Courageous Practice:
Tales from Reflexive Supervision

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ABSTRACT

This article explores a collaborative approach to counsellor supervision using a reflecting process. The first author, who acted as "supervisor" to the other contributors in a graduate-level family therapy practicum, describes the theoretical context of the work, and details his experience of the supervisory role. The remaining authors, who acted as "supervisees," provide anecdotal accounts of their experience with the reflecting supervision process. The central focus is on the manner in which a reflexive orientation to supervision diminishes defensive postures on the part of participants and facilitates constructive learning.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article étudie une méthode de collaboration à la supervision des conseillers qui utilise un processus de réflexion. Le premier auteur, qui a agi à titre de « superviseur » des autres collaborateurs au cours d'un stage de formation en thérapie familiale, effectué dans le cadre du deuxième cycle universitaire, décrit le contexte théorique du travail ainsi que son expérience du rôle d'encadrement. Les autres auteurs, qui ont joué le rôle de « supervisés », racontent des anecdotes survenues alors qu'ils participaient au processus de supervision utilisant la technique de réflexion. L'attention se porte principalement sur la manière dont l'orientation réflexive de la supervision contribue à diminuer les attitudes défensives que peuvent avoir les participants et facilite ainsi l'apprentissage constructif.

A certain vulnerability comes with the apprenticeship stage of professional practice—a time when practitioners' aspirations and imagination may outstrip their abilities. It is frequently a time of passionate engagement with ideas and practices, and of intense desire for mastery. It is also a time of humility, if not humiliation, when the gap between intentions and results is often glaringly evident, and much energy is expended on self-evaluation and critique.

I (DP) do not have to reach far into my memory to recover images of this striking vulnerability in my own professional development; nor do my co-authors,

as their testimonials below demonstrate. As a university-based counsellor educator, I now regularly witness that fragility in student colleagues wetting their feet as counsellors in an educational environment marked by a ritual of collective meaning-making known as "group supervision."

<div align="center">THE VULNERABILITY OF THE LEARNER</div>

Counsellors who are new to practice experience dramatically fluctuating views of their own competence (Larson et al., 1999) and worry about being viewed as a "failure" in the eyes of their peers or their supervisors (Merl, 1995). When they come together to share their work, they create a context rife with both possibility and peril. The group setting affords the opportunity for generativity and the witnessing of success. It can also be a forum for public dismissal and shaming. How to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the group supervision process while minimizing the risks is a central concern of this discussion.

This article was conceived by myself (DP) and my five co-authors when they were enrolled in a graduate family therapy course I taught at the University of Alberta. Much of the discussion here centres on the supervision practices we implemented together in small group supervision. The point of departure for this article was an open-ended invitation to my colleagues to recount their experiences of our semester together. The vignettes were later edited for length, with the intent of preserving points of discussion particularly unique to each of the contributions. Reflecting practices embrace multiple perspectives, and the vignettes mirror that spirit. Each vignette is separated and commingled with the theoretical discussion, so the article speaks as an assembly of viewpoints in the manner of a reflecting team in practice. The authorship of the vignettes has been kept anonymous to preserve confidentiality. The first vignette recounts a previous supervision experience. It speaks to the vulnerability of the counsellor-in-training in group supervision.

Over the course of working with "Bob" around the issue of childhood sexual abuse, I began to sense a mutual disengagement in our sessions. Exploring my experience of our relationship with Bob proved fruitless. I was running out of alternatives, and our relationship was becoming strained in the process. A sense of urgency came over me. I decided to disclose the difficulty I was experiencing to my supervision group.

I contextualized Bob's issues for the group and then presented a videotaped segment of a session in which I experienced disengagement. Moments into the tape, a member of the supervision group posed an innocent clarification question. This one query, however, had the effect of setting off a barrage of questions regarding my work with Bob. I next spent what seemed like an eternity trying to safeguard my sense of "self-as-counsellor" by defending my actions and justifying my choice of interventions. The group's assumption-filled questions felt heavy and dense. I began to deflect attention away from my supposed shortcomings by offering up Bob's inadequacies to the group. Ultimately, I felt as though I had sacrificed Bob's personhood to save my own. I felt like a failure … as a counsellor, as a confidant, as a person.

