



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

**Personal Development in the Higher Education and Training of Social Care
Workers in Ireland**

By:

Patricia Cremen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Science
School of Education

August 2018

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother and my father,
Geraldine and Michael Cremen.

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the help and support of many people to whom I owe a huge debt of gratitude.

Firstly, I wish to extend my sincere thanks and grateful appreciation to the participants who gave so generously of their time and expertise, without their collaboration this research project would not have been possible.

A big thank you to my EdD colleagues, who made the journey so enjoyable with much support, kindness and laughter along the way.

A special word of thanks to my supervisor Professor Gareth Parry (now retired), his expertise and kindness were invaluable during his supervision of my thesis. Also, my very sincere thanks to Dr. Vassiliki Papatsiba, who very kindly and thoughtfully guided and supported me to the conclusion of my research project.

My sincere gratitude to Professor Vincent Cunnane and the Limerick Institute of Technology for their support in granting me the Academic Staff Research Doctoral Write-up Award which facilitated me in completing my research study.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude and very sincere thanks to Marie Breen-Mc Mahon and Tim Cremen for their invaluable support, generosity of time and unwavering encouragement throughout my research study. Their exceptional insightfulness, wisdom and patience has been hugely influential in my completing my research.

A special thank you to Brian Cremen for his good humour and fun throughout the process and to Stephen Cremen for his expertise and technological support at very short notice.

Finally, my wholehearted thanks to all my family and friends for their untiring support and tremendous encouragement from the beginning of my research study to the very end.

Abstract

The education and training of social care workers (SCWs) takes place, predominantly, in the Institute of Technology (IOT) sector in Ireland. Both the state agency Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and Ireland's multi-professional health regulator CORU stipulate a requirement for Personal Development (PD) in the higher education and training of SCWs. However, there is little evidence as to if, or how, this is delivered in the social care (SC) educational programmes in the IOT sector in Ireland. Those who claim its benefits point to the need for SCWs to acquire the capacity to become more self-aware, build healthy self-esteem and challenge sedimented prejudices before entering the profession. The challenging nature of the work, the extremely high rate of stress and burnout in the sector and the imminent professional statutory registration of SCWs is also noted. Little research has been undertaken in this area; hence this study seeks to explore the phenomenon of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs from the perspective of 14 SC educators in the 13 IOTS in Ireland. Underpinned by a social constructivist methodology and using a qualitative multiple case study approach, semi-structured interviews are employed to collect the data. The findings reveal that PD is embedded, but not explicit, in a variety of modules and module titles in the 13 IOTs investigated with only one stand-alone module, specifically designed for the facilitation of PD. The delivery of PD is open to interpretation and depends on the IOT in question, the (SC) programme(s), the module(s) and the influence of the theoretical orientation, background, and training of the SC educator. The findings reveal that students benefit from engaging in PD, especially in dealing with unresolved personal issues that may impede their work with clients. PD is considered necessary in training for professional best practice in social care, but concerns are raised that SC educators are not trained to undertake therapeutic work and find themselves walking a 'thin line' between PD and therapeutic practice.

Table of Contents

Dedication	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Historical Context	11
Chapter 3: Literature Review	22
Chapter 4: Methodology	45
Chapter 5: Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD	63
Chapter 6: The Process and Practice of PD Group Work	82
Chapter 7: Profiling the Social Care Student	94
Chapter 8: The Multi-layered Role of the PD Educator	112
Chapter 9: Discussion	124
Chapter 10: Conclusion and Recommendations	137

Appendices

139

- Appendix 1 Significant Legislation in the Development of SCW in Ireland
- Appendix 2 Extract – Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) - *Awards and Standards for Social Care Work*
- Appendix 3 Extract – CORU-*Criteria for Education and Training Programmes and the Standards of Proficiency for Entry to Social Care Workers Register*
- Appendix 4 History and Evolution of SC Education in Ireland
- Appendix 5 SC Programmes Offered in the Institutes of Technology in Ireland
- Appendix 6 Classification: 68 Social Care Modules Incorporating PD
- Appendix 7 Ethical Application & Approval
- Appendix 8 Invitation to Participate in the Study
- Appendix 9 Information Sheet
- Appendix 10 Participant Consent Form
- Appendix 11 Reflective Journal Entry - Sample
- Appendix 12 Extract of Notes from Conversations with Critical Friends
- Appendix 13 Schedule of Interview Questions
- Appendix 14 Sample Interview Transcript

References

209

List of Tables

Table 1. Differences in Work Orientation Between Social Care Work and Social Work

Table 2. The Participants

Table 3. Phases of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis

Table 4. Topics and Themes in PD Learning

Table 5. The Main Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning PD

Table 6. Class Size/Group Size across the 13 IOTs

Table 7. Methods of Assessment in PD Learning

List of Figures

- Figure 1. Geographical Locations of IOTs Ireland
- Figure 2. Final thematic map showing the final four main themes and sub-themes

List of Abbreviations

AIT:	Athlone IOT
CIT:	Cork IOT
DA:	Delegated Authority
DIT:	Dublin IOT
DKIT:	Dundalk IOT
GMIT:	Galway–Mayo IOT
HE:	Higher Education
HEA:	Higher Education Authority
HETAC:	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
HIQA:	The Health Information and Quality Authority
IADT	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology
IASCE	The Irish Association of Social Care educators
IASCW	The Irish Association of Social Care Managers
IASCW	The Irish Association of Social Care Workers
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
ITB:	IOT Blanchardstown
ITC:	IOT Carlow

ITS:	IOT Sligo
ITT:	IOT Tallaght
IT TRALEE:	IOT Tralee
IOT/IT:	Institute of Technology
LYIT:	Letterkenny IOT
LIT:	Limerick IOT
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards
NFQ:	National Framework of Qualifications
PD:	Personal Development
PPD	Personal and Professional Development
QQI:	Quality Qualifications Ireland
RTC:	Regional Technical College
RQ:	Research Question
SC:	Social Care
SW:	Social Worker/Work
SCW:	Social Care Worker
TU:	Technological University
WIT:	Waterford IOT

Chapter 1: Introduction

Irish society is developing at a rapid pace. Once considered a conservative country ruled by the Catholic Church, changes can now be seen in the weakening moral authority of religion and the profound shift in social attitudes. In May 2018, the referendum to repeal the eight amendment to the Irish constitution was carried, paving the way for the introduction of abortion. Same sex marriage has been recognised since 2015, and the prohibition on divorce was removed in 1996. Ireland has also witnessed the rise and fall of the Celtic Tiger, which resulted in a deep recession, a striking rise in poverty, an increase in homelessness and a new emerging multi-cultural society. Because of these changes and in keeping pace with clients' needs, SCW in contemporary Ireland has also witnessed profound change. This study is an exploration of one aspect of that change: PD in the higher education and training of SCWs in the IOT sector in Ireland.

The opening chapter of this study introduces my research topic, explains the purpose of my research, and documents the reason why it merits investigation. The research questions together with the aims and objectives of the research are outlined, my position in the research is stated and the background to the research is clarified. The concluding section of this introduction includes a brief description of the content of each chapter of the study.

SCW in the Republic of Ireland developed out of the systematic neglect and abuse of children and vulnerable people while in care homes and institutions, that were administered by charitable and/or religious organisations. A succession of government reports (Appendix 1), the most significant of these being the Tuairim Report (1966), the Kennedy Report (1970) and the Task Force on Child Care Services (1980), together with the Child Care Act (1991), provided new legislation, regulations and guidelines for the development of child care services (Howard and Lyons, 2014; Fanning and Rush, 2006). The Health and Social Care Professionals Act (2005) saw a shift in status from 'worker' to 'professional' and paved the way for the statutory registration of SC staff. Services are now delivered by a variety of public, for-profit, and not-for-profit agencies (Howard, 2014). Despite the positive changes, social care workers, who work with the most vulnerable in society, in exceedingly difficult environments, can be both

emotionally and physically challenged in their role (Lalor and Share, 2013). Because of the many needs of their client population and working so closely with them, Kennefick (2006) suggests social care workers need a variety of skills, knowledge, and training to carry out their role effectively. The principle skill, she maintains, is ‘the self’ and she alerts social care educators to the necessity of personal development (PD) or awareness training for social care students, to facilitate the engagement of ‘the self in the work’ (p. 213). The requirement for PD or self-awareness training is specified in *QQI Awards and Standards for Social Care Work* and in *CORU Standards of Proficiency for Social Care workers* (QQI, 2014; CORU, 2017). Yet despite acknowledging this requirement, little is documented on if, or how, the concept of PD is delivered in the SC programmes in the 13 (IOTs) in Ireland. This lack of evidence is compounded by a scarcity of studies and a deficiency of literature exploring the topic. The aim of my study is to explore the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SC students, from the perspective of 14 SC educators in the 13 IOT’s across Ireland. This study is undertaken from a social constructionist perspective and uses a qualitative multiple case study approach. The study specifically relates to the IOT sector and concentrates on the 13 IOTs delivering one or more Level 7 and/or Level 8 SC programmes. The data is obtained by exploring this phenomenon from the perspective of 14 SC educators to obtain rich descriptions of their lived experiences. It is my aim to fill this evident gap in the current research and knowledge base and to prompt further debate and discussion on this vital and necessary subject.

My position

Relativist philosophy which underpins qualitative research, recognises that the researcher is very much part of the research process and is actively involved in the construction of the findings (Willig, 2013). Therefore, as I am engrossed in the sector under investigation, I need to examine my position and question its influence on the research process. I begin by describing my background, using the existential four-dimensional map of human existence, to trace its development (Binswanger, 1963, Yalom, 1980, van Deurzen Smith, 1988). In the physical dimension of existence, I grew up in a rural village in Ireland in an environment which gave me a sense of place, community and belonging. Living in a beautiful country landscape gave me an abiding love of nature. Working in the financial sector necessitated a move to the city where the pace of life was faster, and a different culture absorbed me. In the social dimension of my

existence, my family and my friends are an important and significant part of my world. I was brought up in an extended family whose love and care provided me with a sense of security, moral awareness, and a strong work ethic. I am a social being, I like people, but I also treasure my personal space and solitude. In the personal dimension, I am a grounded and well-balanced individual, sensitive to the needs of others. I am influenced by humanistic philosophy, I subscribe to the concepts of self-actualization and the potential for human growth and development. My philosophy of life is embedded in the existential concepts of authenticity, freedom of choice, and responsibility. I believe in social justice, the principles of liberty and equality and advocating on behalf of the less-heard members of society. These beliefs guided me to change career and train to be an existential psychotherapist, then later again into the area of social care higher education and training. In the spiritual dimension I was raised in the Catholic faith, however, throughout my life, my spirituality, values and beliefs have changed many times and continue to do so. My worldview has developed through constant questioning and has been both enhanced and restricted by the many circumstances and experiences of my life.

Existential Psychotherapist

The subject of PD is existential in nature, it encourages individuals to be open to finding meaning in life and reach their full potential despite the limitations and the challenges. My role as a financial manager, my practice as an existential psychotherapist, my experience as a student counsellor and my work as a SC educator have all contributed to my self-development and ignited my interest in the topic of PD. I have always had an insatiable curiosity about life and when I decided to train as a psychotherapist I was drawn to the existential perspective. This philosophy encourages people to engage with the world in an authentic way, by facing up to the ultimate ontological givens of death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness (Cooper, M. 2003, van Deurzen, E and Arnold-Baker, C.,2005, van Deurzen, E. 1998). My interest and work in the area of PD is based on the existential humanistic approach which draws on the works of Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961). This approach encourages individuals to realize their true potential by focusing in on their subjective experiences to achieve self-awareness and personal autonomy (Bugental, 1981). I find the existential psychotherapeutic four-dimensional map of human existence (Binswanger, 1963, Yalom, 1980, van Deurzen Smith, 1988) invaluable when navigating life in general and more specifically when engaged in therapeutic practice. Exploring

life through the framework of the four worlds (physical, personal, social, and spiritual), individuals become aware of the pull between a positive pole of what they aspire to and a negative pole of what they fear in each dimension. The aim, in life, is to negotiate a healthy balance, in each domain, between the polarities of each of the existential 'givens' (death, isolation, meaningless, freedom), for example, by engaging in life in a meaningful way by being aware of death but without being overwhelmed by it (van Deurzen in Dryden 2002).

Existential Themes

During my research process I became aware of how the main existential themes influenced me in many of the choices and decisions I made along the way. When working from an existential stance, death is a central theme, it puts everything into perspective, it makes us more aware of the temporary nature of human existence, time moving on and changes occurring. I grappled with issues around time in my research process especially when analysing the data. This is a process that consumes time and one that, if limits and boundaries are not imposed, could continue indefinitely. There came a point when I had to decide it was time to conclude the analysis, this provoked both anxiety and a huge sense of relief.

The experience of meaningless and the creation of meaning can produce existential angst and anxiety and during my research process I felt myself fluctuating between the polarities of meaningless and creating meaning many times. Initially, when I read the transcripts, I became overwhelmed with the vast amount of data they contained. At times I was stretched between a sense of meaning being created when themes emerged from the data and then, at other times a sense of meaningless, when nothing made any sense. Sometimes I was confused and uncertain as I tried to interpret the words, sentences, language and ideas of the participants and at other times I become elated when meaning materialised. Trying to create meaning out of so many interpretations was frustrating, yet I believed that by persevering with my exploration, meaning would surface which, of course, it did.

Authenticity is an existential theme that was constantly to the fore in my research, whether it was in wrestling over the decisions concerning the overall design and structure of my study, or, in trying to represent a true account of the voices of my participants. Whilst reading the transcripts of the interviews I was constantly aware of the need to bracket any of my own pre-conceived

assumptions in order to make a responsible and thoughtful choice around the selection of data. I felt I had a huge responsibility to challenge the sedimented beliefs I may have absorbed over time to be true to both myself and my participants.

The research process involved constant movement between the polarities of freedom and constraint. While reading the interview transcripts I was aware that I had freedom to choose and make decisions about the structure and analysis of my data. However, I was also aware of my professional duty and responsibility to strike a balance between my pursuit of knowledge and making sure that the ethical considerations and rights of my participants were protected.

The existential theme of isolation and its opposite polarity of belonging are clear throughout my exploration of the data. I have a certain advantage in that I am immersed in the subject matter I am investigating, I belong to the community of PD facilitators and SC educators and this gives me an insider perspective. However, ethical deliberations can only be considered from clear thinking about what is right and wrong. So, when reading my interview transcripts, I needed to step back and try to account for my opinions and decisions by isolating my pre-conceived knowledge through the process of reflexivity

Throughout the interviews, I observed participants, in their attempt to interpret the concept, move back and forth between the existential polarities of time and limits, isolation and belonging, meaningless and meaning and freedom and constraint. One such example is the multi-layered role of the PD facilitator, 'walking a thin line' between facilitating PD and doing therapeutic work, leaning to one side of the polarity and then to the other, depending on their environment, their personal awareness, and their professional orientation. Overall the existential themes formed a backdrop to my research and guided me in the many choices and decisions I had to make.

In 2004 I applied for and was successful in securing the position of a Personal Development Educator in a Bachelor of Arts, Applied Social Studies Programme, in the IOT sector. My job specification required that I design, plan, and deliver a new module entitled 'Personal Development' for all four years of the Bachelor of Arts, Level 8, Applied Social Studies SC programme. Having worked in the university sector, I drew on my experience in facilitating PD for students in counselling, career guidance and allied health courses. The module 'PD' was based on Corey and Schneider Corey's (2002) groupwork experiential model, with a focus on the

thinking, feeling, sensing and behavioural engagement of students. Some years later, while attending the Irish Association for SC educators (IASCE) conference, I made informal inquiries as to how some of the other SC educators dealt with the PD module for students. This query elicited a very mixed response, from “not at all” to “yes, but not in a specific way or with reference to “PD” in our programme”. Also, during this time, I was introduced to the concepts of ‘Therapeutic Culture’ through the writings of Furedi (2004), especially in his text *Therapy Culture – cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. In it he claims that therapeutic ideas from popular culture, especially the new emotional culture, infiltrate society and redefine the meaning of being human by concentrating on a person’s vulnerability. Rather than an individual realising their potential or acquiring self-fulfilment, therapy culture promotes the notion of self-limitation where ‘the self’ is perceived as being distinctly fragile and feeble and where individuals need the continuous intervention of therapeutic expertise to manage their lives. These ideas are advanced by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) in their text *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*, where therapeutic education is seen as profoundly anti-intellectual. They criticise academics for being too concerned with emotional well-being, emotional literacy and ‘soft outcomes’ of learning rather than the pursuit of knowledge and academic learning. They claim that ‘therapeutic education’, contributes to a diminished view of the individual through a fostering a diminished sense of ‘the self’. These ideas challenged my long-held beliefs on the benefit of PD for students and ignited my interest to explore the topic in much greater detail. I began to develop a curiosity as to how this subject area was perceived by others in the field of SC education. After much deliberation, I decided to investigate this topic and to explore it from the perspectives of 14 SC educators across the 13 IOTs in Ireland. Considering my psychotherapeutic background and my familiarity with one-to-one communication with clients, it seemed a natural progression for me to explore their perceptions and insights on the subject area through the process of semi-structured interviews. I commenced the process of formulating my research questions, which were redesigned many times before I finally decided upon a version that encapsulated the essence of my enquiry. Employing a qualitative multiple case study analysis as a framework for my investigation, I began my research. One important fact that remained crucial throughout my research process was ensuring that I remained as neutral as was possible in carrying out my research. This demanded that I engage in reflexive practice throughout the duration of my study. I now outline my core research questions:

Research Questions

RQ1. How do social care educators perceive the nature, purpose, and practice of Personal Development within the current social care education programmes in the Institute of Technology sector in Ireland?

RQ2. What in their opinion are the perceived advantages, limitations and/or tensions of including Personal Development in the social care programme?

The objectives of my research are as follows:

1. To describe the concept of Personal Development in the higher education and training of social care workers
2. To uncover the rationale and justification, if any, underpinning the inclusion of Personal Development in the social care programme
3. To identify any perceived advantages, limitations and/or tensions in including Personal Development in the social care programme

Importance of the study

The education and training of SCWs within the IOT sector in the Republic of Ireland is concerned with the personal and professional development of the worker together with the acquisition of the skills necessary to carry out the work. Academic subjects such as sociology, law, psychology are essential and essential elements of the SC programme, as are the creative studies and work-placement modules (Lalor and Share, 2013). Yet according to Kennefick (2006), “detailed and comprehensive knowledge alone, even to postgraduate level, does not necessarily mean an individual care worker can work effectively with distressed clients, or work co-operatively with the social care team” (p. 214). Social care workers have access to a major part of their clients’ lives, they are involved in their personal care and leisure activities and at times it is necessary for them to connect and engage with the client when the client is expressing distressing emotions and/or challenging behaviour (p. 215). Kennefick (2006) maintains that to develop effective professional skills and competent practice, social care educators need to

incorporate an element of PD in social care training. This training, she maintains, requires a space where students are facilitated in the process of self-reflection and afforded the opportunity to gain useful insights about ‘the self’ before entering the field of social care work. Since extraordinarily little research has been undertaken in this area in the Irish higher educational sector, it remains unclear as to how this aspect of SC training and education is facilitated, or indeed, if it is at all. This study addresses this question by exploring the lived experiences of 14 SC educators, who are experienced in PD in SC education and training in the 13 IOTs in Ireland.

The **Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Award Standards for Social Care Workers** determines the standards of knowledge, skill, and competence that SC students are required to achieve before they can be granted a major higher education and training award. These criteria specify that SC graduates are required to express an internalised personal worldview reflecting engagement with others and to approach practice in a way that comprehends and emphasises personal growth of self and others (QQI, 2014). **CORU**, the regulator for health and SC professionals, protects the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence, through statutory registration of health and SC professionals. In Section 5 (19) of the *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers*, specific reference is made to the requirement for SC students to engage in PD:

Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of one’s own personal growth and development in order to engage in effective professional practice whilst developing the personal skills of self-care and self-awareness in the role. (Section 5:19)

QQI (2014) and CORU (2017) statutory educational requirements, as they specifically relate to PD, in the training and education of SCWs, is outlined in more detail in (Appendix 2) and (Appendix 3).

Of the 14 IOTs in Ireland, 13 IOTs are granted delegated authority (DA), enabling them to make their own awards within the scope of the authority as delegated by QQI. Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) has the authority to grant its own awards. Consequently, the IOTs have a responsibility to ensure that the programme content and delivery for each subject within the SC programme is relevant and meets with the required standards. However, there is a glaring gap in the knowledge with little evidence to assess the current position regarding PD in the higher education and training of SCWs. Therefore, I believe that this study is incredibly significant from an academic, professional and practical perspective. In this time of rapid change in Irish

society, this study has the potential to stimulate discourse and contribute to further research and development in SC education and training. It also has possibility of exerting a positive influence on both policy and practice in SCW and in the higher educational sector in Ireland. The following section provides a brief overview of each chapter as presented in the thesis.

Thesis structure

My research questions RQ1 and RQ2 require an understanding of SCW in Ireland and the forces that shaped it, therefore, Chapter 2 presents a historical overview of the evolution and development of SCW from ‘worker’ to ‘professional’ and deals with definitional issues. This overview explores legislation, regulation and, most importantly, the development of the education and training of SCWs in the Republic of Ireland. It outlines educational requirements for SC programmes, with an emphasis on PD. The chapter concludes by outlining the distinction between SCW and Social Work (SW) in Ireland.

Chapter 3 provides the reader with an overview of the key theoretical perspectives and discourses that underpin the study. The nature of PD is explored as it relates to SC education. PD group work is discussed, with special reference to student issues such as the motivation for entering SC employment, the impact of the care worker’s unresolved personal issues on service users and the prevention of stress, burnout, and mental health issues. The contested notion of drawing a line between PD and therapeutic work is examined.

Chapter 4 introduces the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this research. My position within the research is discussed, with emphasis on how my world view influenced the methodology for this study. The rationale for my choice of methodological approach and my research design are outlined. Procedures and ethical considerations are presented in relation to trustworthiness, quality and authenticity in qualitative research. Limitations associated with the approach are considered and discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study under the first of the four main themes that emerged from the data: *Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD*. The sub-themes (1) *A blurred and complex structure* (2) *The learning objectives of PD learning* (3) *Topics and themes in PD learning* and (4) *A range of theoretical perspectives* further explore and add to the description and meaning of the main theme.

Chapter 6 presents the findings under the second main theme: *The Process and Practice of PD learning* is outlined. The sub-themes (1) *Experiential group work*, (2) *Methods of assessment of PD learning* and (3) *Grading PD* further explore and add to the description and meaning of the main theme.

Chapter 7 presents the findings under the third main theme: *Profiling the SC Student*. The sub-themes (1) *The profile of the SC student*, (2) *The motivation to become a SCW* (3) *The link between PD and professional competency* and (4) *PD a catalyst in increasing student retention rates* further explore and add to the description and meaning of the main theme.

Chapter 8 presents the findings under the final main theme, *The Multi-layered Role of the PD Educator*. The sub-themes (1) *Walking the thin line*, (2) *Lack of therapeutic training*, (3) *A designated safe space for PD learning*, and (4) *The challenges and commitment of PD work* further explore and add to the description and meaning of the main theme.

Chapter 9 presents a discussion of the findings of the multiple case study analysis of PD in the higher education and training of SC students, from the perspective of 14 SC educators in 13 IOTs in Ireland. It includes an interpretation of the findings in relation to the existing literature and the current body of knowledge on the subject. Some unexpected findings are presented and discussed. The challenges of the study are addressed in relation to the interpretation of the findings and how they may impact of the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 10 contains the summary of the study, the recommendations, and the concluding comments. It highlights the study's original contribution to knowledge and the potential for future research. The wider implications of the study for policy and practice in SC training, other caring professions and allied health services are discussed. The recommendations resulting from the study are summarized and the chapter ends with some concluding comments.

Chapter 2: Historical Context

Introduction

As in most Western societies, Ireland has been greatly influenced by the advent of globalization, with significant social, economic and cultural changes occurring during the past three decades. The Celtic Tiger, peace in Northern Ireland, the disintegration of the authority of the Catholic Church and the creation of new social structures attaching to the new liberal social order are just some of the transforming influences on Irish society. These social changes have, for the most part, been welcomed in Irish society, however, the social problems that were generated during that time continue to affect some individuals in Irish society today, resulting in a sense of alienation, fear, uncertainty, and despair. These social changes have also affected the field of SC in Ireland. It has experienced much disquiet and confusion, as the impact of escalating social problems, budget constraints, structurally imposed goals, and the pressures of achieving targets and performance are imposed on the sector (Share, 2009). This chapter outlines the background and context for the study. It introduces the reader to the field of SCW in Ireland, it sketches its historical development and gives a brief overview of the legislation and regulations that have impacted on the evolution of the profession. It then charts the development of the education and training of SCWs in the Republic of Ireland and outlines the statutory educational requirements for SC educators, especially the requirement for PD training in the SC programme. The chapter concludes by outlining the distinction between SCW and SW in Ireland.

Social Care Work in Ireland

Following independence from Britain in 1922, child welfare provision was assigned by the Irish State to charitable and/or religious organizations, highlighting the close relationship between the Catholic Church and the State (Fanning and Rush, 2006). According to Graham (2011) this handover ensured that the provision of childcare “reflected a moralistic and patriarchal perspective which supported parental responsibility, strict policies on unmarried mothers and their children and on delinquent children” (p.11). Kennedy and Gallagher (1997) note that “Modern day social care work was born out of serious deficiencies in the running of children’s centres ... and the recognition of the need for professionally trained staff” (p.2). From the 1960s onwards, several influential reports (Appendix 1) criticised the system of residential childcare

that prevailed in Ireland and helped to shape the development of social care practice (Share and Lalor, 2009). The Tuairim Report (1966), *Some of our Children*, recommended that children in need of alternative care be cared for in “small mixed units of all age groups ... and the supervision exercised on the children ... Should be that of a reasonable parent, not a warder” (p.147). The Kennedy Report (1970), *Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report*, outlined the necessity to “place emphasis on the child’s needs to enable him to develop into maturity and to adjust himself satisfactorily to ... society” and stated that “The provision of trained staff should take precedence over any other recommendation” (p. 14). The Task Force of Child Care Services, *Final Report* (1980) acknowledged serious gaps in the residential care services that had not been filled in the wake of the Kennedy Report (p. 183). According to Howard (2010), the “Church and state, the two unquestioned pillars of Irish society criminally neglected the poorest and the most vulnerable children and failed in their duty of care” (p.12). There were three significant Child Abuse Reports: *The Ferns Report* (2005), an official Irish government inquiry into the allegations of clerical sexual abuse in the Irish Catholic diocese of Ferns; the *Ryan Report* (2009), detailing the abuse of children placed in institutional care in Ireland; and the *Dublin Archdiocese Commission of Investigation* (2009) on the handling by Church and State authorities of child sexual abuse by clerics over the period 1975 to 2004. These reports signalled a growing separation between Church and State and together with ongoing public scrutiny, contributed to the SC profession as it is known today (Howard, 2014).

The findings of the *Kennedy Report* specifically recommended, amongst other reforms, that child care staff, responsible for the care, training, mental and emotional development of children, should be fairly trained in the aspects of child care in which they are working (Courtney, 2012). *The Task Force Report on Child Care Services* (1980), was set up to review the implementation of the *Kennedy Report* (1970) recommendations and explicitly detailed the training needs of residential childcare workers:

Staff who work with children in residential centres require an expertise and a range of skills equivalent to those of other social workers; they require the same theoretical knowledge of social processes, of personal growth and development and of family dynamics and of the interaction of all of these. (p.402)

SCW education and training in Ireland

Following the *Kennedy Report* (1970) and *The Task Force Report on Child Care Services* (1980), the Kilkenny School of Social Education was established in 1971. According Courtney (2012), “Pat Brennan was appointed Director and set about putting his own innovative and unconventional pedagogical stamp on the curriculum which was individual student centred and educational process driven” (p.3). The course was essentially about the process of group formation, task definition, creating a value system, and behavioural studies. Most importantly, Courtney (2012) stated that “it is workers’ own self and insight that is the main tool in the work” (p.3). The course ran until 1981 and during the 10 years 200 students graduated from the programme.

The IOT sector in Ireland has its origins in the 1962 report, *Investment in Education*. The Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) were established in the 1970s and their principle function:

... to provide vocational and technical education and training for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the college ... (Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, s 5).

The title of IOT was conferred on each of the RTCs during the 1990s. There are currently 14 Institutes of Technology (IOTs) located throughout the 26 counties of Ireland, over the four geographical regions (Munster, Connaught, Leinster and Ulster) and spanning both urban and rural areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Geographical Locations of IOTs in Ireland.



The first Child Care Award, accredited by the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA), was awarded by the College of Catering, DIT in 1974, followed by a National Diploma in Child Care at Waterford Regional Technical College (RTC) in 1976 and Sligo RTC in 1979. By 2003 SC education and training was delivered principally in the IOT sector in Ireland and programmes specializing in SCW are currently offered in 13 of the 14 IOTs (IADT Dun Laoghaire being the exception) (Appendix 4). Courses are also provided in the Open Training College, Dublin (specializing in disability), Carlow College, Carlow and NUIG Galway (Courtney, 2012).

The professional qualification for SCW is a BA (Ordinary) level 7 degree in social care practice or applied social studies and is the required academic qualification to practise as a social care worker in Ireland (Courtney, 2012, Byrne-Lancaster, 2017). The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) devised *Social Care Awards Standards* (HETAC, 2010) to standardize the theoretical knowledge acquired by students. HETAC's functions were taken over by the Quality and Qualifications Framework (QQI) in 2012 and the *Social Care Awards Standards* (QQI, 2014) were republished without change (Byrne-Lancaster, 2017). DIT has authority to grants its own awards, while the other 13 IOTs have Delegated Authority (DA) to

grant degrees, diplomas and certificates which are validated by QQI. Postgraduate qualifications in SCW are increasing every year, with many students undertaking postgraduate studies (Lalor and Share, 2013). The typical SCW programme includes subjects such as psychology, sociology, principles of professional practice, social policy, law, creative arts (art, drama, music, dance, recreation), communication and research projects. Supervised professional practice placements, usually of several months' duration, occur over the course of the programme. (Share and Lalor, 2009). The education and training requirements for SCW are presented in the QQI *Award Standards – Social Care Work* (2014) and more recently in CORU (2017) *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers*.

Statutory Registration of SC Professionals in Ireland

The Report of the Expert Group on Various Health Professions (2000), the *Report of the Joint Committee on Social Care Professionals* (2002) and *Statutory Registration for Health and Social Care Professionals – Proposals on the Way Forward* (2000), laid the foundation for the ratification of the Social Care Professionals Act 2005, which in turn established the requirements for the Statutory Registration for Health and Social Care Professionals (SCI, 2018). CORU, set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), is Ireland's multi-profession health regulator and its role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training, and competence through statutory registration of health and SC professionals. It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in the 2005 Act.

In March 2015, the Minister for Health confirmed the appointment of members to the Social Care Workers Registration Board currently preparing for the registration of the profession. There was a shift in the title from 'worker' to 'professional' for SC staff, which staff had been seeking for many years. Education courses were also approved. It is anticipated that statutory registration of social care professionals will take place in 2018 (SCI, 2018). CORU's *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* and the *Standards of Proficiency for Entry to the Social Care Work Register* were launched on 31 May 2017 (CORU, 2017). Section 5 (19) specifically addresses the requirement for SC students to demonstrate and understand the importance of their personal growth and development. It very clearly and specifically points to the necessity for students to understand the importance of PD in their professional life and to develop and practise

the skills of self-care and self-awareness. The inclusion formally identifies the importance of PD in the training of SCWs, but to date little is known as to how this requirement is fulfilled, if at all, within the higher education and training of SCWs in Ireland. These statutory requirements will influence the education and training that SC students receive into the future. They oblige SC educators to provide the necessary facilities for students to engage in their emotional, personal, and social development. The educational process is required to incorporate the development of self-awareness, reflective practice, groupwork and experiential learning. Currently, it is not evident if, or how, these requirements for PD are being met in the 13 IOTs facilitating the education and training of SCWs in Ireland. This information deficit underpins the rationale for my investigation into the position of PD within the SC programmes in 13 IOTs in Ireland (Appendix 5). A qualitative multiple case study approach is employed for this study and semi-structured interviews are utilised to collect the data from the 14 SC educators across the 13 IOTs who are familiar with the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SC students. The data is further enhanced by programme documentation received from the 14 SC educators, the documents received from 13 IOTs, my case notes, my reflective journal entries, and web searches. The objective of this study is in ensuring the highest possible standards in the higher education and training of SC students in Ireland which in turn will ensure best practice and the safety, wellbeing and professional care of clients and service users in the Irish SC services. Unfortunately, the results of inadequate training in SC, especially in the area PD, can be seen from the very high-profile case of the abuse of SC clients as reported to the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and which is outlined in the next section.

Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) was established under the Health Care Act, 2007. It is an independent authority established to drive high-quality and safe care for people using our health and SC services in Ireland. HIQA's mandate to date extends across a specified range of public, private and voluntary sector services. Reporting to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, HIQA's role is to develop standards, inspect and review health and SC services and support informed decisions on how services are delivered (HIQA, 2018). One of the most high-profile cases on which it reported was Áras Attracta, a state-run care centre in Co. Mayo, which revealed evidence of physical and

psychological abuse of clients with an intellectual disability who were residents of the centre. The HIQA report (HIQA, 2018), which was based on 14 inspections from July 2015 to May 2017, raised issues with the institutional model of care and practice in Áras Attracta. It also highlighted safeguarding issues and lack of opportunities for the personal development and growth for residents in the centre. It pointed to the inappropriate, sometimes violent, behaviour of staff (some of whom were prosecuted and received custodial sentences) towards residents and raised important questions as to the adequacy of staff management and training. Regulatory measures were put in place to rectify these issues, but for the residents this was too late (RTÉ, 2014; *Irish Times* 2016; *The Journal*, 2017). Mulville (2014), an experienced SCW and educator, points out that SCW can be stressful and challenging and staff become tired and irritable at times; however, he maintains SC staff can become more effective in work by addressing their own needs, biases and issues and learn how to deal with them without becoming overly defensive when challenged by clients' issues. Behan (2014), another experienced SCW in residential care, maintains that to deal with a young person in care, the SCW needs to have the ability to empathize and understand while maintaining a professional balance. A SC educator, Kenefick (2006), stresses that lack of PD training for SCWs may lead to the worker becoming overwhelmed by strong emotions when dealing with clients expressing threatening behaviour and/or powerful emotions. She stresses that the objective of PD training is awareness: "an apprehended grasp of what the individual is doing as she is doing it" (p.217). From the foregoing, it can be concluded that SCWs need to be aware of the importance of personal insight and engaging in their own self-care to ensure best professional practice while maintaining empathy with clients. To understand how PD can facilitate students in acquiring the skills necessary to sustain them in their work, it is necessary to understand and define SCW.

Defining Social Care Work

In attempting to answer the question 'What is social care?' Share and McElwee (2005), in *Applied Social Care – An Introduction for Irish Students*, made the first attempt, by educators and practitioners in Ireland, to define and describe the practice of SC in Ireland. Subsequently, other texts such as *Social Care in Ireland: Theory, Policy and Practice* (O'Connor and Murphy, 2006); *Social Care Practice in Ireland – an integrated perspective* (McCann-James, de Róiste and McHugh, 2009); *Applied Social Care – An Introduction for Irish Students* (2nd ed), (Share

and Lalor, 2009); *Applied Social Care – An Introduction for Irish Students* (3rd ed), (Lalor and Share, 2013) and *Social Care – Learning from Practice* (Howard and Lyons, 2014) followed the first publication. A selection of definitions of SCW are outlined in Share and McElwee (2005), one of these offered by the JCSCP (The Joint Committee on SC Professionals) in 2001, describes SCW as:

the professional provision of care, protection, support, welfare and advocacy for vulnerable and dependent clients, individually or in groups. This is achieved through the planning and evaluation of individualized and group programmes of care, which are based on needs, identified where possible in consultation with the client and delivered through day-to-day shared life experiences. All interventions are based on established best practice and in-depth knowledge of life-span development. (p,3)

Social Care Ireland (SCI), the Professional Representative Body for the Social Care Workers Profession in the Republic of Ireland, states that:

Social Care Workers plan and provide professional care to vulnerable individuals and groups of all ages who experience marginalization, disadvantage or special needs. As well as protecting and advocating for such individuals and groups, Social Care Workers professionally guide, challenge and support those entrusted to their care toward achieving their fullest potential. Client groups are varied and include children and adolescents in residential care; young people in detention schools; people with intellectual or physical disabilities; people who are homeless; people with alcohol/drug dependency; families in the community; or older people. Social Care Workers is based on interpersonal relationships which require empathy, strong communication skills, self-awareness and an ability to use critical reflection. Teamwork and interdisciplinary work are also important in Social Care practice. (SCI, 2018)

Administrative and legal responsibility for most of the publicly delivered services now rests with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla and the state provision of SC services falls within the remit of the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Education and Skills. Social Care services in contemporary Ireland are delivered by a variety of public, for-profit, and non-profit agencies (Howard, 2014). All these definitions have as their core the support and care of vulnerable clients, in a variety of settings, to help them achieve their personal and social potential.

The Distinction between Social Care Work and Social Work in Ireland

Even though social care work and social work have developed along parallel paths, the role of social worker and social care worker are separate professions in the Republic of Ireland (Lalor and Share, 2013). SW is defined by the International Federation of Social Workers as:

... a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. (IFSW 2014)

Social Workers usually work in a managerial role in areas such as child protection, adoption and in the health and justice service. Social Workers work in a variety of settings, including hospitals, community care settings, mental health services, child and adolescent services, child protection and welfare settings. Social Workers rarely work alone but are often based in a social work or multi-disciplinary team. Their work includes managing residential child care placements, coordinating case review meetings, negotiating the termination of a placement and responding to child protection concerns in a given area (SCI, 2018; Lalor and Share, 2013).

The objective of social care work is to provide a caring, stable environment in which various social, educational and relationship interventions can take place (SCI, 2018; Lalor and Share, 2013). To achieve this social care workers, work in an immediate way with clients and interact across a range of care, domestic, education and semi-therapeutic settings to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of their vulnerable clients (SCI, 2018; Lalor and Share, 2013). Social care workers may work with children, families, older people, people experiencing mental, physical or sensory illness, people with disability, people experiencing domestic violence or drug/alcohol addiction, young offenders or ethnic groups (Gradireland, 2018).

Social Work is now a statutory registered profession in the Republic of Ireland. However, Social Care Work has yet to achieve statutory registry status (SCI, 2018). The education of social care workers is carried out predominantly in the IOT sector, with elements in the further education and private sectors, and is largely confined to Level 7 and Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) framework, whereas SW education and training is confined to the university sector. The differences in work orientation between the two professions are outlined in the following table (Table 2) as presented by Lalor and Share (2013).

Table 1. The Differences in Work Orientation Between Social Care Work and Social Work

SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL CARE WORK: ORIENTATIONS	
SOCIAL WORK	SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE
Orientation towards:	Orientation towards:
Social and community networks	Individual and interpersonal dynamics
Social problems	Human development
Organization and policies	People and relationships
Knowing about children and families	Living and working with children and families
A wide variety of societal groups and issues	Specific needs of particular groups
Problem solving	Helping and growth process
Gaining power and societal Influence	Gaining self-awareness and personal growth

Source: Lalor and Share (2013, p. 8)

According to Lalor and Share (2013), the distinction between social care work and social work is becoming increasingly blurred internationally, with social work practice varying from country to country. In the United Kingdom ‘social care’ is an umbrella term incorporating social work and social caring activities and can include professional and unprofessional work (p. 8). As already stated, there is little literature available on the topic of PD in the training of SCWs in Ireland. However, the topic of PD has been explored in the UK and elsewhere, though mainly in the context of SW. Therefore, the material gathered for this study includes material in respect of both SW and SCW.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces the reader to the SC profession, charting its evolution and development from the beginnings of the State through to the present day. It highlights some significant changes in the profession from the provision of childcare in the 1960s to the imminent professional statutory registration which has resulted in a shift in the title from ‘worker’ to ‘professional’. The statutory educational requirements for SC education and training are outlined with specific reference to the requirement for PD in the training of SCWs. The adverse

effects of inadequate training, especially in PD, are highlighted. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the distinction between SW and SCW in Ireland.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with a synopsis of the key theoretical approaches and discourses that have informed the study. The nature of PD is explored in general and specifically as it relates to SC education. The issues that are addressed in PD group work are discussed, with special reference to the motivation for entering SCW, the impact of unresolved personal issues on client work and the prevention of stress, burnout and mental health issues. The contested notion of where the line is drawn between PD and therapy is examined and finally the concept of the PD experiential groupwork is explored.

PD is a process which is embedded in the field of therapeutic education. It integrates both the emotional and academic aspects of self-development and promotes learning processes which are focused on ‘the self’, ‘the personal’ ‘the emotions’ and ‘relationship’. It is sometimes viewed with suspicion and frowned upon as being a non-academic subject. Little research has been undertaken as to its usefulness or otherwise in the context of educational settings or most importantly in the higher education and training of SCWs in Ireland. This qualitative multiple case study addresses this gap in the knowledge by interviewing 14 SC educators who are experienced in the area of PD in SC higher education in the 13 IOTs in Ireland. The proceeding chapter introduced the reader to the SCW profession in Ireland, charting its historical context, the impact of legislation and regulation on its development and the evolution of SCW education and training. Based on the research questions, this chapter provides the reader with a review of the literature and the key theoretical approaches and discourses that informed the study. A critical and systematic exploration of the relevant databases, such as ProQuest, Social Sciences Citation Index and Social Care Online, sourced primarily through the University of Sheffield’s Star Plus Library Catalogue, proved crucial in the location of publications relevant to my investigation. I critically examined these publications and documented the contributions and themes I wished to include in my literature review and eliminated those findings which I determined unsuitable for the purpose of my study.

My literature review opens with a discussion on the complex nature of PD, outlining its main theoretical underpinnings and conceptualisations as interpreted by the main researchers in the field. I then examine the challenges inherent in defining this somewhat complex and vague concept. Next, I outline the reasons why I approach my study from the existential humanistic psychological viewpoint. I conclude this section with a critical analysis of the concepts of therapeutic culture and therapeutic education which underpin the theoretical framework of my study. The next section examines the purpose of including PD in the higher education and training of SCW's which incorporates the critical and fundamental skills of developing self-awareness and fostering emotional regulation. Taking a more critical turn, I examine the debate which questions the point at which psychological support provided by SCW's overlaps or becomes counselling. The next section progresses with an investigation into the practice of PD in SC higher education and training. The process of PD experiential group work is defined, the role of the group work facilitator is explored, and skills development are examined. Next, the distinction between PD group work and group therapy is investigated. Finally, this chapter concludes with a review of a previous study undertaken in 2007 on self-training in SC training in Ireland.

