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**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

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M.A. (Education)

GRADE / DEGREE

Faculty of Education

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

**Managing Feelings of Incompetence in Supervision:
A Modified Grounded Theory Study of Counseling Interns**

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Managing Feelings of Incompetence in Supervision:
A Modified Grounded Theory Study of Counselling Interns

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June 24, 2010

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Master's thesis submitted to Dr. Cristelle Audet, Dr. Nick Gazzola, and Dr. David Paré

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Educational Counselling



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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-69032-1
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-69032-1

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Abstract

Feelings of incompetence (FOI) are a pervasive self-care issue for practitioners of psychotherapy, independent of their levels of experience (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008). Supervision may be an effective strategy for alleviating the impact of FOI; however, it is unclear how FOI are managed in supervision and how therapists experience their struggles with FOI in the context of supervision. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with six Master's level counselling interns (5 female, 1 male) who were receiving individual supervision. A modified grounded theory analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) yielded five major categories: Properties of Intern FOI that Required Management in and/or out of Supervision, Actions of the Intern that Pertain to the Management of FOI in Supervision, Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision, Aspects of Supervision That are Helpful to the Management of FOI, and Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI. Implications for counsellor supervisors, counsellor educators, and counselling interns themselves are discussed.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor, Anne Thériault. This thesis could not have been completed without your encouragement, knowledge, and keen eye for quality.

I also owe gratitude to members of my thesis committee: Cristelle Audet, Nick Gazzola, and David Paré. Your input was indispensable to designing and carrying out this research.

I must also thank my family, whose selfless support over the years was vital to my ability to accomplish the work I present here.

Thank you to Sara Alves, best friend, colleague and role model: I could never have done this without you!

To all my dear friends who have put up with my madness throughout this process: thank you!

Last, but not least, I must thank the participants of this research. The candid narratives of your experiences in supervision are the heart and soul of the study presented on these pages.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

A range of self-care issues have been documented in studies of counsellors' and psychotherapists' experience of therapy (Norcross & Guy, 2007). Among these self-care topics, doubts about one's professional competence are a commonly noted problem (Thériault & Gazzola, 2005). The terminology used to describe these doubts varies depending on researchers' conceptualization of the problem. Self-doubts (e.g., Farber & Heifetz, 1981), feelings of inadequacy (e.g., Hahn, 2002), insecurity (e.g., Hellman, Morrison, & Abramowitz, 1986), or incompetence (e.g., Hannigan, Edwards, & Burnard, 2004) are terms that have been used to describe the experience of doubting one's professional competence. In psychodynamic schools, feelings of incompetence have been considered to be a result of countertransference (Hahn, 2001). In social learning theory (Bandura, 1983) therapists' low confidence is associated with the construct of low self-efficacy (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Finally, studies of the Impostor Phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978) have documented feelings of fraudulence regarding professional competence (French, Ullrich-French, & Follman, 2008).

Despite theoretical differences, the aforementioned constructs may be linked through their phenomenological features. These constructs, though unique, include similarities in the underlying emotional and thought processes they incur; for example, feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, incompetence, and self-doubt. Through the lens of these phenomenological similarities, these constructs will be examined under the umbrella term *feelings of incompetence* (FOI), though the author acknowledges that these terms (e.g., low self-efficacy and impostorism) are not equivalent. Accordingly, *feelings of incompetence* may be defined as an internal event, in which a therapist believes that "his or her ability, judgment, and/or effectiveness as a therapist is

absent, reduced, or challenged internally” (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008, p. 20). The researcher will utilize the unifying construct of FOI in order to amalgamate different bodies of knowledge relevant to the inquiry at hand. However, when reviewing existing literature, the researcher will remain true to original terminology used in the works of each author.

Introducing the Problem of FOI

It appears that FOI are commonly experienced during psychotherapy training (e.g., Ladany et al., 1996), and they continue to impact psychotherapists throughout their careers, independent of years of experience (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008). It has been documented that FOI may result in significant stress (Farber & Heifetz, 1981) and personal problems for practitioners of psychotherapy (Mahoney, 1997). Feeling inadequate as a therapist has also been reported to contribute to burnout (Cushway & Tyler, 1994; Farber & Heifetz, 1982; Knestbaum, 1984), which in turn has an impact on therapists physically, psychologically, as well as on the quality of therapy they provide (Renjilian, Baum, & Landry, 1998). Evidence exists that the process of therapy may be impacted by therapists’ experience of FOI. Experienced therapists have reported making therapeutic decisions as a result of their FOI, such as changing the pace or focus of therapy; even feeling motivated to terminate therapy with their clients (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008). Furthermore, therapists’ FOI are associated with negative therapeutic reactions and clients’ feelings of shame (Hahn, 2004), which in turn may impact therapists’ abilities to maintain a strong therapeutic alliance (Watson & Greenberg, 2000).

Research evidence shows that FOI have a deleterious impact on counsellors as well as their work with clients. Despite the significance of the problem, there is a shortage of empirically supported strategies that therapists may use to deal with their FOI. The discrepancy

between the importance of this problem and the amount and quality of research which addresses the problem prompts the current study.

Though empirical evidence is scarce, supervision appears to be a factor that may reduce the intensity of FOI and improve therapists' ability to manage FOI. Supervision has been cited as one way in which psychotherapists may deal with self-care problems (Norcross, 2000). Experienced therapists have reported that early supervision and training experiences that addressed FOI have benefited them in dealing with FOI later in their careers (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008). In other studies, supervision has been shown to be a venue for significant and defining learning experiences for beginner therapists (e.g., Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Furthermore, it has been shown that supervisory feedback can have a profound impact on thoughts and feelings of the supervisee (Gazzola & Thériault, 2007). Though these findings appear to support the notion that supervision has the potential to help therapists in dealing with FOI, the literature is inconsistent about whether supervisees actually disclose FOI in supervision (Ladany et al., 1996; Yourman & Farber, 1996). As a result, it is difficult to determine whether supervisees actually have the opportunity to address FOI directly with their supervisors. Moreover, information about *how* supervision can be helpful with regards to FOI is currently unavailable.

Introduction to Supervision

Supervision has been conceptualized in numerous ways in the counselling and psychotherapy literature. Overall, supervision may be described as “a structured relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee, with the goal of helping the supervisee gain the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to be a responsible and effective therapist” (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007, p.1). In addition to their responsibilities of ensuring the development of supervisees,

supervisors must be involved in managing the supervisory process both administratively and from a relational perspective (Whitman & Jacobs, 1998). Supervisors of counsellor trainees are also in charge of ensuring that the quality of therapy conducted by supervisees is helpful to clients while allowing trainees to explore new methods. Furthermore, they are responsible to the training program for evaluating, supporting, and educating trainees in conjunction with the program. Supervisors must also be aware of their potential legal responsibilities for actions of their supervisees. Finally, they must ensure the quality of their own self-care, professional development, and practice of therapy. As supervisors are faced with filling a complex role, research shows that their work may impact supervisees in both positive and negative ways.

Researchers have identified supervisory strategies that make supervision effective and satisfactory. For example, positive supervision events appear to have a particular structure, for which a good working alliance is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition (Worthen & McNeill, 1996). Furthermore, it appears that highly regarded supervisors are marked by their ability to track and explore affectively charged concerns of their supervisees (Shanfield, Matthews, & Hetherly, 1993). Nevertheless, supervision can also be counterproductive (Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001) or even harmful for supervisees (Ellis, 2001). Additionally, both supervisors' and supervisees' actions can shape whether an interaction is perceived to be helpful by the supervisee (Gazzola & Thériault, 2007). While supervision research has begun to accumulate data on what makes supervision successful, whether and how supervision could help therapists deal with their FOI is not yet understood.

Given that FOI have been shown to contribute to therapists' stress and burnout (Hannigan, Edwards, & Burnard, 2004), it is important that researchers explore potential strategies for the management of FOI. Since supervision is a potential tool that may aid

therapists' management of FOI, it is important to conduct research that investigates the role that supervision currently plays in how therapists deal with FOI. Through an increased understanding of how supervision presently impacts therapists' FOI, we may gain insight into how supervision may help or hinder the management of FOI. To address this issue, the researcher posed the following research question: "What is the role of supervision in supervisees' management of FOI?" The researcher sought an inductive answer that is grounded in the experiences of therapists in development: counselling interns receiving supervision in the context of a graduate counselling program. This population was determined to be a good source of information regarding the role of supervision in FOI because trainees are known to regularly experience FOI (e.g., Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003) and because early supervision experiences may have a significant impact on the management of FOI later in therapists' careers (Thériault & Gazzola, 2008). Finally, at present in Canada, psychotherapists are most likely to receive supervision during their internship, as supervision is not mandatory beyond the training stages. A variation of grounded theory methodology was used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to gather rich yet systematic information about participants' experience of FOI and supervision.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This review will speak to the various theoretical frameworks that have been applied to the study of therapists' FOI, and will explore accumulated knowledge about the interplay between supervision and FOI. First, the review will situate FOI in the context of therapist stress and burnout, demonstrating findings about the prevalence and gravity of the problem. Second, different conceptual frameworks associated with FOI will be examined, in order to present

current understandings of FOI. This section will include discussions of countertransference, therapeutic impasses, self-efficacy, the Impostor Phenomenon, and therapist mindfulness and self-awareness. Third, grounded theory studies that directly address the construct of FOI will be reviewed. Fourth, literature that addresses FOI in the context of supervision will be addressed. Fifth, an overview of studies that aim to understand the supervisory relationship will be presented. Finally, models of counsellor development and of counsellor supervision will be reviewed.

FOI and Psychotherapist Stress and Burnout

Researchers of therapist self-care, stress, and burn-out have frequently identified FOI as a significant element in the experience of practicing psychotherapy. Howard, Orlinsky, and Hill (1969) were first to empirically investigate how practitioners of psychotherapy feel in relation to their practice. The authors used self-report questionnaires to identify the feelings experienced by 28 psychotherapists over a range of 8-26 sessions with a client. The authors used factor analysis, which yielded nine dimensional factors of therapists' feelings. One of the nine dimensions was found to be "sense of failure" (p. 88), which was defined by therapists feeling "disappointed," "inadequate," "frustrated," "apprehensive," and "angry" (p. 88) in relation to their work with clients.

Farber and Heifetz (1981) investigated the positive and negative impacts of working as a psychotherapist in a sample of 60 therapists. Their factor analysis showed that professional self-doubt accounted for nearly 10 percent of the variance of work-related stress factors. The authors' later study (Farber & Heifetz, 1982) that addressed the impact of practicing psychotherapy used semi-structured interviews with 60 therapists. They found that 73.7 percent

of their participants reported “lack of therapeutic success” as the “single most stressful aspect of therapeutic work” (Farber & Heifetz, 1982, p. 297).

Deutsch (1984) surveyed 264 practitioners of psychotherapy about their self-reported beliefs in relation to their sources of stress. Results of the study indicated that therapists’ expectations and sense of failure about process and outcome in client work were a significant source of stress. In a similar survey of 155 psychotherapy practitioners, over 40 percent of doctoral and non-doctoral practitioners reported “doubts about their own therapeutic effectiveness” (Mahoney, 1997, p. 15) as a personal problem, which they rated fourth highest out of a list of sixteen personal problems.

Hellman, Morrison, and Abramowitz (1986) studied the stresses resulting from working in the field of psychotherapy. The factor analysis of questionnaires, completed by 227 psychotherapists, yielded professional self-doubt as a significant contributor to feeling stressed. Their definition of self-doubt included doubting the effectiveness of therapy and difficulty evaluating or being satisfied with one’s contributions to therapy.

A systematic literature review addressing stress, burnout, and job satisfaction of clinical psychologists in the United Kingdom was conducted by Hannigan, Edwards, and Burnard (2004). The authors found that “professional self-doubt” and “feelings of incompetence” (p. 240) are frequently reported as stressors by British psychotherapists. A mail-in survey of 151 British clinical psychologists corroborated that “feeling inadequately skilled” (p. 38) was a factor in therapist stress (Cushway & Tyler, 1994).

The aforementioned studies clearly describe FOI as a contributor to therapists’ stress and burnout. Such overviews of therapists’ stressors indicate that FOI have a significant presence in

the practice of therapy, and that FOI are a self-care issue requiring sustained attention from researchers in order to better comprehend the problem, and to explore possible solutions.

Speculative Explanations of FOI

While several empirical investigations have taken place, some authors prefer to address FOI from a more theoretical and conjectural point of view. Guy (2000) offers a view regarding the source of FOI inspired by Heinz Kohut's work (1984, 1989, 1990 as cited in Guy, 2000). The author posits that the problem stems from therapists' need for support and admiration whose source is normally one's family and friends. Nonetheless, some therapists may turn to their clients as a source of admiration and support. However, due to the special nature of the therapeutic relationship, clients cannot genuinely fulfil such a role. Consequently, when therapists rely on clients to nurture their confidence, they risk mismanaging the therapy process and the crossing of relational boundaries. Guy asserts that to avoid such dire outcomes, confidence-boosts must come from outside of the therapeutic relationship.

A related argument is made by Knestbaum (1984). This author focuses on therapeutic growth expectations as a factor contributing to therapist burnout. According to Knestbaum (1984) "many therapists simply do not know when they are doing well" (p. 375). The trend that expectations for client growth are ill-defined is coupled with therapists tendency to "not hear" (p. 375) positive feedback. The resulting discrepancy between expectations and perceived success causes therapists to be distressed and increases their vulnerability to burnout. While such provisional explanations of FOI provide an understanding of how such feelings may occur in therapists, empirically grounded data is required to achieve a more credible account of how supervision may or may not be helpful in dealing with FOI.

FOI and Countertransference

FOI have been studied as a countertransference phenomenon. The construct of countertransference originates from psychodynamic schools of thought. In its earliest uses, the term referred to “the unconscious and neurotic reactions of the therapists to their patients’ transference” (p. 17, Freud 1910/1951 as cited in Fauth, 2006). However, more modern understandings of countertransference have taken a much more inclusive view of conscious sources of therapists’ emotional reactions. In order to capture both classical and modern views of countertransference, Fauth proposes that the definition could refer to therapists’ idiosyncratic reactions, whether conscious or unconscious, that result from the therapist’s own personal conflicts or biases.

Hahn (2000) found that when clients experience shame during therapy, the defensive projection of such feelings can result in countertransferential feelings of inadequacy and inferiority for the therapist. In turn, this type of countertransference can have a detrimental impact on therapeutic process, outcome, as well as the therapeutic alliance.

Shame and feelings of inadequacy resulting from countertransferential reactions to shame also plays a role in the occurrence of negative therapeutic reactions (Hahn, 2004). A negative therapeutic reaction is defined as a situation in which a therapist applies a normally effective intervention but their client responds with a deterioration of their symptoms and regressing in overall progress (Hahn). Following such an event, feelings of inadequacy may arise in two ways: (a) Therapists may react with feelings of inadequacy as a result of observing the lack of progress or regression in their clients, or (b) countertransference of feelings of inadequacy can occur in response to the client’s own sense of inadequacy.

Goodman (2005) reports that inexperienced therapists are plagued with feelings of incompetence, which makes them especially vulnerable to defensive projections by clients with high levels of guilt, anxiety, and depression. These clients' defensive projections may induce further doubts in their competence as therapists. In addition, therapists may project their own self-doubts and anxieties onto their clients. The poor progress resulting from unrecognized countertransference with such clients may result in negative therapeutic reactions. Then, observing clients' deterioration could once again confirm therapists' pre-existing doubts.

Studies of countertransferential FOI provide us with a theoretical explanation of the sources of FOI. However, the occurrence of FOI as a result of countertransference has not been empirically verified. Also, the assumption that therapists' feelings arise solely as a result of countertransference has been criticised for not treating therapists' feelings as a genuine part of their experience (Howard, Orlinsky, & Hill, 1969). Furthermore, FOI may also be understood from a number of other theoretical perspectives. Finally, these studies are unable to account for the role supervision may play in therapists' experience of FOI.

FOI and Therapeutic Impasses

While the above studies are mainly based on researchers' experience and theoretical expertise, the role of FOI in critical therapy events has been empirically demonstrated. A therapeutic impasse can be defined as "a deadlock or stalemate in which therapy becomes so difficult or complicated that further progress is impossible *and terminations occurs*, with accompanying feelings of anger, disappointment, and a sense of failure on the part of either or both the client and the therapist" (Hill et al., 1996, p. 207). Hill and her colleagues invited therapists to respond to a questionnaire asking them to address a recent and salient impasse they have experienced. The questionnaire was followed up with a semi-structured interview. The

authors found that impasses were often preceded by a feeling of helplessness on the part of the therapist, and were followed by therapists doubting their own professional abilities. Therapists managed their feelings through consultation, supervision and engaging in positive, forgiving self-talk. The impact of the impasse was therapists' increased concern and decreased self-efficacy towards working with their other clients. It is significant that while all therapists reported having made mistakes in the impasse relationships, when researchers reviewed the cases, they did not identify therapist incompetence as the reason for the impasse that resulted in termination by clients. (Hill et al.).

Based on this study of therapeutic impasses, it appears that feelings of incompetence are not clearly related to actual incompetent practice. The relationship of thoughts and feelings to actual performance has been further conceptualized by some authors using the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

FOI and Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy (SE) is a component of Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs in his or her ability to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura, 1986). Counselling SE is defined as "one's beliefs or judgments about his or her capability to effectively counsel a client in the near future" (Larson & Daniels, 1998, p. 180). Counsellor SE can increase with training, supervision, and counselling experience (Easton, Martin, & Wilson, 2008). Furthermore, Easton, Martin, and Wilson's study provided evidence that one's sense of counselling SE is significantly related to measures of emotional intelligence, especially to those which measure the ability to identify one's own and others' emotions. In addition, the authors found that counsellor trainees with low SE gave low ratings to their perceived ability to utilize emotions in problem-solving with difficult clients. Quantitative

instruments such as the Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE; Larson, et al., 1992) or the Counselling Activity Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES; Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003) have been frequently used to study counsellor SE.

Lent and his colleagues (2006) used CASES to measure counsellor trainees' SE in general, and in relation to a particular client. The purpose of their study was to relate client-specific SE to overall SE, as measured by the CASES instrument (Lent et al., 2003). Participants were 110 counsellors in training. Findings indicated that client-specific ratings of SE were positively correlated with general ratings of SE, and impacted counsellors' evaluations of session quality. Furthermore, higher client-specific SE was associated with trainees evaluating the quality of their sessions similarly to their clients' ratings. Therefore, beliefs about low competence with a particular client are associated with an overall lack of professional confidence as well as with less realistic judgments of session quality.

In a recent study, Lent and associates (2009) investigated the sources from which counsellor trainees construct their self-efficacy beliefs. Trainees (N=93) in the first five sessions of their practicum completed questionnaires based on sessions during which they noticed a change in their SE. Their responses were coded and analyzed to uncover sources of their SE beliefs. The authors found that 10 percent of participants noted the impact of supervision as a source of change in their SE beliefs. However, the strongest sources informing SE were trainees' own performance evaluations and their perceptions of how clients responded to therapy. The authors also noted that the cues of client progress that trainees attended to were quite ambiguous. As a result, the authors emphasized the need for clearer performance feedback for trainees.

Heppner, Multon, Gysbers, Ellis, and Zook (1998) sought to find statistical relationships between career counsellor trainees' (N=24) SE scores and measures of counselling process and outcome with their clients (N=55) over 3-12 sessions. The authors found that their participants' self-efficacy measures were related to very few measures of process and outcome of career counselling. In addition, the authors found that clients of trainees with higher ratings of SE reported less growth in terms of personal control over their career decisions. The authors offer multiple interpretations of this correlation: (a) counsellors with high SE allow for less control by clients than their low SE counterparts, (b) clients with lower perceived control may be more likely to boost counsellors' confidence by asking for advice or expressing admiration, and (c) clients who perceive their own control to be low, may view their counsellors' SE to be higher. Based on these findings, Heppner et al. suggest that "more self-efficacy" is not necessarily "better" (p. 393), and that best trainee performance may be the result of an optimal level of counselling SE that is neither too high nor too low.

Studies of SE contribute to empirical and theoretical knowledge about therapists' doubts regarding their professional competence. Nonetheless, their findings are constrained by the assumptions of social-learning theory, which links therapists' confidence in performing well-defined counselling skills with social-learning processes. This results in a narrow conceptualization of the sources and mechanisms of therapists' self-doubts, and does not account for the multiplicity of FOI unrelated to specific counselling skills.

FOI and the Impostor Phenomenon

The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a phenomenological concept that may be related to the experience of FOI. The term, coined by Clance and Imes (1978), refers to the experience of believing that while one appears to be successful externally, one feels that they are incompetent

in reality (French, Ullrich-French, & Follman, 2008). Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman (1995) relate IP to therapists' self-evaluations, which impact their relationships with their clients. Leary, Patton, Orlando, and Funk (2000) examined the theoretical assumptions of IP. The authors found that those who scored high on impostorism did in fact have low self-appraisals; however, contrary to theory, these individuals also expressed an expectation of low appraisal from others. Leary et al. found that high impostorism scorers' reflected appraisals (appraisals expected from others) were different when their responses were public (visible to other participants). When publicly responding, their expectations for others' appraisals were lower, compared to those privately reported. The authors speculate that IP is likely to be at least in part a self-presentation strategy. Persons with high IP measures may attempt to protect themselves from poor evaluations by manipulating their evaluators to lower expectations about their performance.

Studies of the IP are different from other FOI-related fields in that these studies treat FOI as an element of a relatively stable personality trait, rather than a variable, situationally-based element of confidence, such as countertransference or self-efficacy. An article by Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman (1995) provides a possible explanation of how practitioners of psychotherapy may be impacted by the IP. The authors put forth the suggestion that many therapists may have grown up in families in which they were the subjects of narcissistic misuse or abuse by their parents. In such a family, children are placed into developmentally inappropriate roles that serve parents' narcissistic needs, such as providing emotional or instrumental caretaking for the parents. Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman delineate that being in such a role throughout childhood is conducive to developing skills such as high levels of emotional attunement to others; a skill that may lead individuals toward a career in

psychotherapy. Among the correlates of such a disposition are the inability to have one's emotional needs met, perfectionism, and IP. In this case, IP is associated with externalizing success and a tendency to equate achievement and approval with one's ability to meet others' needs. The authors identify IP as one of several narcissistic problems that can predispose therapists to FOI and to a higher risk for burnout.

