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# **How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree  
of  
Master of Social Work  
at Massey University, Manawatū,  
New Zealand.

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2013

# Abstract

Mā te whakaatu, ka mohio

Mā te mōhio, ka mārama

Mā te mārama, ka mātau

Mā te mātau, ka ora

Through discussion comes understanding

Through understanding comes light

Through light comes wisdom

Through wisdom comes wellbeing

Fieldwork practice is a vital component of social work education. Positive fieldwork supervision, based on principles of adult learning is vital to the integration of theory and practice during the fieldwork experience. A student's experiences of fieldwork supervision can shape the value they place on future supervision, thus it is essential that fieldwork supervision is experienced positively. This research focuses on the understandings seven social work students formed about their fieldwork supervision experiences. This study explores what these experiences might mean for those involved in fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This study is qualitative, utilising a phenomenological approach. Data was gathered from semi-structured interviews, and an inductive approach was used for thematic explication. Eight key findings were identified which revealed three themes which signalled the importance of; knowledge, skill, and relationship.

The findings endorse current literature about the place of fieldwork supervision in student learning, and the value of knowledge, skill and relationship in supervision. They also underscore the need for further research into cultural supervision, including the need for a review of how cultural supervision is understood and resourced in fieldwork education in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. The study also reinforces the need for contributions to the literature on fieldwork supervision, particularly exploring the student perspective. On the basis of this research six main implications are identified. This research identifies six key implications from this study, the first concerns the transferability of the findings, four concern the preparation of key stakeholders in fieldwork (namely students, fieldwork

educators, external supervisors and fieldwork coordinators), and the fifth concerns the cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision needs of all social work students in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Thus, like the opening whakataukī above suggests, it is hoped that discussion on which this study is founded provides light, understanding, and ultimately wellbeing for all those involved in and impacted by fieldwork supervision.

## Acknowledgements

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

Completion of this thesis represents the work of many. As the proverb above states, success is not the work of one, but of many. Firstly I wish to acknowledge the Lord as it is only through Him that I am, and that I can achieve anything, "I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12-14).

I am so thankful to my husband Russell and our sons Matthew and Sean. I love you all very much and hope completion of this work encourages you to complete the things you strive for. I appreciate your support, encouragement, patience and your belief in me to keep going when the going was tough. Finishing this is an achievement for us as a family.

To the participants who volunteered their time and their expertise. I am so thankful for your willingness to be part of research, to be part of this study. I was honoured to meet such reflective student practitioners. I wish you well.

To my academic supervisors Kieran O'Donoghue and Kath Hay, your knowledge and expertise were invaluable, and I learnt such a lot from the different skills you each brought. I respected your feedback and appreciated your ability to stay positive and encouraging. Your support of me through difficult times encountered during this process was hugely appreciated. Thank you for your belief in me and my ability to finish this.

I am thankful to my professional supervisor Trudy Ake, who encouraged me, challenged me, inspired me and sometimes even growled me. I value working with you.

To my parents Alf and Judi Woolley. Thank you for instilling in me a 'girls can do anything' mentality, a love of words, and the value of perseverance.

I appreciate the financial support given from Te Runanga a iwi o Ngāpuhi, Massey University, BTI (Bethlehem Tertiary Institute), and the Ministry of Health. This support enabled me to focus on this project and was gratefully received.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my colleagues who have inspired me, encouraged me, guided me, and helped me stay grounded through this, as did my fellow Masters students Jo and Amy. We made it!

To Penny Merton my wonderful proof reader, you are a great friend, a great colleague, and a great author, thank you. Ma te Atua e manaaki koutou katoa.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

Both Western and Māori history reveal that social work education originated in fieldwork practice, with contemporary fieldwork described as the 'signature pedagogy' of social work (Council on Social Work Education, 2008, section 2.3). Supervision has always been a critical element of social work practice (Shulman, 2008) meaning that supervision is therefore also central to fieldwork. Supervision has been defined as:

a process between someone called a supervisor and another referred to as a supervisee. It is usually aimed at enhancing the helping effectiveness of the person supervised. It may include acquisition of practical skills, mastery of theoretical or technical knowledge, personal development at the client/therapist interface and professional development. (Ferguson, 2005, p. 294)

It follows therefore that a student's experience of fieldwork supervision is highly influential in shaping their understanding of supervision and in reinforcing the importance of reflective learning throughout a social worker's career (Bogo, 2010). Fieldwork practicum and fieldwork supervision are requirements of social work education programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand (Social Workers Registration Board, 2011a) and around the world (Noble, 2011a). In Aotearoa New Zealand, conditions under which a social work practicum can occur are determined by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) and overseen by social work training providers, as are the standards of practica and supervisors. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect that social work students' fieldwork supervision experiences are of the highest possible standard.

## Research Aim

The importance of supervision to the professional development of social work students is undisputed. Despite this there is little research considering a student perspective on fieldwork supervision. As 'consumers' of supervision it is vital that the viewpoint of students is gained. This study therefore seeks to discover student perceptions of fieldwork supervision.

Because fieldwork supervision impacts the value that students place on supervision and professional development throughout their career, this study seeks to uncover students' experiences of this phenomenon and how students make sense of their fieldwork

supervision experiences. This research asks the main question “how do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?” and poses three auxiliary questions:

- 1) What are social work students’ experiences of fieldwork supervision?
- 2) What do social work students perceive to be positive fieldwork supervision experiences?
- 3) What understandings do social work students form about why they had or did not have positive fieldwork supervision experiences?

### **Researcher’s interest in the topic**

As a supervisor of social work students and a social work educator involved in fieldwork practicum, I am very interested in students’ perspectives of this phenomenon. I have supervised social work students from a variety of social work programmes and have sometimes been surprised by what I have perceived to be insufficient fieldwork supervision, and fieldwork practicum offering little opportunity for professional growth for students. I am interested in discovering the diversity of students’ fieldwork supervision experiences, how students understand their experiences and what this might mean for students, fieldwork supervisors and social work educators.

My own on-going professional development in supervision studies reinforced the importance of effective supervision to social work education and to on-going social work practice. As both a practitioner and an educator I believe that reflective evidence-informed practice is essential to on-going professional development and that research is a key part of this. Given the pivotal place fieldwork supervision holds in social work education I was interested in furthering my understanding of social work students’ experiences, and through research, contributing to best practice in this area.

My experience in practice based education resonates with a statement made by Cooper who suggests that “within the university system, field education has cottage industry status, little power or acknowledgement, and its staff are seen as the university’s domestic labour” (2007, p. 101). Given this perception, I was eager to contribute to the increasing awareness of the importance of field education to social work education.

My return to social work study after 15 years rekindled my passion for social work and the principles on which it is based. It was my hope that by raising issues and

highlighting possible ways of addressing these that this research would also reflect the social action element of social work practice.

As a social work student I am an 'insider' with participants of this research as I am on the basis of other shared characteristics such as my age, being a woman, a mother, a New Zealander of European descent, and Māori. Conversely I am an 'outsider' to other participants on the basis of these same characteristics. The importance of openly declaring my insider/outsider positioning in this study is that the research cannot merely be interpreted through my own cultural and social lenses from the positions I occupy, rather, my assumptions and relationship with a participant is a factor in the research process (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

### **Background to the research**

"A basic precept of social work education [is] that the two interrelated components of curriculum – classroom and field – are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice" (CSWE, 2008, p.8). In other words, were fieldwork education to be considered the yin, classroom education would be the yang, each complementing the other, whilst forming the whole which is social work education. Fieldwork supervision rests between the yin and the yang, linking classroom learning and learning in the field.

Fieldwork supervision is therefore critical to student learning, and must incorporate contemporary knowledge about learning theory, to assist students link core practice skills and theory. While located in social work education, fieldwork supervision is influenced by numerous forces which shape the social, cultural, educational, and economic context in which social work education resides. These forces impact from global and local origins. While global pressures vary in nature and size on fieldwork education, they can be seen to influence the direction and shape of social work thinking and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

An example of this is the increased global awareness in recent years of the need for culturally responsive practice (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2010). Coupled with a locally initiated renaissance of Māori cultural values (Mead, 2003), this influence is reflected in Aotearoa New Zealand in an increase in literature on cultural practice models, and indigenous supervision models (Eruera, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Mafile'o, 2004; Mafile'o &

Hawkins, 2005; Mataira, 1985; McKinney, 2006; Ohia, 1986; Ward, 2006; Webber-Dreadon, 1999).

This research therefore, in seeking to understand the phenomenon of fieldwork supervision considers the main developmental and contextual factors and influences on fieldwork supervision, while emphasising the student view. This study is particularly interested in exploring a student perspective of the supervision experience given that it is so formative in a social worker's education, and the significant impact of this not only on a social worker's professional development, but also on the client who receives social work services.

## **Key terms and concepts**

### *Fieldwork*

Fieldwork is referred to by a range of terms in the literature including field practicum, field education, field work, field instruction, and practice learning. For the purpose of this thesis the terms 'fieldwork' and 'fieldwork education' are employed as they are commonly used in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fieldwork is an experiential form of learning "where students develop their professional selves and integrate their knowledge and skills under the supervision of expert practitioners" (Noble, 2011a, p. 3). As the 'signature pedagogy' of social work education (CSWE, 2008; Shulman, 2008; Shulman & Safyer, 2005; Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010) fieldwork is an essential method for socialising students to the role of practitioner (Wayne, et al., 2010) and vital for the consolidation of theory and practice. It is through fieldwork that learning opportunities not possible through any other educational mechanism, are made possible to students.

In the field, students have the opportunity to test what they learn in the classroom; integrate theory with practice; evaluate the effectiveness of interventions; contend with the realities of social, political and economic injustice; strive for cultural sensitivity and competence; deliberate on the choices posed by ethical dilemmas; develop a sense of self in practice; and build a connection to and identity with the profession. (Lager & Robbins, 2004, p. 3)

### *Fieldwork supervision*

This thesis defines 'fieldwork supervision' as the oversight of a student on fieldwork practicum by a more experienced practitioner who holds the responsibility to "guide the student through the placement [practicum],...providing a measure of support and

advocacy, facilitating learning opportunities that address student learning needs, evaluating practice development, and assessing work performance” (Maidment, 2001a, p. 284).

### *Fieldwork educator*

The term ‘fieldwork educator’ is used in this thesis to refer to the staff member in the fieldwork practicum agency who “facilitates the student’s learning in practice settings” (Doel, 2010, p. 7). This term varies in the literature from ‘field instructor’ to ‘student supervisor’ in America to ‘practice teacher’ or ‘practice educator’ in the United Kingdom but the term fieldwork educator is commonly used in literature in Aotearoa New Zealand (Chilvers, 2011; Douglas, 2011; Hay & Teppett, 2011; Maidment & Beddoe, 2012).

### *External supervisor*

The term ‘external supervisor’ refers to the supervisor located outside the fieldwork practicum agency who is either employed elsewhere or self-employed (Morrell, 2001). The external supervisor is someone with more experience, skill and knowledge than the student (Shulman, 2008) and is responsible for guiding and growing the student’s personal and professional development. External supervisors tend to be contracted where there is not a professionally qualified or registered social work supervisor in the fieldwork practicum agency (Cleak & Smith, 2012; Zuchowski, 2011). Usually an external supervisor is responsible for the professional supervision of a practitioner or student, while an agency based supervisor is responsible for their administrative supervision or line management (Beddoe, 2012).

### *Fieldwork supervisor*

As the definitions above indicate, differentiation is made in this study between fieldwork educator and external supervisor in referring to their respective roles. Where the issue being discussed concerns both these persons, this thesis uses the term ‘fieldwork supervisor’.

### *Fieldwork coordinator*

Another term used in this thesis which requires clarification is the term ‘fieldwork coordinator’. This is used to refer to the person employed by the student’s training provider to oversee the placement of students in a fieldwork agency. This role may include preparation of students for fieldwork, the approval of fieldwork contracts, the

grading of student assessment, and debriefing the student at the completion of the fieldwork practicum. This term is commonly used in fieldwork literature in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ellis & Worrall, 2001; Hay & O'Donoghue, 2009; Hay & Teppett, 2011).

### *Cultural supervision*

Identifying and discussing the influence of a social worker's personal culture on their practice is essential in supervision, as is recognising culture which occurs within the supervision relationship and process, however those processes are distinct from 'cultural supervision' (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). 'Cultural supervision' as referred to in this thesis refers to

either a formal or informal relationship between two members of the same culture with the purpose being to ensure that the supervisee is practicing according to the values, protocols and practices of that particular culture. It is about cultural accountability and cultural development. (Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004a, p. 16)

### *Kaupapa Māori supervision*

While encouraging tangata whenua social work practitioners to define Kaupapa Māori supervision in a way that is meaningful for them, Eruera (2005b) defines 'Kaupapa Māori' supervision as:

an agreed supervision relationship by Māori for Māori with the purpose of enabling the supervisee to achieve safe and accountable professional practice, cultural development and self-care according to the philosophy, principles and practices derived from a Māori worldview. (p.64)

Interestingly the Kaupapa Māori supervision model developed by Eruera (2005a) is intended for Māori practitioners and supervisors working with Māori clients within a particular agency, whereas the cultural supervision as proposed by Walsh-Tapiata and Webster (2004a) allows for supervision to be provided externally to the agency.

### *Placement agency*

This term refers to the organisation where a social work student is based for their fieldwork practicum. In some instances a student may be situated in more than one placement agency over the course of a single practicum experience.

## **Structure of thesis**

This thesis is formatted as six chapters. This outline of the structure provides a synopsis of each of the chapters for the purpose of clarity and to assist with the location of specific topic areas.

### *Chapter Two: Fieldwork supervision: a review of the literature*

The second chapter reviews the development of the phenomenon of fieldwork supervision through the literature, beginning with an overview of the development of fieldwork education and social work education both internationally and in Aotearoa New Zealand. The practice of fieldwork supervision, and the challenges impacting it are explored through the literature, as are students' experiences of the phenomenon.

### *Chapter Three: Methodology*

The focus of Chapter Three is to outline the methodological underpinnings of this study and explain the resulting methodology. The chapter elaborates on the rationale for the methodological approach, and the significance of the methodological approach to the research design and to answering the research questions. The chapter presents methods used to elicit meaning from participants about their experiences of the phenomenon along with the identification and management of ethical issues. An explanation of how data was gathered, organised and explicated is provided as are the researcher's reflections on the research process.

### *Chapter Four: Results*

The aim of this chapter is to present the results from this research. The chapter begins with an introduction to the participants by presenting some of their demographics. An overview is then provided of how the participants' fieldwork placements and supervisors were arranged. Participants' experiences of supervision in relation to the forms of supervision they encountered are considered as are their experiences across their fieldwork practica. This is followed by an outline of participant perspectives concerning why their fieldwork supervision experiences eventuated as they did. Consideration is then given to questions raised from participants' experience.

### *Chapter Five: Discussion*

This chapter discusses the findings from the Results chapter in light of the literature. Questions raised by the findings are highlighted, and resulting implications indicated with some consideration of how they might be responded to. Areas identified for further research are proposed.

### *Chapter Six: Conclusion*

This chapter reviews the main points from the previous chapters, highlights key results and the implications of these including the transferability of the findings and the possible implications for stakeholders in fieldwork education. Recommendations resulting from the study are presented and a personal reflection of the researcher's thesis journey is provided.

## **Chapter Two: Fieldwork supervision: a review of the literature**

This chapter aims to review the literature pertaining to fieldwork supervision by overviewing the development of fieldwork education within social work education and discussing the phenomena of fieldwork supervision. The literature considering the practice of fieldwork supervision is explored and the challenges which impact fieldwork supervision are reviewed. The literature exploring students' experiences of fieldwork supervision is overviewed and the chapter concludes by identifying the gaps in the literature and the implications of those gaps for this study.

In searching for literature relevant to the research question, initial searches used a variety of key terms including social work, fieldwork, practice learning, practicum, supervision, experiences, perceptions, meaning, and views. Key academic national and international journals were searched, as were the bibliographies of key texts and articles. Initial searches were limited to literature from the year 2000 however given the lack of fieldwork literature in general and more so in relation to fieldwork supervision and the phenomena in Aotearoa New Zealand, it quickly became apparent that the search parameters needed to be extended. Further investigation also revealed that a number of pieces of literature widely used in current writing are more than 20 years old. The parameters of the search were therefore extended to literature from 1990, and older literature was also used where relevant.

In reviewing the literature, it is important to note that literature concerning the development of social work education is written largely from English and American perspectives which reflect the origins of mainstream social work and social work education in this country (Webber-Dreadon, 1999). It was not until relatively recently that the questioning of this orientation became apparent in the literature, and consideration of the oppressive nature of some world views inherent in social work models, education and philosophy was exposed and challenged (Dominelli, 2009; Noble, 2011b).

It is the premise of this thesis that fieldwork education and social work education have always occurred concurrently: a mixture of theoretical and practical learning (Kadushin &

Harkness, 2002). It is therefore useful to consider the development of social work education and trace the position of fieldwork education in relation to classroom education over time.

### **The development of fieldwork education internationally**

This section overviews the development of Western social work education from its recorded beginnings in the 1800s until the present day. While fieldwork education is a consistent feature of social work education, this overview tracks its transition from apprenticeship-based beginnings to variously configured articulated approaches (that is, education which incorporates theoretical study and practice).

'Formal' Western social work education rose out of the need to educate volunteers in an agency apprenticeship model shortly after social work's beginnings in the Charity Organisation Society in England in the late 1800s. As the social work profession developed, social work education became more formalised through the establishment of schools of social work, although education remained firmly grounded in fieldwork. Mary Richmond, a key figure in early social work in America argued in a speech in 1898 that "it should never be forgotten that emphasis is to be put on practical work rather than academic requirements...Theory and practice would go hand in hand" (Leighninger, 2000, p. 10).

The 1920s saw a move for social work education from agency-based training to university-based training (O'Donoghue, 2003). For fieldwork, this move meant the central locus of learning shifted from the field supported by theoretical teaching, to teaching becoming the main modality of learning accompanied by fieldwork practice. This shift necessitated that fieldwork became structured as either concurrent or block placements. Concurrent placements involve the student working in their fieldwork placement agency and attending classroom lectures over the same period, whereas a block placement involves the student attending their fieldwork placement on a full time basis for a specified period (Bogo, 2010).

In the early 1940's the American Association of Schools of Social Work's subcommittee on fieldwork stressed that fieldwork education should be perceived to be of equal importance to classroom teaching, and required that fieldwork educators be as qualified as their classroom-counterparts (Reynolds, 1942). Fieldwork education during this period

is said to have operated from an apprenticeship model of fieldwork teaching, with a dependence on the student-supervisor relationship as the medium for teaching and learning (George, 1982).

The next twenty years reflected a period of experimentation with efforts to ensure teaching and learning was both classroom and fieldwork based with a focus on "achieving educational quality in field instruction" (George, 1982, p. 49). By the 1980s there were two key but opposing perspectives regarding fieldwork referred to in the literature (Jackson Pilcher, 1982). The first perspective conceived of fieldwork as a stand-alone component of the curriculum which should have its own objectives, curriculum and assessment. The opposing view was that fieldwork was a continuation of classroom learning, transposed to an external setting which required a correlation between field and class objectives, curriculum and assessment. It was Jackson Pilcher's (1982) belief that these contrasting views were frequently held by the same faculty.

In the 1980s and 1990s it was the rise of managerialism which exerted the biggest influence on fieldwork education. Managerialism resulted in the commodification of care, with services viewed as products to be accounted for. This was reflected in an increase in the application of management models, philosophy, knowledge, administration and technology in social services (Tsui & Cheung, 2004).

In the last twenty years, globalisation has had a major influence on social work practice, education and fieldwork. Advances in technology and communication have resulted in the world being increasingly perceived as a 'global village' with the profession "simultaneously facing pressures to become more globally aware while paying more attention to 'the social' at the local level" (Dominelli, 2010, p. 128). This is of particular relevance to fieldwork in terms of curricula and preparation for fieldwork, as well as in the increased opportunities for international social work fieldwork practica which raise their own set of issues and challenges (Dominelli, 2003; Hay, Keen, Thomson, & Emerman, 2011; Noble, 2003; Razack, 2002; West & Baschiera, 2011).

As this review has intimated, fieldwork education does not operate in an educational or professional vacuum. Instead, the context influences the form fieldwork education takes and the position it is assigned. Referring to social work education (and by default fieldwork education) Nash affirms this, stating that "like social work itself, [fieldwork

education] is subject to prevailing social, cultural, political, and economic pressures” (2001a, p. 17). This was confirmed by Bogo (2006) who identified context as one of five main themes evident in a review of the literature undertaken on fieldwork education in the five years prior to her review. Based on her findings, Bogo (2006) concluded that given the increasing emphasis on empirically informed social work education, further research in the area of fieldwork is required.

Despite a paucity of fieldwork literature there appears to be an increased clarity of thinking regarding the importance of fieldwork, as suggested by the number of authors emphasising fieldwork’s position in social work education (Chilvers, 2011; Johnston, Rooney, & Reitmeir, 1991; Noble & Henrickson, 2011b). As Bogo confirms “social work educators have, from the earliest days of educating for the profession, recognized the importance of providing learning experiences in field settings, and over time have increasingly highlighted its importance” (2010, p. 17). It is hoped that this mounting assertion will result in an associated growth of literature.

### **Fieldwork education in Aotearoa New Zealand**

This section reviews the development of fieldwork education in this country through key events and documents which have shaped social work education and fieldwork education. The section closes by reviewing models of fieldwork utilised in Aotearoa New Zealand showing how fieldwork models are responsive to the fieldwork context including the changing nature of the student body.

Indigenous social work in this country was traditionally displayed in social roles in Māori communities (Nash, 2001b; O’Donoghue, 2003) as well as in social structures and processes which ensured whānau and hapū wellbeing (Nash, 2001b). In this sense ‘social work education’ was not ‘taught’ in traditional Māori society, rather the roles undertaken by social workers today were lived out by whānau, hapū and iwi members. It could be said that ‘fieldwork’ was an implicit part of these processes and roles, given that those in these helping roles were ‘apprenticed’ through culturally defined responsibilities such as teina and tuakana, kuia and kaumātua, matua and tamaiti.

Like their English and American counterparts, social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand were initially trained by way of apprenticeships (New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 1972b). After World War II the demand for professionally qualified social

workers arose as a lack of suitably trained workers able to meet the needs of a post-war society became evident. A conference on professional training for social work in New Zealand was held in 1943 which resulted in a recommendation that the establishment of a school of social work be explored (Nash, 1998; University Grants Review Committee, 1981). This resulted in the first official social work training course in Aotearoa New Zealand, a two year Diploma offered in 1949 by the University College of Victoria (later known as Victoria University, [VUW]) (Nash, 1998).

The VUW Diploma, based on the British model of casework with a social administration focus, was the only formal social work qualification in New Zealand for the following twenty years (Nash & Munford, 2001). The VUW Diploma encompassed a mix of block and concurrent fieldwork placements over both years of the Diploma (Crockett, 1977) until a curriculum review in 1957. Following the review, fieldwork was altered to a block placement at the end of the first year, followed by a concurrent placement throughout the second year supervised by the College's staff (Crockett, 1977).

The establishment of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) in 1964 as the professional association for New Zealand social workers (Nash, 2001b) was a significant development in the history of the social work profession in this country. The NZASW sought to be involved in the shaping of social work education, and presented a report *Education for Social Workers* in 1971 (Crockett, 1977) which highlighted fieldwork as a mechanism for transmitting self-awareness and personal development for social workers (Crockett, 1977).

Social work education in the 1970s reflected an articulated approach, with fieldwork structured as concurrent or block placements (Crockett, 1977; Nash, 1998). The New Zealand Social Work Training Council (NZSWTC) was established as an advisory body to the Minister of Social Welfare in 1973, charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating and accrediting social work courses and setting minimum professional standards for social work education (Nash, 2001a). Reporting on the development of social work training in 1974, the NZSWTC noted the importance of relating theory to practice in professional qualifications, and stated that "a required element of practical work under skilled supervision is regarded as an integral part of each course" (New Zealand Social Work Training Council, 1974, p. 5) thereby highlighting the significance of fieldwork supervision.

The NZSWTC encouraged diversity of training with an emphasis on improved accessibility (geographically, economically, culturally and educationally) to social work programmes, which resulted in an increased range of social work training providers from the 1970s. An example of this diversity and of collaboration between tertiary providers and stakeholders was the development of student units developed in the mid-1970s. These were set up in the health, education and justice sectors and a financial allowance was paid to social work students to complete their practicum over the summer vacation (Ellis, 1998). By 1981 there were 17 student units in operation in four centres around the country (University Grants Review Committee, 1981) providing statutory fieldwork opportunities for many social work students.

A significant publication impacting fieldwork from the 1980s was the report entitled *Pūao-te-ata-tū* (1986) the Ministerial Advisory Committee Report on a Māori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). This report found many forms of racism in the DSW which resulted in reviews of the DSW, the NZSWTC, and social work education in general. This led to the disestablishment of the NZSWTC and the formation of the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) (Nash, 2001a). The report's recommendations highlighted the importance of incorporating the principles and the Articles of the Treaty of Waitangi in social work education. Of particular significance for fieldwork education was "the insistence that the design and provision of placements demonstrate the scope of the Treaty of Waitangi, specifically in terms of providing culturally appropriate supervision and practical learning opportunities to work with Māori" (Maidment, 2000b, p. 21).

A considerable influence on fieldwork education in the 1980s was the rise of managerialism, which was mentioned earlier with regards to social work education. Similar to the impact of the output-driven focus that social work education generally had experienced, fieldwork education found increased difficulties in locating practica as agencies' time became increasingly absorbed with meeting accountability requirements (Beddoe, 1999).

The eventual disbanding of student units in the early 1990s (Ellis, 1998; Maidment, 2000b) revealed a change in the level of support offered to universities by the state services sector. This resulted in a reduction in the number of placements available to

students (Nash, 1998) placing more onus on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide fieldwork placements. The document "Supervised Practice, Fieldwork and Field Visits" compiled by the NZCETSS working party on fieldwork education in 1993 identified a lack of quality assurance mechanisms for fieldwork, and provided guidelines to address these deficits (Maidment, 2000b).

A return to workplace-led training followed the replacement of the NZCETSS with Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi Industry Training Organisation (TKAITO) in 1995, a move which Kane and Hopkins (1996) contend was skewed towards employers at the expense of training providers and professional associations. Kane and Hopkins (1996) further argued that the return to workplace-led education under the newly devised National Qualifications Framework demonstrated a shift from "reliance upon theory input to recognition of practice wisdom" (p. 99).

The 1997 guidelines put out by TKAITO identified options for fieldwork placement models as well as fieldwork educator requirements. These included the requirement for fieldwork educators to hold a social work qualification and have competence both in the field and as a fieldwork educator (Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, 1997). Another significant requirement in these guidelines was the requirement for training providers to demonstrate the influence of the Treaty of Waitangi on course design and fieldwork delivery, including "the provision of culturally appropriate field supervision, and accessing placements where bicultural practice occurs" (Maidment, 2000b, p. 69).

In 2003 after many years of debate regarding the issue of registration in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Social Workers Registration Act was passed providing for voluntary registration of social workers. This resulted in the establishment of the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) which now sets the benchmark for registration at degree level qualifications. As the external professional recognition body of social work training programmes, the SWRB also sets requirements regarding the number of days of fieldwork required for recognised social work qualifications. The SWRB also determines many other conditions regarding fieldwork, such as the number of practica to be undertaken, the minimum length of practicum, the number of fields of practice required, conditions relating to in-post practica, and eligibility requirements for fieldwork supervisors (SWRB, 2011a) . The social work association (now known as Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, ANZASW) continues to have a degree of input

into fieldwork education as the SWRB is guided by some of the ANZASW's policies such as those regarding supervision (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Inc, 2012) and the Bicultural Code of Practice.

In reviewing social work education in the Deans forum of the Asia-Pacific Association for Social Worker Educators (APASWE) in 2009, "there was almost unanimous agreement that fieldwork education and student supervision was the crucial component in the development of professional practice" (Noble, 2011a, p. 5). Despite this, and similar assertions made in the literature there remains a lack of fieldwork literature in this country. As noted by Maidment a review of both "Australian Social Work and Social Work Review (New Zealand's Social Work Association journal)...shows that very little has been published in the professional journals on field education in either country. Moreover a notable absence of research into practicum education is apparent" (2003, p. 4).

Having reviewed the most significant points on the development timeline of fieldwork education in Aotearoa New Zealand, the following section specifically considers fieldwork models used in this country.

### *Models of fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand*

The models used for providing practical experience in social work training have varied enormously in Aotearoa New Zealand. The fieldwork model predominantly offered in Aotearoa New Zealand is the 'field setting' model (Ellis, 1998) where social work students spend time in a block period (often three months) based in a social service organisation. In part this model is most commonly used due to SWRB requirements that students undertake at least 120 days supervised fieldwork practicum, structured as a minimum of two practica with one being not less than 50 days (SWRB, 2011a).

Fieldwork education in Aotearoa New Zealand was shown by Maidment (2000b) to be in the main based on an apprenticeship model of one student working with one supervisor in one location, with an emphasis on the supervisor-student relationship as the key mechanism for teaching. Twelve years on from Maidment's research, this model continues to be the most prevalent form of "integrating learning with practice and developing student competencies" (Hanlen, 2011, p. 225). This reflects the view that consolidation of skills and behaviours takes place best through experience and that an

individual coaching or mentoring style relationship is the best pedagogical approach in that setting (Peterson, 2010).

Noble et al. (2007) suggest that work-based practica are being increasingly offered in an effort to attract students managing employment, family and study commitments. A drawback of work-based or in-post practica is that students may be expected to manage practicum requirements in addition to their usual workload pressures (Pelech, Barlow, Badry, & Elliot, 2009). Under SWRB requirements, students are able to complete a maximum of one practicum in their usual place of work, in line with a set of parameters ensuring substantially different tasks to their usual work, appropriate learning goals, and a supervisor who is not their line manager (SWRB, 2011a). Such an arrangement in a students' place of employment may be of financial benefit to students needing to remain in their workplace as long as possible while studying.

The issue of what the 'best' fieldwork model for student learning is, has been discussed in the literature (Maidment, 2003; Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006) and highlights the question as to the "extent to which current theoretical paradigms for practicum education have been driven more by economic pragmatism than educational best practice" (Maidment, 2000b, p. 17). The decision concerning what is the 'best' fieldwork model must consider the needs of all fieldwork stakeholders, that is: the practicum agency; the student; the training provider; and the client, balanced within the requirements and constraints of the context within which it operates.

### **Fieldwork supervision: the phenomena**

Following on from the development of fieldwork education as explored above, this section discusses the phenomena of fieldwork supervision. Fieldwork supervision is considered through key events and documents as portrayed in the literature with regard to its evolution, forms, practice and challenges.

#### *The evolution of fieldwork supervision*

For a long period of time, student supervision and staff supervision were often mistakenly assumed to be similar. It was not until the mid-1960s that scholars and researchers began to recognise the conceptual, methodological, and practical differences between staff supervision and student supervision. (Tsui, 2007, p. 3)

One of the first social work texts written defines supervision as an "educational process for training a person" (Robinson, 1936, p.53 cited in Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). This alludes to the importance of the educative element of supervision from social work's beginnings as a profession. The ANZASW defines supervision as:

A process in which the supervisor enables, guides and facilitates the social worker(s) in meeting certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are: professional competence, accountable and safe practice, continuing professional development, education and support (ANZASW, 2012, p. 1).

While this definition is intended to describe professional supervision, it is broad enough that it also describes student supervision.

The functions of supervision frequently referred to in the literature are those conceptualised by Kadushin (1976) that is: educative, supportive and administrative. While there are some variations of these functions in relation to professional supervision, Wilson's (2000) expectations of fieldwork educators correspond to Kadushin's identified functions with a fieldwork focus. Wilson's fieldwork educator expectations are "to support students; to direct, monitor and evaluate practice, and; to facilitate learning from their own work" (2000, p. 27).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, many components of supervision practices existed in the Māori world prior to being termed as such (O'Donoghue, 2003). Such practices are reflected in the traditional roles of *kaiako* and *tuakana/teina*. Bradley, Jacob and Bradley (1999) list numerous other roles but suggest that *kaiarahi* "is probably the most accurate because it refers to guiding, leading or showing the way without notions of being superior or bossy" (p.4).

Although supervision has been central to social work since its inception (Shulman, 2008) with social work programmes revolving around supervised fieldwork (Kendall, 1978) there is very little literature detailing the history of fieldwork supervision in this country. Rather, most literature mentions fieldwork supervision as a programme requirement, but does not provide any details regarding this as is evident in the tracing of its history below.

The development of the Diploma in Social Work at VUW in 1949 resulted in a growing number of students undertaking fieldwork which highlighted the need for fieldwork supervision training. Despite this, it was not until 1953 that VUW offered a one day conference on the supervision of social work students (Crockett, 1977). O'Donoghue suggested that the move of social work education to universities (which occurred elsewhere in the 1920s) repositioned supervision as an "educational process for learning social work practice" (2003, p. 44) thereby raising the importance of fieldwork supervision as its educational role received greater emphasis.

Throughout history, fieldwork supervision has reflected the approach favoured in professional supervision, modelling whichever theories and modalities were current in practice at the time. For example in the early history of social work supervision, the influence of psychodynamic theory was extensive resulting in a lack of clarity at times about whether the supervision relationship was educational or therapeutic (George, 1982). Later, the debate regarding the efficacy of individual versus group supervision arose (American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work, 2004) evidenced in a variety of supervision forms as practitioners wrestled with suggestions that supervision fostered dependence and a lack of self-regulation which signalled a lack of professionalism (Maidment, 2001a).

