

The Ethics of Intuition in a Counselling Practice

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Abstract

Awareness of intuition in the practice of counselling and broader health care is generally acknowledged and often identified by therapists as a “gut feel”. However, the awareness and intentionality as to how intuition might be ethically used by a therapist in their practice is less clear. This paper presents an autoethnographic account of the experience of intuition in a clinical counselling and supervision practice. The motivation for the study stemmed from the author’s experience of intuition, and the desire to find an ethical and safe way to use intuition in a professional counselling practice. Data was collected from 35 reflective journals written over nine months of clinical counselling and supervision practice. Findings from the analysis and synthesis process led to the development of a reflective tool, underpinned by “Collaborative Constructionist principles” (Anderson, 1995), that offers therapists an approach for the ethical use of intuition in a counselling practice.

Introduction

Intuition has been a topic of interest in the counselling and psychology literature for over 50 years (Charles, 2004), yet there have been few studies that focus specifically on the use of intuition in counselling and psychotherapy (Bastick, 1982; Charles, 2004). This is significant for a literature review, beginning with the discovery that intuition has not been easily defined with any commonality across counselling and psychology literature. Sprenkle (2005), proposes findings of 44 differing definitions of intuition, suggesting world views, epistemological, philosophical, and theoretical ideas influence perspectives on intuition. This evidence is used to explore multiple perspectives in the following research.

The differing views on the research of intuition are discussed further on in this paper and bring relevance to the dominance of scientific perspectives in mainstream literature. Marks-Tarlow (2014a), Charles (2004), Bryant & Luft (2023), and Jeffery (2012), point out that intuition as a cognitive-led process holds dominance over more inward, right-brain, or somatic approaches to intuition in the psychology research space. Others – Boucouvalas (1997), Marks-Tarlow (2014a), and Welling (2004) – suggest the experience of using intuition in practice is “unique”

to each therapist. This brings further discussion to the use of this type of subjective data, and the possible research limitations that might occur.

The exploration of the few recent, more subjective studies by Souser (2022), Marks-Tarlow (2014a), and Bryant & Luft (2023), give some broader perspectives for analysis, including how the awareness of intuition might be developed using reflective, mindful processes. This connects with the reflective data presented in this paper and the social constructionist lens of the study. With a lack of studies available on the use of intuition in the counselling context, a reflective tool for counsellors to navigate the use of intuition in practice is presented and put forward to address this gap.

Some initial reflections

The use of intuition has always been a natural way for me to engage with people when working with them. I define intuition as a “felt sense of knowing” that naturally arises when I connect with others in a collaborative and intentional way. This felt sense seems to have contributed not only to my own development as a therapist, but also to the healing, growth, and change that I have witnessed in people within the various caring roles I have held over the years. In particular I was curious regarding the meaning I attribute to intuition, and how it presents itself in my counselling and supervision practice. Furthermore, I was interested in how intuition could be utilised in a way that is safe, ethical, and helpful for clients and the influence my early background in holistic therapies might have had; drawing on therapeutic frameworks that value whole of body and somatic approaches in therapy. This paper describes my research process, the development of my relationship with intuition, and offers an ethical framework for the use of my intuition in professional practice.

The Masters of Counselling studies I undertook at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) privileges a Constructionist philosophical perspective (Munroe, et. al. 2008). Drawing on these theoretical ideas invited me to consider alternative perspectives and question the influences and distance I may have created between my ideas about being a professional counsellor and my intuitive way of being. In the past I had privileged dominant, scientific ideas and knowledges of expected client care, over my own intuition. The Masters program offered me the opportunity to connect more intentionally with my values, ethics, and key principles of practice; and the potential for this to function as a bridge between my intuition and my professional practice, became possible.

I set out with curiosity and openness to explore how intuition manifests in my current counselling and supervision practice. I had the opportunity to work one evening a week for

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nine months in a generalist counselling clinic, offering counselling and supervision using a Social Constructionist approach with a *reflecting teams* process, originally developed by Tom Andersen (1987). I had questions about how this inquiry might influence my practice framework, which was becoming more firmly anchored in a Collaborative Constructionist approach since starting my studies. This approach positions the therapist in a “not knowing stance” in which the client is the expert about their own life. This invites curiosity and collaboration between client and therapist and the co-creation of meaning (Anderson, 1995). I wondered what possibilities this offered for integrating intuition, and as this paper reveals, how this approach has helped me make sense of, and use intuition ethically, in clinical practice.