While studies of IP identify an important cluster of experiences that are likely to be related to FOI, it is unclear whether the construct of IP accounts for the full range of self-doubts experienced by psychotherapists. Furthermore, studies of IP are mainly descriptive, and they lack information about ways of dealing with the problem including the role, if any, that supervision may play in mediating this experience.

Therapist Self-Awareness and Mindfulness

FOI may be manifested in the form of negative, in-session self-awareness of therapists. Several contradictory studies have been published in this area, some of which have identified negative consequences of therapist self-awareness (e.g., Nutt-Williams & Hill, 1996); while others (e.g., Williams, 2003) have found that therapist self-awareness can have a positive impact on some therapeutic processes. The literature is unclear about what management strategies are effective in the face of hindering self-awareness for therapists (Nutt-Williams, 2008). Nevertheless, the following two studies demonstrate ways in which FOI may impact the counselling process.

Stanley et al. (2006) studied 23 doctoral trainees and their 144 adult clients. The study found that therapists' higher degree of in-session mindfulness was related to a lesser degree of client improvement in terms of overall functioning and symptomatology at termination. Although clients of therapists with higher reported mindfulness still improved in therapy, the

results suggest that it is possible that mindfulness interferes with the performance of learned counselling skills.

Therapist self-talk is a phenomenon related of therapists' momentary awareness. Nutt-Williams and Hill (1996) asked 31 therapist trainees to each explore their self-talk in a recorded session of therapy using a thought-listing procedure. The analyses showed that the more negative therapists' self-talk was, the more likely they were to give a low rating of their own helpfulness and of their clients' reactions. This relationship remained true even when the quality of therapeutic alliance was controlled for. Negative self-talk most often involved "not knowing what to say next, feeling stuck, worrying about how they sounded to the client, and wondering about the effect of their words" (p. 174).

FOI therefore have the potential to become a problematic influence on therapists and their client-work. While these studies do not conclusively show the impact of negative self-awareness, they reveal a potential relationship between FOI and therapists' internal processes during the practice of therapy.

Grounded Theories of FOI

Thériault and Gazzola (2005, 2006, 2008) conducted an inductive, qualitative exploration of the subjective experience of FOI among seasoned psychotherapists, with minimum of a Master's degree and a minimum of 10 years of clinical experience. Grounded theory analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed that FOI exist on a continuum, varying in depth and intensity. The authors identified a range of sources of FOI, such as issues of the therapeutic process, therapists' knowledge and therapists' personal issues in therapy. The authors report that FOI impact a therapist's emotional world, his or her actions, the therapeutic relationship, and the

therapist's overall well-being. FOI were also reported to have some positive consequences by encouraging reflection and help-seeking, such as consultation with colleagues or supervision.

Thériault and Gazzola (2005) also describe influences that mediate between intensity levels and outcomes of FOI. Such influences include cognitive management of FOI, the level of therapist experience, regression to earlier developmental levels, internal or external pressure experienced, role-related issues, reflections that result in insight, and past training or supervision received. One quarter of Thériault and Gazzola's (2005) participants spontaneously disclosed recollections of helpful supervision experiences in relation to FOI. They reported recalling such experiences vividly and that many years later they could continually benefit from lessons learned in supervision.

Recently, Thériault, Gazzola, and Richardson (2009) published an article using methods borrowed from grounded theory to study 10 novice therapists' experience of FOI. Their resultant conceptual schema comprised descriptive categories pertaining to important elements of FOI in their novice sample. The authors were able to identify consequences of FOI, coping mechanisms, and attenuation factors. Consequences of FOI affected the process of therapy as well as therapists themselves. Participants in this study reported coping with FOI through various adjustments of their thoughts and attitudes towards their work as well as by performing self-care. The researchers' inquiry into the role of supervision in novice therapists' FOI found that participants desired to use supervision in managing their FOI. However, participants reported that they experienced FOI as a taboo subject in supervision and that they tended to emphasize more positive elements of their work to their supervisors.

Grounded theory studies of FOI are invaluable in understanding FOI as well as potential strategies that help counsellors deal with these feelings. They are unique due to their "grounded-

ness” in the lived experience of their participants. However, these studies are not necessarily transferrable to the FOI of counsellor trainees, and they do not directly address the role of supervision in how trainees manage FOI.

How Supervision May Contribute to Supervisees’ Management of FOI

Supervision has been found to be a strategy that helps therapists through stressful times (Hannigan, Edwards, & Burnard, 2004). Guy and Liaboe (1986), Cushway and Tyler (1994), as well as Norcross (2000) recommend training and supervision as a way of alleviating professional stresses. Knestbaum (1984) strongly recommends supervision as an aid in recognizing progress in clients and also as a source of feedback on one’s practice, especially for therapists in training. According to the literature, the impact of supervision on the counsellor trainee is great, both in depth and breadth. Researchers have found that supervisors can influence supervisees’ feelings, thoughts, practice, and decision-making (Gazzola & Thériault, 2007), state and trait anxiety levels (Al-Darmaki, 2004), and sense of competence (Worthen & McNeill, 1996). Thériault and Gazzola (2005, 2008) documented that supervision is a mediating influence which tempers the impact of FOI. According to authors Briggs and Miller (2005) the “supervisor is a facilitator who works with the therapist to identify and amplify the therapist’s competencies” (p. 200). In support of this notion, researchers have documented ways in which supervision can be helpful with regards to trainee FOI (De Stefano et al., 2007).

In Gray, Ladany, Walker, and Ancis’ (2001) study of 13 psychotherapy trainees, it was typical for participants to report negative thoughts and feelings about their competence and to experience reduced self-efficacy as a result of a counterproductive supervision event. Though almost all trainees felt incompetent as a consequence of the counterproductive event, in half of

the cases, trainees reported that the counterproductive supervision event provided them with an opportunity for growth.

De Stefano and colleagues (2007) found that group supervision was helpful in overcoming FOI and feelings of failure for 27 trainee participants. In tandem, Worthen and McNeill's (1996) phenomenological study of positive events in individual supervision has found that in many of their participants' experiences, feelings of inadequacy enabled the occurrence of a "good supervision event" (p. 28). In such cases, supervisees' disclosures of feelings of inadequacy were met with supervisory feedback that was validating and encouraging exploration. These studies confirm that supervision is likely to have a role in supervisees' management of FOI. However, this role is not clearly explained, since these investigations do not target the subject of FOI-management. Furthermore, the studies do not explain what it is about supervision that may be perceived as helpful or hindering by supervisees in relation to FOI.

FOI and Supervision

A study conducted by Nelson and Friedlander (2001) investigated counselling psychology trainees' experiences of conflictual supervisory relationships. The authors conducted interviews with 13 trainees about their conflictual supervisory relationships. The interviews were analyzed using a combination of discourse analysis and grounded theory, which yielded a categorical ordering of the properties of conflictual relationships. One of the typical negative outcomes of such relationships was long-lasting self-doubt, leading to premature retirement from counselling in one case. Other negative outcomes included feeling unsupported, mistrust toward the supervisor, feeling powerless, and experiencing extreme stress and various fears.

Steward (1998) proposes that it is possible that a parallel process takes place in supervision that affects the self-efficacy (SE) of supervisees. The author suggests that the SE of supervisors may impact the SE of the supervisee. Therefore, nurturing the supervisor's confidence will in turn impact the confidence of those who he or she supervises. Consequently, based on Steward's work it is possible to speculate that interns' FOI may also be linked to supervisors' FOI.

Duryee, Brymer, and Gold (1996) found that while one of trainees' most important needs in supervision is to address their FOI, supervision may be differentially successful in accomplishing this goal. The authors' case studies document mixed outcomes for discussions of FOI in supervision. In their first case study, the trainee's FOI were diminished when the supervisor normalized FOI, and gave the trainee advice on how to best proceed with his clients. In the second case presented, the supervisor's directive approach fuelled patterns of actions for the trainee that were generative of FOI. The authors describe that in this case the trainee became reluctant to trust her own instinct, and instead became dependent on the supervisor's authoritarian guidance. In turn, this dependence became detrimental to the trainee's own FOI and to her approach to working with clients.

FOI and Trainee Disclosure in Supervision

Although supervision can aid trainees in processing FOI, research evidence suggests that disclosing FOI may be difficult. Ladany, Hill, Corbett, and Nutt (1996) used a thought-listing questionnaire with 108 trainees to compile an inventory of nondisclosures in supervision. Their analysis yielded both statistical and descriptive data about the content and reasons for nondisclosures. The authors found that perceived inadequacy is a topic often withheld from supervisors in order to reduce feelings of shame or a negative self-presentation. Forty-four

percent of participants reported withholding information about a perceived clinical mistake in order to avoid a negative evaluation by their supervisors.

According to Yourman (2003), a shame reaction is especially likely to occur when a disclosure involves the trainee perceiving him or herself as inadequately skilled and seeking approval from a liked supervisor. Through descriptive case studies, Yourman demonstrated that the experience of shame in supervision may result in a reduction of supervisee disclosures. The shame reaction in turn can damage the supervisory alliance and the perceived quality of supervision. Hahn (2001, 2004) expounds on supervisees' difficulties in recognizing and processing shame reactions, which can result in defensive reactions that may impact supervisees' self-esteem as well as hinder their work with their supervisors.

While some conceptualizations of the relationship of shame and supervision suggest that disclosing FOI in supervision is difficult, Yourman and Farber (1996) found that FOI are not necessarily a taboo in supervision. The authors used a questionnaire method with 93 trainees to investigate instances of distorting or not disclosing information to supervisors. The prevalence of nondisclosure was confirmed by the study; 30-40 percent of respondents reported moderate to high frequency of *overall* nondisclosure. However, nearly 95% of participants endorsed the statement: "I feel comfortable discussing my feelings of inadequacy as a clinician" (p.571) with moderate-to-high frequency (moderate 43%, high 51 %). The findings suggest that while nondisclosure of FOI does occur, many trainees feel able to discuss them in supervision. The study provides some insight into variables predictive of nondisclosure; supervisee satisfaction and frequency of discussing countertransference were both negatively related to nondisclosure. Moreover, frequency of discussing countertransference and the supervisor treating supervision like therapy were predictive of supervisee satisfaction. The findings inform us of certain

supervisory practices that may relate to increased disclosure in supervision. However, conclusions based on this study must be tentative, since Yourman and Farber's findings are correlational, and they do not specifically address the disclosure of FOI.

Arriving from a different methodological perspective, Walsh, Gillespie, Greer, and Eanes (2001) used a checklist method to investigate the relationship of the supervisory alliance and counsellor trainees' disclosure. The authors asked 75 pastoral counselling students to each choose a past clinical mistake and to complete checklists of factors impacting the disclosure of that mistake. The most important factors that were relevant to making the disclosure were the following supervisor factors: the supervisor's style, their willingness to share their own experiences, investment in their supervisee's success, their willingness to share own mistakes, their amount of counselling and supervising experience as well as their theoretical orientation.

In a recent study of 14 pre-doctoral interns' nondisclosure in supervision, Hess et al. (2008) found that the dynamics of nondisclosure differed somewhat depending on the quality of the supervisory relationship. In good relationships, described as safe, supportive, and collaborative, interns' nondisclosure was incidental, and the content of their nondisclosures were mostly perceived mistakes and other clinical issues. In contrast, problematic relationships were described as critical, evaluative, in which the supervisor lacked investment and competence. In such relationships, nondisclosures were embedded in the relationship, and often pertained to problems in the supervisor relationship, for example tensions arising from differing theoretical orientations. In both types of relationships the main reason for nondisclosure was a concern with poor evaluation and negative feelings such as vulnerability, self-doubt, and insecurity. However, in the problematic relationships, nondisclosures were also motivated by four additional factors: (1) a concern over power differentials and its consequences, (2) supervisor factors such as

theoretical orientation, style, demographic or cultural factors, (3) previous unsuccessful attempts at disclosure, and (4) feeling that disclosure is not worth the effort. Furthermore, in good relationships nondisclosure did not have a significant effect, while the problematic group reported effects of frustration, disappointment, a lack of safety, becoming even less likely to disclose in the future, and becoming less invested in supervision. In good relationships participants said that they would disclose an issue that was originally withheld if their supervisor asked them or if their supervisor engaged in a related self-disclosure. Conversely, participants in problematic relationships had no suggestions for what could have been helpful to encourage their disclosure. Finally, in good relationships, interns were concerned about the nondisclosure, while in bad relationships interns decided to seek supervision from an alternative source.

Studies of nondisclosure in supervision are of particular importance to the current study because they provide evidence that FOI play a role in what is discussed in supervision sessions. However, to date findings in this area are unable to provide a sufficiently rich picture of how disclosing or withholding FOI in supervision is experienced and how supervisors respond to disclosures. A portion of the studies (e.g., Yourman, 2003) are case studies, which provide rich information about the particular instances of disclosing feelings of inadequacy in supervision, but are unable to provide a broader picture of the issue. Other studies (e.g., Ladany et al., 1996; Yourman & Farber, 1996) employ substantial samples and statistical methods, which can inform us about the rate of occurrence of the problem; however, they do not account for the complexity of the experiences involved in disclosure and nondisclosure in supervision.

The Supervisory Relationship

The supervisory relationship appears to be closely connected to processes that take place within supervision. As a consequence, it may be anticipated that the supervisory relationship

would play a role in the management of FOI as well. Weaks (2002) conducted semi-structured interviews with nine experienced counsellors from the USA with 6-26 years of experience.

Through grounded theory analysis the author discovered that the supervisory relationship was the key component to “good” supervision, and that the three categories of *safety*, *equality* and *challenging* were most centrally related to the phenomenon of good supervision.

Conversely, Vallence (2005) conducted phenomenological interviews with six British counsellor supervisees with a broad range of experience. The author’s goal was to identify which elements of the supervision process impact supervisees’ work with clients. She found that self-awareness, professional development, emotional support, clients not discussed, and the quality of the supervisory relationship were the most influential themes on supervisees’ client work.

Pearson (2000) proposed that the greatest challenge to the maintenance of an effective supervisory relationship is the need to recognize psychodynamic issues arising between supervisor and supervisee. When psychodynamic phenomena go unrecognized they can cause conflict or at least ineffective supervision. Signs that one of these phenomena is influencing the supervisory relationship may manifest as unusually negative or unusually positive feelings, tension, feeling an urge to engage in differential treatment of the other party, any atypical responding in communication, and noticing feelings between supervisor and supervisee as being similar to those between supervisee and client.

Liddle (1986) suggested that resistance in supervision is a coping response to the anxiety that arises from external and internal pressures to appear competent and confident. The author identifies two signs of resistance by supervisees: (1) Asking several safe questions that leave no time for personal matters in supervision, and (2) giving ample self-criticism to encourage the

supervisor to give reassuring messages instead of further criticism. The author recommends that supervisors teach supervisees more helpful coping strategies, and that they conduct supervision using empathy, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and respect toward their supervisees.

Pistole and Fitch (2008) applied Bowlby's attachment theory to the study of supervisory relationship. While attachment theory is usually used to describe the attachment patterns of parents and children (Bowlby, 1988 as cited in Pistole & Fitch) the hierarchical nature and the emotional bond existing in the supervisory relationship presents a parallel that makes the use of attachment theory viable. Securely attached individuals tend to feel worthy of love and care from others, and believe that others are trustworthy. Conversely, individuals with insecure attachment patterns may experience various constellations of perceiving themselves as unworthy or perceiving others as unavailable or unworthy of trust (Bartholomew, 1990). Pistole and Fitch posit that supervisees, motivated by their attachment to the supervisor, will work to remain within a range of closeness/distance to the supervisor that provides them with a sense of safety. The supervisee may engage in *attachment behaviour* (p. 194) such as emotional reactions and seeking out the caregiver (the supervisor), especially when faced with external stressors such as a novel experience, or internal ones, for example, self-doubt or fear. If the *attachment behaviour* is met with proximity (psychological or physiological) from the supervisor, the emotional and help-seeking reactions will be soothed and deactivated. The resulting sense of safety facilitates the supervisee's *exploratory behaviour* (p. 194) which allows them to engage in problem-solving and to develop and learn to become a counsellor.

Riggs and Bretz's (2006) survey of 87 trainees found that there may be a complex interaction of attachment processes which contribute to the development of the supervisory alliance. The authors discovered that trainees' perceptions of their supervisors' attachment style

had a strong influence on supervision. For example, when the supervisor's attachment style was rated as secure, trainees tended to give a more positive evaluation of the overall relationship, than in cases where the supervisor was perceived to have any of the insecure attachment styles. The authors also found evidence that trainees' own attachment styles played a role. In particular, high self-reliance in trainees had a negative impact on ratings of the supervisory alliance.

Studies of the supervisory relationship provide us with an understanding of the significance the emotional connections of supervisor and supervisee. However, *how* supervisors approach their relationship to supervisees and other aspects of supervision is variable. The following section will provide the reader with an overview of various perspectives and models on the conduct of supervision.

Models of Counsellor and Psychotherapist Supervision

Through the history of psychotherapy, supervision has been conceptualized in numerous ways. Models of counsellor development and supervision attempt to explain the ways in which students of psychotherapy become professionals through supervised training. Each model systematically describes this path of learning and/or development, and attempts to define appropriate supervisory actions. While the literature on supervision models is vast, the current review will attempt to cover maximal ground through the use of Morgan and Sprenkle's categorization of supervision models (2007). The authors have grouped models of supervision by their common focal points: clinical models, social-role modelling, objectives-based and feminist models, and finally developmental models.

Clinical models. These models utilize theories of psychotherapy to conceptualize the activities and goals of supervision. Examples of clinical supervision models include psychodynamic supervision (Lane, Barber, & Gregson, 1998), solution-focused supervision

(McCurdy, 2006), and narrative supervision (Bob, 1999). These models have been critiqued based on their tendency to equate therapy and supervision, their narrow focus due to theoretical constraints, and a lack of empirical support (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007).

Social-role models. These models are more atheoretical and descriptive as compared to clinical models of supervision. The goal of social-role models is to create an inventory of supervisor and supervisee developmental tasks that are requisite to the successful training of psychotherapists. An emphasis is placed on the supervisory relationship in determining the quality of supervision. A well-known example of a social-role model of supervision is Bernard's (1979) Discrimination Model, which links supervisory roles with the learning needs of supervisees in order to prescribe effective approaches to supervision. Social-role models have been criticized for their lack of structure, which hinders their applicability for purposes of research and for the practice of supervision (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007).

Objectives-based and feminist models. The contribution of objectives-based approaches is to set criteria for knowledge- and skills-goals, which define and describe the advancement of supervisees. Feminist models have focused on collaboration and equality in the supervisory relationship. Without requiring participants to *be* feminist, feminist models infuse the supervisory process with values related to feminism (Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007).

Developmental models. Developmental models conceptualize the training and supervision of therapists as a series of developmental levels or stages (e.g., Bischoff & Barton, 2002; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Each stage of development is accompanied by guidelines for supervisory practices appropriate for that stage. These models are broader than clinical models, and place their focus on meeting the evolving needs of the supervisee.

Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth (1982) proposed a conceptual model of counsellor development. The model is based on eight supervisory issues, within each of which a supervisee may move through three stages of development: *stagnation*, *confusion*, and *integration*. The authors propose that although supervisees may reach *integration* in an area, it is possible that they will recycle through the earlier stages of development in that area later in their careers. Loganbill et al. posit that feelings of inadequacy in the stagnation stage are often denied, while during the confusion stage they frequently become sources of distress due to the fear of being overtaken by them. In the final stage, feelings of inadequacy come to be valued and treated as informative in nature. Loganbill et al.'s model is rich and comprehensive; however, it is limited by its lack of empirical support and inability to account for strong FOI reported by experienced practitioners.

A more current model, proposed by Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) is based on multiple studies of counsellor development with both cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. The model is based on interview data of 100 therapists at different experience levels: beginner and advanced students, as well as groups with averages of 5, 15, and 25 years of post-doctoral experience. The results yielded a six-stage model as well as twenty developmental themes for therapists. In Rønnestad and Skovholt's conceptualization, a therapist moves through the following phases: the *Lay Helper*, the *Beginning Student*, the *Advanced Student*, the *Novice Professional*, the *Experienced Professional*, and finally the *Senior Professional* phase. In the *Beginning Student* and *Advanced Student* phases, therapists report experiencing self-doubts in relation to course requirements and supervisors' expectations. They report entertaining doubt regarding their capacity to master necessary skills. As a *Novice Professional*, self-doubts increase as the support provided during training is taken away, and practice becomes more

independent and therefore more challenging. Finally, as a *Senior Professional*, self-doubts were related to intimidation by younger professionals and to feeling pressured to display competence as a senior practitioner. In the *Lay Helper* and *Experienced Professional* phases, self-doubts do not play a significant role according to this model. The strength of Rønnestad and Skovholt's model is that it is empirically based, using multiple methods of data collection. Furthermore, as compared to older models, Rønnestad and Skovholt are able to explain experienced therapists' FOI. The limitation of the model lies in its broad focus of overall counsellor development, therefore lacking qualitative detail on experiences with FOI at each developmental phase.

Another study that shed light on the role of FOI in counsellor development is Jennings et al. (2008). The authors interviewed 9 therapists who have been nominated to be a "master counsellor" (p. 510) by their colleagues – one that you would recommend to family or friends as "the best of the best" (p. 510) and one in which you have complete confidence. The authors used grounded theory to identify personal characteristics and therapy practices of these master counsellors. They identified self-doubt as one of the major developmental influences for these therapists; they reported self-doubt as a facilitator of growth that occurs periodically, and motivates them to develop their clinical expertise.