The suggestion that supervision indicated a lack of professionalism did not prevail, as the opposite proved true with an increased ambition for professionalism resulting in a greater demand for supervision. This demand for supervision continued into the 1970s when university staff were said to be concerned about the lack of qualified supervisors for students (Crockett, 1977) although this shortage was to be expected given that the VUW Diploma was designed to address an identified lack of professionally trained workers.

Maidment (2000b) notes that the first significant piece of literature related to fieldwork education published in *The New Zealand Social Worker* journal (established in 1965) was Macdonald's (1973) article about the formation of a hospital-based student unit. There was also a series of papers regarding supervision in social work published by the NZASW in 1972 which contained two papers concerning fieldwork supervision, one from an educator's viewpoint, and the other from a student's point of view. This illustrates not

only the lack of literature in this country considering fieldwork and fieldwork supervision, but also the delay in fieldwork literature being published in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the same year as the NZASW papers on fieldwork supervision, the NZASW developed a *Statement on Standards of Education and Training* which included standards for fieldwork supervision. The standards included: the minimum hours required for supervision; the requisite training, experience and professional association membership of supervisors; the requirement for liaison between fieldwork supervisors and; liaison between academic staff and supervisors (NZASW, 1972a). A supervisor's 'duties' at that time were listed as: "to assign work, help the students relate theory to practice, and provide private consultation" (University Grants Review Committee, 1982, p. 5).

The 1980s evidenced consideration of tangata whenua and feminist needs and models of supervision (Bradley, et al., 1999; Mataira, 1985; New Zealand Social Work Training Council, 1985; O'Donoghue, 2002; Webber-Dreadon, 1999) paralleling the changes across the social work profession. Additional supervision courses were developed in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the pressure of accountability and managerialism alongside the growth in professional social work supervision (Beddoe, 1997b; O'Donoghue, 2003). Educational guidelines for social work continued to reflect the importance placed on fieldwork supervision, as evidenced in the TKAITO 1997 guidelines which stipulated that "supervision of students must be provided by qualified fieldwork educators" (p. 6 section 21).

Over the last two decades as with the development of social work practice and fieldwork education, fieldwork supervision has continued to be shaped by managerialism, economic rationalism and an outcome and output accountability focus (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Within this context, supervision practice in Aotearoa New Zealand reveals a recognition and acceptance of "plurality and diversity" (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2011, p. 5).

The changing nature of supervision was also reflected in the changing roles of supervisors and supervisees in supervision. In considering the roles taken in supervision since the 1930s, Beddoe (1999) observed the change from the initial 'Master practitioner/Apprentice' model, until the 1960s and 1970s when the roles became more 'Therapist/Client' or 'Teacher/Student'. During the 1980s and 1990s the roles transferred to 'Role model/Novice practitioner' until the turn of this century when roles became

'Facilitator, Supervisor/Learner', or 'Practice teacher, Kaiako/Active researcher' (Beddoe, 1999).

As this review has shown, the publication of literature regarding fieldwork supervision has remained scant. A welcome contribution in 2000 was a selection of works edited by Cooper and Briggs (2000) including a chapter by Beddoe (2000) on the supervisory relationship in fieldwork supervision, and another chapter by Wilson (2000) considering fieldwork supervision approaches. The recent publication of a fieldwork-themed journal by the ANZASW which included an article on fieldwork supervision (Pack, 2011), along with the book *Social work field education and supervision across Asia Pacific* (Noble & Henrickson, 2011b), constitute two other significant contributions to the fieldwork literature, particularly for the Asia Pacific region. It is hoped this increase in fieldwork supervision literature will continue.

Another issue relevant to the development of fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand is that of Māori approaches to fieldwork supervision. As first signalled in Pūao-te-ata-tū, obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi require supervision for Māori workers to be culturally relevant. While there are a growing number of Māori supervision models (Eruera, 2005a; Webber-Dreadon, 1999) as yet there are none specifically developed for fieldwork supervision. Because Māori learning styles and systems of learning can differ from Western learning styles (Hemara, 2000; Metge, 1984; Tangaere, 1999) the development of a Māori model of fieldwork supervision warrants deliberate consideration. The ANZASW policy on supervision states that it's members must receive supervision that is "conducted in accordance with the articles contained in Te Tiriti o Waitangi" (ANZASW, 2012, p. 1) which supports the argument for supervision to be delivered in a culturally fitting manner. In turn, this ANZASW policy informs SWRB requirements for fieldwork supervision, so the necessity for the provision of fieldwork supervision that is consistent with a Māori world view, tikanga and ways of learning is clear.

### *Forms of supervision*

This section provides explanations of many of the forms of supervision commonly utilised in fieldwork supervision and referred to in the fieldwork supervision literature. While one to one supervision is most frequently used (Cleak & Smith, 2012) it is often supplemented by other forms of supervision including group supervision, peer

supervision, cultural supervision, co-supervision, managerial supervision, and clinical supervision (O'Donoghue, 2003). An explanation of some of these forms of supervision follows.

Group supervision is where a group of workers are supervised together by a designated supervisor. Some of the supervision literature mentions this type of supervision and explores the advantages and disadvantages of supervision structured this way (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2006; Scaife, 2001). Only one piece of literature was identified which mentioned group supervision in relation to fieldwork in the Aotearoa New Zealand context (Townsend, Long, & Trainor, 2011) although that considered fieldwork supervision around the Asia Pacific region, rather than solely in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In researching the use of group supervision in fieldwork, Bogo, Globerman and Sussman (2004) discovered that the competence of the supervisor was seen as crucial to the success of the experience. Other research into group supervision revealed that students receiving group supervision gave poorer evaluations of content covered in supervision and of the supervisory relationship (Zeira & Schiff, 2009) compared with students receiving one to one supervision.

Peer supervision is provided by colleagues either in the same workplace, or through other professional connections, where the role of supervisor is either taken in turns or managed collectively by the group. There appears to be less written about peer supervision, and peer support even less so (Dela Ruelle, 2011). The only literature sourced exploring peer supervision or peer support of social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand other than Dela Ruelle's research report was that by Townsend et al. (2011) mentioned above, which considers peer learning and group supervision in fieldwork in Asia Pacific. Anecdotally it would seem that peer supervision is used as an informal, organic form of support on fieldwork placement.

As previously noted, cultural supervision refers to supervision "in which practitioners of a certain ethnicity are supported in their practice by a supervision process that is grounded in spiritual, traditional and theoretical understandings that are congruent with their worldview" (Beddoe & Egan, 2009, p. 414). Eruera (2005b, 2007) differentiates

this from Kaupapa Māori supervision which as she explains asserts an indigenous position and meets obligations to Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

A recent development has been the idea of co-supervision, where the supervision role is shared between two workers. It has been suggested that this model allows the supervisee the opportunity to benefit from the input and support of two supervisors rather than only one, and in doing so, allows a wider range of people to take on the supervisor role (Coulton & Krimmer, 2005). This arrangement is particularly beneficial in an increasingly feminised and part-time social work workforce (Coulton & Krimmer, 2005). There appears to be little literature on co-supervision to date, although Cleak and Smith (2012) found ten percent of the undergraduate social work students in their study received supervision from two or more supervisors, and that participants rated this form of supervision highly.

### *Supervision kinds*

It is helpful to also understand supervision 'kinds' which refers to whether supervision is provided internally or externally. External supervision takes place with "a supervisor who is not working within the organisation but is contracted as a consultant to provide supervision" (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 15). The value or otherwise of external supervision has been explored in the literature in relation to the Aotearoa New Zealand context and internationally (Flintoff & Flanagan, 2010, 2011; Foster, 2011; Hirst & Lynch, 2005; Morrell, 2001). There is also literature which considers the relevance of external supervision to specific fields of practice (Bell & Thorpe, 2004).

In exploring external supervision, a study conducted by Itzhaky (2001) showed that supervisees viewed external supervision as more constructive and confrontational with less formal authority and more expert-based authority than internal supervision. O'Donoghue's research (2011) discovered that "the content of internal supervision was predominately concerned with clients and work related matters, whereas, the content of external supervision mostly concerned matters that affected the supervisee and their ability to develop their practice" (p.33). Specific to fieldwork supervision, both Morrell (2008) and Cleak and Wilson (2012) state that there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that university staff are increasingly providing external supervision.

## **The practice of fieldwork supervision**

This section discusses what the phenomenon of fieldwork supervision is in practice, that is, “the thing which makes [fieldwork supervision]...what it *is* [original emphasis] – and without which it could not be what it is” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). The role of teaching and learning in fieldwork, the importance of preparedness, and the role of relationship are all significant themes identified in the literature as part of the essence of fieldwork supervision. These themes will now each be discussed in turn.

### *The importance of teaching and learning*

Virginia Robinson, a key figure in early social work education in America highlighted the educative function of supervision in her book *Supervision in Social Casework* published in 1936. Robinson suggested that supervision needed to be lifted “...out of its confusing entanglement with the casework process in order to see it as a unique teaching process which has grown up inside of casework, indigenous to it, but different in important ways...to define supervision as a distinct and unique educational process” (Robinson, 1978, p. 195). This indicates the recognition of the place of learning in supervision from Western social work’s early beginnings.

The importance of teaching and learning in fieldwork supervision has remained a strong theme in the literature, because, as Kadushin indicates “The field instructor more frequently needs to be a skilful teacher in addition to being a skilful social work practitioner” (1991, p. 12). Similarly, in highlighting the opportunity fieldwork provides to link classroom learning with experience, George describes fieldwork supervision as “*an indispensable method of teaching*, [emphasis added] when knowing, understanding and doing are seen as steps in the learning process” (1982, p. 55). So, while staff supervision contains elements of the educative function, the educative function is positioned foremost in fieldwork supervision.

The area of teaching and learning has received much attention in the fieldwork literature (Beddoe, 2004; Bogo, 2010) including discussion of the importance of educational or learning theory to fieldwork (Ellis, 2000; Jones, 2004; Maidment, 2000c, 2001a, 2002; Scaife, 2001, 2010). Like much of the fieldwork literature however, the majority of this literature relates to the wider context of fieldwork rather than specifically to fieldwork supervision. One example of research undertaken which explored learning in fieldwork supervision was undertaken by Maidment (2000a). Her research revealed that although

fieldwork supervisors were generally unable to articulate pedagogical methods they used in the supervision of students, several frameworks for learning were evident in their practice.

The work of Kolb (1984) has been highly influential in the understanding and development of learning theory, particularly his learning cycle which conceptualised the learning process. Kolb's Learning Cycle was foundational to Bogo and Vayda's (1991) Integration of Theory and Practice (ITP) Loop devised for its applicability to social work. The ITP Loop is an action-reflection model designed to aid practitioners to better integrate theoretical principles and practice experience (Bogo & Vayda, 1998). This model is a useful framework for fieldwork supervisors in the challenge of assisting students integrate theory and practice (Boisen & Syers, 2004; 2008; Maidment, 2001a) thereby providing a scaffold for fieldwork supervisors to successfully ensure the educative element is integrated into fieldwork supervision.

Another example of the influence of Kolb's (1984) work is the 'learning styles' identified by Honey and Mumford (1992) which capture an individual's preferred way of learning, where each learning style corresponds to one of the four stages of Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle. Examples of learning styles as discussed in the literature include the application of learning styles for supervision (Morrison, 2005), the relationship between learning style and students' satisfaction with fieldwork (Itzhaky & Eliahou, 2002; Van Soest & Kruzich, 1994), as well as students' preferences with regards to their supervisor's learning style (Carrington, 2004; Lazar, & Eisikovits, 1997). These examples highlight the centrality of the learning aspect of supervision to fieldwork supervision, and demonstrate some of the breadth to which learning styles have been explored.

Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle was also foundational to the development of a fieldwork supervision model by Davys and Beddoe (2000). Their model provides a framework for a student to present their work and the supervisor to "teach, critique and affirm" (Davys & Beddoe, 2000, p. 443). Davys and Beddoe later developed this model further to create the Reflective Learning Model (2009) which incorporates Schon's (1987) notions of reflective practice. Davys and Beddoe are clear that "supervision is a forum for learning and that the main vehicle for learning is reflection" (Davys & Beddoe, 2009, p. 920).

Reflective practice is also a significant area covered in the literature (Beddoe, 2004; Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; M. Carroll, 2009, 2010; Ellis, 2000; Osmond & Darlington, 2005; Pack, 2011), although only a small portion of this considers reflective practice in relation to fieldwork supervision. One such study explored the meaning that social work students attributed to fieldwork education and their fieldwork learning experiences (Lam, Wong, & Leung, 2007). It was found that the 'disturbing events' prompted students to make meaning of the experience, thereby eliciting the learning from the experience and in doing so reinforcing the importance of reflective learning in fieldwork.

### *The importance of preparedness*

It has been said that "there has long been an awareness that field education, and therefore social work education generally, would be enhanced by high quality supervision in the field and by a higher level of preparedness among the students who enter the field" (Gelman, 2004, p. 33). The benefits of preparing supervisees and outlining realistic expectations are discussed in the literature (Barretta-Herman, 2001; Morrell, 2005; Morrison, 2008; Munson, 1989) and confirmed by studies considering the impact of preparation of students for fieldwork (Gelman, 2004; Rosenthal Gelman & Lloyd, 2008; G. Wilson, Walsh, & Kirby, 2008). One study which focused on preparation in relation to the phenomenon of fieldwork supervision (Kanno & Koeske, 2010) demonstrated that students felt prepared for fieldwork and satisfied with supervision when they experienced a sense of efficacy in their role.

A review of the literature reveals a growing number of resources available for preparing and supporting students as they venture out on fieldwork (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2011; Cleak & Wilson, 2007; Doel, 2010; Grobman, 2002; Parker, 2004; Thomlison & Corcoran, 2008). The literature includes guidance on the kinds of issues that can be taken to supervision (Bond & Holland, 1998), realistic expectations of fieldwork supervisors (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2011) and encouragement for supervisees to be active participants rather than being merely receptive vessels (Davys, 2007).

It follows with regards to preparation for fieldwork supervision that preparation of the fieldwork supervisor is also of interest. Citing a number of studies Detlaff (2003, p. iv) states that "research indicates that social work practitioners need specific training to be effective as field instructors", emphasising that the transition from practitioner to

fieldwork supervisor is not merely a professional maturation process. Similarly, Maidment (2001a) notes the formulation of strategies to boost field educators' professional development is essential to offering quality practicum learning.

A study conducted by Fortune and Abramson (1993) showed that one of the three most significant factors affecting students' satisfaction with fieldwork placements was the quality of the fieldwork supervision ('field instruction'). In the early 1990s in the United Kingdom this identified need led to the launch of the now disestablished 'Practice Teachers Award'. This was until recently providing professional development and an accreditation system for fieldwork supervisors in England (Taylor, 1999) which, despite some implementation issues, enhanced the preparation of fieldwork educators taking on fieldwork social work students. The importance of the preparation of fieldwork educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, was confirmed in Hay, O'Donoghue and Blagdon's (2006) research which revealed "a lack of training for field educators" (p.27) as one of the reasons that fieldwork supervisors and students reported that fieldwork aims were not met.

While there has been some discussion in the literature about whether the need for preparation of fieldwork supervisors might indicate the need to develop a system of accreditation or national standards for fieldwork supervisors (Beddoe, 1997a; Walsh-Tapiata & Ellis, 1994), this has not as yet eventuated. The need to extend fieldwork educators' professional development for oversight of social work students was recognised by a network of educators from training providers across the country, and resulted in the resource *Kia Tene/Off the Cuff* (Douglas, 2011). Targeted at fieldwork educators and available at no charge via the internet, this package provides a number of activities for fieldwork educators to undertake with their fieldwork student/s. Any research on the uptake of this by training providers and the implementation by fieldwork educators is yet to be published.

### *The importance of relationship*

Underpinning the effectiveness of fieldwork education is students having access to good quality supervision. Supervision that teaches them what social work is, how to perform social work tasks, how to build relationships, and how to integrate theory and practice and reflect on its efficacy and

develop the necessary awareness for effective practice. (Noble, 2011a, p. 7)

A section of the literature on fieldwork supervision discusses what constitutes 'good' or 'effective' supervision. Findings from one such study found that unhelpful supervision approaches included therapeutic, unsupportive, constricting, amorphous, and caseload management focused supervision (Secker, 1993). In researching students' perceptions of what contributed to their satisfaction of fieldwork, Fortune and Abramson (1993) revealed that those factors which most fostered satisfaction were: "the quality of field instruction...and didactic explanations from the field instructor" (p. 95).

The importance of the supervisory relationship is a key factor emphasised by numerous authors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Fehmi, 2009; Hawkins & Shohet, 2006; Kaiser, 2004; Lefevre, 2005) including Carroll (2001) who considers relationship as part of the 'spirituality' or 'being' of supervision. It has been said that "the supervisory relationship is at the heart of fieldwork education. The field educator requires skills and personal attributes - warmth, genuineness, sensitivity, the ability to facilitate another's learning and the capacity to model good practice..." (Beddoe, 2000, p. 41).

Falendar and Shafranske (2008) suggest that the supervisory relationship is one of three interconnected pillars upon which supervision is based, the other two pillars being "inquiry, and educational praxis" (p.5). Research by Davys (2005) explored supervisees' perspectives on what constituted 'good' supervision and identified four factors: the qualities and attributes of the supervisee; the qualities and attributes of the supervisor; the nature of the supervision relationship, and; the opportunity to exercise choice as to whether to continue or discontinue the supervision relationship.

The centrality of relationship in fieldwork supervision was also highlighted by Lefevre's (2005) study, as was the impact of relationship on students' perceptions of fieldwork supervision and on students' ability to engage in quality practice learning. The research showed that the supervisory relationship seemed to mediate many aspects of the fieldwork supervision encounter (Lefevre, 2005). Research by Wilson, Walsh and Kirby (2008) also affirmed the importance of relationship in fieldwork supervision although their results suggested that "relationships that students develop with other stakeholders

in the placement, including on-site supervisors, is significant and might even compensate for deficiencies in other aspects of the placement” (p.47). This finding by Wilson, Walsh and Kirby (2008) was echoed in findings in a study by Cleak and Smith (2012) who found that the salient factor influencing student’s satisfaction with their practicum was having a strong onsite work presence.

Clearly, there is a high level of congruence amongst the themes in the literature, that is, the importance of teaching and learning, of preparedness, and of relationship in fieldwork supervision. The next section highlights significant challenges impacting on fieldwork supervision.

### **Challenges impacting fieldwork supervision**

There are numerous challenges mentioned in the literature that influence fieldwork supervision. These play a significant role in shaping supervision practice and consequently influence how fieldwork supervision is experienced. This section overviews some of these challenges as indicated in the literature.

Fieldwork (and therefore fieldwork supervision) resides where the power struggles of those with an interest in social work education intersect. These include educators, managers, agency staff, external supervisors, students, clients, and bodies such as the TKAITO, ANZASW and SWRB (Ellis, 1998). Fieldwork and fieldwork supervision cannot therefore be viewed in isolation to their context. Thus, while fieldwork remains firmly positioned within social work education located at the ‘heart’ of learning in social work education (Douglas, 2011) this does not insulate it from challenges or change. Rather, these forces mould fieldwork supervision into the phenomenon it is, as experienced by those involved in it.

The new millennium has seen a focus on accountability, risk assessment, and further management pressures on social service providers in both Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally (Cree, 2009; Webb, 2006). This has meant fieldwork placements are increasingly viewed by agencies as drawing on limited resources (Homonoff, 2008; Maidment, 2000b), and placement agencies’ energies are increasingly spent on accountability requirements. The result of this is that placements are less able to be justified by agencies thus reducing agencies’ availability and enthusiasm for taking fieldwork students (Cleak, Hawkins, & Hess, 2000; Maidment, 2000b, 2003).

Alongside the reduced availability of placements there is a concern about the high turnover of fieldwork supervisors (Clare, 2001). The lack of recognition, status and support given to student supervision may contribute to this, or at least deter some practitioners from taking on the role of fieldwork supervisor (Maidment, 2000b; Walsh-Tapiata & Ellis, 1994). The end result of this may be reduced numbers of individuals offering to take on the fieldwork supervisor role.

Factors impacting potential placements are coupled with numerous changes to the education context. These include adjusting to educating students with special needs and at times heavy responsibilities (Homonoff, 2008) and "the expanding use of Internet-based communication technologies" (Hicks & Maidment, 2009, p. 430). The complexity these issues place on fieldwork and fieldwork supervision is thought to contribute to a reduction in the number of fieldwork opportunities made available (Connolly & Rathgen, 2000; Cooper & Briggs, 2000; Hay, O'Donoghue, & Blagdon, 2006).

While the supervision literature and research in the last 15 years indicates the development of a professional social work supervision culture (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2011), reviews of the literature done by both Lager & Robbins (2004) and Bogo (2006) revealed that while there is a growing body of literature in fieldwork, fieldwork supervision remains understudied. It has been suggested that "...despite the fact that field instruction is more demanding, more complex, requiring more varied skills than agency supervision, it has received less study, less attention by social workers, a contention validated by a review of the social work literature" (Kadushin, 1991, p. 12). This assertion has been reiterated by numerous authors (Caspi & Reid, 2002; Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Skolnik, Wayne, & Raskin, 1999) including Unger who in relation to fieldwork supervision stated: "Professional literature abounds with books and articles describing and recommending styles and techniques of supervision. Less has been written specifically regarding field supervision of social work students..." (2003, p. 106).

As previously stated, a welcome addition to the paucity of fieldwork supervision literature is the recently published book which considers fieldwork education and supervision in Asia Pacific. This includes literature on the phenomenon of fieldwork supervision by several authors (Noble, 2011a, 2011b; Townsend, et al., 2011; Zuchowski, 2011) providing a much needed addition to the existing literature. Given that

“social work fieldwork education...must be considered an integral part of the education of social workers” (Noble & Henrickson, 2011a, p. viii) and fieldwork supervision is so influential in shaping beginning practitioner’s views of supervision’s value (Bogo, 2010; Davys & Beddoe, 2010), surely this must be represented by on-going contributions to the fieldwork supervision literature.

### **Students’ experiences of fieldwork supervision**

This section will demonstrate the extent to which students’ views of fieldwork supervision are represented in the literature. Research in this area explores very specific aspects of fieldwork supervision, rather than the phenomenon overall. For the purposes of clarity, literature exploring students’ experiences of fieldwork supervision is discussed in chronological order.

One of the earliest studies located that explored students’ perceptions of fieldwork placement was conducted by Curnock (1975) who surveyed students about their experiences in student units in England. Although Curnock’s study considered student perceptions of fieldwork supervision there was minimal comment in the findings in relation to supervision as this was only one of many aspects the research considered. This lack of consideration of students’ perceptions in the literature, was noted by Spencer and McDonald (1998) who stated that student views of fieldwork education were not present in the literature for the period 1980 – 1996, an issue they highlighted as requiring attention.

Lazar and Eisikovits (1997) explored students’ perceptions of a specific aspect of fieldwork supervision: students’ perspectives of their supervisor’s style and behaviour. They unearthed student preferences regarding style, focus and preferred theoretical orientation, noting that supervisory style significantly affected students’ evaluations of their field supervisors. While another study into students’ experiences of fieldwork supervision was conducted around the same time (Itzhaky, 1998) this was also very specific in the area researched: students’ perceptions of their fieldwork educator in relation to their position in the agency. Findings from that piece of research revealed differences in how students perceived their supervisors in relation to the position the supervisor held in the fieldwork organisation.

In researching both Bachelor of Social Work students and Master of Social Work students views of their fieldwork supervisors and their supervisor's skills, Knight (2000, 2001) revealed that a fieldwork supervisors' accessibility and the frequency of supervision positively influenced a student's assessment of their fieldwork supervisor. The study showed that clear expectations from both the student and the fieldwork supervisor resulted in enhanced learning for the student. It was also evident from the research that a structured, student-centred approach involving activities such as individualised learning, case reviews and so forth was viewed particularly positively by students on their first fieldwork experience, whereas encouraging the linking of theory and practice was more valued by students on their second fieldwork placement.

Maidment's research (2000a) discovered that there was a difference between the espoused methods that fieldwork educators said they used in fieldwork supervision, and the actual methods they used. Her research revealed "a range of practices in fieldwork education that can only be described as unsatisfactory...In particular, there were shortcomings reported in both the supervision offered to some students and the agency environment in which students were expected to learn" (Maidment, 2000b, pp. 201-202). Similarly Ellis' research found that students had variable educational experiences on practicum which resulted in "variable opportunities to develop as safe and competent social workers" (Ellis, 1998, pp. 32-33). This raises a major concern, and given that both these studies were undertaken in Aotearoa New Zealand, is especially pertinent. The particular issues these studies raise link back to the issue of the need to prepare fieldwork supervisors, a consideration Ellis (1998) also discusses.

As this section has shown, while there has been some useful research exploring students' experiences of fieldwork supervision, the literature is extremely limited with none located which explored the phenomenon using a phenomenological approach. Although there is literature which researched graduates' and practitioners' experiences as students, as these were not *student* research participants, they have not been included in the review above. Writing in 2005, Doel and Shardlow stated that "despite the growing literature on practice learning, Brodie's (1993) verdict still stands: that we know very little about what actually takes place within the supervision process generally or the practice tutorial (supervision session) specifically" (2005, p. 5). Despite this review of the literature being conducted nearly 20 years after Brodie's 1993 statement, this review has demonstrated that little has changed.

## **Conclusion**

In reviewing the literature, fieldwork education has been shown to originate in an apprenticeship model located in the field, with an eventual move to formalised fieldwork education located within tertiary training institutes. While fieldwork education has changed form over time, it remains clearly located in social work education. In Aotearoa New Zealand the variety, indigeneity, and accessibility of fieldwork education is distinctive, with the social, political and cultural context of particular importance in shaping fieldwork education.

Fieldwork supervision is conceptualised as distinct to staff supervision, as it has a particular focus on the educative function. There is a diversity of forms of fieldwork supervision, strongly influenced by significant factors in the context within which it operates, including globalism, managerialism and the professionalisation of social work. The practice of fieldwork supervision reiterates the place of learning theory in fieldwork supervision, and literature highlights the importance of preparation, the place of relationship, and concepts of 'good' fieldwork supervision. The challenges specific to fieldwork supervision related to the influences of managerialism, accountability requirements, the management of risk, supervisor workload and recognition, and the changing nature of the student population and tertiary context.

It was shown that there is a very limited amount of research exploring students' perspectives of their fieldwork supervision experiences, and that research conducted has mostly focused on specific aspects of fieldwork supervision. Key themes in the literature exploring students' perspectives of their fieldwork supervision experiences highlight the varied experiences of students' fieldwork supervision, the need to clarify expectations of fieldwork supervision, the importance of relationship in mediating experiences and perceptions, and the benefits of preparing fieldwork supervisors. There is limited research exploring what students perceive to be positive fieldwork experiences, and no research located which explored students' understandings from a phenomenological approach.

The issue of fieldwork placement and supervision quality is of particular importance given research demonstrating that experiences students encounter in the formative stages of their professional development have been shown to be extremely influential in

shaping their professional practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Giddings, Vodde, & Cleveland, 2004). Similarly, practices modelled to students can be reproduced by them not only once they become qualified, but when students themselves later become supervisors (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Morrison, 2005; Munson, 2001). This highlights the importance of students experiencing high quality fieldwork education and high quality fieldwork supervision during their training.

In short, this review of the literature has highlighted the need for research to consider a student perspective of fieldwork supervision, exploring the phenomenon of supervision from a qualitative perspective.

# Chapter Three: Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to outline the methodological underpinnings of this research and to explain the resulting methodology. The chapter begins by presenting the rationale for the particular methodological approach used, demonstrating how this was integral to exploring the research questions. The research design, which includes the methods of data collection, ethical considerations and participant recruitment, is also described. This is followed by an overview of how data was organised and explored. The chapter concludes with the researcher's reflections on the research process.

## Research Approach

The aim of this research was to examine the views of social work students regarding their fieldwork supervision experiences, and in seeking to answer the main research question "how do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences", explored three auxiliary questions:

- 1) What are social work students' experiences of fieldwork supervision?
- 2) What do social work students perceive to be positive fieldwork supervision experiences?
- 3) What understandings do social work students form about why they had, or did not have, positive fieldwork supervision experiences?

As the research sought to understand the participants' experiences and the meanings they attached to these experiences, the research aligned with a qualitative research approach; and, more specifically, phenomenology. As simply put by Yegidis and Weinbach "Qualitative research designs seek to understand human experiences from the perspective of those who experience them" (2002, p. 17).

Phenomenology has been described as "the study or description of phenomena"; [where]...a 'phenomenon' is simply anything that appears or presents itself to someone..." (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1992, p. 1). Phenomenology seeks to understand what it is like to have a particular experience (Lee, 2002; van Manen, 1990). In this study the particular experience focused upon is that of being a student participating in fieldwork supervision. In other words the goal of the primary research question is to understand what it is like to be a social work student experiencing fieldwork supervision. The 'reality' of how this is experienced is consequently determined by participants (Kvale, 2007) and accepting participants' reality of fieldwork supervision

and the meanings they attribute to this, places participants in the role of expert (Goodman, 2001; Idour, 1997).

Discovering the participants' reality of fieldwork supervision necessitated an interpretivist approach which emphasises the need to comprehend a phenomenon from the view of the participants (O'Leary, 2010). This approach was applicable in this research due to the focus upon how the particular facet of the social world, that is the fieldwork supervision of social work students, is "interpreted, understood, experienced, and/or produced by individuals...associated with or [who] have knowledge of the situation" (Hay, 2011, p. 91). An interpretivist approach can also be seen to be a good fit with this research as social work itself is interested in the social world (Edmond, Megivern, Williams, Rochman, & Howard, 2006; Thomlison & Corcoran, 2008).

Interviews were determined to be the best method by which to gain understanding of participants' lived experiences of supervision, and have been used to good effect in other studies of supervision (Davys, 2005; Henderson, 2010; Tsui, 2008). Interviews are a useful tool to elicit 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of someone's experiences and thereby gain insight into another's reality. Thick descriptions have been defined as "deep, dense, detailed accounts" (Denzin, 2001, p. 98) which determine a participant's rather than researcher's taken-for-granted meanings. As Munhall emphasises (1994) the purpose of gathering thick descriptions is not to validate the researcher's own beliefs or assumptions (as in a deductive approach) but to hear the other and gain insight into their world, thus connecting the researcher with the world of another (van Manen, 1990).

Emphasising the importance of participants' perceptions of their experiences meant that participants had some influence on the interview format. Semi-structured interviews were used to ensure key questions were asked, and to allow space for participants to share what they wanted. It was not assumed that the research interviews or participant experiences would be uniform. Rather, it was anticipated that the interview format would follow participants' responses in relation to key questions (as detailed below in the section titled 'Data Collection') so that the conversation became a mutual exploration of the participant's lived world (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997).

The stance of emphasising a participant's perspective addressed the issue of who assumed the power of attributing meaning to an experience and what was deemed an 'acceptable' meaning. Power is present in some form in all researchers' reflections and decisions (Fraser, 2009) and where the researcher allows the participant to determine what is shared, the power shifts. Moreover, Fraser (2009) suggests that by acknowledging an individual's perception as their reality where the story teller holds the power to determine its 'truth', and where the 'truth' is a revelation to the teller themselves, this process can be empowering for the teller. In this study participants may have experienced a sense of empowerment resulting from having their perspective (that is, their reality) of their fieldwork supervision experience recognised, particularly in circumstances where participants had felt unheard in previous attempts to have their experiences acknowledged. As Patton (2002) notes, being heard can be an end in itself irrespective of how the data might be used.

In reflecting on the power of revealing previously unknown information or beliefs for Māori participants, Bell (2006) suggests this process can enable participants to exercise choice, thereby restoring rangatiratanga and enhancing wellbeing. While this was not specifically explored with Māori participants in this research, probing around the research questions revealed their growing sense of development as Māori practitioners and what appeared to be a determination to assert their mana and tūrangawaewae as beginning practitioners.

Discovering unanticipated topics, events or stories through the interviewing process reflects the inductive logic which guided this research. Inductive logic allows the research material to lead the research as themes are discovered rather than predetermined (Creswell, 2009). This contrasts with deductive logic which operates from a position of testing research data against pre-formulated hypotheses or suppositions (O'Leary, 2010). Allowing participants to talk to topics they were passionate about in relation to their fieldwork supervision experiences enabled topics to organically arise from the discussion, such as the impact of participants' pre-placement supervision experiences. This allowed narratives to be "collaboratively produced" through dialogue (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nylstrom, 2001, p. 154) and reflects "intersubjectivity" (Heidegger, 2000, cited in Pascal, Johnson, Dore, & Trainor, 2010, p. p. 175). Intersubjectivity "decreases the object-subject divide within the research relationship and acknowledges intersubjective experience as epistemology" (Pascal, et al., 2010, pp. 175-176).

Phenomenology assumes that an individual's understanding and interpretation of an experience is shaped by powerful social forces. This is a constructionist perspective which is based on the premise that "ideas, stories, and narratives that identify individuals and communities are flexible, relational, and co-constructed using multiple viewpoints, different voices, and various approaches to knowledge" (Hair, Shortall, & Oldford, 2013, p. 19). While joint cultural understandings can assist communicating shared meanings, they can equally present communication difficulties as meaning can be inferred rather than verified or new meanings sought (van Manen, 1990).