Researching my own intuition

In researching the topic of intuition, I found that autoethnography offered a research methodology that aligned my preferred theoretical lens of social constructionism, with an ethical and inclusive approach to research. More specifically, autoethnography holds a reflexive process, with the researcher positioned at the centre of the study, and “living” the research; being both the subject and the researcher (Coffey, 2002 as cited in Lapadat, 2017, p. 589). This research approach invited my sense of curiosity and created some nervousness about how my stories of intuition might be heard, reflected, or rejected, across the social, cultural and political counselling practice landscape. However, I could also see the opportunity to develop more awareness and dive deeper into the different perspectives that the use of intuition might hold in practice. My motivation for the research was fuelled by the quest to explore how my intuition shows up in a clinical practice, and what process or tools might help me, and other counsellors find an ethical place for intuition within a counselling practice framework.

The literature review provides a range of definitions, and key ideas relevant to my research question. This data was used in a synthesis process, with data collected from 35 reflective journals written over a nine-month period. The vignette that follows is an example reflection on my use of intuition when part of a *reflecting team* (Andersen, 1987). This reflecting team model of counselling gave me the opportunity to collaboratively reflect on my intuition experiences and gain other perspectives with the clinic team during the research project.

Further insights on my reflective process are discussed, including an example of the results of the research project included in Table 1. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of an intuition process for counselling practice, exploring possibilities for its future use, and expressing hope that this research might spark an interest among other counsellors to reflect on the potential of intuition in their own practice.

Intuition and my way of being

Intuition has always been a natural part of my life, and part of my way of being when working with people. My early experiences of having premonitions about the future, and “seeing things” as a young child orientated me towards wanting to work with intuitive and somatic practices. Studying drama and movement therapy based on Jungian ideas as a young practitioner in Europe introduced me to working with symbols and non-verbal communication. This opened a creative way for me to use intuition in my practice at that time. This experience planted a seed, and on my return to Australia I was drawn toward studying and working in the area of alternative natural therapy approaches. This alternative *energetic* approach to the energy systems of the body-mind (Krebs & O’Neil McGowan, 2014) supported my ideas about energy and intuition and also aligned with my holistic philosophical views.

Intuitive knowledge is given particular value within the community and the clients I was working with at the time. It was shocking when I stepped outside this alternative cultural environment and entered a more mainstream science-based health environment. I found it much more challenging to be as open about my beliefs about “energy”, and the use of my intuition. I felt on the “outer” and found myself trying to find a different language in an attempt to connect with people about my ideas in a scientific system that held this dominant discourse. On reflection, I began to hide my ideas, adopting what was more acceptable in a mainstream health environment, and using my intuition more secretly. For the last 20 years, I have been on a journey to somehow bridge the divide between intuitive, creative, mystical ways of being, with the logical, objective, scientific, evidence-based stance that I experience as the more dominant system in our psychology and counselling field today. My resonance with Collaborative Constructionist approaches in counselling and supervision practice was sparked early in my recent studies. This approach has given me the ethical framework to consider exploring the topic of intuition, how it shows up in my practice, and how my practice framework might influence the use of my intuition.

Collaborative Constructionism

The Collaborative Constructionist practice approach holds a subjective view, with the understanding that meaning is co-created in collaboration with others (Anderson, 1995). and forms the basis of my counselling and supervision practice framework. This has allowed an openness, and inclusiveness to explore the many different perspectives of intuition and the bias I might have including or not including my more vulnerable, secret, perspectives and experiences of intuition in the research project. With support from my clinical team and by leaning into a Constructionist approach, I was able to anchor a practice framework that would help me safely explore and stay open to the many multiple perspectives that might be possible in my research.

I found the Collaborative Constructionist practice framework with the key practice principles drawn from Wayne McCashen’s *Strengths Approach* (2017) useful. The application of these principles assisted me in taking a de-centered and influential position when working with clients. This position sees the client as the expert in and about their own life (D’Arcy & Holmes, 2020; White, 2005), with the therapist privileging the client’s knowledge, and trusting that through collaborative conversation new knowledge will grow (Anderson, 1995). In considering the research project, I was curious how this positioning along with reflection on my thoughts and feelings might support an ethical approach I could take to safely use intuition in my clinical practice. This ethical positioning in my approach to the research aligns clearly with the methodology of autoethnography.