Summary and Research Questions

FOI are a significant self-care issue for practitioners of psychotherapy that have captured the attention of researchers from various perspectives. FOI and related phenomena may be examined from different theoretical frameworks, such as countertransference, the Impostor Phenomenon, or low self-efficacy. Furthermore, it is apparent in the literature that FOI may contribute to therapists' stress and burnout, and may impact the course of therapy. There are numerous approaches to viewing the development of psychotherapists, and there are

correspondingly numerous existing viewpoints regarding supervision. However, the role of supervision in trainees' management of FOI is currently unexplained. To date, researchers have shown that FOI are experienced, and at times discussed in supervision, suggesting that supervision does play a role in trainees' management of FOI. Researchers have also shown evidence that supervision may be helpful in managing FOI. However, findings are inconsistent regarding whether or not, and under what conditions trainees disclose or address FOI with supervisors. The literature also lacks empirically grounded research on *how* FOI are experienced and/or managed during supervision. Finally, there is no current research available describing the ways in which supervision can be helpful or hindering in dealing with FOI.

Although supervision is a potentially powerful tool for therapist self-care, the current state of knowledge about the role of supervision in managing FOI is insufficient to inform the effectiveness of supervisory practices in the face of FOI. The association of FOI with stress and burnout in practitioners of psychotherapy makes developing knowledge in this area imperative. To address this problem, the present research addressed the question: "What is the role of supervision in the management of FOI?" This query included the following questions: (1) "How are feelings of incompetence experienced in the context of internship supervision?" (2) Whether and how FOI are disclosed and addressed in supervision?" (3) "What, if anything, is perceived as helpful or hindering by supervisees in supervision regarding FOI?"

To gather thick, descriptive responses to these questions, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with counselling trainees in supervised internships. Then, to present a rich, but systematic synthesis of findings, the researcher used a variation of grounded theory to analyze and interpret interview data.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The following section will provide an account of the present study's methodology. First, the philosophical assumptions underlying the study's methods will be introduced. Second, rationales for methods and procedures will be explained. Third, strategies employed to promote the trustworthiness of the results will be delineated. Fourth, the instruments used for data collection will be described. Finally, recruitment and data collection procedures will be presented, including the demographic information of the participants of the study.

Philosophical Assumptions

The research methodologies chosen carry a number of philosophical assumptions. The assumptions pertain to understanding the nature of knowledge and truth as well as determining what is considered to be a valid research process.

Pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. The methodology of grounded theory was born out of a pragmatist and symbolic interactionist philosophy. From this perspective knowledge is created through the actions and interactions of individuals who are capable of self-reflection. Therefore, according to this philosophy, knowledge is inherently bound with the "knower" whose participation and self-reflection gave rise to that knowledge. This stance furthermore concerns itself with understanding self-reflection and interaction as processes that take place over time. Therefore, knowledge of what we consider "truth" may be fluid, and may evolve over time as further interactions and self-reflections take place. Finally, pragmatist philosophy treats knowledge as well as people's everyday conduct of affairs as closely connected

– as opposed to viewing a division of scientific versus unscientific ways of knowing (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Methodological implications of philosophical assumptions. Knowledge that is based in the interactive and self-reflective nature of individuals results in a system in which truth and knowledge are highly complex. The methods of grounded theory aim to capture this complexity by seeking out multiple sources of information, and integrating the multiplicity of views in the presentation of the results. Therefore, in the present study the researcher gathered data through interviews with multiple participants in order to represent a diversity of views on the research questions. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher sought to ensure a flexible method of data collection in order to capture the complexity of the knowledge contributed by participants. Furthermore, pragmatist views imply that the researcher trusts the truthfulness and accuracy of information that is gathered from individuals' reflections upon their lived experience. Additionally, the researcher treats participants' disclosures of self-reflections as a valuable and legitimate source of data. Therefore, the researcher conducted data-collection and analyses with the assumption that her participants' self-reports about their experiences with managing FOI in supervision are truthful and valid sources of knowledge. Finally, the present philosophical assumptions imply that knowledge is collectively constructed through interaction with other self-reflective participants. The creation of an abstract and systematic presentation of the results of research is viewed as a vehicle of communication with other researchers in order to contribute to collectively built knowledge. To communicate the findings of the interviews to other researchers and the public, the researcher used systematic data analysis methods of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and conceptual ordering to present the results.

Choice of Methods

A qualitative research method was chosen in order to gather rich data that describes feelings and experiences of participants. An interview method was chosen in order to allow participants maximal freedom to express and to describe their responses. Qualitative interviewing is useful for gathering interpretations and meanings assigned to participants' experiences, rather than to collect facts about the world (Warren, 2001). This property lent itself well to the current research, since the researcher's aim was to understand participants' experiences of feelings, and how their feelings are managed in and impacted by interactions with others (supervisors, clients etc.) in the context of a relationship with another (the supervisor). In addition, qualitative interviews can gather rich and in-depth information, which is required for the understanding of the complex and highly subjective phenomena the researcher sought to understand in the study at hand (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher employed a modified version of grounded theory methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory provides a systematic approach to collecting and processing data about an area in which no pre-existing theory is available to guide the investigation (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Since to date, there is no theory available to explain the role of supervision in the management of FOI, grounded theory is an appropriate choice for data collection and analysis. Furthermore, grounded theory is recommended for inquiries addressing processes and interactions, especially ones that take place over time (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales), such as the interactions taking place in supervision and the process of managing FOI.

Why Modify Grounded Theory?

Grounded theory is often modified to suit the particular research questions of individual studies (e.g., Bahora, Sterk, & Elifson, 2009; Henriksen & Hansen, 2004). Grounded theory procedures of open and axial coding were used to analyze – decompose and interpret – the data.

For synthesizing results of that analysis, however, *conceptual ordering* was used instead of traditional theory construction.

Conceptual ordering is a “precursor to theory”; a representation of phenomena studied through grounded theory research, without the identification of a central explanatory category (Daveson, O’Calaghan, & Grocke, 2008, p. 208). Most recently, Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe conceptual ordering as “the organization of data into discrete categories (...) according to their properties and dimensions, then the utilization of description to elucidate those categories” (pp. 54-55). The authors highly recommend such an adaptation of the analytic process for research whose goals are not the construction of an overarching theory, but rather the grounded, systematic description of phenomena.

Modified Grounded Theory Procedures

Grounded theory analysis is based on the method of constant comparisons (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This method requires researchers to perpetually compare and contrast emerging concepts, codes, or categories to one another. Through such contrasts and comparisons, researchers may identify the properties that describe and define a given concept or category. The current study’s analyses were based on methods described by Strauss and Corbin (1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Data analysis procedures. Data analysis took place concurrent to data collection, with the exception of two interviews which followed closely in sequence. Following each interview, the recording was transcribed verbatim and imported into the software Nvivo © to aid manipulations of the text necessary for the rest of the analysis.

Open coding. First, open coding took place. In this process the researcher studied the data to identify any potential units of meaning, concepts, or phenomena in the text.

The goal of open coding was to pool meaning units into categories and related subcategories. Such groupings were then labelled with brief, descriptive titles, sometimes taken directly from the participants' words, called in-vivo codes. Lastly, in the open coding phase, the researcher looked for patterns in the data based on various properties and dimensions of the codes that emerged. Each transcript and open codes pertaining to them were audited by the researcher's supervisor. She reviewed the documents and made suggestions and clarifications regarding the data, which were then incorporated into the analysis by the researcher.

Axial coding. The next level of analysis was axial coding, which occurred concurrently with open coding as the number of interviews increased. The goal of this level of coding was to link categories and subcategories by identifying their relationship to one another. The researcher attempted to identify the conditions, actions, interactions, and consequences of concepts and phenomena established at the open coding stage. As part of axial coding, the researcher created hypotheses about the relationships that emerged throughout the coding process. Then, the data was reviewed to test these hypotheses on a theoretical level. Data evidence that disconfirmed hypotheses was used to refine and rearrange the axial codes and their relationships. It is important to note that the two phases of coding need not be, and were not treated as mutually exclusive. The axial and open coding processes are inherently intermingled as categories and their properties are refined.

Conceptual Ordering. It is at this stage of the analytic process that theory-construction and conceptual ordering begin to differ. In a study aimed at theory-construction, selective coding would follow. The purpose of selective coding is to choose a core category to which the other categories are linked to form a substantive theory of the phenomenon under study. For conceptual ordering, however, the researcher sought to organize codes into clearly

defined categories without identifying an explanatory core. The researcher formed hierarchical categories by grouping codes based on their common properties while continuously observing the “grounded” content of each code. The researcher grouped phenomena by their similarities in how they impact the management of FOI – this process was primarily determined by the role or function of each code in the overall process of managing FOI in supervision. For example, codes pertaining to interns’ actions were distinguished from those that described more passive traits/descriptors of interns. Whenever a code could be subsumed under a higher order category, the label of the unique category was retained; however, the researcher indicated hierarchical relationships through designating different levels of subcategories and dimensions. For example, various sources of FOI, such as aspects of therapy, interns’ identity and supervision related sources, etc. may be united into the category “Sources of Intern FOI.” However, “Sources of FOI” may be considered to be one of several other categories that describe interns’ FOI – these together constitute the major category “Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision.” Each major category is organized in a hierarchy of specificity/abstraction: categories designated as “dimensions” are the most specific and least abstract, while major categories may be considered the most abstract as well as most inclusive. Occasionally, the researcher identified codes/categories that could fit under more than one higher order category. Such ambiguities were resolved by the researcher’s informed judgments; decisions were made to ensure consistency within the categories. For example, supervision related sources of FOI could be considered to belong both to “Sources of Intern FOI” as well as under “Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI.” The category was chosen to be included under “Sources of Intern FOI” because this resulted in the greatest consistency of categories by keeping all codes describing sources of FOI unified. Finally, it may be noted that

one verbatim example may have been used to support multiple codes. For example, the phrase: “I think I just told her: Like, oh my god, that was torture, and frightening” informs us of multiple things. Firstly, we learn about the intern’s experience of “torture and fear” related to FOI. However, we may also observe that the intern’s disclosure to the supervisor focused on the experiential element of her FOI.

An example of the analytic process. The coding process is demonstrated in a verbatim example presented in Table 1. The leftmost column of the table presents a verbatim example drawn from an interview. Most relevant portions of the quotation have been underlined for emphasis. The next column to the right lists open codes the researcher identified in the participant’s words. The third column then presents axial codes corresponding to each open code – these codes served to group open codes through their relationships to one another. Finally, the rightmost column identifies the major category into which each of the lower level categories were placed during the conceptual ordering process.

Table 1

Demonstrating the Coding Process

Verbatim Example	Open Codes (meaning units)	Axial Codes (relationships)	Conceptual Category
<u>“I’m very like a reflective person, so it doesn’t take much for me to start telling about my experience in a sense, so like right away I think I just told her: Like, oh my god, that was torture, and frightening, and I didn’t know what to say, and like things I said was [sic] ridiculous, and I was inarticulate, like I just told her like everything that I felt. Umm... it wasn’t hard to tell her that I felt like totally inconfident [sic] in a room.”</u>	▪ Reflective personality trait increases ease of disclosure ▪ Easy disclosure ▪ Description of feelings – fear & suffering ▪ Disclosure focuses on feelings and experiences ▪ Disclosure made in its entirety ▪ Disclosure focuses on feelings and experiences ▪ The disclosure was easy to make ▪ Description of experience of FOI – lack of confidence	▪ Intern’s personal characteristics ▪ Level of personal difficulty of disclosing FOI ▪ Internal experiences of FOI ▪ Focus of the disclosure ▪ Extent of the disclosure ▪ Focus of the Disclosure ▪ Level of personal difficulty of disclosing FOI ▪ Internal experiences of FOI	▪ Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision ▪ Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision /Disclosing FOI ▪ Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision ▪ Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision /Disclosing FOI in Supervision ▪ Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision /Disclosing FOI in Supervision ▪ Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision

Trustworthiness

In order to achieve trustworthiness, researchers must use strategies that help ensure that participant meanings are correctly represented (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006).

Trustworthiness is created through addressing the components of credibility, dependability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the following section, strategies that were used to support the trustworthiness of the current research will be described.

Credibility. To ensure that participant perspectives were accurately portrayed, the researcher invested time to reflect and describe preconceptions regarding the study in written form (see section “The researcher as instrument”). Credibility can be further increased by increasing the depth of understanding of the phenomena of interest (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the collection of rich and deep information, which contributes to the credibility of the final analysis (Kagan & Schauble, 1969; Timulak & Liataer, 2003). Furthermore, in the conduct of interviews, the researcher strived to elicit rich descriptions from participants, and to encourage them to discuss their experiences openly and in detail.

Another strategy used in striving for credibility was to present discrepant evidence (potentially contradictory findings) when reporting the findings of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Whenever discovered, such evidence was presented in the results section.

Furthermore, member checking (Maxwell, 2005) is a strategy used to support the credibility of the study’s results by soliciting feedback from participants to verify the correctness of the researcher’s interpretation of the data. The current study did not include a formal member checking procedure; instead the researcher used strategies during the interviews, to verify her understanding of the data being collected. These strategies included paraphrasing of participants

disclosures and asking them to confirm or correct the researcher's understanding of them. Incorporating such feedback into the analysis process allowed the researcher to yield increasingly accurate conclusions from the data (Maxwell).

Finally, the researcher included auditing and consultation into the data-analysis process. Results of the open coding from each interview were provided to the researcher's supervisor, who read the analysis, and provided written feedback to the researcher. The feedback from each round of auditing was incorporated into the coding structure by the researcher. The researcher also consulted the supervisor regarding the final product of the conceptual ordering procedure. The researcher included the majority of changes made by the supervisor; exceptions to this were based on carefully considered judgment calls of the researcher.

Dependability. In order to promote the dependability of the study, the researcher accumulated a detailed audit trail. Documentation for the audit trail includes records of the data collection process as well as records of the analysis. The researcher used a journal to accumulate memos regarding each stage of the research. Memos include factual information, such as dates of data-collection events as well as subjective information, such as ideas, insights or questions that arose during interviews and the data-analysis. In addition to these memos, the researcher kept a series of back-up files of the computer-based analytic process, which were habitually created throughout the course of her work. Finally, each coded item in the analysis is directly linked with verbatim examples from the interview transcripts, which increases the connectedness of the abstract categorical analysis to participants' original words. Such verbatim examples are frequently presented in the write-up of results in order to provide the reader with evidence of the link to participants' original contributions.

Transferability. In order to allow the audience of the current research to judge the explanatory power of the results, detailed, rich descriptions were used in presenting the findings. Furthermore, the researcher presented detailed demographic information about participants, so that consumers of the research may evaluate the extent to which the present results are transferrable to their populations of interest.

Research Instruments

Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) was constructed in order to systematically collect descriptive information (e.g., age, gender) about participants of the study. Questions were constructed to gather information about each practicum placement, that is, number of weeks of internship training, number of hours of weekly supervision, the population worked with, and the supervisees' theoretical orientation. Finally, the questionnaire asked participants to describe their past educational and counselling experience.

Semi-structured interview. The interview guide developed for the present study (Appendix D) was constructed based on suggestions by Rubin and Rubin (2005) and DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006). The protocol consisted of 7 clusters of questions and probes, selected by the researcher, each of which addressed a different domain of the phenomenon of interest (Rubin & Rubin). Question clusters included some planned follow-up questions; however, most follow-ups and prompts emerged spontaneously from the interview process. For example,

Interviewer: "Can you describe the impact of your supervisor's response?" (*Planned question*)

Participant: "It really changed how I felt about myself as a counsellor."

Interviewer: "Could you tell me how you felt at the time?" (*Planned follow-up*)

Participant: “I felt relieved because she helped me believe in myself a lot more”

Interviewer: “What did it mean for you to ‘believe in yourself’ more?” (*Emergent follow-up*)

Each interview began with simple, neutral questions (e.g., supervision in general), and were followed by questions increasing in sensitivity (e.g., FOI and nondisclosure). Interviews were conducted in a flexible but conscientious manner to build rapport and to elicit rich descriptions from participants.

Developing the interview guide. The original interview guide was developed through a process of both deduction and induction. The foundation for interview questions were the research questions posed by researcher, which were developed based on a careful review of the literature. Then, the researcher broke down the broader, theoretical research questions into a series of more concrete interview questions, which were designed to be helpful in guiding participants through the interview process. In addition, the researcher added a series of warm-up and closing questions to the interview. A table was constructed in order to illustrate the goals and rationales for questions included in the interview (Appendix A). In the semi-structured protocol, not all questions were asked of all participants; the researcher used the ongoing interview process to guide her decisions of choosing questions during each interview. For example, if an issue was spontaneously addressed by a participant, the researcher could choose to follow their lead and use further questions and prompts most appropriate for the topic at hand. In addition, when participants addressed issues that were not anticipated during the construction of the original protocol, questions were added for subsequent exploration of that topic.

The researcher as instrument. In a qualitative study, the researcher him or herself becomes an instrument of the study. The researcher’s identity and/or presence influences the research process, including choosing research questions, developing and conducting the

interview, and the analytical process of grounded theory (Maxwell, 2005). As a consequence, the process will be inherently influenced by the researcher's own assumptions, biases, and personal experiences. In order to ensure the credibility of the results, the researcher recorded influences that she may have brought to the research process. These influences included personal experiences with FOI and supervision as well as conceptual assumptions that were formed based on the researcher's initial review of the literature and her own previous knowledge.

Personal experiences with FOI and supervision. The following entry was recorded at the outset of the study, before beginning data-collection.

"I am currently in the second year of a 2-year M.A. (Ed) Educational Counselling program. I have completed two supervised internships, concurrent to designing the current study, but prior to beginning data collection. During these internships I have experienced FOI, and have expressed them to my practicum supervisor on occasion, though not always. Reflecting on instances of disclosing my FOI, my supervisor's responses were helpful on some occasions, and less helpful on others. During these internship terms, I have also communicated with fellow interns, who have on occasion disclosed their FOI to me. Some colleagues have also disclosed to me their difficulties with FOI in supervision and how particular supervisory responses impacted their confidence as counsellors. Prior to my current Master's studies, I participated in a volunteer, phone-counselling position. I further recall experiencing FOI in this position as well. In this position I have also heard of my colleagues' self-doubts, which were similar to my own. In this position, consulting with supervisors was more often positive and reassuring, as compared to my Master's internships. I attribute this difference to the volunteer/amateur nature of the phone-counselling position, as the expectations for performance were reduced."

Procedures

Recruitment. The researcher contacted two Canadian universities which have a Master's level program in counselling. E-mail or telephone contact was made with program directors as well as professors who teach weekly internship seminar courses. The time and date of the recruitment was individually negotiated with these professors. Recruitment consisted of a visit to the internship seminar classroom where the study was introduced to the class through a short presentation. Students were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. Each potential participant was given an information packet, which contained a letter of introduction to the author and the study (Appendix B) and an unofficial copy (printed on paper without letterhead) of the informed consent form (Appendix E). Potential participants were encouraged to ask questions at the time, and were invited to follow up with any questions through phone or e-mail contact.

Time and place of interviews. The time and location of the interviews were negotiated on an individual basis. All six participants chose to be interviewed in the researcher's office at the university. The interviews took place over the course of approximately two months.

Data-collection. Each data collection session began with participants completing the demographic questionnaire, which took 5-10 minutes. Following this, the researcher set up the digital voice recorders (one primary, one backup) and began the interview. Interviews ranged from 45 to 88 minutes ($M=70$) in length.

Informed consent. Informed consent was a process that began at the recruitment phase. At this point, potential participants were verbally informed of all of the procedures and risks involved in the study, and were provided with a copy of the informed consent form. Potential participants were encouraged to ask questions both at the time of recruitment and through

subsequent phone or e-mail contact with the researcher. Participants were given the researcher's contact information and given the responsibility of contacting the researcher at a time of their own choosing. All interview appointments were negotiated through e-mail. Finally, the informed consent process was discussed immediately before the research interview, and the form was signed by both the participants and the researcher. A copy was retained by the researcher and another copy was given to each participant.

Confidentiality and anonymity. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the following strategies: (a) The researcher maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of her participants as well as any other information that may result in participants becoming identifiable to others. (b) The researcher never used participants' real names and indentifying information in written documents; pseudonyms were substituted for participants' first names. (c) All data is kept either locked up or password protected in the supervisor's laboratory/office for five years, at which point the data will be destroyed. Finally, (d) consent forms with participants' names were kept separately from participant data.

Participants

Participants of the study were six counselling interns (5 female, 1 male). They were recruited from two Canadian Master's programs in counselling. The average age of participants was 24.5 years ($SD=1.0$). Two participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian, one as Caucasian/Canadian, two as Canadian, and one as Chinese. All participants had one previous undergraduate degree in a social science field. Hours of internship completed at the time of the interview ranged from 90-500 hours ($M=274.3$, $SD=152.6$). At the time of the interview, interns have had between 10 and 18 weeks in supervision ($M=12$, $SD=3.1$), while receiving approximately 30 to 120 minutes of supervision each week ($M=85$, $SD=39.9$). One participant

reported that their supervision was not regular on a weekly basis at the time of the interview. All participants practiced individual mental health counselling, one participant also conducted career counselling, and one participant facilitated counselling groups as well. Two participants worked with adults, two with youth, and two with a population of children. Each participant reported a unique theoretical orientation, which were the following: eclectic/Rogerian, attachment/CBT, eclectic/Narrative, CBT, client-centered/positive psychology, and eclectic. Other than their current internships, participants reported to have had 0-16 months of previous counselling experience ($M=6.3$ months, $SD=6.0$).

Inclusion/exclusion criteria. Participants were required to be fluent in English in order to ensure that communication in the interviews was not hindered by language barriers. The researcher's thesis supervisor may have been in an evaluative, secondary relationship with some members of the potential participant pool due to her position as the instructor/supervisor for some internship classes. To reduce the likelihood of this conflict of interest and threat to freedom of consent, participants who were in the thesis supervisor's internship classes at the time of the study were not invited to participate.