The process used to counter the potential contamination of a researcher's suppositions on another's meaning is termed 'epoche' (White, 2011). Epoche, a concept conceived by Husserl (1982) is described by Moustakas as "to stay away from or abstain...[to] set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" (1994, p. 85). Moustakas (1994) emphasised the importance of bracketing assumptions in this way to allow the researcher to 'return things to themselves', that is, to present the data without the baggage of the researcher. In this study this meant the researcher needed to 'unpack' participants' intended meaning using clarifying questions and probes, and to consistently employ a reflective practice approach (Redmond, 2004; Schon, 1987; Simpson & Ake, 2010).

The reason for collecting 'data' about other people's experiences is, according to van Manen (1990) in order to 'borrow' both their experience and their reflections "...*because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves* [original emphasis]...to become "in-formed", shaped or enriched by this experience" (p.62). This in-forming is valuable in the context of this research for fieldwork supervisors and social work educators alike, as participants' experiences may prompt reflections on and adaptations to the preparation, process and delivery of fieldwork supervision. In this sense the research may contribute valuable information to the wider social work profession through the transferability (Fook, 2002) of meaning to other students, field educators and social work educators.

The transferability of the data from this research implies that the research may influence the very phenomenon or context which is being researched. Payne (2006) notes that social work as a profession is concerned not only with addressing issues which individuals' experience in their particular context, but significantly to working with the

context itself. This value is reflected in the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2008b). An inductive, qualitative approach can therefore be seen as consistent with social work practice values, and congruent with this study.

### **Data collection**

This section explores the rationale for the data collection method and outlines the development of the semi-structured interview format and questions. Because this research was founded on a qualitative approach seeking detailed descriptions of the phenomena, the method of data collection needed to provide the opportunity for participants to disclose in depth and to reveal information spontaneously. Interviewing allows space and time for participants to talk candidly and permits flexibility and spontaneity. Flexibility can be demonstrated within the format itself, the question order and even inclusion of certain questions (Ritchie, 2003). Flexibility in the interview structure signalled an organic, reflective process based on an inductive qualitative approach because as noted by Munhall, "There is no starting place so to speak. There are many portals of entry and many places to go once the question is asked, or the phenomenon named" (1994, p. 59).

Because interviewing seeks immediate responses, it provides an advantage over written forms of data collection as participants cannot withdraw an answer and replace it with one they deem more appropriate and possibly less valid (Gochros, 2005). Interviews also have the benefit of participants recalling the experience as it was lived, unlike providing written responses which van Manen (1990) suggests are likely to project participants into a reflective mode. Interviewing therefore encapsulates what Dahlberg et al. (2001) suggest is the true meaning of the term 'inter-view', that is, two people exploring the phenomenon together, discovering a concept alongside each other.

Based on the benefits outlined above, and the goodness of fit between the method and the methodological considerations, semi-structured interviews were determined to be the most appropriate data collection method for this study. An interview format was developed which had eight open-ended questions, based around four key themes (Appendix A). These questions drew on the themes highlighted in the literature review (Chapter Two) as well as from the researcher's experience as a social worker, and as an externally contracted fieldwork supervisor. Probes were devised to follow up questions to assist in exploring a participant's response more deeply if deemed necessary by the

researcher (Goodman, 2001). Two pilot interviews were conducted with colleagues prior to interviewing participants. The researcher also made use of a research journal and noted when the question order needed modifying, or where questions appeared repetitive or unnecessary. This resulted in modifications to the question order and the phrasing of some probes, consistent with an inductive, reflexive approach.

The interview commenced with introductions, firstly to the research project (including reviewing participants' consent), then to the researcher, and finally the participant introduced themselves. The first questions explored how fieldwork placements and fieldwork supervisors were arranged and participants' understandings of the purpose of supervision. These ground mapping questions were for the purpose of eliciting contextual details and providing what were anticipated to be 'safe' topics to enable participants to relax into the interview process. They also provided valuable information about the specifics of participants' experiences which could be considered in relation to the other participants.

The next question in the interview structure invited participants to take some time to talk about their fieldwork supervision experiences. This provided space for participants to give the deep, rich descriptions sought about the phenomenon and lead to the next phase of questioning which asked participants to talk about why they thought their experiences occurred as they did. This portion of the interview sought to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. Clarification of participants' meaning and bracketing the researcher's own assumptions was required to gain the depth of understanding sought.

The third part of the planned interview structure (although as already noted, there was flexibility and responsiveness in the structure as guided by the participants) sought participants' perceptions of the overall value they believed that fieldwork supervision provided them. This reflected attempts to uncover (if not already revealed) how participants described their fieldwork supervision experience. Participants were then invited to talk about the influences of fieldwork supervision on their practice, whether retrospectively, or looking forward to their future practice. The final question in the interview asked if there was anything regarding their fieldwork supervision experiences that participants wished to raise that had not already been covered. In closing,

participants were advised about the transcription, consent to release, and research publication processes.

### **Ethical issues**

Given that this research involved human participants, approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) was required prior to the research being conducted (see Appendix B). After some amendments to the initial submission, the project was reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/22 (see Appendices C and D).

As both a social worker and a researcher the practice of the researcher was guided by the ANZASW Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2008b). The research process was also guided by academic, professional and cultural supervision. These processes contributed to the reflexive practice approach incorporated in this research and reflect some of the attempts to remain open to this research process, rather than pre-supposing any research outcomes (Lee, 2009; Simpson & Ake, 2010).

Social research is laden with ethical issues as "...research involves collecting data from people about people" (Punch, 2005, p. 276). The ethical approval process involved ensuring that any potential ethical issues specific to this research were identified and addressed. Issues of particular relevance to this study centred on the confidentiality of participants, their supervisors, placement agencies, and training providers. Internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004) was a larger issue than had been anticipated prior to conducting the research given the specialised nature of some participant's fieldwork placements, and also because of the ethnic backgrounds of some of the participants. It was clear to the researcher that depending on how this information was presented, the confidentiality of certain participants could be jeopardised. These issues were discussed with each participant to ascertain the best way to present information to maintain their confidentiality, and in finalising the interview transcripts, their consent was given to how information was portrayed.

In terms of confidentiality, the MUHEC Code of Ethical Conduct (Massey University, 2010) provides the caveat that no research participant can be guaranteed absolute confidentiality and that researchers must state limitations to this allowed by law. This was outlined in the information sheet for participants, and every effort was made to

maintain confidentiality to reduce the possibility of this occurring. No conflicts of interest were identified in conducting this research.

While some participants in this research are Māori, as is the researcher, this research does not specifically seek Māori knowledge or necessitate a Kaupapa Māori research framework. This meant that the research was not subject to the same guidelines that apply to Kaupapa Māori research conducted in Māori communities (Bishop, 1988). Regardless of this, elements of tikanga were incorporated into the interview format, such as the researcher sharing her mihimihi as part of the process of whakawhanaungatanga, and using widely known Māori phrases with some of the participants. These processes and the inherent values of respect and whanaungatanga assisted the researcher to establish credibility and a degree of comfort for the participant (Durie, 2004). As Bishop (1988) states “if kawa is not observed, then the event is “invalid”. It does not have authority” (p. 211). These processes are integral to bicultural social work practice, and are part of authenticity of the researcher practicing who she is (Palmer, 1998; Simpson & Ake, 2010).

### **Participant recruitment and selection**

Given the scope of study for a Master’s thesis and the qualitative approach employed by this research to explore the phenomena by way of thick descriptions, only a small number of participants were required for this project. Recruitment of research participants was through social work training providers within a specified geographical location. The process of recruiting participants commenced with a phone call to identified training providers and a request that they invite students to participate in the research (see Appendix E). One approach to a training provider did not proceed beyond the initial request as it was indicated that their own internal ethical approval process involved a lengthy waiting period to determine whether the invitation to students could be made or not. Despite numerous phone messages left for another training provider inviting discussion about the project, calls were not returned which meant inclusion of that particular training provider was not pursued any further either. This meant the number of training providers within the identified region that initially agreed to invite student participation was extremely low.

Following an initial low response rate to invitations to participate in the research, a request to approach additional training providers to participate in the research was

made by way of a variation to the Ethical Application. Upon acceptance of this variation by the MUHEC (See Appendix F), the geographical area of training providers was extended and participants were targeted through social work training providers in a larger geographical region. The total number of training providers who invited their students to participate in this research totalled three, which included students from both main islands in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The selection criterion for participants was social work students who had experienced supervision during the course of their training. In selecting participants there was no preference in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other significant characteristics. The selection criterion was that the participants had experienced the phenomenon, were interested in exploring the nature and meanings of the phenomenon, and were willing to participate in a recorded interview as well as give permission for the data to be published.

Pertinent paperwork was mailed to those training providers who agreed to invite their students to participate in the project (see Appendix G). This included an advertisement to be read to students who met the criteria (see Appendix H), and information to distribute to interested students. Several students expressed interest in the research so were given an information sheet (see Appendix I), a consent form (see Appendix J), and a return envelope to forward their consent and contact details to the researcher. This process was used to eliminate the possibility of direct recruitment by the researcher and from what might be seen as influencing or coercing participants.

Upon receipt of interested students' consent and contact details, the researcher made contact to explain the research and to answer any questions interested students had. When the student indicated that they had sufficient information and were happy to proceed, a mutually agreed time was then arranged for the interview to be conducted. The original intention was that between eight and ten participants could be interviewed for the research, however only seven expressions of interest were made. The research project supervisors had previously suggested that six was the minimum number of participants that could be interviewed, so it was agreed that the research proceed with seven participants.

Given the geographical spread of six of the seven participants, the researcher and these participants agreed to conduct the research interview by Skype, that is, video calls over the internet. One participant was able to travel to the researcher's workplace and the interview was conducted in person. All interviews were recorded by dictaphone as the primary data storage method. Two dictaphones were used to allow for the possibility of equipment failure. Field notes were also taken by the researcher as secondary storage and the beginning of explication (Morgan, 1997, cited in Groenewald, 2004).

Field notes were used to record key points raised by participants particularly in instances where participants had experienced numerous supervision relationships. This assisted the researcher in understanding the various relationships and timing of these relationships. Two themes which appeared to play a significant role in the experience of participants' fieldwork supervision early in the data collection process included students' lack of preparation for fieldwork supervision and the impact of pre-existing relationships. The appearance of these themes was helpful to understand the phenomena (Maxwell, 1996, cited Schutt, 2004) and increased the researcher's sensitivity to hearing these themes in others' stories and occasionally to probe other participants about the existence and impact or not of these themes in their experiences. The explication of data section below outlines how data was managed, collated and considered after the interviews had been conducted.

All interviews were transcribed, three by the researcher herself and the remaining four by a professional typist. The professional typist was employed on the basis of her transcription experience and professionalism. She was required to sign a confidentiality form prior to receiving the tapes for transcription (see Appendix K), and to store the audio recordings securely whilst completing the transcription project. Participants were advised of the possibility of their interview being transcribed by a professional typist prior to their interview being conducted, and consented to participate knowing this.

### **Explication of the data**

The deliberate decision to avoid the heading 'data analysis' has been made as the phrase 'analysis' implies a philosophy contrary to that of phenomenology (Hycner, 1999, cited Groenewald, 2004). As Hycner (1999) explains, the term 'analysis' infers a breaking into parts which can result in the phenomenon becoming lost. On the other hand, 'explication' infers an exploration or consideration of the various components of a

phenomenon without losing sense of the whole (cited in Groenewald, 2004). As illustrated by Lunenburg and Irby the task of the qualitative researcher is:

To find patterns within words and observed actions, and to present those patterns for others to inspect while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world of the participants as they originally experienced it. (2008, p. 89)

This process of explication is not a linear one, but rather a process of moving to and from different stages (Spencer, Ritchie, & O'Connor, 2003). This process is depicted by Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003) as a series of platforms between which the researcher moves as necessary. As themes are identified and refined, the researcher needs to return to the raw data to validate a theme, consider suppositions and so forth, so at various points the explication process may resemble circular phases rather than a straight unidirectional line. This demonstrates an on-going iterative process so that "...interpretation and the assignment of meaning take place throughout the [explication]...process" (Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor, 2003, p. 219).

As previously mentioned, research interviews were recorded on dictaphones. All audio recordings were initially transcribed verbatim with the omission of 'um', 'er' and other common speech elements to enhance readability. Prior to the transcription being sent to the relevant participant all obviously identifying information was coded; such as the name of a fieldwork placement being termed 'placement agency 1'. In discussion with the participant, further information which could have been potentially identifying was then either deleted or altered to make it more generic. Feedback on the transcription was sought from participants and in some cases there were several iterations of the transcript before participants were satisfied with the final version. Once participants agreed with the transcription, their consent to release the transcript was obtained before any interview data was used.

When the final edited versions of all the transcriptions were approved by participants (see Appendix L), the more formalised approach to explication commenced. The term 'formalised' is used as attempts to comprehend the data commence from the first interview when significant ideas appear, and the beginnings of themes are revealed (Creswell, 2009). This process is known as 'progressive focussing' which as Schutt (2004) explains is an "iterative and reflexive process" (p. 416) that commences when

data collection commences, not once data collection has ceased, and the researcher modifies the data collection process in response to emergent concepts or themes.

Although the interview format was informed by some themes evident in the literature, consistent with a qualitative inductive approach it was anticipated that themes would be revealed as the study progressed (Patton, 1987; van Manen, 1990). This compelled the researcher to employ an open stance working with and considering the data, and to be prepared to accept whatever themes may appear in relation to fieldwork supervision, rather than being limited by her own presuppositions or by themes identified in the literature.

Scripts were read several times as part of the verification process of transcribing them, during which time the researcher noted key words and phrases to allow the participants' voices to speak to the explication process. Participants' key responses were clustered together under the eight main questions used in the research interview (Groenewald, 2004; Smith & Eatough, 2007). From this information, a number of patterns were identified which were colour-coded and particularly noteworthy passages of text which corresponded to these ideas were also collated (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2005). This entailed careful examination of each script, considering the frequency of the word or phrase and the emphasis placed on it by the participant, which resulted in the amalgamation or elimination of some patterns (Moustakas, 1994). In some instances participants were contacted to clarify elements where meaning was unclear.

After this primary phase, these units of meaning were grouped into themes. This was done by listing the units of meaning to extract the essence of each unit in relation to the phenomenon as a whole (Creswell, 2009; Groenewald, 2004). The essence is "the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced" (Patton, 2002, p. 106) the study of which, van Manen (1990) states is phenomenological research. The process of identifying key concepts, refining them and exploring them by dismantling and then reassembling has been said to be a key part of qualitative research (Schutt, 2004). Some overlap was evident with many of the themes, which is unsurprising given "the nature of human phenomena" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 20). Through this iterative process key themes were distilled as were a number of sub themes.

In seeking to capture the essential quality of a particular theme, van Manen (1990) emphasises the importance of 'free imaginative variation': "*our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is* [original emphasis]....Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?" (p. 107). This was a useful tool in the explication process for determining what constituted a theme from the raw data, considering whether the participants' experience of fieldwork supervision necessitated inclusion of a particular theme, or whether the meaning attributed to the phenomenon existed if that given theme was excluded. As Smith and Eatough explain "A two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved. The participant is trying to make sense of his/her world and the researcher is trying to make sense of how the participant is trying to make sense of his/her world" (2007, p. 37). The researcher was mindful of this, wanting to ensure that participants' voices and meanings were being transmitted, not those of the researcher (Spencer, et al. 2003).

The tertiary and final phase of explication involved each interview being summarised anew and units of meaning highlighted in each summary. These units of meaning were then clustered and themes extracted, and then considered against those previously distilled. This process required searching for themes common to the majority of, if not all, interviews, as well as any individual variations in themes (Hycner, 1999 cited Groenewald, 2004; Spencer, et al. 2003). As Spencer stresses "It is essential that the...ideas and concepts that are developed are rooted within the data, rather than simply superimposed" (Spencer, et al. 2003, p. 210). From this final process, five key groupings of student understandings emerged. These were: understanding purpose and process; participant assertiveness; supervisor experience and skill; relationship and compatibility, and; luck. These are presented in depth in Chapter Four.

### **Reflections on the research process**

In line with the interpretive approach taken for this research, it is fitting to share some of the reflexive processes undertaken by the researcher over the course of this study. This section discusses some of the issues faced during this research and explores how these were managed or addressed.

A considerable challenge with this research was recruiting participants to interview. The selection criteria were limited to current social work students which meant that

participants had to be close to or in their final year of study. It was apparent that this may have been a factor in prospective students' reluctance to participate, as the timing of their final fieldwork course impacted on their willingness to participate, and many of those who did participate wanted to complete the majority of their course requirements before being involved in the study. For some this was because they preferred to have the fieldwork paper completed and assessed prior to their participation, and for others it was a workload/timing issue.

Another aspect of the timing of the interviews was due to the interviews falling late in the year. This resulted in pressure to complete the interviews prior to participants going on summer holiday, or for some participants prior to them moving city to commence employment. This necessitated the interviews being done in relatively quick succession, and meant there was pressure to complete transcriptions quickly to allow the participants' time to reflect on the scripts and complete the editing process and consent to release of the transcript before going away.

Interviewing in quick succession presented benefits as well as challenges. Benefits included the researcher being aware of what had been recently revealed in other interviews and being able to probe around related issues. Challenges included reduced time for the researcher to reflect between interviews and consider alterations to interview content or structure. The timing challenge was addressed by being transparent with participants about the issue, and working with them and their timeframes. In a couple of cases the timeframe could be renegotiated as the period for the research project had to be extended. This allowed participants more time to review transcripts and to consider alterations as they needed.

A significant influence on the research process was the use of video interviews over the internet. There were some audio transmission difficulties using Skype particularly with three of the six Skype interviews. The effect of this was that the interview became stilted at times as questions and/or answers needed to be repeated, sometimes as many as three times. This was quite disruptive to the flow of the interview at different points and was especially trying as at times one person would not be observing any difficulty with the transmission while the other person would be experiencing technical problems. This was particularly noticeable when it came to transcribing the interviews as the dictaphone recorded all the audio interactions, which meant modified answers and

questions to missed communication could be clearly heard. One incident that stands out involved a participant with a strong accent who had made a joke which was unable to be heard by the researcher. When the participant was informed that their comment had not been heard, the participant sounded offended that their accent had made the joke incomprehensible and dismissed it. This made for a slightly awkward moment, and what felt like a temporary negative impact on the positive rapport previously established with the participant.

The challenges of working with a two dimensional (sometimes distorted) image also meant that non-verbal cues may not have always been read accurately. Establishing the relational component of interviewing was therefore more difficult than it perhaps would have been had the interviews been done face-to-face. The researcher's own lack of familiarity with this medium may also have contributed to this, although her level of comfort increased as the interviews progressed. While these issues did not appear to overtly impact on the quality of the interviewing relationship, they made the researcher more aware of the need to depend on other skills, such as articulation and responses made to participants' narratives.

A challenging dynamic with the use of Skype during one interview was where the participant was able to see a live image of the researcher, but the researcher could only see a static image (of an imaginary creature) attached to the Skype holder's account. Despite this, the interview went very well and this situation did not appear to affect either the establishing of rapport, or the participant's willingness to disclose information. This may have been a reflection of one of the advantages of interviewing by Skype which was that because participants were able to be interviewed in their own space (whether work or home) this may have increased the feeling of safety and comfort experienced by participants and therefore possibly their level of openness.

It was the intention to conduct only one interview with each participant, however quite quickly into the interviews it became apparent that it would have been preferable to have two interviews (Creswell, 2009). Most participants had experienced a greater number of types of supervision than had been anticipated, which meant there was a lot of material to uncover in one session which at times appeared draining for participants. In one instance a second interview was conducted as the information was too extensive

to cover in one interview, and both the participant and researcher agreed that further time was necessary to cover the material in sufficient depth.

Having two interviews for all participants would also have allowed space for reflection between the interview times, and in doing so afforded the opportunity of further probing. This would have reduced pressure on the researcher to balance comprehending what was being shared with ensuring that questions were eliciting the thick descriptions sought. This was in part due to the researcher's newness to the phenomenological method, but also possibly to the participants' unfamiliarity with this nature of interviewing. This was evident at times when thick descriptions were sought, but despite numerous attempts to gain detailed accounts, participants responded in brief. The degree of insight into the participants' world was therefore constrained by the participants' ability to disclose their world.

The challenge of having limited time for interviewing and of eliciting detailed descriptions was managed by, at the conclusion of each interview seeking participants' permission to contact them to clarify any points needed. All of the participants consented to this, and some spontaneously made this offer themselves.

A related consideration was that of trustworthiness. This was demonstrated in numerous ways, as discussed below, and through offering something in return (Bryman, 2004) to participants in the form of access to the completed thesis. Throughout the research process the researcher was mindful of the need to represent the participants and their conversations authentically, and particularly of not taking a comment out of context. Munhall (1994) tells of her concern when interviews are interpreted line by line, independent of the context "...away from the individual, away from life and the landscape, away from the horizon and the background" (p. 95) an issue that weighed on the researcher's mind throughout the formal explication process. This was addressed by the process outlined in the explication section earlier, using a process of free imaginative variation and trusting this process to present the information authentically.

In explicating the data, the importance of being open to possibilities and interpretations that presented themselves was wrestled with as the researcher was conscious of credibility (Bryman, 2004). There could be numerous interpretations of the data, so ensuring the research was conducted in line with good practice and the data interpreted

correctly was of utmost importance. Van Manen, referencing the work of Husserl (1982) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests that the phenomenon is what it is, regardless of the viewer's lens. This issue connects to the earlier point regarding the importance of bracketing and the related process of free imaginative variation. It was through this process and genuine efforts to represent the data accurately that the researcher felt comfortable that the explication process presented the data faithfully.

Other reflective questions regarding the research process for the researcher included those of subjectivity and researcher-participant distance. The researcher was careful to communicate questions in a way that would reduce the possibility of different participants having varying interpretations of the same question. At times this required the researcher to rephrase a question to ensure that the participant understood the question as it was intended. Similarly, in trying to ensure credibility and dependability (Bryman, 2004) the researcher attempted to underplay pressure on participants having to answer a question and carefully phrased questions to reduce the likelihood of participants thinking a particular answer was being sought (and consequently altering what they might otherwise have said).

The consideration of relational distance was an issue for the researcher in determining what was an 'acceptable' rapport level in the interviews and how as a researcher one 'should' respond to certain information given by participants (for example, information of a highly personal or upsetting nature). The researcher was mindful of allowing participants space to express what was important to them, and to validate participants' responses (Lee, 2009) whilst not being drawn into responding as a professional supervisor might. Conversely as Sennett notes "The craft [of interviewing] consists in calibrating social distances without making the subject feel like an insect under the microscope" (2003, p. 38). In determining an acceptable social distance, the interviewer needed to ensure that there was sufficient proximity to allow for the establishment of rapport and the ability to create a comfortable environment where the participant could comfortably reveal what they deemed appropriate. That had to be balanced with having adequate distance to avoid an over-identification with the phenomenon or the participant, potentially influencing the research data (Smith, 2006).

In reviewing the literature on issues of 'distance' in the interviewing relationship, there are several ideas as to how to manage this relationship. Yegidis and Weinbach for

example state that: "the relationship between the researcher and those being interviewed may be openly supportive and even therapeutic at times. A lack of detachment on the part of the researcher is believed to facilitate understanding" (2002, p. 17). In resolving this, the researcher sought to balance participant comfort with professional and research ethics.

In summary, these many challenges were addressed to the satisfaction of the researcher who with academic, professional and cultural oversight was confident that the data and the explication of it were completed to a standard which sufficiently addressed the research questions.

## **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the key theoretical foundations upon which this research was based and outlined the methodology consequently employed. It was shown that a qualitative, inductive approach, grounded in a phenomenological perspective was the most appropriate to address the research question. This approach ensured that participants' lived experiences and the understanding they formed about these experiences were heard and acknowledged as reality.

Semi-structured interviews aligned with the methodological approach to gain thick descriptions of the phenomenon. Processes for explication of the data reflected the qualitative, interpretive methodology. Five main themes common to the participants as a group were extracted from the data. Managing issues of trustworthiness was a large consideration throughout the research process, as the researcher sought to conduct credible, transferable and dependable research.

The compatibility between research and professional ethics and practices provided reassurance of the integrity of the process, and therefore of the findings. This chapter has made transparent the research rationale, processes, approach and issues so that the reader can themselves determine its trustworthiness.

The following chapter presents the research results, providing an introduction to the participants and to the processes involved in establishing their practica and appointing supervisors. The chapter reveals the research findings and the themes evident in these

in relation to the research questions. Questions raised by the findings are noted, as the chapter considers what conclusions may be drawn from these.

## Chapter Four: Results

"When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said..."it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more or less" (Carroll, 1980, p. 113).

The aim of this chapter is to present the results from this research. The chapter begins with an introduction to the participants by presenting some of their demographics. An overview is then provided of how the participants' fieldwork placements and supervisors were arranged. The next sections outline participants' preparation for supervision, reflections on their one-to-one supervision experiences, followed by reflections on their non one-to-one supervision experience, and then their overall reflections of their fieldwork supervision experiences. This is followed by an overview of participants' perspectives concerning why their fieldwork supervision experiences eventuated as they did. The chapter closes by considering what conclusions might be drawn and questions raised from the experiences and perceptions of these participants.

### **An introduction to the participants**

The seven participants interviewed for this study lived throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants were grouped in 10 year age bands, and were aged from 20-30 years through to 50-60 years of age. Their ethnicities included: three New Zealand Māori participants whose tribal links included Ngāti Kahungungu ki Heretaunga, Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Taranaki, Ngāti Porou and Ngāi Tahu, two of whom were also of New Zealand European descent; two New Zealanders of European descent and two European participants. Five participants were female and two were male. Four participants were studying towards a Master of Applied Social Work (MSW), and three were studying towards a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). All participants were in their final year of study.

Two of the participants had social work experience prior to commencing their current studies; one for twenty years in statutory social work and the other for a short period in youth work. The participant with 20 years' previous experience had received supervision for approximately five of those 20 years, although emphasised that supervision received during that time was limited to administrative supervision. Two participants had experienced group supervision as a requirement for volunteer roles they had prior to

fieldwork practicum, and another participant had received individual supervision from a social work Lecturer in a prior role she held in a voluntary capacity.

The variety of participants and their particular demographics with the experiences they brought suggested that they came with a wealth of information, contributing varied perspectives to this research. The fact that participants had little or no supervision experience prior to commencing their social work training is significant to this research as it gives their experiences and supervision narratives increased credibility by virtue of participants' authenticity (O'Leary, 2010).

### **Participants' experience of fieldwork supervision**

This section details the technicalities of participants' placement and supervision arrangements, outlining how fields of practice were negotiated and the supervision forms that participants experienced. These arrangements form a significant part of the fieldwork experience and contextualise the fieldwork supervision encounter. Participant experience is then considered in relation to their preparation for supervision; the forms of supervision they experienced; their overall reflections on fieldwork supervision and; the understandings participants formed about their supervision experiences.

#### *The process of formalising a placement*

All participants completed two fieldwork practica as part of their social work qualification. Some participants were of the opinion that they had completed three practica given that they had undertaken voluntary social service experience as a programme requirement. SWRB requirements stipulate that practicum is supervised "...consistent with reasonable expectations of the levels of skill and practice ability of the individual" (SWRB, 2011b section 2). The frequency with which supervision was received for these voluntary experiences could not be deemed sufficient for beginning practitioners and these voluntary experiences were not considered fieldwork placements by the training providers or the SWRB. Rather, the experiences are considered to be work experience in the field rather than in-practice placements. Because this work experience was viewed by these participants as fieldwork and because it provided their first experience of supervision, these experiences have been included in this research although they are clearly identified as pre-fieldwork experience in any reference made to them.

Fieldwork was structured as two block placements for all participants. For undergraduate students this occurred in their final two years of study whereas for the Masters students this occurred in each of their two years equivalent full-time study. Participants' experiences of organising fieldwork placements varied. With the exception of one Master's student, who at the request of one placement agency was required to go through the fieldwork coordinator, students undertaking their Masters degree arranged fieldwork placements themselves: "Basically...my memory is that I set things up for myself pretty much" (Jordan, a Masters student). Training providers supplied Masters students with a range of templates including letters of introduction and supervision contracts. When a placement was agreed to in principle by an agency, fieldwork arrangements were then confirmed by the fieldwork coordinator.

Participants undertaking Bachelor programmes were all required to submit a Curriculum Vitae to their fieldwork coordinator, by whom they were then interviewed. The interview was used to ascertain students' interests, service experience in the community, and preferences for field of practice before placement possibilities were proposed. In some instances input from other teaching staff with a knowledge of the participant and their work was also sought to assist the matching process between student and prospective placement agency.

Having completed their training provider's initial requirements for selection, most participants were interviewed by prospective placement agencies prior to being accepted for a fieldwork placement. The application and approval process was less formal for participants who had had prior involvement with their prospective placement agency. As La Tasha remarked "... [placement agency 1] was at a littler NGO and I knew the people also. That basically was a 'yes' even before I asked; there was no real need to apply for placement because I was already involved." Rangimarie had a similar experience with her first fieldwork placement. Rangimarie was known to a particular organisation and was accepted without question, unlike another student who was not known to the agency and was required to undergo a formal application process.

In most instances placements aligned with the participant's area of interest, although this was not the case for Lachlan's first placement: "I didn't think I really wanted to go there for my first placement, but they were the only one who said yes. So that's how it happened." One of the undergraduate participants, Heeni, was quite clear about her

placement preferences which she specified to her fieldwork coordinator, and which appeared to be very influential in determining where she was placed. While Heeni found that this approach worked well for her, she noted that it was not usual practice for students in her year group to be deliberate about placement agency selection.

The participants were placed across a number of fields of practice, including mental health, youth work, health, and community support. Three participants conducted all of their practicum requirements within the same field of practice, although within different agencies for each of their practicum. Four of the seven participants had previous involvement with one or more of their placement agencies. One student undertook her first pre-fieldwork experience at an organisation where she was consequently accepted to do her final placement as a paid in-post position. Two other participants were also employed by their fieldwork practicum agencies, one participant across two different agencies for their final practicum, and another by their placement agency approximately four weeks into their first practicum.

In summary, participants can be seen to have been placed across numerous areas of practice, generally in fields which aligned with their interest. Overall participants had a large part to play in the selection of their fieldwork placements, although not all were involved in direct negotiation with the agency. Maidment (2001b) notes that the area of placement allocation has not really been explored in the literature although the process of placement allocation is a factor which initially influences the student's perception of their relationship with their field educator.

### *The process of appointing supervisors*

Participants' fieldwork educators were all selected by their placement agency. The size of the placement agency often meant that there was limited choice of suitably qualified or experienced persons. At the time that the participants' practicum were undertaken, the SWRB (2009) requirement regarding fieldwork supervision was that students have at least one practicum with onsite supervision by a Registered Social Worker (RSW). This meant that an external supervisor was available to students in placement agencies where a RSW was not on staff.

There were a variety of ways that external supervisors were appointed. One participant was able to select a supervisor from a list supplied by the training provider who paid for

seven or eight sessions. For participants whose training provider appointed the external supervisor, most were able to have some say into who this person might be. For example, in their final practicum three participants requested a specific person as their external supervisor based on their prior knowledge of the person and their perceived compatibility with the participant. It was evident that in choosing an external supervisor or a cultural supervisor that the main criterion participants used was someone whom they believed would challenge and extend their practice, rather than someone who would 'take it easy' on them. One unusual supervision arrangement experience in a participant's final placement was where they were required by their placement agency to have both a fieldwork educator and an internal supervisor in addition to a third person whom the agency designated to act as a reporting link between the agency and the training provider.

As indicated in Table 4.1 below, all participants experienced a variety of supervision forms, although some experienced only one-to-one supervision. Notably, all participants had supervision with a fieldwork educator in each of their practicums. With the exception of the undergraduate students' pre-fieldwork agency experience, most students experienced two forms of supervision for each of their practicum. The number of supervision relationships each participant experienced across all their practica ranged from three to eight per student.

**Table 4.1 Fieldwork supervision forms by participant and practicum**

	Fieldwork educator	Internal supervisor	External supervisor	Cultural supervisor	Peer supervision	Group supervision
Rangimarie (voluntary)			√ Training provider Lecturer			
Rangimarie I	√		√ Training provider Lecturer	√	√ (fellow students)	
Rangimarie II	√	√			√ (fellow students)	
Heeni (voluntary)						√
Heeni I	√			√		
Heeni II	√		√			√
Rona (voluntary)						√
Rona I	√				√√ (fellow students & in-placement)	
Rona II	√				√ (in-placement)	
La Tasha I	√				√ (Peer Support)	
La Tasha II	√ (2x)				√√(fellow students & placement)	
Jordan I	√		√			
Jordan II	√		√			
Jordan III	√ (2x)		√			
Lachlan I	√					
Lachlan II	√		√			
Nina I	√ (2x)					√
Nina II	√ (2x)					

'(2x)' indicates that participants had 2 different supervisors within the one practicum.

'Peer Support' refers to a peer group support activity approximating peer supervision.

'In-placement' refers to supervision which occurred alongside social workers from that placement agency.