While I was on the proverbial "hot-seat," our supervisor sat as spectator to this verbal carnage. Once my colleagues had exhausted their unhelpful form of questioning, my supervisor stepped forward and proposed that I role-play Bob while one of my colleagues take on the role of counsellor, followed by some reflections from the remaining group members. On the face of it, the suggested exercise sounded promising. However, given the draining and humiliating experience I had just endured, my sense of trust in the group was in doubt. I felt wary and defensive, so I declined the invitation. My supervisor, however, pursued me for a rationale. Perhaps he was perplexed that I would refrain from participating in a process that might prove helpful and that would be "good for me" in my development as a counsellor. In the end, I begrudgingly offered up a feeble excuse that only served to deepen my discouragement.

For a time after, two main regrets stayed with me: first, that Bob did not receive the helpful counselling experience he rightfully deserved, and second, that supervision became more about highlighting my ineffectiveness, rather than nurturing my development, as a counsellor.

Unfortunately, this experience is not an anomaly amongst many counsellors-in-training. It illustrates how a potential resource can become a reason to adopt a posture of self-protection—a lost opportunity to both supervisees and their clients, and surely an event that does not contribute to professional expansion. Of course this is not always the case in supervision groups, some of which feature caring and supportive collegiality that encourages risk-taking and affirms the work of all participants. While the creation of that environment is often characterized as a product of a nebulous "group chemistry," we believe it is more appropriately understood as an achievement of interpersonal relating, the product of coordinated action. Much of that action is in the form of language.

THE REFLECTING TEAM

The processes described in this article are deliberate in their attention to the use of language to promote "courageous practice" (Merl, 1995) by counsellors. They draw liberally from the work of Norwegian family therapist Tom Andersen, who conceived of the reflecting team as an approach to clinical practice (Andersen, 1987). Andersen's work grew out of his training experiences with the influential Milan Associates (Selvini-Palazolli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1978), in which a team of clinicians watched a session from behind a one-way glass. In that widely practiced family therapy tradition, interventions were frequently "delivered" to clients by way of an emissary who carried a unified suggestion from the observing team of clinicians. Andersen was skeptical about the way a complex situation would be distilled to one sole view, believing that "meanings are manifold and shift with shifting contexts" (Andersen, 1991, p. 158). Instead, he was excited by the *multiple* viewpoints shared behind the glass, and became interested in the possibility of clients benefiting from the diversity of ideas. His variation on this group practice was to have the observing team switch places with the counsellor and client(s), and to reflect in an open-ended fashion *to each other* while the

client(s) and counsellor watched. The "reflecting team" then returned behind the glass to resume observation and to give counsellor and clients an opportunity to debrief on what they had just seen and heard.

Since Andersen's seminal work (cf. Andersen, 1987, 1991, 1993), reflecting practices have been implemented in a wide variety of clinical contexts (cf. Cohen et al., 1998; Friedman, 1995; Griffith, 1999; Lax, 1989; Merl, 1995; Naden, Callison, & Haynes, 2002; Sells, Smith, Coe, Yoshioka, & Robbins, 1994; Smith, Winton, & Yoshioka, 1993; White, 1997, 2000). They have also been found to be useful in training and supervising counsellors. Prest, Darden, and Keller (1990) describe how reflecting processes allow a supervisee to act as a "fly on the wall," affording a meta-view of the therapeutic work. Biever and Gardner (1995) elaborate on the use of reflecting teams in live-session group supervision responding to live therapeutic sessions. James, MacCormack, Korol, and Lee (1996) used reflecting teams with student counsellors as a preparatory step for systemic practice. Paré (1999) writes about taping participant reflections in intensive training courses for absent therapeutic clients. Rombach (2000) describes reflecting practices as central to a collaborative supervision process of "co-vision," in order to provide an alternate formulation to the prefix "super," which emphasizes hierarchy rather than collaboration.

In the groups we convened at the University of Alberta, a supervisor (DP) met weekly with either two or three master's and doctoral students to review their practicum work in an advanced family therapy course. The students took turns presenting their work by screening portions of videotaped sessions. Following this presentation, supervisor and supervisees reflected to each other on the clinical situations and on the work of the presenting counsellor, who observed without participating. The reflections were loosely structured, unfolding in a two-phase approach that we describe below. Most were oriented to preferred developments in the lives of the clients and the work of the counsellor, frequently containing references to personal experience in order to demystify comments and render them transparent to the presenting clinician (White, 1997). The reflections were followed by a group debrief that provided an opportunity for all participants to pursue further clarification on comments made and questions raised.