CHAPTER IV

Results

In an attempt to answer "What is the role of supervision in counselling interns' management of FOI?" the grounded theory analysis and conceptual ordering yielded five major categories. The major categories are "Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision," "Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision," "Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision," "Aspects of Supervision That are Helpful to the Management of FOI," and "Aspects of

Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI.” Each major category has been subdivided into further subcategories and dimensions whose structural organization is presented in table form before each section below.

Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision

The first major category includes a systematic compilation of descriptions used by interns to characterize the experience of FOI whose management they discussed throughout their interviews. The FOI reported by participants varied according to several properties. These properties were the: (a) internal experiences of Interns’ FOI, (b) sources of interns’ FOI, (c) duration and timing of occurrence of intern FOI, (d) intensity of intern FOI, (e) mediators of intern FOI, and (f) consequences of interns’ FOI.

Table 2

Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision

Major Category	Subcategories	Dimensions
Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision	Internal experiences of interns’ FOI	Feelings related to FOI Physiological experiences related to FOI Thought processes related to FOI
	Sources of interns’ FOI	FOI related to aspects of therapy FOI related to intern professional developmental level FOI related to intern identity or personal characteristics FOI related to the counsellor role FOI related to comparing self to peers FOI related to supervision
	Duration and timing of occurrence of intern FOI	
	Intensity of intern FOI	
	Mediators of intern FOI	
	Consequences of interns’ FOI	

Internal experiences of interns' FOI. FOI may be described in terms of the variety of experiential elements disclosed by participants in the study including feelings, physiological experiences, and thought processes.

Feelings related to FOI. Participants reported feeling a range of emotions associated with FOI that were predominantly negative. Throughout their interviews, interns named feelings such as “guilty,” “incompetent,” “regretful,” “ashamed,” “discouraged,” and “helpless.” Certain participant disclosures appeared to reflect a sense of distress in response to FOI, for example, “Oh my god! That was torture, and frightening.” – Reported Laura, when referring to a client session involving FOI. Feelings were described as part of the FOI experience in various settings, such as in session with clients, in the presence of supervisors, and during interns' private, personal time.

Physiological experiences related to FOI. Interns also characterized FOI by associating them with physiological phenomena. Interns described sensations, such as one's “heart pounding” (Chris) or being “weak in the knees” (Laura). Laura also reported: “So when my supervisor points that out [that I had made a mistake], I just feel smaller.” (Laura). Such descriptions were only reported by two participants. It is possible that physiological experiences do not always accompany FOI, or that certain participants were more aware of and/or had a personal style that preferred using these descriptors for their FOI.

Thought processes related to FOI. Interns also recounted that FOI could manifest in the form of negative thought processes. Interns reported engaging in negative self-talk that was preoccupied with self-evaluation as a counsellor. This self-talk was frequently critical and questioning, for example, “I just question my . . . sort of like what I've been saying to her, and I ask myself if I could have said something different. If I would have said something

different . . .” (Jennifer) Similarly, Laura reported: “I’m such a loser, as if I didn’t see that, and maybe I’m not as good as I’m starting to think I am.”

In addition to the variability in internal experience, interns’ FOI could also be characterized by the sources that FOI originated from.

Sources of interns’ FOI. Interns disclosed that the FOI whose in-supervision management they discussed throughout their interviews originated from the following sources: (a) aspects of therapy, (b) interns’ developmental levels, (c) their identity or personal characteristics, (d) their roles as counsellors, (e) comparing themselves to their peers, and (f) actions of their supervisors.

FOI related to aspects of therapy. The greatest number of FOI was reported to have emerged from difficulties in navigating therapeutic work with clients. Interns were concerned about specific self-perceived mistakes in their work with clients and about their ability to contribute to a successful outcome for a client. They were often unsure about what the appropriate next step was to take with a particular client. Emily reported: “I was anxious and nervous in the group and I didn’t know what to . . . how to . . . what to contribute.” Furthermore, Heather disclosed: “I definitely, like after six sessions maybe like I felt stuck, ‘cause maybe there was countertransference going, but like I felt hopeless, like about, like moving forward with this client. I wasn’t sure what to do.”

On occasion, FOI were experienced regarding the therapeutic relationship. Interns reported that they were highly motivated to maintain a strong bond with their clients, and experienced FOI if they perceived that some of their actions in therapy may have put the therapeutic relationship at risk.

So I specifically was doubting my like . . . my ability to not judge her anymore, like not judge this client. Like I had all these evaluations, impressions of her, and I was just like . . . I'm going in as the *judgmental* counsellor, the opposite of what you need to be.

(Laura)

"So I guess I'm feeling incompetent because I think I'm playing favourites right now (...) which we shouldn't be doing!" (Melissa)

FOI related to intern professional developmental level. At times, interns attributed FOI to their early developmental level as counsellors. Participants recounted their initial practical experiences during which they questioned their capabilities to work with their clients. Chris characterized his initial training experiences as a counsellor as the following: "You're really learning by the seat of your pants; you're kind of dropped in the deep end, and see if you can swim. . . you kind of question, you know, whether you're up to this." Some participants explained that this may have occurred because they had no frame of reference to use to measure their competence. Laura expressed: ". . . this is so *new* and scary, and I even get like tongue-tied with people, and I'm . . . you know. . . I'm talking with people the whole time, like what did I get myself into?"

FOI related to intern identity or personal characteristics. One participant, Emily, discussed difficulties with her internship due to some of her own personal characteristics that made her doubt whether she was able to help a particular population she was working with. She also expressed concern about her age:

It was my own feelings of . . . of being incompetent, and the fact that I'm younger than most of the clients. And I just . . . I'm not dealing with her issue, I'm not. . . I'm younger, and just that age aspect of . . . so not being competent.

FOI related to counsellor role. Participants reported FOI that were related to difficulties in their role as counsellors, especially in the context of their particular internship site. Examples included understanding the particular ethical requirements of the placement and being asked to perform tasks that did not fit with their understanding of the counselling role. Another example was a more general lack of confidence in fulfilling their role as interns:

I don't know what to do. I don't know what my role is. I guess I also need guidelines to feel that I have a role that I can accomplish, and then that way I feel competent. And just because there was not [sic] guidelines, I didn't . . . and I . . . and because I didn't seem to do it . . . that's not what I was expecting, I felt like . . . um . . . when I left like that I wasn't the kind of intern that was competent in this particular centre. (Emily)

FOI related to comparing self to peers. Participants of the study also discussed FOI that resulted from comparing themselves to their peers. For example, in Heather's words:

I felt like the way my supervisor would respond to my colleague was a lot more favourably, it would always be like "Right! That's good!" whereas with me it would be more like "Why did you do that?", "What do you think is happening?" She would be more like challenging me, whereas I felt like with my colleague it was more like "right, you're on track," like she would give more like an approval, so I guess I was comparing myself with the way we were getting our feedback. So that too, that . . . I think that also, come to think of it, contributed to my feelings of incompetence.

Conversely, a participant in the study also mentioned that avoiding making comparisons was helpful in combating FOI. "Ok, I *can* do that, and I'm *good* at that, and let's just leave it at that, like stop wondering if other people are better" (Laura).

However, it must be noted that such interpersonal comparisons were not always negative. On occasion, interns noticed advantageous elements of their own internship experience in comparison to others:

Because some of my other classmates only have an hour a week to see their supervisors, but I have that, I have, you know, group work, and we've done interviews with one client before. So it's been, I think, a much more rewarding experience than some people get.

(Chris)

FOI related to supervision. Participating interns described a number of ways in which supervision became the source of FOI. These FOI can be divided into two major types: (1) FOI that are the result of anticipating or worrying about possible events in supervision and (2) FOI that are the result of the supervisor's actions or other supervision events.

The essence of the first type of supervision-related FOI lies in interns' fears about what *could* take place in supervision in relation to their perceived lack of competence. Intern perceptions about supervision that contributed to FOI included comparing one's own skill to the supervisor's. For example, Chris reported: "I sit back, I'm like: wow. Like it kind of feels a little bit daunting because I wonder if I will ever get to that point of. . . of being sure of myself in that role of a counsellor. . ." Interns were also on occasion concerned about their supervisors' reaction to a perceived clinical mistake or whether their disclosures of FOI would result in a negative evaluation. For example,

I was definitely thinking like: What's she going to think if . . . Like I brought it up quite early in our supervision, like we hadn't really supervised much, so I was kind of wondering what she'd be thinking. Is this too early to bring it up? Should I be just kind of focusing on the clients and not so much myself? And uh. . . I was definitely worried

that she would . . . I guess think less of me as a counsellor maybe. But I . . . yeah . . . definitely think that she would question me as an intern. (Emily)

Although some FOI were the result of interns' anxieties about potential outcomes of supervision, in many situations, it was supervisors' actual actions and feedback that induced interns' FOI. Supervisory actions and feedback that caused FOI included: (a) being confrontational and directive, (b) giving criticism, (c) highlighting mistakes, (d) challenging, (e) giving a pre-emptive warning about a difficult client, (f) acting in neglectful ways, and (g) contextual elements of delivering feedback.

Receiving confrontational, directive feedback from the supervisor. One participant, Heather, reported that her supervisor's approach was very confrontational and "in your face." She reported that while there were benefits to this approach, the feedback resulted in FOI regarding her client work. She reported: "I think that's just like her style, it's to the point and she's not going to beat around the bush, and she won't like. . . she won't sugar-coat it." She described her supervisor's style as directive, "She's more like telling me what to do," which increased her professional self-doubts.

Receiving criticism from the supervisor. One participant reported responding to her supervisor's criticism with self-doubt. The participant reported that her supervisor responded in a critical manner to her description of therapeutic choices with one of her clients. Heather reported the following about her experience: "I guess in that moment, I felt like she was telling me what I was doing was wrong. So that was what was making me feel like uncertain about myself." When describing her supervisor's tone of feedback in the moment, she disclosed: "Like it's critical in a way. So I feel like I'm ok with criticism, but like sometimes when I'm like criticised, like I feel like . . . I don't know . . . flustered" (Heather).

The supervisor highlighting mistakes. Interns participating in the present study disclosed that on occasions they experienced FOI when their supervisors pointed out potential mistakes in their therapeutic conduct. Laura disclosed that when her supervisor pointed out a missed helping opportunity upon reviewing a transcribed session, the realization “hit” her; the result was self-doubt that generalised across her work with the client. Regarding a similar experience, Heather said: “I think it’s afterwards, like after I come out of the supervision I just feel like: ‘Oh everything that I bring to the table, it’s like, I could have done it another way.’ That’s why I felt like everything that I’m doing is wrong.”

Being challenged by the supervisor. One participant reported that when her supervisor challenged her on her counselling approaches she began feeling FOI. Heather addressed the issue as the following: “So in a way she challenges me, and she always questions me. So it’s in a sense like good and bad, like at times I think it’s good because it’s making me think and like question myself, but sometimes like. . . as your study’s about, I get those like doubts in myself. So I sometimes feel discouraged”

Receiving a pre-emptive warning about a difficult client. An intern in the study described an occasion upon which she experienced FOI due to a pre-emptive warning message received from her supervisor regarding a challenging client. Although Melissa did not attribute her FOI to supervision, the FOI did arise as a consequence of a supervisory event. Melissa reported that this client “was like specifically stated as like *not* one of the people that I would be seeing because she probably wouldn’t receive me well. So . . . I guess that’s why I was nervous. But it’s not like it was like due to supervision. I was like: ‘Oh man!’”

Perceived neglect by the supervisor. Neglect by the supervisor in this context refers to the absence of certain behaviours of the supervisor that were deemed to be

important by the intern. One participant, Emily, reported a range of such supervisory issues, which resulted in the development of FOI. Due to her supervisor's unavailability she doubted her professional competence and development. She disclosed: "I feel like without the consistent supervision . . . and that's when I'm probably having the self doubt." Furthermore, supervision played into her FOI because of her feeling that her supervisor was disconnected from her performance when she was not monitoring Emily's work. Finally, Emily reported FOI because her supervisor cancelled and delayed supervision sessions. In her words:

She kept rescheduling, she wasn't keeping up. So I felt at that point that I wasn't . . . not necessarily the counselling part, but I was like an intern or someone who was at that centre I wasn't feeling . . . I didn't feel like I was. . . I felt like a moment of like I was incompetent. And I was doubting if I could . . . umm . . . Just be there, and like use her time.

Contextual elements of delivering feedback. Interns reported that at times the manner and timing in which feedback was delivered by their supervisors were crucial to their FOI. Laura described the "blatant" manner in which the FOI-inducing feedback was delivered. Furthermore she disclosed:

And like almost in a like serious form, kind of outside of her normal character where she'd like cushion in first a bit, and then say it. Like she said and it was . . . seemed like it was, like I *really* missed the mark there. The *tone* of voice or the way she didn't preface it, I think, struck me. 'Cause she's . . . she is like . . . even when she does give me criticism she does it nicely. And not that that was like not nice, but there's just something there.

She also reported making note of the supervisor's "face," "eyebrows," and an expression of "concern" in contrast to her usual, more light-hearted presentation of feedback. Heather also reported observing her supervisor's "tone, and even the choice of words that I think that's just like her style." Moreover, one participant noted that the FOI-related feedback was delivered abruptly, "right away," not "beating around the bush." Another participant reported that feeling confident prior to the moment when the feedback was received increased the severity of her FOI. She disclosed:

So I think I was like on a good high. Like I feel confident, like I want to be hopeful, like I think I can do this. And then in that supervision hour after she pointed out it just really struck me. And I felt like maybe I'm being too confident now . . . (Laura)

Participants' description of FOI furthermore showed variations in terms of the time of occurrence and duration of experiencing FOI.

Duration and timing of occurrence of intern FOI. The results reflect variability in the length of time during which FOI were experienced as well as *when* FOI occurred. Some FOI persisted or recurred over time, while others merely lasted for moments. Interns reported some forms of FOI that persisted throughout their work with a particular client. For example Laura described the supervision process with a client with whom she frequently experienced FOI: "I always bring her into . . . into supervision. Like either through transcribing or things or . . . or through process notes, or just reflecting about her . . . I'm always talking about her." In other cases, FOI also persisted over time, but were eventually resolved through supervision: "I just kept on thinking about it. So I knew that if I didn't do anything I would just be like . . . kind of dwelling on it" (Heather). In contrast, some participants also reported less persistent, momentary

FOI, such as Melissa: “So I mostly would feel like stupid in the moment, but not as much with [my supervisor]. (...) It can be like that moment of like: ‘Oh crap!’”

In addition to the time of occurrence and duration, participants reported differences in the intensity of their FOI.

Intensity of intern FOI. The intensity of FOI reported was variable in the present study. Some experiences of FOI did not have a deep impact on the interns, but rather were treated lightly. As Melissa describes her experience: “I was like. . . was like: SHUCKS! You know. . . like I wasn’t like completely devastated about it. I was like well, I made a mistake, I learned from it, and we’ll move on.” However, in comparison, some FOI were experienced as deeper, and more impactful. These FOI were predominantly related to fundamental suitability for the profession, while in other instances they were related to specific counselling skills. In Chris’s words: “Staring out last year at [my university], you kind of question, you know, whether you’re up to this. It’s kind of like doing counselling is . . . you’re kind of thrown in. Especially talking about someone’s thoughts and feelings.”

In addition to the variable intensity of FOI, interviews also revealed that certain influences mediated the impact and experience of FOI.

Mediators of intern FOI. Interns who participated in the study described certain dynamics that mediated the occurrence or impact of FOI. They described that overall increases in professional confidence resulted in a decrease in the frequency of FOI. In addition, participants also reported that gaining experience and seeing progress over time helped reduce FOI. Emily reported, “I felt really good to see that as I did progress.” Similarly, Laura narrated, “I proved myself wrong, thankfully. So it’s gotten better, and I hope with time and practice and so on and so forth . . . more experience, that will get better and better.”

Interns also mentioned that certain reflective exercises that helped to conceptualize and reflect on FOI were helpful in managing their FOI. Such exercises were used both in and outside of supervision. These activities included the intern's self-reflection informally or as part of a structured supervision exercise. Laura reports: "I can't say it got a bit better or it really changed me just *through* the supervision. Like I did a lot of work on my own." Another participant reported that making the reduction of self-doubts an explicit goal in supervision was a helpful element when it came to dealing with FOI.

One participant in the study, Laura, disclosed influences that served to perpetuate her FOI. She reported that FOI serve as a strategy to protect oneself from a sense of failure.

I also feel like we kind of . . . we're too afraid to be confident, 'cause you know, if you "fail" in a sense, and it's like risky than you have to deal with that feeling, but if you go in thinking: "I suck anyways!" And then you're good for a moment, you're like: "Oh yeah, I *am* good!"

In addition to these mediating influences, it appears that FOI are not discrete, isolated phenomena; instead, they are often accompanied by a range of consequences, which appear to arise as a result of experiencing FOI. Therefore, in addition to the variations in experience, sources, and mediators, FOI may be described in terms of the consequences that follow them.

Consequences of interns' FOI. Interns reported both positive and negative consequences of FOI. It appears that as a result of FOI, the work/home boundary becomes porous; FOI in their professional work seeped into their private lives. Interns disclosed that they ruminated on the FOI itself or on the FOI inducing incident when they were away from their internships. Other negative consequences of FOI were uncomfortable feelings and thoughts (see "Internal experiences of FOI" and), resulting in a need to disclose FOI in supervision (see

“Internal events that facilitate the disclosure of FOI”) or to cope through other resources.

Conversely, some participants reported that they were able to turn the FOI into a learning experience. Melissa described the experience of learning from her struggles with a client: “I was like: ugh. . . [the client is] not even worth it, like I can’t do this right now. You know what I mean? So basically it was a learning experience in testing my patience.”

Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision

This major category includes all actions of the supervisee that influence the process of FOI-management in supervision. The actions of the supervisees have been classified into four broader subcategories: (a) disclosing FOI in supervision, (b) withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision, (c) coping with FOI outside of supervision, and (d) giving feedback to the supervisor related to FOI-management.

Table 3

Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision

Major Category	Subcategories	Dimensions
Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision	Disclosing FOI in supervision	Level of personal difficulty of disclosing FOI in supervision Internal events that facilitate the disclosure of FOI in supervision Focus of FOI disclosure in supervision Extent of FOI disclosure in supervision The importance of time in disclosing FOI in supervision
	Withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision	Motivations for withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision Length of time of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision Frequency of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision Consequences of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision
	Coping with FOI outside of supervision	Psychological self-support for coping with FOI Other-support for coping with FOI
	Giving feedback to the supervisor related to FOI-management	

Disclosing FOI in supervision. Disclosure refers to the verbalizing of a private event such as a thought or a feeling. In the present study, the researcher was interested in intern's in-supervision verbalizations that pertained to their experiences with FOI. The coding process revealed five dimensions that described the disclosures reported by participants of the study. These dimensions were (a) level of difficulty, (b) internal facilitators, (c) focus and (d) extent of disclosures, as well as (e) how readiness to disclose FOI was related to time.

Level of personal difficulty of disclosing FOI in supervision. Participants in the study described varied levels of personal difficulty in making a disclosure of FOI to their

supervisors. Most personally difficult disclosures were high in stress, anxiety, and perceived potential for shame. For example:

I found it stressful to talk to her about because I . . . like I . . . I definitely wanted to be able to come to the supervision (...) But I was nervous to bring up umm . . . one of the things that say like a competency issue. (Emily)

In contrast, many disclosures of FOI lacked the quality of provoking stress, anxiety, or shame. Instead, such disclosures were described as routine-like and a normal part of supervision. For example, one participant reported: “I have no issue of telling her anything that would come up because I know we can deal with it” (Chris).

Finally, participants described instances during which the difficulty of their disclosure was conditional on another process or event taking place in supervision; for example, how many previous disclosures they have made recently or having the time and opportunity to disclose FOI. This is demonstrated by the following examples: “I haven’t had a chance to talk to her. And I did tell her that I want to talk to her about it . . .” (Emily), and: “So sometimes I do find myself like: ‘OK, how often have I said something like that [an FOI] this week, like ok, I won’t. . . I’ll play it up a bit’” (Laura).

Although participants reported that disclosing FOI was to some extent difficult, they also reported that their disclosures were facilitated through various internal influences.

Internal events that facilitate the disclosure of FOI in supervision. Participants described five types of internal events which made it more likely that they would disclose an instance of FOI to their supervisors. These facilitators were: (a) a strong need to talk about FOI, (b) a basic level of professional confidence, (c) a belief in one’s ability to work through FOI, (d)

a need to avoid judgment from one's supervisor, and (e) the intern's perception of the organizational culture of the internship site.

Two interns described a strong need to talk about FOI with their supervisors. As Emily describes, the importance of disclosing an FOI may outweigh the anxieties associated with disclosure. In her words: "But I more wanted to get it off my chest than I was having a hard time." Emily also reported that possessing a basic level of confidence in her professional abilities resulted in her increased comfort with disclosing FOI:

I felt more comfortable to talk about my own personal experience, like my own. Because I knew I was doing a pretty good job. Then to say: "Ok, I'm having trouble with this though . . . like I'm . . . um . . . I'm worried about like something more personal".

Chris reported that believing in his ability to work through his FOI facilitated his desire to disclose his FOI to his supervisor: "I see it as a life-long thing, like you can always better yourself. Even if you might doubt yourself, there's no reason why you can't umm . . . build yourself up at a later date."

Furthermore, Laura reported that disclosing FOI to her supervisor was important to her in order to demonstrate her awareness of her professional shortcomings and thereby avoid judgement from her supervisor.

Like part of me, by just putting it in front of somebody, part of me doesn't have to wonder if they. . . Like sometimes I feel like: Do they wonder if I know that I suck at this part? Because I *know*! Let me tell you . . .

Finally, one participant reported that her perception of the organizational culture of her internship encouraged her to be open in supervision. For example, she reported that her open

rapport with her supervisor and her comfort with making mistakes “might even depend on the team” they worked in, and the fact that “no one’s particularly judgmental.”