Because fieldwork educators were appointed by the fieldwork agency this was a straightforward process, with choice often dictated by staff numbers. This suggests that while a student and training provider can influence the decision as to the field of practice or the agency in which the practicum is undertaken, with the exception of ensuring supervisors meet SWRB requirements, they have little control over the appointment of the fieldwork educator. Conversely, where an external or cultural supervisor was appointed, to some extent participants and the training provider had a greater influence on selection of this person (while ensuring the external supervisor met SWRB requirements) in part because responsibility for payment of this person rests with the training provider.

### **Fundamentals of supervision**

The areas outlined below cover some of the more procedural aspects of supervision, from the extent of contracting in supervision, to the frequency of, and content covered in the various forms of supervision.

#### *Contracting*

All of the participants had written contracts for at least one of their supervision arrangements. The form most used by participants was supplied by training providers which was at times supplemented by an agency- or supervisor- provided contract. Situations where contracts were not utilised were mostly due to altered supervision arrangements (such as a change in supervisor) and neither student nor supervisors had remembered to complete a new contract. Nina believed that this situation in her final practicum contributed to a lack of shared understandings between her and her acting supervisor. Nina was of the opinion that had she negotiated a supervision contract detailing her expectations, that supervision may have been more formal rather than the general case work discussions which resulted. The link between contracting and developing a strong working alliance in supervision raised by Nina is noted by Scaife (2001). Davys and Beddoe (2010) also signal the importance of contracting in supervision, stating that "the establishment of the supervision relationship begins with the discussion of the contract" (p.63). This clearly suggests that how this aspect of supervision is managed can have significant bearing on the success of the supervision relationship.

### *Frequency*

Individual supervision for participants mostly ran for a period of one, to one and a half hours for every five days worked. This is consistent with the norm for fieldwork supervision noted by Cleak and Wilson (2007). For participants undertaking their fieldwork placement part-time, this was contracted to be proportional although in actuality the frequency tended to be slightly less. In all instances where supervision had to be rescheduled, this was usually due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness or urgent case matters and was generally rescheduled within a few days of the original appointment.

Several participants noted that their fieldwork educator adhered to the supervision contract more loosely than did their external supervisors, with participants having to pursue their fieldwork educator to ensure that supervision took place. Jordan experienced having to pursue his fieldwork educator for supervision as “awkward”. Although Jordan acknowledged his supervisor’s overall ability for supervision he explained:

With my first placement with [placement agency 1] my boss was extremely laissez faire, and for that it was a question of chasing her to sit down and sometimes literally to pin her in a seat and say, “Hey we need to talk about things,” so the supervision which was supposed to be formal and was supposed to be for an hour every week didn’t always happen.

Similarly, Jordan also had to pursue his second fieldwork educator, again despite a formal contract outlining expectations to the contrary. He noted that his supervision frequency and format was probably not what the training provider would have liked, as weekly supervision often did not take place. Rather, supervision was more of an ‘open door’ supervision arrangement with him calling in on his fieldwork educator, identifying an issue and requesting a conversation about it. Jordan was happy with the level of supervision he received in this fieldwork practicum in comparison to both his first fieldwork supervision experience and to his social work supervision prior to training.

Like Jordan, other participants spoke about the need for them to claim supervision time and space in their particular fieldwork agency as there was either not an agency or supervisor culture of providing supervision. La Tasha experienced this at her first placement, and consequently formed the opinion that it was the student’s responsibility

to be assertive and ensure supervision occurs. She was very clear that “you can’t depend on the supervisor to chase you up, you have to do it.” This pattern of determining to be assertive and taking responsibility to actively pursue supervision was reflected in many participants’ narratives as they expressed being unhappy with the frequency or content of their fieldwork supervision.

Despite many participants having to pursue their supervisors to ensure supervision sessions occurred, most participants said that they were happy with the frequency of their individual supervision. The frequency of other types of supervision ranged from monthly to only once during the fieldwork practicum. Neither Jordan nor La Tasha received supervision for one month or more in each of their practicum. La Tasha’s first supervision relationship deteriorated after only five or so weeks into her first fieldwork placement, and it was not until after completion of her placement when she continued at the agency in a voluntary capacity that she had external supervision and addressed the issues which had led to the supervision relationship breakdown. The training provider did not appear to be aware of this.

### *Content*

Supervision was used by participants and their supervisors to address a wide variety of issues including issues of culture, ethical issues, linking theory and practice, tracing progress with fieldwork learning objectives and self-care. It appeared that a broad range of issues were addressed in supervision with fieldwork educators with a strong case work focus, whereas supervision with external supervisors tended to concentrate more on making theory and practice links associated with meeting fieldwork learning objectives. This may reflect a role differentiation prompted by the expectations of internal and external supervisors required by training providers, but as this was not explored in the research it is not possible to add further comment.

For Jordan, there was an on-going struggle to link his management-focused fieldwork practice with casework-based learning objectives prescribed by the training provider: “It’s actually bloody difficult to integrate your theory into your practice! Even with an experienced supervisor who has management skills it’s still been a challenge for both of us to think about ‘How do we do this?’.” He explained that some of the difficulty of using casework examples to relate to management work was that this process required high levels of abstraction to show applicability. From his perspective, while he and his

supervisor made some progress with this, the challenge of making his work fit the learning objectives was never fully resolved.

Another example of content covered in supervision was Rangimarie's sessions with her cultural supervisor. These sessions included cultural and practical skill development such as learning karakia, developing confidence in reciting her mihimihi, extending her understanding of bicultural practice models, and consolidating her practice framework. Heeni also spoke about the cultural growth she experienced through cultural supervision/development she had on her first placement with both the kaumatua and her fieldwork supervisor.

Generally participants felt that they determined the agenda for supervision, although this was not true of Heeni's first supervision experience nor of Rangimarie's internal supervision in her final placement. Three participants' supervisors used a set format for supervision sessions which meant that to some extent the format determined the content. Two of these predetermined formats were agency developed layouts and the other was of unknown origin. These covered the content areas indicated at the beginning of this section, but provided a structured format by which to discuss issues. Lachlan commented that he found the agency-developed format used by his first supervisor unhelpfully rigid, and he thought the prescribed format made the supervision process less natural than he would have liked.

Both La Tasha and Lachlan found supervision useful for linking fieldwork learning goals and case work. La Tasha talked about this being a useful tool to aid reflection although she did not elaborate on how. She did however state that having a forum where she could relate her practice to her theory and discover connections between her learning goals and her casework stimulated her reflective practice.

In the process of determining what supervision was for and gaining an understanding of the types of issues they could raise in supervision, a few participants talked about feeling restricted in the kinds of issues they could raise. This restriction was partly because students were mindful that their fieldwork practicum was assessed. Rangimarie spoke about "the fear of failing the placement" if she said or did the 'wrong' thing. As a result she lacked the confidence to raise issues for fear of the consequences in relation to the assessment of her placement. Jordan was also acutely aware of the performance

appraisal aspect of supervision, hugely influenced by his pre-fieldwork supervision experiences.

For Rangimarie her reluctance to raise issues or determine supervision content in her final placement was in part due to her unhappiness with her internal supervisor's understanding of supervision. (Rangimarie had both a fieldwork educator and internal supervisor for that practicum). She felt that her supervisor's limited understanding of supervision negatively influenced his perception of the issues she raised, which meant she became less inclined to raise issues. She gave an example of what she felt was normal reflective practice which was misconstrued by her supervisor:

One comment that I did get back was about I had perfectionist issues...it came up in supervision that sometimes I might get feedback, but it wouldn't be the right feedback for me, so I'd keep questioning it and it was more around my own practice and whether I was...doing the right thing, or practicing appropriately and whether my interventions were correct and whether I could improve my interventions...well how else am I supposed to learn!

In reviewing this section, contracting was widely used, mainly using prescribed training provider forms in the first practicum and then with supervisees leading a negotiation of the contract for their second placement. Participants demonstrated a stronger sense of agency in their second fieldwork supervision relationship, as their initial unsatisfactory supervision experiences propelled them to be clearer about their expectations and insist on the delivery of these in their final fieldwork supervision relationship. This same growth was evident in the study done by O'Donoghue (2012) exploring supervision histories of practitioners. This does raise questions about the role of contracting in establishing the supervision relationship, and in clarifying supervision's purpose and process.

Many participants struggled to receive supervision at the contracted frequency, particularly on their first placement although they were slow to advise their training provider of this. This pattern of participants' seeming acceptance of supervision which does not meet their expectations raises questions about whether this is indicative of participants' somewhat reactive approach to their learning and the role of supervision in

their learning. Alternatively, this response may link to participants' development as supervisees, or of perhaps their not wanting to 'cause trouble'.

Supervision content, as alluded to above, was largely determined by participants themselves, and issues were wide-ranging with some distinction between matters raised with fieldwork educators and those raised with external supervisors. Supervision for the two participants who had cultural supervision included bi-cultural skill development and a strengthening of their cultural identity. Some participants experienced challenges related to aligning fieldwork practice with course prescribed learning intentions while others' consciousness of the assessment component of practicum affected their choice of issues raised in supervision. Differences in content raised by the different supervisors and supervisees could relate to differences in training provider prescribed roles, or supervisor knowledge, skill or personality.

### **Preparation for supervision**

Several participants spoke about their initial lack of knowledge about what supervision was or how to use it. Nina, a Master's student, recalled "I didn't really have a really good understanding of what supervision was before I started my first placement". She talked about sometimes finding supervision a bit intimidating and feeling unsure of whether or not she was saying the 'right' things and whether supervision was progressing how it was 'supposed' to. This uncertainty was echoed by Heeni, a BSW student, who felt frustrated not only with not knowing what her supervisor expected of her, but also frustrated with not knowing what she expected herself:

I didn't really have a strong grasp of what supervision was and how best to use that relationship...I guess frustration was a big element of it for both parties. For me it was frustrating because I didn't understand what it was that she wanted from me. And in the same instance I didn't understand...it was frustrating for me because I didn't know what I wanted as well.

Heeni viewed the struggle to understand supervision as a 'hassle' as she perceived this to be an obstacle which hindered her from 'getting on' with practice.

According to both Heeni and Rangimarie this lack of understanding about supervision was also experienced by other students. Rangimarie remarked:

I don't think any of the students realise what supervision is and what they can get out of it, and that's something that we don't really discuss whilst

we're doing the [course]. Yeah it's not something that's really talked about until you get to that [Post-Practicum Debrief].

Rangimarie believed that this uncertainty was shared by her colleagues in one placement as they demonstrated a lack of understanding of the benefits of supervision, something she was surprised by given her own initial experiences of positive supervision.

Nearly all of the participants spoke about having received some teaching about fieldwork supervision prior to going out on placement, but they all mentioned that only a very short time was allocated to this teaching. Some participants recalled having received a small amount of teaching on the process of contracting in supervision, but for La Tasha her memory of preparation was of being referred to literature on supervision. Two other participants were unable to recall any teaching on supervision, but assumed they must have received it given the importance they perceived supervision has to practice.

In commenting on what she believed to be minimal teaching on supervision, Heeni reflected that given her class had not commenced practicum at the time they received this information, that it was hard to comprehend, and the lack of experience meant the information was abstract and theoretical rather than grounded in practice understanding. It was not until Heeni experienced supervision in practice that she began to understand more clearly the concept of supervision and its application more clearly. Like Heeni, Lachlan attributed some of the difficulty he had in understanding supervision to the newness of the experience and having nothing to compare it to. For him this was exacerbated by what he felt as his isolation as a distance student with no local students to compare experiences with. Nina also talked about the newness of the supervision experience and her initial inability to anchor it to anything familiar to her:

I guess initially with the first placement it was just – 'what is this supervision?' and you know 'what's it for?' and 'what are we actually supposed to be doing here?' And that took a while for me to kind of get the hang of it...never having experienced that kind of supervision before...initially it was a bit challenging, the...learning part.

As participants progressed through their practicums, their understanding and expectations of fieldwork supervision grew. For example, Heeni was clear that despite a

first less-than-ideal supervision experience, that she was able to build on that experience and be clear of what she needed for her subsequent fieldwork supervision:

It was much easier for me to go into those relationships and define what it is, and what I want from those relationships having gone through the third year placement and having that being such a mess. It was a lot easier for me...to define in my head (and for my supervisors)...what it is that I need and want...And it's also been a good experience for me to understand personally how I relate to supervision and what I find beneficial in a supervisor.

While participants talked about building on their unsatisfactory fieldwork supervision experiences and over time forming an understanding of the purpose of supervision and how they could best use it, Nina emphasised the role of the training providers in better preparing students to use supervision. "I think [the training provider] could maybe spend a little more time preparing people for supervision. I don't know whether it was just me, whether I was just asleep that day or something, but I didn't feel like I was that prepared". Nina's comment captures the essence of many of the participants' feelings about their readiness for supervision. The need for adequate preparation for fieldwork voiced by the participants corresponds to the findings of both Gelman (2004) and Kanno and Koeske (2010) which revealed that students' anxiety decreased in proportion to the level of preparation for fieldwork they received.

### **Reflections on one-to-one fieldwork supervision experiences**

Participants' experiences of fieldwork supervision varied from those who had solely positive one-to-one encounters, to those whose experiences included difficult supervision with strained relationships. Lachlan was one of the participants who had very positive fieldwork supervision experiences. He described his fieldwork supervisor as "...helpful and encouraging...super friendly...warm...collaborative...useful and helpful [providing the] sense at the end of the session that you got what you were hoping for." Similarly both Rona's one-to-one supervision experiences were positive and she recalled them as "supportive, challenging, open, [and] reflective." In contrast to these affirming experiences, Rangimarie experienced supervision with one supervisor as "long and drawn out...[as if] it's there, but it's not."

Although some participants had experiences of unsatisfactory fieldwork supervision, all participants had at least one positive experience of supervision. Heeni for example described another of her supervision arrangements as “fantastic” and Rangimarie described two of her supervisors as “very knowledgeable, very experienced” and who, importantly for her, she believed evidenced the skills to assist her to improve her practice.

Despite receiving unsatisfactory supervision in her first fieldwork supervision experience Heeni reflected on what she had gained from that experience. She described her first experience and her sense of regret of what supervision could have been:

I will be honest it was horrible at first and it grew better over time as I kind of gained an understanding of supervision and how I could best utilise it and how my field educator liked to run supervision and stuff...It wasn't an ideal relationship for me...it sounds horrible to say it, to kind of describe it that way because I did get a lot out of it in the finish. It's just there was potential for me to learn so much more and I kind of regret that I didn't...either that a) I didn't take charge of the sessions more, and b) I didn't have a very good grasp of what supervision was and what I wanted from it so, there was a lot of potential for it to get better, but it was mostly just tolerable.

In appraising the quality of supervision he received, Lachlan cited the extremely unsatisfactory workplace supervision experiences he had between his two fieldwork supervision encounters as useful comparisons. For him those negative workplace experiences emphasised the value of the fieldwork supervision he had experienced: “I mean it's kind of easier to explain because you have experienced other kinds of supervision too...because you can only know really what something's like if it's kind of compared to something else.”

Jordan had great difficulty in assessing his fieldwork supervision experiences, in part due to the extensive unsatisfactory experience of supervision he had prior to undergoing his social work training. Jordan's previous experiences highlighted the tension he experienced in supervision being used for measuring performance, a pressure repeated by virtue of being a student on practicum. For him, this contributed to his lack of clarity about what he could reasonably expect from supervision.

With the exception of Jordan who changed placements part-way through practicum and consequently needed a supervisor for his new fieldwork agency, the provision of alternative supervision arrangements were driven by supervisor circumstances rather than student need. Examples included previously unscheduled supervisor absence from the workplace, the resignation of a supervisor, and the opportunity to undertake supervision as professional development. The supervision model experienced by Nina in her first practicum reflects a co-supervision model, a model strongly endorsed by Coulton and Krimmer (2005).

Other one-to-one supervision experiences include cultural supervision which Rangimarie and Heeni both had for one of their practicum. Rangimarie requested cultural supervision for her first placement so was pleased to be able to engage someone familiar to her from the list of training provider-approved supervisors. Heeni had access to a kaumatua for cultural support at her first fieldwork placement, although she and the kaumatua did not meet regularly. Because Heeni was still grappling with what supervision was and how best to use it in her first placement, her cultural supervision was an evolutionary process as she developed her understanding of what she needed and determined what the kaumatua could provide. She recalls: "It was more just for me like the experience of working alongside him and talking to him, it was just about cultural development is kind of what I labelled it in the end. Which I guess is supervision..." Cultural supervision was also part of supervision with her Māori fieldwork educator in the Kaupapa Māori organisation where she completed that particular fieldwork placement, but because of a relationship breakdown with that supervisor, supervision tapered off over time.

Participants had limited experience of cultural supervision. Jordan for example was provided cultural supervision as part of his one-to-one supervision with his fieldwork educator in his first placement, and he had access to Māori staff for cultural supervision in both his other placement agencies. While Jordan did not access any of these personnel specifically for cultural supervision, his first placement was in a small town where he had been for a long time, and where he had excellent networks in the Māori community. Because of this, Jordan felt that the strength of his existing networks allowed him access to appropriate people for cultural guidance if needed.

Overall, participants' views about Kaupapa Māori and cultural supervision highlighted questions of what might constitute 'cultural supervision'. In seeking to understand participants' use of the term 'cultural supervision' it was apparent that the term was widely used yet varyingly understood. 'Cultural supervision' as referred to by the participants might relate to: situations where participants specifically sought advice and guidance on a cultural matter; discussing an issue relating to a Māori client (whether the supervisor was Māori or non-Māori); or the development of the participant's own bicultural practice skills. Limited probing around these questions demonstrated how differently these forms of supervision were understood or utilised, and raised the question of whether or not these various elements represent 'cultural supervision' as defined in the literature (O'Donoghue, 2010; Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004b).

In summary, participants indicated a range of satisfaction levels from their one-to-one supervision experiences, although over time the experiences allowed participants to grasp the purpose and process of supervision more clearly, thereby shaping the participants' future expectations of supervision. This finding corresponds to O'Donoghue's (2012) study of the impact of supervision histories on supervisees' expectations and behaviour. There was a perceived difference between the supervision content with fieldwork educators compared to external supervisors.

Cultural supervision (in one case externally provided and in the other case internally provided) was provided for two Māori students at their request. It was also available for a non-Māori student although he did not define the consultation he sought regarding Māori clients as cultural supervision. The various understandings of what constitutes cultural supervision prompts questions about how cultural supervision is understood by both students and by supervisors, and how it is accessed and resourced in fieldwork placements.

### **Reflections on non-one-to-one fieldwork supervision experiences**

As Table 4.1 (see p.59) shows, it was usual for participants to experience other forms of supervision alongside individual supervision. Peer supervision and group supervision were both utilised by participants, with two of the four group supervision experiences occurring during participants' pre-placement volunteer experience.

Peer and group supervision were generally viewed by the three participants who had experienced them as very worthwhile. Rangimarie was involved in peer supervision with fellow students in both her fieldwork placements, and while the sessions were structured quite differently from each other she described them both as “fantastic”. Nina on the other hand had the opportunity (albeit briefly) to participate in two different styles of group supervision in one practicum as well as a form of peer supervision in her other practicum. One group Nina attended was used mainly for addressing team dynamics with an occasional case consult, whereas the other was used mainly for case consults and discussions. While Rona’s experiences of peer supervision all occurred with other students or practicum colleagues, La Tasha experienced an informal ‘peer support’ group with local social workers. These instances show a range of formats for group and peer supervision experienced by participants. The range of participants’ understanding of and access to peer supervision or peer support is consistent with literature on the varying nature and utilisation of these forms of support in Aotearoa New Zealand (Dela Ruelle, 2011).

Across the participants’ experiences of non-one-to-one supervision types, participants were mostly satisfied with their experience and the majority of participants stated that they would have found it beneficial to meet more frequently in these various supervision forums. There was variation in definitions of peer supervision, peer support, and group supervision but this did not detract from participants valuing these experiences. It is worthwhile to note that peer supervision does not meet either training provider or SWRB requirements for supervision in fieldwork placements and consequently cannot be the only form of supervision received by students on fieldwork. The data shows that the range of supervision types encountered by participants mirrors the plurality of supervision types available in post-qualifying supervision (O’Donoghue & Tsui, 2011). Comments made by participants about these supervision types contrast with the results of Zeira and Schiff (2009) who found that students receiving group supervision tended to be less satisfied than those receiving one-to-one supervision, although their study looked at students experiencing one form or another, not both as in this study.

### **Overall reflections on fieldwork supervision experiences**

While participants’ descriptions reflected a shared understanding of the purpose of supervision, it is worth highlighting that these thoughts were articulated by participants at the conclusion of their fieldwork supervision experience. As discussed earlier, all

participants to some extent were unclear of what supervision was and how to use it at the outset of fieldwork. Having experienced fieldwork supervision, it was seen by all participants as essential for both social work students and graduates. La Tasha typified participants' views stating "it's very important, and not even for trainees but for social workers full stop".

### *Defining supervision*

Most participants described supervision as a forum for safe practice, accountability, professional development, practitioner wellbeing, learning, reflective practice, or for obtaining a second opinion. Some participants noted their appreciation of being challenged within the safety of supervision. Rona for example made the comment that "it was really valuable, because it challenges me and I like to be challenged" and La Tasha was clear that the role of the supervisor was that of assisting the supervisee to improve their practice.

As part of extending their practice, several participants referred to the important role fieldwork supervision played in providing them feedback, and particularly in validating their practice. Nina illustrated this, saying "I think it's really important to...in the same way that you would do with a client, you know is to sort of recognise people's strengths and resources and work with them on those." Both Nina and Heeni spoke about the importance of also using supervision as an appropriate forum to offer feedback about the placement agency to the supervisor.

Most participants described supervision as a reflection-enabling process, an aspect of supervision that participants enjoyed and valued. Nina stated that "I found it really supportive and just really helpful in terms of being able to...reflect on my practice" whereas Rona talked about it being a process that helped her to understand her practice in a new way. Correspondingly all participants noted the increased practice competence that they experienced as a result of fieldwork supervision, and many spoke of intending to pursue this aspect of supervision once they had graduated.

In reflecting on his fieldwork supervision experience, Jordan contemplated how he had modified his expectations of supervision as a result of his fieldwork experience:

I like things to be quite clear cut and precisely defined and supervision is a lot messier than that because it's two people in a relationship...I think that

the major shift I've made has probably been to give up the ideal of what supervision should be...It's like supervision is what it is, it's what you bring to it, the skills that your supervisor brings and jointly what you make of it and the recognition that my supervisor's not going to wave a magic wand and suddenly, I will be all empathetic and wise and whatever. That's not gonna happen; but between us we can grow the wisdom, and we can grow the competence and the practice.

Participants discussed the perceived benefits to them and their practice as a result of participating in supervision and most recognised that their clients, supervisors and the placement agency also benefitted from their supervision. One participant suggested that the social work profession as a whole benefitted from social workers receiving supervision. The exception to this was where the experience of fieldwork supervision had been unsatisfactory, as in Heeni's example of her first fieldwork supervision, which she stated did not really benefit anyone at all.

Participants' reflections on their supervision experience included reflections on the role of their training provider. While participants' expectations of how supervision could be monitored by the training provider varied, a few participants emphasised the need for increased contact initiated by the training provider. It was noted that the participants who raised this tended to be the students who experienced significant difficulties in their supervision situations. Related to this, Nina queried whether the baseline expectations held by training providers for fieldwork supervisor's experience is adequate:

[The training provider]'s only expectation of the supervisor is that they are a qualified social worker and they've had two years of practice, which isn't a lot really, actually. And I think you will learn more from having a more experienced supervisor, and I mean maybe that's something that [training provider] should sort of think about a bit more.

Nina acknowledged that by insisting fieldwork supervisors have more experience to qualify for the role may result in a reduction of the number of either fieldwork placements or supervisors, and this may be why the current requirements exist. She talked about the value of external supervisors, stating "I guess there is a big cost involved in having external supervisors, but I think that a lot of students would benefit more if they had them, learn a lot more." Her perspective was that external supervisors

are more professional and more challenging than internal supervisors because of the distance between them and the supervisee and because the external supervisor does not supervise the student's work on a day to day basis. Nina's perspective corresponds with a finding by Itzhaky (2001) which also revealed supervisee preference for external supervision given their distance from organisational pressures and bias. Nina also saw an external supervisor as advantageous in helping resolve agency-based issues, questioning how a supervisee might resolve a situation where the issues concerned the internal supervisor/team leader themselves.

Other participants shared Nina's view about the value of external supervisors. Rangimarie for example talked about what she experienced as restrictions on her ability to disclose information in her supervision relationship with her internal supervisor given that he was in-house, rather than external. Speaking of his external supervisor, Lachlan experienced a freedom to discuss issues:

She would challenge me more about what was happening at the organisation because she could be more critical of it perhaps, because she wasn't in it. So she would say, 'Why are they doing that, that way?', and you know, 'Do you think that's a good way of doing that?'

In summary, participants' reflections of their supervision experiences evidenced a strong belief in the importance of supervision to practice. Participants spoke of the benefits of supervision, not only for them and their practice, but for their clients, supervisors, fieldwork agency and beyond. While limitations to supervision were noted, there was a consensus that supervision and professional development are career long endeavours. The value of external supervision over in-house supervision was identified by many, while those who had unsatisfactory supervision experiences emphasised their preference for increased training provider-initiated contact and/or monitoring.

### **Understandings participants formed about their supervision experiences**

This section details the key ideas revealed by participant stories about their understandings of their supervision experiences. The five key understandings which emerged from the interview data highlight participant views of the importance of: understanding supervision's purpose and process; participant assertiveness; supervisor experience and skill; relationship and compatibility; and luck. Presented in the order of

importance indicated by participant stories, each of these understandings is now considered in turn.

### *Understanding purpose and process*

As the earlier section on preparation for supervision clearly showed, at the outset of fieldwork all participants struggled with understanding what supervision was and how they could best utilise it to fulfil their learning needs. Participants' narratives as to why their experiences occurred as they did reflected a strong theme of this inability to realise, articulate or assert their supervision expectations. Participants formed the perception that their supervision experiences were a result of a knowledge deficit on their part. Although all of the participants felt insufficiently prepared by their training provider, many of them also intimated that they themselves felt responsible for their insufficient knowledge.

The lack of understanding about supervision meant that participants initially had no standard against which to measure their experience to know whether what happened for them was typical or acceptable. This left students feeling unable to challenge what many of them felt was unsatisfactory. Despite being generally aware of the principles of conflict resolution, the majority of participants were unclear whether or not there was a formal process in place for this. Both Rona and Heeni outlined a disputes resolution process which they assumed would be the process for dealing with such matters, but were not clear whether this was in fact the official process. Participants suggested they would refer to their training provider as a point of contact in such instances, citing that they would contact their fieldwork coordinator should they have concerns. Despite this, participants who had unsatisfactory supervision experiences tended to deal with the matter themselves and advise their institution through scheduled reports some weeks later. Conversely, some participants took action such as reducing the frequency of supervision or, as in La Tasha's case in her first practicum, to cease supervision altogether. This suggests a lack of understanding of purpose and process in relation to resolving conflict and raises questions about the reasons students waited to respond to the issues and why they did not raise the issues with their training provider either at all or for some time.

### *Participant assertiveness*

Participants' stories revealed that their assertiveness to raise unmet supervision needs grew over time, as was evidenced in successive practicums. Many participants formed a similar understanding to Nina who stated that as a supervisee "you need to take an active approach, and you need to...be proactive about what it is that you are wanting to get from supervision [to]...be quite clear about what that is." Many participants developed the belief that they needed to actively seek supervision, and that it was reasonable that this be an expectation upon them. Their narratives suggest that once they realised this, and were confident to pursue their expectations, that this made a significant difference to the outcome of supervision. This belief and corresponding action by participants indicates a level of ownership that participants adopted for knowing about and insisting on the fundamentals of supervision.

For some of the participants, the belief that the responsibility for ensuring their supervision expectations were met rested with them resulted in them carefully specifying their supervision requirements in their subsequent supervision contract. Heeni spoke about the difference it made for her second practicum having clear and agreed upon supervision expectations and understandings from the outset:

I think one of the things I really did appreciate was from the very beginning that we did lay out the expectations for supervision...my understanding was very limited of supervision, so we got a chance to grow my understanding first before actually beginning a proper supervision relationship, which yeah was a lot better for me to grasp and understand and work with and utilise supervision better in the future.

As these stories reveal, participants thought that their uncertainty about what to expect of supervision contributed to them not getting what they otherwise would have received – that knowing what to expect, they could then hold their supervisors to account.

### *Supervisor experience and skill*

The majority of participants who had beneficial fieldwork supervision experiences attributed this to having an experienced and skilled supervisor, whereas participants who were unhappy about their fieldwork supervision cited poor supervisor skill and/or preparation. In referring to one of her supervisors, Rangimarie succinctly stated "I just think they didn't really understand what supervision was."

Nina observed a difference in the approach and usefulness of supervision she received from the two fieldwork supervisors she had in her first placement (one for each half of the practicum) in comparison to that of her last fieldwork supervisor. For her, this difference was attributable to the supervisors' training and prior experience, as she explains:

I think partly it's the experience of the supervisors, because I think the ones at [placement agency1] had not supervised students before definitely and I don't know if they had supervised other social workers...so that was a new thing for them. Whereas with [supervisor 3] she supervised a whole lot of people all the time...she supervised social workers and...quite a few students in the past as well. So she was quite experienced...I think they [at placement agency1] relied a bit more on being a bit more formal because...they were practising their supervision skills, whereas that wasn't really an issue for her [supervisor 3].

Like Nina, Rangimarie also questioned the training of one of her supervisors as she believed this had a significant impact on her supervision experience. Rangimarie felt that her internal supervisor simply did not have the tools to guide her reflective practice as he spent a large portion of the supervision session talking rather than allowing her space to talk or reflect. She spoke about her frustrating supervision experiences with that particular supervisor who also evidenced little skill in maintaining confidentiality or working effectively in the practice area. Rangimarie's experience with her internal supervisor is consistent with the research of Itzhaky (2001) whose work showed that confidentiality was better maintained between supervisees and external supervisor, rather than supervisee and internal supervisor.

A supervisor's skill and experience in managing power was also a factor which had an impact on supervision. While effectively managing power is a factor in establishing and maintaining relationships, there is skill in being able to do so. For some participants this was perceived as being regarded by their supervisors as colleagues rather than students, which was something they valued. La Tasha for example, spoke about her supervisor's ability to consider her perspective, and whilst having a different perspective to La Tasha, was still open to experimenting with her perspective in addressing a practice issue. La Tasha appreciated her supervisor's approach which she viewed as being treated by her supervisor as a peer.

Several participants also talked about the skill of their supervisor being able to question them in a way that they experienced as challenging, yet supportive. This skill was perceived by participants as an important factor impacting how they experienced supervision. Significantly, a number of participants talked about wanting to be challenged, as they were keen to extend themselves and their practice. For these students, their supervisor's skill in being able to grow the participant's practice was essential to the success of fieldwork.

Another interesting aspect of supervisor skill which was seen by Lachlan as significant to shaping his experience of fieldwork supervision was supervisor authenticity. Lachlan mentioned this regarding a supervisor's ability to work within pre-determined supervision formats in a way that maintained their personality and authenticity. His experience was that the rigidity of the formats his first supervisor used detracted from their ability to engage naturally. Rather than a process which he experienced as overly structured and dictated, Lachlan's preference was for a "more organic" process. Lachlan believed that engagement was essential in the supervision relationship and process, but that if not managed skilfully engagement in the supervision experience could actually be hindered by the processes intended to enhance practice.

An interesting understanding participants formed about their supervision experiences was the skill of responsiveness of the supervisors. Rona stated that for her the informality of the supervision process made it a comfortable environment for her to assert herself and her needs; it gave her the freedom "to walk in and say this is what I need to talk about today." It is possible that this responsiveness to informality may link with learning preferences; that the way Rona best processes information is on an immediate, as-required basis. The flexibility of having supervision available with an 'open-door' approach was however noted by a few participants as working well for them and integral to the success of their supervision experience.

Another related aspect concerned the flexibility of the supervision setting. Some participants talked about the venue contributing to the supervision atmosphere, either positively or negatively. Rona talked about feeling "comfortable" in supervision, and further identified the environment as significant. She and her supervisor would sometimes alter the supervision venue and meet in a coffee shop or at the beach. In

considering alternate venues she and her supervisor were conscious of confidentiality and did not meet anywhere that this would be compromised. Heeni also noted the impact of feeling unrestricted when taking supervision outside of the workplace, a significant factor in her successful supervision experiences as she explains:

I think just for me it's nice to be out of the working environment and it's easier for me to disconnect with...the fact that I'm within the organisation I should hold my tongue. I'm in another space...a whole new level of free. Free and open.

For others, the supervision venue presented a challenge. Rangimarie's cultural supervisor often had whanau members in and out of her home where they met for supervision which Rangimarie found distracting. This issue was eventually resolved by Rangimarie requesting that they meet elsewhere in a venue which was free of interruptions. A couple of other participants experienced an agency culture of supervision not being valued which they identified as contributing to an unsatisfactory supervision experience. La Tasha for example recalled one instance where supervision was scheduled but her fieldwork educator told her to "hop in the car", and although another colleague was present, the fieldwork educator began supervision as they travelled.

### *Relationship and Compatibility*

Participants all spoke of having had at least one positive supervision relationship during fieldwork, and for some participants all their fieldwork supervision relationships were positive. The ease of forming a relationship with a supervisor seemed to be a shared factor resulting in a positive supervision relationship for a number of participants.