BOTH/AND RATHER THAN EITHER/OR

The reflecting posture favours acknowledgement over evaluation or explanation (White, 2000), and rests on a view of knowledge and meaning that embraces diverse viewpoints. It is oriented more toward an inclusive both/and stance, rather than an either/or position that can lead to the belief that a point of view is *either* right *or* it is wrong. The task at hand is not a detective's search for the "truth of the matter." A persistent barrier to an affirming acknowledgement of counsellors in supervision is the normative judgement that naturally accompanies the quest for a unitary truth—the notion that "accurate insight" will suggest the "correct"

intervention. In group supervision, this epistemological viewpoint is expressed in the language of expertise, totalizing descriptions, and causal attributions, for example:

Clearly what's going on here …
The real reason he's acting that way is because …
The root of the problem is …

Reflexive supervision adopts an alternative viewpoint, with language to match. It gravitates toward a social constructionist epistemology (Gergen, 1999), which makes sense of meaning as socially constructed and embraces multiple viewpoints. From this perspective, speakers are inclined to situate their comments in their own experience, and to hold on more lightly to descriptions and interpretations, for example:

What struck me when I heard her talk about the incident …
This brought up my own experience with …
I wonder what might happen if they traded roles for a day or two …

A WITNESSING POSTURE

These reflections are made among team members and not directly to the presenting clinician, affording the opportunity for the counsellor presenting his or her work to observe without being called upon to respond. The witnessing posture thus sidesteps the interpersonal dynamic that inclines listeners to signal agreement with statements made to them—a process that tends to discourage diverse viewpoints. For note-takers, witnessing also affords the opportunity to document the wide assortment of ideas that typically emerge. The author of the following vignette describes how the first reflective supervision experience opened space to listen and observe selectively, with no pressure to defend one's work.

As my fingers gently pushed the video into the recorder I could feel the anxious knots twisting and turning in my stomach. It was session number four of my first family therapy course, and I knew I desperately needed help with my counselling. I felt extremely unsure of my skills and naïve in my knowledge of family therapy. I was working with two adult sisters, and the sessions had become tense and hostile. I felt sure either client, or both, might refuse to continue counselling. I needed help.

Although I wanted Angelo and David's feedback, I was nervous about receiving it. In my experience as a student, "feedback" had been a nice way of saying "criticism." The prospect of criticism was like cough syrup I would be forced to swallow, and I was not looking forward to the experience.

As the video ran, my eyes searched for expressions of disapproval and disappointment from David and Angelo. I was surprised to find merely interest and curiosity. As the video came to an end, I prepared myself for the role of dartboard to their piercing critique. Again to my surprise, this did not occur either. David asked if it would be okay if he and Angelo reflected to each other, and I sat back in my chair, my anxiety replaced by curiosity and excitement. As they turned and began discussing my session, I took notes about certain ideas I liked, strategies I would try. There was no pressure

or expectation that everything they said was essential, or "the right way" to do counselling. Because they were speaking to each other, and not me, I could distance and in a sense protect myself. Some comments did not fit for me, but I was able to let them go, discarding what did not fit and highlighting what did. The sense of being in control of content was heightened by David's asking me for permission to engage in reflecting.

The moment my colleagues finished, questions poured from my mouth. Their reflections had prompted me to think about my session in a different, and certainly a less self-critical, light. Maybe I wasn't doing such a bad job after all; maybe I did have hope as a family counsellor. I left with renewed confidence that I might be able to salvage my work with this family … and, more importantly, that I did have skills as an emerging counsellor—I simply needed support in developing them.

EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

The previous vignette describes how reflections painted an expanded landscape of the clinical situation. This is one of the intended effects of reflecting practices. As Anderson and Goolishian (1988) say in reference to therapeutic conversations, "the aspiration is to participate in a conversation that continually loosens and opens up, rather than constricts and closes down" (p. 381). That opening is the product of a divergent, rather than a convergent, perspective. Biever and Gardner (1995) argue that this plurality is fitting for a supervision setting: "Just as no two clients will respond in exactly the same way to the therapist, to the therapeutic context, or to the same ideas, no two students will develop the same under-standings with their clients or supervisors or respond to supervision in the same way" (p. 49). The offering of multiple viewpoints, and the tentative and open-ended manner in which they are delivered, invite supervisees to discard their armour and step into the stories that are most meaningful to them.