The nature of PD

There are many ways of approaching of the concept of 'PD', depending on the slant one takes – academic, philosophical, religious or theoretical. Theoretical underpinnings in this subject are wide and varied. Lifespan developmental theorists see human beings as 'becoming' throughout life. Rogers (1961) puts forward the notion of the fully functioning person, Erikson's (1965) theory of personality is based on life span development, and Maslow (1970) explores the concept of the self-actualising person. The study of personal identity is hugely debated in the humanities and social sciences. Goffman (1959) is widely acclaimed for his work on the social construction of self; Winnicott (1971) explores the idea of true and false selves, and Assagioli (1975) advances the theory of the transpersonal self. Freud's (1923) psychodynamic theory on personality is far reaching, Allport, (1937) looks at two ways of studying personality, and Rowen (1990) proposes the idea that human beings are more than a single personality and are composed of several sub-personalities. Skinner (1938), a behaviourist, outlines the theory of operant conditioning, explaining personality from the perspective of learning, and Bandura (1986), also a

behaviourist, shows in his social cognitive theory how observational learning is important. Therefore, mindful of the substantial amount of literature available on the concept of PD, my research is positioned, principally, within the theoretical perspective of humanistic lifespan development. As my research question was ignited by my interest in the concept of therapeutic culture, my study is set within the context of therapeutic education. I begin this chapter by exploring this concept of therapeutic culture.

Therapeutic culture

The concept of *therapeutic culture* first came into sociological interest and documentation in the 1950s when sociologists became concerned with the rise of what they termed a therapeutic culture. They feared therapeutic practice was moving out of the counselling room and into society, giving rise to therapeutic ways of thinking outside of the traditional psychological spaces. They considered this move to be detrimental and a destructive force in society (Madsen (2014). Rieff (1966) believed that therapeutic thinking promoted a type of psychology of self-centeredness in human beings which turned them inwards, away from the external challenges in life. Lasch (1980) condemned the new therapeutic ethos which promoted, as he saw it, a culture of narcissism within society and Nolan (1998) argued that the United States was becoming increasingly a therapeutic state, supporting government sponsored educational therapeutic programmes which he perceived to be an intrusion into education. Furedi (2004) saw the influence of therapeutic culture as ‘a formidable cultural force’ resulting in the opening of private life to therapeutic scrutiny, the promotion of self-limitation and a diminished sense of self. He feared its influence would begin to dominate the public’s system of meaning and overwhelm other more traditional codes of meaning, which in turn would have an impact on education, the justice system, welfare services, political life and the field of medicine (p. 17). Therapeutic culture that focused on the self, the personal, the subjective and the interior lives of people was criticised for its apparent neglect of the external political, social, historical and economic cultures (Swan, 2010). So, began a culture of fear and mistrust of ‘the therapeutic’, and this suspicion is evident in several publications, one of which contemplates the negative influence of the therapeutic in education.

Therapeutic Education

Drawing on Furedi's work, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009), in *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*, focus on the therapeutic effect on education. They define therapeutic education as "any activity that focuses on perceived emotional problems and which aims to make educational content and learning processes more emotionally engaging" (p. x). They fear its rise because they believe it promotes "a life focused on the self and self-fulfilment rather than with understanding and changing the world" (p.164). Since it favours the emotions over reason, they do not consider it a subject, not "in the sense of an intellectual discipline" (p.153–154). They claim students are increasingly subjected to teachers, counsellors, administrators and other students encouraging them to admit that they are fragile, uncertain and emotionally damaged, leading to the cultivation of a "diminished self" (p.143). This sentiment is also expressed by VI (2009), who displays a growing concern that education, especially in the UK, is being adversely influenced by therapeutic culture. However, Smith (2002) holds the opposite view and suggests educators may need to take a broader view on learning, personal identity, motivation and other related matters and begin to appreciate education's connections with therapy. Hyland (2009) states that education, which is concerned with acquiring knowledge and skills, must surely incorporate an element of PD.

So, what is therapeutic education? It can mean different things to different people depending on their underlying philosophy of life or theoretical leanings. Rogers (1961), Gardner (1993), Goleman (1996) and Kagan (2007), believe therapeutic education draws attention to an intimate connection between emotional and cognitive understanding and highlights the importance of the social, the emotions and the affective in education. Lang (1998), reporting on personal and social education in a European context, defines therapeutic or affective education as that part of the educational process that incorporates both the affective and cognitive dimensions of education, concerns itself with the social experience and PD of students, their self-esteem, their attitudes, feelings, beliefs, emotions, their interpersonal relationships and social skills (p.5). The problem, however, according to Owen-Smith (2004), is that many teachers, have been socialized to value the cognitive over and above the affective (Owen-Smith, 2004). This is also a sentiment echoed by Beard et al., (2007), who note that higher education, which has traditionally presented itself as being concerned with the development of the intellect, can be suspicious of

conceptualizing students in relation to the affective and to focus on students as feeling, embodied and socially located persons. Cornwall and Walter (2006) define therapeutic education as one providing a humanistic approach to schooling based on student-centred teaching (Rogers), self-actualisation (Maslow), personality construction (Kelly) and self-efficacy which encompasses self-belief, self-regulation and self-reflection (Bandura) (p.7-9). They claim that therapeutic education seeks to be holistic, encourages agency and responsibility and makes school life more meaningful and enjoyable by focusing on well-being, PD, supporting growth in self-confidence, self-esteem, interpersonal relations and study skills (p.49-64). Undertaking a single case study whereby they applied the principles of therapeutic education to an educational setting for pupils who were troubled. Teachers were encouraged to apply ‘therapeutic’ insights to their school relationships. The results demonstrated that students responded very well to the integration of both affective and cognitive dimensions in their educational processes and the study produced some very positive results. They conclude that therapeutic education is not limited to individual and disempowering interventions, such as those criticized by Ecclestone (2009) but is characterized by a whole set of commitments to organizational change and most importantly a holistic view of the learner. They clearly support the notion of integrating social and emotional factors into learning and advocate the usefulness and necessity of a therapeutic education perspective in the educational process. However, they concede that therapeutic education has not been fully established in terms of academic research (p.14–15).

PD is a process that is embedded in the field of therapeutic education, integrating both the emotional and academic aspects of self-development and promoting learning processes which are focused on ‘the self’, ‘the personal’ ‘the emotions’ and ‘relationship’. It is sometimes viewed with suspicion and frowned upon as being a non-academic subject. Little research has been undertaken as to its usefulness or otherwise in the context of educational settings or most importantly in the higher education and training of SCWs in Ireland. This qualitative multiple case study addresses this gap in the knowledge by interviewing 14 SC educators who are experienced in the area of PD in SC education in the 13 IoTs in Ireland. The following sections of this literature review attempt to deal with these issues, beginning with an exploration of the concept of PD.

Defining Personal Development

PD, according to Rogers (1961), is an essential element in an individual's effort to fulfil his or her potential in life. However, despite being acknowledged as important, especially in therapeutic practice, Donati and Watts (2005) claim that the concept of 'PD' remains a poorly defined area of training and is "endowed with numerous implicit meanings" (p. 475). Hall et al. (1999) state that it remains "obscure" and "poorly articulated" (p. 99), and Williams and Irving (1996) insist it is an "ill defined" and "poorly specified" area of training "that suffers from a surprising scarcity of literature" (p.171). This lack of clarity contributes to conceptual blurriness as well as ethical and practical concerns for trainers and trainees (Williams and Irving, 1996). Swan (2010), in her text, *Worked Up Selves – PD Workers, Self-Work and Therapeutic Cultures*, proclaims that PD has much in common with counselling and therapy but considers it to be more "hybrid" in its source of ideas and encountered in a broader range of places (p.13). Acknowledging the difficulty in defining the concept, Swan (2010) attempts to provide a definition:

PD is concerned with techniques and pedagogics which help people become more effective at work, or at home or in personal relations through focusing on emotional, psychological and behavioural knowledge and techniques. (p.13)

George and Thomas (2016) define PD as a process that helps individuals to increase awareness of their own self and that of others. Irving and Williams (1999) make the distinction between PD and personal growth, where PD is a purposeful activity that can be planned and structured, and is focused on the development of specifiable skills, aptitudes and qualities, where goals can be specified and monitored and the effects positive or negative. Personal growth, on the other hand, they claim, is an incidental and organic process that cannot be planned and may occur or may not occur because of PD (Irving and Williams, 1999). Because of the lack of coherence in relation to the content or practices of PD, Swan (2010) feels it is better to understand PD in terms of its aims and aspirations, which are underpinned, she says, by the idea that the self can be changed psychologically and behaviourally to improve experiences. It incorporates a range of approaches for thinking about and intervening in the self and its experiences and its relations with others. She also claims that:

Unlike traditional mental health or counselling practices, PD does not claim to help people with mental health problems but instead to support people to get more out of life by focusing on the emotional, psychological and behavioural knowledge and using an eclectic mix of techniques and pedagogics. (p.16)

Egan (2002), in his text *The Skilled Helper*, discusses the importance, for those in the helping professions, of engaging in ongoing ‘PD’ and concludes that self-knowledge which he describes as a psychological and a human understanding of others, an understanding of cultural conditioning, the guts to make mistakes and the sense to learn from them and ‘meta-thinking’ are essential attributes for anyone in the caring profession. Nonetheless, he goes on to state that PD is not acquired without effort and commitment and for the most part each ‘PD’ programme is a challenging experience involving much critical thinking and reflective practice. Lalor and Share (2013) suggests that the main role of the SCW involves working “*alongside* service users to maximise their growth and development”; this, of course, presupposes that the SC students are facilitated to engage in their own personal growth and development while in training (p.18).

Personal Development in SC Education

SCWs are employed in many roles in the statutory sector, non-statutory sector, community-based organizations and the private sector and their work is very challenging (Lalor and Share, 2013). SCI (Social Care Ireland) is the professional SC representative body for SCWs profession and it describes the SC client base as ‘vulnerable individuals and groups of all ages who experience marginalization, disadvantage or special needs’ (SCI, 2018). The core function of SCW is the building and sustaining of interpersonal relationships with clients and involves, among other things, attending to their emotional health and wellbeing and facilitating their personal growth and development. Lalor and Share (2013), in their text *Applied SC – An Introduction for Students in Ireland*, state that “Social care practice is manifestly a helping profession where “the self” is the “toolbox” in SC practice” (p.6–7) and describe the essence of SCW as being:

... based on interpersonal relationships which require empathy, strong communication skills, self-awareness and ability to use critical reflection ... and empowerment of clients to reach their full potential. (p.6-7)

Cooper (2012) maintains that social work provides service users with a relationship to support them in handling personal, family or community problems or conflicts and therefore asserts social work practice must have the use of self at its core. Kennefick (2006), writing about the

concept of PD in the training of SCWs in Ireland, says that “the self” not a static object, but a fluid process which is more usefully conceptualised as ‘a meaning-making process’ by an individual, influenced by other people, personal circumstances, life events, choices, actions, values and beliefs (p.215). Burkitt (2008) echoes this view and refers to “this core self that is never entirely sure of itself, never completed, always in the process of some degree of change, and open to the possibility of reconstruction”. It is, he says, influenced by social worlds, relationships, dispositions, tastes, interests and desires which guide, influence and shape choices and actions (p.190). The use of self in social work practice, according to Dewane (2006), is the combining of knowledge, values and skills gained in social work education with aspects of one’s personal self, including personality traits, belief systems, life experiences and cultural heritage. PD gives SC students the opportunity to explore ‘the self’ in relation to the work they are about to undertake with clients; it allows them the chance to examine any block, prejudices, blind spots and/or sedimented beliefs they may be holding that would prevent them entering an ethical and meaningful relationship with their clients. It affords them the space to reflect on any personal issues that may impede professional practice (Kennefick, 2006; Lyons, 2010). However, echoing sentiments evident in the critique of therapeutic culture, (Shaw 1974) suggests that concepts like the self, self-concept, self-esteem and self-actualisation within social work may be practising a form of narcissism or self-actualisation. He has a ‘concern with self-development’ when conceptions of the self, become an objectified and commodified continual process of improvement. However, he concludes there is nothing intrinsically or ethically wrong with “constructive self-concern”. (p.102). The understanding and knowledge of how ‘we are’ as people underpins the relationships SC practitioners have with those, they work with in the SC profession (Meenan, 2005). But it has been said that human beings have the propensity to endure anything in the world except a clear, complete, fully conscious view of themselves. In other words, people are at times fearful of delving into the unknown, especially in personal awareness (Egan, 1973). Fleming and Benedek (1983) state that to facilitate the process and purposes of personal analysis, students need to be provided with situations and experiences in which their own experience becomes an object of study. This process, they claim, helps students to learn from their own experience, value self-reflection, and understand the difference between empathy and sympathy and the necessity of maintaining boundaries. This process in turn enables them to anchor the phenomena of experience in the cognitive framework of concepts and

theory (p.241). Rogers (1961) emphasizes the necessity for the helper to engage their own personal growth and development before they attempt to enter the helping relationship. He claims that the degree to which the helper has engaged in their own personal growth and development is in direct proportion to their ability to create relationships which facilitate the growth of others. The process PD has the potential to lead to an increased level of self-awareness which can assist SCWs when dealing with the distressed feelings of clients in this challenging work.

Developing Self-awareness

Much of the expertise of social care work is in the knowledge of how people change and develop over time (Share and McElwee, 2005). It is evident from the foregoing that the development of self-awareness is critical for SCWs as they support clients in working through change and assist them with problems and difficulties. However, the development of self-awareness is a skill that must be acquired. Self-awareness is defined by Goleman et al. (2013) as “having a deep understanding of one’s emotions, as well as one’s strengths and limitations and one’s values and motives” (p.40). Taylor (2002) refers to the process of self-awareness or self-development as learning and becoming aware of aspects of the self. The emphasis on PD work, especially in the training of counsellors, is founded upon the notion that the counsellor needs to have attained a high degree of psychological health and self-awareness to support and help another individual (Sinason, 1999). Lyons (2013), writing about SC practice in Ireland, identifies the concept of self-awareness as “the process of looking at yourself with the hope of learning something that might benefit you as a person, and help you as a practitioner” (p.98). According to Clarke et al (2007), social workers help their clients through change, but before they embark on this work, they need to examine their own reaction to personal change and the process of developing self-awareness. This, she declares, is a “fundamental factor in determining reaction to change” and a key to “recognize stressful circumstances” (p.202–203). Rose (2008) understands self-awareness to be at the core of relationship building:

How we are as people affects the relationships, we have with those we work with and those who are open to engaging in the process of PD recognise the need to know as much as they can about themselves and how they are in relationship with others. (p.1)

The process of developing self-awareness is outlined by Bayne et al. (1996) in a simple model that distinguishes between three inter-related components: (1) inner self-awareness of thoughts, emotions, intuitions, sensations; (2) self-knowledge, which refers to the more stable aspects of inner self-awareness, such as personality traits, personal values, attitudes and interests; and (3) outer self-awareness, which concerns an individual's awareness of their own behaviour and how they are perceived by others (p.136).

Regulations of emotions (inner self-awareness)

Educators need richer conceptions of students as affective and embodied selves and a clearer theorization of the role of emotion in educational encounters. Unfortunately, these areas are currently under-researched and under-theorized in higher education (Beard et al., 2007).

Kennefick (2006) points out that the intra-personal (internal processing and reflection) of thoughts, feelings and behaviours together with an interpersonal focus (authentic relating with another) are both essential in the education and training of social care workers, as both incorporate the regulation of emotions, which is a crucial requirement, especially if the social care worker “is to feel comfortable with clients experiencing strong feelings” (p.218).

Humphreys and Ruddle (2010) emphasize the importance of regulating feelings or emotions in negotiating life and especially in the helping professions, which they say are “the most accurate barometer” for gauging well-being (p.73). Nilsson (2014) maintains that those who lack in their emotional regulatory abilities are more vulnerable to personal distress. Barnard (2012) also emphasizes the centrality of emotions, care, communication, interpretation, dialogue and being with the other in providing “a unity of hand, head and heart rather than a detached atomistic rational agent or an anti-intellectual practitioner” (p.114). When professionals take account of the affective as well as the cognitive, they are far more balanced and, therefore, more effective in relationship and work (p.87). This opinion is echoed by Gaffney (2011) in her text *Flourishing*, when she writes that to flourish every individual requires connectivity, or what is called psychological “attunement”, a sensitivity to what is going on inside yourself, being attuned to others and aware of unfolding events. She claims that when an individual is attuned, aware of thoughts, feelings, and motivation, it is easier to take possession of yourself, to *compose* yourself when internally attuned; it is easier relate with others and engage with them in a more effective and creative way (p.8–9). Daniel Goleman's (1995) text *Emotional Intelligence – Why It Can*

Matter More Than IQ, maintained the notion of explicitly teaching and learning emotional literacy both in educational settings and the workplace. The term emotional intelligence has been defined as:

The ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion, the ability to access and/or generate feelings which facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (p.10)

Richards et al. (2009), in their text *Emotion – New Psychosocial Perspectives*, examine different ways in which emotion provides a psychosocial bridge between the inner and outer worlds, but say that a “substantial criticism of the psychosocial project is that it is simply another manifestation of “therapeutic culture”, a development that has often been seen in negative terms” (p.246).

Blind-spots (self-knowledge)

According to Egan (2002), problems in the caring profession are sometimes caused by care workers having ‘blind spots’ around certain issues – dysfunctional ways of thinking in which they are unaware of the problem or choose to ignore it. These “blind spots are self-limiting for the carer but may also affect or have the potential to affect clients” lives substantially (p.179). The task for carers, he outlines, is to identify blind spots by becoming more self-aware and to transform them into new perspectives that lead them to becoming more socially and emotionally competent. According to Humphreys and Ruddle (2010), anyone who does not possess a solid interiority or is not in that mature place will either unconsciously project onto others, blaming the world for what he feels, thinks, says and does, or introject blame himself for what arises in him and what others do to him (p.5).

Boundaries (outer self-awareness)

Creating healthy boundaries in relationships enables an individual to hold that solid interiority, but setting boundaries is a proactive and dynamic process rather than a reactive process. It promotes connection and the use of self and involves taking responsibility for the self and for one’s actions (O’Leary, Tsui and Ruch, 2013). Working with vulnerable people is both personally and professionally challenging, according to Lyons (2013), and she advises the social care student to begin training by becoming self-aware before beginning to learn how to work

with others (p.98). The first piece of self-awareness may indeed include a piece of self-reflection on their motivation for entering the SC profession.

Motivation to become a SCW

The question is often asked as to what motivates a student to enter SCW? Why do they feel drawn to this challenging profession? The usual answer is to help other people. However, Cree (1996) delved deeper into this question when he examined the motivation of students entering social work training and found that having a family background in public or social service, life circumstances that included experiences of loss, illness or disability, and other motivations including a caring vocation, the provision of social justice and making a difference (as in trying to change the system) were motivating factors in choosing SC as a profession. Gender differences were also noted, with men entering social work because of the career prospects and women because of the caring qualities required for the work. However, in a further analysis, he points to some students entering social work as an attempt to resolve issues related to background and upbringing and others who identified themselves as having been victims of discrimination and now wishing to challenge discrimination and the impact of poverty, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability on service users (p.5). Rochford (2007) also speaks of the ‘wounded helper’, emphasizing the experience of loss as a motivating factor for entering social work. However, he cautions that “students with a powerful desire to help, but whose life events have swamped them with feelings may be amplified by experiences and feelings of clients, raising the potential problems of counter-transference which has its value but also its dangers” (p.239).

The potential risk for the student social worker to be influenced by his or her own needs rather than by those of users of services is a real one and needs to be addressed (p.236). While it is not the task of the academic institution to heal the student, there is the potential for students, who are resilient despite their life circumstances, to be facilitated to work with feelings and to make them available for the task of turning self, client, theory and practice into a functioning whole (p.239). If this work is not completed, then there is a risk of stress, burnout or compassion fatigue.

Stress and Burnout

CORU (2012) Code of Ethics requires its members to maintain high standards of personal conduct (p.9). Irish social care educators are required to create an environment in which students are prepared both professionally and personally to enter a profession which is being redefined and changing rapidly (Kennefick, 2006). Many SCWs enter the field with an innate desire to help their chosen population (Wilson, 2016); nonetheless, Dodds-Schumacher (2004) cautions that without a strong sense of identity and developing ways of sustaining themselves over time, social workers run the risk of succumbing to severe stressors or eventual burnout. According to Newell and MacNeill (2010), “the single largest risk factor for developing professional burnout is human service work in general” (p.59). Over the past 20 years, research has identified several potential adverse consequences affecting the health and well-being of professionals who provide caring work, these include compassion fatigue, burnout, moral distress and vicarious traumatization (Figley, 1995, Sabo, 2011). Figley (2002) and Stamm (1999) recommend that those working in the helping professions, human services and other professionals pay strict attention to their own personal, familial, emotional and spiritual needs while responding to the demands and needs placed on them by the people they support. Skovholt (2001) describes burnout very aptly as “a haemorrhaging of the self” rendering helpers, who are both physically and emotionally depleted, with little to give to others, and says this “may contribute to the suffering of their clients rather than alleviating it” (p.106). A contributing factor to stress and burnout in social care work is prosocial motivation, where the social care worker performs the caring or helping work because of a desire to maintain or enhance the well-being of others (Grant, 2008; Grant & Berry, 2011). However, while this is a very commendable reason, sometimes workers may be at risk of becoming enmeshed, entangled or identifying too closely with the job and less likely to develop a healthy distance from the interactional stresses of the work (Maslach et al., 2001; Hochschild, 1983; Erikson and Ritter, 2001). Rochford (2007) claims that the potential for blurring boundaries or ‘acting out on SC clients’ issues is very clear. He encourages the student to engage in a process of self-reflection to gain understanding and to empathize with service users’ experiences. One of the most essential capabilities for social workers, he claims, and one that needs to be considered when determining suitability for social

work, is the ability of social workers to separate their own personal experiences in life, such as loss, poverty, ethnicity and disability from those of their clients. Reflective practice helps the social worker to “become aware of any denial, avoidance or blind spots and guides them towards a professional response of listening actively and empathically to the service user” (p.237–238).

Resilience and Emotional Regulation

Genuineness, concern for others and empathy are characteristics used to describe the professional social care worker (Wilson, 2016). Empathy is a multi-dimensional process involving cognitive and affective components of understanding and identifying with thoughts, feelings, and emotional states of others (Batson, 2011; Gibbons, 2011). It is a critical skill in the ability to successfully navigate personal relationships and create and maintain social relationships (de Waal, 2010), and is an essential skill in social care work (Gerdes and Segal, 2011). In the last decades, however, some researchers have pointed to a potential danger with empathy and compassion because the social worker may feel too much empathy or too much compassion for their clients and subsequently fall victim to compassion fatigue (Radey and Figley, 2007). Consequently, there is an increased emphasis placed on resilience, with its links to emotional and social competencies, as a means of protecting workers (Bonnano, 2004; Grant and Kinman, 2012; Kinman and Grant, 2011; Morrison, 2007). Resilience and emotional regulation are essential skills that can be learned and honed through training. However, Rajan-Rankin (2014) points out that while resilience has been prioritized as an essential skill for social workers, far less is known about the process by which students learn to manage and regulate their emotions. One of the most effective and efficient ways of facilitating social care students in the development of emotional regulation and the prevention of stress, burnout and compassion fatigue is through the process and practice of personal development (Corey and Schneider Corey, 2002). However, it has not been clearly defined as to how this process of self-development and self-awareness is facilitated in the education and training of SCWs in Ireland.

The ‘Therapeutic Alliance’ in Social Care Work

Kenefick (2006) believes PD in social care education and training in Ireland requires urgent attention. She states that knowledge of ‘the self’ is vital in effectively facilitating the development of SCWs’ clients and in maintaining professional boundaries. She argues that

while personal development is a legitimate, essential and accepted part of ongoing professional development in psychotherapy training, it has been less clearly defined why social care workers, who have access to a large part of their clients' lives, especially in residential care settings, should undergo similar training. This is borne out by Mulville (2014), as he describes various care settings in which SCWs in Ireland operate

The children and young people who are cared for in various care settings by social care workers have been dreadfully hurt, neglected or both. The experience of abuse can be physical, sexual, being uncared for, taunted, traumatised by seeing important people to them being hurt, being blamed or held responsible for all that was going wrong for the adults in their lives. (p.119)

They are in contact with residents in an ongoing, intimate level through the day and night, and are often required to hold and contain powerful and distressing emotions when they arise (Behan, 2014). Social care work can be difficult and very painful at times and, according to Lyons (2010), is unmistakably a helping profession where care and support involves the provision of physical and psychological supports to clients. But Byrne (2013) questions the point at which the psychological support provided by the social care work overlaps into or becomes counselling. This is not a very easy question to answer, as there are no black and white answers, but he suggests the overlap appears to be in the provision of "therapeutic care" by the social care worker (p.137). 'Psychotherapy', Byrne (2013) explains, is derived from the Greek work *therapeia*, meaning healing, and the term 'therapeutic' is used in social care work, in the sense of work relating to psychological healing (rather than physical) (p.136). Kennefick (2006) points to a growing association between therapeutic care and social care in recent years, where therapeutic care is achieved through positive, safe, healing relationships and experiences. Share and Lalor (2009) also draw attention to the fact that social care "places an emphasis on therapeutic work, but not in the context of more formal counselling" (p.11). The distinction between psychotherapy, counselling, therapeutic care and active listening is not straightforward, and it is not entirely clear when a supportive conversation becomes counselling or when counselling becomes psychotherapy. Nelson Jones (2005) points to the similarities between counselling and psychotherapy, highlighting that they are both underpinned by the same theoretical models, both person-centred and both foster the capacity for self-help and responsibility (p.5). McLeod (1993) agrees they are similar, but also detects a clear distinction between them. Psychotherapy, he maintains, is provided by practitioners who are usually highly trained specialist professionals

and work with more disturbed clients, over longer periods and on deeper, more involved processes. Counselling, on the other hand, he claims, can be conducted by non-professional volunteer workers. Moss (2008), writing about communication skills for health and social care workers, places counselling on a continuum with ‘in-depth psychological interviewing’ on one end of the continuum and ‘active listening skills’ on the other end, which, he says, are “the common denominator of all people work” (p.73). Not every social client needs in-depth psychological support, according to Byrne (2013), however others may present in extreme crisis and need intensive support to help them cope with daily life;

Social care practitioners do not tend to engage in ‘deep psychological interviewing’ but they do provide clients with a safe, informal, and confidential space where they can give healing attention to issues that are of concern to them in their lives. This ‘healing/holding’ space is where, he believes, is where SC is therapeutic and where it meets and becomes a form of quasi-counselling. (p.137)

Behan (2014) also perceives the therapeutic relationship as a worthwhile element of social care work:

I have come to believe that one of the most valuable tools for this work is the therapeutic relationship. If the holding environment is the sea on which the healing takes place, the therapeutic relationship is the vessel in which it occurs. (p.163)

Mulville (2014) is of a similar opinion when he says of SCWs:

We are all working as therapists/healers of some sort and use relationship as one of the means to help young people grow through distress and realise their dreams. If we clutter up these relationships with our own pain and with the way in which we defend ourselves, we may be blocking the healing we seek to offer. (p.123)

“The significance of identifying the therapeutic role of the care work is that it has implications, in both training and practice, for the extent to which the worker should be required to engage in a process of personal therapy” and the social care student’s engagement with PD while in training (p. 234). Brearley (1995) acknowledges the tensions that exist amongst commentators regarding the rightful place of counselling in social work and Booyen and Stanifort (2017) more recently have commented on the contentious nature of the role of counselling in social work. Considering that practical counselling active listening skills are undertaken as part of the social care work education and training programme, the question needs to be asked: is the opportunity afforded to SC students in training who, though not counsellors, will undertake ‘therapeutic care’ for their

clients to engage in PD work to facilitate, among other things, the exploration of ‘the use of self’ within their SCW? The question remains open and a wide gap in current knowledge in this area exists. This study addresses the gap in that knowledge.

The Practice of PD group work

Drawing the Line

Where, if at all, is the line between the PD group work and the therapy group? Rose (2008) wonders if it is possible to draw a line between them at all, “if a PD group can go “too deep” and stray into the territory of therapy or is there very little difference between the two?” (p.10). She investigates the differences and similarities between them, and the first difference she observes is that when members of the therapy group come together, they acknowledge they need help, whereas the members of the PD group come together, not because they need help, but because they want to help. She then points out that there is an assumption that the PD student is more psychologically robust, with more personal resources, thereby requiring less nurture or containment, and therefore there is less responsibility for the student’s psychological well-being than is the case for a group psychotherapist for a patient/client in the health service. Another difference between the therapy group and the PD group, she maintains, is that the student is usually engaging in a group in an educational context and will be assessed, which is an important aspect of the PD group that is not the case for the therapy group. The PD group has members who interact continually, seeing each other in class, seminars, work groups and practical sessions, and meeting up socially, which does not happen for the group therapy member. The group therapy client requires some sense of being contained for therapeutic change to occur, whereas the PD group, being sharply defined, requires less containment (Rose, 2008) In the end, according to Rose (2008), both types of group rest upon the mutual and meaningful relationships that the members build in the process of the group’s existence and both must take responsibility for their own behaviour and the impact that they have on others. PD students gain an enormous amount of self-knowledge in the supportive and challenging environments of training courses, and therefore the outcome might look very hard to distinguish from that of therapy (p.10–12). Yalom and Leszcz (2005) highlight the importance of participating in a group by stating that it provides students with an opportunity to:

Learn at an emotional level what you may previously have known only intellectually. You experience the power of the group-power to both wound and to heal. You learn how important it is to be accepted by the group; what self-disclosure really entails; how difficult it is to reveal your secret world, our fantasies, feelings of vulnerability, hostility, and tenderness. (p.553)

Dryden et al. (1995) indicate the group's usefulness in identifying and resolving blind spots:

The PD group ... is also a vibrant context for identifying PD needs. If an atmosphere of trust and spirit of encounter can be developed in the group, the members can help each other identify needs which otherwise have been blind spots. (p.98–100)

Participating in a group provides a powerful learning experience that integrates intellectual understanding (cognitive empathy) with emotional awareness (affective empathy) which, according to Ohrt, Robinson and Hagedorn (2013), provides students with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of their future clients' experiences and may support them, as potential future group facilitators, in relating and empathizing with clients (p.32). However, creating a designated space in the timetable and placing students together in a group with the task of "personally developing" may be a first step, says Rose (2008), but it does not guarantee the desired outcome, as "coherent and transparent policies about the relationship of the group to the course and its role in assessment" need to be established before the group commences if the group is to be a place where students are given the opportunity to learn about themselves and others (p.2). Payne (2004) states that in general, PD groups are non-directive, closed and aim to "offer opportunities for reflection on interactions and other important learning of counsellor [therapist] skills and processes" (p.511). Corey and Schneider Corey (2002) describe the psychoeducational group as facilitating the PD of individuals who are psychologically robust and relatively well-functioning but who may have an information deficit in a certain area of their lives. The aim of the psychoeducational group "is to prevent an array of educational deficits and psychological problems". The groupwork facilitates learning by imparting, discussing, and integrating old information with new information and incorporating planned skill-building exercises (p.15). They advocate the use of a PD group based on a phenomenological approach, which provides a 'meaning making' exercise, based on the thinking, feeling and behaving dimensions of human experience and underpinned by the integrated theoretical concepts of person-centered counselling, gestalt, existential, psychodynamic, humanistic, cognitive-behavioural therapies. This approach invites the student to engage with and get a sense of phenomena in the present, whilst simultaneously bracketing off any previously held assumptions,

beliefs or prejudices and allowing for new meaning to emerge (p.9). Based on a psychoanalytic approach, Rochford (2007), proposes using an experiential way of working with social work students which integrates both emotional and cognitive work and through the process of self-reflection allows the students to empathize and to enter the worlds of others while introducing them to their feelings through a whole array of concepts such as denial, detachment, ambivalence and access to their defence mechanisms (p.245). Rose (2008), however, emphasises that no matter what the theoretical orientation, good PD practice requires self-understanding and learning how to relate with others “in a meaningful manner, how to communicate at depth and how to change and to grow” (p. 3). Lieberman (1981) states that groupwork is not seen as beneficial for everyone; research reveals “severe negative outcomes” from participation in groupwork, with some individuals who engage in this type of learning approach experiencing uneasiness (p.241). Rose (2008) admits that some students struggle with the nature of the task in PD groups, viewing groupwork as something that may expose their vulnerability, and they need to protect themselves, the ultimate danger being the loss of self. Lennie (2000) notes a contrast in trainees’ reactions to PD groupwork, with some experiencing trust, empathy and genuineness compared with those who disliked the PD group, commenting on its dysfunctional character.

The role of the group work facilitator

Corey and Schneider Corey (2002) caution against forming a group in haste or led by a facilitator without suitable training opening the potential for the group to be more damaging than beneficial. Swan (2010) claims that personal development workers are “people who use therapeutically based practices with the aim of helping someone work better, become a “better” person or get a “better” life” (p.16). Different groups require different leader qualifications; some professionals are highly qualified to work in one area but not in another (Corey and Schneider Corey, 2002). The facilitator’s role is complex and group leaders need to know their limitations, as they are very influential in the way the group develops; however, this is not the deciding factor as to whether a group works well or not. Success is related to the mix of the group members, their cooperation, attitude and experiences and their openness to sharing responsibility to create a group where genuine exploration, growth and learning can occur (Rose, 2008). Techniques and practices used by PD facilitators vary and are sometimes dependent on the specific contexts (workplace, education institution, recreational evening class, etc.) in which

they are working and on the requirements those establishments (Swan, 2010). Fleming and Benedek (1983) speak about the necessity to maintain a boundary between being a tutor and a counsellor or therapist for students; somewhere in there lies a boundary, between education and grandiose ambition, between the legitimate need to see the student's feelings, and voyeurism, but while being adamant about a strict separation.

Group facilitation skills

Lindsey and Orton (2008), define social groupwork as “a method of social work that aims, in an informed way, through purposeful group exercises, to help individuals and groups meet individual and group needs, and to influence and change personal, group, organizational and community problems” (p.7). Phillips (2001) recognizes groupwork as a professional tool in a range of human service agencies in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors (p.16). CORU (2017), *The Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers: Section 2 (16)* outlines the requirement for the social care student to understand the principles and dynamics of group work and the facilitation techniques required to enhance the participation of service users in care (CORU,2017). The enhancement of participation by service users in care is borne out by Heap (1985) when he suggests the use of groups in the helping professions “so often increases the quality and the relevance of help” because group members help themselves and other members by sharing information and feelings, comparing attitudes and experiences and developing relationships with each other (p.9). Social care students, given the opportunity to participate in personal development group work, can acquire the skills of group facilitation, experience the capacity of groupwork process to bring about change, learn the skills of giving and receiving feedback and demonstrate to others in the group how their behaviour affects group members. These benefits not only enhance their learning, skills and insight, but also provide the potential for change and growth (Coulshed and Orme, 1998).

Reflective practice in groupwork

Reflective process is a core element of all PD training and the process of reflective practice is outlined as one of the competencies required in the QQI (2014) *Awards Standards – Social Care Work*: “Reflect on personal experience and group practice to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge” (p.9). Reflective practice specifically supports the SC student in critical

thinking, self-awareness and self-actualisation, helps and prevent stress and burnout and contributes to building competence in their professional development. There are many models of reflective practice: Kolb's (1984) Reflective Cycle; Schon's (1983) Reflective Cycle; John's (1994) Model for Structured Reflection; Gibbs' (1988) Reflective Cycle. However, as Burr et al. (2016) point out, reflecting upon one's beliefs and assumptions is not an easy thing to do and the student may need assistance in acquiring these skills (Burr et al., 2016). The most commonly used methods for engaging in reflective practice in PD groups are reflective diaries and logs. Moon (1999) identifies many purposes for reflective writing which include, deepening the quality of learning in the form of critical thinking; developing a questioning attitude; enhancing professional practice or the professional self in practice; enhancing the personal value of the self with respect to self-empowerment; and to providing an alternative 'voice' for those who cannot adequately express themselves.

Creativity in groupwork

Lyons (2010), outlines the potential benefits of using the creative approaches of art, drama, music and dance in both training and practice which enable the worker to interact in a non-directive way with clients Within social care creative studies education, students learn how to facilitate creative activities through participation in experiential workshops. Students use the creative arts therapeutically in practice which differs greatly from the practice of doing creative arts therapy (p.6).

Group work facilitation, reflective practice and creative work are just some of the many skills that are acquired and developed during the process and practice of PD group work. Others include exploring and developing aspects of 'the self'; learning how to deal with personal issues; dealing with existential themes; challenging prejudices; and developing relationship skills. These skills contribute to developing professional competence and best practice in SCW and facilitate the integration of the personal and the professional in SCW.

Previous Study: Self Training in Social Care Training

Educators in the field of SC in Ireland are required to create an environment in which students are encouraged to develop both professionally and personally. The learning objectives include acquiring the skill to challenge the taken for granted assumptions in the field of SCW, to engage

in reflective practice and to facilitate learning in how to adapt to change as the profession is being constantly redefined. The relationship between the client and the SCW is paramount and meaningful contact is vital to the work; therefore, understanding and knowledge of ‘the self’, is crucial and the necessity for the social care student’s engagement with personal development is an essential element of SC training (Lyons, 2014). There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that the inclusion of PD in the SC programme is very beneficial, some would say crucial, but there is very little evidence available to support this claim. In 2007, Denise Lyons, an experienced SCW, art therapist and SC educator, undertook a study on self-training in SC training (Lyons, 2007). She carried out four one-to-one interviews with SC educators, two e-mail interviews with two Canadian educators and a survey of SC graduates. The study confirmed the existence of self-training in Dundalk IT and Limerick IT and within a designated subject entitled PD in Limerick IT. It also confirmed that Cork IT included self-training in the subject Communications and PD, and the IOT, Tralee recorded four key subject areas where the self is trained – Communications in Professional Practice; Health and Leisure/Creative Practice; Skills Lab and Placement. The study showed that the areas where self-training occurred in SC training were group work, placement, creative studies, counselling classes and reflective journal. However, she states that the self-training experience of SC students varies from college to college and student to student.

Considering most studies regarding affective or therapeutic education are carried out at a distance, based largely on abstract theorisation rather than qualitative research, my aim is to examine how qualitative data may extend current thinking on therapeutic education and, more specifically, the subject PD in the higher education and training of the social care student in SC in the 13 IOTs delivering Level 7 and/or Level 8 social care programmes in Ireland. My intention is to provide a greater understanding of the rationale underpinning the inclusion of PD in the higher education and training in Ireland by exploring the ‘lived experience’ of this phenomenon/concept with 14 experienced social care educators and examining the documentation that they and the IOTs provided together with information gathered through web searches.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs from the perspective of humanistic lifespan development and within the concept of therapeutic education. Attempts are made to explain and define the concept of PD, followed by a review of its application in the higher education and training of SCWs. The benefits and limitations of engaging in the process are investigated, with special reference to the development of self-awareness in assisting SCWs in dealing with clients in practice. The necessity of addressing ‘regulation of emotions’, ‘blind spots’ and creating ‘healthy boundaries’ are discussed. The motivation for SC students entering the profession are probed. The adverse consequences of not attending to ‘the self’ while helping others is addressed, specifically mentioning stress, burnout and compassion fatigue. The debate surrounding ‘the therapeutic alliance’ in SCW is presented, and the implications for SC practice and education are portrayed. The difference between the PD group and the therapy group is considered, and finally the engagement in PD by the SC student through the process and practice of PD group work is examined, with specific reference to its contribution to professional competence and best practice. Finally, this chapter refers to a previous study undertaken and concludes by reiterating the rationale and aim of the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

Each person holds beliefs on which they define the nature of reality (ontological assumptions) and the knowledge of things in the social world (epistemological beliefs). These assumptions inform the overall research and methods of any research study (Crotty, 1998). The overarching methodology for this study is qualitative in nature and is approached from a contextual social constructionist perspective. Interpretative analysis is adopted as a method to engage with the prescribed text generated from the interviews. A multiple case study framework is employed as an anchor to explore the lived experience of the participants. Thematic analysis, with the aid of the software NVivo 11 (2018), is used to analyse the data. This chapter introduces the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this research and highlights the ways in which these beliefs influenced the methodology for this study. The research design is outlined and the rationale for the choice of approach is explored. Procedures and ethical considerations are presented in relation to the trustworthiness, quality and authenticity in qualitative research. Limitations associated with the approach are considered and discussed.

Methodology

According to Creswell (2009), the selection of a research design is influenced by the researcher's assumptions and personal experiences which they bring to the study, the nature of the research question and the audiences for the study. Thus, how I position myself in the ontological and epistemological debate deeply affects how I will go about justifying my choice of research design and choosing my research methodology (Crotty, 1998; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). To begin my exploration, it is necessary for me to distinguish between the main research paradigms. The quantitative or positivist/postpositivist paradigm or scientific method reflects a realist, deterministic philosophy (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2004) and treats social reality as existing independently of both the participants and the researchers (Silverman, 2010). Willig (2008) outlining the principles of scientific methods states that quantification and the use of statistics are used "to produce objective knowledge and understanding that is impartial and

unbiased” (p. 3). Relativist ontology focuses on how constructions are devised by individuals, who in attempting to make sense of their reality, develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research methodologies, reflecting a relativist philosophy, acknowledge that the researcher is part of the world they are describing and therefore plays an active role in the construction of the research findings (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006; Willig, 2007). Langdridge (2007) states that it is important for the researcher, when deciding upon the best methodological approach to adopt for research, to reflexively examine their ontological stance and define their beliefs and principles for understanding the world. Mason (2002) advises that it is beneficial if this is done early in the research process. As my philosophical stance will inform the methodology I choose and provide a context for the process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), I now describe my ontological and epistemological beliefs and outline how they underpin my choice of a methodology for my investigation.

Ontology

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), all research is interpretation, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (p.13). Many factors have contributed to the evolution and development of my world view. It has been shaped and designed by my upbringing and how I responded to it and by my engagement with family, friends, community and society at large. My historical and cultural backgrounds have influenced it and my professional life has affected it. These contributors, in various ways, have had an impact on how I situate myself physically, personally, socially and spiritually in the world today. Having completed some small-scale research projects when studying economics as an undergraduate student and subsequently when working in the financial sector, I subscribed to the positivist view of reality and used a quantitative methodology in my research projects. However, following a career change into the fields of psychotherapy and SC education, my world view shifted, and I became aware that there are many ways of interpreting the world and that knowledge is influenced by context and the people creating it. I therefore began to move towards a relativist methodology.