Focus of the disclosure of FOI in supervision. Interns in the study had two main approaches to discussing issues pertaining to FOI in supervision: (1) asking for feedback or advice with counselling strategies in areas of doubt and (2) focusing on their feelings and experiences of self-doubt. Interns frequently sought advice and feedback from their supervisors regarding counselling techniques and strategies. In such cases the focal point of their disclosure was the FOI-inducing event. As Chris describes:

I don’t know if there’s [sic] been specifics, but I know it’s happened before where I will come in and say like “What do I do?” And I . . . I don’t know if I will outright say that I’m doubting myself, but you know, I’ll ask questions like: Is this the right way to go?

The alternative approach taken by interns to address FOI was to talk about their feelings and experience of FOI: they disclosed the emotional or cognitive aspects directly. For example, “I spoke with my supervisor after, like the next day I was like: ‘Oh! I’m so upset with myself for saying that, like I wish I could go back in time and not have said that!’” (Jennifer) “I think I just told her: Like, oh my god, that was torture and frightening and I didn’t know what to say” (Laura).

Extent of FOI disclosure in supervision. The extent to which interns disclosed their experience of FOI to their supervisors varied greatly. For example, the depth in which FOI was discussed changed over time in one participant’s experience: “I felt like I could just tell her my honest opinion, but it felt like it took some time to really sit down and talk about things that *were* bothering me” (Emily).

There were also examples of interns struggling to minimize the extent of the disclosure of FOI: “I felt, I . . . well . . . maybe I lied to her a little bit. Or I glazed. I decided to not to . . . I was like: ‘I can’t not say anything period.’” (Melissa), as well as: “So as long as I feel like as long as she knows that [my FOI] exist, and she knows ALL of them, than we’re good” (Laura).

The importance of time in disclosing FOI in supervision. Based on participants’ interviews, time appears to influence the role that supervision plays in interns’ management of FOI. Firstly, participants reported that their confidence fluctuates and in some cases grows over time. For example, Emily reported “I felt really good to see that as I did progress . . . It was just that initial of like starting my internship [when I had a problem with a particular FOI].” Secondly, the supervisory relationship changes over time. Some interns reported that their relationship with their supervisors became more warm and informal. The level of comfort in the supervisory relationship, as discussed earlier, impacted interns’ readiness to disclose FOI. Emily referred to this process the following way:

So I felt a little anxious just going to her at the beginning. Now I know that like once I sit down I can talk about anything, and it’s . . . I know I won’t sit awkwardly not knowing what to talk to her about . . . she’s pretty good.

Two further influences of time were manifested through the impact of time-limitations. Firstly, participants attributed great importance to be able to “just express” experiences in the moment to one’s supervisor. One participant reported that being able to disclose problems immediately made those disclosures more “authentic” (Laura). Limitations of time impacted disclosures also through having limited time to see one’s supervisor. Interns reported that they felt the need to prioritize more pressing issues over others, which limited the number or extent of the disclosures they were able to make about FOI. Laura reported her anxiety regarding

spending too much time discussing her FOI, “Only because (...) we don’t have time. (...) but like now that we’re here, I have clients to talk about . . . like we have *one* hour!”

Disclosures of FOI were found to be variable in nature; they differed in their difficulty, their internal facilitators, their content, extent and relationship to time. Despite the evidence that disclosure of FOI was often possible, five out of six participants reported at least one example of FOI that they did not share with their supervisors.

Withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision. In the present study, withholding disclosure of FOI referred to those instances during which interns experienced FOI, but did not share information regarding this feeling with their supervisor. Acts of withholding disclosures of FOI in supervision varied according to the following dimensions: (a) motivations for withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision, (b) length of time of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision, (c) frequency of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision, and (d) consequences of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision.

Motivations for withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision. Participants reported having a number of different motivations to withhold disclosure of FOI from their supervisors. These have been grouped according to underlying themes that describe reasons for withholding FOI: (a) fear of evaluation, (b) unintentional withholding of FOI, (c) problems with the supervisory relationship, and (d) fear of the consequences of disclosure.

Withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision due to fear of evaluation. A fear of evaluation or judgment by the supervisor was the most frequently reported reason to keep FOI hidden. Underlying these fears was the implicit belief that having FOI is a reflection of de facto incompetence, or at least that the supervisor would interpret FOI as such. In some cases the fear was regarding the disclosure of having made a perceived error as a counsellor, in other

cases interns were anxious that they would be judged for lacking confidence. For example, “Like I think overall, sometimes it’s hard to talk to her because, I guess, I’m afraid I’m being evaluated negatively” (Heather).

I think I’ve like pretty much scared her with all of my self-doubts. (...) I think sometimes I’ll play it down even, like the level of like how nervous I get about something, or. . . Just ‘cause I don’t want her to think like: “Wow, she’s got so much low self-esteem or whatever.” (Laura)

Unintentional withholding of FOI disclosure in supervision. Participants in the present study reported a number of instances during which they withheld disclosures of FOI from their supervisors without being aware of any particular purpose behind the nondisclosure. Some FOI were processed outside of supervision because the supervisor was unavailable or was less available than other sources of feedback. For example, in Emily’s case: “I didn’t really bother to tell my supervisor because she wasn’t there, she didn’t see it, and I’d already felt I got it off my . . . I felt comfortable. Yeah, I guess it resolved.” Other unintentional nondisclosures were the result of forgetting about the issue, and in some cases participants could not identify any particular reason for the non-disclosure. “I never thought of bringing that up. Which is a good point. I don’t know why I didn’t, ‘cause I totally could, but I just never thought to bring that up” (Laura).

Like if I didn’t address something with her, it’s not because I didn’t want to. It was because I forgot, or I . . . you know, something else came up or whatever. Umm . . . like there’s never been time when I have said: Oh, I’m not going to tell my supervisor about that because, you know, she would not react well. That’s never happened. (Jennifer)

Finally, in one case, a need to process thoughts and feelings prior to disclosure was cited as a reason to not disclose FOI in the moment.

For me it takes time to process things. Like I think 'cause I'm more introverted, like, I have to process it, so it takes time for me to like just think about things, and how I feel towards them. Like I can't really, like I'm not really and on-the-spot person. (Heather)

Problems with supervisory relationship that resulted in the withholding of FOI in supervision. Some FOI were kept hidden due to a problem in the supervisory relationship. In one case, FOI were withheld due to inhibition because of the power-difference in the relationship. As Heather describes: "So like. . . I don't know, sometimes with people of authority, I just. . . I feel more inhibited in a way, like I hold back more. I feel like there's a big power differential. . ." In Laura's case, FOI remained undisclosed to maintain an interpersonal boundary in supervision, as she reported: "There's also like that kind of like boundary between . . . you know she's my supervisor, but she's not really my counsellor, so if we're getting into this, it's either I tell you everything, or I don't, in a sense."

Withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision due to fear of consequences. Another participant reported fearing the discussion of FOI because of the foreseeable consequences of disclosing the FOI-inducing scenario. The focus of anxiety in this case was regarding possible negative consequences for a client rather than for the intern herself.

I feel bad about withholding this from her because I do feel so safe around her. And now I'm not really sure, and I think it's because I don't know what the consequences would be. Usually, I can basically gauge any sort of consequence of a situation, and so, yeah. Like, I . . . I'm just not sure how that consequence would play out. (Melissa)

Although participants reported to have powerful motivations to keep their FOI covert, it appears that not all disclosures were withheld forever.

Length of time of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision. A finding that emerged from interviews was that the withholding of a disclosure of FOI from supervisors may be only temporary, though it is possible that some FOI are never disclosed. In some cases, participants reported that while they initially did not disclose an instance of FOI, they had decided to return to their supervisors to discuss the issue after processing it alone or with others.

I mean, if something . . . what I do, is like I usually go to my colleague, and she'll like either help me process it, or she'll encourage me to like go back to my supervisor, or I'll just go back to my supervisor on my own. (Heather)

"I had gone home that day, and I was upset, and then when I spoke to her about it the next day when I went back, and . . . Yeah, she was . . . fine, she was great" (Jennifer).

While most interns described an instance of withholding FOI for some length of time, there was variation in the frequency of withholding disclosures of FOI from one's supervisor.

Frequency of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision. Examples of withholding disclosures of FOI can also be described in terms of the frequency with which interns withheld disclosures of FOI from their supervisors. Some interns reported that nondisclosure virtually never happened: "I'm sure that there was something [that I didn't talk about], but I would say like as a general rule, I'm not afraid to bring things up with her" (Jennifer).

Others reported that nondisclosure was very uncharacteristic of their supervision process. As one participant reported: "No! No, [this nondisclosure is] completely atypical. Otherwise, I felt like I've been completely a hundred percent honest with supervision" (Melissa).

Finally, some participants reported that nondisclosure, at least for some period of time, occurred habitually. “I think sometimes like I just. . . I don’t know why I just keep things inside, like I don’t always say what’s on my mind. Like I think it’s just me. . .” (Heather)

As interns described variations in the properties of their nondisclosures, they also reported that the withholding of a disclosure of FOI was not without consequence.

Consequences of withholding disclosure of FOI in supervision. The withholding of disclosures of FOI had a number of consequences for interns. Participants reported having been distressed by the act of nondisclosure as well as feeling additional FOI as a consequence. They also reported having FOI persist or even intensify as a result of withholding their disclosure from their supervisor. In such cases, interns reported having to turn to their own internal or external coping strategies. Examples include: “So I just kind of put it on the back burner, and it’s still . . . when I think about it, it still kind of bothers me” (Emily). As well as:

I guess I’ve given myself a timeline of like one to two weeks, and then I’m constantly reassessing. I like kind of lie to myself by being like: “I’ll reassess after!” But I’m constantly like reassessing it like going over like the details in my mind. I’ll see how I feel next week. (Melissa)

Furthermore, participants reported feelings of anxiety and discomfort as well as a strong desire to disclose the information that they were withholding. As a result, participants sometimes engaged in rationalization and rumination about their decision to continue withholding disclosure. “I really wanted to tell her. I did, I did, I did. Like there was some part of me that was just like: Just out with! Just tell her . . .” (Melissa)

Evidence of criticizing oneself as a result of the nondisclosure was also given:

I think umm . . . Like maybe it would have been better if I had just said it right away, 'cause like: I shouldn't be afraid to challenge my supervisor, so. . . I think I have to . . . like I want to be able to just be more open with my supervisor. (Heather)

Participants reported that when an FOI was finally disclosed after a period of time, the consequences of nondisclosure dissipated. This lends support to the finding that the negative consequences described above were indeed a consequence of withholding a disclosure of FOI, rather than of another concurrent phenomenon.

I guess, the fact that I was doubting myself, and I actually acted upon it, it was a good thing in the end 'cause then I got reassurance in the end and a sense of closure too: I wasn't just continuing on dwelling on it. (Heather)

It is clear that withholding information about FOI were difficult experiences for participants. The stressful experiences of withholding disclosures as well as the FOI themselves required that interns engage in coping strategies.

Coping with FOI outside of supervision. The term "coping" refers to an individual's strategies for managing a difficult or stressful situation. This subcategory includes codes that describe coping strategies reported by participants when dealing with FOI. Although, supervision itself was observed to be a way of coping with FOI, this category excludes supervision, as it is examined in further detail elsewhere.

During the analysis, the researcher noted that coping with FOI took place as a complexly interrelated system with supervision. In some cases, coping was required for stresses arising from supervision-related to FOI. In other scenarios, various coping strategies were necessary in order to complement supervision as a source of managing FOI. Such a need was especially

strong, when a disclosure of FOI was withheld from supervisors. Two major types of coping were reported by interns: psychological self-support and other-support.

Psychological self-support for coping with FOI. Participants in the study reported using a variety of internal strategies to cope with FOI. Participants frequently reported engaging in positive self-talk to soothe their FOI. The content of the self-talk was often described as the imagined version of what one's supervisor would say to help out with the problem at hand. Furthermore, one participant reported using external resources, such as books that helped him understand issues related to FOI.

Well, I guess, just to have an internal dialogue with myself if I'm not with my supervisor. Umm . . . About, ok, I'm . . . maybe I'm doubting myself now, but why is that? You know how you do that kind of self-coaching? And maybe thinking: ok, well maybe I doubt myself now, but maybe just give it a day, give a few hours, try to relax, and then, you know, it will have, regardless of how it is now, the outcome will be good. And even thinking maybe when I'm not with my supervisor, like if my supervisor was here now, what would she say to my self-doubt. (Chris)

Participants also reported engaging in cognitive re-evaluations of the FOI-inducing situation in order to cope. Laura described this process as the following:

It's more like . . . like I want to beat this challenge. Like I don't want to feel this. I want to figure out why I'm feeling this way. Like an investigation in my head, like what is it exactly that irks me the wrong way. So over-analyzation, I guess like that's what happens outside of the internship.

Other-support for coping with FOI. Participants in the study reported coping with FOI through talking with other people in their lives, such as colleagues, friends, or

significant others. Examples include: “I had gone home that night, and I told my roommate like: ‘oooooh, I did something so stupid today!’” (Jennifer) As well as:

And some of the counsellors I just get along with easily, I feel very comfortable with, so (...) [I] take 10 minutes [after a session] to kind of debrief and say like: What did you think of my comment? What did you think of my questions? Was there something I could have done better, you know? (Emily)

Beyond seeking out coping resources, interns reported an additional strategy that they used to influence how FOI were managed in supervision: They gave feedback to their supervisors.

Giving feedback to the supervisor regarding FOI-management in supervision. Some of the participants described occasions upon which they gave feedback to their supervisors about their progress in supervision regarding their FOI. The message of the feedback varied. For example, Chris gave feedback that reinforced the supervisor’s approach:

I mentioned to her something recently about like I feel like self-confidence as a therapist is growing. And she said that’s great. And I said, you know: I think our supervision, and the fact that you keep challenging me is rubbing off on me in going to clients, and when I work with clients. And so that self-doubt isn’t as much there.

Whereas Laura requested that her supervisor adjusts her style of feedback:

I told her, I’m like: Yeah, like sometimes I feel like what if you don’t tell me everything? Like what if you’re too nice? What if you’re trying like . . . trying not to hurt my feelings so you’re just pointing out the good stuff because I had so much self-doubt.

In addition to acts of disclosure, withholding disclosure, coping, or giving feedback, a range of attributes of interns were found to impact the way FOI were managed in supervision.

Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision

Throughout the interviews, interns spontaneously (without explicit questions addressing this matter) referred to a range of personal attributes that they perceived as relevant to the process of managing FOI in supervision. These attributes included interns' self-described personal characteristics that impacted FOI-management in supervision, their expectations about and hopes regarding supervision, and their previous experiences and acquired knowledge that needed to be reconciled with supervision.

Table 4

Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision

Major Category	Subcategories	Dimensions
Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision	Interns' personal characteristics that impact FOI-management in supervision	Cognitive evaluations of FOI Disposition toward disclosure in general
	Interns' hopes and expectations for supervision	Hopes and expectations regarding parameters of supervision Hopes and expectations toward self Hopes and expectations regarding objectivity in supervision
	Previous experiences and acquired knowledge that need to be reconciled with supervision	

Interns' personal characteristics that impact FOI-management in supervision.

Participants in the present study described ways in which their self-reported personality

characteristics contributed to the way they managed FOI in supervision. These included their cognitive evaluations of FOI and their personal tendencies towards disclosure.

Cognitive evaluations of FOI. Interns reported different evaluations of their FOI that appeared to be influenced by their unique, personal views. One participant reported that it is part of her personality to be high in self-doubts and to be closely in touch with her emotions. She reported: “I’m generally like someone who *does* have a lot of self-doubts and especially in counselling” (Laura). The impact of private, cognitive evaluations on FOI was discussed by other participants as well, for example:

Maybe it’s if you can just have more confidence in yourself, and well . . . don’t worry about what other people think, even clients, if they think you’re the greatest or the worst it’s really about what you think about yourself. (Chris)

In addition to cognitive evaluations of FOI, participants’ personal characteristics were also reported to be impactful on their general dispositions toward disclosure.

Disposition toward disclosure in general. Most participants in the study reported that their personalities impacted their readiness to disclose FOI in supervision. This interaction occurred in different ways. One participant (Heather) reported that she occasionally withheld disclosures of FOI because she needed to reflect and consider disclosures well-before they were brought up. “I think sometimes like I just . . . I don’t know why I just keep things inside, like I don’t always say what’s on my mind. Like I think it’s just me.” Another participant cited that she was not comfortable with the way her supervisor approached her emotional expression in supervision, which encouraged her to hold back some disclosures of FOI: “. . . sometimes she puts me in tears. Like oh my god, something’s really wrong with me, you know? But like I’m not even thinking that’s something’s wrong with me, I just . . . I’m an emotional person, and she

kind of brings it out in me.” Finally, one participant reported that her inherent tendency to want to “please and do a good job” made her more sensitive to her supervisor’s evaluative role, and consequently discouraged her disclosures of FOI.

Besides their self-described personalities, participants in the present study reported having a range of hopes and expectations regarding supervision that impacted their management of FOI.

Interns’ hopes and expectations for supervision. The expectations and hopes, which interns brought into supervision, impacted how FOI was managed in supervision. Participants reported that they harboured hopes and expectations concerning the parameters of supervision as well as expectations towards themselves. Finally, the theme of desiring objectivity in supervision emerged, which arched across various hopes and expectations interns held toward supervision.

Hopes and expectations regarding parameters of supervision. This subcategory includes codes that pertain to hopes and expectations of interns about the purpose, process, and boundaries of supervision. The researcher observed that these hopes and expectations impacted how interns evaluated their experience in supervision. Participants occasionally struggled with the lack of guidelines given for supervision. They reported hoping for more guidance regarding the supervisor’s boundaries as well as for guidelines regarding the purpose, structure, and requirements of supervision. Due to the perceived lack of such guidance, interns reported feeling uncertain about what disclosure could and/or should be made to supervisors and what they may expect from supervisors in response to those disclosures. An example is demonstrated in the following quote: “There’s no clear cut structure for the supervision. We’ve never sat down and

said: Ok, this is what will happen in supervision. (...) And what is actual supervision? Because my idea of it seems to be completely different from someone else.” (Emily)

Another example of expectations about the parameters of supervision was the belief that certain disclosures were deemed altogether unsuitable for supervision. For example, Heather reported: “I want to go to my supervisor with like if it’s something related professionally, I would let her know, but I mean, I’m not going to go to my supervisor and be like: I don’t like the way sometimes you talk to me . . .” Although she was also an advocate that supervision should be a “dialogue”, where “. . .you have to be open to feedback, but you’re allowed to express yourself, and challenge it back to the supervisor. Like you don’t have to always just be receptive.”

Finally, participants reported that they expected to gain feedback about their work through supervision. For example, Heather reported: “So, I’m always prepared in a way to get an answer from her, like to know what her opinion is. I’m always anticipating like what she thinks, like or how she conceptualizes the client’s problem.”

Hopes and expectations toward oneself. Participants’ interviews also reflected expectations towards themselves regarding behaviours they hoped to display in supervision for FOI-management to be successful. One participant reported wishing to be more assertive and engaged in supervision than she has been in the past. She also expressed that she wished to become less sensitive to direct feedback from her supervisor. For example, Heather reported: “I think if I were to present myself as a little more confident, than at least, like I think she would respond differently”

Hopes and expectations regarding objectivity in supervision. Interviewees reflected a desire for objectivity throughout the supervision process, which played a role in how

their FOI were managed. Participants reported that they felt most comfortable with supervision when their supervisors' feedback was based on impartial, objective evidence of their work, rather than their own reflections about it. For example, Laura reported that giving her supervisor recordings of counselling sessions gave her a sense of security against FOI. In her view, the recording could supply the supervisor with an objective reference point of her work with clients.

She disclosed the following:

'Cause then as I feel like it's almost a little bit of a defence when I explain it, like: I'm feeling all of this because this, this and that. But I don't mean to like excuse it. I just really feel like this is the reason why I feel this way. So if she can just like see it, or hear all of it . . . that would help me be ok with what I'm feeling.

In support of this finding, Emily disclosed that the lack of recording at her internship had made it more difficult for her to get feedback from her supervisor and to be able to trust that feedback. As she reported:

Like if it had been audiotaped and I'd taken it to my supervisor, I think I would have wanted for her to hear that. I'd want to know what she'd have to say about it. But when she's not seeing the actual exchange then I feel . . . like I'm bringing it to her, and describing it from my perspective, and I don't want to know if my . . . I don't want her opinion based on my perspective.

Furthermore, the lack of objectivity available from the supervisor encouraged this participant to seek feedback from other resources outside of supervision, such as other colleagues who worked alongside her. In addition to interns' personalities, hopes, and expectations, participants reported that their past experiences and education also influenced the management of FOI in supervision.

Previous experiences and acquired knowledge of the supervisee that need to be reconciled with supervision. Part of the process of managing FOI in supervision involved the need to integrate previous experiences with the supervisor's feedback. Such previous experiences included previous experiences in education and training, previous supervisors, as well as previous client-experience. In one case, a participant reported that it was challenging to adjust to her new supervisor's approach. Additionally, participants reported that when their supervisors' approach was different from their university training, they occasionally felt unsure about the correct course of action. For example, Heather reported:

So I guess that's different for me because I'm more used to. . . not used to [this approach], but I think that the way we've been taught in this program (...) And that's so far . . . that's not really been happening. So . . . it's very different . . . like I think I'm learning like a very different approach, which is good.

A specific example of the role of previous client-experience was also given by Heather. She reported that her supervisor's opinion about her work was in conflict with her earlier experiences with the effectiveness of the intervention in question.

Aspects of Supervision That Are Helpful to the Management of FOI

This major category includes aspects of supervision that participants found to be helpful in managing their FOI. This includes actions of the supervisor that improve interns' ability to disclose and discuss FOI, and actions that result in reducing the intensity and/or frequency of occurrence of FOI. Finally, aspects of supervisory relationship that were helpful in relation to FOI will be described.