In a review of his early work with reflecting processes, Andersen (1991) commented that he would remove the word "explanation," because it speaks of prediction, control, and regulation—aims out of line with the practices explored here. But this is not to say that reflecting is not a highly deliberate process. On the contrary, it calls upon participating team members to choose their words carefully, to speak in a respectful and affirming manner consistent with a pluralistic perspective. Because reflections perform somewhat distinct functions of both affirming counsellors and generating new ideas, it can be useful with less experienced practitioners to divide the reflections up into two rounds.

ROUND ONE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first round of responses from the supervision team is devoted to affirmation (we will speak of the second round later in the article). This first round borrows from anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff's (1982) notion of "definitional cere-monies," about which White (1997, 2000) has written extensively. The purpose

of these reflections is to *acknowledge* the presenting clinician. In distinguishing acknowledgement from *applause*, White (2000) says the former is grounded in specific moments witnessed where the latter is frequently unfocused and, despite good intentions, tied to a normative judgement. An example of the latter:

I was really impressed by Mary's session. She's doing some great work with this client.

When team members "cheerlead," they are, in effect, offering plaudits for "good" sessions, which still holds practice up to an arbitrary yardstick and promotes competitiveness in supervision groups. Instead, I encourage members to notice, name, and promote further reflection on positive developments in a counsellor's work—especially those in line with the counsellor's stated objectives for the session.

What struck me was the moment Jason made fun of himself; it seemed to set the client at ease. I wonder how Jason's concerns about his rapport-building skills might fare if he continues to draw on that self-effacing sense of humour of his.

Practices of acknowledgement fall outside the discourses of mastery (cf. Jennings & Skovholt, 1999) that can serve as scorecards against which apprenticing counsellors judge themselves. They transform supervision into a ceremony for self-definition, a context where counsellors story their professional lives (Winslade, Crocket, Monk, & Drewery, 2000) along with an audience of witnesses. This is more than self-representation; it is a self-constructive practice. As Kogan and Gale (1997) put it, "we *accomplish* who we are and what we are on an ongoing basis through interpretive practices" (emphasis added, p. 104).

THE ROLE OF REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is a key feature of the process. A reflexive verb is one whose subject and object refer to the same person or thing; reflexive practice generates views of *itself*. Reflecting practices in supervision act like a mirror for presenting clinicians, illuminating views of their work and indeed their professional identities. This calls for considerable intentionality by team members. As Tomm (1988) says, a reflexive posture is "facilitative": it invites the other to actively engage in useful self-examination.

For one of the authors, reflexive supervision gave birth to a new "version" of her as a professional, and marked a turning point in her view of herself as a counselling practitioner:

After presenting my work with a family to David and Kevin, I was surprised that neither interjected with a declaration of the possible underlying culprit to the family's problems. My experience with case conferences and supervision had usually featured an interrogation founded on diagnostic labelling or rigid "expert" observations. I had learned to respond by retreating into a cocoon for protection, slowly donning the expert hat myself and adopting the attitude that I knew my clients' problems better than they did—a position out of line with my professional values. As Kevin and David listened intently to what I had to say, I perceived I was being respected as the conduit

of information for this family, that my accounts of my work deserved to be heard and valued. We watched some tape, and David invited Kevin and me to engage in a reflecting process, with me in the role of witness.

David began, "Well, first of all, I couldn't help but notice how connected [the counsellor] is with this family. They seem really comfortable talking with her." These were offered in the form of statements, not questions I had to answer. A sliver of light penetrated the cocoon I had been spinning in my professional practice. In 10 minutes, my colleagues pondered my reactions to body language and speculated about how jealousy, conflict, and disharmony had made their way into this family. They wondered what the parents would be fighting about if the daughter was not the centre of their disputes, and offered their personal experiences of parenting and adolescence.

As I listened intently, I felt a shift happen for me. I was not being told what I should do with this family, nor what the family's "real" problems likely were. Instead, I was invited to witness two subjective impressions that triggered further thoughts of my own and provided luminescent insight. I felt profoundly motivated and more in touch with myself—with my perspectives, my position, and my power.

The acknowledgement I received in that supervision session left me with an indelible imprint of the transformative nature of reflection and promoted a metamorphosis in the development of my counsellor self. No longer retreating into a cocoon of protection, I began to feel more whole in my practice—a butterfly emerging. It marks the time I found my wings.