Theoretical Perspectives

The qualitative constructivist paradigm sees the nature of reality as multiple, socially constructed realities, ungoverned by natural laws, causal or otherwise (Lincoln and Guba, 1989). Social constructionism assumes that the construction of these realities is based on interpretation and is always from a stance grounded in a historical, social and cultural understanding of individual beliefs (Lincoln and Guba, 1989, Creswell, 2009; Neuman, 2011 Willig, 2013). Qualitative research methodologies acknowledge that the researcher is part of the world they are describing and therefore plays an active role in the construction of the research findings (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006; Willig, 2013). According to Creswell (2009) the researcher's goal is to investigate the processes of interaction among individuals in specific contexts or setting, where they live and work and inductively make sense of or interpret their meanings about the world. I decided upon social constructionism as my choice of a research design, because I believe, as stated by Guba (1990) and Crotty (1998) that there are many realities in the world, many people to interpret them and that these interpretations are constantly changing and evolving. I believe a qualitative methodology, particularly, a multiple case study analysis, would enable me to explore the lived experience of my 14 participants and present an in-depth analysis of their perceptions of the phenomenon of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs. It would also permit me to conduct my research in the natural settings of each of the 13 IOTs and accommodate a variety of research methods.

Epistemology

According to Crotty (1998), epistemology is the theory of knowledge underpinning the research process and which inspires our methodological framework. Mason (2002) describes it as focusing on what is regarded as evidence or knowledge of things in the social world. As an existential psychotherapist and a SC educator, the therapeutic and educational work has influenced my world view I have undertaken with clients and students. I subscribe to the epistemological assumption underpinning social constructivism that we are shaped by our lived experience and that knowledge is subjectively constructed. I endorse Guba's (1990) view that the findings uncovered in my research are the co-creation of my participants and me and that we gain understanding by interpreting these subjective experiences. Much of my psychotherapeutic

and educational work entails exploring and interpreting how life circumstances, experiences and contexts contribute to clients' presenting issues. I am aware that this co-construction only presents one interpretation of many possibilities. It is not the only interpretation or the only truth. However, it is the one that we co-create, and it is the one that we choose to work with. Similarly, in undertaking my research project I am attempting to understand the subjective perceptions of reality of my participants, through visiting their settings, gathering the information personally and attempting to interpret and analyse my findings. My interpretation of the data is not the only interpretation available, but it is the one that I perceive to be an accurate description of the views and opinions of the participants. Considering all the above, the social constructivist interpretivist perspective clearly fits with my epistemological beliefs.

Multiple Case Study Analysis (Interpretative)

Case study research is very often described as qualitative enquiry (Creswell, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 2014; Stake, 2006). It is a way of holistically capturing the experiences of the real world, in all its complexities, in a naturalistic way, which can provide insights into other, similar situations and cases (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Cohen et al., 2003; Merriam, 1998). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) perceive case study research as having temporal characteristics, geographical parameters, boundaries, defined by context, role or function and shaped by organizational or institutional arrangement. The main aim of case study research is to carry out an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon, within its setting, with the aim of understanding this phenomenon from the perspective of the participants (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009). Stake (2006), Yin (2014) and Merriam (2009), three of the most prominent case study researchers, stress the importance of the research having overarching methodology and of outlining the various methods and data sources before commencing the study. Methods employed in case study research can include interviews, focus groups, observations and relevant documents (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009; and Merriam, 2009).

Types of Case studies

The most widely used case study approaches employed in social science are those proposed by Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2003). Yin (2009) adopts a postpositivist "realist perspective" (p. 17). Stake (1995, 2006), on the other hand, aligns with a constructivist and

interpretivist approach. Yin, (2009) categorizes case studies as explanatory (seek to answer a question), exploratory (explore phenomenon in which there is not a clear, single set of outcomes) or descriptive (describe and analyse a phenomenon within the real-life context in which it occurred). Cases can be single, holistic and multiple case studies which are not mutually exclusive and may overlap. Stake (1995, 2006) identifies case studies as intrinsic (acquire a better understanding of a case, which can be an individual, a group, an event or an organization), instrumental (examined mainly to provide insight into an issue, theoretical question or problem), multiple or collective (when several cases are studied to form a collective understanding of a phenomenon). A case study approach, as a research framework, has several advantages (Stake, 1995; Bassey, 1999; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Yin, 2009, Silverman, 2011). It involves empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2009). It allows for one aspect of a problem to be studied at some depth within a limited time scale and it provides the opportunity to adopt several research methods (Bassey, 1999; Yin, 2009, Thomas, 2011). The disadvantage of using a multiple case study method is that depth of analysis may be sacrificed as the expense of breadth of the data obtained, and while the evidence created from this type of study is considered robust and reliable, it can be extremely time consuming and expensive to conduct (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The multiple case study approach according to Simon (2009) provides me with a comprehensive design framework on which to structure my research, it enables me to explore the in-depth and lived experience of the participants in their ‘real life’ contexts and allows me to investigate the ‘complexity and uniqueness’ of the phenomenon from ‘multiple perspectives’ (p.21). My study is positioned in the field of educational research investigating the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs. I intend to use a combination of Stake’s (2006) intrinsic and multiple case study approaches in the analysis and interpretation of the perceptions of 14 SC educators, across 13 IOTs in Ireland. This will allow me to identify issues and analyse data within each setting and across the settings of the study.

Determining the Case/Unit of Analysis

‘Purposive’ sampling according to Wellington (2003) is defined as the “choice of sampling that serves the purposes/objectives of the investigation” (p.59-61). Denscombe (2007) states that the selection of the case is not a random act, but one whereby, cases are selected on ‘the basis of

known attributes' and their "relevance to the practical problems or theoretical issues being researched" or because of their similarity or contrast (p.39-40). Yin (2013) advises that when evaluating the use of a case study to take some time to explore what makes the case study complex approach, pay attention to the methods used and the research questions posed. One of the common pitfalls in case study research is that researchers tend to attempt to answer a research question that is too broad or choose a topic that has too many aims and objectives for one study (Baxter and Jack, 2008). To avoid this, Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) suggest placing boundaries on a case can prevent the posing of a research question that is too wide-ranging for one study. Suggestions on how to bind a case include by (a) time and place (Creswell, 2009); (b) time and activity (Stake, 1995); (c) definition and context (Miles and Huberman, 1994); and (d) setting limits on the criteria for data collection (Merriam (1998). Determining the boundaries of a case may be challenging (Creswell, 2007) however, according to Denscombe (2007) "Without some notion of a *boundary*, it becomes impossible to state what a case is". (p.44).

Selection of the Case

Taking this advice on board and as an aid in defining and contextualising the research study, I decided to place the following boundaries on my qualitative multiple case study: (a) Educational Setting: SC education and training is delivered in 13 IOTs in Ireland offering Level 7 and/or Level 8 SC programmes (Appendix 3) and I choose these 13 IOTs for my investigation. There are 3 other academic institutions delivering SC programmes in Ireland, however, these 3 colleges were not considered for inclusion in this study as I wished to confine my study to the educational sector with which I am familiar, also I felt that their inclusion would result in data overload. (b) Geographical Location: The 13 IOTs selected are spread out over the entire country and are situated in the four regional locations as previously outlined in Figure1. I decided to travel to each of the 13 IOTs and even though this would entail much travelling it would also ensure a very rich data base. (c) SC Programme: SC education is offered at Level 7 and/or Level 8 in the 13 IOTs and I decided to include all Level 7 and/or Level 8 SC programmes across the 13 IOTs as outlined in (Appendix Z) in my study again. This would ensure a comprehensive study and contribute to a rich data base. (d) Time Allocation: I set a time limit of one academic year 2012/2013 for the collection of my data. (e) Subject Area: the focus of the qualitative multiple case study is the phenomenon of PD in the higher education and training of SC students in the 13

IOTs across Ireland. (f) Participants: All 14 participants were required to be experienced SC educators familiar with the concept of PD in SC education in the IOT sector.

Selection of the participants

I purposefully selected 14 participants, who were familiar with the phenomenon of PD and who were experienced SC educators. I selected two participants from one IOT (one of these participated in the pilot study) and one participant from each of the other 12 IOTs. Of the 14 participants who participated in the study, 9 were female and 5 were male. Since the SC profession is predominantly female, the fact that there were 5 male participants contributed to the richness of the data collected. Access was made easier and more convenient for me by the fact that I am employed in the IOT sector and my knowledge of the structure and systems assisted me in my search for participants. My work colleagues and Heads of Department also served, to use what Wellington (2007) terms, “contact points” and provided me with an initial link to the names of educators as potential participants for the study (p.64). The criteria for selection of participants stipulated that they held the position of educator on a SC programme in the IOT, that they taught and worked on Level 7 and/or Level 8 SC programmes and that each participant was familiar with the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SC students. All participants previously worked in other professions and disciplines before joining the staff of the IOT sector. The professional profiles, gender and background and training of each of the 14 participants together with the time span of the interviews are summarized in Table 3.

Table 2. The Participants

Participant ID	Gender	Background/Training	Time span of Interview
P.1	Female	Lecturer, Psychologist, Psychotherapist	45 mins
P.2	Female	Lecturer, Physical Education Teacher, Dance Teacher	41 mins
P.3	Female	Lecturer, SCW, Art Therapist	46 mins

P.4	Female	Lecturer, SW	58 mins
P.5	Female	Lecturer, Art Therapist, Supervisor	59 mins
P.6	Male	Lecturer, SCW	1 hr. 9 mins
P.7	Female	Lecturer, Drama/Theatre Teacher	1 hr. 25mins
P.8	Male	Lecturer, Psychotherapist	53 mins
P.9	Female	Lecturer, SW	1hr. 7 mins
P.10	Female	Lecturer, General Nurse, Psychiatric Nurse, Psychotherapist	1 hr. 14 mins
P.11	Male	Lecturer, Social Worker	54 mins
P.12	Female	Lecturer, Youth and Community Worker, Counsellor	59 mins
P.13	Male	Lecturer, SCW	54 mins
P.14	Male	Lecturer, Head of Department, Lawyer	43 mins

Ethical Considerations

Punch (2009) states that all social research involves ethical issues because it involves collecting data from people and about people and all methodological approaches recognize the ethical dimension to undertaking research. There is a moral and professional duty on the researcher to make sure that the balance between the pursuit of knowledge and the rights of the participants are protected (Neuman, 1991). While a code of ethics and other researchers provide guidance on

ethical issues, I am aware that ultimately, ethical conduct is my responsibility as the researcher, and while I am aware that my participants are professionals in the education sector and would not be considered a vulnerable cohort, I have a duty to adhere to an ethical code that will protect both me and my research participants. I applied for and was granted ethical approval from the University of Sheffield (Appendix 7) and subsequently commenced my research study. My initial contact with the participants was a short telephone conversation in which I outlined the broad areas of my research proposal, requested their participation in my research project, answered any queries that they had and clarified the approximate time span and scope of the case study interview. All the participants who were approached agreed to participate in the study. I followed up on this initial contact with a Letter of Invitation, confirming details of my research study and the time and place of interview (Appendix 8) and enclosing an Information Sheet (Appendix 9) outlining all aspects of the research project that might influence their willingness to participate in the research. Before commencing each interview, I handed each participant a Consent Form (Appendix 10) that acknowledges that their rights will be protected during data collection and includes a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity and an assurance of their right to withdraw from the research process at any stage. Before engaging in the interview process, each participant read and subsequently signed the consent form. When each interview concluded, I checked with each participant as to whether they wished to receive a copy of the transcribed interview, and all but one declined. I sent a copy of the transcribed interview to the participant who requested a copy and duly made the suggested minor deletions/amendments.

Data Collection

According to Denscombe (2003), interviews are useful when the researcher wishes to explore the phenomenon under investigation in more depth, has issues and questions that need to be addressed and demonstrates the centrality of human interaction in the production of knowledge. Interviews are largely structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bryman, 2008). In a structured interview, the researcher has a predetermined interview schedule, with the wording and order of the questions laid out in advance of the interview (Ryan et al., 2006). Unstructured interviews give the interviewer almost complete freedom, whatever issue may arise under the theme of the interview, and data can emerge itself which then directs the focus of the research. I chose the semi-structured interview format, as this allowed me to prepare my questions in

advance of the interview, but also allowed me the flexibility to change the order and wording of the questions as I deemed appropriate during the interview. It also allowed me to ask questions that were not on the interview schedule (Robson, 1993; Bryman, 2008). I had the option of explaining certain details if necessary, probe responses in more depth and deviate from the schedule, and I had flexibility to omit or add questions as the interview progressed (Robson, 1993). Robson (1993) states that semi-structured interviews are flexible, allow you to go into more depth or clear up any misunderstandings, enable testing of interviewees' knowledge, encourage cooperation, produce unexpected answers and allow realistic assessment of what the interviewee believes. During the interviewing process, I was able to catch the 'close-up reality' and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of each participant's lived experience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003).

Pilot Study

Bryman (2008) advises that "piloting an interview schedule can provide interviewers with some experience in using it and can infuse them with a greater sense of confidence" (p. 247). Taking this advice, I piloted the initial interview with one of my fellow colleagues, and her feedback, in conjunction with that of my supervisor, informed the refined interview schedule of questions (Appendix 11). I chose this participant because of her familiarity with the subject area and her access and convenience. The pilot interview proved to be a rich and valuable source of data, and rather than discard this information I decided, in consultation with my supervisor, to include the data obtained from my pilot study in my study. This resulted in my obtaining two sets of data from one IOT and one set of data from each of the other 12 IOTs.

The interviews were audio-recorded, with participants and interview times ranging between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes. Following on from each of the 14 interviews, I immediately took some time to reflect upon my thoughts, feelings, observations and initial reactions to the interview process and recorded them in my personal journal. The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. After each interview, the recordings were uploaded to my computer and copied to a back-up hard-drive, which was password-protected. They were also transferred to memory data sticks, reviewed and professionally transcribed verbatim. The transcribed interviews were rechecked against the audio recordings for accuracy. Any

identifying information (e.g. names, locations) was deleted. I commenced analysis of the data shortly afterwards.

Trustworthiness criteria

Quantitative researchers often question the trustworthiness of qualitative research because they believe that the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed the same way in naturalistic research as in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). This is disputed by Silverman (2001) among others, who has demonstrated how qualitative researchers can use measures that deal with the question of reliability and validity for establishing trustworthiness in naturalistic research. Many qualitative researchers prefer to use terminology that is different to that used by quantitative researchers. One such author is Guba (1981) who proposes criteria (equivalent concepts to those of the positivists) that he believes should be used when establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study: credibility (internal validity); transferability (external validity) dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity). Demonstrating congruence (establishing credibility), according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Simons (2009) explains that validity, a crucial requirement in case study research, “is concerned with how to establish warrant for your work; whether it is sound, defensible, coherent, well-grounded, appropriate to the case” (p.127). This is achieved, according to Cohen (2003), by demonstrating “that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data” (p.107). One of the ways of establishing credibility or internal validity is through the process of data triangulation, which includes collecting multiple sources of data in one study of a single phenomenon as a mechanism of ensuring reliability and credibility within the data (Mile and Huberman, 1994; Wellington, 2003, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Interview data can be supplemented with observations, documentary information or questionnaires (Stake, 2006). The data generated by the 14 semi-structured interviews in this study is supported by my fieldwork notes, my reflective journal entries, my case memos, website information and a review of each IOT’s programme documentation. This triangulation provided me with a means of cross-checking the data and ensuring that I kept bias to a minimum and maintained consistency throughout the process (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003; Patton, 2002). Yin (2009) proposes using a multiple case study design as opposed to a single case study design,

because the larger number of cases benefit the analysis more than a single analysis and add to the robustness of the overall study (p.47) and insures the credibility in case study research (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Yin (2003) claims that external validity for case study research centres on knowing “whether a study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study”, because the single case study doesn’t offer a great base for generalizing (p.370). Employing a multiple case study format enhances generalization and increases the possibility of applying the findings to a larger base (Merriam, 1998). For this reason, I selected a multiple case study approach across the 13 IOTs that deliver SC programmes as opposed to a single case study. To insure clarity and accurately reflect the phenomenon under investigation, I used diagrams and tables, as Yin, (2009) suggests assisting in the presentation and explanation of the data.

Reflexivity

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) bias needs to be addressed in case study research due to the subjective nature of the inquiry. Researchers are advised to engage in the process of reflexivity and examine how they may be influencing or shaping the research process (Ryan et al., 2006; Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Cresswell (2009) describes reflexivity as the researcher’s awareness of “how their biases, values and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status, shapes their interpretations formed during a study” (p. 233). Therefore, researchers are advised to use reflective journals, case notes and memos as an aid to reflexivity and to support their research (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Reflexivity is a crucial factor in my research, as I have a close association to the multiple case study under investigation, I am immersed in the subject matter, I work in the IOT sector as a SC educator and I facilitate SC students in their PD during their SC education and training. Furthermore, I have a deep and passionate interest in therapeutic education. This insider knowledge and understanding (Punch, 2009) could be considered an advantage and strengthen my approach, enriching and deepening my research regarding insider information, contacts, networks and experience and interpretation. However, it could also be considered a disadvantage, bringing with it the risk of subjectivity and bias as previously outlined. Punch (2009) cautions that it may be difficult to maintain a neutral, dispassionate approach to the research situation, but advises that “awareness and analysis of the issues is the best defence

against it” (p. 44). I actively engaged in the process of reflexivity throughout the process of my study, attempting always to make my beliefs and values explicit to understand them.

Reflective Journal

I am actively committed to the ongoing development of SC education and I am aware that I need to consistently question my assumptions and understanding of this subject area while carrying out my research (Willig, 2013). It is vital that I reflexively monitor how I am being informed and changed because of engaging in the process with participants, and simultaneously actively examine how I may be influencing the research process. Throughout my career in psychotherapy, I acquired and refined the skills of personal reflexivity and maintaining a reflective journal. My grounding as a therapist and the use of these skills assisted me in getting as close to my participants’ lived experiences as is possible during the interviews, whilst at the same time standing back to gain an objective and unbiased analysis as is possible. Throughout the entire research process, I maintained a reflective journal (Appendix 11) which was crucial in allowing me to reflect upon and examine my perspectives, understandings and viewpoints at different stages in the research process. I documented in my journal any details, issues or dilemmas that emerged for me during each stage of the research process and reflected on my interpretations, my analysis, the decisions I was making and the reasons for making those decisions. De Laine (2000) says field notes “paint a picture of our own prejudices and biases” (p.215). My reflective journal provided me with a space in which my new awareness and insights developed and grew and was the medium where I observed how my philosophical stance shifted, changed, developed and evolved throughout the process. In addition to my reflective journal, I also had three critical friends (Appendix 12) who reviewed my work at regular intervals and were very honest in their advice and critique and provided very worthwhile guidance for me. Finally, my thesis supervisor guided my research progress throughout the process. Employing these strategies in my study addressed the issues of credibility, dependability, neutrality thus ensuring trustworthiness in my research study.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is not aligned to any methodology and therefore, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is essentially independent of theory and epistemology (p.78). There are several

approaches to thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as capturing “something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.82). Willig (2013) defines thematic analysis as “a method for recognizing and organizing patterns in content and meaning in qualitative data” (p.57). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) describe thematic analysis as “a form of pattern recognition within the data” (p.82) and Joffe (2012) suggests themes should ‘highlight the most salient constellations of meanings present in the data (p.209). Willig (2013) advises all qualitative researchers to acquire this skill of:

... being able to systematically work through qualitative data to identify common threads of meaning, to group these together into categories of meaning and to then cluster these into higher-order themes. (p. 58)

Consequently, thematic analysis, is by its very nature, a time-consuming process, requiring a great deal of interpretative work and needs to be undertaken in a conscientious and patient manner, to ensure rigour and reliability (Attride-Stirling, 2007). According to Willig (2013), the identification of themes involves making decisions about what is and what is not important and therefore the researcher needs to adopt a set of criteria to assist in determining what is worth thematizing (p.62). Also, Braun and Clarke (2006) caution that thematic analysis is to be more than a summary and classification of what is contained in the data; it should also attempt to make sense of what the participants have said and why they may have said it to “... identify the “essence” of what each theme is about” (p.92). Having considered the options available to me I adopted Braun and Clarke’s (2006) principles of thematic analysis (Table 3) as the method of data analysis for my study. I judged this model, which is based on a constructivist, inductive approach and reports the “meanings and the realities of participants” through direct quotes, to best capture and make sense of my participants interpretations and reduce the risk of researcher bias.

Table 3. Phases of Braun and Clarke’s Thematic Analysis

Phases of Braun and Clarke’s Thematic Analysis	
Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

Initially, I read and re-read the transcripts many times to identify the emerging themes. I also employed the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 (2018) as an aid to analysing my data. Tight (2017) advises small scale researchers to explore the possibility of using qualitative software to assist analysis such but concludes that it is still important to do some analysis manually, as this gives the researcher “a better feel for the analysis to be undertaken and act as a check that your software analysis is producing appropriate results” (p.184). According to Beazley (2007), one of the advantages of NVivo is that it facilitates extensive manipulation of the data by cross-checking and comparing across data and cases. I was aware that NVivo 11 (2018) would not replace my work as a researcher, but that it could assist me in the management and manipulation of the large amount of data I had collected and in the identification of common themes.

One of the main challenges in qualitative research is to find ways of telling the ‘story’ of the research in a clear and cogent way (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Consequently, presenting the findings is a crucial stage in the qualitative research process. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggest that “it is important that the subtlety, richness and detail of the original material is displayed while keeping the right balance between description and interpretation” (p.301). Burnard (2004) claims that there are two main approaches to writing up the findings of qualitative research, the first reports the key findings under each main theme or category, using verbatim quotes to illustrate those findings, then a separate chapter which discusses the findings in relation to the existing research accompanies these. The second approach integrates the findings and the discussion into one chapter. Mindful of the potential of overuse of verbatim quotes, I decided to present my findings using the first approach as I believed it was the most meaningful way of exploring, unravelling, and explaining the rich and complex social world of my participants to the reader. Allocating one chapter to each of the main themes, with minimal interpretation, I believed, allowed me to represent the complexity of the findings in a way that remained grounded in the participant’s interpretations. This approach provided the reader with the opportunity of experiencing the enriching power of my participant’s own expression of their views on the subject. Also, I did not wish to lose the depth and richness of the participants voices as they made sense of their subjective experiences and their reality of the phenomenon under scrutiny. I trusted that this approach would guide the reader through the key findings by providing them with a clear, uninterrupted opportunity to observe the strength, ambivalence,

hesitancy, confusion and contradictory views of my participants while at the same time, offering them an active minimal interpretation of the findings of the research. The linking discussion chapter then provided the means for an in-depth interpretation of the findings, a reflective commentary and discussion in view of existing research and against the backdrop of the research questions.

Limitations

One of the limitations of multiple case study methodology is that it generates large quantities of data, which may result in the researcher becoming overwhelmed with the amount of data to be analysed. It can be very time consuming (Cohen et al., 2003). I found this to be the case as the 14 participants were very generous with their time and in providing me with programme material, also I received programme documentation for each of the 13 IOT and these together with my case notes, reflective journal entries, and web search material produced a large amount of information. The NVivo 11 (2018) system of coding assisted me in sorting this large volume of data and brought structure to the data analysis; however, it did not reduce the time it took to analyse the information, which did take a lot of time and patience. Another limitation of case study research is the problem of reporting a case study in a concise manner, which can be a difficult task due to the complex nature of this approach. I am aware that, as pointed out by Baxter and Jack (2008), it is the researcher's responsibility to convert a complex phenomenon into a format that is readily understood by the reader (p.550). However, with the assistance of my thesis supervisor, I devised a structure that included presenting data in figures and tables and allowed me to report the findings in a manner that I hope the reader will find easy to access. A further common criticism is that the data generated is not open to cross-checking, which poses the risk that conclusions may be selective, biased, personal and subjective; however, I ensured that through the process of data triangulation and reflexivity this potentiality was kept to a minimum. Finally, during the analysis of my data, I noticed another limitation in my research study, namely, the omission of a question, in my interview schedule, that specifically related to the diversity of the SC student population. All participants, when questioned on the structure of the SC programme, did refer to the student mix, specifically the age, gender balance and background of SC students. However, I now realise that if I had included a specific question on diversity it may have given the participants the opportunity to explore this topic in more detail,

especially in terms of culture, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identification. This added information would have broadened the profile of the SC student and enriched the data collected.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines the research methodology and the methods chosen for my research study. It clarifies how my world view has influenced my ontological stance and provides the context for my choice of research topic. It examines the reasons for my decision to employ a qualitative paradigm and specifically an interpretative, social constructionist approach. The chapter explains how my insider position effects the study and the necessity for me to actively engage in the process of reflexivity throughout the study. It charts my process in adopting a qualitative multiple case study as a framework in exploring the lived experience of the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs in Ireland, as well as determining the unit of analysis, selection of participants and ethical considerations for the study. The chapter outlines my choice of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework together with NVivo 11 software NVivo (2018), as a means of analysing the data. Finally, issues in relation to trustworthiness, quality and authenticity in qualitative research are examined and the limitations associated with the approach are considered and discussed. The next chapter presents an analysis of the findings of the multiple case study analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings

Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD

Introduction

The previous chapters outlined the background, rationale and methodological approach for this study. The following four chapters present the findings from the multi-case study analysis, undertaken across 13 IOTs in Ireland. The data obtained from the 14 interview transcripts, the documentation obtained from 13 IOTs, together with my case notes, my reflective journal entries and web searches are interpreted and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) principles of thematic analysis and aided by the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 (2018). The findings are reported in each of the four chapters by presenting the main theme extracted from the data and then employing sub-themes to develop the themes further.

Supporting quotations from the participants are used as evidence of their origin and to illuminate their 'voices' in recounting their 'lived experience' of the phenomenon.

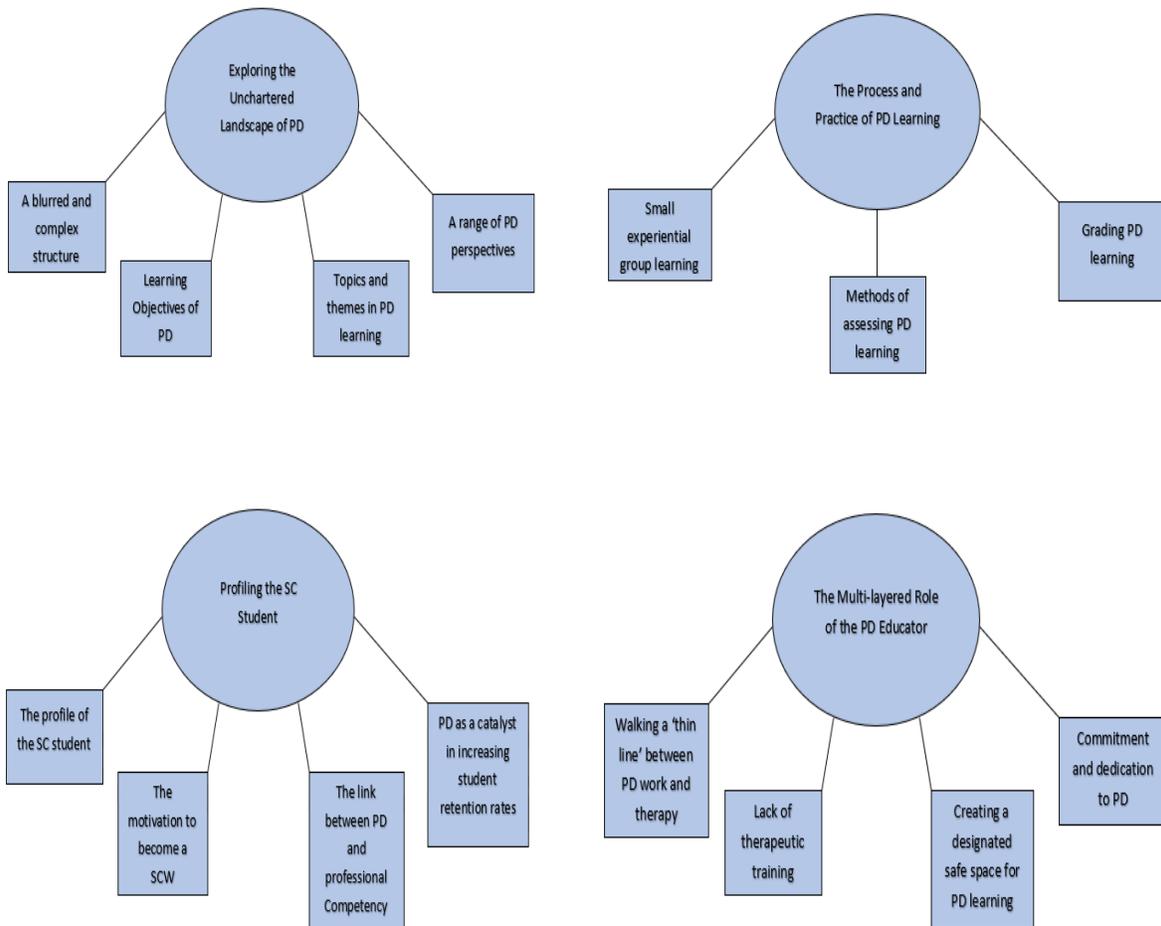
To recap, the research questions that guided the research are as follows:

RQ1. How do social care educators in Ireland perceive the nature, purpose and practice of Personal Development within the current social care education programmes in the Institute of Technology sector?

RQ2. What, in their opinion, are the perceived advantages, limitations, opportunities and/or tensions of including Personal Development in the social care educational and training programmes in the Institute of Technology sector in Ireland?

The research questions are purposefully broad to allow the participants freedom to express their interpretations in a full and meaningful way. The results that emerged from the data analysis are classified under four main themes and their sub-themes and are identified as follows:

Figure 2. Final thematic map showing the final four main themes and sub-themes



Main Theme: Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings under the main theme: Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD which focuses on the landscape, context and current position of PD within higher education and training of SCWs in the 13 IOTs. The sub-themes further elaborate on these findings under the headings: (1) *A blurred and complex landscape*; (2) *Learning objectives of PD learning* (3) *Topics and themes in PD learning* and (4) *A range of theoretical perspectives*.

Main theme: Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD

The main theme ‘exploring the uncharted landscape of PD’ finds that PD is present in various ways and to varying degrees but is not explicit in the higher education and training of SCWs in the 13 IOTs sector in Ireland. The range and depth of PD learning, according to most of the 14 participants, is dependent on the specific IOT, the SC programme(s), the module(s) into which it is written and the influence of the social care educator. The participants perceive 68 modules, under various titles, which either have a specific module dedicated to PD or incorporate PD into a module in varying degrees across the 13 IOTs (Appendix 6). The findings indicate the learning objectives of PD include the facilitation of core competency skills such as self-awareness, reflective practice, group dynamics, challenging prejudices and engaging in effective relationship. There is a wide variation of theoretical perspectives underpinning PD in the 13 IOTs mostly dependent on the background and training of the 14 participants. These findings are new, they reveal a blurred and complex landscape of PD which until now has remained largely uncharted and unknown. The findings suggest the nature of PD within the higher education and training of SC students in the IOT sector in Ireland to be vague and somewhat ambiguous. The following sub-themes elaborate on this blurred and complex structure of PD learning, by interpreting the voices, perceptions and lived experiences of the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs.

Sub-theme: A blurred and complex structure

One of the most significant findings of this study suggests that PD is not explicit and does not hold a prominent place in the SC programmes in the 13 IOTs investigated. Participants point to the ambiguity, vagueness and uncertainty that surround this subject area. P.7 explicitly points to the ambiguity regarding the inclusion of PD in the SC programme:

Now you mightn’t see the language ‘PD’... It is ... it is without it being specifically stated, that’s what it is. We’re not saying, “this is PD”. (P.7)

P.5 when questioned as to the inclusion of PD (in the SC programme) notes that:

PD is there without it being explicit’...so, it is ... without it being embedded into this (module)... here ... it is PD. (P.5)

She suggests that SC students engage in PD not by any purposeful intent but by default. Most of the 14 participants considers PD to be an important element in SCW education and training but it requires a better profile within the SC programme(s) this is summed up by P.5:

Like the use of self is not focused on particularly but is probably a by-product of what they're learning. And whether they make that connection or not I don't know ... Like, I think ... I think it's ... am ... I think it needs a better profile maybe in terms of how important it is, yeah! It's kind of, I get the impression that it's stuck in there without it really being thought through. (P.5)

The findings indicate that the inclusion of PD into the SC programmes is not uniform across the range of the 13 IOTs, with a minority of IOTs specifically committed to the facilitation of PD whilst the remainder include PD as an add-on to a module particularly in modules such as professional development or creative studies. When questioned about the evolution and development of PD within their specific module(s) participants indicate that the PD blueprint is sketchy and insufficient. They consider PD to be very much dependent on the IOT in question, the SC programme, the module(s) description, the module(s) content and the social care educator. Three of the participants stated that the planning, design and format is done on an ad-hoc basis, usually drawn from the expertise of those charged with the delivery of the subject and the expertise of the existing and/or new staff members joining the programme. P.12 remarks:

Well when it came in, there wasn't any major discussion on why it came in, definitely wasn't. It was just introduced very quickly and without much consultation with staff. A couple of staff, myself and another colleague were just allocated staff and just 'go and do it' and sure we didn't know what we were doing. (P.12)

The development, as recalled by P.5, came from the ground up, developed from the expertise of staff already there:

To be honest I think this has been the debate over the last few years about...am...the evolution of courses coming from the expertise of the people who are already there. So, I think that might have been originally how it might have come about. (P.5)

P.5 also spoke about the movability of staff affecting the development of the modules, which affects the continuity in the facilitation of PD:

PD tends to get, God, I will be a little bit controversial here now, it might get moved from one person to another, you know depending on what hours are there or whatever ... (P.5)

The module titles in which PD are embedded are many and varied, with each of the participants noting the variety and the almost hidden nature of PD within the SC modules. P.5 confirms the covert nature of the PD within the programme:

... (PD) is not an overt part of my course in creative studies but it is within other courses, named in other modules, so there are other people who teach, particularly, PD along with maybe ... mm ... group dynamics or things like that. (P.5)

P.11 confirms this fact and adds that elements of PD are incorporated into modules and delivered over the lifetime of the programme:

We don't have a specific module, but elements of PD would come in at the start of the degree in Learning to Learn, which is our introductory module ... Placement ... and we finish up with ongoing Professional Development and that includes elements of PD and that's at the end of the degree. (P.11)

P.13, whilst not having a specific module designated to PD, confirms that it is embedded in four major pillars of their SC programme:

We wouldn't have one particular module that's called PD. We would have it built over a number of different modules ... we divide it into different pillars, so some of the pillars would be around PD and Practice; some of them would be around Social Theory; some of them would be the Creative Arts, so they are the three main and Practice is another one added to that, so there's three or four major pillars that the modules are attached to in terms of developing the worker. (P.13)

PD is embedded throughout the Level 7 SC programme, but under a variety of module titles according to P.6:

So, the idea (PD) is embedded throughout the programme, now the key, the central module for our programme is a ten-credit module, in each of the three years of our level 7 degree; In year 1 it is called Introduction to Social Care; Year 2 it's SC Theory and Practice; Year 3 Preparation for Practice, but it's (PD) a central ... (P.6)

And a variety of module titles was also recounted by P.10:

First year, it's (PD) called Reflective Learning, I think, as a module title. (Coughs). Pardon me, in first year they also do some creative modules, so they do dance or drama or religion ... and PPD (Personal and Professional Development) and it's a split module so it's half and half. (P.10)

P.14 confirms it is taught in two modules, communications and professional development:

In xxx it's taught in two principal forms, it's taught in Communications and it's taught in Professional Development. (P.14)

PD is embedded within Professional Development modules according to P.8 and P.12:

Here in (name of IOT) it's embedded in the Professional Development ... mm ... part of the module, you know. So, it's kinda 50:50, you know. (P.8)

We didn't develop it as a specific module because our templates wouldn't allow that. So, while we were delivering it (PD Planning) it was part of another module. But it stood on its own ground, and it was 20% of the Professional Studies module. (P.12)

PD is specifically names in 7 of the overall 68 modules incorporating PD, P.3 and P.4 explain:

Well it's situated in one module in the third-year programme. So, the year 3 students then will do some elements on one subject called Personal and Professional Development before they go out on placement and when they return. (P.3)

Whilst Personal and Professional development is embedded in other modules, there is a specific space for personal and professional development module within the curriculum, so in, when students come here in first year, they do the module that's called Personal and Professional Development, so that's specific and it's allocated its own space. (P.4)

Many of the creative studies modules also contain elements of PD and P.2 explains how this is facilitated:

We liked the idea of people being able to express themselves through the artistic medium ... we termed it 'Creative Practice', but then it was through the practices of drama and dance at the time people would develop themselves. (P.2)

However, both P.1 (pilot study) and P.9 confirm the presence of a stand-alone module specifically titled 'Personal Development', which is delivered across all four years of the Level 8 programme. This module is regarded as a separate and equal module within the SC programme;

It's a stand-alone module ... ah ... in all four years of the four-year, abinitio, honours degree programme ... so, I suppose how I see it is that it is a separate and equal module within the programme. (The title) is Personal Development. (P.9)

These findings present a blurred and complex PD structure within the 13 IOTs investigated, the results also suggest PD is not explicit, but vague and hidden within in a variety of modules with an assortment of module descriptors and a range of titles. These results are disquieting, considering the statutory educational requirement of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs. However, all 14 participants, confirmed that PD does take place across the 13 IOTs even though its positioning within the SC programmes is ambiguous and confusing.

Sub-theme: Learning Objectives of PD learning

The findings revealed that the overall learning objectives of PD focus on developing the essential skills for SCW which included the ability to become more self-aware, engage in effective relationships, build resilience, develop a good work ethic, explore sedimented beliefs, bias and prejudices and develop core competencies such as emotional regulation and practical skills such as reflective practice. However, it is evident that each participant's perception of PD learning is influenced by their training and background. P.1 an experienced SC educator and psychotherapist describes PD learning as:

Am ... it also allows them to mirror maybe similar things that are happening for them, from what's happening for somebody else in the group, and to learn from that experience. And, it also helps them to learn how to sit with things that are so, what's the word, aren't so comfortable, when they talk about issues or, for example someone may inappropriately laugh in a group and the reaction that they may have to that as much as someone could cry and walk out of the room if they were upset and how they learn the resilience to deal with that and to sit with that. (P.1)

However, P2, a dance teacher, interprets PD from the perspective of engaging in creative studies, and especially in dance. She feels that when students, especially first year students, attend third level education for the first time, they can feel lost and lonely. Her interpretations of PD focused, among other things, on the students' engagement in the creative studies module where they learn how to form friendships and gain the ability to get to know one another in the relaxed creative environment. Contact improvisation is a very valuable PD objective for P.2, "they just get to know each other" (P.2). Friendship, whilst it may not be considered the main aim or objective of PD for other participants, P.2 feels it is. P.2 also points to students' engagement in dance and how this facilitates them in becoming:

...comfortable with their own bodies and at their own ability levels (P2)
which she believes is an element of PD learning which they obtain through engaging in movement in creative dance.

P.4 a SW, believes that SC students need to explore their motivation for entering the SC profession as she feels that some students don't know why they are entering the profession or what the work involves. She feels that engaging in PD work gives the student the means to explore this important topic. "So, I am the self, I'm here and I want to be a helper, but why do I

want to be a helper?” and one of her objectives is to reflect upon this question throughout her Personal and Professional module, “And we have been talking about the self who becomes the professional and what the self is and how important it is to develop self-awareness”. (P.4). Most participants reiterated the fact the SC students need to be self-aware when entering the SC profession and this is one of the main learning objectives recounted throughout the interviews. All the learning outcomes as perceived by the 14 had a common thread running through them, that of facilitating the students in developing a solid personal presence to work in the very challenging environments, to safeguard clients and to prevent stress and burnout which is very evident in the field of social care. The learning objectives of PD learning are mostly facilitated through experiential learning in small groups and the topics and themes are again varied and dependent on the module in question and the influence of the SC educator.

Sub-theme: Topics and themes in PD learning

The 14 participants point out that the SC educator have a significant influence on the choice of topics and themes underpinning the students’ learning. Table 7 outlines the main topics and themes in PD learning as perceived by the 14 participants and supported by the programme documentation provided by the 13 IOTs

Table 4: Topics and Themes in PD Learning

DEVELOP SELF - AWARENESS	ADDRESS PERSONAL ISSUES	EXPLORE EXISTENTIAL THEMES	CHALLENGE ATTITUDES VALUES BELIEFS	DEVELOP SKILLS
Self-awareness	Addressing Personal Issues	Fear	Challenge assumptions	Relationship skills
Self-esteem	Telling their Personal Story	Sexuality	Challenge biases	Communication skills
Self-confidence	Examining Family History	Change	Explore personal belief systems	Group dynamics
Self-growth	Exploring personal lifelines	Power	Examine ethical standards	Interpersonal skills

Self-development	Investigating Learning styles	Loss and grief	Explore personal value system	Reflective practice skills
Self-care	Developing mental health awareness	Loneliness	Exploring prejudices	Active listening skills
Self-reliance	Developing emotional regulation	Creating Friendship	Examining Ethical issues	Creative and artistic skills

All 14 participants across the 13 IOTs perceive PD learning as affording students the opportunity, the time and space to explore ‘the self’ by telling their personal story, tracing their personal lifelines and dealing with unresolved personal issues. These, if not addressed, may prevent them working in an ethical way with clients and which may result in stress and burnout. Other topics include exploring existential themes such as the concept of power in SCW relationships and challenging sedimented beliefs, assumptions and prejudices, which, unless explored by students at both a personal and professional level may prevent them responding to clients’ needs in an appropriate manner or in keeping with ethical standards and best practice. All 14 participants refer to the very practical and essential skills the students acquire through the experiential process of PD, such as communication skills, relationship skills and active listening skills among others that would assist them in their future careers in SCW. The experiential nature of PD group work facilitates the students’ learning in an immediate but practical way, whilst also giving them the opportunity to learn how to give and receive constructive feedback. The delivery of the PD themes and topics, apart from the stand-alone module depends on the IOT, the SC programme(s) and the specific module(s). P.1, who delivers one of the stand-alone PD modules gives a very comprehensive account of the content of her stand-alone module which covers all the topics and themes outlined in Table 7.