Autoethnographic research

Autoethnography as a research method ignited a process of critical reflection and analysis of my experiences through the use of reflection and journal writing. This process provided an arena to explore and understand my experiences of intuition within a counselling context. Writing regular reflective journals on my clinic experiences allowed me to collect data from 35 journals over a nine-month period. The autoethnographic approach challenges traditional ideas about research, privileging stories rather than theories, and expressing an inclusive, ethical, social and political approach to research that introduces new and perhaps different ways of thinking (Ellis, et. al. 2010). This approach aligns with my constructionist practice framework and gave me hope. I envisioned that it might allow me to hold

the stories of my experiences of intuition with an openness to their interpretation and the ideas they might create in the light of differing contexts.

My methodology focused on my embodied experience and felt sense of intuition. Tami Spry's description of "autoethnographic performance" helps to describe the lived experience of this process, with the researcher's living body as a salient part of the research process (Spry, 2021). The reflexive process of journaling about my intuition, and the reflective and reflexive experiences with supervisors, peers, clients and reflecting teams, provided the data to critically analyse the themes that emerged over nine months. These themes were compared and then contrasted against the existing literature on psychotherapists and counsellors experience of intuition and how it might show up in their practice. Drawing on Kolb's inductive learning cycle method (1984) was useful in positioning literature to generalise ideas, but also as a focus for critical reflection and collaboration with others in relation to the meaning of my experiences.

Literature review

I was not sure what I would find in the literature, but I expected there might be a bias toward valuing more of the objective ideas generated from intuition in relation to decision making processes that support intervention practice approaches. This made me question if literature valuing rational, scientific, evidence base ideas would loom large in my search. I also considered how, in taking a social constructionist stance, this literature could be critically analysed in relation to the limitations and assumptions regarding multiple perspectives, context, and the social/political discourses. I was curious about what threads might link across epistemologies via the various schools of thought and integrated practice approaches, and how different perspectives might influence the way intuition shows up in practice. The first step however, was to try and figure out the meaning of intuition.

Definitions of intuition

There is a surprising lack of clarity around the meaning of intuition in the counselling and psychotherapy field (Charles, 2004; Marks-Tarlow, 2014a). Shirley & Langan-Fox, note that researchers and scholars are unable to agree on the meaning of intuition (1996). Agor (1989), believes this is due to the very different disciplines they follow and perspectives they hold. This seems to indicate rational objective ways of thinking about the world from a structuralist perspective, and subjective, socially constructed ways of thinking and being in the world (Charles, 2004; Marks-Tarlow, 2014a). From a neurobiological perspective, Marks Tarlow states her integrative neurobiological approach with, "intuition is the means by which therapists perceive and respond to relational patterns" (2014, p. xvii). Rosenblatt & Thickstun (1994), present a psychoanalytic perspective, with the idea about brain function in the belief; *"that intuition reflects the operation of an unconscious pattern-- matching activity, wherein a currently perceived pattern is matched to a stored pattern"* (p. 700). Fox agrees with this (2013). On the other hand, Bastick, views intuition as more than a cognitive process, with the idea that *"it is an awareness arising from an emotional state of the individual"* (1982, as cited in Garcia, & Ford, 2001).

With over 40 differing definitions of intuition in psychological literature (Sprenkle, 2005), it would be reasonable to expect the rational, structuralist ideas to hold dominance, due to the discourses that privileges scientific thinking (Charles, 2004). This does, however, make me curious about possible alternative perspectives and unique experiences of the counsellor's intuition, and what the literature might hold about these experiences.

Dominant perspectives of intuition

As I dug a bit deeper there seemed to be some dominant ideas about intuition in counselling and psychotherapy that have stemmed from the early psychotherapists; namely Carl Jung and Carl Rogers, who refer to the use of intuition as "clinical intuition", and place importance on it in the decision-making process (Jung, 1971; Rogers, 1985). It could be argued the ensuing studies on this have been lacking because of the association of "intuition" with magic, and the paranormal, deeming it "unscientific" (Charles, 2004; Marks-Tarlow, 2014a; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022), and not trusted by science (Keith, 1987; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996). Cohen (2017) seems to suggest discrimination exists in the field of research *"against the inclusion of intuitive modes of practice"* (p.2). Peña would add that the dominance of scientism has marginalised and discredited the use of intuition (Peña, 2019; Goldberg, 1983). This confirmed my thoughts, and I wondered if the gap I was finding in literature in this area was an indication marginalisation continues to occur, with scientific ideas being privileged, and holding dominance.