ROUND TWO: GENERATING POSSIBILITIES

The reflections this author witnessed included deliberate acknowledgement of her practice, but they also included a different type of reflection that I (DP) set aside for a second round of reflections that follow the opening acknowledgements. This second round is more oriented toward generating ideas, and the vignette above includes this sort of response—improvisational rejoinders wherein team members tap into their own impressions, wonderings, imagination, and experiences. This generative round of reflections is particularly welcome to a clinician open to self-exploration because, by virtue of suggesting what else one *might have done*, it highlights what one *did not do*. However, because it is not framed in the more typical form of direct questions and suggestions, this form of feedback is less likely to inadvertently telegraph the message that the clinician "got it wrong." Ideas are put forward in what Bruner (1986) calls the subjunctive mode: team members adopt a tentative posture, building on each other's insights and offering up thoughts on alternate directions, for example:

I got to thinking about the ways in which silence can be an invitation, how it sometimes creates space for something unsaid. I wonder what might have happened if Evelyn had sat back more, and left more room for the client to sort things out herself.

Most of the reflecting done in the family therapy course described here occurred following the review of taped sessions and was for the eyes and ears of the presenting clinician. However, reflecting practices are more about a worldview

than a "protocol" per se, and can be used to bridge supervisory and clinical contexts, especially when the counselling is oriented to social constructionist values (Biever & Gardner, 1995). This happened in one author's case, when a supervision meeting led to the introduction of a reflecting team at a subsequent live counselling session.

Terry was a 56-year-old man seeking counselling to root out the anger that was creeping into his life and disrupting his relationships. He often shared his belief that people he encountered viewed him as a worthless being. As a result he had tried to take his life on numerous occasions. In contrast to his perceptions, I noticed that Terry built his life around others. I spent many sessions trying to convince him of his value, something so apparent to me. Finally, due to limited counselling experience, I became stuck and decided it was time to consult my supervisor.

"Terror" describes the feeling I had anticipating the scrutiny of the colleagues with whom I felt I was competing, and my supervisor's discovery that I wasn't able to succeed on my own. Nevertheless, humbled by necessity, I presented them with my plight. Much to my surprise I didn't receive a barrage of suggestions on what to do next. Instead, my supervisor offered to come to the next session and share reflections.

That next session began with a team of my colleagues behind the glass observing my session with Terry. The idea of them watching me perform was daunting, but I soon forgot about them being there. After a while, Terry and I changed places with the reflecting team so that we witnessed their reflections about what they had experienced thus far. As I listened to a poignantly respectful exchange of ideas, feelings, and metaphors, I suddenly realized that I was part of a greater purpose. I felt part of a team and not on display to be analyzed and criticized.

Following the team's input, Terry's eyes welled with tears as he struggled to share what he had experienced behind the glass. He was awed that two strangers had named qualities in him he deeply cherished but of which he felt unworthy. Elated for Terry, I pondered the respect bestowed upon both of us by my colleagues behind the glass. This supervision experience taught me the merits of collaborating. I no longer feel that I am a lone counsellor but rather part of a team that has potential to touch hearts and change lives.

JOINT ACTION AND MEANING PRODUCTION

Something happens in the telling and re-telling of narratives (White, 2000) that exceeds the sum of the stories recounted. Supervision groups are more than mere forums for the *expression* of meaning; they are prime sites for its *co-production*, because all participants inevitably contribute through both their comments and silence to whatever emerges from these contexts. Shotter (1995) describes conversation as "joint action," and supervision is a site for group conversation that gives birth to new meanings through coordinated exchanges. Strong (2004) speaks of meaningful moments—such as the moment of re-definition that followed reflections to Terry's session described above—as "collaborative accomplishments." In this sense, reflecting teams are not mere assemblies of

individual points of view, but rather sites of co-constructed meanings. The voices
are commingled, and the meanings that emerge are joint creations, for example:

> *Counsellor A: When [the presenting clinician] asked [the client] who might have predicted this
> positive turn of events, I got to thinking about how all of our lives are watched by people who care
> for us. We never do it alone, even when it feels like we do.*

> *Counsellor B: What that brings up for me is my own experience of sometimes feeling very alone in
> my counselling work. I wonder who stands by [the presenting clinician] in her work? Who would
> have been least surprised to witness the moving work she did today?*

As the author of the previous vignette points out, this kind of dialogic reflecting
calls for "teamwork," and an intentionality around the use of language that
matches what we believe should be standard fare for counselling practice. Reflexive
supervision provides a (sometimes-squandered) vehicle for counsellor skill-
development because it calls on participants to be active, in keeping with the
constructive purpose of the gathering.