... the lecture series would have key themes on self-esteem, family, assertiveness ... am ... interaction with the world, the rites and passage of life from birth to death, all the things that effect humans and human nature, but from a theoretical background. (P.1)

The main theme common to all 14 participants is the issue of 'self in practice' and the importance of being self-aware before engaging in client work with the vulnerable populations they will support in their future careers. P.3 sums this up:

We also talk about their own personal story and one of the things that I would try to explain to them is that in SC when you're a worker, you're privy to other people's information and we don't realize how precious that is, until you've actually had to share your story with somebody else and ask them to keep that confidential and have that feeling of vulnerability. (P.3)

The 'self in practice' is very important to all participants:

I like to see that students are being reflective in thinking about personal and professional development, so I set out exercises to help them ... ah ... to think about themselves. (P.4)

Participants perceive most SC students as not having had the opportunity to discuss life issues in a safe space with a professional educator before they engage in their SC studies. PD experiential group work offers the student this safe space to deal with these issues. One of these is the issues of sexuality which is a very important topic for SCWs, especially in the disability sector. P.3 explains how this work is facilitated:

We look at sexuality and the notion of touch and ... am ... you know because sexuality would be a big area in terms of disability, and we talk about you know their own understanding of sexuality and how they form their views and values. (P.3)

Other life issues that are dealt with include dealing with the concept of fear, negotiating change, addressing issues of power, and exploring loss and grief. P.6 addresses the concept of fear in an innovative way:

I do those exercises where they write stuff down on a piece of paper and it's all anonymous and they realize that everybody in the group has the same fears ... (P.6)

SCW is based on forming, engaging in and maintaining relationships. Therefore, being aware of the dynamics of relationship is a very important topic for SC students and according to P.7 and P.6, PD offers them the opportunity to understand the dynamics of relationship building. a major learning requirement for all the participants:

Pedagogical practice and social care, and behind that dreadful title is the idea of getting the students to reflect on themselves as persons in the dynamic relationship with another person. (P.7)

And I see the strength ... am ... the individual kind of growth, students develop through that, establishing those, kind of relationships and that dynamics and I mean it's wonderful. (P.6)

Most participants speak of the need for students to acquire the ability to challenge sedimented and prejudicial views, biases, values and belief systems as pointed out by P.4:

They are doing an assignment called 'Where I Come From, What I Bring to Social Care' ... I think it's a good way of thinking about what it is that they bring. By the time they do that assignment we have looked into their values, their beliefs, and stuff like that, they don't do it straight away. (P.4)

P.2, referring to the PD skills acquired through participating in the dance module confines her answers mostly to the creative and practical skills mentioned in Table 7:

I explore theories of inter-culturalism and dance, disability and dance, the whole notion of being creative with your body and I feel the necessity to take on any dance form or type, so I explore theoretically. (P.2)

These practical life skills such as assertiveness and communication skills, relationship skills and skills in building self-esteem and self-confidence are considered vital and mentioned by most participants. Listening skills are required in SCW, as highlighted by P.13:

... this idea of being able to sit down and being able to listen to people. (P.13)

P.6 states that in her case it's more than listening; communication also includes "patience ... am ... perseverance" (P.6). Developing the capacity for expressive creativity is considered by many of the participants, which may prove difficult to begin with. But as P.12 points out:

They hate it [drama] to start with, and by the time they get to the end, they want more. But we introduced an awful lot of this year. We do dance, we're doing a lot of artwork, an awful lot of artwork, story-telling, and there's a lot of PD, we're doing an awful lot of that. (P.12)

All these topics and themes in PD learning are underlined by various theoretical perspectives, usually aligned with the theoretical learnings of the SC educator delivering the module(s) or a SC educator who may have designed the module(s) or who previously delivered the module. The 14 participants in this study, when questioned as to their underlying theoretical perspective(s) reveal a wide and diverse range. The following sub-theme elaborates on these findings.

Sub-themes: A range of theoretical Perspectives

When questioned as to the theories or philosophies underpinning learning objectives of the 68 modules incorporating an element of PD or the more pronounced PD modules, the 14 participants, across the 13 IOTs, present a very wide range of perspectives and these findings are now revealed in the sub-theme: A range of theoretical perspectives. It became apparent that this range is heavily influenced by the background and training of the 14 participants, which in turn influence the design, planning and facilitation of the module(s). Table 5 classifies the main theoretical perspectives, under 9 categories (together with their sub-sections), which underpin PD learning, as interpreted by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs.

Table 5 The Main Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning PD learning

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVESS	UNDERPINNING PD LEARNING
1.HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY	2.PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanistic Approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychodynamic Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rogerian – Person Centred Approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowlby’s Attachment Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gestalt Psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychodynamic Winnicott
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existential thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jungian Psychology
3.BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES	4.CREATIVE STUDIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Behavioural Therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belbin’s Nine Team Roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edward de Bono (Creative Thinking)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviourism Bandura 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand therapies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicative Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic Studies
5.ECOLITERACY	6.ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Hands Heart (Cohen et al.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronfenbrenner’s Theory
7.POPULAR PSYCHOLOGIES	8.CONSTRUCTIVISM

• Popular Psychologies	• Active Learning Model
• Emotional Intelligence Theory	
• Self-Help Psychologies	
• Positive Psychology	
9.OTHERS	
• Resilience Models	
• Spiritual concepts	
• Philosophical ideas	

Table 5 shows an eclectic mix of theoretical approaches, utilised to varying degrees, by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs. The findings suggest that humanistic psychology followed by the behavioural theories are the most common among participants. Other theoretical perspectives, some specifically related to subject areas such as creative studies or SC professional practice, are also utilised. The findings appear to show that most participants use an integrated approach, utilising a variety of perspectives in their work. This can be considered beneficial for the SC student as it introduces them to many ways of interpreting and understanding new knowledge. However, the notion a using a wide theoretical base for PD can also be contested, as it is contributing to the vague and ambiguous nature of PD and the lack of a specific academic identity. The idea of having one module, supported by specific theoretical perspectives underpinning PD, may ensure clarity and increase its standing in the higher education and training of SCWs.

Most of the participants spoke of the value of providing a theoretical base to the experiential work, as it provides an in-depth understanding of the process and practice of their PD and assists students in understanding professional practice:

... on the PD field, I would use theories, because again I'm trying to get them to understand that a theory is a piece of knowledge that helps you understand the practice that you are doing, that somebody has written about, but it could come from a variety of sources. And it's valuable if its valuable to you and it makes sense to your practice. (P.3)

And P.13 spoke of exploring and debating new theories and ideas without adopting the taken for granted assumptions about the theoretical base:

Well we would be very particular here, like the kind of major theories that we would use here and again you know some of the staff would be critical of them which is great, they make us challenge and look...that it's not the be all and end... all that you have to begin at the critical side of things. (P.13)

P.13, a very experienced SCW and SC educator, also speaks of the preference for theories by staff in his SC programme and as PD is incorporated into the professional development module the theories chosen to reflect that fact:

There are some who would be very big on Attachment (theory), very big on Resilience (theory), I suppose we'd be very big on the Ecological systems (theory). (P.13)

The theoretical approach most common to all 14 participants across the 13 IOTs is the integrative approach, which incorporates a variety of theoretical perspectives and for some it forms the basis of their training as it is for P.8, "... Integrative (approach), because that was my training' (P.8) and P.3, 'I try to come from a variety of perspectives ...'. (P.3) and P.5, "So that's where my kind of pattern is you know. I do kind of have an interest in a lot of different ways of working". (P.5)

The dominant theoretical stance adopted by most of the participants is the humanistic perspective, with the Rogerian philosophy of person centred work the most common proponent of that perspective. Rogers (1961) work as referred to in the literature review is based on the holistic view of the person and he emphasises the importance of the fully functioning person. He highlights connection between the cognitive and the emotional understanding and the importance of the social, the emotions and the affective in education.

I think first frame of reference would have been to reference from Carl Rogers from the Psychology background and just look at his view on 'Becoming a Person' you know and the kinda criteria we are looking for as, core-competencies then for people to become more personally in-tune to become more professionally in-tune. That was very much my theory level to write the competencies. (P.1)

And the Rogerian Approach is very popular among many of the participants:

And I mean I would draw on the Rogerian thinking and Rogers, the whole importance of empathy and unconditional positive regard, but my overall framework, orientation working would really be on Reflected Practice. (P.4)

Especially when discussing the importance of relationship, the Rogerian notion of authenticity is employed by P.7:

... we have tended not so much to use the language of PD, as using a term that we take more from a Rogerian Framework, the notion of authenticity, being authentic in that relationship, being real and not having masks, not hiding behind masks, being real... (P.7)

And P.9, speaking about self-awareness, uses the Rogerian core conditions as a foundation for her PD work with students:

So, it's that. I think it is ... ah ... developing, sort of, it's Rogers who talks about the core conditions, you know, being empathic, being who you really are, being authentic, and being very genuine in your approach. Am ... you know being a person who listens without judgement. (P.9)

The humanistic approach emphasises the core competencies in SCW, however, not all the participants were advocates of the humanistic approach, with P.10, a behavioural therapist, favouring CBT over the Humanistic approach:

I know some of my colleagues now would be very different and they'd be much more into sort of getting people to talk and reflect and they'd use that type of Humanistic approach. But I wouldn't be that, I mean I'd do it, but it's not my forte. It's not what I do best. (P.10)

Others questioned an over-use of the humanistic approach:

The main theoretical stance would probably be the humanistic perspective you know, like primarily Humanistic you know. Sometimes it might be too much Humanistic, but it is definitely, that's what I'm saying. (P.8)

The gestalt perspective, falling under the humanistic approach, is another perspective used by P.1, who stresses the holistic view of the person, "helping people become more whole in themselves" and "dealing with what's going on right now" (P.1) in this approach.

The participants who were trained in the psychodynamic approach favoured it; P.5 and P.8 both favoured this approach, having previously worked in the psychiatric services where this approach is commonly used:

Mostly my way of working would have been psycho ... psychoanalytic view point ... ah ... a lot of my placements were in that area. I worked in psychiatry as well, so we used a lot of that. Jungian theory, there's a lot you ... (P.5)

A large amount of my training was psychodynamic, a lot of my academic background was, would, a lot of it came from psychodynamic ... ah ... theory so, that would be tipping away in my mind as well you know. (P.8)

And for P.13, a SCW the psychodynamic attachment theory was very important in the Professional Practice module, he says: “There are some who would be very big on attachment (Theory)”. (P.13)

The Behavioural approach is also utilised, P.1, a committed humanistic psychotherapist, also employs CBT, which she believes helps students to ‘challenge negative thoughts about themselves and negative perceptions. She goes on to explain:

I think the theory of CBT has helped in terms of the more thinking stuff, verbalizing thoughts, peace with people ... Personally, I think the way this CBT interprets ... am ... the way we think or conceptualizes the way we think has been helpful at that level to challenge students to look at something a different way. (P.1)

P.10 very much favours the CBT approach:

...obviously, I’m a Behaviourist at heart and you can’t get rid of those stripes I’m afraid, once they’re on I can’t get rid of them. So, my approach would always be much more of a pragmatic, practical approach. (P.10)

Other approaches are adopted for a specific purpose. P.6, formerly a SCW and very familiar with the use of teams and groups, employs Belbin’s Nine Roles Framework when discussing teamwork with students:

... and they reflect on their own roles and ... am ... then they use that framework (Belbin’s Nine Roles) here’s the situation now, what role do you think you’re playing, how would you solve that? (P.6)

Popular psychologies, self-help and emotional intelligence approaches are utilised by P.3, and various models of reflective practice for professional development are important to many of the participants,

Reflective practice is considered an essential in processing PD work by most of the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs. P.12 specifically employs Jasper, Gibbs and Schon models of reflection together with active learning covered by Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle Theory:

The models of reflection we would promote would be ... mm ... we would start them off with Jasper, three a day, and then Jasper five a day. And we would go into Gibbs Model, we would talk about Kolb and they would talk about Schön. But, certainly in First Year,

it's usually ... mm ... Jasper three a day and Jasper (five-a-day) and then dealing with Gibbs. Kolb was talked about and then we pushed him in. (P.12)

It's varied, and then in the reflection module then we would have the focus and we would use the walk on walk off again for the reflection, that's the reflective kind of framework that we would use, that we would present to them in terms of that. (P.13)

Egan's 'The Skilled Helper' Model is very popular among many participants, P.11 states that 'normally, usually, I just follow the Egan's Model. (P.11.)

P.13 refers to the main counselling approaches:

... we do counselling helping skills in third year...they would get to touch on the subject of the major counselling traditions, and they would get to do role plays with each other and stuff like that. So, they would talk to each other. P.13

Other theoretical perspectives related specifically to the professional practice of SCW – theories such as the Orr's Eco literacy, Head, Hands, Heart Model:

A new area that I've introduced into the programme, I was looking at the core competencies of social care. And because for me, I need the students to acknowledge that there is the 'head, the hands and the heart' (model) on top of the training and the heart area is really what the module addresses. (P.3)

Creative studies sometimes lean towards the therapeutic and employ techniques such as "sand play therapies" (P.5). However, other creative studies modules, base their content on theories specifically related to the learning objective of the creative module as specified by P.2 "...dance theories such as Rudolph Laban's 'broad-based approach to movement'" (P.2)

Both P.6 and P. 13, formerly SCWs utilise Edward de Bono's 'creative problem-solving theory' as outlined by (P.6) and the 'ecological systems theory' noted by (P.13) in the professional development modules

The Spiritual dimension is mentioned by P.8, however, he notes this not a popular choice as it can be construed as religious as opposed to spiritual and considering the history of SCW as outlined in previous chapters, it can be frowned upon and not considered politically correct in Irish society today:

... and even like part of it as well, it's very unpopular but ... mm ... it has the spiritual element as well. Because in SC right, there is a vocational side to it, but we're not allowed talk about it, you know but I would sneak it in under the radar you know. (P.8)

Overall, the data reveals that the participant chooses the theory they are most familiar with and the module is designed and delivered based on that theoretical perspective:

It tends to be kind of sourced back to an individual, an individual's driving force, so, especially in Ireland you know, we kind of adopt things whole-sale, a kind of a very personal impetus behind it like you know. (P.8)

This fact is confirmed by P.14, speaking from his perspective as a head of department whose programme does not have an overall philosophy or ideology but depends on who is teaching the subject:

we wouldn't have any, I'm not aware of any sort of ... mm ... any particularly card-carrying ideology that attaches to, or links them all together in the programme itself. (P.14)

The theoretical perspectives underpinning PD learning are many and varied. This can be considered an advantage as this eclectic mix gives a wide span of theories, concepts and ideas which add to the SC student's knowledge base. However, it can also be considered a disadvantage as it adds to the difficulty in defining the identity and meaning of PD work. Also, it may be contributing to the vagueness and ambiguity which surrounds the subject of PD. This study can be considered a starting point in opening and continuing the discourse and debate on defining PD learning in the higher education and training of SCWs across the 13IOTs in Ireland and further afield.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings of this study under the first main theme: 'Exploring the uncharted landscape of PD' and the sub-themes: a blurred and complex structure; learning objectives of PD learning; topics and themes in PD learning and a range of theoretical perspectives. The findings suggest the uncharted landscape of PD is blurred, complex and unclear. PD is embedded but hidden to varying degrees and in a variety of 68 modules in the SC programmes in the 13 IOTs investigated. The make-up, learning objectives and structure are very much dependant on the specific IOT, the SC programme(s), the module(s) description, the module(s) content and the influence of the SC educator delivering the module. The meaning of PD does not appear to be consistent across the 13 IOTs and is very much dependent on the PD educator and their underlying theoretical perspectives. The results reveal 1 stand-alone module,

in the 13 IOTs investigated, specifically dedicated to the facilitation of PD for SC students. Considering PD is one of the educational requirements for statutory registration of SCWs, this result is alarming. These results emerge from a heretofore uncharted area of the higher education and training of SCWs and uncovers some interesting but also disconcerting interpretations of the status of PD learning across the 13 IOTs investigated.

The structure, learning objectives, topics and themes and theoretical perspectives establishes the foundation of PD learning. The next chapter establishes how this learning and knowledge is imparted and is enabled and reports the findings under the main theme ‘The Process and Practice of PD Learning’

Chapter 6: Findings

The Process and Practice of PD Learning

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings under the second main theme: The Process and Practice of PD Groupwork as perceived and interpreted by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs. The sub-themes further elaborate on these findings under the headings: (1) *Small experiential group work*; (2) *Methods of assessment in PD learning* and (3) *Grading PD learning*.

Main theme: The Process and Practice of PD Learning

The results reveal that the process and practice of PD across the 13 IOTs depends entirely on the specific IOT, the SC programme(s), the module(s) in question and the influence of the SC educator. Most of the 14 participants state that they employ a combination of lecture and small experiential group work in facilitating the process of PD for SC students. Class size varies between 150 students in the largest class to 25 in the smallest one. The size of the small groups also varies across the 13 IOTs with a minimum of 5 members in a group to a maximum of 30 members. The most effective group size to facilitate PD learning is perceived to be 10 members. The approximate class and small group size across the 13 IOTs are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6 Class Size/Group Size across the 13 IOTs

Class Size	Group Size
150	15
120	30
100	10
80	20
80	15
70	14
70	15
60	20

50	05
44	20
40	10
30	15
25	05

All participants, bar one, said they use the lecture format to deliver the theoretical content of the 68 modules associated with PD. The 14 participants across the 13 IOTs utilise a combination small groups, workshops, practicals, tutorials and/or a creative action method as their preferred mode of delivery for PD experiential and active learning. Most participants favour the experiential small group as the main mode of delivery. However, the issues of resourcing small group work are a challenge for many participants, with most participants describing poor facilities, such as inadequate heating, lack of appropriate room space for PD work, timetabling issues and inadequate staffing and appropriate training. The findings reveal that those PD facilitators, especially those with a therapeutic background and training, are comfortable in the role of small group work facilitator, however, some of those without psychotherapeutic training are not quite as comfortable in the role especially if the work veers towards the therapeutic. Some participants spoke of the responsibility of being a role model for the students especially in the practice of maintaining healthy boundaries and confidentiality in group. Reflective practice is considered an important element of PD group work and learning. The methods of assessment and grading of PD learning depend on the IOT, the SC programme(s) and the module(s) in question, however, most participants comment on the subjective nature of PD work and the difficulties they experience in grading. These findings explore the main theme in more detail under the following sub-headings.

Sub-theme: Small experiential group work

All participants, without exception, recognise the importance of experiential group work in facilitating PD work, within the various 68 modules. They describe it as providing a space for students to experientially, explore personal issues and concerns, engage in creative art work and acquire the relevant practical skills for SCW. An added learning outcome, they observe, is that it also provides an opportunity for students to observe and experience the function and importance

of group dynamics whilst simultaneously witnessing the link between theory and practice. This learning is outlined by P.1:

... group participation, learning about group dynamics which can only really be learned by sitting in the group and reacting in the group. (P.1)

P.8 claims small group work in SC training is like a microcosm reflecting actual SCW dynamics and this proves very beneficial for the students in that it prepares them for their future role as SCWs:

In discussion, in the way they act with others, you know, it's almost like a microcosm of how they're going to act out in the real world you know. And it's just trying to capture that and showing that yes that is relevant for the professional practice you know. (P.8)

All the participants speak of the advantage of shared experience and how this facilitates the students in their learning:

And in the tutorial group there is a sharing about reading Mark Hamer and what I am taking from what he is saying is this and that. This I have found provides an opportunity and a space for students to hear others for sharing their experience of, because they all take different things from the reading and so therefore, I also find when they are doing an assignment. (P.4)

P.6 facilitates drama workshops and points to the participatory nature of the work:

... it is very much participatory and non-intrusive and usually they change the room round so they are not sitting at the desk. They change it around, they are all sitting around in a circle. (P.6)

Learning how to develop a connection with another human being is another benefit of working in small experiential groups and is considered the cornerstone of SCW by P.9 and P.1 observe:

I also think that the group work, the small group work makes, gives more opportunities for the class to have more connections, to care more about each other, to interact more with each other, to develop a class identity ... You increase trust, you increase care, you increase a desire to protect, to increase peoples' respect for other people's human dignity around that. (P.9)

I suppose PD theory is then translated into group settings where one can feel human nature at its core and to feel what it's like being with people who are maybe being very honest about something or working in a very real way in a group. (P1)

P.8 maintains that working in a group setting allows the student to get out of the headspace and into a creative emotional space:

(Lectures and Groups – in circles) I can integrate very creative elements as well, drawing photographs can bring pieces to talk about these kinds of things, you know, just to give something different to it, coz it's almost created to get people out of the headspace, as associated with the lecture. I operate on a different level, for feeling, like emotional type of level you know. (P.8)

Connecting the practical elements with the contents of the lecture is an important learning objective for all 14 participants across the 13 IOTs;

But they get the chance to experience what I am talking to them about in the lecture, so for something like visual difficulty they would actually put blindfolds on and feel what it's like not to be able to see and to move. So that would be the main way I would teach it. (P.2)

Even though the benefits of small group work are evident, however, the participants also experience challenges which impede their work with students. The findings disclose the optimal group membership to be 10 members, however, P.10 speaks of having 28 members in her group at any one time, which she claims defeats the purpose of 'small' group work:

Well, what we're supposed to have in a group, what is laid down; we're not supposed to have more than 15. But the reality is you can have twenty, now at the minute I'm lucky, I have 20. But last year like, I had 28 in one group. Now I had 20 in the other, I had 3 groups last year and there were 20 in the other two. But one group with 28 in was just ... (P.10)

This problem highlights the question of lack of resourcing for PD work in general but specifically small group work. This proves to be a concern for all the participants, and they point to the high cost of running small groups (the high cost of the low teacher-to-student ratio) as being a significant factor in increasing group size.

And it needs to be small groups and small groups are expensive. So, it's about encouraging Institutes (IOTs) to understand the value of the work. It needs to come across and I think that's the biggest challenge. (P.3)

Most of the participants confirm that facilities are not up to standard for small experiential group work, across most of the 13 IOTs and mention the lack of adequate facilities which impede the work.

the group size, I think it would be really nice to be able to work ... ah ... more deeply perhaps, with groups ... ah ... time constraints, over semesterization has reduced the amount of deep thinking that needs to take place, you know the development of anyone's learning is a process ... am ... that's not easy for everybody... (P.5)

And because of inadequate facilities, large classes and time constraints, P.6 has dispensed with small groups and now utilises workshops as an alternative mode of delivery:

And what I tend to do (coughs) it's harder here because the classes have got so big, I do it a lot down in xxx am I've taken workshop blocks ... we have blocks of Thursdays, just Thursdays, so then you, they were coming in and it was workshop for the whole day. They were in the room because with the stuff I was trying to do, you can't do that in an hour. You just can't. (P.6)

Also, according to P.8, facilitators need to be trained and not over-burdened:

... but it depends on who's facilitating it as well you know. If they have the training or the know-how, if they're sensitive in the area you know, if they're not over-burdened you know. (P.8)

However, P.14, head of department, gives his perspective from management and acknowledges that space constraints are a resourcing problem but cannot see an immediate solution to the problem.

And I think, in point of fact, you know, because we're so constrained on space, that's part of the reason. But ideally that should only be taught at 20 to 1 ... I think we might be doing 25 to 30 to 1 ... 30 is a bit high. Then as I said to the lecturer they have to modify and work within the constraint, it may be something I have to re-visit this year. (P.14)

P.8, who is a psychotherapist and very experienced in facilitating group work, expresses concern that there is a misconception in the wider academic community as to what small experiential group work entails and what happens in a PD group:

I think it has to do with lack of understanding of the status of it ... Because the idea that you know 'it's an easy option' that someone is doing group work, what do you do, just sit there and make people cry right. Well let me tell you, right, that's not the case, because you'd be absolutely drained after some of them. (P.8)

P.9 describes her experience of facilitating small experiential group specially designed for PD learning within a stand-alone module:

But it is the telling and the releasing and the exploring those nooks and crannies that I was talking about before right, you don't just shed the light on them, you create understanding for them, of them retrospectively, or the student creates, you maybe help that or other people in the group help that. 'How do you understand what happened to you? How do you think you moved through that?' You might use a word like 'survive'. 'How did you survive that?' There are some things I hear in group that is exactly the word I use, because there are some appalling stories you know. So, it's not about the thing that happened to you, it's 'How do you make meaning from it? How do you create resiliency out of it?

How do you move through it?’ If you are in a group and somebody else is sharing something that you have no connection with that at all, ‘nothing like that has ever happened to me’, then for you the work is, ‘how do I listen to it, how do I bear witness to somebody who’s saying these things and how do I support them and help them in their telling of that?’ (P.9)

P.9 is speaking as a facilitator who works from a therapeutic perspective, however other PD groupwork facilitators work with students in a more practical way in developing the practical skills they will require in SCW:

Get them to develop empathy, listening skills, and all that kind of stuff you know, so that’s the way that I’d work it. (P.8)

Skills include defining clear boundaries and understanding the nature of confidentiality:

So, we agree at the start of the year what the parameters of the group are, around the confidentiality, keeping it in the room, coz I ... mm ... I also give examples, even though they’re confidential and anonymous that there has to be you know, an understanding within the group that things are confidential. (P.1)

Several of the participants comment on the role of the group work facilitator. P.1 feels that creating safety and trust in the group is of the utmost importance; the group needs to be a place where the student can build a relationship of trust with the facilitator and others in the group: “The facilitator’s role is to create safety and trust” (P.1). This perspective is endorsed by P.6, who agrees that the most significant role of the facilitator is to establish a relationship of trust;

They’re out of their comfort zone and I always know what’s in the room, they’re afraid she’s going to get us up and do a song and dance, drama or whatever and they all have this fear, every year it’s the same ... So, I suppose it’s a lot of me putting them at ease and building that relationship of trust. It is that. (P.6)

P.9 feels that the facilitator acts as role model for students:

Yeah! Because that I think is more about teaching and I don’t see myself as ... mm ... as a teacher when I’m in the group room. Sometimes I might see myself as a model, but not as a teacher. (P.9)

While the benefits of facilitating PD through the medium of small experiential group work are highlighted, the participants experience many challenges as well. One dilemma that became evident during the interviews is whether group work attendance should be mandatory and/or monitored. The results are conflicting, some participants feel that group work is so essential and important in SCW education and practice that it requires mandatory attendance “If you are going

to be working as a SC practitioner, you're working with people, you need to be able to work around people, so it is mandatory". (P.6), for others the learning is so important that all students need to attend so "everybody gets PDP. It's a mandatory piece of work". (P.12). However other participants require 80% attendance, allowing 20% for personal circumstance that may prevent them from attending, but if they do not achieve the 80% then they fail the element. "they have to have 80% attendance, they have to have that, and we do fail them if they don't". (P.10). For other participants participation in group work is not mandatory but is monitored and assessed according to the level of participation and engagement in group.

Sub-theme: Methods of Assessment in PD Learning

The main method of assessment in PD learning utilised by most participants is continuous assessment. In a minority of IOTs, participants utilise an examination in combination with continuous assessment, but these are mainly in the professional development modules. Overall the methods of assessment for the 68 modules depend on the module in question and are varied and these are outlined in Table 10.

Table 7 Methods of Assessment in PD Learning

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT IN PD LEARNING				
Reflective Journal	Group Project	Report	Record Sheets	Role Play
Reflective Diary	Group Facilitation	Case Study	Essay	Observation of art work

Reflective Log	Presentation	Project	Exam	Artistic Performance
Reflective Essay	PDP Interview	Portfolio	Review	Practical

Reflective practice is mentioned by all 14 participants across the 13 IOTs as being an essential element of SC training. The reflective journal/diary/essay and log are the most popular method of assessment and are employed by most of the 14 participants and are regarded as a core element in PD assessment as described by P.3:

So, the core part of the work is a reflective journal. And I give the students a question each week based on the experience that we have in class because I give a lecture and then I have them in small groups of twenty and it's very discursive so, I need them to start to explore what we are talking about and to give of themselves. (P.3)

The reflective journal is utilised as an aid in self-reflection, self-development for the SC students and is a necessary learning as “they need to be reflective practitioners to be effective in the workplace”. (P.12)

The principal written assignments are essays, examinations are not used to assess PD learning. Practical proficiencies are used to assess the professional practice modules and creative studies assessment consists of performance and observations.

Sub-theme: Grading PD Learning

However, there are different views on the methods employed in assessing and grading PD learning:

Like for, they'd have to do an assignment for me or a reflective journal you know and literally one of the sessions I'd go through each and every point that I need in the reflective journal. What I'd mark them on is the ability to connect to their own life and to their own experiences. (P.8)

P.6 has reservations concerning the use of reflective journals. She had used the reflective journal in the past but has replaced it with experiential group work, based on an assessment of skills rather than a reflective assessment. The problem with the reflective journal, as she saw it, was that it was "too personal" and she was not trained to deal with the personal issues that were emerging from the work:

I know in the beginning we were going down the route of reflective practice and I could even have been ... am ... an extern at that time that we talked about it, that it just wasn't working in terms of getting them to write ah reflective journals, in terms of their, their own personal ... ah ... experience of being in a group, being around people, you know because a lot of these students were coming from, a lot of them would have been mature students as well coming from careers that didn't involve working with people or whatever, though ... am ... yeah, I found that it wasn't ... ah ... that they really had to be taught how to do reflective practice and we would have discussed that with externs at the time. And now it's very much ... am ... very experiential within the class. (P.6)

Some of the participants make the reflective journal a mandatory piece of work but do not apply a grade to the journal entries as evidenced by P.7 and P.10:

However, they are, they're mandatory for them to write reflective journal. But we don't mark it. And we don't go and look at it necessarily. But we expect the students to use it as a platform for their own work in the modules, they bring their experiences and refer back to the reflective journal, let them bring those experiences into what you are doing. (P.7)

And so, the reflective diary for my part, I feel that if it's a proper reflective diary, a piece of work, that isn't a theoretical piece of work, then I think it's almost impossible to mark or to grade. I think you can give it a mark for submission to say that you've actually done it; you know it's submitted and then it's there on record, but whether you can grade it I'm not sure. (P.10)

P.11 utilises a pass/fail method of assessment for reflective work:

Ah ... but, for our reflective journals then, pass or fail. (P.11)

P.12, having decided not to assess the reflective journal, requires students to maintain a journal which is not observed by staff. However, they are invited to show their journal entries to get some feedback if required. P.12, having researched this topic, is now of the opinion that it is best if the entries are examined:

... are required to keep a journal; we don't look at the journals. They're invited to show us a journal entry when they come for interview if they wish. And students have said that that's useful whether they're writing a descriptive one or a reflective one, and certainly I'd be making a recommendation and we do that more formally, that we ask them to submit because that's one of the things. I have done an evaluation recently and one of the things the students were saying that if their journal is never looked at, they don't want to do it and then I discovered that Year 4 was still using Jasper 3 a Day which is totally inappropriate, but then if no-one is looking at it or asking them, sure they can do what they like. So, if we really believe that in order to be a Reflective Practitioner you should be writing reflectively, then we have to ask, so that's where I'm coming from in this instance. (P.12)

According to P.12, entries in the reflective journal are sometimes a cry for help:

Sometimes they do put very momentous tuff in, I suspect at times, I remember reading one lady's and I thought now 'this is put in here for a reason', that I'm in sympathy and you're going to know about it. That was an interesting one, I thought. (P.12)

Reflective practice is used in assessment:

I suppose that's the, we would be big in trying to assess reflection, I know some people find it hard, but I think it's the term of the people who have to move past the descriptive and move into you know, look at feelings, their own involvement, the choice. (P.13)

Three of the participants, P.1, P.9 and P.10, use the reflective journal method but do not view the students' journal entries, they prefer to use a reflective journal summary essay as the preferred method of assessment. Three of the participants do not use this form of assessment, and P.2 concentrates on performance. The body as "a medium of expression" (P.2) is the primary tool of assessment in creative studies:

Well the body is the first tool of expression, you know it's the first thing we did, you know, when we're born, symmetrically, our arms and our legs go out to the world you know. And ... am ... you'll be able to, I think, assess people, how they're feeling, far better through the way they move than the way they talk. So, the body is the primary tool. And, unfortunately, it's something that we all, some of us lose confidence in. (P.2)

The difficulty in grading work that is considered subjective work is commented upon by many of the participants, P.1 stating that it is not the personal story that is under review but the student's ability to express their process of development:

... it is subjective, and I think probably what we are ... am ... grading is someone's ability to express their development really. I never thought about it that way before as someone's ability to express and critically look at themselves and their development coz we couldn't assess what's going on inside somebody. (P.1)

The difficulty in assessing self-awareness is brought up by P.4:

I think you cannot assess the skill of whether people are self-aware or not ... but what you can do is provide an opportunity for reflection and therefore what I assess is the student's ability to engage with the process rather than the fact that by the end of the module they are self-aware, I can't assess that, but I can assess that they have through their writing, through their sharing, I can assess that they have engaged with the process and all I look for is that they engage in the process. (P.4)

P.12 admits struggling with the subjective element of the assessment and provides a solution by cross-marking each submission:

Now we've struggled. We would say even yet that assessing reflection is extremely difficult. It is very subjective. So, what some of us do is cross-mark. We would swap a certain amount with a colleague and then we would have a discussion. I find that quite effective. (P.12)

P.5 recommends striking a balance between freedom to express and the limitations of assessment:

The thing about creativity is that there's a balance has to be sought between the freedom to express and the limitations then of assessment and if you push one thing too far the other way you lose, you lose out. So, what we found, if we allow a lot of expression and they don't directly come under the eye of the assessment as such, we take the skill part out of it maybe that then we have more freedom, they're more able, they are a lot more willing to engage with it. (P.5)

Art work is not graded in every case, with P.5 noting the freedom of expression without the restriction of being assessed:

... well, the approach that I've taken to it is that the art work or the productions, the articles that come out of the work are not graded, so, they're free, there's a freedom in terms of being able to express, so the work in that sense is not ... mm ... assessed but they do have to keep what is called a record sheet, so the record sheet just goes as an outline of what the activity is, more of an observational record, and an identification of what the learning is from this, and how it might be used and so they have to make links that way. (P.5)

However, the theoretical element of creative studies is graded through the essay:

... they write then an academic essay focusing on a particular area in society that they would like to work with later on. And how they see dance can focus on that obviously with academic references. (P.2)

The essay also facilitates the assessment of the experiential work:

... the knowledge underpins the work that we do ... mm ... and then the skills, maybe the art skill of you know feeding somebody with dignity, you know and the diverse skills we need in SC depending on the area that we were talking about, but there is that huge area of

the heart and coping and everything that we're talking about PD, so I'm able to assess that through essay work. (P.3)

Combination of assessment types is common among participants, with P.10 giving an example of such a combination:

Yeah, all of that sort of thing, so part of the assessment is usually some sort of group project that they have to do in class, often with some sort of ... ah ... a short essay or synopsis or a reflective diary to go with it. And that seems to work OK. (P.10)

Observation of skills, especially listening skills, is mentioned by P.11:

So, if they ask a closed leading question then that's wrong, but they recognize that, that's good because they've highlighted their mistake, whereas if it's an open-non-leading question, then that's normally good and they highlighted why it was good, then we can mark it; the basic skills that are observable and can be objectively looked at. (P.11)

Individual feedback takes a lot of time according to P.10:

The number, I gave you 20 in a group, to give feedback to 20 students that takes a huge amount of time so, you know it is a problem. But that's generally how it's assessed (P.10).

Conclusion

This chapter reports the finding under the main theme: The Process and Practice of PD Learning which is further elaborated and discussed under the sub-themes: (1) *Small experiential group work*; (2) *Methods of assessment in PD learning* and (3) *Grading PD learning*. The findings reveal that 13 of the participants over 12 of the IOTs favour the small experiential group, with an optimum group size of 10 members, for the facilitation of PD learning, however inadequate resourcing proves to be a difficulty. Working through personal issues together with developing appropriate skills for best practice are the main topics of PD learning. The group work facilitator is perceived as a role model for students, especially in the effective establishment of relationship and developing trust. The methods of assessment are predominantly 100 per cent continuous assessment, with the professional development modules using continuous assessment in combination with an examination. Various methods of assessment are used to assess the content of the work, with the reflective journal/log/diary the most common method. Participants report on the difficulty of assessing the subjective nature of PD work. The next chapter reports the findings under the main theme: Profiling the Social Care Student.

Chapter 7: Findings

Profiling the Social Care Student

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings under the main theme: Profiling the Social Care Student as perceived and interpreted by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs. The sub-themes (1) *The profile of the social care student* (2) *The motivation to become a SCW* (3) *The link between PD and Professional Competency* (4) *PD a catalyst in increasing student retention rates* further elaborate on the main theme.

Main theme: Profiling the Social Care Student

The findings present a description of the social care student as perceived by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs investigated. These interpretations focus on the students' profile and include elements such as age, gender, backgrounds, life experiences and routes to higher level education. The main theme also suggests that, apart from the altruistic motives which underpin their motivation, there are many other underlying reasons why students chose SCW which may have a negative impact on their SCW if not explored and resolved. The usefulness (or not) of PD in the development of professional competence and best practice is reported as perceived by the participants. The skills required in SCW are presented and the necessity of 'the self' in the work is evidenced. The PD group is suggested as a place where these skills can be acquired and developed.

Sub-theme: The Profile of the SC Student

The results suggest that most of the social care students come from the catchment area or the hinterland surrounding the specific geographical area of the IOT. This is summarised by P.14, HOD, when he states that:

All I can say is that of the, when I was doing the vetting forms this year for the students, I was surprised that every one of them came from the catchment area of the Institute, and before a couple of years ago I was getting them from a broader spread. It seems to

consolidate that we take from our community, you know. Do you know what I mean and obviously it's working in our communities, it's very modular, in that respect. (P.14)

When queried as to the backgrounds of the social care students most of the 14 participants, across the 13 IOTs confirm that many social care students, but not all, come from socially and economically, deprived areas. This could be as a result of government initiatives and funding mechanisms to widen access to higher education for disadvantaged groups or because these students have had personal interaction with the SC services either as a client themselves or in relation to their caring role for others.

And in (name of IOT) now we would have a lot of girls and lads, but mostly girls, who come from very deprived areas, and I'm sure like most of the courses to be honest, the kids come from quite socially deprived backgrounds. And their perspective is wonderful because they are mixed with kids who haven't or mature students who bring something different. You know it's about; social care should be about being inclusive. (P.10)

All the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs state that students avail of many educational pathways into SC education, some of the students complete the Leaving Certificate Examination (Scrúdú na hArdteistiméireachta), which is the final examination of the Irish secondary school system and is also the university matriculation examination in the Republic of Ireland. Some students complete a Level 5 or Level 6 course in one of the many further education colleges in Ireland. Other students, having completed secondary school, opt to take some time out before commencing third level education. Some have been out in the workforce for some years and come to SC as mature students (over 23 years). With the professional statutory registration of SCWs imminent, some students who have worked in SC for many years but do not fulfil the required Level 7 criteria for statutory registration, choose to commence studies on a SC programme:

Now there is direct entry to second year, they have done other programmes elsewhere, and so as the years progress in the degree course, they tend to get older, not just one year older, but twenty years older, all of a sudden so it can be a bit ... (P.11)

Again, all the 14 participants in each of the 13 IOTs experience a mixed profile in terms of age, gender and occupation within their SC student population.

We have a very mixed age group as you can imagine, people say coming back after a lifetime ... (P.3)

The mix in profile is referred to by P.7 as affecting the dynamic when engaging in PD in class:

And so, we would get, through the Leaving Cert., you'd get your quite young people in a class, with a lot of mature people and that straight away creates a different type of dynamic, as well in terms of PD and authenticity. (P.7)

... it's very much focused on kids coming from the Leaving Cert., the CAO there's a small number, there's about two places kept for mature students and I think there's two kept for FETAC students. So, it's mostly ones who have just done the Leaving Cert. (P.11)

And despite the differences, a positive dynamic is fostered, according to P.6:

I see ... ah ... young guys maybe eighteen, nineteen just out of school I kinda thought ... uh ... oh ... this is challenging now because there's a roomful of mature students here, you know, and to keep them on board, when I see that happening, I ... and when you see them studying together, you see the younger ones helping, you know it's fantastic. (P.6)

Lifelong learning is advocated and promoted within the Irish education system and evidence of an increase in mature students entering the profession is recounted by many of the 14 participants.

Out of, this year coming into first year we could have 30 mature out of a class of 60, but on typically on average we would have a class of 60, we would have up to 10. And even indeed some years it's even been 3:1 in favour of mature applicants for whatever reason. Sometimes it can go the other way, but in general it's called 50:50. And on average in comparison with other programmes we have a much older age profile. The common student for us would be someone who's coming in, into this work after doing something else, or they're finished rearing their family and they're interested in coming into some form of care work, or they're slightly older. (P.7)

One of the contested findings centers on the debate as to whether mature students, because of their life experiences, have a better understanding of PD than the younger students. P.12 thinks that they do:

And mature students would really go into deep reflections and would take it much more seriously than some of the younger students and I think that's part of their stage of development, you know that you know first year they expect the Lecturer to be the expert and give them information. They don't like having to have dialogue, they don't like these kinds of fluffy things where we have to go in and talk about things. They prefer to be given information. And I think they find it more challenging, whereas mature learners have different life experiences to reflect on and engage with. And I think that they sometimes take to it better than the younger students you know. (P.12)

P.5 also agrees that life stage development does impact on both the young and mature students' level of engagement, again believing that mature students, ready to learn engage fully with PD:

The mature students, there's a certain cohort of mature students who are here now, ready to learn, they've been through it, they know what they're doing. We have another cohort of students who are here, and they don't know why they're here ... And then I see the ... am ... the student coming in from the Leaving Cert. who has put it on the form and not quite sure why they're here but 'I like working with people. I like the idea of working with people' but not quite sure what they're actually going to be doing, what the type of work is you know. (P.5)

The student population is mixed:

I have a mix of them, I have a mix of them, so I'd have mature students and I'd also have [leaving certificate students and] somewhere in between from all walks of life. You know we even have a pensioner in First Year, you know which I think is a good thing. (P.8)

P.4 notes that "it's about people's life experiences, it's about the place where people are at the time". This point is also made by P.3, but in the context of mature students being ready for engagement in PD and the younger students not yet ready to engage:

They (mature students) soak it. They are ready, they're at that stage in their life, so again I'm putting it out to everybody and saying: 'you (younger students) may not be ready to engage in this at all at this level and then it will be there for you to look back on'. (P.3)

However, P.4 contradicts this view when she states that engagement in PD does not depend on life stage development but on life circumstances and that both young and mature students engage on an equal basis:

... thinking to myself, I wonder how the 18-year old, the 19 or 20 who are in this class are engaging with this whole process and this whole thing about the self and self-knowledge and self-awareness ... And then I look at the mature students; I think when I look at mature students, they've a lot to contribute, they've a lot to, they've had life experience. So, they've a lot to obviously to give ... but I don't, I don't, I don't like to think it's about measuring the amount of how much people can make ... can bring because of their life experience. I like to think that even at 20 you begin to look at yourself and your life, that short life that you have, and you can still reflect on it. (P.4)

According to P.14, it balances out in the end:

They do because they're [mature students] bringing a lot of years but as well, so the Leaving Cert. student doesn't have years to bring but they have a level of sharpness that a mature student might presume they have but ... but it balances out. (P.14)

Gender balance is mentioned by all participant noting the predominance of women engaging in SC education and training. The reason for this imbalance is addressed by P.8:

There was a change when there was a move away from the religious point of view you know, so, there was mostly men back originally. But then there was a kind of a cultural shift and it's because even because there's 'care' in the title you know it's predominantly female you know ... but the gender balance is not there yet, but it makes a difference if there's some fellows in there like you know. (P.8)

An increase in male students entering SC programmes is evident for P.12:

Mainly school leavers but we have, I could say we have up to 20% mature learners. And in certainly last year we got quite a few mature men. We're getting more men over the past few years. (P.12)

Noting that, "A gender balance is very rare to have you know, I usually just have all women. All women, it's just the way that it falls" (P.8), those men who do enter the profession "they are snapped up into the sector very, very, quickly" (P.8)

The question of gender impacting on how students engage with the PD element is commented on by many of the participants, with differing views emerging on the topic:

Yes ... ah ... obviously much more women than men, but I think the, I have never, my experience so far is that both can engage as equally again depending on what they are at in their life. I have noticed you know, men can engage, I have noticed that, in fact there are some men can really engage from that struggle, excuse me, it might be more age related than gender. (P.3)

... And I think we can, we can try and draw away too much between the age and the gender. I've been surprised that some guys actually on the current course actually like the whole thing of personal and professional development. So, I wouldn't like to be sexist and think and say it's more a woman's thing, more a thing that women are drawn to. (P.4).