Participants varied in their explanations as to why they experienced positive supervision relationships. Rangimarie described two of her supervisors as "very strong and very relaxed and ... easy to talk to". She attributed this to knowing those particular supervisors previously and having a shared Māori world view. Lachlan similarly described his supervisors as "really friendly people that were good listeners and...were good at engagement."

La Tasha had a different explanation for why she felt quite engaged with the process of supervision. She found both her supervisors in her final placement responsive and easy

to communicate with, which La Tasha believed was because she actively sought feedback about her practice. Heeni believed that the positive relationships that she had in group supervision resulted from the benefit and enjoyment she got out of the group discussions along with the supervisor's facilitation ability. Interestingly in one instance Heeni expressed frustration at wanting to get on with her work in the field, rather than take time to establish a relationship and form a shared understanding in supervision.

Jordan made an observation that his supervision relationships were different from each other. He attributed this to "the length of the relationship from...starting work and also in the formality of the contracts." Jordan took responsibility for his role in the lack of success in these relationships citing the fact that his tendency to withhold personal information concerning his long term health issues had presented an obstacle to meaningful connection. Jordan discovered that as he increased self-disclosure over time, that he experienced more understanding and support from his supervisors, which in turn strengthened the supervision relationship. He commented "the more open I am the more likely I am to benefit from supervision...hiding stuff just takes a heap of energy and doesn't assist."

For some participants there was a connection between a positive supervision relationship and the sharing of power. In one of his practicum, Jordan was supervised by someone new to the supervisor role who he felt shared power equitably. He stated: "The fact that we were learning roles together meant it was a less hierarchical relationship, it was a much more even relationship, I think I'm much more comfortable with that." Nina was also supervised by people new to the role of supervisor in her first placement however her experience was that power was poorly managed. She felt that her supervisors adopted a critiquing stance, which she experienced as power being wielded over her. These experiences illustrate that how power is managed in supervision does impact the supervision relationship. This raises questions of what training fieldwork supervisors receive about managing supervisory power, particularly given the additional dynamics in fieldwork supervision, and whether this is specifically included in supervision contracts.

For Heeni, the power dynamic in supervision was related to cultural authority. As was indicated earlier Heeni experienced her first supervision relationship as not very

constructive. She believed this was due not only to unclear expectations and understandings of supervision, but also to a cultural dynamic:

I'll be honest and say she intimidated me at first, just because she presents herself as being quite...what I would describe as mana wahine, so like quite firm, quite intelligent, very strong tangata whenua base and that kind of intimidated me a little bit because my identity as being a Māori clinician, or just Māori in general was nowhere near as defined or pronounced as hers was.

In exploring this issue further, Heeni acknowledged that she was aware of coming from iwi outside of that area whereas her supervisor was tangata whenua. For her, this reinforced that she did not have the mana to challenge the situation with her supervisor.

Another example of an interesting dynamic in the supervision relationship was related by Nina. She spoke of an experience she had with one fieldwork supervisor where it appeared that her supervisor viewed the relationship quite differently to Nina:

One of the supervisors I had at [placement agency 1]...I think that she wanted me to reveal more of myself...I remember in one session she said, Oh I just want to know, you know, how do you feel about, for example, would you feel comfortable to cry in a supervision session?...I didn't find [the work] emotionally difficult and I think she is the kind of person who was a bit more, I don't know 'touchy feely', or I don't know if that's the right term, and I found that a little bit uncomfortable, because I didn't want to have that kind of relationship with her. If I had an emotional issue she would not be the person I would have taken it to.

These participant recollections demonstrate that while the participants all experienced at least one positive supervision relationship, there was broad diversity of their experiences and their relationship dynamics contained therein. Unsurprisingly where supervisors evidenced effective communication skills, participants experienced positive supervision relationships. This resonates with the work of O'Connor (2000, cited Giddings, et al., 2004) which showed that less than ideal supervision eventuates when elements of productive supervision are either diminished or omitted.

Another element of relationship which some participants attributed to their supervision experience was participants' belief about the impact of pre-existing relationships. Being

supervised by someone whom participants knew prior to fieldwork was mostly seen to provide significant advantage in the fieldwork supervision experience.

Some participants knew their fieldwork supervisors on a personal level prior to fieldwork, and others knew them through professional connections. Because of the respect Heeni had for the supervisor she worked with while in a volunteer capacity, Heeni negotiated with her training provider for this person to be her external supervisor for her final practicum. This decision was based on the supervisor's familiarity with how Heeni liked "running supervision" as well as the supervisor's practice knowledge and her ability to challenge Heeni. This example, mirrored by comments from other participants, demonstrates that a preference for supervisor familiarity was driven by the active pursuit of professional growth and challenge rather than by participants' comfort with a particular supervisor and avoidance of professional development.

For Jordan, the prior knowledge that he and his supervisor had of each other's idiosyncrasies and strengths meant that once he and his supervisor had completed the initial negotiation that they "could both go straight into it", a notion also voiced by other participants supervised by people known to them. The ability to get on and do the work of reflexive practice, rather than spending time becoming familiar with each other and establish how they work together was seen by participants to be hugely beneficial, and was a significant element of successful supervision experiences.

Other comments that participants made regarding advantages of being supervised by someone familiar to them included the freedom they experienced in being able to more readily access their supervisors. Some participants noted that being able to access supervisors as required was a significant factor which contributed to their positive supervision experiences, and in some cases was only possible because the student had an existing relationship with their fieldwork supervisor. This prompts questions about whether students would delay contacting supervisors about an issue if the supervisor was not previously known to them, and whether this might result in poor or unsafe practice decisions being made.

Rangimarie spoke about the prior relationship she had with her cultural supervisor lubricating their professional relationship, enhanced by the fact that both her cultural supervisor and her external supervisor were Māori. She explained "I'm familiar with the

way they work...and because it comes down to for me the fact that they are Māori, it makes a huge difference for me.” She made a similar observation regarding her subsequent practicum where her two supervisors were internal, but one Māori and the other non-Māori. Rangimarie believed that her non-Māori internal supervisor did not understand her or her perspective as well as her Māori fieldwork educator did, and that this was due to their differing cultural backgrounds.

La Tasha’s perception of using an existing relationship for supervision contrasted to that of Jordan and Rangimarie. La Tasha attributed the difficulty she experienced in one particular supervision relationship to her need to discuss work-related issues with someone in an external forum. Her perspective was that had she been able to access a supervisor who was not also her team leader, then the ensuing conflict could have been discussed immediately, and strategies for resolution developed. Because she had a pre-existing relationship with her fieldwork supervisor, she felt unable to suggest this for fear of causing offence, and instead chose to avoid supervision.

Another participant indicated that her fieldwork supervision experience benefited from a pre-existing relationship, in a way quite different to those previously mentioned; that of her supervisor’s pre-existing relationship with the training provider. Rona saw her supervisor’s prior knowledge of the training provider as beneficial in that her supervisor understood the BSW programme as well as some of the stresses Rona faced as a student. Rona also viewed the fact that her supervisor had been a student with the same training provider as an advantage for similar reasons. To her, this contributed to her successful working relationship with this fieldwork supervisor.

Part of the understanding participants formed about the importance of relationship concerned the perceived ‘match’ or ‘fit’ between them and their supervisors. Participants attributed successful supervision experiences to there being a good fit between them and their supervisor, as well as the converse; a poor supervision experience was thought to be the result of a poor match with a supervisor.

Factors relating to what participants viewed as a good ‘fit’ between themselves and their supervisors included having a similar personality to their supervisor. There were numerous comments made by the participants suggesting that this was a key ingredient to a successful match, and therefore to positive supervision. This was intimated also in a

comment made by one participant, who of hearing of peers who had poor fieldwork supervision experiences, commented that this was probably attributable to a poor personality match between supervisor and supervisee.

Another factor that participants identified as demonstrating a good fit between them and their supervisors was their shared preferences for how supervision was structured. Those participants who identified this as a positive factor in supervision noted that they found a clearly structured approach helpful for understanding supervision and therefore how best to use it. Relatedly, Rona found having a shared communication style with both her supervisors, including agreeing at the beginning of supervision to deal with issues candidly, eased the establishment of a positive supervision relationship.

It is possible that the perceived compatibility in styles may in fact be indicative of the participant's learning style and simply indicate for example, that Heeni's preferred way of receiving and processing information was well catered for by her supervisor. In other words, supervision was delivered in a way that was compatible with their pragmatist, theorist, activist, or reflector preferences (Honey & Mumford, 1992). The use of building on student learning styles to promote practice learning is certainly something that has been advocated for in the literature (Cartney, 2000).

In summary, what was clear from the participants' stories was that most participants attributed successful fieldwork placements to there being a positive relationship with their supervisor and a high level of compatibility between them and their fieldwork supervisor.

### *Luck*

In contrast to these perceptions, a few participants were also of the opinion that their supervision experiences were due to chance. Some of the participants used words like 'fortunate' and 'lucky' to describe how they felt about their successful supervision experiences and why their supervision experiences occurred as they did. Some also talked about feeling fortunate particularly in light of their classmates' fieldwork supervision experiences which they were aware had not been positive.

These comments suggest that some participants believed that the success of their fieldwork supervision experiences was not a result of careful matching or reflective of

the quality of the training provider's pool of fieldwork supervisors, but due to chance. Conversely, the comments might also imply that participants felt they were 'lucky' in the sense of being blessed to have received quality supervision. If this were the case, this idea still contains the notion of fate or fortune (that is, being one of only a few) rather than experiencing a predictably successful supervision match as the result of a thorough decision-making process.

## **Conclusion**

I think basically the experience varied according to who the supervisor was and what their previous experience was and how they chose to do things. So I think a lot of it is to do with who the supervisor is and how they supervise and that really impacts on your experience. (Nina)

This chapter explored participants' fieldwork supervision experiences as well as participant perceptions of their experiences. This exploration resulted in a number of questions arising from student experiences, and of the understandings they consequently formed. These include:

- how might contracting be better utilised to clarify the purpose and process of supervision, to identify and discuss issues such as how power will be managed and conflict resolved, and to establish the supervision relationship?
- what understanding do students have about the role of supervision in their learning?
- what understanding do students have about their own role in their learning?
- what preparation are students given for supervision and how might students best be prepared for supervision?
- what professional development are fieldwork supervisors given to assist them to undertake fieldwork supervision?
- what would assist students to raise any issues of feeling unsatisfied with fieldwork supervision?
- what is the impact of students feeling reluctant to contact their fieldwork supervisor outside of a regularly scheduled session?
- what distinguishes cultural supervision by Māori supervisors for Māori workers from Kaupapa Māori supervision, and does this require further clarification?
- how accessible is Kaupapa Māori supervision for students during fieldwork?

- how frequently do students have two supervisors for fieldwork and what might the implications of this be?

The key findings identified in this chapter will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, and consideration will be given to the questions that the findings raise.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the findings from the previous chapter in light of relevant literature, and highlights questions that the findings raise. The implications arising for those involved in fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand are then considered including a discussion of how these implications might be addressed and by whom. The chapter concludes by proposing areas for further research.

Eight key findings were identified from the participants' responses to the research questions. Each of these findings represents an essential component of fieldwork supervision and is consistent with themes in the literature. Table 5.1 (see p.88) shows the relationship of each finding to the three auxiliary research questions posed in order to explore the main research question "how do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?"

**Table 5.1 Research Questions and Findings**

Research Question	Finding
<p>What are social work students' experiences of fieldwork supervision?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insufficient preparation for fieldwork supervision resulted in participants feeling inadequately equipped for it</li> <li>2. A reluctance to challenge unsatisfactory supervision was evident</li> <li>3. Previous supervision experiences impacted participants' expectations of subsequent supervision</li> <li>4. External supervision was viewed as preferable to internal agency-provided supervision</li> <li>5. Access to cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision was inconsistent and limited</li> <li>6. There was a relatively high incidence of participants having two supervisors for one practicum</li> </ol>
<p>What do social work students perceive to be positive fieldwork supervision experiences?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. While defining "positive" fieldwork supervision appeared difficult for some participants, accessibility and a number of key elements including, professional development, support &amp; challenge, reflective practice, clear communication, and well managed power dynamics, were identified as essential.</li> </ol>
<p>What understandings do social work students form about why they had or did not have positive fieldwork supervision experiences?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Participants understood that their fieldwork supervision experiences occurred as they did due to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Their supervisor's and/or their own level of understanding of the purpose and process of supervision.</li> <li>ii. Their assertiveness.</li> <li>iii. Their supervisor's experience and skill.</li> <li>iv. The relationship and compatibility between the supervisor and supervisee.</li> <li>v. Luck.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

### **Insufficient preparation**

In general participants did not feel adequately prepared for supervision; they lacked an understanding of the purpose of supervision, and therefore how to use it. This meant students were learning what supervision was as they were experiencing it and they were simultaneously trying to use it to maximise their fieldwork learning. This finding aligns with one of the key themes identified by O'Donoghue's (2012) research which showed that participants whose first supervision experience was fieldwork supervision had "limited preparation and understanding of what supervision involved" (p. 217).

Learning to be a supervisee is equally as important as learning to be a supervisor (Barretta-Herman, 2001). Despite this, the development of supervisee skills and the supervisee's understanding of the purpose and process of the supervisory relationship has been given minimal attention in the literature (Barretta-Herman, 2001). Because of this, Barretta-Herman (2001) underscores the need for social work educators to evaluate the preparation given to students to equip them to be effective supervisees.

Because many participants struggled to recall any teaching regarding fieldwork supervision, it could be assumed that any preparation they did have was not understood by them well enough to transfer to practice. This could also reflect the difference between what is taught and what students learn, and suggests a disconnection between the academic teaching conducted prior to fieldwork followed by a reliance on an apprenticeship approach once in the field. Participants' difficulty in recalling supervision preparation raises questions about whether this is due to what is being taught, the amount of preparation time given, or how students are being prepared. This in turn prompts questions about what preparation students require that would cultivate their understanding of the purpose and process of fieldwork supervision, that is, what teaching material is essential for this and likewise what is the preferable pedagogical approach for preparing students for fieldwork supervision. It could also suggest that teaching cannot be confined to prior to fieldwork, but needs to incorporate on-going reflection and supported learning activities, which in turn begs the question of who might be responsible for this, a point which is addressed in the concluding chapter.

While there is a small amount of research considering student preparation for fieldwork, the research considers preparedness for fieldwork in a general sense with either only

scarce mention of supervision (Gelman, 2004; Rosenthal Gelman & Lloyd, 2008; G. Wilson & Kelly, 2010) or none at all (Kanno & Koeske, 2010). Even a recent exploration of student supervision across seven European countries (van Hees, 2011) only alluded to the preparation aspect of fieldwork supervision for students, which reinforces Barretta-Herman's (2001) statement above. This finding regarding the importance of preparation for supervision has highlighted a gap in the research and signals an area for future study.

In discussing the impact of students' responses to their awareness of their lack of knowledge Bogo (2010) suggests that the way students manage the realisation of their 'not knowing' how to put their knowledge into action, along with the way they manage their emotional response (including feelings of incompetence), influences students' practice learning. Students' realisation of the difficulty of applying their head knowledge at a practical level can be particularly pronounced in initial fieldwork experiences. This may provide an explanation as to why students in the current study felt unprepared; they were confronted with the realisation that applying knowledge to practice is not as straightforward as they had anticipated, including knowledge of what fieldwork supervision is and how to use it, and this realisation reinforced their feeling of being unprepared.

An alternative explanation for this finding could relate to the contracting (or lack of) that occurred for participants when beginning their fieldwork supervision relationships. It has been said that "the key to a successful practice learning opportunity is a clear understanding of expectations...the basic ground rules should be agreed beforehand" (Doel & Shardlow, 2005, p. 7). The importance of clear expectations, and the role of contracting in detailing expectations and understandings could suggest that inadequate contracting and ineffective outlining of expectations resulted in participants feeling unprepared and uncertain, which they perceived as lacking preparation. While the majority of participants recalled having a supervision contract in place, it could be that this was not detailed to the level that participants' required. The importance of clear contracting was noted by participants at several points throughout their interviews. Doel and Shardlow (2005) give numerous examples of the kinds of issues that need to be clarified when discussing expectations at the beginning of the supervision relationship, which could provide a useful resource for both students and supervisors.

## **Reluctance to challenge**

The second finding revealed that participants were reluctant to raise their dissatisfaction about their supervision with either their fieldwork supervisor or their training provider. The passivity in participants' willingness to address this issue is significant and raises questions of why this might be and how this might be addressed. An immediate question this finding raises is how students define unsatisfactory supervision, particularly given that the participants all noted feeling unsure of what fieldwork supervision was prior to experiencing it. This in turn gives rise to the question of how students define positive supervision, which is discussed later.

One possible explanation for participants' reluctance to raise their dissatisfaction with fieldwork supervision could be their awareness of power in the supervision relationship. One participant, for example, mentioned her awareness of her supervisor's role in her assessment and her consequent reluctance to challenge the unsatisfactory standard of supervision. It is significant that a participant made specific mention of this aspect of fieldwork supervision which may typify participants' awareness of the power fieldwork supervisors hold, not only in relation to assessment but also to other forms of power. The importance of effectively managing power and authority in the supervision relationship is highlighted in findings from Davys' (2005) research. Similarly, Davys and Beddoe (2010) stress that legitimate power such as that inherent in assessing students needs to be openly discussed by the student and supervisor in order to avoid misunderstanding and to consider the potential impact of this on trust and disclosure in the supervisory relationship.

There is a significant amount of literature that considers power in supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Middleman & Rhodes, 1985; Pack, 2009) although there are some differences in how power is conceptualised by different authors. Middleman and Rhodes (1985) for example contrast positional power (including that of promotions and dismissal) with power based on expertise (knowledge and skills), whereas Davys and Beddoe (2010) refer to the organisational, professional, and cultural filters through which power is exercised. All of these constructs of power are potentially present in fieldwork supervision. Some participants in the current study referred to cultural authority and power as a factor in them feeling too *whakamā* to challenge their supervisor about the quality of fieldwork supervision they were receiving. This reinforces the suggestion that power, and a lack of awareness or skill in knowing how to

appropriately assert one's supervisory needs, may explain students' reluctance to challenge unsatisfactory supervision. It may also suggest that fieldwork supervisors would benefit from increasing their skill in managing power well in the supervision relationship, a skill which has been noted as vital (Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Middleman & Rhodes, 1985).

Ideas to address power in supervision include overt discussion (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Scaife & Walsh, 2001) and using contracting to broach and clarify power issues (Cleak & Wilson, 2004; Morrison, 2005; Scaife, 2001). These suggestions prompt further questions in relation to the finding namely: whether participants engaged in discussions about power with their fieldwork supervisors, and whether power was an area specifically covered in fieldwork supervision contracts. Given that the literature asserts the importance of addressing power issues in supervision, and given the likelihood of the impact of power on this finding, the questions raised warrant consideration in regard to further research.

Another reason for participants' seeming acceptance of their unsatisfactory supervision could be that the significance of learning through supervision was not fully appreciated by participants. If students' reluctance to challenge unsatisfactory supervision signals that they did not comprehend the role of supervision in their fieldwork learning, this could relate to the first finding regarding a gap in students' preparation for supervision. In other words, the learning aspect of supervision was not well taught, further endorsing the need to revisit fieldwork preparation. Alternatively, participants' reluctance to challenge unsatisfactory fieldwork supervision could indicate that participants took a somewhat reactive rather than proactive approach to their learning, which also prompts consideration of why this might be and how this might best be addressed.

An alternative explanation for this finding as provided in the literature is seen in Davys' (2002) research. She suggested that the developmental level of a supervisee affects not only their ability to experience processes and procedures but also their ability to reflect on and critique these. This would suggest that due to their stage of professional development participants struggled to fully engage in the experience of supervision and were also limited in their ability to reflect on that experience and respond accordingly. If this was the case, this would suggest that a limited understanding and use of supervision was developmentally appropriate. This would then reiterate questions raised

previously about the knowledge and skill preparation of student supervisees and their fieldwork supervisors, along with questions about what emphasis was given to a developmental approach to fieldwork supervision.

Another study noted that lack of supervision was the most common problem encountered in fieldwork supervision for participants in their study, and that, worryingly, participants did not really perceive this as a concern (Giddings, et al., 2004). Students not acting on lack of supervision is of particular concern given that students are developmentally not in a position to accurately assess the impact of limited supervision on their professional development, their clients, and it could be argued, their fieldwork agency (Giddings, et al., 2004). It could therefore be suggested that this was an issue in the current study; that in not raising the issue of insufficient amount of supervision, participants made decisions beyond their level of expertise regarding their ability to practice without adequate supervision and guidance, and thereby potentially placed themselves and others involved in their fieldwork practicum at risk.

Related to participants' developing practice, this finding links to participants' understanding of the importance of addressing conflict, coupled with their budding conflict resolution skills. It might be that students' professional maturity, including their emotional intelligence (Morrison, 2005) limited their ability to respond to unsatisfactory supervision. This is supported by findings in O'Donoghue's (2012) work which revealed that supervisees need to develop their emotional intelligence along with their problem-solving strategies in order to professionally respond to unsatisfactory or unsafe supervision. In an earlier exploration of issues of conflict in practicum, Ellis and Worrall (2001) noted that effective preparation of all parties involved for fieldwork, along with robust review and evaluation processes, were some of the skills required to anticipate and resolve fieldwork conflict. This raises the question of what prior training participants in the current study had in conflict resolution as well as what, if anything, students and supervisors contracted with regards to conflict resolution.

### **Expectations of subsequent supervision**

Participants evidenced increased expectations of their successive fieldwork supervision experience/s through a stronger sense of agency and an increased clarity in their expectations of their supervisors. This increased sense of agency included an increased expectancy to have their fieldwork supervision expectations met. This was apparent

across a range of expectations, from supervision frequency, to content, venue and relationship. This resonates with O'Donoghue's (2012) findings which showed that there was a connection between practitioners' supervision histories and their professional development and behaviour. Another corresponding finding from O'Donoghue's (2012) research was that participants' understanding of, and participation in supervision developed over time. This prompts questions similar to those noted in earlier findings regarding what preparation is required to maximise students' learning and preparation for fieldwork supervision, and how and when this might best be taught.

It could also be suggested that the growth in participants' agency in claiming their fieldwork supervision needs, endorses the argument for adopting a developmental perspective to fieldwork supervision. Such an approach suggests a clear progression of expectations regarding supervisee competency and confidence as they proceed from one level to the next. Hawkins and Shohet's (2006) model of supervisee's stages of development is such an example, which incorporates numerous authors' developmental approaches presented as four distinct stages. Some research has shown that supervisors' responses to supervisees are dependent on the supervisee's developmental level and subsequent needs (Stoltenberg, 2005). Stoltenberg's findings could suggest that participants' developed sense of agency is in part a response to their supervisor's expectations of them, that is, as student supervisee's practice matures, supervisor expectations of them are increased, which students in turn respond to with more advanced practice.

The importance of understanding supervisees' supervision histories and what has worked well in supervision previously is also encouraged (Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Morrison, 2005). Such an approach also acknowledges that students are not a homogeneous group with universal characteristics, but that their learning experiences are different as is how they respond to learning (Bogo, 2010). Only one participant in the current study mentioned a conversation of this nature with their second supervisor which leads to wondering what extent this practice is integrated into supervision, and furthermore whether learning styles and relational preferences are discussed at the outset of the fieldwork supervision relationship.

Given that supervisees build on their previous supervision experiences, the need to ensure that initial supervision experiences are positive is highlighted. The importance of

successful first supervision experiences raises questions about what can be done to optimise the probability of students having positive initial fieldwork supervision experiences, to augment an overall progression of expectations and behaviour.

### **External supervision**

While both internal and external kinds of supervision were experienced by participants, external supervision was preferred by most participants who stated that they valued the professional development focus it provided and the objective view offered from someone outside of their fieldwork agency. This preference for external supervision corresponds with findings from a study conducted by Itzhaky (2001) which showed that participants perceived their external supervisors as having expertise-based authority compared with internal supervisors whom participants perceived as holding more formal authority. While Itzhaky's (2001) study was with graduates rather than students (as is much of the literature considering external supervision), it raises questions about how participants in the current study perceived their external supervisor's authority and expertise compared to that of their fieldwork educator, and what professional development for supervisees fieldwork educators include when providing internal supervision.

Participants in the current study also said they valued professional challenge from their fieldwork supervisors and appreciated the independent perspective external supervisors provided. This parallels Itzhaky's (2001) findings which showed that external supervisors were less affected by either ambiguity or role-related conflict than internal supervisors and were therefore able to be more confronting and provide more constructive negative feedback than internal supervisors. This leads one to ask whether participants formed ideas about how fieldwork educators were positioned in relation to external supervisors, and how ideas about this were communicated to them. This in turn leads to questions about the related issue of power in this dynamic, although it has been suggested that power and authority issues are expected to have less impact in external supervision relationships (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). This prompts the question of whether power was a factor for participants preferring external to internal supervision and whether participants perceived that power issues impacted supervision less with an external supervisor, as is considered below.

In contrast to external supervisors' independence being viewed positively, Davys (2005) suggests that the dislocation of external supervisors from the agency results in a

dislocation from the supervisee's practice. An example of this dislocation was apparent in the dissatisfaction expressed by students in Cleak and Smith's (2012) study. Participants in that study were unhappy with the separation of the external supervisor from the fieldwork agency and with external supervisors not having either a legislative or administrative background congruent with the fieldwork agency (Cleak & Smith, 2012). Interestingly then, what was seen by participants as a positive factor in the current study, was viewed from the opposite perspective by participants in Cleak and Smith's (2012) study.

Participants' preference for supervision provided externally raises questions of whether students perceived that they were less accountable to external supervisors by virtue of the supervisor's separation from the fieldwork agency. The change to accountabilities in external supervision is highlighted by Davys (2005) who noted that externally offered supervision alters provision of supervision's functions. As external supervisors are contracted by and therefore accountable to training providers (Morrell, 2001) the question arises of how the shifted delivery and accountability in external supervision was seen by students. It is possible that participants perceived that external supervision allowed them more autonomy than they would have had under the guidance of an agency based supervisor. Morrell (2001) recommends that supervisors and supervisees overtly discuss and negotiate the supervision relationship and accountabilities and develop a clearly detailed contract which includes regular review. The specific details of participants' initial supervision discussions and supervision contracts are unknown, but omission of these particular aspects may have contributed to participants' understanding of accountabilities in the supervision relationship and how they perceived the connection between external supervision and fieldwork educators. This situation again highlights the importance of robust supervision contracting practices.

The importance of negotiating supervision relationships and accountabilities and formulating these into a contract is also highlighted by Hirst and Lynch (2005). Having explored many of the tensions impacting external supervision they were clear that in order for external supervision to be beneficial to the agency there are a number of requirements needed. While their work was not specific to supervision in a fieldwork setting and focused on the benefits of external supervision to the organisation (rather than the supervisee and their learning needs), their recommendations echo those revealed by participants in the current study. They state:

this requires all parties in the process to: be clear about the purpose of external supervision; clarify their respective roles; expectations and responsibilities; and finally establish good communication processes and maintain an effective supervision contract. (Hirst & Lynch, 2005, p. 96)

Issues pertaining to the use of external supervision in fieldwork are particularly pertinent given the observed trend over the last thirty years in fieldwork education of contracting external supervision (Beddoe, 2012) and given that:

anecdotal evidence suggests that the use of external supervision by university or sessional staff is increasing and [furthermore that] there is concern about the quality and viability of some of these emerging supervisory models (particularly external supervision) and whether they compromise optimal student learning. (Cleak & Smith, 2012, p. 5)

The changes to the frequency and provision of external supervision in fieldwork suggests the importance of robust discussion, clarification of accountability, and contracting (Flintoff & Flanagan, 2011; Maidment & Beddoe, 2012; Morrell, 2001, 2008).

An alternative explanation for participants' preference for external supervision may relate to the difference already alluded to in roles held by external supervisors and fieldwork educators. Supervision provided by a fieldwork educator is only one of many roles they hold as they may also be required to induct staff and students to the agency, co-work clinical cases, and maintain organisational accountabilities such as manage a caseload, oversee external contract applications and staffing decisions (Chilvers, 2011). On the other hand, while it is possible that external supervisors hold many differing roles, they meet with fieldwork students solely for supervision. This could mean that supervision with an external supervisor is less likely to be overlooked or not occur than with an internal supervisor. This indicates some of the considerable organisational and contextual pressures that fieldwork educators operate under and highlights what could be seen as the comparative lack of importance attributed to the supervision of a student social worker (Gursansky & Le Seur, 2012). This prompts the question of whether some of these pressures were inadvertently communicated to students by their fieldwork educators, contrasted with the assuredness of supervision with an external supervisor, resulting in the students developing a preference for external supervisors.

How external supervision was perceived by participants compared to agency-based supervision also prompts the question of whether external supervisors provided something different to agency-based supervisors which influenced this preference. Could it be that 'haphazard' learning experiences such as those encountered by participants in Maidment's (2000b) research were similarly experienced by participants in this study, more so with fieldwork educators than with external supervisors? If this were the case, does this suggest that there needs to be greater emphasis on learning taken by fieldwork educators, with fieldwork educators adopting more of a deliberate teaching role? As Beddoe notes:

Poor practice is probably most frequently a consequence of the lack of time, training and support for student supervision. In addition there is and [sic] increased risk of supervisors simply telling students how to do it 'our way' rather than teaching through facilitating more reflective learning opportunities. (1999, p. 22)

Literature considering the issue of standards for fieldwork educators, propose training for fieldwork educators and emphasise the importance of teaching aspect of the role (Beddoe, 1997a; Walsh-Tapiata & Ellis, 1994) asserting that these initiatives promote excellence in supervision. This leads to the question of whether an accreditation system and requisite training for fieldwork supervisors would diminish any difference, if there are in fact differences between how external supervisors and fieldwork educators supervise.

In the United Kingdom the need for an increased emphasis on teaching and learning in the fieldwork educator role was recognised by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) which as noted earlier resulted in the implementation of a Practice Teachers Award towards the end of last century (Taylor, 1999). This Award required practitioners to become accredited under this system to enable them to undertake Practice Teacher roles (equivalent to fieldwork educator roles). The Award, Bellinger (2010) argues, "raised social work practice learning from a functional apprenticeship model to a recognised, structured and financially supported teaching and assessment activity of equal value to classroom-based learning" (p. 603). Although the Practice Teachers Award has since been abandoned as a consequence of what Bellinger (2010) calls the "erosion of the infrastructure for practice learning in England" (p. 599), its introduction highlights how universal the recognition for the integration of teaching

and learning in the fieldwork educator role is. Development of this kind of initiative locally may result in a change in perception of the importance of fieldwork supervision which could lead to it being given greater priority in the fieldwork educator's competing roles.

Although some training providers offer professional development for fieldwork supervisors (Beddoe, 1999), a lack of field educator training has been identified as a factor contributing to the insufficient focus on learning in fieldwork supervision (Maidment, 2000b). This, in line with the current finding, prompts the question of whether fieldwork educators should be expected to provide the same type of supervision as external supervisors, and what selection criteria (particularly in respect of supervision education and experience) is reasonable to expect. The idea of raising selection criteria and implementing accreditation of supervisors is supported by the findings of a study by Knight (2000, p. 378) who promotes "the value of and need for training for field instructors to assist them in moving from social work practitioners to social work educators". The notion is supported by local researchers Douglas (2011) and Beddoe (1999). Douglas suggests that in order for field education to "have as robust a pedagogical base as classroom learning, the move from Field Educator as *practitioner* to *practice teacher* [original emphasis] is imperative" (2011, p. 39). The need for increased consistency in teaching and learning in fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand identified by fieldwork coordinators from a range of training providers resulted in a collaborative project which produced "Kia Tene/Off the Cuff". This document provides learning and teaching activities designed for fieldwork educators to use with fieldwork students, (Douglas, 2011) providing a valuable local resource to meet this professional development need for both fieldwork educators and students.

### **Cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision**

Participants' stories revealed that they had limited and inconsistent access to cultural supervision or Kaupapa Māori supervision during their fieldwork experiences. This raises questions about how cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision are understood in social work education and how they are positioned in relation to supervision, both in the fieldwork context and in the social work profession in this country. How do training providers define and provide 'core' supervision and how does this relate to professional definitions of culturally relevant supervision (ANZASW, 2012)? What does the discourse say if cultural supervision or Kaupapa Māori supervision are positioned alongside

external supervision rather than alongside clinical supervision? Does this suggest these forms of supervision are viewed as supplementary processes, rather than essential to social work and fieldwork practice? Which fieldwork students have access to cultural supervision or Kaupapa Māori supervision and what message does this convey to social work students about the importance and use of these forms of supervision? Given the profession's commitment to bicultural practice, these questions, along with the experiences of this study's participants indicate the urgent need for further research into cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Tiriti o Waitangi contains a commitment to the provision of culturally authentic models of supervision for Māori social workers as well as accountability for non-Māori social workers to practise bi-culturally with Māori clients (Eruera, 2005b). Core documents of both the ANZASW (2008a, 2008b) and the SWRB (2011b) are based on principles in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, reinforcing the social work profession's commitment to these. Despite these imperatives, the lack of literature exploring the provision and utilisation of these types of supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand leaves unanswered questions about what is provided in the way of cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision, to whom, and under what circumstances. Although it has been found that the professional supervision culture in Aotearoa New Zealand embraces a plurality of supervision types, O'Donoghue and Tsui (2011) state that research into these forms of supervision is limited.