Table 5

Aspects of Supervision That are Helpful to the Management of FOI

Major Category	Subcategories	Dimensions
Aspects of Supervision That Are Helpful to the Management of FOI	Supervisor behaviours that increase likelihood of disclosure	Listening, openness Establishing safety & acceptance Being available Direct encouragement Making self-disclosures Giving opportunities for disclosure
	Supervisor behaviours that help reduce FOI	Validating Focusing on strengths Educating Giving feedback Normalizing Listening Being flexible, non-judgmental Challenging
	Elements of the supervisory relationship that are relevant to FOI-management	Chemistry between supervisor and supervisee Person-centered attributes of the supervisor The supervisor's sense of humour Dynamics of coach, parent, therapist within the supervisory dyad Clarity of boundaries in supervision Interaction with the supervisor outside supervision Personal match of supervisor and supervisee Power management in supervision
	Mediators of the degree of effectiveness of supervision in managing FOI	Consistency of supervision Value of learning from supervision

Supervisor behaviours that increase the likelihood of disclosing FOI. Participants reported that certain behaviours of their supervisors increased their willingness to disclose FOI.

These behaviours included: (a) listening and demonstrating openness, (b) establishing safety and non-judgment, (c) being available, (d) giving encouragement, (e) making self-disclosures, and (f) giving opportunities for disclosure.

Listening and demonstrating openness. Participants in the study reported that having supervisors who are “easy to talk to” (Jennifer) increases their ease and willingness of talking about FOI. This involved perceiving that the supervisor is open and receptive to the intern’s disclosures. Melissa described the experience of her supervisor’s listening skills the following way:

I can tell . . . it’s like . . . like cue, like . . . I’ll like . . . she’ll be about to say something when she thinks there’s a pause in my big rant, and she’ll be like: Ah [taking a breath], and I keep on going and she sits back down, and I still feel like she’s like not ruminating on what she wanted to say, she’s like back being focused on what I’m saying, which I think is so cool.

Establishing safety in supervision through supervisor acceptance.

Complimentary to supervisors’ listening skills was a sense of safety established in supervision. Safety in supervision was closely related to supervisors’ non-judgmental and accepting attitudes, which was demonstrated through their communication with interns. As Melissa put it:

She doesn’t . . . you know what I mean, she’s never said like this is completely bad, like please don’t ever do this again, like. I don’t even know if she ever would. I feel like I could do something really-really terrible and I don’t even know if she would. Which makes me feel safe around . . . being around her.

One intern reported that knowing her supervisor’s comfort with emotions increased her willingness to talk about FOI:

She does emotion-focused therapy, so she's very comfortable with emotions, and I feel comfortable in expressing myself. So if I feel something, and even though like you know I might be embarrassed about this feeling, I'm very comfortable with her. (Laura)

A sense of safety was also established in knowing that the supervisor would be willing and able to help the intern with their disclosure. Chris reported: "I just guess I judge her to be exceptionally competent at what she does, and so I trust in the process that whatever I bring to the table it will be dealt with." Finally, one participant reported that their supervisor's Socratic style contributed to the non-judgmental atmosphere because instead of her supervisor giving her opinion, she elicited the intern's own assessment of their work with clients.

Being available. Interns reported that their supervisor's availability greatly increased the likelihood of FOI disclosure. As Jennifer put it:

I'd say the fact that she's always there, makes it really easy. We spend a lot of time together, and it makes it a lot easier to address things with her. And it's also like, when I experience something in the moment, I can . . . if I'm with her, which is often, I can just express that. And I would imagine that if I couldn't express it right away, and I addressed it with her later, it wouldn't be quite the same.

Similarly, Melissa placed great importance on the availability of her supervisor:

I think [it] comes down to how available your supervisor is . . . if they always come across as busy . . . like, if she . . . like I know she's busy, but I don't feel bad, and that I think that is like one of the *hugest* factors in like a good supervisor is (...) I know she's crazy busy, and like . . . but yeah, I'm not intimidated walking over there, and be like: *Hi!* I need half an hour today, and I might come back for another half hour. I like . . . I

might do it 3 times or 4 times in one day like I have to sit down and talk to her for half an hour at a time. And like it never looks like it bothers her.

Direct encouragement. Supervisors giving explicit encouragement in response to disclosures also increased interns' ease of future disclosures. Heather described a positive experience of e-mailing her supervisor about an FOI as the following:

She's like: I encourage you to continue e-mailing me whenever like, you . . . something like doesn't sit well with you. Like, I want you to question it and bring it back to me, so . . . In that way, I'm glad that . . . Like had I not said anything, I would have just like dwelled on it, and she like she would have never known. So I think it opened up like a dialogue.

Making self-disclosures. Participants reported that their supervisors' self-disclosures about their own FOI greatly increased their willingness to disclose their own FOI. Interns felt that such conversations normalized the act of talking about FOI. Emily described the way in which her supervisor's self-disclosure opened up communication about FOI: "She didn't go too much into it; she didn't have a huge disclosure. Just saying: Yeah, I know the feeling. And it was kind of . . . I felt like it kind of got the ball rolling to where I could say . . . the next time I did come and say: 'Ok this is another issue I'm having.'"

Giving opportunities for disclosure. Although the above communication and relational influences increased the ease of disclosure for interns, they also reported that certain concrete actions of their supervisors provided them with an opportunity to make a disclosure in the moment. For example, in Jennifer's case, the supervisor was discussing a client in a light, casual way, which helped her disclosure of FOI in the moment: "That opened up the lines of communication because she brought it up. But I would have brought it up anyways. I was

planning on bringing it up with her, and that just happened to be the perfect moment to discuss it.” In another case, a general discussion about confidence that was initiated by the supervisor gave way to a disclosure of FOI.

Overall, participants reported that particular supervisory behaviours resulted in interns’ increased willingness to disclose FOI; however, once FOI were disclosed, further management of the FOI was still necessary. The interviews revealed that a number of supervisor behaviours were perceived to be helpful in managing and reducing FOI.

Supervisor behaviours that help reduce FOI. Participants reported that additional helpful aspects of supervision included certain behaviours of supervisors that resulted in the reduction of the intensity and/or frequency of occurrence of FOI. Such FOI-reducing behaviours were: (a) validating, (b) focusing on strengths, (c) educating, (d) giving feedback, (e) normalizing, (f) listening, (g) being flexible and non-judgmental, and (h) challenging.

Validating. Interns reported that when their supervisors responded to their disclosures of FOI by validating their feelings, the intensity and/or frequency of occurrence of FOI was reduced. Interns reported that supervisors let them know that their feelings are valid by confirming their perspectives and feelings about their client work. As Heather disclosed in the interview: “I was glad because . . . so it’s like I’m not completely off the wall with what I’m feeling, you know?” Validation by the supervisor was described to be similar to validation of clients’ feelings by a counsellor. Laura reported: “...you know, as the good counsellor would, validate that, and be like, you know, of course your first time, and you know, the client was a difficult one . . .”

Focusing on supervisee strengths. One participant reported that when her supervisor focused on her strengths as a counsellor it helped alleviate her FOI. In her words: “I

think, just her also like pointing out like good stuff. Like that still helps. (...) And asking me also to point it out. Like I have to listen to tapes, and bring in good and bad moments, so I'm forced to bring in the good moments. So that . . . that's good."

Educating. Interns in the present study reported that at times when they disclosed FOI to their supervisors, their supervisors responded by helping them understand and gain new perspectives on the FOI-inducing situation. In other cases, the educational component of the supervisor's response pertained directly to issues of competence and confidence. In Chris's case, the supervisor alleviated his FOI explaining what is necessitated by a particular counselling task. Chris reported: "... she did really reassure me that 'No, it's not that she's a professional, she just knows her material, and it's life experience. Not only counselling experience, but life experience.' I think that helps a lot too." Other participants reported that their supervisors helped them "reframe" the situation (Jennifer) through eliciting new interpretations through the Socratic method of questioning. Emily described an instance where her supervisor helped her understand the dynamics of the client-situation that caused the FOI, after which she felt "a lot more able to deal with the issue" if it happened again.

Giving feedback. Particular types of feedback received from supervisors also promoted the reduction of FOI. Feedback that was reassuring and encouraging was reported to sooth FOI; however, apparently feedback did not need to be entirely positive to be effective. Feedback that provided a clear reflection of interns' performance was also considered to reduce FOI.

Giving positive feedback. Interns frequently reported that their FOI were reduced when they got positive feedback about their work. Supervisors expressed satisfaction with interns' performance, complimented them on particulars of their work, or reassured them

that they were handling challenging situations well. Emily described her experience the following way: “I think she said like: ‘I’m really impressed that you’re really getting out there and you’re so busy’ – So that really helped to know that I was on the right track.” Similarly, Jennifer reported: “We’ve spoken about it, and my supervisor always reassures me that she is just a difficult client and that I’m lucky that I even get what I get out of her.”

Giving clear performance feedback. Giving clear, specific feedback about interns’ performance was reported to help combat FOI. Interns reported that feedback that was tactfully balanced to point out positives as well as areas that need improvement helped to reduce their doubts about their performance. FOI were also reduced when a supervisor followed up on their intern’s progress in a difficult area. Melissa reported that on one occasion, she was worried because she was not sure if she had made a mistake with her client. She reported that her FOI were relieved when her supervisor confirmed that mistake because it reduced the ambiguity of the FOI-inducing situation.

I was like debating and I was like: Did I? Did I? Didn’t I? Like Huh? And then when I talked to [my supervisor] it was like: “Yeah, I did.” (...) so it was just like: “OK. It happened” – and so it felt better actually when she was like: “Yeah, it didn’t happen”

Like I was like: “OK. I will make sure to keep that kind of stuff in mind when I feel like I’m going down that path.”

Normalizing. Interns emphasized that normalizing by supervisors decreased the intensity of their FOI. Normalizing was either done through explicit statements about the normalcy of FOI or through supervisory self-disclosure. Issues that were normalized included personal reactions to clients and difficulties due to interns’ level of experience. Emily described

her supervisor's normalizing approach as the following: "She still wasn't . . . I didn't feel like she was coming down on me hard. She was very like: "That's normal, just keep trying!"

Participants also reported that their supervisors' self-disclosures of their own experiences of FOI also served to normalize interns' FOI. Chris reported: "I think it helps in umm . . . alleviating [FOI] in a big sense (...) because if someone *this* good at their job has had self-doubt, than it's normal to have it because I'm new at it." Jennifer spoke about her supervisor's self-disclosure similarly:

. . . very often when I tell her a story about how I believe I've done something wrong or that I'm incompetent or whatever, she'll give me an example from her practice of when *she* thought that *she* did something that, you know, wasn't so good, and then she spoke to her supervisor, and her supervisor you know, clarified it or whatever. (...) And I think that has the effect of, you know, normalizing the experience for me, and you know, it just makes me feel better . . .

Listening. Listening by supervisors was observed to be an effective strategy against FOI by way of giving an opportunity for catharsis through disclosure of FOI. Laura described how she felt after disclosing FOI: "Cathartic! So just even being able to bitch about it in a sense. Umm . . . Definitely made me feel better . . ."

Being flexible, non-judgmental. Participants reported that receiving feedback that is flexible and non-judgmental contributed to reducing their FOI or at least keeping their FOI at a low level. The following two verbatim examples demonstrate how interns experienced such feedback:

So she can like read between the lines of when I'm like distressed about something, and she won't ever say that I'm wrong or anything! She'll be like, you know, she's like, you

know: I'm not saying you're wrong, BUT maybe this person isn't owning it, so. . . she's like . . . so think about that. And . . . So [my FOI are] not really intense" (Melissa).

"She accepted, and she supported me, and she didn't . . . you know, she didn't say that she felt that I had. . . I had done something inappropriate; you know, she was cool with it" (Jennifer).

Challenging. One participant, Chris, reported that being challenged by his supervisor was helpful in reducing his FOI over time. He reported:

I'm starting to grow in self-confidence, and I think the supervisor there that I have now has played a big part in that. Umm . . . I find often our supervision is just . . . she reads my notes, and she goes: "You wrote this about the client; why would that be?" And it's very much challenging. (...) Maybe being challenging to a client is also being empathetic, if you have that kind of rapport. But maybe that could be a part of our supervision with my supervisor because she's empathetic towards me but she's also very challenging.

In addition to the aforementioned range of behaviours of the supervisor, the overall supervisor relationship appeared to have an impact on interns' management of FOI in supervision.

Elements of the supervisory relationship that are relevant to FOI-management.

This subcategory is devoted to describing the role of the supervisory relationship in interns' management of FOI in supervision. In discussing what contributes to the ease of disclosure of FOI and satisfactory management of FOI in supervision, participants frequently cited qualities of their respective supervisory relationships. A number of themes emerged as important in the supervisory relationship for the satisfactory management of FOI. These relationship themes

were: (a) interpersonal chemistry, (b) person-centered attributes, (c) a sense of humour, (d) dynamics similar to a coach, parent or therapist; (e) clarity of boundaries, (f) interaction outside of supervision, (g) personal match with the supervisor, and (h) power management in the supervisory relationship.

Chemistry between supervisor and supervisee. Some participants in the study talked about an instantaneous appearance of rapport between themselves and their supervisors. In such instances they did not refer to any specific process of how that rapport was created; rather, they referred to their immediate recognition that the supervisor is “warm,” “friendly,” “kind,” “loving,” and “easy to talk to.” As Laura explained: “I just kind hit it off [with my supervisor], like this little click, chemistry if you can call it . . . umm . . . from the moment I saw her, I just felt like wow, like I would love to learn from her . . .”

Person-centered attributes of the supervisor. While “chemistry” in the relationship referred to the initial bonding period with the supervisor, in the overall span of the relationship, person-centered attributes of the relationship were described to contribute positively to the management of FOI in supervision. Acceptance, non-judgment, being genuine and open, and not imposing a ‘supervisor-is-expert’ role on the intern were cited as important. For example, Jennifer reported: “I guess it was just like her acceptance of me, just as a human being.” Heather explained the phenomenon through the contrasting of two supervisors she has encountered:

Once again, the client is the expert, so I don’t know . . . if like the supervisee is the expert? So [my previous supervisor] would let me discover the answer for myself, and than the current one is more like she’s telling me like what to do.

The supervisor's sense of humour. One participant reported that her supervisor's sense of humour was critical to a supervisory relationship in which she felt safe discussing her FOI. She reported that had her supervisor not been accepting of her preference for using humour it would have been detrimental to their work together. In her words: "I need someone who can take a joke. I was like if someone . . . if my supervisor is someone who can't take a joke, I was like, unfortunately, it will probably go really, really poorly" (Melissa).

Dynamics of coach, parent, or therapist within the supervisory dyad.

Throughout their interviews, participants often likened the effectiveness of their supervisory relationships to those of other hierarchical yet supportive teaching relationships, such as a coach, a "good counsellor" (Laura), or a primary attachment figure. Chris described his supervisor's commonalities to a coach as the following: ". . . it's like someone you look up to, someone who helps you train, get better at what you're trying to accomplish, who gives you kernels of wisdom from their own experience, who's well-read, knowledgeable, just a good source of information." Chris also further elucidated the likeness of a supervisor to a primary attachment figure:

So in supervision I see that as, OK this is our internalized secure base where we develop ourselves, and I can go and work with my clients and take that with me, whether that'd be her voice or a feeling that I have about my work, and then change that into, not her anymore, but me.

Clarity of boundaries in supervision. Another theme that emerged from interviews was the importance of clear boundaries in supervision. Some participants reported that their supervisors gave clear signals regarding their availability, such as having an "open doors policy" (Melissa). Chris described the process of negotiating the boundaries of supervision thusly:

She told me right from the get go when I did the interview for the placement that: “I’m very busy. When my door is closed, my door is closed, but when my door is open, you can always come and talk to me.” And I’ve done that before, even when it’s not our set hour for supervision, and she welcomes me, and I can sit down and just say: I need to talk to you about this.

In contrast, participants reported that the lack of guidance about the boundaries and purpose of supervision resulted in difficulties. For example, Emily reported: “Guidelines, that’s the word I was looking for. Yeah, there was [sic] no guidelines. Yeah. It was come talk about it, whatever you want to talk about. Tell me about your week. Tell me what you did and, just talk.”

Interaction with supervisor outside supervision. Interns reported that their interactions with their supervisors outside of formally scheduled times for supervision contributed to their relationship. This process could take place as informal, casual interaction, such as: “She’s such a . . . we have conversations about everything (...) and not even necessarily stuff to do with clients, just in general. She’ll talk to me about her family and you know, personal stuff. So that just makes me feel more comfortable with her” (Jennifer). Furthermore, comfort in the relationship increased when supervisors involved interns in their work: “Yeah, we get along really-really well. She’s always wanting to like take me along with her, if I like don’t have anything else to do for the afternoon” (Melissa). Being able to observe one’s supervisor at work was also a contributor as Chris reported: “I just see different sides of my supervisor where maybe because I have more involvement, maybe some other people at different agencies or placements wouldn’t get that because they only see them in the one kind of setting.”

In contrast, one intern reported that her comfort in supervision was initially reduced due to the lack of such external interactions. Emily reports: “I always felt comfortable to talk to her about . . . honestly about the internship, but I was a little anxious a lot in our supervision meetings. So it just didn’t feel like um . . . I’ve seen her much around the place.”

Personal match of supervisor and supervisee. Participants reported that matching on certain characteristics with their supervisors contributed to the rapport. Features that were addressed as such included similarities in counselling approach, similarity in age, and similar personal backgrounds prior to entering the counselling field. For example, Emily disclosed that knowing that her supervisor had encountered a challenge similar to her own: “I knew she . . . it was something she’d dealt with in her career a lot, and she . . . she’s definitely helped a lot of people.”

Power management in supervision. Participant reports about FOI and supervision reflected that a low power-difference was preferred in the supervisory relationships. Power was demonstrated through the extent to which the supervisor’s role as an evaluator was emphasized, how much authority they were viewed to have in the intern’s eyes. When the focus of supervision moved “away from evaluation” (Emily) conversations about FOI were enhanced. Heather also reported feeling more confident in herself when thinking: “Like [supervisors are] not the masters of counselling, so they don’t know all the answers, so they know what they know from their own experience . . .”

Although participants reported many aspects of supervision that were considered helpful in their management of FOI, it appears that these strategies were not equally effective in reducing the frequency or intensity of their FOI. Instead, the researcher identified certain influences that appear to mediate the effectiveness of supervision in the management of FOI.

Mediators of the degree of effectiveness of supervision in managing FOI. A trend that emerged from the analysis of interviews was that the effectiveness with which supervision can reduce FOI varies. In some cases, supervision had a long term impact on interns' FOI, as demonstrated by Emily:

If I'm ever asked that again, or when I am, because I probably will be, I'll be able to have an answer that I'll feel. . . I'll feel strong about it, and know that I can still . . . that I can help that person.

Some participants reported that their FOI have been processed completely through supervision, for example: "I always come out of supervision feeling, you know. . . I never go in feeling *bad*, but I go out feeling a little, you know . . . just. . . I don't want to say like 10 times better, but it's just uh . . . it's almost like . . . just refreshed" (Chris). Conversely, other participants disclosed that in some cases supervision was able to reduce their FOI, but not to eliminate them entirely, for example: "So kind of like it DOES help overcome like the self-doubts. They're still THERE, but not as global. (...) I think that was the biggest impact of it gone, but didn't stop me from still thinking about it outside of internship."

Two overarching trends were discovered through the analysis that appeared to have a mediating influence on the effectiveness of supervision in managing FOI. These mediating influences were: the consistency of supervision and the value of learning from supervision.

Consistency of supervision. Interviews reflected the importance of consistency of supervision. Reduced frequency of supervision may allow FOI to resurface, for example: "I was doubting that I . . . at the very beginning I was definitely doubting am I doing this right? And I think I . . . I have been having them again lately because I'm not seeing her" (Emily). In contrast, consistent positive supervision experiences can have a long term impact, as Chris

described a recurring FOI that has passed: “I don’t think it’s a negative at all in my case because . . . well, we’ve processed that.”

In addition to the consistency of supervision, it was apparent in participants’ interviews that viewing supervision as a learning opportunity was a mediating influence on the outcome of supervisory conversations related to FOI.

Value of learning from supervision. Interns expressed putting great value on the learning through supervision. Participants disclosed that being able to learn from difficult feedback contributed to their development as counsellors and increased their receptivity to the feedback. For example, Heather reported: “So I sometimes feel discouraged, but I guess it’s good and bad ‘cause of the learning experience.” Similarly, Laura disclosed the following about receiving FOI-inducing feedback from her supervisor:

Like again, maybe if she cushioned it, but at the same time I wouldn’t want her to. Like that had an impact on me for a purpose, like it was [a] *good* thing that it influenced me so much, and now I’m more vigilant about that and I . . . and I’m aware of that. So like I wouldn’t . . . like I don’t wish that she did it differently.

Overall, participants revealed several aspects of supervision that they found helpful with their management of FOI. However, they also reported that many aspects of supervision were unhelpful or hindering to the management of FOI.

Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI

This major category encompasses all aspects of supervision that participants reported as hindering to their management of FOI. The major category includes subcategories describing supervisory behaviours that hinder the disclosure of FOI in supervision and aspects of supervision that hinder communication about FOI.

Table 6

Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI

Major Category	Subcategories	Dimensions
Aspects of Supervision that Hinder the Management of FOI	Supervisor behaviours that hinder disclosure	Maintaining a formal atmosphere Theoretical differences of supervisor and intern Unavailability of the supervisor
	Aspects of supervision that hinder communication about FOI	Unbalanced feedback Intensity of FOI Discrepant goals of communication Need to incorporate client feedback

Supervisor behaviours that hinder disclosure. Two of the participants in the present study reported that certain actions of their supervisors resulted in a reduced likelihood of FOI disclosures. These included the maintenance of a formal, evaluative atmosphere; theoretical differences, and the unavailability of the supervisor.

Maintaining a formal, evaluative atmosphere. One participant reported that in the early stages of the internship, her supervisor's maintenance of a formal, structured atmosphere had a somewhat negative impact on her willingness to disclose. She reported that the formal tone of supervision highlighted the evaluative purposes of supervision. While evaluation was in the foreground, the intern felt increased pressure to present a competent self to the supervisor.