The profile of the SC student is similar across the 13 IOTs as perceived by the 14 participants in the study.

Sub-theme: Motivation to be a SCW

SCW according to most participants, attracts a certain type of student. When queried as to what did they mean by a 'certain type of student', they all comment that generally they are motivated by altruistic reasons and want to help or care for others. However, when this question is explored further it emerges that many of the SC students had been involved in caring for others before they began their studies. They continue to care for others especially in their families, extended families, community network or friends and this leads them to opt for a career in SCW. Moreover, some participants note that some SC students, have been in care and have received (or

are currently receiving) the professional support of a SCW or SW and this prompts their choice of career. In some cases, the motivation to enter SCW arises out of the need to resolve some deep-seated personal issues, or in some other cases' the personal need to rescue or care for 'the other' prompts them to be a SCW as described by P.4:

According to P.4, SCW and SW attracts the person who wants to rescue:

I think we attract the person who wants to rescue, we attract the person who wants to genuinely help, we attract the person who themselves possibly have problems and want to resolve their problems by being sub-consciously, there is something about social work and social care work that attracts the rescuer, the person who is searching for answers, the person who has the need to help somebody, and in the process maybe help themselves, even subconsciously. And because of that I think that is important that students are subjected to the whole scrutiny of PD. (P.4)

Or the student who has experiences many difficulties in life:

They come into me because the world hasn't been right for them. Yes, I think there's a fair amount of that alright. And that sometimes doesn't come out for a year or two. (P.12)

P.6 feels that they come into SCW to help themselves:

... (something) draws them in to help people ... yeah ... but I mean the first people they are helping is themselves you know because there are quite a lot of students coming from backgrounds of addictions which I think is a huge benefit to social care, a lot of people coming from and am ... (P.6)

And this may be for the wrong reason, according to P.2:

The group that do SC sometimes, themselves, as we know, sometimes can have their own vulnerabilities. And they do the degree, sometimes for the wrong reason. (P.2)

P.10 recognises the students who wish to emulate the professionals who helped them:

... it (SCW) attracts, often it attracts kids who've had their own problems in life and it's not surprising because the people that they want to emulate are often the professionals that they had contact with as young children. (P.10)

SC is a programme whose content has the potential to trigger personal issues for students, especially in the first year according, to P.4:

I find the first year the course throws up a lot of things, so children might come up and say, 'well I was adopted', or talk about an issue like 'well I know about suicide because my brother hung themselves in the garage' or something like that. I try to say that because

they are here for four years it is important that they are aware that they need space themselves to say personal issues or not to say them. (P.4)

These issues and historical memory can impede their professional work, according to P.10 and P.7, with the necessity for self-awareness in addressing these issues and creating professional boundaries noted by P.7:

So, it is not surprising but yes, we often have a good proportion of the group who have considerable problems ... so they may have drug problems ... abuse problems ... or have other mental health problems. We have, there's often kids with depression or anxiety ... I think that's the course we offer, we attract, you know I would say 'it's ok'. I think it's fine. (P.10)

Now a lot of people are drawn into working in SC because of issues for themselves you see, either historical memory or they're wanting to make up for their own experiences. So, this, if they're not aware of that, this can trip them up in terms of dealing with other people. Because often then they project their own needs onto the other person, so there's an obvious issue there. (P.7)

Referring to the shadow side of the caring profession, P.1 points to the necessity for exploring motivation for entering the profession:

Am I do think that ... mm ... the shadow side about being in SC or Psychology or anything, is that, there is a reward from helping others and I think people need to address that motivation, see it and also look at how constructively they need to help. If they want to see someone grow it has to be on that person's two feet alone that the growth has to come ... (P.1)

This is also referred to by P.3, with the specific intention of protecting the carer and the client:

I think it's a recognition of the importance of understanding yourself before you work within social care. And that it should, you should start looking at it before you go to work with people who are vulnerable and you know if one of the key questions that the student will leave with is even asking himself 'why do I want to be a SCW?' and you know, even acknowledging that, yes, I need to be the one that's grounded, so I need to have done some work on myself before I work with vulnerable people. That would be the core. (P.3)

The students, states P.5, need the opportunity to talk about and discuss any issues that may impede their work:

... you know. I don't know, there are some people who come through us with all kinds of issues, and you know, I know that from my work in psychiatry and all these different areas, it may not be the right time to talk to somebody about something. Or they may not even be aware of what they're doing. And there may be the right time then for somebody, for me to say, 'listen this is what's going on, do you realize that' and then they realize. (P.5)

The process of PD facilitates self-awareness and exploring motivation to enter SCW, according to P.4:

... I think what it [PD] does is it helps students to look at themselves, which they should do, and what I have seen is a lot of students will come on the SC programmes and social work attracts a certain kind of person. And I would argue that because it attracts that kind of person students in fact need to be subjected to that scrutiny of themselves. (P.4)

And educators need to be aware that according to P.10:

How's it, they come from these backgrounds they often have financial problems, or they have carer burden or there's so many other things, so many things students have to deal with, and the whole profession is supposed to be looking after people, so I do think it's remiss of us, not to kind of think of that when we're looking after... (P.10)

The motivation to enter SCW is not straightforward, it is complicated and sometimes integrated with the student's personal life experience. One important fact noted by all 14 participants, is the need for the SC student to explore and examine their reasons and motivation for entering SCW, both for their own self-care but also for the safety and wellbeing of client.

Sub-theme: The link between PD and professional competency

The 14 participants across the 13 IOTs stress the link between engaging in PD and the development of professional competency referring to PD learning as the cornerstone of professional competency. The necessity for students to explore and deal with their unresolved personal issues, history and 'baggage' before attempting to work with a client base who, are in the main, a vulnerable population is very evident in the data. The safety and wellbeing of the SCWs and most especially the service user is paramount and is emphasised by all the 14 participants. They acknowledge the role PD learning plays in developing the aptitude, skills, proficiency and expertise required in SCW. The upcoming statutory registration of SCWs will require SC educators to ensure students entering SCW are trained to the highest professional standards and participants point to the part PD learning plays in that process. It also is evident from analysis of the data that participants are influenced by their theoretical perspectives when commenting on the competencies. The psychotherapists emphasising the necessity to process unresolved issues, the drama teacher pointing out the necessity of gaining self-confidence and the SCWs who facilitate the SC student in professional development referring to the reflective practice. This link between

PD learning and professional competency is underlined, by P.1, a psychotherapist when she clearly states:

We all have our own ... am ... baggage or history and I suppose, we don't really want for people to go into social care without seeing that baggage and being able to identify things that they may react to from a personal level when they're in a professional capacity, or to know when things are too much, or to know when they may be feeling vulnerable in a certain situation. (P.1)

This link is also expressed by P.8, another psychotherapist:

... the client base that they are dealing with, you know, you need to kinda have some internal work done yourself, you know in order to deal with, there are so many issues that you might face on placement or in the real world, you know. (P.8)

And again, this is apparent when P.6, a SCW, declares that:

I always say you never go out and work with a group of people and get them to do things that you wouldn't do yourself you know and to understand that, all the different dynamics, really prepares them for going out into a placement where as soon as you walk into that room the dynamic is shifted. (P.6)

All of the participants, experienced SC educators, reflect on the need to “make links with who they are and why they are the way they are” (P.12) and say that PD learning has a very important place in SC education, especially as the worker expect clients to “trust you ... to share their vulnerability with you” (P.3). SCW is based on establishing healthy relationships with clients, who may be very vulnerable. The need for students to become self-aware is paramount and facilitators state that the facilitation of PD needs be done in a purposeful way to insure client and worker safety.

.... because in SC you are working with vulnerable people and in order to do that you need to purposely learn about yourself. (P.3)

And:

... the SCW is deploying their own selves into the relationship. That is so, and we would spend a lot of time on their development of self-awareness, because aspects of themselves get implicated with them. (P.7)

The need to address personal unresolved issues and the development of self-awareness is mentioned many times by most of the participants especially in relation to the protection and welfare of clients.

And I don't think people come into this course fully realizing the extent of how much they have to use themselves and how much the self is so important and how, how clear they must be, in their own you know, how much damage they could do to other people, if they are not actually aware of themselves to that extent. How, you get people to that stage I'm not sure. (P.5)

P.1 refers to the need for SC students to address personal issues before embarking on a career in SCW, especially the issues of power in the SCW/client relationship where there is a danger of the SCW getting their own needs met through the disempowerment or abuse of vulnerable clients.

And if you've never gone through the process of acknowledging that you need to look at areas in your life, you need to look at your past, you need to maybe sort out the reason why you are attracted to a helping profession, look at that, look at your issues with power, look at your issues with family dynamics, relationships in your life, how functional or not functional that they are ... mm ... in terms of your needs, are you trying to have your needs met in the work that you do and all of those questions, you need to ask them in training because you need to be the person who is a model, who through the work that you've done on yourself, will give somebody the confidence to do work on themselves. (P.3)

Developing self-awareness, learning how to engage in healthy relationships, challenging sedimented beliefs and prejudices, self-care and building self-esteem are familiar learning outcomes of PD for the 14 participants. However, the extent to which this is evident to those other educators, outside the area of PD, is questionable with some referring to PD work as soft learning or non-academic. This is disputed by all participants who stress the importance for the SC student in higher level education to have the opportunity to explore 'the self' before engaging in such challenging SCW. This exploration of 'the self' is explained by P.4:

... it's possible to evidence that students who come on or who are attracted to this programme are coming for a reason other than just the course. They are on a search path. They are attracted on it for a certain reason. It's also possible to evidence that the way they are doing the module when they go on placement begins to make sense about why they want, why they had to look at themselves in the first place. They begin to say 'oh I became aware of such and such' from the whole self-awareness thing begins to kick in. I don't know if that answers your question am ... but I think that it's possible to evidence the need for such a module. (P.4)

The human element is core to SCW and needs to take center stage, according to P.8:

I think, especially the area that you're in, it's the human element that has to be pushed to the front, it's not about grey or black and white. It's all various shades of grey you know. This is what our students are going out to be dealing with, on a day to day hour to hour basis, messiness you know. (P.8)

Because if the self or the carer (SCW) is not right, to use that term, then the relationship won't work and if it won't work you're going to do harm to the service user which is an ethical breach, we must not do harm to the people we work with, but it will also do harm to the 'carer' themselves because they'll misinterpret what's happening or become damaged by what's happening or be negatively affected by the relationship itself. So, therefore central is the personal, self. (P.7)

I think PD is a space for people to get stronger ... mm ... in terms of their ability to ... if they're going to be strong going into the work, they're going to appreciate the strengths in their clients, so that client has survived here-to-fore without them and will still go on surviving afterwards. So, it's to help that person gain extra knowledge or insight to help themselves. (P.1)

This point is taken up by P.3, who expands by acknowledging that PD is an area that is not done very well. The reason that it is not done very well may lie in the fact that it is hidden and not explicit and may need a higher profile in SC higher education and training.

I think it is the hardest part of the work and we don't really do it that well! (P.3)

P.14 cautions about what happens in the aftermath of self-awareness for the student, they are provided with this knowledge and how do they react? Maybe their personal issues require professional support. This is a very important point as some participants point to the need to refer the students to the college support services, who are very accommodating, but have long waiting lists. P.14 is questions opening up issues for the student if the professional support is not immediately available.

I think what can happen is that students of SC come to the programme through a variety of needs or following a variety of roads. And for some it is a case of self-exploration or self-excavation. Fine! It is what it is! But it's what they do with that knowledge once acquired, that's once revealed to themselves is the important thing. And I think what we've got to try to do ... mm ... with the student is to make sure that they don't, that they empathize with the circumstances of the client that they're with, but that's it and some boundary issues would be a big thing in professional development so, that they can be aware of who they are, and they can either view it as a strength because they're aware of that. (P.14)

The question of fitness to practice in SC is a challenging issue for SC educators. How is this assessed? Some educators point to work experience or placement as the means to assess if the student is suitable for SCW. However, this view is challenged by PD educators who stress that the SC student also needs a space to examine and explore personal issues and prejudices? PD is one space that is available according to some participants

... so, when they started talking about their own experience around disability and you know you could see that they were really thinking about how their attitudes were formed ... (P.12)

... but the rationale was probably about trying to at some level pick and choose or to weed out people that might be suitable for care work. And there was no other module that would allow you to get to know those students, so it was about trying to ensure some sort of standard or quality to these kinds of people that we were hoping to kind of process (into this). The PPD allowed you to get to know your students. (P.10)

The cultural influence on PD work is noted by P.4, suggesting a hesitation on the part of Irish people to talk about themselves:

So, the module will be mainly focused about you. We will talk about service users but mostly we will talk about you.' And I find that there is an, I don't know if this is an Irish thing or whatever, there is very much a hesitation around 'oh I don't like talking about myself, oh I don't like,' and I insist that we cannot talk about other people, we cannot talk about the other if we can't talk about ourselves. (P.4)

The combined views of the participants acknowledge the benefits and need for PD however for most this was not occurring explicitly but hidden within a multitude of modules. P.5 admits PD is not overt but is probably a "by-product of what they're learning. And whether they make that connection or not I don't know" (P.5). Speaking about the rationale for the inclusion of PD in the training of SCWs, P.10 refers to the view taken by some 'academics' about the more experiential subjects and comments:

It's really interesting because I think the people that wrote the course originally were academics you know, and they weren't billed to have any field experience, or very limited, so they would be reminded to include 'those sorts of things' in their programme. (P.10)

Building a relationship is considered core to SCW by a large proportion of the respondents:

I think because the profession of SC is based on working with people and relating to people. (P.1)

As the profession of SC is based on working with people:

... the profession of SC is based on working with people and relating to people ... in SC we may be meeting people who have been affected by difficult relationships or traumatic relationships and my own belief is it has something to do with healing through relationships in a more positive way that people are going to find a way forward or to move in a more positive direction for themselves. (P.7)

Statutory and non-statutory providers require a SC graduate who understands the dynamics of relationship, according to the experience of P.7:

... and they (statutory and non-statutory providers) were equally strong, they did not want graduates who could reference 'ology's and 'ism's and theoretical frameworks, what they really wanted was somebody who could enter into a relationship with another person ... So, therefore we then try and learn the skills of well how do, you, do relationships ... (P.7)

Confidence building can be explored in an enjoyable way, especially through the medium of dance, as explained by P.2:

I can only speak really from a dance perspective, but I do feel, and I do teach them first in the year, I feel at the end their ability to relate with each other, they all have got to know each other in the dance studio anyway and the laughing and the enjoyment but equally too, they all say, themselves, their confidence in themselves, especially their body confidence, has really ah, really improved. (P.2)

The skills of self-awareness and self-reflection are paramount to SC training:

So, therefore we then try and learn the skills of well how do, you, do relationships ... the SCW is deploying their own selves into the relationship. That is so, and we would spend a lot of time on their development of self-awareness, because aspects of themselves get implicated with them. (P.7)

And the value of these are reiterated by many of the participants:

Yeah, it's trying to give them, I don't know if we can ever teach them to reflect, but it's a model, a coat hanger as the man would say, when you've had an incident, here's a look at a person's perspective, your feelings, you know, the respect for other people and that, and how we can bring that into your practice in future. (P.13)

Now the, I suppose the big thing is that and its core with all the SC programmes as I can see, this idea of the reflective practitioner seems to be a big thing. (P.14)

And they do get an opportunity to write on a reflective log, to use that space, maybe to explore the learning, but it is learning focused rather than ... am ... it is exploring the self, but it is about learning about the self, drawing the learning from that. (P.5)

.... And then we embedded it into the Professional Studies module because we felt that was the most appropriate because Professional Studies is about SC Practitioner, and one of the core competencies would be the ability to be a Reflective Practitioner. So, we put it into that, and it was allocated one hour per week. (P.12)

The prevalence of stress and burnout in the caring professions in general is commented upon by most respondents, but specifically in the field of SCW. P.3, an experienced SCW confirms that if a student engages in PD work, their performance will be enhanced, and they will be less likely

to burn out and more likely to engage in healthy self-care activities. This in turn will have a beneficial effect on clients and service users:

And if somebody is given this type of training, (PD) they will perform better, they'll be less stressed, they won't burn out. (P.3)

...but you only realize it afterwards when you're in work and you're burnt out and you realize you've taken out your own stuff on the kid or you know what I mean, you only realize it after that. (P.3)

And P.9 extols the virtues of addressing the process of self-care in the profession:

Absolutely, absolutely, I should have said that. Self-care is a BIG, big, piece of it you know in all four years and you know I think we do a good job of promoting that. (P.9)

And participant P.11 looks at the issues connected with healthy boundaries in work:

... because working with perpetrators and situations like that is, can be inherently damaging if you don't take care of yourself; so, we look at issues connected with boundaries and that sort of stuff and the impact on the self and how to overcome that, easy talking and listening and that type of stuff. (P.11)

The role of PD in SC education and training is perceived by participants as equipping students with a variety of skills required for a profession that involves working with a vulnerable population in challenging environments. P.6 refers to developing a set of skills appropriate to working with people:

Because it was crucial ... that the students had the skills and the confidence to work with people. That's really, that's the bottom line ... this is a career about working with people ... there's a different set of skills (P.6)

P.3 recognises the importance of addressing the mental health of the SCW:

And I think maybe the role of PD in SC Education is to give people a variety of tools that maybe they mightn't use them now, but they may later-on when they're working in the field. And I'm really feeling that they need, you know, to start looking at themselves ... that we should be very open to talk about the mental health of the worker and PD will enhance your coping skills to be able to work in very challenging environments. (P.3)

Self-awareness is to the fore for P.4:

I think that it's grounded, it's grounded in the importance of self-awareness, it's very much grounded in the importance of examining one's own beliefs and values and in relation to how they in-put in practice, so just helping students to develop that importance of self-awareness. (P.4)

Students need to acquire the tools to deal with the messiness of life as pointed out by P.8:

They have to be shown how to deal with this messiness, because they don't need the ...
xxx ... messiness, right when they leave placement or their place of work. They carry it
with them, and they need to be given the tools on how to deal with it, the real world you
know. (P.8)

P.9 refers to circumstances of life:

Ah the big one is just become more aware of who you are. Ah, I think getting exposure to
and ... mm ... welcoming, learning to welcome people who are different from you,
learning to be able to be with people ... mm ... in difficult circumstances, in happy
circumstances, in competitive circumstances, in circumstances where there is loss or
difficulty or sadness. (P.9)

Students need to learn how to engage and communicate, give and receive support:

Ah I think basic, especially for, well not for everybody, I suppose, especially for our
students – how to engage with people, how to communicate, in particular how do you
communicate with somebody who maybe doesn't communicate in a way that you do;
whose experience ah is either exactly the same as yours or who comes from a completely
different family-background experience than you are, how do you connect with people ...
How you offer support, how do you, I mean I see this with our students, how do you
receive support, how you let other people help you or listen to you? (P.9)

P.2 refers to increasing confidence and self-esteem creatively:

So, self-confidence, self-esteem, absolutely, there's body image and there's no questioning
it ... my aim is to let my students see the value of dance as an area that they may hone-in
with when they're in SC later on. (P.2)

Practical coping skills are advocated by P.10 as she believes that these are the skills required to
deal with challenging environments and not necessarily to adopt a predominantly thinking or an
emotional response:

... you know most of these kids are going to be working with people with, the vast
majority of these will be working with people with an intellectual disability, they're going
to be working with youth, they're going to be working with the mentally ill, the homeless,
so they need skills to help them cope and manage those things, not necessarily to think
constantly about their, about how they feel in it. (P.10)

However, P.11 takes the opposite view, suggesting that thoughts and feelings are important and
that ignoring them would be to do an injustice to the student:

From my experience I think that my job is to equip the students for the real world, even if
it's just on placement. And I realize that in the real world that thoughts and feelings are

important and that if we ignore that then we're not doing the students a proper service. (P.11)

Creative studies, especially drama, offers the facility to act out in role plays from practice and learn how to react to real-life work situations, as suggested by P.13:

... and they would do things in drama, like they will you know replicate role plays from practice, they will get a chance to role-model that, get feedback from others in how they dealt with situations, so that's very valuable ... And we would do role plays in terms of, you know, examples of workers who are, maybe, very power driven and into structure and routine, how they handle situations like that, and they would bring examples back to the practice. (P.13)

The establishment and maintenance of 'relationship' is one of the core elements in all types of SCW. Participants, in general, seeing how the potential enmeshment of worker and client could occur if clear boundaries are not established early in the relationship, note the critical need for engaging in the process of self-reflection and self-awareness. P.7 claims that "the person you most meet in SC is yourself" and adds that PD is not an 'added-on' component in SCW but is the central pillar around which everything else comes into play, because SCW is based primarily on the relationship between the SCW and the client and therefore is open to abuse of many sorts.

So, we cover things like child abuse, domestic abuse, self-injury, you know we do, all those types of things, and so they may have been affected by that. And that's what they're going to be affected by in practice, how they're going to deal with that knock-on, all the incidents of stuff like that. So, part of the journey is trying to come to, some sort of self-awareness around that, come from that, is that going to leak into their practice in the end in working with clients like this? (P.13)

... you see ... personally, the relief people have when they don't have to keep hiding certain parts of themselves anymore, because they realize other people are the same at a core level ... so, in that sense I've seen students really become more, true to themselves and a bit more freedom has come from that, I think, that's my guess. So, there's a huge personal benefit which will then lead to a huge professional benefit to the people they support and that they have that more freedom with themselves. (P.1)

Sub-theme: PD a catalyst in increasing retention rates

One of the unexpected findings to emerge from the data is the relationship between engaging in PD work and increasing student retention rates. This finding is related to having a designated space each week in which students can discuss their current issues with a professional SC educator and their fellow group members. Some participants refer to the attention and concern

students received through the process of PD work. Others feel that students are monitored in PD on a weekly basis and any difficulties are addressed before they escalate out of hand.

... and then at the one stage there might have been a few drop-outs that we were kinda concerned about and we kinda looked into that to find out why and it was to do that they didn't, they had no confidence (P.6)

When I first worked here, I shared an office with people who were teaching Science and they had issued a report showing the retention rates in different programmes and that year SC was like at 97%. And they were kind of getting ah a little bit of grief from their Department Heads and Heads of School because they were below 80. And I wasn't even teaching PD then. And two of the women ... mm ... who have been here for 30 years ah both said, 'It's the PD work that they do that keeps those students here', so people know it, but we are not shouting about it and we're not contradicting, not making it visible and we need to do that. Because one of my fears really here ... (P.9)

Reference is also made to small classes as the best way of getting to know student:

... but it's still our best way of getting to know the student, you know there's no other class or module that allows that ... you have some link in to the real person. (P.10)

P.12 refers to identifying difficulties, good relationships and retention of students:

I was sort of trying to say this recently. Simply that you know one of the things, what I would believe is that ... mm ... retention, I think is affected by PD people. That interests the funders, because of the fact that we would lose a few students, very few, because we have a good relationship with them. We're able to identify difficulties and our retention rate, I mean we can tell you that two students left last semester and you know why they left. And I think that's really important and funders should take note of that...it's still around the PD you know, and I think that's really important. Retention I think is affected by this and I think that's you know ... (P.12)

Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings under the main theme: Profiling the Social Care Student as perceived and interpreted by the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs. The sub-themes further elaborate on the main theme. The findings suggest that SC students come from all walks of life, but quite a large percentage come from economically or socially deprived areas. The age, gender and life stage of students is varied, with a noticeable increase in number of male students who are now beginning to enter SC work. Mature students provide a large cohort of the students who are entering third level education for the first time. Some are returning to fulfil the statutory requirement for a Level 7 degree in SCW in order to be eligible for registration. The results show

that, apart from altruistic inspiration, there are other underlying motivations for students entering the SC profession. Some of these involve attempting to unconsciously process unresolved personal issues through their work with client. The findings reveal the potential for unhealthy enmeshment or entanglement with clients' issues, mental health issues or burnout if these unresolved issues are not addressed. before they enter the caring profession. An unexpected finding suggests a correlation between attending PD experiential group work on a weekly basis and provides a catalyst for the increasing the retention rates for SC students. Finally the main findings describe the benefits of PD work which includes developing self-awareness and creating healthy boundaries which are essential in SC education and subsequent SCW.

Chapter 8: Findings

The Multi-layered Role of the PD educator

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings under the final heading: The Multi-layered Role of the PD educator. The sub-themes further elaborate on these findings under the headings: (1) *Walking a thin line* (2) *Therapeutic training* (3) *Creating a 'safe space'* and (4) *Commitment and dedication to PD work*. The main theme presents the findings in relation to the profile of the PD educator and their interpretation of their role within the higher SC educational and training programme in the IOT sector.

Main theme: The Multi-layered Role of the PD Facilitator

The findings reveal the role of the PD educator to be multi-layered and in some respects ill-defined. Participants describe their role as ambiguous in that they find themselves walking a thin line between what they perceive to be PD work and therapeutic work. Results suggest a tension and complexity in defining the PD educator role, which is described by some as doing therapeutic work, by others as using therapeutic skills within PD work and still others who do not perceive it be therapeutic in any way. Lack of adequate resources is highlighted by participants as impeding their work, with one participant claiming the lower status of PD work among other academic subjects as having a bearing on the allocation of resources. For some participants, their perceived lack of therapeutic training for the role of PD educator is a challenge. For some others the challenge is in finding themselves in the role of PD educator without being consulted. However, duty of care toward the student is uppermost in all the participants' minds and having the option to refer students to student services, especially student counselling, when necessary is appreciated. All the participants are very committed to their PD role despite the challenges and the tensions.

Sub-theme: Walking the Thin Line

One of the main findings to emerge from the data is the perceived multi-layered and sometimes ambiguous role of the PD educator, most evident in the perception of many participants as ‘walking the line’ between facilitating PD and doing therapeutic work. Some participants feel that when facilitating students in dealing with personal issues their work leans towards therapeutic work. P.8, an experienced psychotherapist, acknowledged this ‘fine line’, but states that as a psychotherapist, with wide experience, he is within his depth:

... the way we do PD here is great. But we walk a very fine line. And that is, I guess I want to make sure that I am walking that very fine line as well as I can. So, I think the more that I know and the more experience that I have I can walk that line. (P.8)

This notion of negotiating this imaginary line or ‘walking the fine line’ is mentioned by many of the participants, with some very definite as to where they stand on that line. Some participants, especially, those who facilitate dance or drama modules are very clear that they do not work from a therapeutic perspective, P.2, a dance teacher, is very sure that she does not work from a therapeutic perspective:

I always stipulate that the people they deal with, it’s not from a therapeutic perspective. (P.2)

P.10, a psychotherapist, also refers to ‘the line’ but is adamant that PD should be therapeutic but should not provide therapy. She also makes a distinction between engaging in therapeutic work and using therapeutic skills in PD work.

I don’t think it should be therapeutic. I think we can use therapeutic skills and therapeutic environments, but the aim is not to provide therapy, but, it’s about where you decide or what you decide is therapy and what isn’t ... Now sometimes there’s a need for it, I’m not saying you can’t never do it, but not as a general rule. So, there is a kind of line and it does – in the middle there somewhere and I think it does depend on the personal and professional background of the individual. (P.10)

However, P.9, a SW who has therapeutic training, states the opposite, in her case she does engage in therapeutic work, but this is sometimes frowned upon:

... our programme ... some of it is ... (pause) ... what’s the best word for me to use here ... political about the programme, in that we are doing group work, we are doing educational group work, we are sometimes doing psycho-educational group work. We are not doing group therapy but the dirty little secret here is that we’re doing therapeutic group work and that is sometimes frowned upon ... mm ... (pause) and it’s really only in the last

six months to a year that I have been very confidently trying to say, no this is what I do. 'I know this is what I do and don't tell me any differently. It is therapeutic group work. This is exactly what it is.' (P.9)

P.6, a drama teacher, makes the point that SC students are attending an academic institution and not attending a therapeutic center. She is resolute about not veering into therapeutic work:

No, I'm being very personal in this. I would, we would have ... ah ... different views than other members, we all have our own different views on it and I'm just going to give you mine. They are different from somebody else's, is that ... am ... ah ... no, it shouldn't because they're coming into a college, it's not a therapeutic center and I'm very strict about that. I'm sorry now but I will say that, you know. (P.6)

The fact that PD takes place in an academic institution ensures that the PD group is not a therapy group, but P.8 does concede that therapeutic elements exist in the experience:

I see it as being different to a therapy group, you know because ... mm ... in it's in an academic institution, students have to go out of the group and into a lecture format, so they're seeing people, that's not exactly a therapy group but there are therapeutic elements through that experience you know. (P.8)

Due to the increasing number of service users attending the SC programme as part of their rehabilitation programme, P.6 makes a very definite point of stating that students are attending an academic institution:

... you have to be sensitive and aware but there has been stages where it's become 'hold on a minute, are we running a college here or is it a rehabilitative institute?' (P.6)

P.1, again emphasizes the distinction between doing therapeutic work and using therapeutic skills in PD groupwork:

... whilst therapeutic skills are being used by facilitators in terms of encouraging the group dynamics and encourage a bit more honesty and self-development it's not going into the reasons why people are acting that way, or the background factors which may be very personal. (P.1)

P.5, an art therapist, notes that when facilitating students in creative artwork the students sometimes assume "they are doing creative therapies" (P.5), and she needs to point out the distinction between the discipline of art therapy and working with therapeutic skills:

So, we often came across students sometimes say they were doing art therapy, but you have try to, kind of, tell them, that's not art therapy. So, it's a no man's land sometimes they're in between, so they have to try to get it, to understand that they're not therapists

now are they, they're working with a therapeutic skill, I suppose? They're not really doing therapy work, so they're not working with clinical side or the treatment side. (P.5)

The distinction between training SCWs and training therapists and counsellors is made by P.2, a dance teacher, who is very sure that she is not creating therapists and warns about the danger of venturing into therapeutic territory in a short space of time during an academic term:

I don't believe I'm creating therapists and I'm inclined to stay very well away from it. What I do is, I use dance and I look at different places in the community rather than differing individuals. I think it's a dangerous area to enter and I don't. I'm at the point of not entering it, especially when they're only doing six weeks of dance. (P.2)

P.7 is adamant that an academic classroom is not the place for a student to work out personal issues:

But I think there is a certain limit that we found last year which is, a course of study which is a degree is an academic course of studies, it isn't a counselling programme. And it isn't a psycho-therapeutic programme, so while it is important that the students learn to be self-aware and to talk a little bit about that, a classroom setting is not the place for them to work out very profound and serious issues for themselves. (P.7)

However, blurred boundaries do occur, according to P.6, a drama teacher, especially between the role of a SC educator and a that of drama therapist:

Absolutely ... and ... am ... and there's areas of it that I didn't get into in terms of the individual self, because that's really, that's where the boundary where the blurred boundary between a drama therapist as opposed to ... [teacher]. (P.6)

The experience of facilitating PD is summed up by P.7:

So, it's when you get into the detail of it, it's, I'd find it tricky territory to navigate. (P.7)

Sub-theme: Lack of therapeutic training

P.10, a cognitive behavioural therapist, suggests that walking the line depends on the training and background of the educator:

... So, there is a kind of line and it does – in the middle there somewhere and I think it does depend on the personal and professional background of the individual. (P.10)

Professional training is helpful in dealing with the issues that come up, as P.11, a SW, notes:

Well, I worked in Children's Homes as Social Worker as well as doing field work with perpetrators and victims, so I am kind of 'used' is not the right word or I'm not comfortable with it either, but ... ah ... I don't feel professionally out of my depth if that

happens. Although I don't know it that's really comfortable, if that's, normally I'm ok with that. (P.11)

The participants who facilitate the stand-alone module, both with therapeutic training, have very definite views as to the necessity for a stand-alone module for 'PD' in SC training and that staff facilitating this module should be required to have therapeutic training. P.1 confirms that the staff facilitating PD in the stand-alone modules are therapeutically trained or had done some PD. Therapeutic training for staff was also essential for P.10 and P.12:

And then primarily I think they should have some sort of therapeutic type background from one degree, it doesn't, I wouldn't specify that they have X, Y and Z but I do think they should have some sort of Post Graduate background in some sort of therapy. (P.10)

I think it's [therapeutic background] a help. I think people, even if they were given some sort of continued professional development around it like offering PDP, I think that would help... (P.12)

P.3 acknowledges the importance of having qualified staff to facilitate PD but points out that the work is expensive, and management need to become more aware of what is involved in PD work before the resources will be allocated to the area. P.12, while acknowledging the need for staff with a strong psychology or psychotherapy background to do the intensive work, is also pragmatic about the whether the programme is ready:

I think we have to be practical, if PDP is going to be delivered by people with that background, I don't think we're ready for the more intensive stuff really.

P.9 feels that a therapeutic background is necessary to make sure students are not left feeling vulnerable and in an unsafe place within the group:

You need the therapeutic background and you need that level of training in order to recognize how deep your layer is going and to be very mindful or very, very, very confident or consistent so that you're not leaving people vulnerable, you're not leading them to a place that they can't come back from. You're not creating things that are unsafe within a group. (P.9)

Dealing with serious personal issues requires training, according to P.8:

If I didn't have that [professional social work training] you know, even in the context here, I've come across serious enough cases you know, if I didn't have the training that I had, I don't think I'd be able to deal with it properly you know. I mean other people here ... ah ... colleagues of mine, they wouldn't have had the training that I've had, and they would be starting it, starting the group work this year and they really don't, they see it as a talking-shop you know. (P.8)

But due to the necessity for management to fill hours, participants point out that it is not uncommon to have untrained staff filling the posts:

... but I can acknowledge from discussions with my colleagues that they're mostly not trained in this and it's troubling for them as well you know. (P.7)

P.8 feels that that when filling posts affective or PD education comes lower down the scale than the more 'academic' subjects like physics and P.10 says that "certainly in this college that anyone can teach it". (P.10)

It's battling against the political force of the organization because they have to fill hours and say 'och, anyone can do that' ... They wouldn't just throw anyone in to teach physics like you know. (P.8)

The hierarchy of academic subjects is also mentioned by P.12, leading to the fear that inexperienced staff allocated to the practice subjects could potentially damage students:

SC is really the backbone of the whole place, but the practice elements are not always seen as valuable and therefore anyone could do them, so we have like people who have just finished their masters have no practice at all of anything, running PPD groups. And that's a problem. (P.12)

One of the learning outcomes of PD is learning about boundaries as a necessary element of personal work and as a protection for self:

So, they need to learn then about, for me more about boundaries ... So, the necessity – the boundary is a protection for the self. (P.4)

To ensure the safety of the student and appropriate self-disclosure, P.7 advises a limit to be imposed on 'too much revelation', a limit on self-disclosure, "some kind of boundary is established that says in the course, this is territory we don't go into" (P.7). This boundary around appropriate self-disclosure is also recommended by P.11:

Students are more open. But I also think, even in my fieldwork experience, there's a thing that we use in interpersonal skills, you know, 'appropriate self-disclosure' (P.11)

Facilitators need to know their limits in the work. P.1 comments on the need for the facilitator to maintain boundaries in their work, as they have a responsibility to create trust and safety for the student in the PD group:

... and the safety is from people not being too vulnerable, not being too helpless and sometimes it's from saying 'I think you do need extra support from what this group can offer' (P.1)

P. 12 says that some staff don't have an interest in the work and that "there has to be a real interest in student development and student welfare".

I never got the feeling of 'well this is what you have to do', it was very open, and I was allowed to bring whatever strengths or interests that I had to it, which I think was great for me. (P.9)

The issues regarding the navigation of the line between PD and therapeutic work are brought up many times by participants, along with the difficulties inherent in dealing with the personal issues that emerge in groupwork, but P.8 points to the fallout if students didn't have the facility of PD within their education and training, believing the issues will build up if not dealt with on an ongoing basis. However, he also observes that students are not training as counsellors: 'They're not going to be Counsellors you know.'

Creating a safe space is mentioned by some of the participants as being important in providing space and opportunity for students to share;

... encouraged them to be reflective practitioners which contributed to self-awareness and a space for them to discuss issues which are affecting their learning, if that happens to be lack of computers, or lack of engagement by lectures, so be it (P.12)

When questioned about the ways to facilitate the SC students' PD in their education and training, the participants reveal many different approaches. P.8 uses the issues brought up by students to enrich group experience and encourages an open style:

So, I am continually surprised at what issues are brought up you know, but it's your ability to use them and to enrich the group experience, to feel that, that's important. I think from a facilitator point of view you have to be open to being surprised. Don't force things. You can come in with a kind of preconceived plan and it all goes out the window. This happens so many times! So! You're not doing the exact same thing over and over again. (P.8)

The pragmatic behaviourist style is evident for P.10:

... I'm a Behaviorist at heart and you can't get rid of those stripes I'm afraid, once they're on I can't get rid of them. So, my approach would always be much more of a pragmatic, practical approach. But they also love kind of an active learning, so I you know, I hardly ever have a lecture. (P.10)

P.13 point to the role of one's personality in SCW:

I know it's a cliché now, but your personality is your toolbox and particularly in Social Care. (P.13)

Most agree that each lecturer has a different approach that comes from their own underlying theoretical position:

And you see it comes from your own philosophy doesn't it? We're all from different backgrounds with different ideals, then there's bound to be some sort of problem. (P.10)

The professional interest by lectures in their subject area has a bearing on the student experience, as when:

... some lecturers had more interest in PDP than others and that affected their sort of interest in PDP also. (P.12)

Most of the participants speak about the necessity at times to refer students to the student support services, especially the student counselling service:

But in this module if an issue was to arise that am the students have a choice, to either not necessarily to talk in the group but if they want, if it is something they want to discuss with me they can discuss, but we have got a counsellor here at the campus sometimes people might not want to go for counselling or sometimes they might just want a debrief about something that has come up for them and they always ensure that is kept confidential (P.4)

And if anything, ever comes up, you know you go to wherever you need to go to for counselling and so on. (P.5)

P. 6 refers to the counsellor on campus and the availability of the service if major personal issues present for student;

Now we do have a Counsellor on campus (telephone rings twice) they can all go and talk to the Counsellor at the time, obviously, or be referred to her to an external person (telephone rings twice). I'm talking specifically about within the course itself. (Telephone rings twice) (P.6)

While group work tends to be the place where minor personal issues are dealt with in the SC programme, major personal issues are referred to counselling:

I have come across it. Some would be ... mm ... very, very personal issues, you know ... mm ... some like you'd say, you'd have kinda certain issues that you'd need to report, you know like drug-abuse, [stutters] sexual kind of things you know, all this emerged in the whole course of my experience. So those you would tend to advise them to go for professional counselling because you only have them once a week and there wouldn't be the space for that either you know. Like general everyday issues like say the dissertation, problems, maybe at home, with classes, you know, like what I would tend to do, would be

to use the group as kind of ... ah ... a safe holding area you know and allow students to bring issues that they would have to the group. (P.8)

... if somebody is in real bother, we would use a counselling service. And we wouldn't take on, but we certainly would support them in the First Year. (P.10)

... you can speak with us or your lecturer or we have support services, the counselling service, we're still at the college and there are counselling services associated with this union. And I would remind them of that, and that it's a free session. And at this stage it's become a bit of a joke and that's the cool, just to be aware. (P.11)

So, we do advise, for some very personal issues, that they use the student counselling service. We try to offer help and support but sometimes it's beyond peoples' expertise. (P.12)

The stigma that was previously attached to counselling is disappearing and students are more inclined to use the counselling service:

So, as a tutor we try not to, you know we're careful about that ... mm ... but we would tend to steer them towards maybe counselling services, they are more equipped to deal with some of that. And a lot of the students would use that, and I think students are less see it as ... mm ... you know something you know ... mm ... what's the word I'm looking for? They don't see it as ... mm ... (P.13)

Sub-theme: Creating a designated safe space for PD learning

Many participants spoke of having a space where students are facilitated to deal with personal issues. However, this proves to be a problem for a variety of reasons. P.4, who works through the forum of a tutorial, speaks of the difficulty of discussing personal issues with students in that forum due to their vulnerability and the limited time frame:

If they decide to say them [personal issues] in the forum that we are in, well that's their choice, but sometimes it's better that they are able to go to a space where they are facilitated and helped to work through, because they cannot be facilitated to work through those issues in a group that is going to happen for one hour. And what it does is, it makes them more vulnerable and will leave them like that and that is not how to deal with it, it's like opening a can of worms and then because they don't even know the people yet, especially in First Year they don't know each other. Well, I have often thought that might leave them vulnerable so that is not just the forum or the place to. (P.4)

This point is reiterated by P.5, who speaks of working in a public group setting with students and making students aware of the difficulties posed by disclosing personal information in a public space:

We've learned over the last few years that we don't do that. So, what we inform students when they come into us, that while it is a confidential space, and respected space, it is not, it is still a public space. So, it's not space for exploration of anything personal at a level that they wouldn't be comfortable with in any other place. (P.5)

Again, this is mostly due to the lack of time and the large group format:

But our groups are so large, we have very little time. It's not fair to put them in a position where they could share something that they feel that they wouldn't get support on. So, if we had smaller groups and we work intensively you could stretch that experience a little further. (P.5)

P.6 reiterates the point that in her case they don't offer sharing opportunities that could put someone in vulnerable position, instead controlling how much the student shares with another:

I actually cannot remember anything actually coming up. Because the way the structures of the classes are, we don't get into large groups at the end, we don't offer sharing opportunities that could put someone in a position where they're vulnerable. The only thing, we do have a sharing aspect of it but it's only between the person that they're sitting beside and usually the person that they sit beside are the people they know. So, it's very much controlled in terms of how they share and what they share. So, anything other than that I don't think what would be appropriate in a place like this ... it's not a forum for them to ... (P.6)

Sub-theme: Commitment and dedication of PD educators

Participants, in general, are happy engaging in the facilitation of the PD process for students:

Yeah, facilitating the process, I really like teaching this module. For me it's the heart of social care. For me, it's not overstating the point, it's the beginning or the core or the center of whatever else we then do. (P.4)

They refer to engaging in PD work without feeling they must be a therapist:

When I came here first there was no syllabus, there was nothing there, so it was essentially starting off with what they, looking at what the SCWs needed and what was appropriate for their area without them feeling that they had to be a therapist or, you know, we had to kind of be kind of balanced in terms of what we were able to offer. So, we had to be, I had to try and design a course that was, that gave them as much information as they needed, and be able to work without them feeling they had to be a therapist. (P.5)

Participants are committed to PD work and enjoy it:

Well I thoroughly enjoy the work, I thoroughly enjoy the work in the SC area, and I think us benefit, students and I, every time we do something creative. (P.5)

The satisfaction and fulfillment of witnessing the personal growth and development of the student is one of the delights for P.6 which is seen when in the role of facilitating:

Do you know, I'm kinda that kind of a person that if I don't see the value in it, I'm not very interested in it. I do see the value in it and that's where my delight is, is to see the personal growth of these [students] (P.6)

P.10 loves PD work:

I think, I don't know, I love it. I mean I moan about it endlessly, but I absolutely love it, then of course I would coz this is the kind of work I like doing. I love it because it gives you a real chance to work really with people. And I love the way you can see students' progress and see them even within twelve weeks how you can progress them and I love it. (P.10)

And even though the work is challenging, P.4 likes facilitating the subject:

The role does challenge me, and I like a challenge. That's why I like teaching this module. And it's challenging because whenever I teach about it, it makes me think, sit back a little bit, and think about my practice myself and think about myself. So, I do find it challenging and I'm challenged by different students' experiences and takes on it, everyone takes it on very, very, very, differently. (P.4)

Not all staff are comfortable with facilitating PD, according to P.6 and P.11:

I suppose I'm uncomfortable with it [PD] to be honest, if the truth be told. You know I can't stand in front of a class and say: 'this is all about PD. I'm going to help you', I don't know. (P.6)

Well not everybody is comfortable in placement visits and not everybody is comfortable doing the professional development/PD sort of thing at all, and some people are. Some people love to get inside students' heads and some, it just depends on what's there. (P.11)

P.3, an experienced SCW and art therapist, acknowledges the need for PD within the training of SCWs:

I think you know (Social Care) courses have evolved possibly without a recognition of how important it is to this notion of PD and even what is PD? (P.3)

P.7, believes PD is the central component in SCW education and training;

So, therefore central is the personal, self, so, I would say, this question of PD is not an added-on component but is the central thing done in SC and it's around that central pillar that everything else comes into play. (P.7)

And even though the work is tiring and edgy, P.10 enjoys it too:

... and creative and all of those things but that's also what makes it kind of edgy and dangerous and you're never quite sure where you're going to land. So, you know you have to kinda cut it both ways I suppose. That's why I think it's nice; of course, that's why you're tired at the end of it as well. (P.10)

P.9 feels she is doing the best she can to teach a nebulous subject within the confines of the subject area:

... mm ... again I think it is a constant, I won't say 'struggle' but to answer the question, I look at it and come back to it all the time. I think my short answer to that is I'm doing the best I can, within, within confines, well it is that I teach, which is a bit more subjective, it is a bit more nebulous, it is more, fuzzy, yes, it is you know, so let's acknowledge that. (P.9)

Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings under the final main theme: The Multi-layered Role of the PD Educator. The findings suggest that their role is somewhat ill-defined and ambiguous. Participants also describe the tensions evident in their role, the main one being the dilemma, which they describe as walking a thin line between what they perceive to be PD work and therapeutic work. The findings reveal the perceived challenges and tensions that present for them while carrying out their role, such as the lack of adequate resources, the need for therapeutic training, the challenges of facilitating PD in an academic setting and sometimes finding themselves assigned to the role of PD facilitator without consultation. All the participants are very committed and dedicated to their PD work, duty of care toward the student is very evident and despite the challenges and tensions, the love and enjoyment of the work is voiced by all 14 participants.

Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the multiple case study analysis of PD in the higher education and training of SC students from the perspective of 14 SC educators across 13 IOTs in Ireland. It commences with a reminder of the research questions, followed by an interpretation of the findings in relation to the existing literature and the current body of knowledge on the subject. Some unexpected findings are presented and discussed. The challenges of the study are addressed in relation to how they may have impacted the interpretation of the findings.

The research questions:

RQ1. How do social care educators in Ireland perceive the nature, purpose and practice of Personal Development within the current social care education programmes in the Institute of Technology sector in Ireland?

RQ2. What, in their opinion, are the perceived advantages, limitations, opportunities and/or tensions of including Personal Development in the social care educational and training programmes in the Institute of Technology sector?

Nature

My study explores the nature and structure of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs in Ireland from a social constructionist perspective. The relevant literature, led by Lalor and Share (2013) and Howard (2010) among others, traces the history of SCW, referring to it as a relatively new profession seeking an identity, meaning and place among the other established caring professions in Ireland. However, during this development of SCW, there have been times of darkness, especially the abuse and neglect of vulnerable children and individuals within Irish society (Fanning and Rush, 2006; Lalor and Share, 2013; Howard, 2014). Nevertheless, the

profession of SC has evolved out of this dark place, commencing with some significant reports (Appendix 2) and subsequently with the separation of Church and State which paved the way for new SCW structures such as the elevation of the SCW title from ‘worker’ to ‘professional’ and the imminent professional statutory registration of SC professionals. This transition also heralded new developments in the education and training of SCWs, including the re-alignment of the educational requirements for SCWs from certificate to the current statutory requirement of a Level 7 degree. Statutory education requirements now oblige the SC student to demonstrate an understanding of their personal growth and development, develop the skills of self-awareness and self-care, understand the dynamics of relationship and group work and integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge, to ensure the safety and empowerment of clients (QQI, 2014; CORU, 2017). Therefore, the onus is on educators to deliver a SC programme that will provide a complete, competent and holistic education for SC students who are about to enter a very demanding and challenging profession. This study poses the question as to how these requirements for PD are being met across 13 IOTs who are the main SCW educators in Ireland.

The findings of my study are illuminating, the data discloses the nature and structure of PD within the higher education and training of SC students to be blurred and complex. Findings suggest PD is embedded in various ways and to varying degrees in a variety of 68 modules, with various titles, in the SC programmes investigated (Appendix 5). The composition and nature of PD in the higher education and training of SCWs according to the 14 participants depends on the specific IOT, the SC programme, the module(s) and the expertise of the relevant SC educator. Swan (2010), attests the pivotal role of the facilitator in the design and implementation of PD groupwork and most of the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs, perceive modules incorporating PD have been developed from the ground up by the SC educators with the design dependent on the background and training of the individual educator as indicated by (P.5):

To be honest I think this has been the debate over the last few years about ... am ... the evolution of courses coming from the expertise of the people who are already there. So, I think that might have been originally how it might have come about. (P.5)

Results show that among the 68 modules investigated across the 13 IOTs, there is only one stand-alone module, specifically designed for the facilitation of PD, delivered in each year of the 4 years, of a Level 8 programme. Consequently, PD is not an overt learning objective within the remaining 64 modules. “Now you mightn’t see the language “PD” ... it is ... it is, without it

being specifically stated, that's what it is. we're not saying this is PD" (P.7). These findings are broadly in agreement with sentiments expressed by Donati and Watts (2005), Hall et al. (1999) and Irving and Williams (1999), when writing about PD, they state that PD training remains vague and inadequately expressed or defined. This study also confirms Irving and Williams's (1999) assertion that PD is an "area of training that suffers from a surprising scarcity of literature" (p. 171). PD facilitators base the design, process and practice of their PD work on the underlying principles of their previous professional background (e.g. SCW; SW; art therapy, psychotherapy, dance, drama) and their preferred theoretical perspectives (Table 5). However, despite the eclectic mix, findings indicate that the central premise of PD learning, common to most participants is for SC students to develop 'the use of self', as self-awareness is crucial for SCWs and clients' safety and wellbeing. This sentiment is expressed by P.5:

And I don't think people come into this course fully realizing the extent of how much they have to use themselves and how much the self is so important and how, clear they must be, in their own, you know, how much damage they could do to other people, if they are not actually aware of themselves to that extent. How, you get people to that stage? I'm not sure. (P.5)

For most of the participants, the facilitation of PD learning, especially on the 'use of the self' occurs in small experiential groupwork similar to the framework for PD small experiential groups established by Corey and Schneider Corey (2002) and Rose (2008). The PD group, according to participants, is like a 'microcosm of the real world' (P.8), connecting the theoretical with the practical in SC education and where the PD learning happens. The development and integration of personal and professional competency is brought alive by experiential learning which can only be achieved "by sitting in the group and reacting in the group" (P.1). Corey and Schneider Corey (2002) and Rose (2008) suggest the 10/12 members to be the ideal membership of a PD group, however, the findings show that PD group membership, except for two groups, PD group member ranges between 10 and 30 members (Table 6). The reason for these large numbers, according to P.3, is the expense of resourcing small groups. P.10, who has 28 members in her group, feels it 'defeated the purpose of small group work'. Findings reveal that PD work is impeded by the lack of resources in delivering small experiential groupwork this is a concern for all the participants. With resources limited, the tendency is for small groups to become larger.

And it needs to be small groups and small groups are expensive. So, it's about encouraging Institutes to understand the value of the work. It needs to come across and I think that's the biggest challenge. (P.3)

Commenting on PD's contribution to transformative change, participants specifically mention adequate facilities, adequate time and adequate space to facilitate the PD work and staff who are adequately trained. Another finding points to the perceived notion that PD is seen to be a 'lesser' subject, lower down on the scale than the more 'academic' subjects as attested by Owen-Smith (2004) and Beard (2007). This has a bearing on the allocation of staff; as P.8 points out, "they would not assign just anyone to teach physics" (P.8). Space constraints, the ratio of teacher to students in small group work and teacher timetables are a concern for management as expressed by P.14 as HOD:

And I think, in point of fact, you know, because we're so constrained on space, that's part of the reason. But ideally that should only be taught at 20 to 1 ... I think we might be doing 25 to 30 to 1 ... 30 is a bit high. Then as I said to the lecturers they have to modify and work within the constraint, it may be something I have to re-visit this year. (P.14)

The need for specialised training in PD groupwork facilitation and techniques as suggested by Rose (2008) and Corey and Corey Schneider (2002) is echoed in the findings as one of the major difficulties with PD work. Another is in creating and applying boundaries or limits to the degree of self-disclosure by a student. The essence of groupwork is the facilitation of the student, in a safe space, to explore personal issues. However, participants caution that students need to be reminded that they are in a public place and need to decide how much self-disclosure is acceptable for them:

We've learned over the last few years that we don't do that. So, what we inform students when they come into us, that while it is a confidential space, and respected space, it is not, it is still a public space. So, it's not space for exploration of anything personal at a level that they wouldn't be comfortable with in any other place. (P.5)

However, participants are conflicted, as the creation of the safe space lends itself to open discussion, hence the disclosure of personal material needs to be managed. The subjective experiential nature of PD work is outlined by Johns (1996) and the conflict between the subjective work in PD and the necessary objective stance of the educator is highlighted in the findings and this tension is commented on by P.9, who feels she is "doing the best I can, within ... within confines ... which is a bit more subjective, it is a bit more nebulous, it is more, fuzzy, yes, it is you know, so let's acknowledge that". P.12 finds assessing reflective practice,

“extremely difficult, it is very subjective”. P.1 suggests assessing PD learning is assessing “someone’s ability to express their development really”. Participants devise varying ways to deal with these challenges and tensions in assessing and grading the students’ PD work. Some participants, assess the reflective work of the students’ ability to ‘analyse’ their self-development in the reflective journal, as opposed to writing ‘descriptively’ about the process. P.12 admits struggling with the subjective element of the assessment and provides a solution by cross-marking each submission:

Now we’ve struggled. We would say even yet that assessing reflection is extremely difficult. It is very subjective. So, what some of us do is cross mark. We would swap a certain amount with a colleague and then we would have a discussion. I find that quite effective. (P.12)

Another finding of this study is the extent to which PD is hidden or overshadowed by the main learning objectives of the module(s) to which it is attached or embedded. The exception to this is the one stand-alone module, over the four years of a SC programme, in one IOT. The upcoming statutory registration of SCWs has a statutory requirement for PD learning however these results highlight that PD is not overt or explicit in the higher education and training of SCWs in Ireland and if the requirements of QQI and CORU standards and criteria for SCW training are to be implemented in their entirety, then findings in this study suggest that the subject PD would benefit by having a stand-alone module, specifically designed for PD learning, in each of the 12 IOTs investigated. It further suggests learning objectives be clearly outlined in SC programme(s), resources provided to facilitate small experiential group learning and adequate training provided for SC educators.

Purpose

The main purpose of PD training is to enable the student to get a very good sense of ‘self’ before attempting to help others and this, in turn, ensures the safety and well-being of clients. There is much written about the concept of ‘the self’ in the literature. Rogers (1961), Burkett (2008), Dewane (2006) and Cooper (2012) all validate the ‘use of self’ as core to the helping professions. Writing in the context of SCW in Ireland, Kennefick (2006), Lyons (2007, 2010, 2013) and Lalor and Share (2013) all specifically affirm a deep understanding and awareness of ‘the self’ is essential, as it allows SCWs to explore any blocks, prejudices, blind spots, and/or unresolved personal issues which may inhibit working ethically with the vulnerable client

population that they are supporting and empowering. The findings reinforce these claims, all 14 participants emphasise the fact that the knowledge of the 'self in practice', underpinned by the development of self-awareness and the examination of sedimented prejudices and beliefs, is the cornerstone of PD work. This is summarised by P.4.

I think that it's grounded, it's grounded in the importance of self-awareness, it's very much grounded in the importance of examining one's own beliefs and values and in relation to how they in-put in practice, so just helping students to develop that importance of self-awareness. (P.4)

However, the argument proposed by Shaw (1974) and Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) suggest that students, whilst engaged in therapeutic education, become self-absorbed, narcissistic and dependent on the educators. This viewpoint was put to the participants and the responses indicated that they did not find this to be true, but PD learning assisted students in their personal growth and development, allowed students the opportunity to discuss issues that might obstruct their work with clients and hinder professional best practice which in turn assisted in creating a work environment that ensured the safety and wellbeing of the SCW and the client.

Cree (1996, 2003) and Rochford (2007) investigated the motivation for SW students entering the SW profession and found that while the main reason of wishing to help others was to the forefront, other reasons, including having a family background in public service, life circumstances such as loss, disability or illness, a caring vocation, and/or using the profession as an attempt by the student to resolve past family issues. Rochford (2007) points to the student who, with a strong desire 'to help', but whose life circumstances have left them overwhelmed with feelings which, when dealing with clients, may be triggered, resulting in the potential for counter transference, projection or blurred boundaries. He claims that the potential is there for the SW to get their own needs met at the expense of the client. The results of my study confirm these assertions, participants found that some students came into SC to "help themselves" (P.6), as they have unresolved personal issues which "can impede the professional work" (P.10) and which may be "the wrong reason" to be a SCW (P.2). P.4 says "I think we attract the person who wants to rescue" and, referring to this "shadow side of caring", P.1 cautions that students needs to deal with 'their own history and 'baggage' before attempting to help others. My study also indicates that some of the SC students, having had the experience of being 'in care' themselves or been supported by a care worker whom they admired, wished "to emulate the

professionals who helped them” (P.10) and to follow in their footsteps. The prime objectives of developing self-awareness and strategies for self-care, according to Dodds-Schumacher (2004), are crucial in the development of the professional skills and competencies to protect clients. The SCW code of ethics, IASCW (2012), requires members to attend to their mental and physical health and well-being, and the study’s results show this is a primary concern for the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs investigated.

Rogers (1961) emphasises the necessity for the helper to engage with their own personal growth and development before they attempt to enter the helping relationship. Lyons (2013) concurs with this prerequisite, stating that the relationship between the client and the SCW is paramount and knowledge of ‘the self’ is crucial and students’ engagement with PD essential. Humphreys and Ruddle (2010) claim that when professionals take account of the affective as well as the cognitive, they are far more balanced and, therefore, more effective in relationships. The dynamics of relationship is referred to by participants:

... the profession of SC is based on working with people and relating to people ... in SC we may be meeting people who have been affected by difficult relationships or traumatic relationships and my own belief is it has something to do with healing through relationships in a more positive way that people are going to find a way forward or to move in a more positive direction for themselves. (P.7)

The necessity to develop skills such as relationship skills and skills that include emotional awareness and regulation is explained by Gardner (1993), Goleman (1995), Kagan (2007), Gaffney (2011), Kennefick (2006), Humphreys and Ruddle (2010), Beard et al., (2007) and Nilsson (2014), and is crucial to the work. Students need to learn how to regulate their emotions, according to Kennefick (2006), especially if the SCW is to feel competent to deal with clients who are experiencing strong feelings or expressing challenging physical behaviour. Humphreys and Ruddle (2010) suggest that regulating emotions, especially in the helping professions, is very useful in discerning well-being. Nilsson (2014) contends that inability to regulate feelings has the propensity to make people more vulnerable to personal distress. Barnard (2012) also emphasizes the centrality of emotions in linking head and heart (p.114). Findings disclose that PD training gives the student the time and space to explore their emotions and provide the opportunity to learn about emotional regulation, especially when dealing with clients who may be challenging physically or emotionally or both. P.8 advises the student to “get out of headspace and into a creative emotional space”, and P.13 states:

Yeah, it's trying to give them, I don't know if we can ever teach them to reflect, but it's a model, a coat hanger as the man would say, when you've had an incident, here's a look at a person's perspective, your feelings, you know, the respect for other people and that, and how we can bring that into your practice in future. (P.13)

P.2 speaks about the integration of the physical and emotion in discerning wellbeing:

Well the body is the first tool of expression, you know it's the first thing we did, you know, when we're born, symmetrically, our arms and our legs go out to the world you know. And am you'll be able to I think assess people, how they're feeling, far better through the way they move than the way they talk. So, the body is the primary tool. And unfortunately, it's something that we all, some of us lose confidence in. (P.2)

O'Leary, Tsui and Ruch (2013) refer to connection and the 'use of self' in PD learning and in creating and maintaining healthy boundaries a crucial skill in SCW. "And if somebody is given this type of training (PD) they will perform better, they'll be less stressed, they won't burnout" (P.3). Sabo (2011) and Figley 1995) address the critical necessity of developing enhanced relationship skills and creating healthy boundaries in the prevention of stress, burnout and mental health issues. The findings concur with these observations and confirm PD learning is essential in the prevention of enmeshment and entanglement with clients' issues and to prevent stress, burnout and mental health issues occurring among SCWs.

So, we cover things like child abuse, domestic abuse, self-injury, you know we do, all those types of things, and so they may have been affected by that. And that's what they're going to be affected by in practice, how they're going to deal with that knock-on, all the incidents of stuff like that. So, part of the journey is trying to come to, some sort of self-awareness around that, come from that, is that going to leak into their practice in the end in working with clients like this? (P.13)

Finally, when questioned as to their preference, a stand-alone PD module or PD embedded within the modules across programmes, participants were divided on their choice. Some participants preferred the inclusion of an explicit, overt PD module with the specific purpose of addressing the specific needs of SC students in training. Other participants preferring the embedded option, stating that PD is not a stand-alone subject but is embedded in every aspect of the students' education and training and therefore should be present and embedded in all aspects of SC training. However, most participants endorse the elevation of PD to a clearly defined, prominent position within the SC programme.

Therefore, with the advent of professional statutory registration on the horizon, this study exposes the rationale and the need for PD in the higher education and training of SCW.

Practice

The ambiguity concerning the distinction between PD and therapy, or whether PD work is therapy or if it possible to draw the line between them at all, are sentiments expressed by Rose (2008). A surprising finding in the study indicated that the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs find themselves in a dilemma when attempting to make the distinction between PD and therapy. P.8, an experienced psychotherapist, finds himself “walking a thin line” between PD work and therapeutic work: “We walk a very fine line. and that is, I guess, I want to make sure that I am walking that very fine line as well as I can”. The literature confirms the dilemma in trying to distinguish between PD, counselling and therapy, with Nelson-Jones (2005) and McLeod (2003) debating the issues and still not arriving at any clear and definitive demarcation in relational work. The results show that participants find this lack of clarity unsettling. The unease or apprehension varies according to the background and training of the educators, with some of those who are trained psychotherapists, counsellors or art therapists more at ease with dealing with this issue than those who are not trained in this area. The findings also affirm Byrne’s (2013) account of the confusion and uncertainty about making this distinction. P.6, a drama teacher, made a conscious decision not to engage in any form of therapeutic work because she is adamant that “this is an academic centre not a therapeutic centre”. However, P.9, who obtained counselling training as part of her SW education, felt the opposite, claiming that “yes, it is”, and “we do therapeutic work”. P.5, an art therapist, makes the distinction between ‘using’ therapeutic elements in the work with students and ‘engaging’ in art therapy. However, even though P.10 is an experienced psychotherapist, she feels that the work she does is “not therapy”. P.8 claims that the “therapeutic element” does exist in the PD work. The distinction between ‘doing’ therapeutic work and ‘using’ therapeutic skills is a major concern for participants in facilitating the work. P.1, an experienced psychotherapist, is adamant that PD work does not address or attempt to address a student’s historical issues or engage in an in-depth way with their issues as does engaging in therapy. P.2, a dance teacher, commented on the short space and time available, especially over one semester, to facilitate students in PD work. The study discovers

that this is a contentious issue, one that is unclear and ambiguous and the reason why there is a fear of engaging in PD work if not adequately qualified.

The findings reveal PD prevents a build-up of unresolved and current personal issues for SC students by dealing with these issues in group work or referring to the counselling service if they manifest into major issues that need immediate attention. However, those participants, especially those who were not therapeutically trained; feared that they may damage the student if they do not have the skills necessary to hold them in a 'safe way' when dealing with serious personal issues. Nevertheless, all participants confirmed the use of the IOT student support services, especially the IOT counselling service, where they can refer students presenting with serious difficulties. The participants felt PD promoted independent thinking and that students were well prepared to engage in professional best practice with the interests and safety of both carer and client always to the forefront.

The findings suggest that PD to be a valuable and essential component in ensuring that both competencies and best practice are achieved in training. The participants find students develop self-confidence and the relevant skills for SCW. However, the findings indicate a major concern, as that discussed by Booysen and Stanifort (2017) and Brearley (1995) when they refer to the contentious nature of the role of counselling in SW and the tensions that exist amongst commentators regarding the rightful place of counselling in SW. This tension is also addressed in Share and Lalor's (2009) work, when they state that there is an 'emphasis on therapeutic work in SCW but not 'in the context of more formal counselling'. Many of the participants are adamant that SC students are not training to be counsellors and therefore do not require therapeutic training. However, both Mulville (2014) and Behan (2014), experienced SCWs in residential care in Ireland, speak of the existence of the 'therapeutic alliance' in SCW and the fact that SCWs engage in a therapeutic alliance with their clients. This finding is in keeping with Kennefick's (2006) belief that there is a growing association between SCW and therapeutic care. The study reveals the existence of counselling modules in some of the SC programmes (Appendix 6) which incorporate skills such as active listening skills and communication skills but not specific counsellor training. Most participants experience holding students in a 'safe space' and dealing with personal issues when they arise; this, they claim, requires therapeutic training but, because of staff allocation and resources, there are times when untrained staff fill

the role, and this is a concern for most. However, with evidence of a therapeutic alliance in the work, the continual growth and development of SCW, the increasing number of vulnerable clients and the upcoming professional statutory registration, (QQI, 2024; CORU, 2017) the study's findings question if the time is now right for SC educators to re-address the delivery of PD training for SC students and advocate for the use of some component of therapeutic training within the SC programme.

Unexpected Findings

An unexpected finding is that the stigma about attending counselling or therapy that participants perceived in earlier years among students, appears to be fading away and replaced by an openness and a willingness to speak about their difficulties:

So, as a tutor we try not to, you know we're careful about that ... mm ... but we would tend to steer them towards maybe counselling services, they are more equipped to deal with some of that. And a lot of the students would use that, and I think students are less see it as ... mm ... you know something you know ... mm ... what's the word I'm looking for? They don't see it as ... mm ... stigma. (P.13)

Another unexpected outcome of the study is the relationship between the unintended positive impact of PD on student retention rates. Through the process of PD, students make friends, especially in first year, which can prevent loneliness and homesickness that may overwhelm the student and detract from their enjoyment of college. PD provides a safe space for the student each week, where they can allow friendships to grow, deal with any pressing personal issues and connect with the PD educator. P.12 states that in a college report on retention rates for programmes in the IOT:

... retention, I think is affected by PD people. That interests the funders, because of the fact that we would lose a few students, very few, because we have a good relationship with them. We're able to identify difficulties and our retention rate, I mean we can tell you that two students left last semester and you know why they left. And I think that's really important and funders should take note of that ... it's still around the PD you know, and I think that's really important. Retention I think is affected by PD and I think that's it you know... (P.12)

That year SC was like at 97 per cent ...[others] were below 80 ... And two of the women ... mm ... who have been here for 30 years ah both said, 'It's the PD work that they do, that keeps those students here', so people know it, but we are not shouting about it ... not making it visible and we need to do that. (P.9)

This study explores the nature, place and practice of PD in SC higher education and training, its findings reveal new and enlightening results which are contributing to the evolution and development of SC education and professional best practice in a rapidly changing environment.

Challenges

The study was not without its challenges which I wish to acknowledge in this discussion. The main challenge to this research investigation is my personal position within the study, especially the potential for unconscious bias during the research process. To counteract this, I consistently engaged in the process of reflexivity, consulted with my supervisor and had many discussions with my 'critical friends', but human nature being what it is, there is always the possibility that the bias will seep into the work. However, I did make every possible effort to ensure that this was kept to a minimum and did not influence the findings of the study.

Another challenge to my study was the very large amount of data the multiple case study analysis generated, and the time spent on coding and analysing the data. I found it very difficult to discard any of the data, as it was so rich and descriptive of the phenomenon under investigation. However, with perseverance, patience and the aid of NVivo 11 (2018), I worked through the data and, eventually, the themes began to emerge. The study focused exclusively on the higher education of SCW in the IOT sector in Ireland and the study reflects the 'lived experience' of 14 SC educators across the 13 IOTs investigated. However, as was pointed out in Chapter 2, three other educational institutions which are not part of the IOT sector also provide programmes in SC education and training, and I did not include these in my investigation due to pressures of time and the concern about increasing what was already a very large volume of data. The inclusion of these educational establishments would have added to the overall representation of the SC education landscape and hopefully this added piece of research will be undertaken in future investigations. Finally, this investigation points to the absence of literature on the subject area of PD within academic research in Ireland or elsewhere. This lack of material proved to be a source of frustration at times, but also highlighted the need for more research to be undertaken in this area.

Conclusion

The nature and structure of PD across the 13 IOTs investigated appears to be blurred and complex and the definition and meaning of PD within the SC programmes appears vague and somewhat ambiguous. One interpretation of the data shows that among the 68 modules investigated across the 13 IOTs, there is only one stand-alone module, specifically designed for the facilitation of PD, delivered in each year of the 4 years, of a Level 8 programme.

Consequently, PD, while embedded, it is not overt or explicit in the remaining and 64 modules across the 13 IOTs investigated. The results, therefore, suggest that PD is not emphasized as a major subject area in SC education and it is struggling to find its place among the other modules.

One suggestion as to why this is so, is the lack of adequate training for staff which can be considered as one of the main obstacles to delivering a fit for purpose PD module. Also, the contested notion of the thin line between PD and therapeutic work can be perceived as an inhibiting factor in the inclusion of this subject in SC education training. A contested and controversial claim is that PD is not understood by those educators outside of this subject area.

One reason for this may be that it is not coherently labelled nor easily recognisable within the educational system. This perceived shortcoming may be resolved by opening a discussion now that a statutory educational requirement for PD is established and because the results of this study deem it be very beneficial for students in preparation for SCW. A perceived challenge for management and educators, emanating from this study, may be to contest the taken for granted assumptions and dare to address this issue in SC education and training.

Chapter 10: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

During my preliminary investigations, I became aware of a gap in the body of knowledge, the literature and in practice on the topic of PD in the education and training of SCWs. This perceived lack of information prompted me to undertake this study, which specifically focused on the nature, purpose and practice of PD in the higher education and training of SC students in the IOT sector in Ireland. The resulting multiple case study analysis investigated this phenomenon from the perspectives of 14 SC educators across 13 IOTs in Ireland. The findings of my research are important, relevant and timely and contribute significantly to SCW knowledge, literature and practice of PD in social care higher education and training in the IOT sector in Ireland. The initial aims and objectives of my study are realised, and the findings fill the perceived gap in the knowledge which initially ignited my research questions. This chapter outlines these contributions and the implications of my research and makes some recommendations for future research in policy and practice.

My Research Process

I undertook my research from a social constructionist perspective, collected my data utilising semi-structured interviews, programme documentation, case notes, reflective journal entries and web searches and employed a multiple case study analysis of the data. As a SC educator and an existential psychotherapist, I believed it was essential to listen to the ‘voices’ of the SC educators to obtain an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under investigation. The multiple case study analysis allowed me to investigate the topic from the perspective of the 14 SC educators, experienced in the facilitation of PD, across the 13 IOTs in Ireland. This methodology allowed me to view the phenomenon of PD from many angles, comparing the 13 settings and the lived experiences of all the participants. The risk of unconscious bias in the process, due to my subjective insider position in the research process, was evident for me; however, becoming aware of this, I engaged in the practice of reflexivity throughout the study to address any assumptions, prejudices and beliefs that would impede my research. The main challenge in undertaking a multiple case study analysis was the vast amount of data it yielded and the

subsequent effort in coding and analysing this data. However, the research generated multiple rich and descriptive findings.

The Focus and the Importance of the Study

The objectives of my research were (a) to explore the nature, purpose and practice of PD within the higher education and training of SCWs in the IOT sector in Ireland, (2) to uncover the rationale and justification, if any, underpinning the inclusion of PD in the SC programmes, and (3) to identify any perceived advantages, limitations and/or tensions underlying the presence of PD in the SC programme. Considering research into this phenomenon was never undertaken, on this scale, in Ireland before, one of the main contributions of my findings was filling an extensive gap in the body of knowledge in SCW higher education and training in Ireland. My findings appeared to uncover a hidden, blurred and complex nature of PD in the higher education training of SCWs in the IOT sector in Ireland. During a time of incredible change and transition in the SC profession, especially the imminent professional statutory registration of SCWs, my research seems to point to a very substantial gap in SCW higher education and training, by revealing that one of the main skills required by the SCWs in their work the use of ‘self,’ crucial to both ethical and professional best practice, is not emphasised as a major component of the higher education and training of SCWs. It appears that it is struggling to find its place among the other main subject areas. This finding is alarming considering SCW, by its nature, is both physically and emotionally challenging and the ability to develop self-awareness and emotional resilience is crucial in supporting students to deal with the challenging issues that will present for them in their careers. PD and especially the development of self-awareness, is a requirement in the educational standards and criteria for SCWs as set out by both QQI (2014) and CORU (2017). These requirements are vital for SCWs in providing support, empowerment and the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals and a means in the avoidance of stress, burnout and mental health issues in SCW (Kennefick, 2006, Lalor and Share, 2013). Considering these facts, my findings expose a sizeable gap in the current SC education, training and practice across the 13 IOTs investigated.

New Findings

The four main themes to emerge from the data are: (a) Exploring the Uncharted Landscape of PD; (b) The Process and Practice of PD Group Work; (c) Profiling the SC Student and (D) The Multi-layered Role of the PD Educator. The main findings of my research suggest a significant shortcoming in the higher education and training of SCWs across the 13 IOTs investigated. The nature and structure of PD within the SC programmes investigated appears to be blurred and complex in its presentation within the programmes. The 14 participants confirmed the apparent lack of consistency and conformity in its composition which is mostly influenced by both the structure and policies of each IOT, specific SC programme(s); the module(s) content and the influence of the SC educators delivering the module. The findings also show that PD is not overtly, clearly or precisely demarcated within the SC programmes appearing to be submerged, in various ways and to varying degree within 64 modules. The findings established one specific, distinct stand-alone module designed for the facilitation of PD over 4 years of a Level 8 SC programme in one IOT. These finding, are very relevant to improving best practice in SCW which will benefit both the SCW and the service users. These findings are also very timely considering PD is now recognised by QQI (2014) and CORU (2017) as being a statutory educational requirement in the training of SCWs in Ireland and advocated by experts and researchers in social care and other caring professions. These findings make an important contribution to understanding SCW in the higher education and training of SCWs in the IOT sector in a rapidly changing and evolving society in Ireland.

The findings suggest that the rationale underpinning PD theory and practice is rooted in the principle of ‘the use of self’ in achieving best professional practice and ensuring the safety and well-being of clients and SCWs. Therefore, a deep understanding and awareness of ‘the self’ is essential in SCW, allowing an exploration of any blocks, prejudices, blind spots, and/or unresolved personal issues which may inhibit working with vulnerable client populations that they are supporting and empowering. The results of this study reinforce these claims, the 14 participants across the 13 IOTs, clearly perceive PD as a means in providing the SC student with essential skills for SCW, especially, the that of gaining an in-depth knowledge of ‘the self’. Also, PD affords students the opportunity to discuss issues they may impede their work with clients and hinder professional best practice. These findings highlight a concern raised by some

PD educators, who perceive that they may, in some way, do ‘damage’ to the student if they do not have the skills to hold them ‘in a safe space’ or in a ‘safe way’ in dealing with personal issues. However, all participants confirmed that they are welcome to refer students to the IOT support services when major personal issues present for the student. These findings suggest that the delivery and facilitation of PD is not being currently adequately addressed. These findings are new and make a valuable contribution to the current on-going research and development of SCW higher education and training in Ireland.

Small experiential group work is considered the most beneficial and preferred mode of delivery of PD by most of the participants, however, findings suggest that this mode of delivery is hampered by inadequate financial resources and facilities such as a safe learning space adequate room size and appropriate heating. Further constraints which were revealed include maintaining group membership to 10 members, insufficient length of time allocated to small experiential group work and the transfer of untrained educators between modules. A major obstacle perceived by the participants is their inadequate training in the process and practice of PD. One interesting observation is the interpretation by participants that PD is perceived, by some academics to be a ‘lesser subject’ this in turn they noticed had a bearing on the allocation of staff for PD with the more ‘academic subjects’ having higher priority in the distribution of the staff. However, this claim can be contested as statistical data was not available to support this finding. The assessment of students’ PD work, especially considering the subjective nature of the work however, proved to be a challenge for most participants however they devised innovative ways overcoming this problem. These findings suggest that this information has the potential to contribute to the development of new ways of assessing the subjective nature of PD and contribute to the ongoing development of SCW higher education and training.

This study makes a significant contribution to SCW in general and specifically SCW higher education and training by shining a light on how motivation for entering SCW can impact on work with clients. The findings suggest that some students, having had experienced life circumstances that involved loss, disability, illness, and/or unresolved family issues or personal experiences of attending SC services, may have unresolved issues from these traumatic experiences. These may be triggered when working with vulnerable clients, resulting in overwhelming feelings, projection, counter-transference and/or blurred boundaries resulting in

unsafe work practice. These findings, if explored further have the potential to contribute to the evolving development of SCW in Ireland and in preparing SC students for professional best practice. Related to this finding is the acknowledgement by all participants of the importance, for SC students, in developing the skill of emotional regulation, crucial in dealing with challenging or distressing scenarios in SCW and cultivating the means of establishing healthy boundaries. The findings of this study are very valuable in that they address an area in SCW education that was not investigated previously and contribute new knowledge by providing new information and data which the findings suggest may contribute to best practice in SCW.

One of the contested areas in therapeutic education is attempting to make distinction between PD work and therapeutic practice. This question was explored with all 14 participants across the 13 IOTs and the results suggest that this is a controversial issue. The findings revealed that PD educators with a therapeutic background are more at ease with the idea of PD being therapeutic, however, those without psychotherapeutic training regarded PD as non-therapeutic. Most participants agreed that therapeutic elements do exist in PD work, however, the distinction between ‘doing’ therapy and ‘using’ therapeutic skills is a debatable one. All participants disclosed a fear regarding ‘walking a thin line’ between PD work and unintentionally veering into therapeutic work. This is a substantial finding as this fear was anecdotally expressed in the past by PD educators, but this research has recognised and identified this issue as a tangible and unsettling concern. This finding is related to the significant lack of clarity regarding the definition and meaning of PD in SCW. This study now, however, contributes to the clarification of the nature and purpose of PD within SCW and paves the way for this to be developed in future research.

One of the unexpected and valuable findings is the positive impact of students attending weekly PD experiential groupwork and the corresponding perceived increase in student retention rates of in that SC programme. However, extracting the statistical data required further investigate this finding was beyond the scope of this study, however, it does have the potential for further research. The PD educators’ duty of care and the commitment to their students was very much in evidence in each of the interviews, across all the IOTs. Despite the challenges and tensions evident in the findings, the presence of PD in the higher education and training of SC students is

considered beneficial, advantageous and an essential element in the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and training required for the role.

My Voice

I am passionate about the development of PD in the higher education and training of SCW's. Throughout my career, I have been privileged to support and witness the ongoing personal growth and development of SC students as they engage in PD work throughout the four years of a Level 8, SC programme. From a professional point of view, I can honestly say that this subject is one of the most worthwhile and crucial elements in their SC education.

My diverse experiences and extensive expertise in SC education have led me to steadfastly believe that PD ought to be acknowledged as an essential part of the education and training of SCW's. In my opinion, the subject PD should be afforded a prominent position in the SC educational structure within the IOT sector. Therefore, I propose that one dedicated stand-alone PD module be incorporated into every SC programme. This module would be specifically created, planned and designed for the comprehensive facilitation of PD for SC students. This will ensure every SC student will have the opportunity to engage in PD in their training. Also, it will clearly highlight and clarify, in unambiguous terms, the nature, place and purpose of PD within the higher education and training of SCW's in Ireland.

From my wide experience in SC higher education and training, I strongly believe that those who are attracted to the caring profession are motivated by altruistic reasons and a deep, genuine concern to help others. However, this motivation may sometimes arise out a need to resolve some deep-seated and profoundly serious personal issues. Not addressing these issues may compromise the protection, safety and wellbeing of both the individual and the service users. Consequently, I firmly believe that engaging in PD work affords SC students the opportunity to reflect upon their lives and address any unresolved personal issues which may impede their work with the people they support.

I resolutely believe that those in the caring profession, require the highest professional standards in their education and training. The findings in my research study reinforce my long-held belief of the centrality of PD in the higher education and training of SCW's. This needs to be undertaken in a purposeful way, therefore, the establishment of a mandatory requirement for SC

students to engage in process and practice of PD, before they embark on a career in SCW, needs to be inaugurated.

The PD educator is an extremely responsible role, as revealed by the findings, it is complex, multi-layered, ambiguous and ill-defined. Due to this ambiguity, PD educators find themselves in a precarious position of walking a thin line between PD work and therapeutic work. Therefore, I strongly advocate that the role of the PD educator be filled by a fully trained, qualified and accredited counsellor/psychotherapist as a prerequisite to facilitating PD. As a precursor to this change the PD educator role needs to be clearly defined and unambiguously outlined.

The current situation regarding the facilitation of PD in the IOT's cannot be sustained without the allocation of adequate financial resources. This is especially pertinent with regard to the recruitment of professionally trained staff, their on-going training and development and the provision of professional supervision. I propose a commitment by the management of the IOT sector, to the timetabling of PD for a guaranteed minimum of 3 hours per week. Also, the provision of appropriate structural facilities for the delivery of PD and the assurance of a budget allocation for creative materials.

As I reach the conclusion of my study, I am glad to say that I am heartened by the engagement and responses of the participants in this, heretofore, unexplored area of SCW education and training. Their dedication and commitment to the facilitation of PD for SC students is extraordinary, considering the general lack of resources and facilities in many of the IOTs investigated.

The next section outlines the recommendations that follow on from the findings of my research study and are categorised under the headings: implications for SC educational policy; implications for professional best practice and implications for further research.

Recommendations

Implications for SC educational policy

It is recommended that one dedicated, mandatory, stand-alone PD module is introduced into every SC training programme in the IOT sector. This stand-alone status would ensure the PD module is no longer an add-on to other SC professional development modules. This stand-alone

PD module would ensure every SC student will have the opportunity to engage in PD in preparation for their demanding and challenging profession. This well-defined and fit for purpose PD module would ensure students receive an in-depth and fully-rounded training prior to embarking on a career in SCW, thus, safeguarding current and future clients through ethical and best practice.

Considering PD educators are dealing with the personal issues of students (sometimes very serious), it is highly recommended that PD educators, who are assigned to this role are fully trained, qualified and accredited counsellors/psychotherapists. It is also recommended that the provision of resources for CPD training and monthly professional supervision be made available.

The findings demonstrate the crucial importance of PD in SC training; therefore, it is recommended that CORU elevate PD to a mandatory core training requirement for the statutory registration SCW's.

Implications for professional best practice

It is recommended that a mandatory 3 hours per week, in total, for PD experiential group work and lectures are timetabled into the SC programmes in the IOT sector, thus ensuring ample time for the delivery of PD.

It is recommended that PD experiential small group membership is maintained at the advocated group size of no more than 10 members.

The findings reveal a lack of adequate resources for the appropriate delivery of the PD module. Therefore, it is recommended that a budget allocation be assigned for the provision of a dedicated and fit for purpose room (space), facilities such as adequate heating, lighting, and sound-proofing and a budget allocation to provide for creative art supplies.

The formation of a national forum for PD educators is recommended. This forum would allow PD educators the opportunity to network, avail of peer support and contribute to the advancement of PD in the higher educational sector in Ireland. The creation of this national forum would also provide the opportunity for the on-going professional development of PD educators.

It is also recommended that a national steering committee be established. Tasked with the strategic development of PD, it would lead and advise on new developments in the field of therapeutic education. Furthermore, it would simultaneously highlight the profile of PD among the academic community.

In order to make a variety of PD resources readily available, it is recommended that a national/international resource hub, using tried and tested platforms such as YouTube and iTunes university be established. This would assist in the on-going standardization and development of educational resources and material for PD and contribute to the promotion of research into this area.

It is recommended that the results of these findings be extended into other caring professions and allied health services.