Rachel Charles has written one of the few books on intuition in psychotherapy and offers her definition of a "rational process" as an outer knowing derived from direct experience and observation. She recognises this is generally more privileged in the world of psychology, over inward ways of knowing (2004). From this I begin to see how cultural values and worldviews might be central in shaping the meaning and value of intuition, and why definitions might be different for different counsellors. I began to recognise how my world view is interconnected with my way of being, in which intuition is naturally generated from an inward way of knowing.

My definition in relation to the literature

In short, my definition of intuition could be defined as a deep, felt sense of knowing. I have experienced this sense of knowing gaining clarity, particularly when practicing meditation and mindfulness. There is some commonality in the literature with the internal process of slowing down thoughts that promotes intuition (Hunt, 1996; Marks-Tarlow, 2014a; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996). Other ideas consider mindfulness as a process of attunement (Bryant & Luft, 2023; Sousa, 2022), or as Charles might describe as "connecting at a subliminal level" (2004, p. 71). My reflection on my practice of mindfulness connects me with my whole being; mind, body, and spirit, along with the land, people, and environment around me. It seems that when I slow down my thoughts, I can become more aware and naturally attune to this broader perception.

I am struck by a semblance of connection with Australian Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing, and the interconnection this has with all life: plants, animals, the land, the skies, and water (Cameron, 2010; Martin, & Mirraboo, 2003). Purdie, & Dudgeon, et.al., (2010), strengthen this idea by suggesting that *Ngarlu*, which is located in the stomach, and the centre of wellbeing, is stronger than gut feeling or intuition (p.246). Robert Lawlor (1991) adds to this with the statement that the intuition of Aboriginal people has the ability to sense and participate in the subjective life and subtle energies of the entire natural world (p.111). This suggests a complex and deep understanding of the experience and knowledge of intuition as a natural part of Aboriginal culture. It seems that the influence of this extensive knowledgeable perspective on intuition – that had a striking resonance for me – was not reflected in the psychology and counselling literature that I was able to find.

The experience of intuition

It appears from the literature that the experience of using intuition in practice is unique to each therapist (Boucoulalas, 1997; Marks-Tarlow, 2014a; Welling, 2004), and is guided by processes from a therapist's theoretical orientation (Bryant & Luft, 2023). However, there is less in the literature about how a therapist's epistemology – reflecting the worldview of the therapist – might play a role in intuitive experiences or processes (Marks-Tarlow, 2014a). This might highlight the restrictions therapists might feel, as found in some studies, due to a lack of value in the professional environment or training, regarding the use of intuition in practice (Charles, 2004; Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Sousa, 2022).

A majority of the literature appears to support the idea of the quick fast-acting intuitive responses that can take place when working with clients. These ideas can also be described as a top-down approach, reflecting a cognitive led, left-brain, decision-making approach to intuition, found in the more dominant, accepted theories of clinical practice (Bryant, & Luft, 2023; Charles, 2004; Jeffery, 2012; Muñoz-Cobos, & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022, Marks-Tarlow 2014a). The right brain, intuitive body-mind connected process is a slower and deeper, mindful approach (Bryant, & Luft, 2023; Jeffery, 2012; Marks Tarlow, 2014a; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996), representative of a bottom-up approach, that is more of an embodied, inward, right- brain, somatic, approach to intuition (Cervini, 2020; Marks-Tarlow, 2014b; Peña, 2019). Even though these writers are using these terms, their interpretations are slightly different depending on their theoretical practice approach.

Sousa (2020) found the experience of intuition had numerous ways of occurring during her study: via bodily sensations, images, thoughts, energetic sense, and auditory thoughts. Similar experiences were found in the literature across a number of studies including those by Charles (2004), Hart (1997), Jeffrey & Stone Fish (2011), and Shirley & Langan-Fox (1996). These studies seem to take a more subjective view of the experiences of intuition, and I am curious to explore this view further, looking to research for ideas on how intuition might actually work in practice.

