

## 9: My research - The golden question

Hello and welcome. You're listening to the craft of supervision. My name is Dr. Mish and I'm a psychotherapist and supervisor. And I have a real passion and enthusiasm for all things clinical supervision. So I thought I'd bring my enthusiasm for the subject to this podcast. And here I'll invite you to come on a bit of a journey with me to explore this wonderful world of supervision, through looking at the different models, through the research, the debates, and any issues that come up when we're practising supervision. I'm really glad to be here. And I hope it will be useful for you too. So let's go.

Hello, hello, here we are yet again.

And I'm so delighted with how many of you are engaging with listening to this all about supervision. It's interesting to me, because I suppose I, I'm really passionate about it anyway. And to know that others are sharing that passion and sharing that curiosity is fantastic. So thank you for all your encouragement for just joining in, in the in the discussions around supervision. And I thought, okay, I really do need to do an episode about my research into supervision that I did for my doctorate. And the reason why I thought this was because I kind of in a weird way, I suppose I was trying to avoid it. And I don't know why that was I kind of thought about why I've been not necessarily sharing that works about my research. And then a little while back, one of my colleagues prompted me in sharing my research paper that I'd written for the counselling, psychotherapy Research Journal, which was my research, essentially. And I've also been involved in writing a chapter for a book that will be coming out at some point, and my chapter in the book about supervision for the clergy, my chapters, obviously, based on my research and my interest around self care and supervision. So

I just thought, I need to kind of engage people in what I spent all that time doing, and present my research in a way that brings it to life a bit more. Because often when we, when we complete research, we're immersed in the subject. And for us researchers, our subject is fascinating. And yet, for everyone else, it's kind of just something that you're doing. And you're probably not that interested in it. I think the only person who wasn't as interested, as me was actually my research supervisor who managed to sustain his curiosity and feed off the passion I had for my subject. So thanks for my research supervisor for getting me through it, really. But this is what I wanted to do. I just wanted to talk about what my research was. So what I was wondering, before I started, my research was about how supervisee self care was addressed in clinical supervision. And I suppose I was kind of sceptical that supervisees were really being honest about their overall well being, and whether supervisors felt really equipped to, to fully address the supervisees self care and how well they were in their work. So I was really curious about this. And this is what, what prompted me to undertake my doctorate really, because I talked about self care and resilience and all the different aspects of the work that can impact on our well being. I talked about that quite a lot. And it was just that, again, that curiosity about well, how does that work in supervision, really. So this is when I undertook my research. And essentially what I did is I had two parts of my research. The first part was all about having record your recorded supervision sessions. They were individuals, the vision session serves as one supervisor, one supervisee. And I use those recordings to do an analysis of the language and the dialogue process that addressed self care in

supervision because my research question was, how is or how isn't supervisee self care addressed in clinical supervision and this was specific to counsellors and psychotherapists. So I had the recorded supervision sessions. And I also interviewed supervisor and supervisee, and asked for their experiences. So it was really two parts of a research project, one that looked at the language and discourse and the dialogue. And the second that looked at experiences. It sounds really easy, I suppose. But actually, it took me ages, having to analyse all the language and all the nuances that came with supervisees. And supervisors discussing aspects of self care took ages, and I had to learn a whole, almost like a whole language of how to analyse their dialogue. And then of course, with people's experiences, there was so much wealth of information, and I wanted to try and capture it all, and present it in a really usable, interesting way. But for me, there was some fantastically interesting bits about the dialogue. For example, metaphor was really used to explore the self care issue, because obviously, when we use a metaphor, it's can feel much easier to tackle something quite serious. And of course, the supervisory relationship was really crucial that enabling self care issues to be explored fully. But there are also some verbal indications that showed that it was quite difficult to address aspects of self care. So there were some times instances where the language was hesitant, or the subject was avoided, or sometimes the opportunity to explore the self care issue was, was missed. And one bit of this, which really fascinated me was the use of laughter. Now, of course, laughter is a really important part of the work that we do. And in supervision, I'd like to think that there are instances where we have a lot of laughter. But there is obviously seriousness within that as well. And what struck me about the use of laughter around self care issues was because in a way, it almost enhances the supervisory relationship, which, in turn would mean that self care disclosures were more easily approached. But equally, at times, it removed the chance to really dive into a self care issue. And it's almost like the laughter was used to divert away from how serious the topic of self care really was. So for me, having that window into audio recorded actual supervision sessions was totally invaluable for my understanding of how supervisees self care was addressed. So then, when I went on to look at the experiences of the supervisor and the supervisee, one thing that came across was, all the supervisors knew how important it was to talk about self care. But they also acknowledged that it wasn't always easy to because they realised that supervisees may try and hide things. And they noticed that supervisees needed some real explicit guidance about being able to bring self care issues. And for the supervisees, there was a real interesting part about they're feeling shameful or feeling guilty and struggling about whether they're we're almost allowed to disclose self care issues. And they were really worried about what their supervisors would think, fundamentally, what happened is, both the supervisors and the supervisees tended to base their current understanding of whether self care was okay to be addressed based on either their training, or their early experiences off their supervisory relationships. So it really taught me how important it is for supervisory training and supervisee understanding to be really, really explicit about it. So one of the things that I wondered how to capture this all was in what I call the golden question. And I call it the golden question. Well, actually, one of the participants described it as supervisee self care is this Well, that's the golden question. And what came to me one day was that actually the golden question around supervisees self care is simply how are you which makes you go Well, that's just what we ask. And it's pretty basic. But bear with me, because what I mean by this is having the golden question of how are you means that you elevate that question instead of being just a throwaway social comment, it means that you're thinking of not only the dialogue around self care, but also the person's experience around self care listening out, for example, for metaphor, or how the language gives you clues about how comfortable someone is in disclosing it to

challenging the supervisee kind of the permission giving aspects of having self care addressed in supervision, and how our early experiences of supervision will have influenced it. So there's many layers to the golden question. And I'd really invite supervisors to explore this aspects a lot more in their supervision, because I think that it's really important that we fully embed, addressing supervisee self care firmly in the supervisory relationship. I think that if we just give it a cursory social nod off, how are you? Yeah, fine. How were you? Yeah, I feel like that misses a whole heap of information that we need to know about our supervisees. So I would just encourage you to engage with it a little bit more and explore what addressing self care means in the work that you do in supervision. So that's kind of the research that I did in in a bit of a nutshell, a whistlestop tour of the research I did there is, of course, the research paper that is already out there, which is obviously called the golden question, I can put a link for where to find it. It is in academic journal. And I believe that if you're a BAC P member, you can access that journal as part of your membership. But it may well be behind some sort of paywall war, which is really frustrating for other people who want to read an article and it's behind the paywall. So do let me know if you want to read it. And I'm glad to share my my copy of it for you to have a read and see what you think. But that's it for now for this episode.

So that was my research. That was the golden question at hand. I hope you all are keeping well. And thanks once again, for listening. Do give me a shout if you want to be involved in this podcast. I have got some guests that will be coming on. And I'm absolutely thrilled that so many of you want to engage with supervision community and supervision world. So yeah, please do get in touch. I welcome your feedback. I welcome your questions. And also if you want to be on the podcast, just give me a shout. And if you're a supervisor or an aspiring supervisor, where you've got some aspects of supervision that you really want to highlight, give me a shout and I'll endeavour to arrange to speak to you and get you on the podcast if we can. Okay, take care everyone and I'll speak to you next time.