The provision of cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision is advocated for by Walsh-Tapiata and Webster (2004a) who emphasise that Kaupapa Māori supervision should occur in addition to other forms of supervision. Walsh-Tapiata and Webster (2004a) also argue that there needs to be a cultural component included in all forms of supervision, rather than cultural issues only being addressed in cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision. This argument is based on the premise that such supervision is essential for best practice to benefit social worker and client, rather than an optional extra provided only when financial resourcing allows. The question this raises is, who would resource the provision of cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision in fieldwork and should it be made universally available to the students via the training provider or via the fieldwork agency?

Were cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision determined to be a 'given' in social work and therefore fieldwork practice, this would then raise questions of how suitable people would be identified, accessed, supported and remunerated. O'Donoghue (2010) notes that there are currently insufficient numbers of suitable people available to provide cultural supervision, so the need to train and develop practitioners for this work is imperative. As Walsh-Tapiata and Webster state "it should not be assumed that just because someone is Māori they necessarily know how to handle situations in a culturally appropriate manner" (2004a, p. 16). Thus supervisors and supervisees alike can benefit not only from cultural supervision, but also training in these forms of supervision.

Related to this finding, the current study also revealed that participants had varying understandings of what cultural or Kaupapa Māori supervision might be or how they might work in practice. A recent study by O'Donoghue (2010) presented corresponding findings regarding participants' understanding and definition of cultural supervision, revealing that for some participants the difference was dependent on whether the supervisee was Māori or not. As O'Donoghue's (2010) research participants were practitioners rather than students, this suggests that the finding in the current study resonates with practitioners' understanding of and access to cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision in the field, adding further justification to the argument for the need for research and development in this area.

### **Frequency of two supervisors**

A surprising finding was that participants in this study experienced a high number of instances of being supervised by two fieldwork supervisors. There is a lack of literature exploring this supervision arrangement, although there is literature on related topics. Co-supervision for example is defined by Coulton and Krimmer (2005) as "two or more workers who work equally and collaboratively to encourage the strengths and capabilities of the supervisee" (p.154). The supervision arrangements they refer to involve two or more supervisors being responsible for supervision on alternate weeks, rather than successively as was the case for all participants in this research. Co-supervision is also clearly focused on benefitting student learning (as well as meeting workload and responsibility demands for supervisors) where in contrast, the prevalence of two supervisors in this study was dictated by supervisor needs in three of the four instances it occurred. This prompts questions about what the implications of having two fieldwork supervisors might be, particularly in relation to the supervisory relationship and

to the student's learning, and whether having two supervisors occurs more frequently than anecdotal evidence would suggest.

One participant noted both pros and cons of having two supervisors. That participant cited the main benefit as learning different things from different people, a finding consistent with Coulton and Krimmer's (2005) study. Participants who experienced co-supervision in a study undertaken by Cleak and Smith (2012) reported a high level of satisfaction with this arrangement, although reasons as to why this was are not offered. The participant in the current study who discussed the positive and negative aspects of this arrangement, identified the disadvantages of this arrangement as having to renegotiate the supervision relationship and the supervisor not being aware of the work the student had already undertaken. This raises questions about whether dissatisfaction was communicated to the supervisor concerned, the placement agency or the training provider, or whether this represents another example of participants being reluctant to challenge unsatisfactory supervision, as discussed previously.

In the competitive environment that exists for fieldwork placements, training providers are under significant pressure to place students for fieldwork (Beddoe & Worrall, 1997). This situation can result in students being placed in less than ideal situations or under less than ideal supervision arrangements. O'Donoghue's (2012) study revealed that organisational decisions made about participants' supervision negatively impacted participants' motivation for and participation in supervision. This raises questions about what impact having two supervisors had on participants' motivation for and participation in supervision. Participants' experiences prompt the question of whose needs are being met in the allocation of supervisors, and how subsequent supervisors acknowledge or respond to being a subsequent supervisor, particularly with regards to addressing a student's learning needs.

Another perspective to consider concerning participants' change of supervisors relates to attachment and a supervisee's need for a 'secure base' (Hanna, 2007). Shifting from one fieldwork supervisor to another requires that a new supervisory relationship be negotiated. This change requires that a supervisor gain an understanding of the supervisee's perspective of their supervision history as well as their emotional response to the change (O'Donoghue, 2012). The significance of relationship in supervision

highlights the need for further research into the impact of two supervisors on attachment in supervision.

### **Conceptualising 'positive' supervision**

While there are checklists for students (and graduates) to evaluate supervisors by, and an increasing number of manuals outlining expectations of supervisors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Davys, 2005; Falender & Shafranske, 2008; Morrison, 2005, 2008; Pack, 2009) many participants initially struggled to communicate their thoughts about what positive supervision is. An example of this was when participants stated that supervision was "great", however when asked to explain further some participants had difficulty articulating their ideas about this. In some instances several attempts were needed to elicit descriptions of what positive supervision entailed for them. As all the participants were in the final year of their social work programme and had the experience of at least two fieldwork supervision settings, this was surprising. This finding demonstrates what appeared to be a lack of a conceptual understanding of supervision, and raises questions about how it is that students lack a satisfactory understanding, and what students need in order to develop their understanding of what good fieldwork supervision looks like.

Accepting that a supervisee's understanding of supervision develops over time (O'Donoghue, 2012) provides an alternative explanation for this finding, that is that participants' difficulty to articulate the specifics of good supervision is consistent with their stage of professional development. The question might therefore be: what is a reasonable progression of expectations of a student regarding their understanding and ability to articulate at any given developmental stage, and how does a lack of conceptual understanding of supervision impact the supervision relationship and therefore learning? There does not appear to be any literature which provides developmental guidelines of this nature, which highlights this as an area requiring further research.

When participants reflected on extreme examples of either positive or negative fieldwork supervision experiences, they presented some clear ideas on what positive supervision incorporated. Positive supervision was consequently described as that which enabled their professional development, provided both support and challenge, allowed for reflective practice, was grounded on clear communication, appropriately managed power

dynamics, provided feedback, and was accessible in terms of timing, format and location.

In seeking literature to compare with this finding it was evident that Knight's comment suggesting that "relative to other aspects of the social work curriculum, there have been far fewer empirical studies of what constitutes effective field supervision" (2001, p. 357) is still applicable. Examples of research which might have included students' perceptions of supervision include those considering student satisfaction in their fieldwork practicum. Unfortunately these either contain little, if any reference to fieldwork supervision (Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001; Raskin, 1989), or tend to address other aspects of supervision such as the model of supervision (Cleak & Smith, 2012) or students' preferences of their supervisor's style and behaviour (Lazar & Eisikovits, 1997). Walsh-Tapiata and Ellis (1994) discussed issues in student supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand and noted qualities that students appreciate in a fieldwork supervisor, however students' comments were only a small part of the article and taken from fieldwork evaluations, so it is unclear to what extent these sources were researched.

Two studies conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand explored participants' views of good supervision (Davys, 2005; O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2006) and identified elements which resonate with characteristics and qualities identified by participants in the current study. In the wider supervision literature there is a significant amount which proposes the core ingredients of positive supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shohet, 2006; Morrison, 2005; O'Donoghue, 2003; Pack, 2009; Tsui, 2005) all of which correspond to those aspects identified by the participants. What is particularly interesting, is given participants' experience of feeling unprepared for supervision and being unsure how to use it, at some point their understanding of what positive supervision is aligns with that outlined in the literature. This raises questions about how this process occurs, whether it relates to students' professional development and the socialisation which occurs in supervision and on fieldwork, and what the implications of this are for social work education.

## **Understandings participants formed about their supervision experiences**

Participants' perceptions of their experiences revealed five factors contributing to their fieldwork supervision experiences transpiring as they did. These factors are: the participant's and/or supervisor's understanding of the purpose and process of supervision; the participant's assertiveness; the supervisor's experience and skill; relationship and compatibility between supervisor and supervisee, and; luck. Each of these factors is discussed in relation to the literature and questions that each factor raises highlighted.

### *Understanding the purpose and process of supervision*

Participants were clear that their supervision experiences were significantly affected by the understanding or lack of understanding, that they and/or their supervisor had about the purpose and process of supervision. This relates closely to the finding that revealed participants felt unprepared for fieldwork supervision, and is significant in that not only did participants experience feeling unprepared, but they saw this as an explanation as to why their experiences manifested as they did.

As noted earlier, participants developed their understanding about supervision through experiential learning (that is, from experiencing fieldwork supervision) as well as in critical reflection with peers. Their learning reflects understanding gained in a manner consistent with Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984) and Adult Learning Theory (Bogo, 2010). Participants' learning also evidences transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997) as participants made their own meaning of their experience, rather than relying solely on explanations provided by others, particularly educators. This highlights the importance of experience based learning for fieldwork supervision, and provides challenges for social work educators in how best to capitalise on this to ensure that learning prior to and during fieldwork supervision builds on what is known about how adults learn.

This factor reinforces that knowledge of supervision is equally important for the fieldwork supervisor and student supervisee, and furthermore that both parties have a responsibility to develop a level of competence in fieldwork supervision. The importance of learning how to be a supervisee is underscored in literature as is the idea that supervision is a partnership requiring active participation (Barretta-Herman, 2001; Carroll & Gilbert, 2006; Davys, 2007; Morrell, 2005). The supervisor needs to be an

effective fieldwork supervisor skilled in interpersonal communication, social work practice and assisting student's learning. The supervisee on the other hand needs to be equipped with skills and knowledge of what supervision is and how to use it in order to be active supervisees (Davys, 2007). The importance of developing supervisees resonates with findings from O'Donoghue (2012) which showed that:

improvement to the education and development of supervisees, in relation to their understanding, use of and participation in supervision, is an area requiring attention. The particular concerns appear to be...preparation for supervision. (p.331)

An interesting aspect of this factor is that not only did participants perceive their lack of understanding regarding supervision as contributing to their fieldwork supervision experience but they assumed this to be the result of an inadequacy on their part, and in doing so assumed significant responsibility for this situation. Taking responsibility for this could reflect a not-knowing as perhaps participants did not understand the nature of shared responsibility for supervision, including the need for adequate preparation and on-going support. This raises questions regarding what students are taught about responsibility in fieldwork supervision, and suggests that this is another area requiring attention in the preparation of students for fieldwork supervision.

### *Participant assertiveness*

Many participants formed the perception that the responsibility for unsatisfactory supervision reflected a shortcoming on their part, and therefore their poor supervision experiences were a result of their lack of ability to assert themselves, particularly in their first fieldwork experience. This resonates with findings from O'Donoghue's (2012) research which showed that in addition to participants being prepared for supervision and how to utilise it, they also needed to be able to assert their needs and expectations. As well as highlighting the interactional nature and complexity of the supervision relationship, this factor does raise questions about whose responsibility it is in fieldwork to ensure that the supervision experience is positive for students, and how might this be monitored. Similarly, questions are raised about what it is about how fieldwork supervision is taught, established and monitored that leads students to believe that they are responsible for shortcomings in their fieldwork supervision.

Searching for literature which considered the assertiveness of students in fieldwork did not yield many useful results although a related study by Fortune, Lee and Cavazos (2005) provides some interesting parallels. In exploring social work students' achievement motivations in fieldwork they discuss the significance of student confidence in their own ability to accomplish a task. Expectancy-value theories on which they base their study suggest that one of the reasons students are motivated to choose a particular task is their confidence in their ability to succeed in completing it. Applying similar reasoning prompts questions of whether participants lacked confidence in their ability to insist on having their learning needs met, and whether this resulted in their lack of assertiveness. This again highlights the need for preparation of students for fieldwork supervision and development of core skills such as conflict-resolution and emotional competence.

### *Supervisor experience and skill*

Participants perceived that their supervisor's experience and skill, in fieldwork supervision as well as specific to the field of practice in which the practicum was located, was critical to their experience of fieldwork supervision. The importance of supervisor (and supervisee) qualities and attributes is a key finding in Davys (2005) study of 'good' supervision. As indicated in the literature review, the importance of training fieldwork supervisors is undisputed, although as Beddoe (1999) suggests, despite this being the case, training providers believe that some agencies have used fieldwork students as 'guinea pigs'. Similarly Maidment found that "field educators...described field education as a 'sideline of what we do', and generally rated student supervision as a low priority compared to core agency business" (2000b, p. 206). This gives rise to questions of who assesses fieldwork supervisors' competence and commitment to fieldwork supervision and how this is ascertained beyond meeting SWRB requirements (SWRB, 2011a).

The participants' view regarding a supervisor's perceived lack of skill also prompts the question of whether this reflects a supervisor's ability to effectively communicate their knowledge and skill. If a fieldwork supervisor struggles to effectively communicate their competence, this might suggest that a supervisor's strengths or skills are not in the area of teaching and learning, or that they would benefit from professional development in this area. Given that several studies demonstrate that "it is the educational aspects of the field instructor's role that are most critical to the student's overall learning in practicum" (Knight, 2000, p. 174), this is of particular significance. Furthermore, this

raises the question of whether some fieldwork supervisors practise beyond the scope of their competence, which then raises ethical issues. Certainly Maidment (2001a) states that the need to enhance field educators' professional development is one of the key issues in social work education which is essential to delivering quality fieldwork learning experiences.

Another dimension to this factor regarding supervisory skill was participants' appreciation of their supervisor's flexibility in providing supervision, notably when and how supervision took place. Most participants appreciated the 'open door' aspect of supervision, which allowed them to seek their supervisor's feedback and guidance on an 'as required' basis in addition to scheduled supervision times. As noted previously, some participants believed that supervision flexibility contributed to a more relaxed and therefore more productive session with increased reflectivity and creativity, rather than being dictated by a predetermined immovable format. These elements correspond to those noted by O'Donoghue, Munford and Trlin (2006) which they define as environment encapsulating situation, time, comfort, and opportunity. This dimension of responsiveness raises questions of how this relates to students' learning styles and personalities, and whether supervisor responsiveness is universally experienced by social work students as a positive factor in supervision or whether it reflects personality and learning preferences.

### *Relationship and Compatibility*

Participants attributed positive supervision experiences to having a positive supervision relationship and level of compatibility with their supervisors, which for many was strengthened by having prior knowledge of their supervisor. The importance of relationship in supervision is identified throughout the literature (Beddoe, 2000; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Hawkins & Shohet, 2006; Itzhaky, 2001; McMahon, 2004; Pehrson, Panos, Larson, & Cox, 2009; Scaife, 2001; Tsui, 2004). Davys (2007) states that it is the quality of the supervision relationship, more so than anything else, which influences whether supervision is experienced positively or negatively. Specific to fieldwork, Beddoe (1999, p. 22) states that "...relationship is essential to the success of teaching and learning in the field and yet is poorly prepared for and is very much at the mercy of the larger financial and policy issues which impact on the placement site". Despite this, there is little literature addressing the place of relationship in fieldwork supervision

(Giddings, et al., 2004; Shulman, 2006) and even less literature exploring the role of compatibility in this.

In some cases, participants spoke about compatibility as being well 'matched' with their supervisors despite an actual absence of deliberate 'matching'. A couple of participants perceived their ability to relate easily with their supervisor and to having experienced positive supervision as attributable to having a shared practice perspective (such as a rights perspective) or having similar personalities. A few participants spoke about their supervisor's ability to communicate directly and not shy from providing challenge, a characteristic they noted to be compatible with their preferred communication style.

Davys and Beddoe (2010) suggest that there is support for the idea of supervisor/supervisee match based on age, gender, ethnicity, theoretical orientation and the like, while Beddoe and Egan (2009) also suggest that it is preferable for supervisor and supervisee to have similar cultures and worldview. The idea of 'fit' being the sole factor contributing to a positive supervisory relationship is challenged by Caspi and Reid (2002) which balances rather than contradicts the idea that compatibility is important. This factor prompts questions of whether a relationally skilled supervisor can foster or highlight areas of compatibility to aid the supervisory relationship, particularly given that participants viewed matching as a helpful factor in supervision, as well as why compatibility is seen as desirable.

Another series of questions this factor raises relates to attachment in the supervision relationship and whether attachment patterns may be represented in participants' perceptions of their supervisors, particularly to those with whom participants already had a working alliance. There is a growing amount of literature exploring ideas from attachment theory in relation to supervision (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Mohr, BrintzenhofeSzoc, & Saks, 2008; Bennett & Saks, 2006; Hanna, 2007) which suggest this may be a useful paradigm from which to understand this finding. Questions of how attachment is managed in fieldwork supervision relationships, whether attachment issues are covered in supervision preparation for supervisors or supervisees, and how it might best be responded to in fieldwork supervision are raised.

Many participants perceived a pre-existing collegial relationship advanced the establishment of trust in the supervision relationship and provided a firm foundation

upon which challenge could be made in either direction in the supervision relationship. This raises questions of whether supervision with known supervisors provides something which is perceived to be reduced or absent in supervision relationships with new supervisors and if so, whether it would be advantageous (or even possible) to replicate these things in supervision where there is no pre-existing relationship.

Furthermore, specific to the process of contracting, given that contracting is seen as critical to establishing the supervisory relationship (Davys & Beddoe, 2010) was there a difference in how students with previously known supervisors used the contracting process compared with students negotiating contracts with previously unknown supervisors? For example did the existing relationship allow contracting to be more robust, or were issues explored more superficially in contracting given a history of having potentially resolved issues in the past?

Another aspect of compatibility was that of a shared worldview. For two of the Māori participants it was significant that they had a supervisor who understood some of the cultural understandings they held about the world, and were able to work from a shared perspective. Indeed a core value inherent in the Māori world is the centrality of relationships, of oneself to others and to the environment. This connection to others and to significant entities is fundamental to Māori identity (Mead, 2003) and to establishing relationship with others. This process, known as *whakawhanaungatanga*, through which connections are established and relationships cemented, is foundational to Māori relationships and to bi-cultural social work practice. This raises questions of whether the dynamics perceived as positive by participants in supervision relationships with those with a shared worldview simply reflects good supervision practice. In other words those supervision relationships reflect a Māori mentoring approach based on *teina/tuakana* relationships which reinforce *tikanga*, a Māori world view, thereby increasing the sense of comfort experienced by the supervisee.

### *Luck*

The final reason to which participants attributed the shape of their fieldwork supervision experiences was luck. Participants believed that chance determined whether they would have the opportunity to work with a good supervisor or conversely with a supervisor who lacked the experience and skills they required.

Interestingly the role that luck played in students being allocated a good placement was raised by several participants in Maidment's (2000b) research. Her participants' references to luck implied that they did not understand allocation as a managed process overseen by quality control measures, rather that they perceived it as a random occurrence, with them in a position of powerlessness (Maidment, 2000b). Given the changes to suitability requirements for fieldwork educators and fieldwork supervisors implemented since Maidment's research was undertaken, particularly since the establishment of the SWRB in 2003 and subsequent requirements they have implemented, it is particularly noteworthy that 'luck' re-presents as a theme in the current study. This factor raises questions about whether the perception that luck played a role in the success or otherwise of participants' fieldwork supervision experiences could be linked to participants' reluctance to challenge unsatisfactory supervision. In other words, participants perhaps considered having unsatisfactory supervision was just the luck of the draw, and hopefully they would have 'better luck' next time.

### **Themes evident across the findings**

As was noted at the beginning of the chapter, three broad areas became apparent across the findings. These themes highlight the importance of: knowledge (both supervisor and supervisee needing an understanding of fieldwork supervision's purpose and process); skill (particularly supervisor experience and skill) and; relationship (including what is perceived to be compatibility). As the discussion on each of the findings demonstrated, these broad areas resonate with those identified in the literature as essential to providing quality supervision (Davys, 2005; Hawkins & Shoheit, 2006). The significance of these areas to fieldwork supervision raises questions as to whether these areas are intentionally addressed in fieldwork preparation for students, and in training or resource material for fieldwork supervisors.

### **Implications of the findings for the practice fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand**

This next section considers the implications of the findings for the various stakeholders in fieldwork supervision in this country, including how these might be addressed. The results of this study have implications for teaching, research and the practice of fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Transferability (Bryman, 2004) is the most immediate implication arising from the fieldwork supervision experiences of participants in this study, in terms of (a) the extent to which these experiences affirm other students' fieldwork supervision experiences, (b) what other students perceive to be positive fieldwork supervision, and (c) what understandings other students formed about why they had or did not have positive supervision experiences (O'Donoghue, 2012). The remaining implications highlighted in this section have been grouped as follows: implications for students; implications for fieldwork educators; implications for external supervisors, implications for cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision and; implications for fieldwork coordinators.

### *Implications for students*

The second implication arising from participants' experiences is that social work students must be adequately prepared for fieldwork supervision. Participants' experiences demonstrated that student preparation for fieldwork supervision needs to be more robust than it currently appears to be. Participants lacked knowledge of what they could expect from both fieldwork supervision and their supervisors, which contributed to them feeling unable to assert themselves in insisting on the fundamentals of supervision.

While there is some literature which supports the development and delivery of the key curriculum areas for preparation of students for fieldwork (Williamson, Hostetter, Byers, & Huggins, 2010) this study suggests that this is an area for further research. Preparation of students for fieldwork supervision needs to include information on the purpose and process of supervision with an emphasis on the learning focus in fieldwork supervision. It also needs to educate students on the roles people hold in supervision, (for example the role of student supervisee, fieldwork educator, external supervisor and cultural supervisor), and how these roles relate to each other. Preparation also needs to provide students with the skills to measure 'positive' supervision, and how to identify and respond to power in supervision. How to negotiate a supervision contract that will touch on many of those things, including how to respond to unsatisfactory supervision (Doel & Shardlow, 2005) is another area shown by this study to be necessary for student preparation.

Learning outcomes from preparation for supervision related to this include the need for students to demonstrate a level of emotional intelligence (O'Donoghue, 2012) and develop skills in conflict resolution (Barretti, 2009). Providing a progression of

expectations of the student supervisee would assist both students and their supervisor in having realistic expectations of the student, and address expectations students have of themselves practising as fully competent social workers, rather than social workers in training. Developing a progression specific to fieldwork supervision in this country is an area requiring further research.

Scaffolding to support students in their learning and participation in supervision needs to be clearer, providing a clearly transitional approach, rather than the current system which propels students into fieldwork supervision with what participants perceived as little on-going monitoring by the training provider. A 'learning-practice escalator' such as that suggested by Doel and Shardlow (2005) may provide a framework for such scaffolding. Participants' experiences also suggest that students may benefit from on-going discussion of their fieldwork supervision experiences during placement, rather than only reviewing this at a half-way point fieldwork visit or at the conclusion of fieldwork. There are many possibilities for providing such oversight, such as an online discussion forum or video conferencing either overseen by training provider staff or facilitated by the students themselves (Birkenmaier et al., 2005). Increased contact with peers and the training provider alongside on-going education about fieldwork supervision could assist students to identify and address any unsatisfactory supervision or fieldwork arrangements, thereby reducing the occurrence or severity of this dynamic.

The importance of grounding pre-fieldwork learning in simulated experience has also been highlighted by participants' experiences. Basing preparation on the principles of adult learning particularly linking learning to experience has been shown to be essential in helping social work students to gain a conceptualisation of fieldwork supervision. Bogo (2010) argues that the gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is practised in the field positions students to "navigate between these two domains of education and make sense of the divide between course material and field experiences" (p. 19) which is what more robust preparation and on-going support would seek to avoid. It could be that the teaching of fieldwork supervision is linked with skills teaching on a degree programme, providing an existing platform on which to scaffold supervision skills. This may also suggest that teaching of fieldwork supervision skills needs to be concurrent with fieldwork, even if only for an initial period to further reinforce the theory-practice link for fieldwork supervision.

Responsibility for the development and delivery of training for fieldwork supervision aimed at students would in the main fall on social work training providers. This would allow students the chance to collectively process and problem-solve dilemmas with peers which has been said to be "invaluable" (Barretti, 2009, p. 61). It is conceivable that where strong collaborative relationships exist with fieldwork educators and external supervisors, that skills training, particularly experientially based learning could involve them, providing the added benefit of simultaneously contributing to the professional development of fieldwork educators and external supervisors.

### *Implications for fieldwork educators*

This leads to the next key implication arising from students' experiences, and that is that fieldwork educators themselves also require adequate skill and preparation for fieldwork supervision (Dettlaff, 2003; Williamson, et al., 2010). This study has shown that preparation of fieldwork educators needs to include the purpose and process of supervision with an emphasis on the learning focus they need to maintain in fieldwork supervision. Professional development for fieldwork educators needs to include information on the roles of those involved in supervision, and how to manage the interface between these roles. Naming and effectively managing power in supervision is critical. Guidelines on giving and receiving feedback using a model such as Hawkins and Shohet's (2006) feedback model known by the acronym CORBS (based on giving feedback which is clear, owned, regular, balanced and specific) would also reinforce what 'positive' supervision looks like in practice.

Similarly, providing fieldwork educators with a progression of expectations of the student supervisee will assist them having realistic expectations of their fieldwork student/s and the varying levels of support they need to offer depending on students' level of professional maturity (Stoltenberg, 2005). This professional development would need to be offered by training providers, perhaps in conjunction with skilled fieldwork educators and/or supervisors. It is important to ensure fieldwork educators are aware of Kia Tene/Off the Cuff (Douglas, 2011) so they can access its resources and activities to guide student learning.

Students' fieldwork supervision experiences show that a review of fieldwork educators positioning in regards to their role in the student's learning needs strengthening. The link between satisfaction with fieldwork supervision and fieldwork supervisors fostering

students' learning is clear (Giddings, et al., 2004). Given that fieldwork practicum is regarded as the main component in teaching social work "then, by implication, the Field Educator is the students' most important teacher" (Douglas, 2011, p. 36). Maidment (2000a) found that while there was agreement between field educators and social work students about what methods best assisted students' learning in the field, these did not tend to be used. Similarly a study conducted by Hay, O'Donoghue and Blagdon (2006) found that one of the three factors identified as contributing to non-achievement of fieldwork aims included lack of training for fieldwork educators. Thus the importance of fieldwork educators addressing students' learning needs cannot be overstated. Relatedly, if greater importance is placed on the role of fieldwork educator particularly within agencies, this may lead to a decrease in the number of students having two fieldwork supervisors, as those who take on this role give it the time and commitment it requires.

Given the importance of the fieldwork educator role a revisiting of the requirements for fieldwork educators appears warranted. While SWRB policies dictate that social work students must be supervised by a RSW (SWRB, 2011a), apart from an obligation to practice within the scope of their competency there is no requirement that the registered social work supervisor is an experienced or trained supervisor. Standard Seven of the ANZASW Supervisor Practice Standards (Supervisors' Interest Group, 2004) concerns the supervisor's knowledge of "social work and supervision methods" although it is unclear how this is monitored particularly given that the process of review for supervisors competency against supervisor standards (rather than social worker) is optional. It is acknowledged that a consequence of clarifying and potentially narrowing the eligibility criteria for fieldwork educators could result in a reduction in the pool of prospective fieldwork supervisors, and in turn limit the range of fieldwork agencies available to students. O'Donoghue (2010) proposes the implementation of a developmental framework for supervisors and supervisees which would go some way towards addressing this and would seem a good starting point for a development of this kind.

#### *Implications for external supervisors*

Another key implication arising from the findings is that external supervisors must be experienced and skilled in fieldwork supervision in order to take on this role. As this discussion has argued this may require development of criteria for experience and

demonstrated skill to accompany existing requirements of fieldwork supervisors. Many of the professional development needs identified as vital for fieldwork educators are similarly required by external supervisors, that is, understanding: the purpose and process of external supervision and the emphasis on the learning focus in fieldwork supervision; the differing roles of the various parties in supervision and the resulting importance of collaborating with the training provider; what 'positive' supervision looks like in practice, including naming and effectively managing power in supervision, and; the developmental progression of expectations of the student supervisee. This professional development could be undertaken by training providers alongside experienced fieldwork supervisors.

Given that literature searches to discover the extent to which external supervisors are used in fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand did not yield any concrete data, research into the nature and frequency of this in fieldwork in Aotearoa New Zealand would be valuable. Information such as who provides external supervision, for example increasingly academics as Beddoe (2012) suggests, and how successfully external supervision works from the perspectives of the different parties involved in fieldwork, would boost literature in the area, and be useful for understanding the phenomenon further.

#### *Implications for cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision*

This implication revealed by findings concerns the need to devise a plan to meet the cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision needs of students. This study showed that consideration of how cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision is positioned and how this aligns or not with obligations and accountabilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and social work practice standards in fieldwork, requires immediate attention. A plan detailing training providers' responses to who has access to these forms of supervision, under what circumstances, and how these forms of supervision will be resourced (including resourcing of appropriate personnel) is required to ensure the genuine provision of these forms of supervision.

The varied access that participants had to cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision highlights that further thought is required and guidelines needs to be established regarding how cultural supervision is positioned in relation to other forms of supervision, as well as what the training providers' response is to this. Undertaking research on this

phenomenon, and consequently developing guidelines and instituting practices which students will anticipate on graduating into the workforce, is an essential step. While financial resourcing is a consideration in the provision of cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision, the same could be said of all fieldwork supervision, and any decision made regarding resourcing to some extent reflects the position that form of supervision holds.

### *Implications for fieldwork coordinators*

Implications of these findings for fieldwork coordinators (or other relevant training provider staff) arising from the participants experiences relate to the demonstrated need to review the preparation of students for fieldwork supervision, in terms of what is taught, when, and how. As has been shown in each of the preceding implications there are many aspects from each of the implications which would require input and/or oversight by fieldwork coordinators. Based on participants' experiences, reviewing the learning outcomes of fieldwork preparation is warranted as is consideration of development of a progression of expectations of students in supervision. Preparation needs to be firmly based on principles of adult learning theory with a greater use of experiential learning, and on-going supported learning particularly at the commencement of practicum. There have been numerous content areas for preparation indicated by participants' experiences and supported by existing research, such as clearer use of contracting and conflict resolution (Barretti, 2009; Doel & Shardlow, 2005).

Similarly, fieldwork coordinators need to consider how they might ensure the adequate preparation of fieldwork supervisors, particularly emphasising the teaching role held by fieldwork supervisors and advocating for a certain level of experience and skill in supervision. This may involve the implementation of a developmental framework for fieldwork supervisors such as advocated by O'Donoghue (2010). As highlighted in the implications for fieldwork educators and external supervisors, there were many areas of preparation identified as essential to their preparation and professional development, a need which requires fieldwork coordinators (or other relevant training provider staff) to oversee.

Another important implication for fieldwork coordinators is the need to review how their training programme positions cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision and how they are resourced in their particular social work programme. A review would need to consider what a training provider teaches students about the use and provision of

cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision, and how what is articulated about these forms of supervision is evidenced in their programme.

## **Conclusion**

Exploring students' perceptions of their supervision experiences provides social work educators with insight into the preparation and support needs of future social work students embarking on fieldwork. This study has highlighted the need to seek out and listen to student voices, particularly in respect of fieldwork supervision. It has validated the position that fieldwork supervision is vital to fieldwork, the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2008; Shulman, 2008; Wayne, et al., 2010). Fieldwork supervision has been shown to be critical to student learning for fieldwork. This study has highlighted the key themes of knowledge, skill and relationship, all of which are documented as essential supervision components in the literature. The need for these themes to be researched from a student perspective has been highlighted, as has the need for research into students' preparation for fieldwork supervision, and the role of supervisors in fieldwork.

The need to develop more robust preparation for students and fieldwork supervisors, and to consider suitability criteria for practitioners taking on the role of fieldwork supervisor has been emphasised. Likewise, the importance of experiential learning in preparation of students has been reinforced, along with the need for on-going education and support for students experiencing fieldwork supervision. This study has also shed light on the need for expectations of student supervisees to align with their professional development, which may necessitate research into this area.

A pressing research need revealed by this study centres on cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision. How these are positioned in relation to other forms of fieldwork supervision, and how this corresponds with what best practice dictates, requires further consideration through research. This study has also emphasised the need for training providers to devise a plan to meet the cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision needs of all students preparing for practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As Chilvers impresses, fieldwork "provides an experience that has a lasting impact on the neophyte social worker's approach to practice, either positive or negative" (2011, p. 76). This research has shown that it is vital that those involved in fieldwork do what they

can to ensure the student's fieldwork supervision is the best it can be, so that the lasting impact is a positive one, for the student social worker, the social work profession, and importantly, clients.

# Chapter Six: Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to gain insight into the meaning student social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand formed about their fieldwork supervision experiences. This chapter reviews the research question and the methodological approach employed in this study. The key findings are briefly discussed, and implications arising from the study outlined. Recommendations for research prompted by the findings are considered, and a personal reflection on the thesis journey offered.

## Research objectives

This study sought to understand social work students' perceptions of their fieldwork supervision experiences. Three key questions shaped the research in order to gain insight into the phenomena. These questions sought to:

- reveal participants' experiences
- understand what participants perceived to be positive fieldwork supervision experiences
- increase insight into the understandings participants formed about their fieldwork supervision experiences.

Findings revealed in response to questions framed around each of these three research objectives are reviewed below.

## Methodology

The methodological approach adopted was phenomenological. Phenomenology is a qualitative methodology based on interpretivist reasoning. This approach was highly appropriate given that the intention of the study was to gain an understanding of participants' perceptions and gain thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) about participant experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the seven participants, providing rich data which was then explicated to reveal a number of themes.

## Key findings from the first research objective

In exploring participants' experiences of fieldwork supervision, six key findings were established, each of which is briefly reviewed below.