Guidelines for use of intuition

Various attempts to provide a theory or guideline for using intuition in practice have been researched in a variety of ways but also clearly influenced by the various schools of thought (Bryant & Luft, 2021; White, 2011). Vaughan is cited by a number of researchers, and her guidance refers to learning to relax and becoming aware of physical sensations in the body without trying to change them as a process to develop intuition (1979). Rea's guidelines for refining clinical intuition has a similar approach, with a leaning into deep observation, holding a presence and empathy with the client (2001). It is clear from the research that counsellors often use intuition, but in light of limited research on its use in counselling practice, there seems to be reluctance to discuss intuition in clinical settings (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Sousa, 2022).

More recent qualitative studies (Cohen, 2016), hermeneutic studies (Cervini, 2020; Phelon, 2001; Pysklywec, 2008), and grounded theory approaches (Muñoz-Cobos, & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022; Sousa, 2022) in research, have progressed literature toward ideas that support therapists in discovering their own sense of the experience of intuition. Marks-Tarlow' supports this with her offering; "Although clinical intuition originates at a nonconscious level that cannot directly be taught, conditions for tapping into intuition can be fostered" (2014, p. xxxiii). Exploring these ideas had me thinking about the value counsellors might place on the *reflective and reflexive* practice,

as suggested by Jeffery (2012), and foster this awareness that can tap into intuition, as Marks-Tarlow (2014 suggests).

My sense of intuition

My intuition sometimes manifests in a visual way that I see as an energy field in, and around people's physical bodies. This connects with a perspective regarding the idea of "field theory", that we are all connected energetically, and can be perceived in a sensory way (Loewenthal, 2022). I notice how my sense of this energy field connects to my intentionality and values when creating a sacred space with clients. My belief is that setting clear intentions internally, externally, and in the energy field of the space between therapist and client when initiating a session, sets up an environment of collaboration, openness, respect and trust.

When I connect with people in this way, it is like an energetic, intuitive, conversation takes place, in which images become visible to me, along with an intuitive sense of knowing. At this stage of my research, I was beginning to gain an understanding of how my *way of being*, my *way of doing* with intentionality, and my *practice principles* that reflect my values were helping to guide my intuitive process. However, questions still loomed in my mind – how does this happen? What meaning does it have, and from whose perspective is it useful?

The energetic collaborative conversation I was beginning to experience with clients was reflected in my literature research. The following reflection captures my learning about my ways of being and sense of knowing during a clinic session experienced during the research project.

Vignette

A new client arrived, for whom I was to be on the reflecting team, and I had gone to the front reception to retrieve some forms from the printer. When I returned the client and counsellor were in the counselling room ready to start. The room has a one-way viewing mirror in which the reflecting team observes from an adjacent room. I felt a little concerned that I hadn't met the client, but my supervisor reassured me that the client had been told I was on the reflecting team and was okay with that.

As I settled into being present for the session. The client mentioned she was interested in any "intuitions", which surprised me, and I noticed that it was nice to hear a client asking for this, and I wondered about tuning in more closely to her energy. Even though she was open to intuitive input, I felt that more permission was needed, particularly since I had missed the introductions before the session started. I was reminded of past times when I would energetically ask people for permission to enter into their energy field. I would ground and center myself in my heart, and then ask permission with words in my mind. Asking for permission to enter a place that belongs to another is an act of respect and has always been important to me. I think about how important this is in Aboriginal culture, and reflect on how asking for permission, and paying my respects to the ancestors when I am walking on Country has always been important to me.

So, how did I ask permission of the client in the clinic whom I had not physically met? I intentionally focused with a mindfulness practice, becoming aware of my whole body and energy, or what Tara Brach calls living *presence/aliveness* (Brach, 2023). This state of body/mind usually initiates a deeper breath and connects me to my physical heart, feelings of compassion, and creates a state of presence and stillness in which I can feel and see the energy field around myself and around others I am with. It was at this point I formed the words in my mind and asked the client for her permission to look into her energy field during the session. There was a clear "yes" response back that I

heard in my head, and at the same time I noticed her energy field brighten with a yellow glow that momentarily expanded, moving towards me, as I sat in the reflecting team room looking through the window. I recognise how important permission is, the ethical importance this has for me, and how this influences my access to intuition.