A fine-grained attention to language is central to these skills. In their
introduction to reflecting practices, students sometimes remark that reflecting is
not "natural." To this we would respond, "No, and neither is counselling." We
believe counselling and supervision conversations should be oriented to being
helpful, with a mindfulness of the ways in which experience is constructed through
language. Reflecting, like counselling, calls for highly intentional talk, and it
brings added value to a counsellor's training. This intentionality extends to
considering whose meanings are privileged, and at what cost. When it came to
evaluating the work done over the semester, we shared our observations, while
leaving space for the supervisor to provoke self-examination in much the same
way as the second round of generative reflections described above does:

*I had always dreaded mandatory evaluations at the end of practicum courses. They
typically involved rating my performance on a 3-point Likert scale within categories
such as Counselling Skills and Professional Conduct and included items like "Is skillful
in the application of therapeutic interventions" and "Accepts and uses supervision
feedback in a constructive manner." They presupposed a "correct way," yet I wondered
according to whom or what? I could only assume my supervisor knew the correct way
and would know once I had acquired it. I found myself sneaking defiant thoughts:
What if I didn't care for my supervisor's way?*

*In our reflexive supervision group, there were no forms to fill out. My supervisor
took a moment to reflect on strengths and skills he'd noticed in my counselling style,
the first time emphasis had been placed on my professional abilities rather than my
"deficiencies." I was amazed by what he recalled of my work; it showed me he had
been attentive to my process, which made me feel supported. I felt strong and important,
as though I was becoming a part of something significant. The validation was for my
unique qualities, not for doing things "right" or fulfilling some elusive criteria. It left
me believing I already possessed the characteristics and skills of an effective counsellor.*

*David, as supervisor, then invited me to reflect on what my counselling would
have been like if I had approached the work somewhat differently. I took this as a*

subtle way of guiding me toward improvement. But the invite was just that: if the suggestion didn't resonate with me, I could leave it. Consequently I was receptive to the feedback and felt more inclined to use it.

Toward the end of the evaluation I was given the opportunity to comment on whether the reflections fit with me and whether I had anything to add. I remember thinking, "You mean I have a say in my evaluation?" It was as though my supervisor knew he could offer observations but that only I could decide which ones resonated with my experience.

In previous evaluations in supervision, I had been told I wasn't doing therapy the "proper" way. This usually prompted me to become defensive. I would leave feeling I hadn't gained much from the evaluation—other than the nagging feeling there was something I still hadn't attained. The feedback rarely helped me change as a clinician. Conversely, the reflexive supervision process offered me "grist for the mill" without threatening my sense of competence, because the ideas came in the context of reflections on my strengths and skills. I now have the confidence to continue using those strengths and skills in my unique way.

AN ETHIC OF MEANING-MAKING

Kvale (1996) characterizes conversations as sites of knowledge construction, and certainly supervision groups are particularly rich in their constructive potential for counsellors. The processes described here seek to create a forum in which multiple meanings can be shared and blended in a spirit of affirmation and collaboration. Language is central to this process, but the meaning of our utterances does not merely "depend on their syntactic structure or their semantic content. It depends on the [speaker's] intentions and assumptions" (Tomm, 1988, p. 9). Attitude is key, and it is communicated not just by words, but through posture, tone, cadence, and inflection. Ultimately, reflexive supervision is about an *ethic* of meaning-making, and it is the consolidation of the ethic rather than the refinement of a technique that is key to developing helpful reflecting practices.

While that ethic leans toward affirmation and multiplicity of meaning, it does not rule out stating a position when that may seem appropriate or necessary for the situation at hand. Supervision entails responsibility to the client, to the practitioner, to the profession, and to the public at large. At times I (DP) may feel a supervisee's practice is inappropriate or neglectful and I may express this in unambiguous terms. But even here, my forthrightness is tempered by an openness to being transformed by the other—more than pronouncements, my comments are invitations to further dialogue.

Not a "model" per se, reflexive supervision entails a *manner,* rather than a protocol for meaning-making. Nevertheless, reflecting practices are clearly inconsistent with traditions of confrontation, for instance, and are not particularly hospitable to quests for etiology or diagnosis. Neither is debate a feature of this variety of professional dialogue. Reflexive supervision relinquishes the urge to

explain in favour of a quest for what is helpful, for conversation that promotes courageous practice by counsellors in training.

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