### *Insufficient preparation*

It was discovered that feeling inadequately prepared for fieldwork supervision was a significant part of participants' fieldwork supervision experience. Participants indicated that they did not have a clear understanding of the purpose of fieldwork supervision, or of its process. The lack of preparedness and the importance of grounding learning in experience were noted, showing that learning for fieldwork supervision needs to be addressed by training providers throughout the social work programme. This finding reinforces the importance of contracting in fieldwork supervision (Doel & Shardlow, 2005) and the part contracting plays in aiding supervisees' understanding of the purpose and process of supervision.

### *Reluctance to challenge*

Participants were reluctant to challenge unsatisfactory supervision and this raises questions about what role participants understood that supervision holds in learning for fieldwork and professional practice. This links with the first finding as it highlighted a possible consequence of supervisees not clearly understanding the purpose of fieldwork supervision; that is, they do not comprehend, in either the short-term or long-term, the significance of insisting on positive supervision for their professional development. This finding also emphasises the importance of students having sufficient conflict resolution skills to be able to appropriately address supervision issues (Ellis & Worrall, 2001). Other issues highlighted by this finding included: the possibility that a student's stage of professional development and emotional intelligence limits their ability to effectively identify, raise and address issues of unsatisfactory supervision (Morrison, 2005; O'Donoghue, 2012); and the importance of both supervisees and supervisors understanding and addressing the many forms of power inherent in supervision (Cleak & Wilson, 2004; Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

### *Expectations of subsequent supervision*

The third finding revealed that following their first experience of supervision, participants spoke of an increased sense of agency and improved clarity of supervision's purpose and process. This resulted in participants raising their expectations of supervision including expecting to have their supervision needs met in subsequent fieldwork supervision. Issues raised included: the appropriateness of adopting a developmental approach in expectations held of supervisees' ability to engage in fieldwork supervision, and; the importance of reviewing students' supervision histories when beginning supervision,

and; of supervisors and supervisees building on previous positive experiences (Doel & Shardlow, 2005; Morrison, 2005).

### *External supervision*

Several participants who experienced external supervision, valued their experiences of this more so than their experiences of agency-based supervision. Participants appreciated the challenge, support and professional development given in external supervision. It is not known whether perceptions of fieldwork supervisor's power and accountability or expertise based authority and clarity of role (Itzhaky, 2001) affected participants' preference, or whether participants' perceptions were influenced by how external supervisors are positioned in relation to fieldwork educators.

### *Cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision*

Access to cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision was inconsistent and limited. Questions about how this positions cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision (Eruera, 2005b) in relation to one-to-one supervision must be considered by training providers, and what provision is made for these particular forms of supervision during fieldwork. The commitment to and accountability for cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision provided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi as reinforced by professional social work bodies in Aotearoa New Zealand (ANZASW, 2008a; SWRB, 2011b), underscore the need for further research into the position and provision of these forms of supervision in this country. This finding also highlighted the variance of understandings participants had in defining cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision, reinforcing the lack of clarity about these and their provision.

### *Frequency of two supervisors*

An unanticipated finding was the relatively high incidence of participants having two supervisors for one practicum. This generates questions about the impact of this arrangement on student supervisees and the supervision relationship, the frequency with which this occurs, how having two supervisors impacts attachment in supervision and how this might impact a supervisee's perception of supervision's value.

## **Key findings from the second research objective**

The second research objective, which sought to understand the participants' perceptions of 'positive' fieldwork supervision, resulted in the findings briefly reviewed below.

### *Conceptualising 'positive' supervision*

A surprising aspect of this finding was that some participants had difficulty defining what 'positive' supervision might be. Difficulty in articulating ideas about positive supervision suggests a lack of conceptual understanding which reinforces the importance of preparation and on-going facilitated learning about fieldwork supervision. The key elements of 'positive' fieldwork supervision subsequently identified by participants included: professional development, support as well as challenge, the facilitation of reflective practice, clear communication, and well-managed power dynamics.

### **Key findings from the third research objective**

The final finding was revealed in response to questions which sought to gain insight into the perceptions social work students form about why their fieldwork supervision experiences occurred as they did.

### *Understandings participants formed about their supervision experiences*

Participants' narratives revealed five main understandings they formed about why fieldwork supervision transpired as it did:

- The understanding of the purpose and process of supervision participants, and in some instances their supervisor possessed
- Their assertiveness to insist on their supervision needs being met
- Their supervisor's experience and skill, in practice and in fieldwork supervision
- The relationship and perceived compatibility between them and their supervisor
- Luck

Each of these factors is briefly reviewed below.

### Understanding the purpose and process of supervision

Key to shaping their fieldwork supervision experience was the understanding that participants and in some instances their supervisor, possessed about the purpose and process of supervision. This factor corresponds to the need for preparation of both supervisee and supervisor as already highlighted, and the importance of experientially-based learning about supervision. This factor reiterated the importance of competence of both supervisor and supervisee; for a supervisee's competent and active participation

in supervision, and the supervisor's competence in fieldwork supervision as well as competence in practice.

### Participant assertiveness

Participants identified their own lack of assertiveness as a factor contributing to their experience of fieldwork supervision. This belief reflects a level of self-blame adopted by participants. Whether a lack of assertiveness reflected a lack of understanding about the shared responsibility for supervision or simply a level of professional maturity which presented as a lack of assertiveness, was unclear. The lack of preparedness may have contributed to participants feeling unsure of how to address their unsatisfactory supervision experience as well as unsure whether their supervision expectations were realistic or appropriate.

### Supervisor experience and skill

The experience and skill level of the fieldwork supervisor (specifically those who were perceived to be less skilled) was another factor seen by participants to contribute to participants' supervision encounters. This factor reinforces the need for fieldwork supervisors to be skilled practice teachers able to facilitate student learning, and to evidence competence in the field of practice in which the practicum is located. The importance attributed to supervision by some fieldwork educators may have a part to play in how supervision was perceived by participants, as some literature indicates the low status given to fieldwork supervision by staff or agencies is of concern (Beddoe, 1999; Maidment, 2000b) and reflects a lack of understanding of the critical role supervision plays in professional development and professional identity (Tsui, 2005).

Another element related to supervisory experience and skill was supervisors' flexibility in where and when supervision was provided. In part this reflects relational skills, but also suggests the need for students to make links with their learning in ways appropriate to their preferred learning styles (Cartney, 2000; Honey & Mumford, 1992). The supervision environment was perceived by participants as having a positive influence on the supervision experience. This signals the importance of a supervisor's skill in supervising in a manner tailored according to an individual student's learning needs.

## Relationship and Compatibility

Another understanding participants formed about the quality of their fieldwork supervision experiences related to relationship and compatibility. The supervisory relationship was seen as a key reason that fieldwork supervision was experienced by participants as positive or not, and in many instances viewed by participants as being hugely influenced by 'compatibility'. This was referred to in relation to a variety of characteristics, from sharing similar communication styles to practice perspectives, and worldviews. Compatibility includes aspects of relationship which in some instances was strengthened by participants having an existing relationship with their fieldwork supervisor. Relationship is resoundingly emphasised as vital to positive supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Davys, 2007; Scaife, 2001) although there are differing ideas about the extent to which matching supervisees and supervisors contributes to a positive relationship, and if so what might be desirable areas of compatibility (Caspi & Reid, 2002; Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

## Luck

The other significant factor identified by participants as shaping their fieldwork supervision experiences was luck. Participants perceived a level of inevitability to their experience, intimating that such experiences were likely at some point in their professional lifespan and they had the fortune or misfortune of experiencing positive or poor supervision at this particular point in their supervision history. Perceiving luck as a contributing factor to shaping their supervision experiences suggests that participants had a lack of understanding of the requirements of fieldwork supervisors and of the processes followed in appointing and allocating fieldwork supervisors.

## **Implications of key findings**

Participants' experiences of fieldwork supervision have implications for all stakeholders involved in fieldwork education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Because fieldwork supervision is so critical to a student social worker's professional development and professional identity, implications from this study are far-reaching. It is vital that social work students have positive experiences (Chilvers, 2011) so all those involved in fieldwork supervision need to play a part in contributing to this. There are six key implications identified from this study, the first relates to the transferability of the findings, four relate to preparation

of key stakeholders in fieldwork, and the fifth concerns access to and provision of cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision. Each of these implications are discussed below.

### *Transferability*

The first implication concerns the transferability (Bryman, 2004) of the findings, that is; the degree that participant experiences resonate with other social work students' supervision experiences; what other social work students view as positive fieldwork supervision, and; the understandings other social work students develop about their supervision experiences.

### *Implications for students*

The second implication is that social work students must be adequately prepared for fieldwork supervision. Through adequate preparation, students are more likely to maximise their learning in supervision, engaging in many of the learning and practice opportunities fieldwork supervision potentially provides. This study has identified some core areas which need to be included in the preparation of social work students. These areas are: the purpose and process of fieldwork supervision, particularly supervision's role in assisting learning; the importance of being actively engaged (Davys, 2007); emotional competence (O'Donoghue, 2012); conflict resolution (Barretti, 2009); contracting for supervision (Doel & Shardlow, 2005); knowing what positive supervision involves; how to utilise different forms of supervision; different forms of power in supervision and how power can be effectively managed; voicing supervision needs and expectations assertively (Barretta-Herman, 2001) and; appropriate expectations of supervisees at different levels of professional development (Tsui, 2005).

This study has shown the importance of grounding preparation of students for fieldwork supervision in experiential learning (Bogo, 2010). Preparation of students needs to continue to be developed and delivered by training providers, preferably in conjunction with fieldwork supervisors. Inherent in this implication is the need for student learning about fieldwork supervision to be on-going throughout the fieldwork practicum period. On-going support offered by fellow students through various mechanisms of peer support (Barretti, 2009) would enhance student learning as would existing support available from the training provider. Increasing peer support would in many instances necessitate more formal instances of peer support be made available to students, and

may require an increased diversity in provision of such support (Birkenmaier, et al., 2005).

### *Implications for fieldwork educators*

Implications specific to fieldwork educators raised by this study centre on the importance of adequately preparing them for fieldwork supervision (Dettlaff, 2003; Hay, et al., 2006) rather than assuming this occurs through a process of professional maturation. Findings from this study also implied that determining fieldwork educators' experience and skill (beyond solely meeting SWRB fieldwork supervisor requirements) prior to appointing them to this role would be beneficial. The importance of impressing on fieldwork educators their responsibility to assist student learning cannot be overstated. Understanding the significance of the learning element to fieldwork supervision and ensuring fieldwork educators can facilitate student learning is an essential component of their preparation for fieldwork supervision (Giddings, et al., 2004).

Fieldwork educators need to understand: the purpose and process of supervision, including the essentials of positive supervision; the importance of relationship and of experiencing positive supervision and of students forming a positive mental pattern of supervision (Hanna, 2007); how to appropriately manage power (Davys, 2005); giving and receiving feedback (Hawkins & Shoet, 2006) and; having expectations of supervisees appropriate to their level of professional development (Stoltenberg, 2005). Skills in developing and maintaining relationship in supervision have also been shown to be vital and highly valued by participants in this study so may need to be revisited in preparation developed for fieldwork educators. The importance of supervisors gaining a supervision history from new supervisees and explicitly contracting around issues mentioned above such managing power, and addressing conflict has also been shown by this study to be valuable, and would need to be emphasised in fieldwork educator training.

Developing a preparation package for fieldwork educators would most naturally fit with training providers, and could build on the work of the Kia Tene/Off the Cuff resource package (Douglas, 2011). Preparation for fieldwork educators could be developed in conjunction with experienced fieldwork educators and/or fieldwork supervisors. This could have the added benefit of providing useful liaison between agency based

supervisors and external supervisors, thereby encouraging discussion about their different relationship and accountabilities.

### *Implications for external supervisors*

Implications for external supervisors from this study centre on how the role of external supervisors is explained to and utilised by social work students. Training providers in particular need to be mindful of how they communicate to students the position held by external supervisors in relation to fieldwork educators. Additionally, it may be useful for external supervisors to overtly discuss the relationship between internally provided supervisors and themselves, and how these roles complement each other for the benefit of the students' learning. Specific preparation/training given to external supervisors to help them identify and address any unhelpful alliances or dynamics apparent in the supervision relationship may be beneficial.

As noted for fieldwork educators, external supervisors' supervision and practice experience and skill level must also be determined prior to them being appointed them to this role, and they must have a good understanding of the purpose and process of the supervision they are contracted to provide. External supervisors need to be able to identify and effectively manage power in supervision, and base expectations of the student as supervisee in developmental stages.

Confirming that external supervisors fulfil requirements of fieldwork supervisor needs to continue to sit with training providers. Similarly, any on-going professional development/training should continue to be developed by training providers, again in consultation with experienced external supervisors. Implications from this study also suggest that SWRB requirements regarding fieldwork supervisors need to be revised to include experience requirements in addition to competence determined by Registration. Such an addition may or may not include the demonstration of competence as a fieldwork supervisor.

### *Implications for cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision*

This implication raised by participants' experiences of fieldwork supervision centres on the positioning and provision of cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision in fieldwork. The provision of these forms of supervision and access to them by participants in this study showed that training providers need to give greater

consideration to how these forms of supervision are positioned in relation to one-to-one supervision in fieldwork. Training providers also need to review what access to these supervision forms communicates to students and practitioners about the place of these forms of supervision in bicultural practice. A clear position needs to be taken on this matter by training providers in consultation with the SWRB and ANZASW and a plan developed accordingly. What is communicated about both cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision can greatly influence students' understandings of these forms of supervision. In turn this can shape student expectations about these forms of supervision, and by implication, their understanding of the importance of bicultural practice.

#### *Implications for fieldwork coordinators*

This implication raised by the findings showed the pivotal role held by fieldwork coordinators in reviewing, developing and overseeing many of the suggestions noted in each of the implications above. The oversight and management of fieldwork education, with the intention of providing (as far as possible) positive fieldwork supervision experiences for students requires much of fieldwork coordinators. As the previous five implications have demonstrated, this study has shown that implementing quality fieldwork supervision requires a review of student preparation for fieldwork supervision, a thorough consideration of curriculum areas covered in student and fieldwork supervisor preparation including stressing the educative role of fieldwork supervisors, consideration of the requirements for fieldwork supervisors, and an appraisal of training providers' stance on cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision.

#### **Research recommendations**

This study has highlighted several areas in respect of fieldwork supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand which would benefit from further investigation through larger scale projects. Reviews of the relevant literature have demonstrated a lack of a student perspective on fieldwork supervision, and given the vital role of fieldwork supervision in shaping beginning practitioners, this highlights the need for further research from this perspective. The four key areas for further research highlighted by this study are: preparation of students for fieldwork supervision, expectations of students in fieldwork supervision, use of external supervisors in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the current and ideal provision of cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision. These are now each briefly considered and suggestions for further areas for study indicated.

Research into preparation of students for fieldwork supervision exploring what is provided to students and the degree of congruence between different training providers is needed to enhance preparation provided to students. This study cited a number of curriculum areas identified both by participants and the literature as vital to preparing students for fieldwork. It is anticipated that there may be additional areas not covered by this study, which more comprehensive research may identify thus benefitting students, training providers and ultimately clients. In addition to ascertaining the content of supervision preparation covered by training providers, an exploration of the forms of preparation students receive, and the duration for which this is provided, would provide useful information for social work educators to determine best practice in this area.

This study also indicated the need for research into a realistic progression of expectations of social work students. Development of a tiered framework or exploration into whether already devised frameworks for supervision such as that by Stoltenberg (2005) could be tailored to fieldwork supervision for social workers could benefit social work educators, students and fieldwork supervisors alike.

Thirdly, research on the extent to which external supervisors are used in Aotearoa New Zealand would provide useful data on how often this arrangement occurs, the conditions under which this takes place, and the understandings surrounding this arrangement. Research is needed into how frequently academics are used to provide external supervision, and the success or otherwise of this arrangement. Given that the SWRB has raised the requirements of supervisors for fieldwork practicum, it would be interesting to discover whether there is a shift in who provides supervision and what students' and supervisors' experiences are of these arrangements.

The fourth area of research highlighted by this study concerns the current and the ideal provision of both cultural and Kaupapa Māori supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand. Given obligations and provisions under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as well as professional obligations under ANZASW and SWRB policies, a 'stock take' is required of how these forms of supervision are explained, offered, and accessed in fieldwork, and how well or not this fits with the mandates offered by these documents. Further development of processes to identify, train and remunerate suitable persons to provide these forms of

supervision as suggested by O'Donoghue (2010) is required to appropriately resource this.

The extent to which students have two supervisors and the impact of this on the supervision relationship is another area this study identified as requiring further research. Given the vast amount of literature emphasising the importance of relationship in supervision (Beddoe, 2000; Hawkins & Shoheit, 2006; Itzhaky, 2001; Tsui, 2005) and the growing amount of literature exploring attachment theory in supervision (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, et al., 2008; Hanna, 2007), this is an area that could provide useful insights into supervision practice and supervision relationship. This could include consideration of how a students' perspective of the value of supervision is impacted by having two supervisors, or by a weak attachment to their supervisor.

Other areas identified for further research include development of a Māori fieldwork supervision model, exploration of the extent existing fieldwork models and resources are used, and possibilities for co-supervision in fieldwork. For example, it would be interesting to explore the benefits of co-supervision in fieldwork supervision and whether this arrangement would enable a greater number of supervisors to be involved in fieldwork supervision or whether this would detract from the learning attained by fieldwork students.

### **Limitations of the study**

As this study was based on the findings of data from interviews with seven social work students, it is dependent on the credibility of "the participants, their recollections, and the interpretation of participants' responses by the researcher" (O'Donoghue, 2012, p. 228). These findings have raised numerous questions about the meaning to both participants and to others involved in their fieldwork supervision. The degree of transferability of these findings depends on the extent to which others involved in fieldwork supervision share these experiences (Fook, 2002) and dependability of the processes by which the data was explicated (Bryman, 2004).

### **Personal Reflections on the research journey**

As with all good social work practice, reflection ought to be a key element of the social work research process (Redmond, 2004). This following section includes some of the researcher's reflections on the journey of this particular study.

As an experienced social work practitioner I was confident that I could interview the research participants and uncover the data needed to prepare a thesis. What I had not anticipated was that despite confidence in interviewing skills, I struggled with wanting to ensure my research practice maintained the integrity of the methodology used for this study. As I journeyed through the interview process, I realised that the methodology and the need to unearth meaning necessitated multiple layers of questioning. For me, this was a balance in eliciting meaning consistent with a phenomenological perspective and richness of descriptions, whilst avoiding interrogation style questioning. Despite this initial unease, undertaking the research to understand students' experiences reinforced both the legitimacy of the methodology, and of my 'fit' with phenomenology as a research lens. This uncertainty was also evident in my difficulty being comfortable with there not being a 'right way' to understand the research process or data, or to uncover the 'correct' answer. It was through a process of reflection, individually and through supervision, that I was able to find a level of comfort with this for myself. The research process reinforced the place of reflective practice in research as the journey forced me to reflect on what I was seeking to discover and the best way to elicit this information. The questions I asked of myself and the process and the reflections prompted by these questions I believe helped me maintain integrity both as a social work practitioner, and social work researcher.

A significant point in the research journey for me was in the data gathering phase, in meeting the research participants and being struck by their generosity in sharing their time and reflections. This was very humbling, and I felt privileged that they shared their stories and experiences with me, a stranger to them. I believe this reflected the integrity of the participants and their willingness to be involved in research and to contribute to on-going best practice ideas, thereby contributing to the greater good. I was struck by the participants' desire to pursue high standards of practice as evident in their narratives and reflections, and believe this also reflected something of the quality of the social work training programmes they attended.

I was also very conscious of the parallels between me learning how to effectively use academic supervision, what it was for and how that supervision relationship worked, whilst researching a similar dynamic between participants and their journey in professional supervision. The irony of this was not lost on me.

My journey through this research has reinforced to me the importance of social work research to inform both practice and understanding. My return to study has reignited my passion to maintain currency with social work literature, and reinforced to me the need for social work practice to contribute to research.

## **Conclusion**

This study has highlighted the centrality of fieldwork supervision to social work education, and the importance of social work students experiencing positive supervision in fieldwork. The implications raised by this study strongly suggest that in order to increase the prospect of this occurring, the preparation of those involved in fieldwork supervision requires further development, and that the positioning and resourcing of cultural supervision and Kaupapa Māori supervision require immediate consideration and action. In closing, the following statement made by Welch touches on the dichotomous place reached in this study where much has been learned, yet much is yet to be learned:

From a phenomenological perspective, the completion of any project is not to suggest that the final word regarding the phenomenon under study has been uttered. The final report is in actuality a living text that invites the reader to engage in a timeless dialogue from which new insights and understandings are gleaned. The completion of the project is viewed by phenomenology as both a point of arrival and a point of departure. (Welch, 2001, p. 71)

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## **APPENDIX A**

# **How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?**

### **Interview Schedule**

In asking this question I am interested in the following issues:

1. What are social work students experiences of fieldwork supervision?
2. How do they make sense of these experiences?

It is further anticipated that the research will be able to:

1. Identify whether any themes are apparent in the students' narratives.
2. Identify whether there is any connection between the themes identified.

### **Introduce myself:**

Mihimihi

Social Work training

Social Work and Supervision experience

### **Introduce the research project:**

MSW

My interest in project

General philosophy of phenomenological research

Structure of the interview

Consent

How information stored, confidentiality etc

Verification of transcription

How data to be used, destruction of data

### **Participant to introduce themselves**

Mihimihi

Age (10 year bands)

Gender

Ethnicity

Previous social work experience

## **Key questions**

- 1. Student's experience.**
- 2. Student's perception of the experience / how they understood this.**
- 3. Student's evaluation of the experience.**
- 4. How this may contribute to their future practice.**

- **Please tell me about how your Training provider arranges placements and supervisors.**

### **1a. Please tell me about where you did your fieldwork placements** **Probes:**

- How many fieldwork placements have you completed during your social work training?
- Where were your fieldwork placements? (organisation and field of practice or specialism).
- How was it decided where you would do your placement/s?

### **1b. Please tell me about the decision-making into selection of your fieldwork supervisor.**

#### **Probes:**

- How was it determined who would supervise you for your fieldwork placements?
- What supervision options were made available to you? In what ways were these options made known to you?
- What input did you have into this decision-making process?
- What processes were in place to monitor your supervision either during or upon completion of your fieldwork placements?
- What do you know about the ANZASW's (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers') or SWRB's (Social Work Registration Board's) policies on supervision?

### **1c. Tell me about your understanding of the purpose of supervision.**

#### **Probes:**

- Why do you think supervision is a requirement for social work trainees?
- What are your thoughts on who might benefit from supervision?

**1d. Tell me about the specifics of your fieldwork supervision arrangements.**

**Probes:**

- Supervision type (e.g. individual, group).
- Training year in which supervision received and period of supervision.
- Please tell me about the planned and actual frequency of this supervision?
- What contractual arrangements existed for this supervision (Written or verbal? Formal? Ad hoc?).
- Were there any other forms of supervision you participated in during the time of this supervision arrangement? (such as peer, cultural, informal).
- How did the additional supervision just described come about / was your supervisor aware of this arrangement / how did these different forms of supervision relate to each other / was your Training provider aware of this additional supervision?
- Tell me about the format supervision tended to take? What kinds of issues were raised and by whom?

**1e. Take some time to tell me about your experience of fieldwork supervision.**

**Probes:**

- What was your experience of fieldwork supervision?
- What are some examples of the highlights of your supervision experience?
- Tell me about any challenges that arose in fieldwork supervision for you.
- How would you describe your engagement with your supervisor?
- How would you describe your engagement with the process of supervision?

**2a. Given what you have told me so far, what is your understanding of why these things occurred?**

**Probes:**

- What is your thinking about why these things happened?
- If you were to be a supervisor at some point in the future what learning would take from these experiences?
- What have you picked up from your peers about their supervision experiences, and has that raised issues for you – either similarities or differences?

**3a. How would you describe the overall value of your fieldwork supervision?**

**Probes:**

- In what ways did supervision meet (or exceed) your expectations?
- In what ways did supervision not meet your expectations?
- What impact do you think this experience had on any subsequent supervision?
- What key things would you say you have learnt from this supervision experience?

**4a. What have you noticed about how these fieldwork supervision experiences have influenced your practice, or how do you think they will influence your practice?**

**Probes:**

- In what ways do you think your experience of fieldwork supervision has impacted on your practice?
- What might your experiences mean for your supervision in the future?
- What has been the impact of your fieldwork supervision experiences on your clients?
- What has been the impact of your fieldwork supervision experiences on you as a professional / on your professional development?

## APPENDIX B

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

### SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE THE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

*(Part A and Part B of this questionnaire must both be completed)*

**Name:** Leisa Maree Moorhouse

**Project Title:** How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?

This questionnaire should be completed following, or as part of, the discussion of ethical issues.

#### Part A

The statements below are being used to determine the risk of your project causing physical or psychological harm to participants and whether the nature of the harm is minimal and no more than is normally encountered in daily life. The degree of risk will then be used to determine the appropriate approval procedure.

If you are in any doubt you are encouraged to submit an application to one of the University's ethics committees.

#### Does your Project involve any of the following?

*(Please answer all questions. Please circle either YES or NO for each question)*

#### Risk of Harm

1. Situations in which the researcher may be at risk of harm.	YES	<b>NO</b>
2. Use of questionnaire or interview, whether or not it is anonymous which might reasonably be expected to cause discomfort, embarrassment, or psychological or spiritual harm to the participants.	YES	<b>NO</b>
3. Processes that are potentially disadvantageous to a person or group, such as the collection of information which may expose the person/group to discrimination.	YES	<b>NO</b>
4. Collection of information of illegal behaviour(s) gained during the research which could place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships.	YES	<b>NO</b>
5. Collection of blood, body fluid, tissue samples or other samples.	YES	<b>NO</b>
6. Any form of exercise regime, physical examination, deprivation (e.g. sleep, dietary).	YES	<b>NO</b>
7. The administration of any form of drug, medicine (other than in the course of standard medical procedure), placebo.	YES	<b>NO</b>
8. Physical pain, beyond mild discomfort.	YES	<b>NO</b>
9. Any Massey University teaching which involves the participation of Massey University students for the demonstration of procedures or phenomena which have a potential for harm.	YES	<b>NO</b>

### Informed and Voluntary Consent

10. Participants whose identity is known to the researcher giving oral consent rather than written consent (if participants are anonymous, you may answer No).	YES	NO
11. Participants who are unable to give informed consent.	YES	NO
12. Research on your own students/pupils.	YES	NO
13. The participation of children (seven (7) years old or younger).	YES	NO
14. The participation of children under sixteen (16) years old where parental consent is not being sought.	YES	NO
15. Participants who are in a dependent situation, such as people with a disability, or residents of a hospital, nursing home or prison or patients highly dependent on medical care.	YES	NO
16. Participants who are vulnerable.	YES	NO
17. The use of previously collected information or biological samples for which there was no explicit consent for this research.	YES	NO

### Privacy/Confidentiality Issue

18. Any evaluation of Massey University services or organisational practices where information of a personal nature may be collected and where participants may be identified.	YES	NO
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### Deception

19. Deception of the participants, including concealment and covert observations.	YES	NO
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### Conflict of Interest

20. Conflict of interest situation for the researcher (e.g. is the researcher also the lecturer/teacher/treatment-provider/colleague or employer of the research participants or is there any other power relationship between the researcher and the research participants?)	YES	NO
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### Compensation to Participants

21. Payments or other financial inducements (other than reasonable reimbursement of travel expenses or time) to participants.	YES	NO
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### Procedural

22. A requirement by an outside organisation (e.g. a funding organisation or a journal in which you wish to publish) for Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval.	YES	NO
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## Part B

The statements below are being used to determine if your project requires ethical approval by a Regional Health and Disability Ethics Committee. The statements are derived from the document, "Guidelines for an Accredited Institutional Ethics Committee to Refer Studies to an Accredited Health and Disability Ethics Committee", prepared by the Health Research Council Ethics Committee.

(<http://www.hrc.govt.nz/assets/pdfs/policy/ReferralGuidelines.pdf>)

In situations where you are not sure whether the research needs approval by an HDEC, you should seek an opinion from the Administrator of the relevant HDEC. <http://www.ethicscommittees.health.govt.nz/>. Include a copy of your written response from the Administrator with your application.

### Does your Project involve any of the following?

*(It is important that you answer all questions. Please circle either YES or NO for each question)*

23. The use of staff or facilities of a health provider (e.g. DHB, PHO or health NGO).	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
24. Support, directly or indirectly, in full or in part, by health provider funds (e.g. DHB, PHO or health NGO).	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
25. Participants who are patients/clients of, or health information about an identifiable individual held by, an organisation providing health services (for example, general practice, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, sports medicine), disability services, or institutionalised care.	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
26. Requirement for ethical approval to access health or disability information about an identifiable individual held by the Ministry of Health, or held by any public or private organisation whether or not that organisation is related to health.	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
27. A clinical trial which: requires the approval of the Standing Committee on Therapeutic Trials; requires the approval of the Gene Technology Advisory Committee; is sponsored by and/or for the benefit of the manufacturer or supplier of a drug or device.	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

**Determine the type of approval procedure to be used  
(choose one option):**

If you answer **YES** to any of  
the questions 1 to 22 (Part A)  
and **NO** to all questions in Part  
B

If you answer **YES** to any of  
the questions 23 to 27  
(Part B)

If you answer **NO** to all of  
the questions \*

Prepare an application  
using the  
**MUHEC Application Pack**

✓

Prepare an application  
using the  
**Health & Disability Ethics  
Committee  
Application Form**

**Prepare a  
Low Risk Notification**

*\* Note - Researchers who are  
new to the University, new to  
research with human participants  
or for whom Committee approval  
is desirable are welcome to send  
in a full MUHEC application, even  
if the Screening Questionnaire  
questions have all been answered  
"no".*

GO BACK TO APPROVAL PROCEDURES, STEP 4, AND DOWNLOAD THE INFORMATION  
REQUIRED.

<http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/ethics/human-ethics/approval.cfm>

## APPENDIX C



Application No: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
*This number is assigned when your application is accepted.  
Quote on all documentation to participants and the Committee.*

### Human Ethics Application

#### FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED RESEARCH/TEACHING/EVALUATION INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

*(All applications are to be typed and presented using language that is free from jargon and comprehensible to lay people)*

#### SECTION A

1 **Project Title** How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?  
**Projected start date for data collection** 01 May 2011 **Projected end date** 30 Nov 2011  
*(In no case will approval be given if recruitment and/or data collection has already begun).*

2 **Applicant Details** *(Select the appropriate box and complete details)*

#### ACADEMIC STAFF APPLICATION (excluding staff who are also students)

**Full Name of Staff Applicant/s** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School/Department/Institute** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Campus (mark one only)** Albany  Palmerston North  Wellington   
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

#### STUDENT APPLICATION

**Full Name of Student Applicant** Leisa Maree Moorhouse  
**Employer (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone** 07 543 0298 **Email Address** l.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz  
**Postal Address** 44 Williams Rd, RD 3, Tauranga 3173  
**Full Name of Supervisor(s)** Dr Kieran B. O'Donoghue, Kathryn S. Hay  
**School/Department/Institute** Health and Social Services  
**Campus (mark one only)** Albany  Palmerston North  Wellington   
**Telephone** 06 356 9099 X 2822 **Email Address** [K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz)  
[K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz)

#### GENERAL STAFF APPLICATION

**Full Name of Applicant** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Section** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Campus (mark one only)** Albany  Palmerston North  Wellington   
**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Line Manager** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Section** \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Type of Project** (provide detail as appropriate)

Staff Research/Evaluation:

Student Research: ✓

If other, please specify:

Academic Staff

Specify Qualification

MSW

General Staff

Specify Credit Value of Research

120

Evaluation

(e.g. 30, 60, 90, 120, 240, 360)

**4 Summary of Project**

Please outline in no more than 200 words in lay language why you have chosen this project, what you intend to do and the methods you will use.

(Note: All the information provided in the application is potentially available if a request is made under the Official Information Act. In the event that a request is made, the University, in the first instance, would endeavour to satisfy that request by providing this summary. Please ensure that the language used is comprehensible to all.)

Social work incorporates the oversight of practitioners by more experienced workers known as 'supervisors' to enable, guide and facilitate the social worker in meeting identified personal, professional and organisational objectives. Students' initial experience of supervision is whilst undertaking fieldwork practice as part of their social work training. Given the importance of supervision and the impact it can have over the professional lifespan of a social worker, coupled with the lack of research identified which considers a student perspective, the proposed study seeks to explore social work students' perceptions of their fieldwork supervision experiences.

The proposed research will involve individual interviews with social work students about their experiences of fieldwork placement supervision and their perceptions of these experiences. The findings from this research will contribute to the literature on both supervision and fieldwork practice.

**5 List the Attachments to your Application**, e.g. Completed "Screening Questionnaire to Determine the Approval Procedure" (compulsory), Information Sheet/s (indicate how many), Translated copies of Information Sheet/s, Consent Form/s (indicate of how many), Translated copies of Consent Form/s, Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement, Confidentiality Agreement (for persons other than the researcher / participants who have access to project data), Authority for Release of Tape Transcripts, Advertisement, Health Checklist, Questionnaire, Interview Schedule, Evidence of Consultation, Letter requesting access to an institution, Letter requesting approval for use of database, Other (please specify).