The client was talking about a lack of confidence that has been with her all of her life, and how just being more herself is helping her to feel more confident. This is what she wants to create more of, but it is a struggle to make this change and then stay with this change when other people and environments prefer the less confident person. As she spoke, I had a sense of “confidence” and “lack of confidence” being at different ends of the spectrum and she was in the middle. As I focused on her energy, I sensed a big fluffy warm purple blanket that she could snuggle under. It was a protective, nourishing, nurturing blanket that was creating the space for her to have a rest, perhaps just be herself, and have time out from all this hard work about “confidence”. During the reflecting team discussion, I shared this vision of the blanket, offering it tentatively, so that she could make use of it or not. The client and counsellor continued the session in which the intuitive idea was not directly discussed, and the session ended with the client expressing that she had gained some different ways of thinking about her situation, which was a helpful outcome for her.

During our team debrief, the counsellor mentioned that when he and the client were in the reflecting team room, observing the reflecting team discussion, the client was deeply moved by the “purple blanket” intuitive offering.

De-construction and new perspectives

After the session I reflected on the role “confidence” had been playing in my research journey with intuition. Was there a parallel process with the client’s “confidence”? Was it my connection with “confidence” that initiated the intuition? Was it a co-collaboration on some level with the client? These questions invited me to reflect on my intention, and what values I might draw on to gain more clarity.

I reflected on other experiences, when I had intuitions, but didn’t share them in the reflecting team or offer them collaboratively with clients, and I noticed myself challenging the “logic” of the intuition. I realised privileging this perspective could pose a risk of eliminating them as an untruth, or distortion. I recognised the echoes of past experiences, with my intuition not fitting with mainstream beliefs in the professional allied health environment, and how these discourses have in the past shut down other perspectives that might have held real meaning for myself and those around me at the time.

This was a pivotal moment that helped me recognise alternative perspectives to the story – co-created with my peers, supervisors, and clients – that helped me shift into a more confident self. The use of journaling also helped me catch these moments, and enabled more awareness, reflection and critical thinking to occur during the research process. The collaborative conversations with the clinic team made alternative perspectives more possible to see, and the reflecting team process created a safe space for me to tune into intuitions, explore, and discover internal and external processes for using intuition in my counselling practice.

My research was unsuccessful in finding literature relating specifically to Collaborative Constructionist counselling approaches and the direct use of intuition. The review of literature privileged more modernist ideas in the use of intuition, with an objective, rational, scientific, dominance. This was a slight setback, as I was interested in how other Collaborative Constructionist counsellors might use intuition within their practice. I did, however, find a few Collaborative Constructionist ideas loosely related to the concept of intuition. A Collaborative Constructionist *practice principle* that Alice Morgan refers to in Narrative practice, views the client as the “expert” on their life (2000). This could be also reflected in Marks-Tarlow’s suggestion that the practice of “checking in” with clients about a therapist’s intuitions, which supports a safe and ethical way of using intuition in counselling practice (2014a). This discovery helped me to begin to see the ethical resonance that was possible between my *way of being* with the constructionist values and practice principles, and the *way of doing* internal and external reflective practice as a process for using intuition.

Table 1. Intuition Process

Intuition Process: Based on a Collaborative Constructionist Approach			
Way of Being – Who I am	Way of Doing – Intentionality	Way of Being – Values / Principles	Self-reflective Questions for Counsellors / Supervisors
Internal Intuitive Process			
Spiritual presence.	Mindfulness Heart/compassion practice Self-care/awareness	Compassion: self/client Empathy. Kindness	What is my ontology, beliefs, values? How is this reflected in my relationship with myself and others?
Sacred space.	Pay respects Permissions Grounding	Respect	What is my relationship with the space I am using for counselling and supervision?