The evaluation aspect, just knowing that in a way she's evaluating me, and um . . . We just . . . It was more very, it was very structured. Come into my office, let's talk about it. And I felt like it wasn't . . . it was very formal still . . . But I still felt like there was that

evaluation aspect, and that I guess like in that first month or two, I didn't want her to think. . . yeah. . . to think that I couldn't do what I've been like taken on to do. (Emily)

Theoretical differences of supervisor and intern. Another participant reported that due to a theoretical difference, her supervisor had expressed disapproval of her approach. As Heather reported: "So I could tell like . . . she doesn't think that [my approach] is the best approach to be using for therapy." This tension resulted in her reluctance to disclose a particular FOI to her supervisor. However, it must be noted that this was her initial reaction, and that the FOI was later addressed with the supervisor.

Unavailability of the supervisor. Finally, the unavailability of one participant's supervisor resulted in a pattern where she often relied on other colleagues for feedback for the management of her FOI. As Emily describes: "So, when I wasn't consistent with [my supervisor], I was going out of my way to ask (...) the counsellors that they have seen me, to say is there anything else I could have done."

Although participants reported that particular supervisory behaviours made them less willing to disclose FOI, even when disclosures were made, supervision occasionally proceeded in ways that were unfavourable to the management of FOI.

Aspects of supervision that hinder communication about FOI. This subcategory encompasses those aspects of supervision that were described by participants as hindering to the processing of FOI with their supervisors. These impediments appeared to occur through interfering with the process of communication regarding FOI. In contrast to the previous subcategory, these hindrances occurred even when a disclosure of FOI was already made to the supervisor. The hindering dynamics described in this category impeded further management of the FOI by disrupting the process of disclosing and receiving feedback between supervisor and

intern. Aspects of supervision that thus hindered the management of FOI included: (a) receiving unbalanced feedback, (b) the intensity of interns' FOI, (c) discrepant communication goals of intern and supervisor, and (d) the need to incorporate client feedback.

Unbalanced feedback. Participants in the study reported that being given feedback that was unbalanced and did not include both positive and negative aspects of their work was difficult to receive. In some instances, feedback that did not acknowledge alternative, more positive views of an intern's work resulted in the intern's reluctance to follow the supervisor's instructions. In tandem, one participant found that feedback that included only positives was difficult to trust:

I think there was also part of me that was wondering like: Are you just being nice? Are you just. . . You know, you can't *really* tell me that I suck after my first client. Like you can't really be *that* honest. You know you . . . and plus you're a counsellor, so you're trying to like sugar-coat it, and you know how to do that, so. . . I think it made me feel good, but I didn't super-fully trust it. (Laura)

Intensity of FOI. One participant provided evidence that when FOI are of a high intensity, the supervisor's attempts at pointing out strengths may become ineffective. It appears that in this case, when FOI were intense the intern was suspicious that her supervisor was hiding her "real" judgments while she's attempting to soothe her (the intern's) FOI. This problem was also related to the supervisor's tendency to be "too" positive and to her apparent avoidance of giving critical feedback. Laura disclosed the following about a scenario:

[My supervisor] like I guess congratulated me in a sense that like: Good for you for pointing that out or for knowing that or for . . . for admitting that, you know. [She is referring to a perceived error.] Like that it takes courage, and all that fun, fluffy stuff.

(...) The biggest part was like: Is she judging me? Like is she . . . does she see something that I'm not catching on, and she doesn't want to tell me? Like, kind of like . . . what's the word? Suspicious!"

Discrepant goals of communication. Participants reported that communication related to FOI was impeded by the discrepant goals of communication between supervisor and intern. In such instances, interns' and supervisors' communication goals were mismatched either in their theoretical approaches or the desired emotional depth of the conversation. In one case, a difference in theoretical orientation resulted in difficulty getting the desired feedback from the supervisor regarding difficulties with a client. In this case, the difference in theoretical approaches created a conversational impasse. As a result, the intern's FOI persisted following supervision. In another case, the supervisor addressed her interns FOI in a manner that was too deep and personal for the intern's comfort level. As a result of the intern's discomfort, the conversation was counterproductive to her management of FOI. As Laura reported:

Like I feel like she misses the point of . . . of me just reflecting. Like I don't need an answer, to dig more, or like I already know where it comes from, or why I'm feeling that way. I just want to share . . . like a debriefing. Like I just want to share this like sensation I had. Umm . . . but a few times, and I think once I even told her too, like: "It's not that big of a deal. Like I'm saying this to you. . . umm" . . . and I think when I start saying it like she has this like look, like so concerned.(...) Like oh my god, something's really wrong with me, you know?

Need to incorporate client feedback. Interviews suggested that interns regularly face the task of reconciling clients' messages about their performance with the messages received from their supervisors. Interns expressed that at least some of the time feedback they

received from clients was more important to them than feedback from their supervisors. As Jennifer described: “Like my supervisor can give me feedback, and comment on stuff I’ve done or said, but really it’s about the client. So if the client is telling me, you know: I’m happy when we meet.”

Another way in which perceived feedback from clients overrode that of the supervisor’s occurred when interns perceived that their supervisor’s feedback may threaten the therapeutic relationship with a client. In such a situation, Melissa was unwilling to disclose her FOI that involved a client: “I guess it’s my own problem because I am not willing . . . like right now I’m not willing to lose this client. I’m not willing to lose their trust.”

Finally, interns reported considering whether they should ask their clients for performance feedback. One participant, Emily, reported considering this action when her supervisor was unavailable to help with an area of FOI. She disclosed: “I thought about maybe asking the client, like: ‘Did I say something?’ . . . Like asking him later on like: ‘Was there something I said that time? Because I feel uncomfortable from that exchange.’ I thought about it, but didn’t get a chance to.” Whereas another participant, Jennifer, reported that even though clients’ feedback is important to her, she believed that asking clients for feedback in areas of doubt would reverse their roles; in her words: “I wouldn’t want to necessarily *express* self-doubts per se to the clients ‘cause then it becomes about me, you know, that’s not about them.”

Emergent Trends: A Tentative Decision-Making Algorithm of Intern Management of FOI

The use of conceptual ordering did not require the researcher to identify an underlying theoretical structure to the data; however, trends and relationships between categories and dimensions of categories could be identified. These relationships are tentative, and the

researcher recommends that future research explores the soundness of the following speculations.

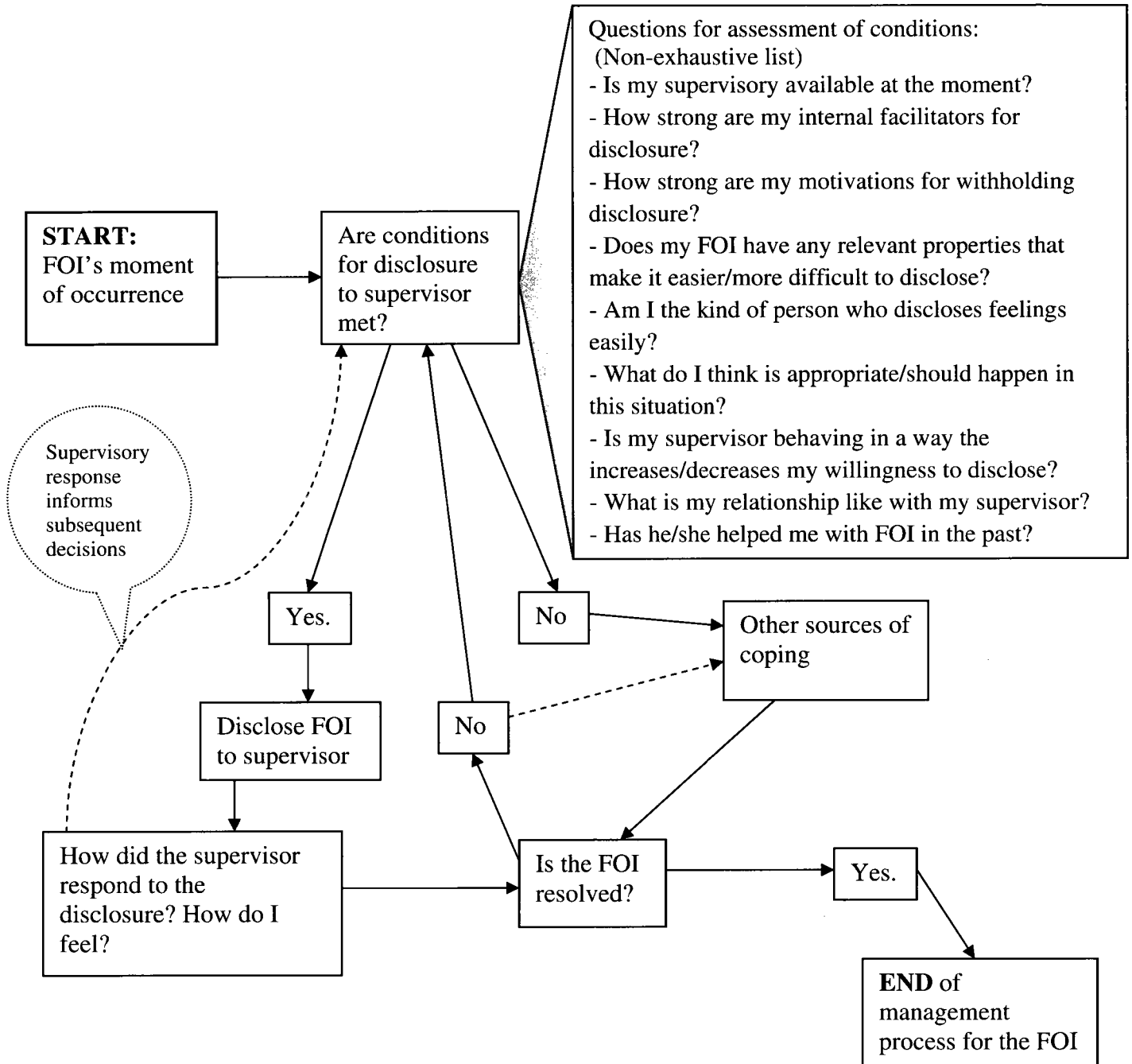
Participant interviews suggest that interns' management of FOI in supervision follows the pattern of a decision-making process. Although in reality this process is highly complex and variable, it is possible to construct a tentative model that outlines the apparent flow of decision-making by interns. For the purposes of demonstration, the analogy of an algorithm may be considered. An algorithm is a "systematic procedure that produces – in a finite number of steps – the answer to a question or the solution of a problem" ("Algorithm", Britannica Online, 2010). First, the researcher will delineate this decision-making process verbally, using the analogy of the algorithm. Then, a visual/symbolic model of the algorithm will be presented to elucidate the verbal description (Figure 1).

- (1) It can be delineated that decision-making takes place as a "function" of time. This is a necessary consideration since many of the categories identified through interviews reflected the significance of the timing and duration of various events that make-up the FOI-management process.
- (2) The algorithm begins at the time of occurrence of a particular FOI, and ends when that feeling has been completely resolved. This property reflects the study's findings, according to which it appears that all occurrences of FOI require management. However once the FOI dissipates, management no longer seems to be required.
- (3) It is proposed that each individual feeling of incompetence (FOI) must be treated on an individual basis as the "input" of the decision-making algorithm. Although interns reported trends or tendencies in their management of FOI, all participants reported

that managing FOI involved either changes or exceptions to their “usual” approach to their work.

- (4) Major components of the decision-making process are the categories and dimensions that have been identified by the modified grounded theory analysis. These components are derived from, but *not* identical to the conceptual ordering presented in the results. These components are: (a) properties of interns’ FOI, (b) attributes of the intern that influence FOI-management in supervision, (c) previous experiences of helpful and/or hindering aspects of supervision in relation to managing FOI, (d) the interns’ coping strategies, (e) outcomes of previous feedback given to the supervisor, (f) internal events that facilitate the disclosure FOI in supervision, and (g) motivations for withholding disclosures of FOI in supervision.
- (5) The model posits that the interplay of components listed above determines interns’ consideration of whether conditions are met for disclosure of the FOI to one’s supervisor. Each component has the potential to increase or decrease the likelihood of disclosure. If disclosure is withheld from the supervisor, the intern will turn to alternative strategies of coping with the FOI.
- (6) Coping strategies may successfully resolve the FOI, in which case the algorithm reaches its end. If coping strategies do not resolve the FOI, the FOI is “fed back” into earlier steps of the algorithm, at which point the intern may reconsider disclosing the FOI in supervision, using the above criteria.
- (7) Once a disclosure has been made, the outcome of that disclosure must be observed by the intern, e.g., Did it reduce FOI? Outcomes could involve evaluating the interactions with the supervisor as helpful or hindering. Helpful and hindering

aspects of supervision pertaining to FOI-management (as described in the “Results” section) as well as relevant attributes of the intern will influence the outcome of this communication process. Depending on the outcome of the supervisory communication, FOI may be eliminated or may continue to persist. If FOI are eliminated, the algorithm has reached its endpoint. If the FOI persists, it is “fed back” into earlier steps of the algorithm, at which point the intern may reconsider the disclosure of FOI to the supervisor. If it is immediately apparent that disclosure to the supervisor is not a viable option at the moment (e.g., the supervisor is absent), the intern may bypass the repeated consideration of disclosure, and turn directly to other sources of coping.

Figure 1.*Tentative Algorithm for Interns' Management of FOI in Supervision*

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The researcher will use the following section to discuss the results of the study at hand. First, a summary of the study's findings will be reiterated. Second, results will be contextualized in existing bodies of literature on FOI and supervision. Third, practical implications of the research results will be discussed for supervisors, counsellor educators, and supervisees themselves. Fourth, delimitations of the study and limitations of the findings will be described. Finally, the researcher will outline suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

The modified grounded theory analysis yielded five major categories of concepts and phenomena that influence the management of FOI in counselling supervision. The major categories identified were: (1) *Properties of Intern FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision*, (2) *Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision*, (3) *Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision* (4) *Aspects of Supervision That are Helpful to the Management of FOI*, and (5) *Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI*.

Properties of FOI That Required Management in and/or out of Supervision were described in terms of (a) internal experiences of FOI, (b) sources of FOI, (c) duration and timing of occurrence of FOI, (e) intensity of FOI, (f) mediating influences, and (g) consequences of FOI. It is important to note that a large number of FOI were the product of hindering supervision events. *Actions of the Intern Pertaining to the Management of FOI in Supervision* included: (a) disclosing FOI in supervision, (b) withholding disclosures of FOI in supervision, (c) coping with FOI outside of supervision, and (d) giving feedback to their supervisor related to managing FOI. *Attributes of the Intern That Influence FOI-Management in Supervision* included interns' self-

reported personality characteristics, their expectations and hopes for supervision, and their previous experiences and acquired knowledge. *Aspects of Supervision That are Helpful to the Management of FOI* included behaviours of the supervisor that increased interns' willingness to disclose FOI, behaviours that resulted in a reduction in the intensity or frequency of FOI, and certain elements of the supervisory relationship that were found to be relevant to the management of FOI. Moreover, mediating influences were identified that appeared to impact the effectiveness of supervision in the management of FOI. The last major category, *Aspects of Supervision That Hinder the Management of FOI* included supervisor behaviours that made disclosure more difficult and further aspects of supervision that hindered communication regarding FOI. Finally, the researcher proposed an algorithm model of the decision-making process that appears to take place throughout interns' management of FOI. The tentative model is based on the present conceptual ordering, and describes criteria that interns may consider in choosing to manage their FOI in and/or outside of supervision.

Contextualizing Results in Existing Literature

Explanations of FOI. Participants provided an assortment of explanations for the development of FOI. Their accounts lent support to different theoretical perspectives regarding of FOI. Supported theoretical perspectives include: attribution of FOI to the lack of feedback, to social learning processes, to countertransference, and to the Impostor Phenomenon.

Guy (2000) and Knestbaum (1984) related therapists' lack of professional confidence to the lack of feedback or to the ambiguous nature of feedback that therapists receive from clients. Interns provided evidence of their struggles to construct a "picture" of their competence based on observing their clients and through getting feedback from their supervisors. Furthermore,

participants also provided evidence that getting clear, balanced feedback on one's performance can eliminate FOI.

Other findings of the study appear to support studies on counsellor self-efficacy (SE). A study by Lent (2006) found that SE scores with a single client were correlated with overall counselling SE scores of counselling interns. Present findings paralleled Lent's results: participants reported instances when FOI generalized from questioning their competence with one client to questioning their overall competence. They also reported that their overall confidence as a counsellor was related to lower intensity and frequency of FOI. This supports the notion that counselling interns' confidence in their ability to successfully counsel a single client (involving particular tasks and goals) is related to interns' overall beliefs in their ability to be successful as counsellors.

In addition, Lent (2009) found that client progress accounted for more variance in SE scores than did supervision. Participants in the present study expressed struggles with the task of reconciling sources of feedback that came from clients with feedback from their supervisors. This finding supports Lent's study by demonstrating evidence that both client progress and supervision can have an impact on interns' perceptions of their own capabilities as professionals.

Based on participants' reports, some FOI may have arisen as a result of countertransference. Fauth (2006) defines countertransference as a therapist's idiosyncratic reactions, whether conscious or unconscious, that result from the therapist's own personal conflicts or biases. Participants reported FOI due to being unable to foresee progress with an unmotivated client, feeling overly concerned about a client and wanting to protect him from potential failure, or having one's own personal reactions to clients become the source of self-doubt. All of the above examples illustrate instances in which the interns own personal and

potentially biased reactions may have played a role in the development of FOI. Therefore, it is possible to speculate that such personal reactions were part of the phenomenon of countertransference.

Studies of the Impostor Phenomenon (IP) were also supported by the results. Studies such as Leary and colleagues (2000) proposed the possibility that IP is related to a protective self-presentation strategy. The authors proposed that individuals high in impostorism may *report* fearing low evaluation by others in order to prevent their *actual* negative evaluations. One participant proposed that her own and other interns' FOI may be perpetuated by the need to avoid disappointing themselves and others. The intern also disclosed that she is up front about her perceived shortcomings in order to prevent being judged by her supervisor as someone who is unaware of her inadequacies. As such, the participant's report supports the notion that self-presentation strategies may play a role in the development of FOI.

Grounded Theories of Experienced Therapists. Result can be compared and contrasted with Thériault and Gazzola's (2005, 2006, 2008) studies of experienced therapists' FOI.

Sources of FOI. Thériault and Gazzola identified four sources of FOI, using a classification system that was different from the one that emerged from the present analysis. The authors identified the following sources: (1) *Permissible* sources, that are considered an integral part of the therapist role; (2) *Professional* sources, which included FOI pertaining to knowledge and training required for the practice of therapy; (3) *Process* sources, which arose from the process of conducting therapy; and (4) *Personal* sources, which included FOI originating from personal issues of a therapist. Similar to the experienced therapist sample, interns described sources of FOI that fall into permissible, professional, and process categories outlined by

Thériault and Gazzola. The fourth source of FOI identified by the authors, *personal sources*, was not reported by interns. Such a difference is most likely a result of sampling since the probability of personal problems affecting interns' practice is unlikely to be different from that of experienced therapists.

Intensity of FOI. Thériault and Gazzola (2006) identified six levels of FOI, hierarchically organized according to the intensity of the emotional experience. Interns in the present study reported FOI that may represent five out of the six levels: (Level 1) *being correct* about procedures and decisions, (Level 2) *being effective* in one's delivery of procedures, (Level 3) *being confident*, referring to therapist's self-evaluations; and (Level 5) concerns with one's *contributions/attributions* in the therapeutic change process. Finally, (Level 6), FOI related to the therapist's *identity* and personal shortcomings were also reported by interns. Interestingly, the fourth level of intensity (Level 4) *wavering faith in the process* of conducting therapy was not mentioned by interns. This discrepancy may be dismissed as a product of sampling, although speculations for the absence of Level 4 FOI may be put forth. It is possible that because interns are still in training, they are more invested in the belief that therapy works. Believing otherwise would probably result in cognitive dissonance and inner conflict. In addition, it is possible that due to interns' awareness of their trainee status, they more readily attribute negative therapeutic outcomes to their own shortcomings than to shortcomings of the therapeutic process itself. Finally, interns may have limited reference points for evaluating the counselling process. Hence, they are less likely to report a wavering faith in the therapeutic process as the source of FOI.

Grounded theory methods with novice counsellors. Comparisons may also be made with Thériault, Gazzola, and Richardson's (2009) grounded theory inspired study of novice counsellors. The authors studied 10 counsellors with an average of 2 years and 2 months of

counselling experience. They used methods inspired by grounded theory to create a conceptual scheme related to novice counsellors' FOI.

Coping. Novice counsellors and interns used similar coping strategies to manage FOI, such as positive self-talk and seeking support from others. Novices and interns also shared their *desire* to receive support and feedback from their supervisors. However, while the novice sample reported that FOI was a taboo subject in supervision, interns did not echo this perspective. This difference is strongly evidenced by the fact that interns' supervisors were reported to frequently self-disclose their own FOI. In addition, novice counsellors expressed that they were left the task of initiating conversations about FOI, whereas interns frequently reported that their supervisors often took it upon themselves to open up discussions related to the subject. There are multiple ways in which these differences may be explained. Firstly, it is possible that the difference is merely due to sampling and not a true difference between the groups. Secondly, it is possible that novice counsellors felt more pressure to appear competent since they were no longer in training; therefore, they were less likely to admit to needing support. Thirdly, it is possible that interns in the present study had a different level of understanding of FOI compared to novice counsellors. It is possible that interns presently receive more education with regards to FOI in their training programs. Such education may normalize FOI, and thereby ease the disclosure of FOI to supervisors. This possibility is supported by one intern's interview that was opened by the participant disclosing that she had recently read an article by Thériault and Gazzola. Lending further support to this speculation is the fact that novice therapists expressed wishing that they were better prepared for FOI through their training; a concern that was not expressed by intern participants. Since the researcher did not investigate or control the amount

of knowledge participants held about the concept of FOI, it is difficult to determine to what extent these influences account for the nature of the present findings.