- Screening Questionnaire to Determine the Approval Procedure
- Information Sheet/s (one only)
- Participant Consent Form/s (one only)
- Confidentiality Agreement (for persons other than the researcher / participants who have access to project data, including transcriber)
- Authority for Release of Tape Transcripts
- Advertisement / Script for Training Providers to Invite Student Participation
- Interview Schedule
- Letter requesting access to an institution/Cover Letter
- Other : Initial Request to Training Provider Script  
: Data Collection Process Flowchart

Applications that are incomplete or lacking the appropriate signatures will not be processed. This will mean delays for the project.

Please refer to the Human Ethics website (<http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz>) for details of where to submit your application and the number of copies required.

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**SECTION B: PROJECT INFORMATION**

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**General**

- 6 I/We wish the protocol to be heard in a closed meeting (Part II). Yes  No   
*(If yes, state the reason in a covering letter.)*
- 7 Does this project have any links to previously submitted MUHEC or HDEC application(s)? Yes  No   
If yes, list the MUHEC or HDEC application number/s (if assigned) and relationship/s.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Is approval from other Ethics Committees being sought for the project? Yes  No   
If yes, list the other Ethics Committees.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9 For staff research, is the applicant the only researcher? Yes  No  NA   
If no, list the names and addresses of all members of the research team.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Project Details**

- 1 State concisely the aims of the project.  
0 To explore perceptions social work students have of their supervision experiences, and in doing so contribute a student voice to existing research.

- 1 Give a brief background to the project to place it in perspective and to allow the project's significance to be assessed. *(No more than 200 words in lay language)*

It has been shown that experiences students have in the formative stages of their professional development are influential in shaping their practice throughout their professional lives (potentially impacting hundreds of clients). Previously modelled practices can be reproduced by students not only once they become qualified, but these experiences (successful or otherwise) can be replicated when students themselves become supervisors (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Morrison, 2001; Munson, 2001). This highlights the importance of students experiencing good fieldwork opportunities and fieldwork supervision during training as emphasised by Slocombe "Fieldwork still remains the single most important factor in the preparation of social workers..." (1993, p. 49).

While there is a significant amount of literature on supervision, there are only a relatively small number of studies on fieldwork supervision. Studies exploring fieldwork supervision have not included a student perspective on supervision beyond a limited number looking at students' supervision preferences with regards to their supervisor's learning style (Lazar & Eisikovits, 1997) and predictors to students' satisfaction with the fieldwork placement itself (Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Fortune, et al., 1989). What this reveals is that a student voice into the supervision experience is missing. The proposed study is therefore interested in exploring social work students' experiences of fieldwork supervision during their training.

- 
- 1 Outline the research procedures to be used, including approach/procedures for collecting data. Use a flow chart if necessary.**

The proposed research is qualitative, exploring social work students' experiences of fieldwork supervision during their training.

The research plans to use semi-structured in-depth interviews up to two hours duration utilising an interview format with open-ended interview questions and probes (attached).

The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. Transcripts will then be reviewed and amended by participants before the data is used.

Please see Data Collection Process Flowchart (attached)

- 
- 1 Where will the project be conducted? Include information about the physical location/setting.**

- 3** Interviews will be conducted at a mutually agreed venue. The researcher will have a mobile phone on her to assist with her personal safety and use a personal vehicle parked for ease of quick exit if necessary. Transcription, analysis and writing up of the findings will take place in the researcher's home office.

- 
- 1 If the study is based overseas:**

- 4**
- i) Specify which countries are involved;
  - ii) Outline how overseas country requirements (if any) have been complied with;
  - iii) Have the University's Policy & Procedures for Course Related Student Travel Overseas been met?  
*(Note: Overseas travel undertaken by students – refer to item 5.10 in the document "Additional Information" on the MUHEC website.)*

N/A

- 
- 1 Describe the experience of the researcher and/or supervisor to undertake this type of project?**

- 5**
- I am a Registered Social Worker with nearly 20 years experience of working alongside others, using both structured and semi-structured interview techniques. I have provided supervision for social work students and graduates for several years, and have undertaken post-graduate training on supervision. I have also been involved in coordinating practicum for both social work and counselling students for several years and I successfully completed 179.702 Advanced Research Methods in 2010. I also have the guidance and oversight of two research supervisors who are both experienced qualitative researchers.

- 
- 1 Describe the process that has been used to discuss and analyse the ethical issues present in this project.**

- 6**
- I have familiarised myself with the MUHEC Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations (2010) Involving Human Participants, and as a requirement for the Research Proposal required for 179.702 Advanced Research Methods paper, identified the key ethical considerations and have reviewed these issues with my research supervisors.

---

### **Participants**

- 17 Describe the intended participants.**
- Social work students in their final year of social work training who have experienced supervision during their training whilst on fieldwork placement.

- 18 How many participants will be involved?**

A maximum of 10

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**What is the reason for selecting this number?**

*(Where relevant, attach a copy of the Statistical Justification to the application form)*

As the research is qualitative it is concerned with exploring in detail the experiences of a small number of participants.

---

**19 Describe how potential participants will be identified and recruited?**

Recruitment of research participants will be through social work training providers who have students living in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato. Contact will be made with the Training Provider by phone in the first instance to request they invite students to participate in the research process. Should they consent to this the Training Provider will be mailed the research Advertisement /Script for Training Providers and 20 sealed envelopes each containing an Information Sheet, Participant Consent Forms, and a prepaid envelope addressed to the researcher. Training Providers will be asked to read out the Advertisement/Script to their final year social work students, and distribute the sealed envelopes to interested students. Students willing to participate can contact the researcher to clarify questions or to indicate consent and arrange an interview time. Students not requiring further clarification can sign the consent form provided and return it in the prepaid envelope to the researcher, who will contact the interested student to arrange an interview time.

The main selection criteria is social work students who have had fieldwork supervision during their training and are in their final year of study. There is no preference in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, or other significant characteristics - the first ten students who consent to be participants will be involved in the research. The essential criteria is that the participants have experienced the phenomenon, are willing to participate in a recorded interview and give permission for the data to be published.

Should initial recruitment result in insufficient participants, extending the sample area to include the central North Island will be considered.

---

**20 Does the project involve recruitment through advertising?**

Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the advertisement to the application form)*

Advertisement/Script for Training Providers attached

---

**21 Does the project require permission of an organisation (e.g. an educational institution, an academic unit of Massey University or a business) to access participants or information?**

Yes  No

**If yes, list the organisation(s).**

*(Attach a copy of the draft request letter(s), e.g. letter to Board of Trustees, PVC, HoD/I/S, CEO etc to the application form. Include this in your list of attachments (Q5). Note that some educational institutions may require the researcher to submit a Police Security Clearance.)*

The University of Waikato/ The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic

Te Whare Wananga o Aotearoa (Tauranga campus)

Waiariki Institute of Technology

Waikato Institute of Technology

Copies of the request letter giving the researcher permission to access participants whilst gained prior to data collection will be forwarded to the MUHEC upon completion of the project.

---

**22 Who will make the initial approach to potential participants?**

The training provider

---

**23 Describe criteria (if used) to select participants from the pool of potential participants.**

Social Work students must be in their final year of training, and have been supervised during their training whilst on fieldwork placement.

- 24 How much time will participants have to give to the project?  
3-4 hours (Up to 2 hours interview, plus reviewing and amending transcript)

**Data Collection**

- 25 Does the project include the use of participant questionnaire/s? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the Questionnaire/s to the application form and include this in your list of attachments)*

- If yes: i) indicate whether the participants will be anonymous (i.e. their identity unknown to the researcher). Yes  No

- ii) describe how the questionnaire will be distributed and collected.

*(If distributing electronically through Massey IT, attach a copy of the draft request letter to the Director, Information Technology Services to the application form. Include this in your list of attachments (Q5) – refer to the policy on “Research Use of IT Infrastructure”.)*

- 26 Does the project involve observation of participants? If yes, please describe. Yes  No

- 27 Does the project include the use of focus group/s? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement for the focus group to the application form)*

If yes, describe the location of the focus group and time length, including whether it will be in work time. *(If the latter, ensure the researcher asks permission for this from the employer).*

- 28 Does the project include the use of participant interview/s? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the Interview Questions/Schedule to the application form)*

Attached

If yes, describe the location of the interview and time length, including whether it will be in work time. *(If the latter, ensure the researcher asks permission for this from the employer)*

The interview will be at a mutually agreed location. It is not anticipated that the student will have to take time off work or study. If the interview is to be conducted during the participant’s work hours, the researcher will request permission of the employer to do so in the participant’s work time. Should participants be on their Fieldwork Placement, they would require the consent of their Training Provider and/or Fieldwork Educator to meet during usual hours of work/fieldwork.

- 29 Does the project involve sound recording? Yes  No

- 30 Does the project involve image recording, e.g. photo or video? Yes  No

If yes, please describe. *(If agreement for recording is optional for participation, ensure there is explicit consent on the Consent Form)*

- 31 If recording is used, will the record be transcribed? Yes  No

If yes, state who will do the transcribing.

I will transcribe the audio recording, as long as time allows. Should transcription be too time consuming I will employ the services of a suitably recommended person to transcribe the interviews. This person will be required to sign the relevant Confidentiality Agreement (attached).

*(If not the researcher, a Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement is required – attach a copy to the application form. Normally, transcripts of interviews should be provided to participants for editing, therefore an Authority For the Release of Tape Transcripts is required – attach a copy to the application form. However, if the researcher considers that the right of the participant to edit is inappropriate, a justification should be provided below.)*

- 32 Does the project involve any other method of data collection not covered in Qs 25-31? Yes  No

If yes, describe the method used.

- 33 Does the project require permission to access databases? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the draft request letter/s to the application form. Include this in your list of attachments (Q5). Note: If you wish to access the Massey University student database, written permission from Director, National Student Relations should be attached.)*

- 34 Who will carry out the data collection?

The researcher

### SECTION C: BENEFITS / RISK OF HARM (Refer Code Section 3, Para 10)

- 35 What are the possible benefits (if any) of the project to individual participants, groups, communities and institutions?

Individual participants may benefit from having their experiences (either helpful or unhelpful) of fieldwork supervision heard, which could in turn benefit the future use they make of supervision. Training Providers might benefit from hearing about the supervision experiences of their students, and may consider modifying their practices given these experiences. Where students had helpful supervision experiences, the Training Providers will benefit by having their practices and personnel validated. Whether Training institutions Providers endorse or modify their supervision arrangements as a result of the research findings, future social work students will benefit, as will the clients and communities they work with.

- 36 What discomfort (physical, psychological, social), incapacity or other risk of harm are individual participants likely to experience as a result of participation?

There is the possibility that in exceptional cases participants may experience some discomfort in retelling the experience if they have strong emotions associated to this experience. While this is acknowledged as a discomfort, it is not anticipated that this necessitates harm, but that the converse is true in that retelling the experience may offer some therapeutic benefit to the participants concerned.

There is also possibility for harm if a participant were to criticise their Training Provider, although this risk is minimised in managing the confidentiality of the participant and their Training Provider. Neither providers nor participants will be named and every effort will be made to protect identities of both participants and providers.

- 37 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q36.

Should a participant present with signs of discomfort, I will allow them to express what is happening for them in the retelling of this experience and respond with silence, the offer of tissues or clarifying questions as seems appropriate at the time. I will clarify whether this information has been relayed to the appropriate staff at their training institute and whether it is something they have addressed in supervision and/or personal counselling. If I deem it appropriate I would encourage the student to pursue the matter further with the appropriate personnel as indicated above.

Neither providers nor participants will be named and every effort will be made to protect identities of both participants and providers.

---

**38 What is the risk of harm (if any) of the project to the researcher?**

The only perceived harm is potentially that of psychological discomfort at hearing participants' stories and being affected by this myself.

---

**39 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q38.**

As guided by my training and experience as a registered social worker I would identify this response as my own and focus on the participant's needs rather than mine. If the affect was significant I would contact my research supervisors and discuss it with them.

---

**40 What discomfort (physical, psychological, social) incapacity or other risk of harm are groups/communities and institutions likely to experience as a result of this research?**

It is possible that Providers or Supervisors could be professionally harmed were confidentiality not maintained.

---

**41 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q40.**

Neither providers nor participants will be named and every effort will be made to protect identities of both participants and providers.

---

**42 Is ethnicity data being collected as part of the project?**

Yes  No

If yes, will the data be used as a basis for analysis? If so, justify this use in terms of the number of participants.

If no, justify this approach, given that in some research an analysis based on ethnicity may yield results of value to Maori and to other groups.

*(Note that harm can be done through an analysis based on insufficient numbers)*

As this is a qualitative study this data will be used to provide the general overview of the background of the research participants and their supervisors as a group rather than for comparative purposes.

Collection of this data relates to the reader understanding the background of participants and how this may contribute to a participant's perception of their experiences of fieldwork supervision.

---

**43 If participants are children/students in a pre-school/school/tertiary setting, describe the arrangements you will make for children/students who are present but not taking part in the research.**

*(Note that no child/student should be disadvantaged through the research)*

N/A

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**SECTION D: INFORMED & VOLUNTARY CONSENT (Refer Code Section 3, Para 11)**

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**44 By whom and how, will information about the research be given to potential participants?**

Potential participants will be advised of the research by their Training Provider, initially by way of an invitation and then if they indicate an interest in being involved, through an Information Sheet the Training Provider will give them on the researcher's behalf.

45 Will consent to participate be given in writing? Yes  No

*(Attach copies of Consent Form/s to the application form)*

If no, justify the use of oral consent.

46 Will participants include persons under the age of 16? Yes  No

If yes: i) indicate the age group and competency for giving consent.

ii) indicate if the researcher will be obtaining the consent of parent(s)/caregiver(s). Yes  No

*(Note that parental/caregiver consent for school-based research may be required by the school even when children are competent. Ensure Information Sheets and Consent Forms are in a style and language appropriate for the age group.)*

47 Will participants include persons whose capacity to give informed consent may be compromised? Yes  No

If yes, describe the consent process you will use.

48 Will the participants be proficient in English? Yes  No

If no, all documentation for participants (Information Sheets/Consent Forms/Questionnaire etc) must be translated into the participants' first-language.

*(Attach copies of the translated Information Sheet/Consent Form etc to the application form)*

**SECTION E: PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES (Refer Code Section 3, Para 12)**

49 Will any information be obtained from any source other than the participant? Yes  No

If yes, describe how and from whom.

50 Will any information that identifies participants be given to any person outside the research team? Yes  No

If yes, indicate why and how.

51 Will the participants be anonymous (i.e. their identity unknown to the researcher?) Yes  No

If no, explain how confidentiality of the participants' identities will be maintained in the treatment and use of the data.

This will involve using pseudonyms for research participants and ensuring that as far as possible that information is not revealed in such a way that a third party or connected person could ascertain a participant's or Training Provider's Identity. The researcher is mindful of possible issues pertaining to internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004) when using pseudonyms. Every effort will be made to ensure that as far as possible that information is not revealed in such a way that a third party or connected person could ascertain a participant's, supervisor's or Training Provider's Identity.

The reporting of demographic data will be aggregated across in terms of range, which it is anticipated will lessen any threat of a particular participant, training provider or supervisor being able to be identified.

- 52 Will an institution (e.g. school) to which participants belong be named or be able to be identified? Yes  No

If yes, explain how you have made the institution aware of this?

- 53 Outline how and where:

i) the data will be stored, and

*(Pay particular attention to identifiable data, e.g. tapes, videos and images)*

Data will be stored: on a pen drive or Dictaphone stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office, or on my personal computer.

ii) Consent Forms will be stored.

*(Note that Consent Forms should be stored separately from data)*

Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my work office.

- 54 i) Who will have access to the data/Consent Forms?

Leisa Moorhouse and her supervisors if requested.

ii) How will the data/Consent Forms be protected from unauthorised access?

The storage facilities are locked and only accessible by me.

- 55 How long will the data from the study be kept, who will be responsible for its safe keeping and eventual disposal? (Note that health information relating to an identifiable individual must be retained for at least 10 years, or in the case of a child, 10 years from the age of 16).

*(For student research the Massey University HOD Institute/School/Section / Supervisor / or nominee should be responsible for the eventual disposal of data. Note that although destruction is the most common form of disposal, at times, transfer of data to an official archive may be appropriate. Refer to the Code, Section 4, Para 24.)*

It will be kept for a period of three years, I will continue to remain responsible for its safe keeping over this time, and for its disposal after this period.

#### SECTION F: DECEPTION (Refer Code Section 3, Para 13)

- 56 Is deception involved at any stage of the project? Yes  No

If yes, justify its use and describe the debriefing procedures.

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**SECTION G: CONFLICT OF ROLE/INTEREST (Refer Code Section 3, Para 14)**

57 Is the project to be funded in any way from sources external to Massey University? Yes  No

If yes: i) state the source.

ii) does the source of the funding present any conflict of interest with regard to the research topic?

58 Does the researcher/s have a financial interest in the outcome of the project? Yes  No

If yes, explain how the conflict of interest situation will be dealt with.

59 Describe any professional or other relationship between the researcher and the participants? (e.g. employer/employee, lecturer/student, practitioner/patient, researcher/family member). Indicate how any resulting conflict of role will be dealt with.

None

---

**SECTION H: COMPENSATION TO PARTICIPANTS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 23)**

60 Will any payments or other compensation be given to participants? Yes  No

If yes, describe what, how and why.

*(Note that compensation (if provided) should be given to all participants and not constitute an inducement. Details of any compensation provided must be included in the Information Sheet.)*

---

**SECTION I: TREATY OF WAITANGI (Refer Code Section 2)**

61 Are Maori the primary focus of the project? Yes  No

If yes: Answer Q62 – 65

If no, outline: i) what Maori involvement there may be, and

Participants who choose to participate in this study may be Maori.

ii) how this will be managed.

The researcher is Maori and competent in Te Reo Maori. Tikanga will be observed with the opportunity to start and finish the interview with karakia, some whakawhanaunga connections made at the outset of the interview and an offer of a cup of tea and kai made at the conclusion of the

62 Is the researcher competent in te reo Maori and tikanga Maori? Yes  No

If no, outline the processes in place for the provision of cultural advice.

63 Identify the group/s with whom consultation has taken place or is planned and describe the consultation process.

*(Where consultation has already taken place, attach a copy of the supporting documentation to the application form, e.g. a letter from an iwi authority)*

None

64 Describe any ongoing involvement of the group/s consulted in the project.

None

65 Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with the group/s consulted?

N/A

**SECTION J: CULTURAL ISSUES (Refer Code Section 3, Para 15)**

66 Other than those issues covered in Section I, are there any aspects of the project that might raise specific cultural issues? Yes  No

If yes, explain. Otherwise, proceed to Section K.

It may be that participants from various ethnic or other social groupings are involved in the research. This may require consideration as to the interviewing needs specific to them, as well as further consideration and/or increased awareness by me of their particular fieldwork supervision requirements.

67 What ethnic or social group/s (other than Maori) does the project involve?

Potentially the ethnic and social groupings resident in Aotearoa/New Zealand

68 Does the researcher speak the language of the target population? Yes  No

If no, specify how communication with participants will be managed.

69 Describe the cultural competence of the researcher for carrying out the project.

*(Note that where the researcher is not a member of the cultural group being researched, a cultural advisor may be necessary)*

As required by both ANZASW and the Social Work Registration Board competency I am able to work with a variety of ethnic and social groups in New Zealand, and where I would need to work outside the level of my competency I am able to access advisors as necessary.

70 Identify the group/s with whom consultation has taken place or is planned.

*(Where consultation has already taken place, attach a copy of the supporting documentation to the application form)*

This will be on an as required basis, dependant on the composition and needs of the individual participants.

71 Describe any ongoing involvement of the group/s consulted in the project.

Nil

72 Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with the group/s consulted.

N/A

- 73 If the research is to be conducted overseas, describe the arrangements you will make for local participants to express concerns regarding the research.

N/A

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**SECTION K: SHARING RESEARCH FINDINGS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 26)**

- 74 Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with participants and disseminated in other forums, e.g. peer review, publications, conferences.

*(Note that receipt of a summary is one of the participant rights)*

Transcripts of the interviews will be reviewed and amended if necessary by the participants prior to analysis. A summary of findings will be posted to participants and they will be advised of the link to the thesis online accessible through the Massey University Institutional Research Repository

It is also anticipated that the data will be used as the basis for journal articles and conference presentations.

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**SECTION L: INVASIVE PROCEDURES/PHYSIOLOGICAL TESTS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 21)**

- 75 Does the project involve the collection of tissues, blood, other body fluids or physiological tests? *(If yes, complete Section L, otherwise proceed to Section M)* Yes  No

If yes, are the procedures to be used governed by Standard Operating Procedure(s)? If so, please name the SOP(s). If not, identify the procedure(s) and describe how you will minimise the risks associated with the procedure(s)?

- 76 Describe the material to be taken and the method used to obtain it. Include information about the training of those taking the samples and the safety of all persons involved. If blood is taken, specify the volume and number of collections.

- 77 Will the material be stored? Yes  No

If yes, describe how, where and for how long.

- 78 Describe how the material will be disposed of (either after the research is completed or at the end of the storage period).

*(Note that the wishes of relevant cultural groups must be taken into account)*

- 79 Will material collected for another purpose (e.g. diagnostic use) be used? Yes  No

If yes, did the donors give permission for use of their samples in this project? Yes  No   
*(Attach evidence of this to the application form).*

If no, describe how consent will be obtained. Where the samples have been anonymised and consent cannot be obtained, provide justification for the use of these samples.

- 80 Will any samples be imported into New Zealand? Yes  No

If yes, provide evidence of permission of the donors for their material to be used in this research.

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

If yes, state where.

*(Note this information must be included in the Information Sheet)*

82 Describe any physiological tests/procedures that will be used.

83 Will participants be given a health-screening test prior to participation? *(If yes, attach a copy of the health checklist)* Yes  No

**Reminder: Attach the completed Screening Questionnaire and other attachments listed in Q5**

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**SECTION M: DECLARATION** *(Complete appropriate box)*

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**ACADEMIC STAFF RESEARCH****Declaration for Academic Staff Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. My Head of Department/School/Institute knows that I am undertaking this research. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Staff Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**STUDENT RESEARCH****Declaration for Student Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Supervisor. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.

The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Student Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration for Supervisor**

I have assisted the student in the ethical analysis of this project. As supervisor of this research I will ensure that the research is carried out according to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**GENERAL STAFF RESEARCH/EVALUATIONS****Declaration for General Staff Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Line Manager. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

General Staff Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration for Line Manager**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.

Line Manager's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**TEACHING PROGRAMME****Declaration for Paper Controller**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the teaching programme as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. My Head of Department/School/Institute knows that I am undertaking this teaching programme. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Paper Controller's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration for Head of Department/School/Institute**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.

Head of Dept/School/Inst Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

## References

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## APPENDIX D



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

12 July 2011

Leisa Moorhouse  
44 Williams Road  
RD 3  
TAURANGA 3173

Dear Leisa

**Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 11/22  
How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?**

Thank you for your letter dated 7 July 2011.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Matthews'.

Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair  
**Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B**

cc Dr Kieran O'Donoghue  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

Ms Kathryn Hay  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

Prof Steve LaGrow, HoS  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

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Massey University Human Ethics Committee  
Accredited by the Health Research Council

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Te Kūnenga  
ki Pūrehuroa

## **APPENDIX E**

### **How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?**

#### **INITIAL PHONE REQUEST TO TRAINING PROVIDERS**

##### **Draft of phone request to Social Work Programme Leader**

Kia ora, my name is Leisa Moorhouse.

Is now a convenient time to speak with you? [If so continue, if not arrange a convenient time to phone back]

I am a registered social worker based in Tauranga and am about to undertake some research for completion of my Master in Social Work. The research explores social work students' perceptions of their experiences of fieldwork supervision. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

I hope to interview up to 10 students in face to face semi-structured interviews. The student's name and also that of your training institution is confidential and care will be taken that the information will be presented in such a way that neither the student nor their Training provider will be identifiable.

The data from this project will form the basis of the Master thesis and may also be used as the basis for journal articles and conference presentations. You will be able to access the thesis through the Massey University Institutional Research Repository on line.

Would you be willing to inform your final year social work students about this research project?

[If decline] Thank you for your time [end of call].

[If agree to do so] That is wonderful, thank you.

I will send you an Advertisement/Script for you to please read to the students to inform them of the project. I will also send you 20 sealed envelopes containing Information Sheets, Participant Consent Forms and prepaid envelopes for distributing to interested students. They can then either contact me for further clarification, or on reading the information send me their consent forms and I will contact them from there. If students are not interested, please thank them for their time, and accept my thanks for advertising the research on my behalf.

Do you have any questions?

Do you know when you would be able to inform your students about the project so that I can make sure I get the information to you by then? I will contact you in a few weeks if I have not heard from any students so I can ascertain student interest in the project.

Also I need to advise you that my thesis supervisors are Dr Kieran O'Donoghue and Kathryn Hay from Massey University whom you can contact should you have any questions. Would you like their contact details now?

Thank you for your consideration of this project and your students' involvement. Would you like my contact details now or shall I post those out to you?

Thank you.

## APPENDIX F



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

12 July 2011

Leisa Moorhouse  
44 Williams Road  
RD 3  
TAURANGA 3173

Dear Leisa

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 11/22  
How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?

Thank you for your letter dated 6 October 2011 outlining the change you wish to make to the above application.

The change has been approved and noted as follows:

- Extension of sample to other providers in the North Island;
- Please provide a copy of the permission letter from providers, when received.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee. If over time, more than one request to change the application is received, the Chair may request a new application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Matthews'.

Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair  
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Dr Kieran O'Donoghue  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

Ms Kathryn Hay  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

Prof Steve LaGrow, HoS  
School of Health & Social Services  
PN371

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Massey University Human Ethics Committee  
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4402, New Zealand  
T +64 6 350 5673 -64 6 350 5575 F +64 6 350 5622  
E humareth@massey.ac.nz eths@ethics.massey.ac.nz pic@massey.ac.nz  
www.massey.ac.nz

## APPENDIX G



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

[To Training Provider Programme Leader]

RE: MSW Research Project:

### **"How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?"**

I am a student undertaking my research project on the Masters of Social Work programme at Massey University. I am interested in exploring what social work students' experiences of supervision have been during their training whilst on fieldwork placements. I plan to interview up to 10 social work students to hear about their supervision experiences, and their thoughts about those experiences.

Can you please inform social work students in their final year of social work training about this research by way of the attached Advertisement/Script, Information Sheets about this project, along with Participant Consent Forms and prepaid envelopes are attached for distribution to interested students.

The participants would be invited to participate in an interview of up to 2 hours duration. The interview will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. It is not anticipated that there will be any cost or discomfort of any sort experienced by participants in this project.

The student's name and that of your training institution is confidential and the information will be presented in such a way to give the highest level of assurance that identities of those involved in the study and their training institutions will not be identifiable.

My thesis supervisors are:

Dr Kieran O'Donoghue, phone (07) 350 9099 ext 2818 [K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz) and Kathryn Hay, phone (07) 356 9099 ext 4901 [K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz) whom you can contact should you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this project and your students' involvement. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Naku iti nei  
Na

Leisa Moorhouse  
[l.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz](mailto:l.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz)  
Phone 027 3113 569

Please Note:

*"This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/22. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone: 06 350 5799 x 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)."*

## APPENDIX H



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

**For taura/students in their final year  
of social work training  
in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions.**

**You are invited to take part in research that Leisa Moorhouse a  
Master of Social Work student at Massey University is undertaking  
in regard to students' experiences of supervision whilst on  
fieldwork placements.**

**Leisa is interested in hearing about your experience of supervision  
and your thoughts on those experiences.**

If you would like to find out more, please contact Leisa Moorhouse Ph 027 3113 569  
or [l.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz](mailto:l.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz), and please feel free to take a pack containing an  
information sheet, consent form and pre-paid envelope.

This project is supervised by Dr Kieran O'Donoghue, Massey University, Phone (06)  
350 9099 ext 2818 [K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz) and Kathryn Hay, Massey  
University Phone (06) 356 9099 ext 4901 [K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz)

*"This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human  
Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/22. If you have any concerns about  
the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair,  
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x  
8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)."*

# APPENDIX I



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

## How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?

### RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

#### Researcher Introduction

*Tena koutou katoa!  
Ko Mamari te waka  
Ko Hokianga te awa  
Ko Nga Puhi me Ngati Ingarangi oku iwi  
Ko Ngawha te marae  
E noho ana ahau kei Tauranga Moana  
Ko Leisa Moorhouse ahau*

My name is Leisa Moorhouse. I am of English and Maori (Nga Puhi) descent, and live in the Bay of Plenty. I am a registered social worker, undertaking this research for completion of my Masters in Social Work. I am interested in exploring the perceptions of social work students' experiences of fieldwork supervision.

#### Project Description and Invitation

I plan to interview a maximum of 10 social work students about their experience of fieldwork supervision during their training. The sorts of questions I will ask will be "In what ways did supervision meet or exceed your expectations?" "Tell me about any challenges that arose in fieldwork supervision for you" or "What might these experiences mean for your supervision in the future?" If you have had fieldwork supervision during your training and are in your final year of study, then you are invited to be a participant in this research project.

#### Participant Identification and Recruitment

Your social work Training Provider will have given you this Information Sheet, Consent Form and a prepaid envelope addressed to me. If you are willing to participate in this research please complete the enclosed Participation Consent Form and return it to me in the prepaid envelope provided. If you would prefer to clarify anything with me prior to doing so, I can be contacted on [L.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz](mailto:L.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz) or phone 027 3113 569.

If you meet the inclusion criteria of this project and agree to be involved in this research, it is not anticipated that any expense or inconvenience would be incurred by you as a result of your involvement. The research is also unlikely to present any discomfort or risk to you as a result of your participation.

#### Project Procedures

If you agree to be a participant on this project, and give your informed consent, I will arrange a time to meet with you at a mutually agreed location to interview you regarding your supervision experiences. It is anticipated that this interview would be up to 2 hours duration. This interview will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. Once I have completed the transcription I will ask whether you would like to confirm that the transcription is correct and that you agree for its use in the research. It is expected that involvement in the research will take up 4 hours in total.

#### Data Management

The data collected for this research project will be stored in a locked filing system accessible only by me, and will be disposed of 3 years after the completion of this project. The data will form the basis of the Masters thesis and may also be used as the basis for journal articles and conference

presentations. A summary of the findings will be provided to all participants and the thesis will be accessible through the Massey University Institutional Research Repository on line.

Your name and that of your training institution and supervisor is confidential and your information will be disclosed in such a way that it does not reveal either your identity or that of your Training Provider or supervisor. Pseudonyms will be used for participants and all care will be taken to maintain confidentiality. Whilst every endeavour will be made to maintain confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed.

#### **Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study within one calendar month of your initial acceptance to participate;
- ask any 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.
- ask for the audio-recording to be turned off at any time during the interview.

#### **Project Contacts**

- Leisa Moorhouse  
Masters student  
[L.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz](mailto:L.moorhouse@xnet.co.nz)  
Phone 027 3113 569
- Dr Kieran O'Donoghue, 1<sup>st</sup> Supervisor  
Director of Social Work and Social Policy and Senior Lecturer  
Massey University  
[K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz)  
Phone (06) 350 9099 ext 2818
- Kathryn Hay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor  
Lecturer  
Massey University  
[K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:K.S.Hay@massey.ac.nz)  
Phone (06) 356 9099 ext 4901

You are welcome to contact me and/or my supervisors if you have any questions about the project.

*"This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/22. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)."*

## APPENDIX J



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

### How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

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 agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_

My contact details are: \_\_\_\_\_ (landline)

\_\_\_\_\_ (mobile)

The best day/s and time/s to contact me are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX K



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

## How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?

### TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I ..... (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX L



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
TE KURA HAUORA TANGATA

### *How do social work students perceive their fieldwork supervision experiences?*

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

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 in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix M: Glossary of Māori terms used in this thesis**

This glossary is arranged in alphabetical order. Brief translations are given, so it should be noted that fuller and multiple meanings may be attributed to words depending on the context in which they are used.

Aotearoa	Māori name for New Zealand
E noho ana ahau ki	I reside in the locality of
Hapū	section of a large tribe
Hokianga	Place name in the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand
Iwi	nation, people
Kaiako	Teacher/learner
Kaiarahi	Leader
Kaimahi Māori	Māori worker
Karakia	Incantation, Prayer
Kaumatua	Old man or woman
Kaupapa	Theme, agenda
Kawa	Protocol
Ko...ahau	I am...
Kuia	Old woman
Mahi	Work
Mamari	Name of an ancestral waka
Matua	Parent
Mana	Authority, control, influence, power
Mana wahine	Woman of influence, power
Marae	A traditional communal meeting place
Māori	Person of the indigenous race
Maunga	Ancestral mountain
Mihimihi	Speech of greeting, tribute
Ngāpuhi	Name of tribe
Ngati Ingarangi	English descent
Rangatiratanga	Sovereignty, chieftainship, right to exercise authority, self-determination, self-management, ownership, of noble birth
Runanga	Tribal Council
Tamaiti	Child
Tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land

Tauranga Moana	Place name meaning safe harbour
Teina	Younger brother of a male, younger sister of a female
Tena koutou katou	Greetings to three or more people
Te reo	Language, the Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Māori version of the Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga	Culturally prescribed practices
Tuakana	Elder brother of a male, elder sister of a female
Tūrangawaewae	domicile, place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship
Pūao-te-ata-tū	The Ministerial Advisory Committee Report on a Māori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare
Waka	Canoe
Whakamā	Ashamed, shy
Whakataukī	Proverb, saying
Whānau	Family group
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection
Whakawhanaungatanga	The process of establishing relationships, relating well to others