Internal rituals.	<p>Inviting the client into the space</p> <p>Set up of my internal shelf for emotions /triggers</p> <p>Inviting my mentors and supervisors as witness to my practice</p>	<p>Partnership & collaboration Openness Curiosity Power with not power over</p> <p>Respect Reflective practice Social justice Accountability</p>	<p>How does the client present to me when I think about them before a session?</p> <p>Where will I put my emotional responses/stories? What will I do about them if they arise and are a distraction during sessions?</p> <p>Who might I mentally invite to sit on my shoulder to support me in my practice?</p>
Internal reflective practice at the start of the counselling session	<p>Internal reflective check:</p> <p>Emotions of self, triggers / reactions</p> <p>Initial intuitive responses to client, and practice processes</p>	<p>Focus on values: reflective practice</p> <p>Curiosity Honesty</p> <p>Respect Transparency</p>	<p>As I listen to the client's story, how do my values engage with their story?</p> <p>Do I need to put my own emotions/triggers/stories/ bias aside?</p> <p>What am I sensing, and how might this influence the client's hopes for the session?</p>
Sense of Knowing: Intuitive Sense and Reflective Process			
Internal reflection in response to intuitive sense.	<p>Internal reflective check</p> <p>Self-check of: meaning/ feeling/constructs</p> <p>Therapeutic relationship</p> <p>Intuition becomes interpreted as an idea/image</p>	<p>Social justice</p> <p>Ethics Empathy Compassion Curiosity</p>	<p>How do I know what I know? How did I sense this?</p> <p>What does intuition mean to me personally?</p> <p>What does it mean for my understanding of the client's situation? How might this impact the therapeutic/ professional relationship?</p>
Cognitive/intuitive/ reflective process.	<p>Internal decision about offering intuitive idea/image to client</p> <p>Reflection on process</p>	<p>Self-agency Focus on values</p> <p>Focus on language as the primary medium of change</p> <p>Collaboration & partnership</p> <p>Curiosity</p>	<p>What social constructs might surround this idea?</p> <p>Are there cultural or ethical considerations?</p> <p>Is my decision to offer the intuitive idea to the client:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A rational cognitive thought process? - An intuitive, gut – feel decision? - Or both? <p>How might the intuitive idea impact the counselling / supervision process?</p>

Intuition: External Process			
External reflection & collaboration.	Reflection with client on intuitive offering 'Offering tentatively'	Focus on language as the primary medium of change Partnership & Collaboration Curiosity Empathy	What language and approach will I use to introduce the intuitive offering? How helpful /not helpful was the intuitive offering for the client?
External reflective /reflexive process.	Reflecting team process Debriefing Client feedback Supervision Journaling	Partnership & collaboration Social justice Compassion: self/client.	What part of this process would be most helpful to explore in my supervision?

Summary

My journey with this autoethnographic research project, and the result of an intuition process, has been based on a Collaborative Constructionist approach to practice. The process has opened me to curiously question how I make sense of my way of being in the world, and the values and principles I bring as a counsellor into practice. More broadly, I discovered through the research project a lack of discussion and resources in therapist's academic training, and supervision, about the use of intuition. I hope that in the future, there will be more openness and curiosity to bring the topic of intuition into the light for discussion and development in counselling and supervision practice.

This autoethnographic study has highlighted an important perspective; that all therapists are unique in their use of intuition, and that this is informed by their own ways of being, ways of knowing, and approach to practice. Given this, the intuition process offered in this paper will not necessarily fit with everyone. However, the *self-reflective questions for counsellors* suggested in the intuition process (Table 1.), could offer a starting point for counsellors interested in exploring their own process for the use of intuition in their practice. This might foster the development of the self-awareness and reflective practice processes suggested by the literature, that supports therapist trust and confidence in their use of intuition (Bryant, & Luft, 2023; Charles, 2004; Jeffery, 2012; Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Marks-Tarlow 2014a; Peña, 2019; Pysklywec, 2018; Sousa, 2022). As Marks-Tarlow suggests, the implications of engaging in critical reflective processes, brings ethical awareness to the experience and use of intuition in a therapist's counselling practice (2014a). This clearly aligns with the Collaborative Constructionist approach, and its inherent reflexive practice for critical and ethical reflection on practice and process. This approach would seem to support more open and inclusive discussion on intuition in the professional development of counsellors and psychotherapists.

The intuition process in Table 1., has been the product of the research, and will be regularly used to help me curiously question and reflect on how I make sense of my way of being in the world, and the values and principles I bring as a counsellor to the use of intuition in the process and practice of counselling and supervision. Further research on the topic of intuition could explore how clients might use intuition in the therapeutic process, and what these stories might make possible in the collaborative counselling journey.

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