To extend the benefits of PD, it is recommended that an adapted PD module, would be introduced as a general educational requirement in the first year, of all programmes, across disciplines, in both the IOT sector and the wider higher educational sector in Ireland.

Implications for further research

To build upon this research, it is recommended that the phenomenon of PD be investigated from the perspective of current SC students in the IOT sector. Their perspective would be a welcome addition to the findings of this study.

Also, this study can be further extended to post-graduate students who have completed their training and are now SCW's in practice. These SCW's could potentially make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Lastly, further collaboration with other international SC educational bodies, in the EU and further afield, is recommended.

Conclusion

This large scale national research study, which focused on the concept of PD in the higher education and training of SC students in the IOT sector in Ireland, has never been undertaken before. The findings break new ground in our understanding of this new and evolving field of

therapeutic education, most significantly, in our understanding of the phenomenon of PD in SC education in Ireland. One of the many substantial findings of this study positions PD as an essential and key area of training for SC students in Ireland. However, it also highlights some heretofore, controversial, and unanswered questions and shortcomings in policy and practice which need to be urgently addressed. These findings make a notable addition to the current, sparse body of knowledge in the evolving world of SC education. Finally, this study exposes the need for further research to be undertaken in this area and suggests some constructive recommendations that may be addressed and implemented in the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SOME SIGNIFICANT REPORTS AND LEGISLATION THAT IMPACTED UPON THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SC PROFESSION IN IRELAND		
1966	Tuairim Report	Some of Our Children: A Report on the Residential Care of Deprived Children
1970	Kennedy Report	Reformatory and Industrial School Report – chaired by District Justice Eileen Kennedy
1980	Task Force on Child Care Services (DoH)	Final Report of the Task Force on Child Care Services to the Minister of Health
1991	Child Care Act 1991	The principal law in Ireland in relation to the care of children
2001	Children Act 2001	Governs the administration of juvenile justice
2009	Ryan Report (Government of Ireland – Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs)	Inquiry into Child Abuse
2015	The Children First Act 2015	Statutory obligations on those providing services to children

Source: Government Publications, 2018

APPENDIX 2

QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Award Standards – Social Care Work (2014)

Extract from the requirement as they relate to PD in SCW

Skills Section – Know-How and Skill-Selectivity

The learner is required to (among other skills):

- *Build and sustain appropriate relationships with service-users respecting the dignity of the person*
- *Separate private personal and professional boundaries*
- *Empathise with service-users and families*
- *Critically reflect on social care issues and practices including one's own practice*

Competence – Learning to Learn

The learner is required to (among other skills):

- *Reflect on personal experience and group practice to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge.*

Competence – Insight

The learner is required to (among other skills):

- *Develop knowledge of self (including one's personal attitudes)*
- *Comprehend human diversity*
- *Recognise the influence of well-being and background on personal practice*
- *Express compassion*
- *Appreciate the broader reasons why typically encountered behaviours manifest themselves*
- *Recognise when personal values/beliefs clash with the needs or expressed wishes of others and respond appropriately*

- *Approach practice in a way that comprehends and emphasises personal growth of self and others*

APPENDIX 3

CORU (2018) *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes and the Standards of Proficiency for Entry to the Social Care Workers Register*

Extract from the requirements as they relate to PD in SCW

There are two types of requirements:

- **Standards of Proficiency** are the threshold standards set by a Registration Board for entry to the register. The standards of proficiency provide details on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.
- **Criteria for Education and Training Programmes** are the requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

The **Standards of Proficiency** are recorded under five sections:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

The *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers* (2017) outlines the requirements in skills training for SCWs and **they specifically refer to the personal development of students** as follows:

- **Section 1 (20)** *Be aware of and take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing;*

- **Section 2 (16)** *Understand the principles and dynamics of group work in a range of settings and be aware of the role of different facilitation techniques to improve outcomes and enhance the participation of service users in care;*
- **Section 5 (8)** *Understand the role and purpose of building and maintaining relationships as a tool in the delivery of social care across the lifespan in a variety of contexts;*
- **Section 5 (9)** *Have a critical understanding of the dynamics of relationships between social workers and service users and the concepts of transference and counter-transference;*
- **Section 5 (13)** *Be able to integrate self-awareness, communication, working in partnership and professional judgement into professional practice to meet the need of the service user and empower them to meet their full potential;*
- **Section 5 (19)**. *Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of one's own personal growth and development to engage in effective professional practice whilst developing the personal skills of self-care and self-awareness in the role (Section 5:19)*

APPENDIX 4

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF SC EDUCATION IN IRELAND			
1971–1981	Kilkenny	Kilkenny Child Care Course	First training course for child care workers in residential child care. Evolved into current, generic programme of education for SCWs, for a variety of services
1974	Dublin IOT (College of Catering)	Developed a (3-year) In-Service Diploma in Child Care	First Child Care award in Ireland accredited by NCEA (National Council for Education Awards)
1976	Waterford Regional Technical College (RTC)	Introduced a national diploma in Childcare course	Accredited by the NCEA
1979	Sligo Regional Technical College (RTC)	Introduced a national diploma in Childcare course	Set up to train prison wardens
1982	Cork Regional Technical College (RTC)	Introduced a 2-year (part-time) college certificate for childcare supervisors	Supervisory and Counselling Skills in Care
1992	Open Training College (St Michael's House) Dublin	Commenced training for SCWs	Vocational Rehabilitation (now disability)

1992	NCEA	Report of the Committee on Caring and Social Studies (NCEA, 1992)	Report outlined the basis for the range of educational programmes in SC Practice
1990s	St Patrick's College, Carlow (Carlow College)	Introduced a SC Programme	SC Programme
2000	Statutory Report: (DoHC) <i>The Way Forward – Statutory Registration for Health and Social Professionals</i>	Outlined framework for the Structure of the Health and SC Professionals Council (HSCPC)	Outlined the 'legislative framework for the appraisal and approval of education and training courses, examinations, qualifications and development across the professions' (DOHC 2000: 5)
2002 DoHC	Joint Committee on SC Professionals (JCSCP)	Expert Review Board established to examine issues relating to health and social professionals Sub-committee examined the terminology 'child care worker' and a new title 'Social Care' was selected	The practice of SCW was defined in the report as the 'professional provision of care, protection, support, welfare and advocacy for vulnerable or dependent clients, individually or in groups (JCSCP 2002: 9)

		that was inclusive of other similar helping professions, (e.g. disability sector)	
2002	Tralee IOT (IT)	Introduced SC Programme	New SC Programmes
2003	Blanchardstown (IT) Dundalk (IT) Limerick (IT)	Introduced SC Programme	New SC Programmes
2005 Government of Ireland	Health and SC Professionals Act 2005	CORU and Registrations Boards are established under the Act	To be approved by the Registration Board IOTs and other educational institutions are required to deliver a high standard of professional education for SCWs
2006	Carlow (IT) Tallaght (IT)	SC Programme now offered	New SC programme
2008	Letterkenny (IT)	SC Programme now offered	New SC programme
2009	Galway–Mayo (IT)	SC Programme now offered	New SC programme
2010	HETAC	National Awards Standards for SCW published	Provides a national benchmark for SC education providers NFQ levels 6 to 10

2012	QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) established when HETAC dissolved.	(QQI) is the national agency responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in further education and training and higher education in Ireland	Provides a national benchmark for SC education providers NFQ levels 6 to 10
2014	QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)	QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Re-issue SCW – Awards and Standards	The SCW – Awards and Standards are reissued in 2014
2017	CORU – SCWs Registration Board	Standards of Proficiency for SCWs and Criteria for Education and Training Programmes	Outlines the Standards of Proficiency required for entry to the SC profession and provides details on the knowledge and skills that all SCW graduates must possess at entry to the register

Information sourced from Courtney (2012)

APPENDIX 5

SC Programme Offered in the IOTs in Ireland		
IOT	Level	SC Programme
Athlone IOT (AIT)	Level 7 – 3 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care
Athlone IOT (AIT)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in SC Practice
Cork IOT (CIT)	Level 7 – 3 Years	BA in Social Care
Cork IOT (CIT)	Level 8 – Add-On Year	BA in Social Care
Dublin IOT (DIT)	Level 8 – 3 Year	BA in Social Care
Dundalk IOT (DKIT)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Social Care
Galway–Mayo IOT (GMIT)	Level 7 – 3 Years	BA in Applied Social Care
Galway–Mayo IOT (GMIT)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Applied Social Care
IOT Blanchardstown (ITB)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care
IOT Carlow (IT CARLOW)	Level 7 – 3 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care
IOT Carlow (IT CARLOW)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in SC – Professional Social Care
IOT Sligo (IT SLIGO)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in SC Practice
IOT Tallaght (ITT DUBLIN)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in SC Practice
IOT Tralee (IT TRALEE)	Level 7 – 3 Years	BA in Social Care
IOT Tralee (IT TRALEE)	Level 8 – Add-On Year	BA in Social Care

Letterkenny IOT (LYIT)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Health and Social Care
Limerick IOT (LIT)	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in SCW
Waterford IOT	Level 8 – 4 Years	BA in Applied Social Studies in Social Care

Source IOT Programme Documentation

APPENDIX 6

Classification of 68 Social Care Modules incorporating PD

THE POSITIONING OF PD WITHIN THE SC PROGRAMMES IN THE 13 IOTS IN IRELAND						
YEAR	STAND-ALONE PD MODULE	PD IN MODULE TITLE	PD WITHIN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE	PD WITHIN CREATIVE STUDIES MODULE	PD WITHIN VARIETY OF MODULES	TOTAL
YEAR 1	1	3	3	9	11	27
YEAR 2	1	2	6	2	1	12
YEAR 3	1	2	7	4	5	19
YEAR 4	1	0	2	1	6	10
TOTAL	4	7	18	16	23	68

Stand-alone Personal Development Module

Stand-alone PD Module			
Title: Personal Development			
Year 1 – Personal Development 1 (Stand-alone)	Year 2 – Personal Development 2 (Stand-alone)	Year 3 – Personal Development 3 (Stand-alone)	Year 4 – Personal Development 4 (Stand-alone)

Personal Development Embedded in Social Care Module Title

PD IN THE TITLE			
Year 1 – Personal and Professional Development	Year 2 – Personal and Professional Development 3	Year 3 – Personal and Professional Development	Year 4 -NIL

Year 1 – Personal and Professional Development 1 and 2	Year 2 – Communications and Personal Development	Year 3 – Personal and Professional Development 4	
Year 1 – Personal and Professional Development			

Personal Development Embedded in Social Care Modules – Personal Development in the Title

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Year 1 – Professional and PD* (Stand-alone)	Year 2 – Professional Development Skills	Year 3 – Preparation for Social Care Practice*	Year 4 – Professional Practice 4 (C/A 50% + Exam 50%)
Year 1 – Professional Studies 1 – (PDP 10% of the module)	Year 2 – Practice Preparation	Year 3 – Pedagogical Practice and Social Care	Year 4 – Professional Studies*
Year 1 – Principles of Professional Practice in Social Care	Year 2 – Professional Practice Review	Year 3 – Professional Development 2	
	Year 2 – Professional Development 1*	Year 3 – Professional Practice: (PDP integrated into this (module))*	
	Year 2 – Principles of Professional Practice in Social Care*	Year 3 – Principles of Professional Practice in Social Care*	

	Year 2 – Professional Practice 1 (C/A 50% + Exam 50%)	Year 3 – Professional Practice 2 (C/A 50% + Exam 50%)	
		Year 3 – Professional Practice 3 (C/A 50% + Exam 50%)	

Table 5.3 Personal Development Embedded in Social Care Modules – Professional Development

OTHERS			
Year 1 – Introduction to Social Care*	Year 2 – Children and Family Support	Year 3 – Philosophy of Self	Year 4 – Counselling and Psychotherapy
Year 1 – Learning to Learn		Year 3 – Group Process and Dynamics	Year 4 – Ethics for Social Care
Year 1 – Learning to Learn at Third Level		Year 3 – Therapeutic Interventions in Social Care	Year 4 – Cognitive Humanistic Therapies
Year 1 – Learning to Learn		Year 3 – Communicative Practice in Professional Care	Year 4 – Psychodynamic Therapeutic Care
Year 1 – Managing Interpersonal Relations		Year 3 – Group Work (100% CA)	Year 4 – Utilising and Applying Therapeutic Interventions

Year 1 – Communications			Year 4 – Introduction to Therapeutic Interventions
Year 1 – Communication and Group Work Skills			
Year 1 – Working with Interpersonal Skills 1			
Year 1 – Working with Groups in Conversation			
Year 1 – Working with Children and Vulnerable People			
Year 1 – Exploring Values			

Personal Development Embedded in Creative Studies Modules

PD EMBEDDED IN CREATIVE STUDIES MODULES			
Year 1 – Creative Practice	Year 2 – Creative Approaches to Social Care, Art Drama Recreation	Year 3 – Creative Practice	Year 4 – Inclusive Arts
Year 1 – Introduction to Creative Studies	Year 2 – Drama or Understanding & Facilitating the Art Process in Social Care Practice	Year 3 – Creative Approaches to Social Care: Art Drama Recreation	

Year 1 – Creative Approaches to Social Care 1		Year 3 – Creative Approaches to Social Care 2	
Year 1 – Critical and Creative Thinking (Dance, Drama, Religion)		Year 3 – Creative Skills 2	
Year 1 – Creative Skills 1			
Year 1 – Creative practice 1 – Introduction to Creative Practice			
Year 1 – Drama in Education			
Year 1 – Creative Approaches to Social Care 1			
Year 1 – Introduction to Art Production in Education and Development			

Personal Development Embedded in Various Social Care Modules

PD EMBEDDED IN VARIOUS MODULES			
Year 1 – Introduction to Social Care*	Year 2 – Children and Family Support	Year 3 – Philosophy of Self	Year 4 – Counselling and Psychotherapy
Year 1 – Learning to Learn		Year 3 – Group Process and Dynamics	Year 4 – Ethics for Social Care
Year 1 – Learning to Learn at Third Level		Year 3 – Therapeutic Interventions in Social Care	Year 4 – Cognitive Humanistic Therapies
Year 1 – Learning to Learn		Year 3 – Communicative Practice in Professional Care	Year 4 – Psychodynamic Therapeutic Care
Year 1 – Managing Interpersonal Relations		Year 3 – Group Work	Year 4 – Utilising and Applying Therapeutic Interventions
Year 1 – Communications			Year 4 – Introduction to Therapeutic Interventions
Year 1 – Communication and Group Work Skills			
Year 1 – Working with Interpersonal Skills 1			
Year 1 – Working with Groups in Conversation			

Year 1 – Working with Children and Vulnerable People			
Year 1 – Exploring Values			

APPENDIX 7

Ethical application and approval

University of Sheffield School of Education RESEARCH ETHICS
APPLICATION FORM

Complete this form if you are planning to carry out research in the School of Education which will not involve the NHS, but which will involve people participating in research either directly (e.g. interviews, questionnaires) and/or indirectly (e.g. people permitting access to data).

Documents to enclose with this form, where appropriate:

This form should be accompanied, where appropriate, by an Information Sheet/Covering Letter/Written Script which informs the prospective participants about the a proposed research, and/or by a Consent Form.

Guidance on how to complete this form is at:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/11/43/27/Application%20Guide.pdf>

Once you have completed this research ethics application form in full, and other documents where appropriate email it to the:

Either

Ethics Administrator if you are a member of staff.

Or

Secretary for your programme/course if you are a student

NOTE

- Staff and Post Graduate Research (EdDII/PhD) requires 3 reviewers
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 1 reviewer – low risk
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 2 reviewers – high risk

I am a member of staff and consider this research to be (according to University definitions)

: low risk

high risk

I am a student and consider this research to be (according to University definitions):

low risk x

high risk

*Note: For the purposes of Ethical Review the University Research Ethics Committee considers all research with ‘vulnerable people’ to be ‘high risk’ (e.g. children under 18 years of age).

University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

COVER SHEET

I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project’s nature, the use of a method to inform prospective participants about the project (e.g. ‘Information Sheet’/‘Covering Letter’/‘Pre-Written Script’?)	
Is relevant	Is <u>not</u> relevant
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covering Letter enclosed• Information Sheet enclosed	

(if relevant then this should be enclosed)	
--	--

I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project's nature, the use of a 'Consent Form':	
Is relevant	Is <u>not</u> relevant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent Form enclosed (if relevant then this should be enclosed) 	

Is this a 'generic "en bloc" application (i.e. does it cover more than one project that is sufficiently similar)	
Yes	No
	NO

I am a member of staff

I am a PhD/EdD student

I am a Master's student

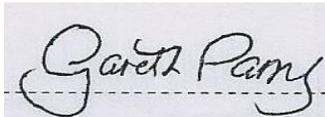
I am an Undergraduate student

I am a PGCE student

The submission of this ethics application has been agreed
by my supervisor

w Y

Supervisor's signature/name and date of agreement

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature reads "Gareth Parny" in a cursive style. A horizontal dashed line is drawn across the signature.

28 November 2012

I have enclosed a signed copy of Part B

 Y

PART A

A1. Title of Research Project

Personal Development in the Higher Education and Training of Social Care Practitioners in Ireland

A2. Applicant (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised research projects):

Title: Ms

First Name: Patricia

Last Name: Cremen

Post: EdD Student Department: School of Education:

Email: edp08pc@sheffield.ac.uk: Telephone: 00353 86 6034698

A.2.1. Is this a student project?

Yes

Supervisor:

Professor Gareth Parry

School of Education

University of Sheffield

388 Glossop Road

Sheffield S10 2JA

Email: G.W.Parry@sheffield.ac.uk

A2.2. Other key investigators/co-applicants (within/outside University), where applicable:

None

Please list all (add more rows if necessary)

Title	Full Name	Post	Responsibility in project	Organisation	Department

A3. Proposed Project Duration:

Start date: 2008 End date: 2014

A4. Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:

	Involves children or young people aged under 18 years
	Involves only identifiable personal data with no direct contact with participants
x	Involves only anonymised or aggregated data
	Involves prisoners or others in custodial care (eg young offenders)
	Involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
x	Has the primary aim of being educational (eg student research, a project necessary for a postgraduate degree or diploma, MA, PhD or EdD)

A5. Briefly summarise the project's aims, objectives and methodology?

The research will investigate the meanings of personal development in the higher education and training of social care practitioners in Ireland. and it will examine the rationale for its inclusion in the undergraduate curriculum of social care education. The purposes and benefits claimed for the personal development curriculum will be explored, including its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings as well as its pedagogies and practices. A qualitative research approach will be employed. In-depth interviews will be undertaken with personal development tutors on a sample of undergraduate courses in a number of institutes of technology. The design of interview schedules will be informed by a literature review and analysis of relevant documentary sources.

A6. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?

Minimal inconvenience

A7. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project and, if yes, explain how these issues will be managed?

None

A8. How will the potential participants in the project be (i) identified, (ii) approached and (iii) recruited?

(1) The potential participants in the project will be identified by consideration of my research focus and consideration of practical and resource based issues. Therefore, I will identify my potential participants as working in the Institute of Technology sector in Ireland and covering the four geographical regions (Munster, Connaught, Leinster and Ulster) of Ireland. More specifically they will be educators in the undergraduate programmes in the training of social care practitioners within these Institutes of Technology.

- (2) The potential participants in the project will be initially approached by correspondence (open invitation) inviting them to participate in the research project and enclosing an information sheet with this correspondence outlining all aspects of the research project, in which he/she is considering participating that might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate. This correspondence will be followed up by a telephone call to the potential participant, unless the potential participant requests otherwise.
- (3) As there are thirteen Institutes of Technology in Ireland, each offering an undergraduate social care programme and as they are spread out over the entire geographical area of Ireland, (clustered in four regions), I intend to recruit one participant, an educator in social care, from each of these colleges. This will ensure a good geographical spread, (urban and rural), a mix of large and small institutions and a variation of social care programmes and educators.

A9. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

Yes	Y
No	

If informed consent is not to be obtained, please explain why. Further guidance is at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes/consent> Only under exceptional circumstances are studies without informed consent permitted. Students should consult their tutors.

A.9.1 How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):

I understand that consent to participate in my research project must be given freely and voluntarily and under no circumstances must coercion be used to obtain a person's

consent to participate in the research. My potential participants will be adults who are employed in third level education sector in Ireland.

I intend to obtain informed consent in writing, and I intend to use the University of Sheffield consent form template as a guide in constructing this form. I intend to write to all potential participants inviting them to participate in my research and enclosing an information sheet outlining the research protocol. This information sheet includes a paragraph on Consent whereby the potential participant is fully informed that they are free to choose not to take part in the research project at any stage and if they so decide, they do not have to give a reason for doing so and any written information will be deleted or destroyed. The potential candidate is advised if they choose to participate then they are required to sign both copies of the enclosed consent form and return one signed copy to me for my records. They are further informed that if they have any questions, queries or need further clarification I supply my contact details and they are free to contact me in order to obtain further information.

A.10 How will you ensure appropriate protection and well-being of participants?

I understand that I have a responsibility to protect any participants from harm arising from my research, however, it is not envisaged that the potential participants will be exposed to risks that are greater than or additional to those they encounter in their normal lifestyles during the course of my research project. I will obtain informed consent of the prospective participant prior to their participation in my research project. I will be employing semi-structured interviews as my research method and it is not envisaged that the content and line of questioning will be highly sensitive, raise confidential, personal issues and intrude, or perceive to intrude, upon a participant's comfort and privacy, however, should that not be the case, I will ensure that all participants are made aware of the procedures for contacting me within a reasonable time period if, following participation, they experience stress, harm or have related concerns.

A.11 What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

Before consent is obtained from prospective participants an information sheet will be sent to each individual assuring them that any personal information collected, that could identify them, will remain strictly confidential and access to the information will be restricted to my supervisor and myself, at all times, before, during and after the research activities.

Also, that they have the right to access personal information, whether or not it is confidential, that relates to them, and to be provided to a copy of this information on request.

Finally, that they have the right, following their period of involvement in the research to withdraw their consent and to require that their data be destroyed, if practicable.

A.12 Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided.)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A.13 Will the research involve the production of recorded or photographic media such as audio and/or video recordings or photographs?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

A.13.1 This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded or visual media:

How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media or photographs may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?

Before consent is obtained from prospective participants an information sheet will be sent to each individual assuring them that the audio and/or video recordings of their activities made during the research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without their written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. The data collected during the digitally recorded sessions will be analysed and kept strictly secure and confidential. Information will be stored in locked cabinets and on IT hardware protected with security software. All data will be subject to Data Protection legislation (UK and Ireland) and at the time of disposal all tapes will be erased and destroyed and all documents shredded.

The final thesis will be published and therefore available for general readership. The greatest care will be taken to ensure that no participant is identified or identifiable in this project.

University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

PART B - THE SIGNED DECLARATION

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's 'Financial Regulations', 'Good research Practice Standards' and the 'Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue' (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In signing this research ethics application, I am confirming that:

1. The above-named project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue':
<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/govethics/researchethics/index.html>
2. The above-named project will abide by the University's 'Good Research Practice Standards':
<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/generalprinciples/homepage.html>
3. The research ethics application form for the above-named project is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
4. There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
5. Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
6. I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my supervisor or the Ethics Administrator as appropriate
7. I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CICS).
8. I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
9. I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers/supervisors) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
10. If this is an application for a 'generic'/'en block' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.

11. I will inform the Chair of Ethics Review Panel if prospective participants make a complaint about the above-named project.

Signature of student (student application):

Patricia Cremen

Signature of staff (staff application):

Date:

28th November 2012

Email the completed application form to the course/programme secretary

For staff projects contact the Ethics Secretary, Colleen Woodward Email:
c.woodward@sheffield.ac.uk for details of how to submit

ETHICS REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM

This form is for use by members of academic staff in the School of Education when reviewing a research ethics application.

Note to reviewers and applicants:

The ethical review process in the School of Education is designed to provide critical response on ethical issues identified in research proposals. For this reason, reviewers' comments are not anonymous*. The comments given here are intended to help applicants (and where appropriate their academic supervisors) to revise their research plans where necessary to ensure that their research is conducted to high ethical standards.

The contents of this form remain internal to the University, and should not be used for wider dissemination without written permission from the Ethics Reviewer named here and the Chair of the Ethics Review Panel.

1. Name of Ethics Reviewer*: <small>Reviewers who wish to make anonymous responses should contact the Chair of the Ethics Review Panel before completing the review.</small>	Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba 
2. Research Project Title:	<i>Personal Development in the Higher Education and Training of Social Care Practitioners in Ireland</i>
3. Principal Investigator (and name of Tutor/Supervisor in the case of student applications):	Patricia Cremen (Prof Parry)
4. Academic Department / School:	School of Education

5. I confirm that I do not have a conflict of interest with the project application I do not have a conflict of interest
--

6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:			
Be approved:	Be approved with <i>suggested</i> amendments in '7' below:	and/or Be approved providing <i>requirements</i> specified in '8' below are met:	<u>NOT</u> be approved for the reason(s) given in '9' below:
X			

APPENDIX 8

Invitation to participate in the study

Date: November 2012

Participant's name

Participant's address

Research Project Title

PD in the Higher Education and Training of SC educators in Ireland

Researcher: Patricia Cremen

Dear...

I am a lecturer in the programme Applied Social Studies in SC in the Limerick IOT, and I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the University of Sheffield. For my research thesis I have chosen to investigate the meanings of PD in the higher education and training of SC practitioners in Ireland and the rationale for its inclusion in the undergraduate curriculum of SC education.

The attached information sheet outlines the details of my research and I was hoping that having read this document you would be willing to participate in my research.

Should you require further clarification on any of the areas outlined in the document, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I sincerely hope that you will be in a position to take part in my research. I will contact you by telephone during the next week to discuss any questions you may have regarding my proposed research and hopefully to discuss the possibility of meeting with you.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Cremen

Department of Humanities

Limerick IOT

Email: patricia.cremen@lit.ie

APPENDIX 9

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project Title:

Personal Development in the Higher Education and Training of SC educators in Ireland

Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

The research will investigate the meanings of PD in the higher education and training of SC practitioners in Ireland and it will examine the rationale for its inclusion in the undergraduate curriculum of SC education. The purposes and benefits claimed for the PD curriculum will be explored, including its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings as well as its pedagogies and practices. A qualitative research approach will be employed. In-depth interviews will be undertaken with PD tutors on a sample of

undergraduate courses in a number of institutes of technology. The design of interview schedules will be informed by a literature review and analysis of relevant documentary sources.

The research is being undertaken to contribute to the emerging literature on the sociology of therapeutic culture as it relates to the education and training of SC practitioners in Ireland (especially in the context of the forthcoming statutory registration of) and in partial fulfilment of the requirements for completion of the award of Doctorate in Education (EdD) of the University of Sheffield.

Why have I been chosen?

My research will include one participant from each the thirteen Institutes of Technology in Ireland, who are involved in the delivery of the Undergraduate SC Programme and who are familiar with the subject PD.

As you are a member of this group, I hope that you will agree to take part in this research in order that I may investigate the meanings of PD in the higher education and training of SC practitioners in Ireland and examine the rationale for its inclusion in the undergraduate curriculum of SC education.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part in the study, I will arrange to meet with you to interview you for approximately 60 minutes at a time and location that is suitable for you. You will not be asked to give additional time to this research beyond the interview. You will be offered the opportunity to verify interview transcripts and make corrections should you wish. No expenses can be paid for contributions to the research. The interviews will take place between January and February 2013. You will be asked questions about the meanings of PD in the education and training of SC practitioners in Ireland and about the inclusion of this subject in the undergraduate curriculum of SC education, its rationale, purpose, advantages and disadvantages, theoretical underpinnings, pedagogies, and practices.

You will be asked to respond as openly and as honestly as you can and there will be no obligation on you to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will guide future teaching of this subject and contribute to current debates on this topic.

What if something goes wrong?

This research project has been ethically approved via The University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedures. If you feel that I have acted unethically during

this research or if you have any concerns or wish to raise a complaint regarding this research, my supervisor Professor Gareth Parry can be contacted at:

Professor Gareth Parry
School of Education
The University of Sheffield
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

Email: G.W.Parry@sheffield.ac.uk

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that is collected during the research that could identify you will remain strictly confidential and access will be restricted to my supervisor and myself, always, before, during and after the research activities. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

You have the right to access personal information, whether it is confidential, that relates to you, and to be provided with a copy of this information on request.

You have the right, following your period of involvement in the research, to withdraw your consent and to require that your data be destroyed, if practicable.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. The data collected during the

digitally recorded sessions will be analysed and kept strictly secure and confidential. Information will be stored in locked cabinets and on IT hardware protected with security software. All data will be subject to Data Protection legislation (UK and Ireland) and at the time of disposal all tapes will be erased and destroyed, and all documents shredded.

The final thesis will be published and therefore available for general readership. The greatest care will be taken to ensure that no participant is identified or identifiable in this project.

Contact for further information

If you require any further information or if you need clarification on any matter related to this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

Patricia Cremen
Department of Humanities
Limerick IOT
Moylish Campus
Limerick

Email: patricia.cremen@lit.ie

Consent

You are free to choose not to take part in this research project at any stage and if you do so you do not have to give a reason for your choice and any written information will be deleted or destroyed.

If you choose to take part, please sign both copies of the attached consent forms and return one signed copy to me for my records.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering participation in this research.

Patricia Cremen

08th November 2012

APPENDIX 10

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project:

PD in the Higher Education and Training of SC educators in Ireland

Name of Researcher: Patricia Cremen

Name of Supervisor: Professor Gareth Parry (University of Sheffield)

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated January 2013 for the above project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before Publication. I give permission for your supervisor to have Access to my responses.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX 11

Reflective Journal Entry

I completed my second interview today. It was such a different experience compared to my first interview. (name) comes from the artistic world and her perception of PD is very different to that of the first participant and to mine. In my first interview (name) had a similar training background to me and worked in a similar way in PD. However today was different. I felt that I was in a new world of PD very different to my own. As the interview progressed, I found myself comparing processes, practices, philosophies and even wondering if I totally agree with this way of working. Now, as I sit here reflecting back on the experience, I am aware that I need to bracket my own past experiences, beliefs, opinions as much as I can, but I am finding this is so difficult to do. As I write about this, I am anxious, but I know this is my honest opinion. However, on the positive side I also remember. during the interview, pulling myself back and consciously bracketing off my own worldview, concentrating and actively listen to what (name) was saying. I did struggle but remembered my objective and attempted to remain very present to the conversation. As I sit here now reflecting on my experience, I realise that keeping myself apart while at the same time engaged in the encounter is not an easy task. I am aware that I am invested in the concept of PD and hugely committed to working in this area. I assumed that my insider knowledge would make interviewing easy, but this is not the case, it's so easy to slip into comparison mode and dare I say it...be judgemental!! I am overwhelmed by the generosity and honesty of the interviewees so far and their willingness to co-operate in my research, it's such a relief! Also, on the positive side, I was very comfortable during the interview, I possess good interviews skills and I am an active listener. Today, writing this reflective piece tells me I am going to be hugely challenged along the way and this is going to be a journey of discovery

Notes to self:

1. Schedule in some time after each interview to do some free writing in my journal (without judgement)
2. A good plan also is to get some fresh air and then a cup of tea.

APPENDIX 12

Extract of notes from conversations with critical friends (1)

Critical Friend 1 (CF1)

This discussion took place with Critical Friend (CF1) at the beginning of my research process when I was trying to decide on the sample for my study. I knew that I wanted to undertake a national investigation into the subject of PD in all the IOTs delivering SC programmes in Ireland.

I discussed this plan with CF1, however, she was not at all convinced that this would work out. She was concerned about the organization of undertaking, what she considered, to be an enormous project. She pointed out:

1. Geographical distance between the IOTs
2. The time it needed to carry out the task
3. The financial implications
4. The challenge of travelling all over Ireland as I work full time

She made some very persuasive arguments for reducing the geographical span such as confining it to one region. She also stated that she had concerns about the plan succeeding.

I, on the other hand, was really committed to undertaking a national investigation. I felt anything less than this would not be worthwhile.

However, CF1 was not at all convinced and suggested an alternative way of carrying out the investigation such as staying geographically close to where I live and work. She suggested the Munster region (5 IOTs) was an ideal location in which to source 10 participants. She proposed carrying out an interview with one PD facilitator in each of the 5 IOTs together with one member of the management team, (such as Head of Department), who would be involved in programme development.

I considered this proposal, but (a) I thought confining the research area to one region would not allow for an in-depth exploration of the topic (b) I did not think that management would have the necessary in-depth knowledge and experience of the concept of PD that I wished to explore and (c) I really wished to carry out a fully comprehensive national study.

CF1 also pointed out the financial implication of travelling all over Ireland, the mileage and the accommodation. She also mentioned the physical exertion involved while still occupying a full time lecturing position.

I understood her point of view and appreciated her input and concerns about my welfare. After much consideration and deliberation and when she was sure that I understood all the undertakings and challenges involved in a national study, she endorsed my decision.

Nevertheless, she suggested that we do a brainstorming session on how to constructively manage the project. Ideas such as taking a year's leave of absence from work were debated but rejected due to financial implications. Finally, having debated many ideas and suggestions we came upon the idea of applying for job-sharing for one year when I would work half-time and have some free time to collect my data. We concluded our discussion with that choice a possibility.

(P.S. I did take job-sharing for one academic year and completed my data collection)

Extract of notes from conversations with critical friends (2)

Critical Friend 2 (CF2)

This discussion took place with CF2 during a time I was struggling with the fact that I was both an insider and an outsider in my research study. I work in the IOT sector, I am a PD educator and I am passionate about the subject of PD in the higher education and training of SCW's.

However, I am also the researcher, on the outside, managing the research process. This insider/outsider position proved to be an ethical dilemma for me, especially at the beginning of my research study when trying to decide whether to include my own place of work (IOT) in the research sample.

I discussed this dilemma with CF2, and she pointed out that, from her point of view, there were both advantages and disadvantages in this situation and we needed to examine all avenues. We

opened up the discussion by exploring the advantages of being an insider in the research which she believed to be:

Advantages:

1. My knowledge and experience in this area would increase the richness of the data collected
2. PD is an established and respected mode of learning in my IOT and to leave it out would not allow for valuable comparison and contrast with other modes of PD learning
3. I had the ability to bracket off my own preconceived assumptions and beliefs as I was an experienced psychotherapist and had the professional skills to carry out this task

Disadvantages:

1. My familiarity with my work colleagues (PD educators) in my IOT would prevent me being objective and impartial during the interview process.
2. I am so familiar with the workings of PD in my IOT that I might miss or overlook some important questions that would be crucial to the research study
3. I might, despite all my efforts, allow bias to seep into my interviews with my participants.

We discussed these advantages and disadvantages in-depth and I admitted that I felt nervous about making this decision as I did not want to compromise my research study in any way. I knew this decision was crucial and I wanted to make the right choice.

Finally, after much discussion and debate, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and I included the IOT I work in as part of the sample and I felt very happy with my choice.

APPENDIX 13

Semi-Structured Interview – Schedule of Questions

1. Is PD incorporated in your SC programme and if so, could you tell me how it is integrated into your module(s)?
2. Can you tell me a little about your background and training and how you are involved in the PD of students?
3. What is the rationale of including PD in your SC programme?
4. What is the core philosophy of the subject of PD in this SC programme?
5. What frame of reference (if any) was employed in designing the module(s)?
6. What, in your view, are the main theoretical stances underpinning the design?
7. Could you describe how PD is facilitated/taught/delivered in this college?
8. What are the proposed learning objectives/outcomes of this module?
9. How is this subject assessed/graded? Could you comment on the notion of subjective assessment/grading?

10. What, in your estimation, are the advantages, limitations and/or tensions of including PD in the education and training of SCWs?
11. How has the concept of PD evolved in this SC programme? How (if at all) has the preparation for the statutory registration of SCWs in Ireland impacted on this development?
12. What has been your personal experience of lecturing/facilitating the subject of PD?
13. On which theoretical approach (if any) do you base your work? If so, how does this influence your teaching/facilitating of the subject?
14. PD is considered by some academics/students to be 'non-academic'. What are your thoughts on this?
15. Some academics maintain that engaging in Personal Development has a negative effect as it encourages students to concentrate on past painful experiences and to become self-absorbed and introspective. Could you comment on this?
16. How do you see the future development of Personal Development in SC education in Ireland evolving?

APPENDIX 14

Sample: Interview Transcript

Tape Participant 8: 008 – Time 53:07

Key: I = Interviewer

Key: R = Respondent

I: Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for my research topic. So, I will start Personal Development or the subject of Personal Development. It's embedded in different modules, in different ways, so here in xxx what happens?

R: Here in xxx it's embedded in the Professional Development mmm part of the module you know. So, it's kinda 50/50 you know. We would have the PD elements which would be Personal Development and then you would have the Professional Development, you know so it's part and parcel of and it's linked to placement as well, right. Now the interesting thing is that although it's given priority in the module, right, people can fail the Personal Development, a part of it and still go on placement you know. Coz there's a little bit of a quirk in the system, in that we carry over three sessions ah after placement, so it would be post placement you know. So, we don't give a mark out on time really you know, we might do well enough on placement but if they haven't ah submitted or kept up the Personal side of it do you know, then they run into difficulties at the end of it you know. And there does tend to be a void as well you know. So, a lot of people if they can't argue with the professional side, but with the personal side then they might take issue you know, oh what are they doing, if they are sitting around in a circle talking about stuff you know, there's not a kind of a broad understanding around it. This is my experience anyway you know.

I: And is that running on all four years of the programme?

R: The first three years of the programme, you know. In Fourth Year, there is a kind of Personal Development mmm group, but it's not tied to placement, it's a stand-alone one. In Third Year, the PD is tied to counselling skills, you know and in the First Year and the Second Year it's tied to the placement, the rational development.

I: OK, so it has a different title, the same for two years, third year's is the counselling and fourth year is ...

- R: ... is stand-alone linked to various lectures so kind of you know. Am it would be (name) who would do it, she'd do mmm psychodynamic, the cognitive, humanistic you know the theory and then that, apparently would be xxx mirrored in the group, though not always the way, it takes speed, you might have two separate people doing it, so there tends not to be a flow between ah what goes on in the lecture or what goes on in the actual group itself.
- I: And in your college here, do you have a lecture once a week and a group once a week or how do you deliver Personal Development?
- R: The, the it's how it's delivered you know, so mmm, say for First Year I would have for say for nine of the weeks, because it starts like holding over three sessions, I'd have them for maybe an hour and a half, yeah, an hour and a half mmm for one semester, and then I carry those hours over post-dated and then I have three sessions after that, you know. Now, how it works in relation to 'Professional' is right, Professional, what it does is broken up, is done in chunks. Some Lecturers do the Ethics part you know, that kind of stuff involved in the Placement part of it, you know, so there would be a kind of ah, different people doing different things. So, it would be broken up sometimes, it has been the case where Care Plan Lecturers might do six weeks altogether, and then there'd be nothing then for the following six weeks, other ways it might be staggered, it might be based upon availability.
- I: So, then how many would you have in a group?
- R: In a group, 15 in a group, we're trying to keep it small you know, anything over fifteen and you'd run into issues, you know, because it's just, it's the nature of the group, if you're not able to voice or kinda express yourself in the group, you have people hiding you know, and it's, it's, it's, within the group, as you know yourself there's a social dynamic in play, you know and you know like we try to keep it to 15 because just allocation of hours, and also anything over that, it affects the dynamic you know, because you have a very short period of time. It's like sometimes you might like last year was an hour per session, if you had 15-20 people in a group they'd be just able to say (door closes in the background) 'Hello my name is ...' and then it would be over, like you know. So that's part of the rationale behind it.
- I: OK
- R: That's a class then, that's a class rather than a group, and how long would they have, like how long?
- I: An hour to an hour-and-a-half.
- R: You see that to me now would be a class you know, and I don't think people would be able to develop properly in that kind of environment. Because part of the Personal Development is the interaction, it's the sharing, you know, so if you have it in a large, it would be almost

lecture format there, you know. You could choose just to kinda zone out completely. You know it's just another lecture, whereas PD is, especially, the client base that they are dealing with, you know, you need to kinda have some work internal work done yourself, you know in order to deal with, there are so many issues that you might face on placement or in the real world, you know.

I: So, when you say you have your group of 15, what sort of issues would they bring up in groupwork?

R: I have come across it. Some would be mmm very, very personal issues, you know mmm, some like you'd say, you'd have kinda certain issues that you'd need to report, you know like drug abuse, (stutters) sexual kind of things you know, all this emerged in the whole course of my experience. So those you would tend to advise them to go for professional counselling because you only have them once a week and there wouldn't be the space for that either you know. Like general everyday issues like say the Dissertation, problems maybe at home, with classes, you know, like what I would tend to do, would be to use the group as kind of ah, a safe holding area you know and allow students to bring issues that they would have to the group. It's a kind of, mmm in the group, it allows subjectivity to come in, you know. And so, it allows discussion and kind of looking at it in different perspectives, you know, and it also gets people out of their own heads as well because they're still kind of small, they're still came along as children, you know. Get them to develop empathy, listening skills, and all that kind of stuff you know, so that's the way that I'd work it.

I: So, can you tell me a little bit about how you came to teach the subject and maybe your background in the—?

R: Well, previous to coming to xxx I was a practising psychotherapist as you know. I was involved in, 'oh what wasn't I involved in?' A lot of my client base would have been in serious mental illness, so it would be schizoid-affective disorder, manic depression you know, ah all these kinds of ones, right, so I was thrown in at the very, very deep end you know. So, I had a lot of experience dealing with that. I worked with teenagers, I had referrals from ah the JOR Officers, you know. I've worked with the elderly, life story work. I've lectured on counselling courses, like I would be very familiar with the group therapy dynamic you know and that was kinda before I came here, you know. Originally when I started here, it was primarily ah kind of lecturing I was doing you know. It was kinda my own practice, alongside my own practice because I was only doing a small number of hours to begin with you know, but then it slowly, the hours started to mushroom, you know. And we would have here key people who would be involved in the PD element and they could do some hours, so I was asked to step into the breach you know. And to begin with, it was all Fourth-Year hours, mmm but that kind of changed, there was a political coup, so I get a push towards the First Years, you know.