Developmental perspectives on FOI. It appears that many of the above differences between intern, novice, and experienced therapists' FOI echo Rønnestad and Skovholt's developmental trajectory of therapist self-doubt. According to their studies, beginner and advanced students' self-doubts are centered on course requirements, supervisors' expectations, and the capacity to master necessary skills. Later on, novice therapists' self-doubts increase as the support provided during training is taken away and practice becomes more independent and more challenging. Finally, in what the authors call the *Senior Professional* phase, self-doubts tend to relate to feeling intimidated by younger professionals and feeling pressured to display a high level of competence as a senior practitioner. The differences identified between grounded theory studies of interns, novices, and experienced therapists seem to follow a similar pattern. Similar to Rønnestad and Skovholt's findings, interns' concerns in relation to FOI appear to differ from those of more experienced counsellors. Rønnestad and Skovholt's theory also supports the present observation that a higher developmental level for therapists appears to be related to increased difficulty in disclosing FOI and in seeking help from others, such as supervisors.

Studies of supervision and FOI. Results confirmed the notion that supervision can be an effective self-care strategy in the face of FOI, an idea promoted by many researchers in the past (e.g., Cushway and Tyler, 1994; Guy and Liaboe, 1986; Hannigan, Edwards, & Burnard, 2004; Norcross, 2000). Interns reported that their supervisors in many cases were able to aid their management of FOI. Worthen and McNeill (1996) found that FOI in supervision can sometimes enable a "good supervision event" (p. 28). Although interns in the present study were

not asked to qualify supervision events as “good” (or “bad”), interviews revealed similar patterns to Worthen and McNeill’s study. When supervisors responded with openness, flexibility, and validation to disclosures of FOI, interns reported positive supervision experiences.

Interns in the present study also corroborated studies that associate difficult supervision experiences with the experience of FOI. Gray, Ladany, Walker, and Ancis (2001) found that counterproductive supervision experiences can cause decreases in self-efficacy and the questioning of one’s own judgment. Similarly, interns described various supervision scenarios that lead to FOI; examples include being criticised or neglected by one’s supervisor.

Parallels were also found with Nelson and Friedlander’s (2001) investigation of conflictual supervisory relationships. Two participants disclosed some type of tension (though not explicit conflict) in their supervisory relationships; one regarding differences in theoretical orientation and one regarding the availability of the supervisor. Both types of tension had a negative influence on the way FOI were managed with supervisors.

Studies of disclosure in supervision. The present study was in accordance with studies of disclosure and nondisclosure in supervision. Ladany, Hill, Corbett, and Nutt (1996) found that perceived inadequacy and clinical mistakes were often withheld from supervisors. The authors found that 44 percent of 108 trainees withheld a clinical mistake due to fear of evaluation by the supervisor. Moreover, results supported Yourman and Farber’s finding (1996) that supervisees often (though not always) feel able to disclose their feelings of inadequacy. It was found that despite the intermittent occurrence of withholding disclosures of FOI, most participants in the present study reported themselves to be comfortable with talking about their FOI in supervision.

The presence of shame in supervision, as Yourman (2003) conceptualized, was also discernible from interns' interviews. Only one out of the six participants explicitly reported feeling "shame" in response to supervision. Nonetheless, several other participants reported being "embarrassed" by their mistakes or by the impression their supervisor may form of them based on their presentation in therapy and in supervision. It is possible that the experience of shame was not reported more often because trainees, according to Hahn (2001, 2004), often do not recognize shame reactions.

Finally, findings of the present study are concordant with Walsh, Gillespie, Greer, and Eanes's (2001) inventory of influences that determine interns' willingness to disclose clinical mistakes to their supervisors. The authors found that factors most relevant to making such a disclosure were (a) the supervisor's style, (b) their willingness to share their own experiences, (c) their investment in their supervisee's success, (d) their willingness to share their own mistakes, (e) their amount of counselling and supervising experience, and (f) their theoretical orientation. Perceived clinical mistakes were included among the various sources of FOI reported by participants of the present investigation. (These may be found under the dimensional category of "FOI resulting from aspects of therapy"). Some factors identified by Walsh et al. were similar to those aspects of supervision which increased the likelihood of disclosing FOI in the present study. Interns considered the supervisors' style, such as person-centeredness or directiveness, to impact management of FOI. Also, the supervisors' willingness to share their own mistakes, termed as supervisors' self-disclosure by interns, was important for normalizing and opening up communication regarding FOI in supervision. Furthermore, a match with the supervisor's theoretical orientation seemed to benefit interns' management of FOI, while a theoretical mismatch was occasionally considered a hindrance.

Implications of Findings

The following section will describe some implications of the study's results. The findings of the present study may translate into practical suggestions for supervisors and educators of counsellor trainees as well as for counselling trainees themselves. However, it must be noted that these suggestions are merely tentative as they are based on self-reports of only six counselling interns.

What can supervisors do to help their interns with FOI? Interns' interviews revealed a number of strategies that helped them manage their FOI through supervision. The following section will present a list of suggestions that may prove useful to supervisors of counselling interns.

How disclosure of FOI may be eased. First and foremost, it is important that supervisors are available to their supervisees. In the current study, availability appeared to be crucial to disclosing FOI. Supervisors' availability did not only provide the de facto opportunity for talking to one's supervisor, but was associated with more immediate stress relief, a sense of genuineness, and a more positive perception of the relationship. In addition, a lack of availability was perceived by one intern as implicitly communicating a lack of interest in her development. Based on disclosures of this participant, it may be advisable for supervisors to be aware of the potential negative impact of their unavailability on their supervisees. However, supervisors who established clear boundaries of availability appeared to be able to avoid the negative impact of being occasionally unavailable. Therefore, other supervisors may also find setting clear boundaries to be a useful strategy.

Once engaged in a supervisory session with interns, it appears that disclosure of FOI can be eased through various strategies. Supervisors enabled disclosures by establishing safety,

being open and non-judgmental, and by listening actively. Additionally, open encouragement of disclosure and initiating FOI-related conversations greatly aided supervisees' ability to disclose. Finally, when supervisors offered disclosures of their own FOI or struggles with clients, they had a normalizing effect on FOI. Engaging in the above strategies may prove helpful in encouraging the disclosure of FOI in supervision. Moreover, once disclosed, findings suggest that supervisors may use additional behaviours to increase effective management of those feelings.

Helping supervisees' management of FOI. Results revealed a range of supervisor behaviours that were identified as helpful in interns' management of FOI. Other supervisors may find similar strategies useful when supervising their interns.

Helpful behaviours. It appears that interns will be most helped when supervisors validate, normalize, and listen to interns' disclosures. Furthermore, supervisors were perceived as helpful in relieving FOI when they provided more direct help to interns, such as explaining the dynamics of therapy and giving advice about how to proceed with clients. However, to be successful in alleviating FOI, it is important that instrumental help be delivered in a flexible, non-judgmental, and person-centered manner that focuses on interns' strengths. Finally, one participant reported that being challenged by his supervisor was greatly appreciated; however, it is important to note that this participant's interview reflected a strong and safe bond with the supervisor.

Managing the relationship. Findings suggest that supervisors need to be aware of how the supervisory relationship impacts disclosure and management of FOI. Although certain aspects of the relationship cannot be controlled, findings suggest that supervisors who set clear boundaries but who are consistently approachable in- and outside of supervision build the relationship in ways that are favourable for disclosing and resolving FOI in supervision. Overall,

the building of rapport between supervisor and supervisee appears to be beneficial to creating an atmosphere in supervision that is conducive to effective FOI management.

Awareness of mediating factors. It may also be helpful to supervisors to be aware of the degree to which FOI-management in supervision is impacted by challenges faced by interns. It may help interns if their supervisors strive to become aware of their supervisees' needs in supervision, the nature of their concerns, the intensity of their FOI, and their added challenge of needing to weigh their supervisors' feedback against the feedback they appear to receive from their clients. Finally, supervisors may enhance the management of FOI by emphasizing the component of learning through supervision, as many interns appear to be motivated by this feature of the supervision process.

What can counsellor educators do to help interns? Educators involved in the training of counsellors can aid the process of FOI-management by conveying standards for how FOI could be managed in supervision. Educators may achieve such a goal through their administrative and educational actions. Firstly, counsellor educators may help normalize FOI and resulting struggles through providing readings and initiating class discussions. Results of the study suggest that normalizing FOI is very important to both disclosure and resolution of FOI. Counsellor educators have the opportunity to prepare students for the experience of FOI and to encourage openness about the subject. Additionally, counsellor educators may encourage the constructive management of FOI in supervision through their communication with on-site supervisors. For example, educators may include the subject of discussing FOI and confidence as part of assessment activities required by the program.

What can supervisees do to help manage their own FOI? Results may also be used to suggest ways in which counselling interns may improve their own management of FOI in

supervision. First of all, interns should be aware of the possibility of managing FOI with their supervisors' assistance. Although they have no control over how their supervisor may handle their disclosures of FOI, they should keep in mind the possibility that when supervision is generally safe and constructive, supervisors may help manage FOI successfully.

Moreover, all participants who gave feedback to their supervisors reported a positive outcome in terms of further FOI-management. Two interns told their supervisors about their dissatisfaction with the supervisors' feedback. One intern was invited by her supervisor to give verbal feedback about her satisfaction with supervision, whereupon she let her supervisor know about her need for increased negative feedback. The other intern was not invited to give feedback. This individual used e-mail to inform her supervisor about her concerns regarding the nature of the feedback she received in supervision. In both situations, interns reported that their supervisors were receptive to the feedback and that they responded by adjusting their approach. A third intern reported giving positively reinforcing feedback to their supervisor, which was also reported to have had a positive outcome, by increasing communication about FOI-related subjects. Based on these reports, interns may choose to consider whether giving feedback about their perceptions regarding supervision to their supervisors might benefit their management of FOI.

Furthermore, it may prove helpful for interns to become aware of how their personality and personal reactions could impact how FOI are managed in supervision. Focusing on opportunities for learning was helpful for participants in terms of "taking in" difficult feedback and preventing the development of FOI in supervision. Hence, it is possible that focusing on learning gained through supervision events may work to mediate the effects of FOI. Interns should also be aware of how their expectations for themselves and for supervision influence the

process. Interns in the present study did not explicitly disclose whether and how they resolved issues related to their expectations. However, the researcher will propose the following suggestions: If interns become aware of their hopes and expectations, they may use that awareness to choose a supervisor or internship site that best meets their expectations. Furthermore, they may communicate with their supervisors about their hopes and expectations when negotiating a supervision contract. Doing so may increase collaboration with the supervisor when managing FOI. Finally, their awareness of their own hopes and expectations may be used to inform their personal coping processes when faced with FOI.

The present investigation has many practical implications. Nonetheless, the scope of the study was delimited by particular methodological decisions, while a number of shortcomings of the data-collection process resulted in further limitations of the study's outcome.

Delimitations of the Study

First, a decision was made to interview only supervisees and not supervisors. This decision was made to ensure that supervisee perspectives could be studied in great depth. As a result, the study did not account for the perspectives of supervisors. Second, a decision was made to interview supervisees who are in training in order to reduce the strain on their memory of recalling supervision events. As a consequence, results may have reduced or uncertain applicability to more experienced therapists in supervision. Third, the study seeks out qualitative information. An inherent shortcoming of this approach is that results cannot be generalized to another sample or population. Furthermore, without quantitative measures, no information was gathered about prevalence, frequency, or statistical significance of the data on FOI and supervision. Additionally, interviewing for data-collection has a caveat. Because the process is semi-structured and interpersonal, results will be strongly influenced by the presence and

character of the interviewer. Though the personal nature of the interview process may prove to be an advantage in gathering in-depth data, it may also impact the transferability and dependability of the results. Furthermore, participants of the study were asked to recall events of their supervision. The effects of memory on the accuracy and precision of reports may have influenced the findings of the study. Finally, grounded theory methods are also closely tied to the identity and history of the researcher, and carry an inherent set of assumptions that impact results (these have been addressed by the “Methodology” section of this thesis).

Limitations of the Study

Firstly, the present study is limited by the number of participants interviewed. While the data gathered is rich and high in utility, it is possible that with the given number of participants some potential perspectives were not captured.

Secondly, the present study included only one male intern and all female supervisors. Although such a gender ratio is typical of the field of counselling, the disproportionate representation of gender could affect the transferability of results to other male interns.

Thirdly, four out of six participants reported that they were very happy with their supervisors. One reported mixed feelings toward their supervisor overall. Another participant reported having difficulties with the supervisor at the time of the interview; however, she reported that overall she was satisfied with supervision. Hess et al. (2008) suggest that the structure of disclosure in problematic supervisory relationships differs from disclosure patterns that occur in supervisory dyads where the relationship is good. In addition, Nelson and Friedlander (2001) found self-doubt to be particularly impactful on supervision that is conflict-ridden. As a consequence, it is possible that the way FOI are managed in difficult relationships is also different from how FOI are managed in “good” relationships. Since highly problematic or

conflictual relationships were not represented among the sample of the current study, it is possible that the results were unable to capture a particular facet of the role of supervision in the management of FOI.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research may use the present conceptual ordering as a springboard for a variety of investigations. Firstly, using an approach similar to the present study, future research may aim to construct a substantive theory of FOI-management in supervision. The conceptual ordering presented here may serve the construction of further interview guides, or inspire further research questions. Future grounded theory studies may purposively sample less satisfactory relationships and thereby address some limitations of the current results.

Similarly, the conceptual ordering constructed here may be used to inspire items for quantitative research endeavours. Such studies could determine the frequency of occurrence and correlates of concepts and phenomena identified in the present study.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial for future investigations to address supervisors' perspectives on FOI-management with their supervisees. For this purpose, it may be helpful to conduct studies that address supervision in terms of a dyad, in order to account for all perspectives involved. Moreover, participants in the present study hinted at the possible impact of group supervision and of university seminars on management of FOI. The investigation of these venues for managing FOI could add to the complexity of knowledge about FOI and its management.

Additionally, studies addressing FOI that aim to reduce the effects of memory could increase the accuracy of knowledge in this area. Such approaches could include pre- and post-

session questionnaires for supervision, diary studies, and stimulated recall approaches, such as Interpersonal Process Recall (Kagan, Krathwohl, & Miller, 1963).

Finally, it may be valuable to investigate FOI and its management in supervision longitudinally, addressing various stages of therapist development. For such a study, intern development could be observed over the period of their counselling placements; alternatively, therapists could be followed throughout the course of their careers.

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Appendix A

Construction of the Interview Guide

Interview Question Clusters	Rationale
Cluster 1. Tell me a little bit about your current internship. Tell me about your current supervisor. Tell me about your relationship with your current supervisor.	To situate the researcher, and warm up the interviewee for the rest of the interview.
Cluster 2. Can you think of an instance in which you experienced feelings of professional self-doubt During supervision? After supervision? Before you entered supervision?	To elicit specific examples of FOI that can be explored through subsequent interview questions. Sub-questions intended to capture FOI in various temporal relationships to supervision. Related research question: How are feelings of incompetence experienced in the context of practicum supervision?
Cluster 3. Can you think of an occasion on which you experienced professional self-doubts and you talked to your supervisor about how you were feeling? Can you think of an occasion on which you experienced professional self-doubts and you did not talk to your supervisor about you were feeling?	To capture the potential disclosure or non-disclosure of FOI in supervision. Related research question: Whether and how FOI are addressed in supervision?
Cluster 4. Can you describe this occasion, please? How did you feel? What did you think? What was going through your head? What was your self-talk? How did the fact that you were in supervision have an impact? What was it about supervision that had an impact? Were there any other factors that influenced you at this time? Can you tell me about them?	To elicit a detailed description of the interviewee's internal, implicit experiences. Related research question: How are feelings of incompetence experienced in the context of practicum supervision?

Cluster 5.

Do you remember if you talked to your supervisor about how you were feeling?

A. If yes:

How was it addressed?

What was the impact of how it was addressed?

Was it helpful?

What was helpful about it?

What was unhelpful or hindering about the response?

B. If no:

What was your reason for not addressing it?

What was the impact of not addressing it?

How did you manage the feeling?

What was more helpful/hindering about approaching it this way?

To elicit a detailed description of whether and how disclosures were made, how the disclosure was received by the supervisor, and how the conversation was experienced by the intern.

In cases where an FOI was disclosed, questions aimed to explore reasons for addressing it, and the impact of the nondisclosure.

Related research questions:

Whether and how FOI are addressed in supervision?

What, if anything, is perceived as helpful or hindering by supervisees in supervision regarding FOI?

Cluster 6.

Have similar instances come up on other occasions?

Do you consider this to be a typical or your supervision experiences?

What is different about these other occasions?

To situate the disclosure or nondisclosure in the overall supervision process.

Related research question:

Whether and how FOI are addressed in supervision?

Cluster 7.

Do you have any other comments to make about this topic?

How did this interview go for you?

Does anything stand out? Surprise you? Impact you negatively?

Any other comments you would like to make about the interview?

To bring the interview to a close, and to ensure that the interviewee gets to express any ideas not addressed by the planned interview questions. To find out how the interviewees may have been affected by the interview process.

Appendix B

Recruitment Text

To: Counselling Interns/Practicum Students

From: Anna Nyiri
student, M.A. [Ed.] Educational Counselling,
University of Ottawa
STAR center (Supervision Training and Research Center)

Dr. Anne Thériault
professor/ thesis supervisor,
Educational Counselling,
University of Ottawa

Subject: **NEW Research Participation Opportunity**

Hello,

My name is Anna Nyiri, and I am a student in the M.A. Educational Counselling program. I am currently conducting a research project for my Master's thesis in partial requirement for an M.A. in Educational Counselling. My work is supervised by Dr. Anne Thériault, at the University of Ottawa, Department of Educational Counselling.

In this project, I am interested in learning about the counselling supervisees' experiences of professional self-doubt. Self-doubts in relation to the counselling practice are often experienced by counsellors in training as well as by seasoned therapists. Doubts about one's effectiveness as a therapist are inherent in the process of becoming a counsellor and therefore they may come up during supervision as well. The purpose of this research is to better understand the interplay of supervision and counselling supervisees' ways of dealing with self-doubt.

For the purposes of this research, I am looking for English-speaking counselling students, who are currently taking part in an internship or counselling practicum.

Participation in this study will mean that you will be asked to

- **Fill out a short demographic questionnaire**
- **Participate in an interview discussing the relationship of professional self-doubts and supervision.**

For more information on confidentiality and anonymity, I encourage you to review the attached Informed Consent Form. If you have any questions about the study, do not hesitate to contact me or Anne Thériault at the addresses above.

Many thanks in advance,

Anna Nyiri

Appendix C**Demographic Questionnaire**

1. Gender: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Ethnicity: _____
4. Please describe your educational background (including your current degree) e.g. B.A. Sociology, M.Ed.
Counselling: _____
5. How many hours of internship have you completed at your current placement? _____
... in total? _____
6. How long (in weeks) have you been working with your current supervisor? _____
7. How many minutes per week of supervision do you receive? _____
8. How many hours of supervision have you received up to date? (approximately) _____
9. What type of counselling do you do at your current placement? e.g. individual mental health, group career _____
10. What is the population that you work with at your current placement? e.g. children-

11. How would you describe your theoretical orientation? E.g. psychodynamic

12. What counselling experience do you have up to date (not including current internship)?
E.g. "3 months crisis counselling" or "no previous experience"

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Researchers: Anna Nyiri

*student, M.A. [Ed.] Educational Counselling, University of Ottawa
University of Ottawa
STAR Center (Supervision Training and Research Center)*

Dr. Anne Thériault

professor/ thesis supervisor, Educational Counselling, University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study entitled *Moments of self-doubt in counselling supervision*, conducted by Anna Nyiri and Anne Thériault. This research study is conducted as part of Anna Nyiri's Master's Thesis, which is required for the completion of her M.A. [Ed.] degree.

Purpose of the Study: In this project, the researcher is interested in learning about counselling interns' experiences of professional self-doubt. Self-doubts in relation to the counselling practice are often experienced by counsellors in training as well as by seasoned therapists. Doubts about one's effectiveness as a therapist are inherent in the process of becoming a counsellor therefore they may come up during supervision as well. The purpose of this research is to better understand the role of supervision in counselling interns' ways of dealing with self-doubt.

Participation: My participation will consist of an interview and a short questionnaire. In the interview, the researcher will ask me questions that help her understanding of counselling interns' self-doubts and their relationship to supervision. This interview may last approximately 1 ½ hours and will be audio-recorded. I will also be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire which will take up to 15 minutes to complete.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I may volunteer some information that is personal. I understand that discussing my self-doubts may cause me to feel anxious or embarrassed. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks through the following:

- I may ask questions about the study at any point in time
- I may refuse to answer any question during the interview
- I may stop participating in the study at any point in time.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help gather knowledge about the role of supervision in how counselling interns deal with self-doubts. This information can help counsellors' and psychotherapists' self-care and can also be used to train supervisors of counsellors and psychotherapists.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used for the writing and dissemination

of Anna Nyiri's Master's Thesis. The dissemination of results may include publications in journals and/or conferences. In this process, the researchers will protect my confidentiality by

- never using my real name or any other identifying information
- keeping all data in a locked cabinet in the thesis supervisor's office
- abiding by the Canadian Counselling Association's Code of Ethics for Research and Publications (for details, see <http://www.ccacc.ca/documents/ECOEAPR07.pdf>)

Anonymity: My participation in this research will be anonymous. Any of my identifying information will be stored separately from video or audio recordings. My identifying information will not be published when disseminating the research findings.

Conservation of data: The data collected will consist of:

- an audio recording of my interview
- a transcript of the interview
- a paper form of the demographic questionnaire

All of these items will be kept in a secure manner; in a locked file cabinet at the University of Ottawa, in Dr. Thériault's office. The data will be accessible only to Dr. Thériault and Anna Nyiri. The data will be preserved for 5 years (until 2014), at which point all items will be destroyed and disposed of.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate in the study and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be used for the overall analysis, unless I notify the researchers that I prefer that any portion of this data is destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____ hereby agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Anna Nyiri of the Department of Educational Counselling, University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Anne Thériault, Department of Educational Counselling, University of Ottawa.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5 Tel.: (613) 562-5841 E-mail: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____