- I: OK, so, you have no fear in dealing with all the issues that—?
- R: Fear is all you know, like literally nothing can faze me, you know.
- I: So, does your professional background help?
- R: The professional background.
- I: Yes.
- R: Exactly, if I didn't have that, you know even in the context here I've come across serious enough cases you know, if I didn't have the training that I had, I don't think I'd be able to deal with it properly you know. I mean other people here, ah colleagues of mine, they wouldn't have had the training that I've had, and they would be starting it, starting the group work this year and they really don't, they see it as a talking-shop you know. I see it as being different to a therapy group, you know because mmm in it's in an academic institution, students have to go out of the group and into a lecture format, so they're seeing people, that's not exactly a therapy group but there are therapeutic elements through that experience you know. Because from the group itself, friendships are formed, you know certain dynamics can be analysed and used to illustrate various points, you know and primarily for me, it's a safe place for work, any issues that occur, you can talk about. If there was no such group and if that wasn't encouraged within the group, if you were shut down with an issue, you know, what's going to happen? You know you just build up, and build up and build up, you know, so that's the way that I would kind of work it, you know.
- I: And how do you create that safe place then?
- R: Any group that I would have, I lay out the confidentiality, the boundaries, now, given my way of working would be different to, because my background is very, very diverse you know. Like mmm some people would take, place enormous emphasis on you know the therapeutic side of it, you know. So, you know it's the, they would almost put pressure on people to reveal their emotions and it's almost a success if they get them to cry. Now, I wouldn't be of that ah persuasion at all. I would kind of ah, claim that it's what they bring to the group, you know, if they have an issue they need to, it can't be forced out of them, and it's a humanistic element in me. It can't be forced out of them, like they need to feel the trust and develop the trust and have an element release the frost in the group you know in order to bring that to the fore. You know it can be very damaging you know to go after an issue in a group too. It's almost like hunting, so I wouldn't, that's kinda my personal philosophy on it you know. Well it's partly because I've had experience of a lot of groups before you know as well in life.
- I: So, you're well experienced in the work?
- R: Too much experience!

- I: And can I ask you just following on from that then, what's your own therapeutic approach or your psychological school of thought?
- R: Integrative, because that was my training, that was like you know, like when the integrative approach was coming, kind of like depending on the age group as well, you know like say with the First Years you have to go very, very gently, because they're all very new to it, you know. So, the primary care is Humanistic, you know, I would kinda, because of my training bring in a little bit of essential bits here and there in my lecturing as well you know. A large amount of my training was Psychodynamic, a lot of my academic background was, would, a lot of it came from Psychodynamic ah theory so, that would be tipping away in my mind as well you know. I lecture on the CBT Course, so as you know, all of that as well you know, and even like part of it as well, it's very unpopular but, mmm it has the Spiritual element as well. Because in SC right, there is a vocational side to it, but we're not allowed talk about it, you know but I would sneak it in under the radar you know.
- I: OK, so in this college, what do you think is the main core, or the core philosophy or the main theoretical stance in this college?
- R: The main theoretical stance would probably be the Humanistic perspective you know, like primarily Humanistic you know. Sometimes it might be too much humanistic, but it is definitely, that's what I'm saying. You have the lecture piece and the group you know. Like the group would be organised in a circular fashion you know and sometimes you'd get the, depending on the time frame that you'd have, we could do work in groups, so like I can integrate very creative elements as well, drawing photographs can bring pieces to talk about these kind of things you know, just to give something different to it, coz it's almost created to get people out of the headspace, as associated with the lecture. I operate on a different level, for feeling, like emotional type of level you know. But what happens in this institution is we help people specialise with PD, you know so it wouldn't have any lecturing at all. It would just be all PD you know and just on Personal reflection, they can miss out on the balance, because they are going to group after it, group after group, so literally they are doing the same thing over and over again. They have no kind of ah conceptualisation of you know 'oh we have to go out of the group into a lecture', you know so it is just interesting.
- I: So, these are facilitators? Can I confirm – they facilitate only group work, and no lectures?
- R: No, nothing else, no.
- I: To link into the theoretical?
- R: No, no. (Someone knocks at the door.) Sorry about this.

I: And thank you very much, you gave me the programme module. And the learning objectives then, what would you say overall, they would be in this college?

R: In a nutshell, it's interesting. It depends on the facilitator, on what the learning objectives are. You know there is an attendance component there so, like you'd think that if people attended every ah session, they'd get full marks. Well it's not really the case, Personal Development right. One problematic that I have would be the interpretation of you know what constitutes participation you know. So, you're giving a mark for participation really. And I admit ah, I'd be generous enough where other facilitators would give you know 43, how would you build up the rationale behind this you know. Like for, they'd have to do an assignment for me or a reflective journal you know and literally one of the sessions I'd go through each and every point that I need in the reflective journal. What I'd mark them on is the ability to connect to their own life and to their own experiences. That's what I'd kinda mark but other people – they'd have completely diverse ways you know. I have come into conflict with people over marks in that you know my way of marking would be very much by the criteria laid down, the criteria, they hit the mark you know. Others would kinda be more oh what they say in class you know, or they participate, they didn't speak up enough, you know. But from my perspective, you know different personality types, they communicate differently, you know. So, you might have like ah, a girl might be very shy and retiring you know, and you might have someone who is very, very loud and take over you know, you can't kind of use the same measure for them. You know the person that might be talking a lot, mightn't be saying anything at all, you know and the person who might be very quiet might just give nuggets themselves. You have to really pay attention there. I think the assignment is good in that it gives concrete evidence of where they're at and where they're coming from you know.

I: So, attendance is important and graded?

R: They are around 10 per cent. Like the issue with that, it's a small enough mark do you know, people would kind of ... mmm ... bring participation to bear on that. From an institutional perspective how would you measure how much people participate? You know even in this interview you know; how would you evaluate how much I've participated?

I: 10 per cent represents how they engage and how you measure that?

R: Exactly! I, I, I'd play it safe and I'd say if they're sitting in the seat, yeah, it's for attendance they get the mark for it, the attendance and then the reflective journal, then you can measure ah

I: Their own awareness?

- R: Exactly, you measure the structure, certain activities, to mirror what occurs in the journal, right. So, they have to be constantly writing about what they do in class reflecting on it and then that is transcribing it to the journal.
- I: I'll just ask you the next question. Some academics say the subject (of PD) is too woolly altogether, it's all talk and emotion. You couldn't possibly grade it because it's too subjective. Would you have any opinions on that?
- R: I'm firmly entrenched now in the emotional side, right. All my research, in one way or another has to do with the affective element and the importance of the affective element. Now what I think and again this is controversial has to do with disciplinary blindness, right. So, it depends on your training. Right, so for example Social Policy you know wouldn't really kind of pay great credence to intra, intra-personal processes, you know, be completely alien to them, so that's literally, they reach a point, they're immersed in this kind of ah, so they can't see the wood from the trees essentially. A lot of academics who are working in higher education, a lot of them, they may not have had that much experience in the field. They may have been straight through you know. They may not understand the value of reflecting, they may be very black and white. It depends on the discipline. Some disciplines are more open to it than others you know. That would be just my opinion on it. But I would say definitely they need to focus on and understand the emotional side you know. And interestingly enough if you look at, not necessarily in Ireland, in an international context, the role of emotions is becoming more and more to the fore because there's been such a cognitive bias you know on strategies etc. etc. that they are not looking at the underlying effective element as to how they impact upon actions you know.
- I: So, when they say this, would you say then that the whole area has developed and the thinking that was there, it's changing?
- R: Well it's not actually changing a bit, like there are certain, depending on the disciplines that they're from, there are always these kind of core biases, you know, because that has to do with their training, they're not open to it you know. If you dedicated maybe 20 to 30 years of your life to a given discipline, you know you're not going to be changed that much you know. I, like interesting enough PD here you know it has been kept, taken away from, a little bit because people don't understand it. I think in Ireland, right, PD and Personal Development is not understood as being core to the SC experience and to SC practice. Check it out, you know. You might ask xxx next door, he's Head of the Department; he might be able to tell you.
- I: And the next question really is about the frame of reference that was used when setting up the personal development module.
- R: It's interesting because it always came with new modules and approaches. It tends to be kind of sourced back to an individual, an individual's driving force, so, especially in Ireland

you know, we kind of adopt things wholesale, a kind of a very personal impetus behind it like you know.

I: And regarding the module, you were telling me a lot of the benefits. I'm just wondering do you think there are any limitations or any negatives for including.

R: Like one negative that I would see is that at the moment it's semesterized. So, kind of, it used to be the way the, you'd have it all the way through the academic year. But if it's sectioned off you know, those Personal Development end you know after a couple of months, you know it should run all the way through you know. But again, since semesterization, things have been, its block booked almost, segmented out, you know. So, like am, psychologically how that affects the student, it's not a continuous process of learning as you know. OK to get this assignment done, this assignment done, this assignment done, and then it's out of the way which we probably see now in future is going to have serious problems in you know how people learn and recall things, you know, so I think it should be all the way through the semester you know.

I: And are you semesterized a very long time?

R: We're semesterized this is what now, three or four years. It's young yet, like maybe five years I would say. Because like when I started it was the old style, you know one big long. You see what happened here is we adopted the American model you know, and then interesting enough, the Americans decided to go back to the old way, that's funny, and we're still stuck with the semesterized model.

R: It's the same with (name) it's all semesterized you know, which actually increases the amount of work that we as Lecturers have to do. It might be easier in a way for the students, but it also lessens how much you can expose them to; like with continuous assessment you are continually correcting continuous assessment, piles of boxes filled with them behind me. It almost demeans the experience.

I: And can I just ask you, is it 100 per cent continuous assessment or are you exam based as well?

R: Usually at the end of every year, at the end of each semester they'd have two to three exams.

I: Really, for Personal Development?

R: Not for Personal Development, no. It would be continuous assessment all.

I: It would be 100 per cent continuous assessment.

R: But overall, they'd have two to three exams here, across the board, yeah.

- I: I think the old system for Personal Development was the exam based.
- R: When I was in the Counselling course, they had interviews, you know, so you had to be interviewed to see if you were suitable to progress on you know. Now I could actually see some of the advantages behind that you know, because the assessment of PD there's difficulties attached to it you know. It's only recently enough that there, it was actually myself who introduced the reflective journal you know, because before that it was all just how do people participate you know, which again there are problems there, you know they actually have some kind of trail back you have some kind of paper there, to show what this person did.
- I: I'll just move on here. Just wondering, I presume your review every five years.
- R: Yeah.
- I: So, at the next review what would be the things that you would say maybe need to be changed or would be a good idea to change or would you have any ideas as to the future development of personal development?
- R: I think that came from the professional element, that it must be more of an interlink age between the personal and the professional, you know. So if somebody fails the personal element you know they can't go out on placement, because say they haven't reached the required criteria, you know, they're a kind of a danger to themselves and others if they are out on placement and they reflect badly on the Department as a whole, you know, so I think that has to change, whether it be by a shared assessment, something like maybe ah kind of an interview or something like that you know, something like that needs to come into play but you know there'll probably be resistance to it. There is always resistance to change, anything new, you know.
- I: If you find that somebody is unsuitable for SC Practice is it through Personal Development that you deal with that or is there some other way or?
- R: Like usually the issues come to the fore in Personal Development, but it depends on what type of group that you have. So, if have a very, very open group, anything can be discussed in the group you know. So, if someone has ah personal issues you know it tends in fairness because of the trust that emerges there. If that wasn't there you know, how do they deal with the issues, they'd probably act out in kinda numerous different ways, you know. So like ah, it tends to be kind of outed very much in the group, because, you think of the lecture format you know, I'd have over 100 students in a lecture. I don't know them all individually, what's going on, but within the group you get to know the students, too well, you know from that experience you know.
- I: And would it be in discussion with them that —?

R: In discussion, in the way they act with others, you know, it's almost like a microcosm of how they're going to act out in the real world you know. And it's just trying to capture that and showing that yes that is relevant for the professional practice you know, but it depends on who's facilitating it as well you know. If they have the training or the know-how, if they're sensitive in the area you know, if they're not over-burdened you know. Sometimes what happens is you'd have kind of Facilitators who might deliver the lecture and then they want total control of all of the groups, you know. I was ousted from the Fourth Year because (stutters) I was, I, I, I had Fourth Year since I began. I know the old-style way and this person came in and said, 'No, no. I want all the groups together', so there are political pressures.

I: Could you tell me about resources here, are you supported in the college or not?

R: Not necessarily. We did have a Therapy Room; it was taken away from us. So now it's the Art Room. We don't have access to it. What's transpired now is that a lot of the groups would take place in say pre-fabs which aren't really suitable because you know the noise levels, they're in a classroom format so it takes time to organise it, it's a circle you know, they'd be cold, one of my colleagues she has to bring a radiator with her, you know to the pre-fab now to heat it up, you know. So not really facilitated and big windows and all that kind of stuff, you know and the one that I'm in, the door wouldn't close properly, so we have to wedge a chair up against the door you know. So, resource wise we're not really catered for that well you know. But I think it has to do with lack of understanding of the status of it within the institution as a whole, not only the department you know. It's the institution as a whole you know. Because the idea that you know 'it's an easy option' that someone is doing group work, what do you do, just sit there and make people cry right. Well let me tell you, right, that's not the case, because you'd be absolutely drained after some of them.

R: The attitude that you're kind of working against, you know because I don't think that probably the training isn't emphasised, you know I don't think it's recognised as being a necessary part ...

I: Not a necessary part of the qualifications required to teach or to facilitate the subject? They're not specified?

R: They're not understood you know they're not really understood either you know. You might have people from a play therapy background coming in and taking group work and they actually haven't done any group work.

I: OK

R: It's battling against the political force of the organisation because they have to fill hours and say 'Ouch, anyone can do that'.

I: Anyone can do that?

R: They wouldn't just throw anyone in to teach Physics like you know.

I: Yes! OK I'd better move on. Some academics would say that the subject of Personal Development cultivates a sense of victimhood in the students, and that it encourages them to be too introspective altogether and to be dwelling on past painful experiences and there's nothing good, it creates a sort of diminished person rather than a person who?

R: Right, there's a whole issue in academia around introspection and the role played by introspection, like you know, the founding fathers of psychology were all about inter ah introspection, right, because academically trained people, they are, Social Science is a science, in discipline, so they have to present a certain level of objectivity. You know for example, in academic essays you can't use the word 'I'. In academic circles it's basically kind of claimed that using the word 'I' kind of limits your argumentative power, that you can't have a valid point if you use the word 'I' right. Now I'd be of a newer generation, even in academic essays you know I encourage students to use the word 'I' because it implies ownership. So, what I would argue with the academics that lay claim to this is, victimhood, who is the victim and what does that mean you know. Like if you can realise that you were a victim, right, and acknowledge it, you can also do something about it. It's not a static case of being, you know. I think it comes from their disciplinary imperatives that they'd have you know, whereas it's the background that they come from, valuing objectivity but in reality, like a lot of science, like hard science, there is a lot of introspection and wasn't even the guy who invented the ah, the human genome, of two snakes intertwining you know, so what is that if not introspection you know? So, I don't think; possibly as well there is a psychological form there that they themselves don't want to feel victimised, right. As you find there's a certain personality characteristic, people who work in academia, it can be shown that they're sociopathic in a way in that they have put up this professional front. So, you're going in front of how many people, and you have to put up this veneer of expert, right. Now, if you brought your own personal opinion into play there, you know that whole veneer persona would break down and a lot of people aren't comfortable with that. I'd be very comfortable in that you know. I think, especially the area that you're in, it's the human element that has to be pushed to the front, it's not about grey or black and white. It's all various shades of grey you know. This is what our students are going out to be dealing with, on a day to day hour to hour basis, messiness you know.

R: They have to be shown how to deal with this messiness, because they don't need the xxx' messiness, right when they leave placement or their place of work. They carry it with them, and they need to be given the tools on how to deal with it, the real world you know.

I: What would you think would be the main themes in personal development?

- R: It depends on what stage of the course they're at you know; kind of First Years you know, the family, the idea of self, that's a new concept for them you know. Whereas when I was with the Fourth Years endings, life matters, things such as that, it depends on what stage the student is at you know. As well as that you know you need to be very, very flexible in a group as well in the various issues that come in. You need to be able to deal with them you know and integrate them into the group experiences as well you know. So, I am continually surprised at what issues are brought up you know, but it's your ability to use them and to enrich the group experience, to feel that, that's important. I think from a facilitator point of view you have to be open to being surprised. Don't force things. You can come in with a kind of preconceived plan and it all goes out the window. This happens so many times! So! You're not doing the exact same thing over and over again.
- I: Certainly not! Can I just ask you, do you have mostly young students, Leaving Cert. and all that or mature or a mix?
- R: I have a mix of them, I have a mix of them, so I'd have mature students and I'd also have—
- I: Leaving Cert. and somewhere in between then?
- R: Somewhere in between from all walks of life. You know we even have a pensioner in First Year, you know which I think is a good thing.
- I: Do you think the gender balance is changing? Do you have predominantly female students?
- R: There was a change when there was a move away from the religious point of view you know, so there were mostly men back originally. But then there was a kind of a cultural shift and it's because even because there's 'care' in the title you know it's predominantly female you know, which is interesting for me from a sociological point of view, you know, is it only women who can care, which I would take issue with you know. Because it's worse in the Early Ed. Course, I lecture on that. Oh! That's all women you know, but I think it's an idea that people have, or sometimes people would go into SC as a launching pad into Social Work you know but the gender balance is not there yet, but it makes a difference if there are some fellows in there like you know.
- R: A gender balance is very rare to have you know, I usually just have all women. All women, it's just the way that it falls.
- I: And the men?
- R: But they seem to be snapped up quite quickly before they leave us. They are snapped up into the sector very, very quickly.
- I: And into management?

- R: That's a whole other issue!
- I: There's two more if I, just quickly, very quickly, mmm, I was just saying to you earlier on that the subject of Personal Development is considered to be a core competency in the new CORU framework for the statutory registration. How do you think this will affect the future development of the education of social care workers?
- R: More people taking issue because it's not coherently labelled, you know they're taking out what they have in this like, you know, so we don't know, it might be setting us up for a fall really. If it's vaguely, unless you had, have key learning outcomes attached to it, you know that can be measured in some way, that's why I'd be kind of ah, presenting even, the interview format you know, so you'd have kind of a list of things that you'd want to see, does that person – can manifest these qualities, you know interview them and see can they actually make the mark you know.
- I: And the final question xxx, could you let me have your opinion on whether there should be one generic title that covers personal development? Or do you think it's good to have a variety of modules with personal development embedded in the module?
- R: You see it depends what kind of ah a way you want to go. So if you want recognition you know alongside the other subjects, you know maybe to have ah I would say generic, a kind of a key module but then from my perspective, I'd be very much in the academic line of you know, that it needs to be that I do see it as very relevant to like even, you know to the other subjects that I'd have, so I'd be Disability, Elder Studies, Mental Health, Addiction, all these, the personal element does come into play. Because primarily what's happening is that people are drawing on the personal element to inform their ideas and their arguments. We all do this, right, but it takes a very brave person to admit that they do that you know. So, I would see advantages to both sides; with certain disciplines like say, Law for example, you're not allowed touch on law because the lawyer has to teach it you know. So, it depends what way people want to go with it you know. If you're arguing for more training and to be recognised by key people, it needs to be a stand-alone module you know. If you want it to be more general one to feed into the general curriculum you know, like, then keep it nice and general. The danger is, having it as a stand-alone module is that it might just be put in one semester, you know it wouldn't be all the way through.
- I: And can I just, the very last question, can I just say if you were say having that stand-alone module, have you any ideas for a title?
- R: I'm really being put on the spot now.
- R: Because there is an issue, kind of with ah the term 'Personal Development', kind of even 'Reflection', is kind of an issue, you know like. Because what you want to do with that module, the object behind that module, possibly a way of around would be integrating it

with Professional Practice, you know, so something with Professional, Professionalism you know in it. So maybe just off the top of my head, SC Professionalism, you know something like that but within Professionalism you know, is the Personal Development you know. Am because like here, it is tied to the Professional Development but it's still quite separate you know. Like Counselling Skills would be tied to Counselling Skills but then you have to argue you know, Counselling Skills, what's that doing in Social Care? They're not going to be Counsellors you know. Ah we have therapeutic practice, you know, which again there would be issues around that, it's not really therapy, it's a nebulous area you know, but something that needs to be specific to, like something even Therapeutic Approaches to Social Care, you know then you could kind of, maybe each year hit on key terms, maybe, you know something like that and then you'd be emphasising that people who have a therapeutic background have to teach this module if that's the way you want to go. That's very Machiavellian.

I: Thank you very much (xxx).

R: I wish you all the best in your research.

I: Thank you

Interview Ends

REFERENCES

- Allport, G. W. (1937). *Personality: a psychological interpretation*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.
- Assagioli, R. (1975). *Psychosynthesis*. New York, NY: Turnstone Press.
- Attride-Sterling, J. (2007). 'Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research'. In: Bryman, A. (ed.) *Qualitative Research 2, Volume 4: Qualitative Data Analysis*, (pp.385-4-5) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Austin, W. (2001). 'Nursing Ethics in an Era of Globalization', *Advances in Nursing Science*, 24 (2), 1-18.
- Bandura, A. (1989). 'Human agency in social cognitive theory', *American Psychologist*, 44, 1175–1184.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.
- Barnard, A. (2012). 'The self in social work', *Social Work & Social Sciences Review*, 15(3), 101–118.
- Baxter, P. and Jack, S. (2008). 'Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researcher', *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–559.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Batson, C. D. (2011). 'These things called empathy: Eight related but distinct phenomena'. In: Decety, J. & Ickes, W. (eds). *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, (pp.1-17). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Bayne, R., Hoton, I., Merry, T. & Noyes, D. (1994). *The Counsellor's Handbook: a Practical A–Z Guide to Professional and Clinical Practice*. London: Chapman & Hall.
- Bayne, R., Horton, I., Bimrose. (1996). *New Directions in Counselling*. London:Routledge.
- Beard, C.,Clegg. S. & Smith, K. (2007). 'Acknowledging the Affective in Higher Education', *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(2), 235–252.
- Bazeley, P. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. London: Sage.

- Behan, L. (2014). 'Placing Therapeutic Relationships at the Heart of Our Work., In: Howard, N. & Lyons.D. (eds.) In:*SC Learning from Practice*, (pp.163-172). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Binswanger, L. (1963). *Being-in-the-World: Selected Papers of Ludwig Binswanger*. (Trans. J. Needleman.). London: Condor Books
- Bonnano, G. (2004). 'Loss, trauma and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely adverse events?', *American Psychologist*, 59(1), 20–28.
- Booyesen, P. & Staniforth, B. (2017). 'Counselling in social work: A legitimate role?' *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 29(1), 16–27.
- Brearley, J. (1995). *Counselling and Social Work*. Bristol: Open University Press.
- Broadfoot, P. (2009). 'Extended Review: The future of educational change: international perspectives', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30(3), 373-378.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Burkitt, I. (2008). *Social Selves: Theories of Self and Society*. UK: Sage Publications
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bugental, J.F.T. (1981). *The Search for Authenticity: An Existential-Analytic Approach to psychotherapy*. New: Irvington
- Burke, C. (29 November 2017). 'HSE "consistently failing" to address problems at Áras Attracta care home', *The Journal*. Retrieved on January 30, 2018, from: <http://www.thejournal.ie/aras-attracta-report-consistent-failing-hse-hiqa-3722059-Nov2017/>
- Burnard, P. (2004). 'Writing a qualitative research report', *Nursing Education Today*, 24, 174-179
- Burr V., Blyth, E., Sutcliffe, J. & King, N. (2016). 'Encouraging Self-Reflection in Social Work Students: Using Personal Construct Methods', *British Journal of Social Work*, 46(7), 1997–2015.
- Byrne, J. (2013). 'Therapeutic SC Practice'. In: Lalor. K. & Share.P. (eds.) *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Byrne-Lancaster, L.(2017). 'Thresholds to cross when learning social practice', *Practice and Evidence of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 12(2), 81–96.

Carolan, M. (6 September 2016). 'Áras Attracta Residents Treated Like Eternal Children', *Irish Times*. Retrieved on January 30, 2018 from:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/%C3%A1ras-attracta-residents-treated-like-eternal-children-1.2781289>

Clarke, B. A., Meirs, M. D., Pollard, K. C. & Thomas, J. (2007). 'Complexities of learning together: students' experience of face-to-face interprofessional groups', *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 6(4), 202–212.

Cohen, L., Mannion, L. & Morrison, K. (2003). *Research Methods in Education* (5th edn). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Cooper, A. (2012). 'The Self in Social Work Practice; Uses and Abuses'. Paper given to the CSWP Essex Regional Group/Essex University day conference: How to do relationship-based social work. Southend, 2012. Retrieved 7 March 2016, from:

<http://www.cfswp.org/paper-01-01-2012-the-self-in-social-work-practice-uses-and-abuses.php>

Cooper, M. (2003). *Existential Therapies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Corey, G. & Schneider Corey, M. (2002). *Groups: Process and Practice*. USA: Brooks/Cole.

Cornwall, J. & Walter, C. (2006). *Therapeutic Education: Working alongside troubled and troublesome children*. New York, NY: Routledge.

CORU. (2017). *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers 2017*. Retrieved 7 August 2017, from:

[http://coru.ie/uploads/documents/Standards_of_Proficiency_for_Social_Care_Workers_\(31.05\).pdf](http://coru.ie/uploads/documents/Standards_of_Proficiency_for_Social_Care_Workers_(31.05).pdf)

CORU. (2018). *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers 2018*. Retrieved 4 January 2018, from:

http://www.coru.ie/uploads/documents/typeset_Social_Worker_Code_Feb_2010.pdf

Coulshed, V. & Orme, J. (1998). *Social Work Practice: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Cree, V. E. (1996). 'Why do men care?' In: Kavanagh, C. and Cree, V. E. (eds). In: *Working with Men*. London: Routledge.

Cree, V. E. (2003). *Becoming a Social Worker*. London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (3rd edn). London: Sage Publications.

- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. CA: Sage.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage.
- Courtney, D. (2012). 'The Development of SC Education and Training in Ireland'. Taking Stock SCI Conference 2012, (Keynote Speech). Kilkenny.
- Day, C., Elliot, B. & Kington, A. (2005). 'Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(5), 563–577.
- Day Sclater, S., Jones, D. W., Price, H. & Yates, C. (2009). *Emotion: New Psychosocial Perspectives*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- De Waal, F. (2010). *The age of empathy: Nature's lessons for a kinder society*. New York, NY: Random House.
- DeLaine, M. (2000). *Fieldwork, Participation and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Dodds-Schumacher, M. E. (2004). 'Crafting an Identity: Narrative study of grassroots helpers in age of Uncertainty'. (PhD Thesis, Claremont Graduate University).
- Donati, M. & Watts, M. (2005). 'Personal development in counsellor training: towards a clarification of inter-related concepts', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 33(4), 475–484.
- Dewane, C. J. (2006). 'Use of Self: A premier revisited', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 34(4), 543–558.
- Dryden, W., Horton, I. & Mearns, D. (1995). *Issues in Professional Counsellor Training*. London: Cassell.
- Ecclestone, K. & Hayes, D. (2009). *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*. London: Routledge.
- Egan, G. (1973). *Face to Face*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Egan, G. (2002). *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Erikson, E. (1965). *Childhood and Society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

- Erikson, R. J. & Ritter, C. (2001). 'Emotional Labor, Burnout, and Inauthenticity: Does Gender Matter?' *Social Psychology*, 64(2), 146–163.
- Fanning, B. & Rush, M. (2006). *Care and Social Change in the Irish Welfare Economy*. Dublin: University College Press.
- Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). 'Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80–92.
- Figley, C. (1995). *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Figley, C. (2002). 'Compassion fatigue: psychotherapists' chronic lack of self care', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(11), 1433–1441.
- Fleming, J. & Benedek, T. F. (1983). *Psychoanalytic Supervision*. New York, NY: International University Press.
- Freud, S. (1923). *The Ego and the Id*. Retrieved 14 April 2014, from: <https://www.sigmundfreud.net/the-ego-and-the-id-pdf-ebook.jsp>
- Furedi, F. (2004). *Therapy Culture: Creating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*. London: Routledge.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*. UK: Hachette.
- Gaffney, M. (2011). *Flourishing*. Ireland: Penguin Group.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Basic Books Inc.
- Gerdes, K. E. & Segal, E. (2011). 'Importance of empathy for social work practice: Integrating new science', *Social Work*, 56(2), 141–148.
- Gibbons, S. B. (2011). 'Understanding empathy as a complex construct: A review of the literature', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 39(3), 243–252.
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Further Education Unit, Oxford Polytechnic.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. US: Anchor Books.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2013). *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. US: Harvard Business Press.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bantam Books.

- Government of Ireland. (1991). Child Care Act 1991. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (1992). Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2000). *Report of the Expert Group on Various Health Professions*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2000). *Statutory Registration for Health and Social Professionals Proposals for the Way Forward*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (2001). Children Act 2001. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2002). *Report of the Joint Committee on SC Professionals*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2005). Health and SC Professional Act 2005. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2005). *The Ferns Report*. Dublin. Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2007). The Health Care Act 2007. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland. (2009). *Report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (2015). Children First Act 2015. Dublin Stationery Office.
- Gradireland (2018). *Graduate Jobs in Ireland*. Retrieved 26 February, 2018, from: https://www.jobs.ie/graduate_jobs.aspx
- Graham, G. (2011). ‘What Critical Success Factors are Necessary and Sufficient for Provision of Development Care for Each Young Person in Irish Residential Care and Youth Care?’ (PhD Thesis, DIT) Retrieved on February, 10, from: <https://arrow.dit.ie/appadoc/22/>
- Grant, A. M. (2008) ‘Employees without a Cause: The Motivational Effects of Prosocial Impact in Public Service’, *International Public Management*, 11(1), 48–66.
- Grant, A. M. & Berry, J. W. (2011). ‘The Necessity of Others is the Mother of Invention: Intrinsic and Prosocial Motivations, Perspective Taking, and Creativity’, *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(1), 73–96.
- Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012). ‘Enhancing well-being in social work students: Building resilience for the next generation’, *Social Work Education*, 31(5), 605–621.
- Guba, E.G. (1981). ‘Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries’, *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29, (2) 75-91

- Guba, E. G. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. CA: Sage
- Hall, E., Hall, C., Harris, B., Hay, D., Biddulph, M. & Duffy, T. (1999). 'An evaluation of the long-term outcomes of small-group work for counsellor development', *British Journal of Guidance-Counselling*, 27(1), 99–112.
- Hamilton, L. & Corbett-Whittier, C. (2013). *Using Case Study in Education*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2011). *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Heap, K. (1985). *The Practice of Social Work with Groups: A Systematic Approach*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Hochschild, A. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feelings*. CA: University of California Press.
- Howard, N. (2014). 'The Irish Association of Social Care Workers'. In: Howard, N. & Lyons, D. (eds.). *Social Care: Learning from Practice*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Howard, N. (2012). 'The Ryan Report (2009). A Practitioner's Perspective on Implications for Residential Child Care', *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*, 12(1), 38–48.
- Humphreys, T. & Ruddle, H. (2010). *Relationship, Relationship, Relationship: The Heart of a Mature Society*. Cork: Atrium.
- Hyland, T. (2009). 'Mindfulness and the Therapeutic Functions of Education', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 2009, 43(1), 119–131.
- IFSW. (2014). *Definition of Social Work*. Retrieved 15 December 2017, from: https://www.google.ie/search?q=international+federation+of+social+workers&rlz=1C1CHBD_enIE783IE783&oq=International+federatio&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j0l5.7990
- Irving, J. A. & Williams, D. I. (1999). 'Personal growth and personal development: concepts clarified', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 27(4), 517–526.
- Joffe, H. (2012). 'Thematic Analysis'. In: Harper, D. & Thompson, A. R. (eds), *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Johns, H. (1996). *Personal Development in Counsellor Training*. London: Cassell.
- Johns. C. (1994). *The Burford NDU Model: Caring in Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications.

- Kagan, J. (2007). *What is Emotion?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kelly, P. (2001). 'Youth at Risk: processes of individualisation and responsabilisation in the risk society', *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 22(1), 23–33.
- Kennedy Report. (1970). *Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report*. Dublin: Government Publications.
- Kennedy, K. & Gallagher, C. (1997). 'Social Pedagogy in Europe', *Irish Social Worker*, 15(1), 6–8.
- Kennefick, P. (2006). 'Aspects of Personal Development'. In: O'Connor, T. & Murphy, M. (eds). *SC in Ireland*, Cork: CIT Press.
- Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2011). 'Exploring stress resilience in trainee social workers: The role of social and emotional competencies', *British Journal of Social Work*, 41(2), 261–275.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Lalor, K. & Share, P. (2013). *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Langdrige, D. (2007). *Phenomenological Psychology: Theory, Research and Method*. UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Lang, P. (1998). *Towards an understanding of affective education in a European context*. In: Lang, P, Katz, Y. & Menezes, I. (eds). In: *Affective Education A Comparative View*. London: Cassells
- Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2006). 'Giving Voice and Making Sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 102–120.
- Lasch, C. (1980). *The Culture of Narcissism*. London: Abacus.
- Lennie, C. (2000). 'The role of personal development groups in counsellor training'. Unpublished MA dissertation, Manchester University.
- Lieberman, M. A. (1986). 'Analysing change mechanisms in groups'. In: Bates, B. & Goodman, A. (1986). 'The effectiveness of encounter groups', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 14(3), 240–250.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. CA: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A. & Guba, E. G. (2011). 'Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited'. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.

- S. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp. 97–128). London: Sage Publications.
- Lindsay, T. & Orton, S. (2011). *Group Work Practice in Social Work*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.
- Lynch, K., Lyons, M. & Cantillon, S. (2007). 'Breaking silence: educating citizens for love, care and solidarity', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 17(1-2), 1–19.
- Lyons, D. (2007). 'Just Bring Yourself'. (MA Thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland).
- Lyons, D. (2009). 'Exploring the Importance of Self-awareness in Training in SC Education'. In: Share, P. & Lator, K. *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*. (pp.122–136). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Lyons, D. (2010). *Creative Studies for the Caring Professions*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Lyons, D. (2013). 'Learn about your "self" before you work with others'. In: Lator, K. & Share, P. *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*, (pp. 98–108). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Lyons, D. (2014). 'SC Education and the Irish Association of SC educators'. In: Howard, N & Lyons, D (eds). *Social Care: Learning from Practice*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Madill, A., Jordan, A., & Shirley, C. (2000). 'Objectivity and Reliability in Qualitative Analysis: Realist Contextualist and Radical Constructionist Epistemologies', *British Journal of Psychology*, 91(1), 1-20.
- Maslach, C. & Leiter, M. (1997). *The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B. & Leiter, M. (2001). 'Job burnout', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397–422.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mayer, J. D. & Salovey, P. (1997). 'What is emotional intelligence?' In: Salovey, P. & Sluyter, D. J. (eds). *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence Educational Implications*, (pp. 3–31). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- McCann-James, C., de Roiste, A. & McHugh, J. (2009). *SC Practice in Ireland: an integrated perspective*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- McLeod, J. (2003). *An Introduction to Counselling*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

- Madsen, O. J. (2014). *The Therapeutic Turn: How Psychology Altered Western Culture*. UK: Routledge.
- Meehan, D. (2005). 'Working in Social Care'. In: Share, P. & Mc Elwee, N. (eds). *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Irish Students*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Studies: Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Johnny Saldana: Arizona State University.
- Misbach, J. (2008). 'Review: "Therapizing" Ourselves to Death? Challenging Therapeutics and the Discourse of Emotional Determinism', *Theory Psychology* 18(1), 5.-25.
- Moon, J. (1999). *Learning Journals: a handbook for academics, students and professional development*. London: Kogan Page.
- Morrison, T. (2007). 'Emotional intelligence, emotions and social work: context, characteristics contributions and challenges', *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(2), 245–263.
- Moss, B. (2008). *Communications Skills for Health and Social Care*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mulville, F. (2014). 'It's about the "I": Self-understanding in SC Practice'. In: Howard, N. & Lyons, D.(eds). *SC Learning from Practice*, (pp. 119–126). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Nelson-Jones, R. (2005). *Practical Counselling and Helping Skills*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Neuman, W. L. (1991). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Newell, J. M. & MacNeil, G.A. (2010). 'Professional burnout, vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue: A review of theoretical terms, risk factors, and preventative methods for clinicians and researchers', *Best Practice in Mental Health*, 6(2), 57–68.
- Nilsson, P. (2014). 'Are Empathy and Compassion Bad for the Professional Social Worker?' *Advances in Social Work*, 15(2), 294–305.
- Nolan, J. L. (1998). *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End*. New York, NY: University Press.

- NVivo 11 (2018), Qualitative Data Analysis Software, 2018, Retrieved on January 4, 2018 from: <http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/nvivo-products>
- O'Connor, T. & Murphy, M. (2006). *SC in Ireland*. Cork: CIT Press.
- O'Leary, P., Tsui, M. S. & Ruch, G. (2013). 'The Boundaries of Social Work Relationship Revisited: Towards a Connected, Inclusive and Dynamic Conceptualisation', *British Journal of Social Work*, 43(1), 135–153.
- Ohrt, J. H., Robinson, E. H. & Hagedorn, W. B. 'Group Leader Development: Effects of Personal Growth and Psychoeducational Groups', *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 38(1), 30–51.
- Owen-Smith, P. (2004). 'What is Cognitive-Affective Learning (CAL)?' *Journal of Cognitive Affective Learning*, 11(1), 79-92.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- Payne, H. (2004). 'Becoming a client, becoming a practitioner: student narrative of a dance movement therapy group', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 32(4), 511–532.
- Pearlman, L. & MacIain, P. (1995). 'Vicarious Traumatization: An Empirical Study of the Effects of Trauma Work on Trauma Therapists', *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice*, 26(6), 558–565.
- Phillips, J. (2006). *Groupwork in SC Planning and Setting Up Groups*. London: Kingsley Publishers.
- Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. London: Sage Publications.
- QQI. (2014). *Awards Standards – Social Care Worker*. Retrieved 9 December 2015, from: <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Social%20Care%20Work%20-%20Awards%20Standards.pdf>
- Radey, M. & Figley, C. R. (2007). 'The social psychology of compassion', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 35(3), 207–214.
- Rajan-Rankin, S. (2014). 'Self-Identity, Embodiment and the Development of Emotional Resilience', *The British Journal of Social Work*, 44(8), 2426–2442.
- Robson, C. (1993). *Real World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Richards, B., Jones, D. W., Yates, C., Price, H. & Day Sclater, S. (2009). 'Psychosocial Studies: A Therapeutic Project?' In: Day Sclater, S., Jones, D. W., Price, H. & Yates, C. (eds) (2009), (pp. 242–254). *Emotion: New Psychosocial Perspectives*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Rieff, P. (1966). *The Triumph of the Therapeutic Uses of Faith after Freud*. New York, NY: Harper Torch Books.
- Rochford, G. (2007). 'Theory, Concepts, Feelings and Practice: the Contemplation of Bereavement within a Social Work Course'. In: Lishman, J. (ed.) *Handbook for Practice Learning in Social Work and Social Care*, (pp. 235–248). UK: Kingsley Publishers.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *On Becoming a Person*. London: Constable.
- Rose, C. (2008). *The Personal Development Group: The Students' Guide*. London: Karnac Books Ltd.
- Rowan, J. (1990). *Subpersonalities: The People Inside Us*. London: Routledge.
- RTÉ. (9 December 2014). Prime Time Investigations Unit. Retrieved on January 30, 2018 from: <https://www.rte.ie/news/player/prime-time-web/2014/1209/>
- Ryan, D., Mannix-McNamara, P. & Deasy, C. (2006). *Health Promotion in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Research*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Ryan, S. (2009). Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Report, (Volumes 1–V). Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Sabo, B. M. (2011). 'Compassionate presence: The meaning of Hematopoietic stem cell transplant nursing', *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 15(2), 103–111.
- Salovey, P. & Sluyter, D. J. (1997). *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence Educational Implications*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- SCI. (2018). *Advocating for Social Care Workers, Educators and Managers in Ireland 2018*. Retrieved January 4, 2018, from: <https://socialcareireland.ie/>
- Share, P & McElwee, N. (2005). *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Share, P. & Lalor, K. (2009). *Applied Social Care: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

- Shaw, J. (1974). *The self in social work*. London: Routledge.
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study Research in Practice*. University of Southampton, UK: Sage:Publications Ltd.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London:Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Sinason, V. (1999). 'In Defence of Therapy for Training'. In: Feltham, C. (ed.) *Controversies in Psychotherapy and Counselling*, (pp. 155–164). UK: Sage Publications.
- Shenton, A.K. Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Reseach Projects, *Education for Information*, 22 (2), 63-75.
- Skinner, B. F. (1938). *The Behaviour of Organisms*. MN Appleton & Company.
- Skovholt, T. M. (2001). *The resilient practitioner: Burnout prevention and selfcare strategies for counselors, therapists, teachers and health professionals*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Smith, R. (2002). 'Self-Esteem: The Kindly Apocalypse', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(1), 87–100.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Stamm, B. H. (1999). *Secondary traumatic stress: Self-care issues for clinicians, researchers & educators*. Lutherville MD: Sidran Press.
- Swan, E. (2010). *Worked Up Selves: Personal Development Workers, Self-Work and Therapeutic Cultures*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Task Force on Child Care Services. (1980). *Final Report to the Minister of Health*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Taylor, C. (2002). 'The Dialogical Self'. In: Hiley, D., Bohman, J. and Shusterman, R. (eds). *The Interpretative Turn: philosophy, science and culture*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Thomas, E. & George, T. S. (2016). 'Evaluation of Personal Development Components in Counselor Education Programs in India', *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling*, 6(1), 1–20.

- Thomas, G. (2011). *How to do your case study: A guide for students and researchers*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Tight, M. (2017). *Understanding Case Study Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- TUAIRIM. (1966). *Some of Our Children: A Report of the Residential Care of Deprived Children*. London: Tuairim.
- van Deurzen, E & Arnorld-Baker, C. (2005) *Existential Perspectives on Human Issues*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Deurzen, E. (2002). 'Existential therapy' in W. Dryden. (Eds.), *Handboook of Individual Therapy* London: Sage
- van Deurzen, E. (1998) *Paradox and Passion in Psychotherapy: An Existential Approach to Therapy and Counselling*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.
- van Deurzen, E. (1988). *Existential Counselling in Practice*. London: Sage
- VI, M. A. (2009). 'Has Therapy Intruded into Education?' *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(1), 119-131.
- Wellington, J. (2007). *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches* London: Continuum Books.
- White, C. Woodfield, K. and Ritchie, J. (2003) 'Reporting and Presenting Qualitative Data' In: Ritchie, L. and Lewis, J (eds). *Qualitative Research Practice – A guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage Publications: London.
- Williams, D. I. & Irving, J. A. (1996). 'Personal growth: Rogerian paradoxes', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 24(2), 165–172.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Wilson, F. (2016). 'Identifying, Preventing, and Addressing Job Burnout and Vicarious Burnout for Social Work Professionals', *Journal of Evidence – Informed Social Work*, 13(5), 1–13.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and Reality*. London: Hogarth.
- Yalon, I.D. (1980). *Existential Psychotheapy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Yalom, I. D. & Leszcz, M. (2005). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Applications of Case Study Research*. CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. (2013). Validity and Generalization in Future Case Study Evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), (pp.321-332).