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***Paper Title:* An International collaboration and partnership: Enhancing the quality of health and social care professional doctorates student's supervisory and support experiences.**

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Abstract

Background

Enhancing the quality of undergraduate/postgraduate and higher degrees students' learning experience is paramount to them achieving the aspirations and goals associated with their chosen educational programme. A successful or unsuccessful outcome has the potential to impact on their employment/employability, career pathway and subsequent learning. An ongoing debate associated with ensuring that students receive the best possible outcomes is aligned to the quality of 'supervision' and 'support' (Carr et al, 2010).

The past decade has witnessed a proliferation of articles and texts outlining the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of what constitutes quality supervision and what does not (McSherry and Bettany-Saltikov 2014, Carr et al, 2010). A lack of sound supervision and support can have a profound impact on the progression and completion of professional doctorate and doctor of philosophy students (Savage 2013, Lee 2008). Sharing and learning from existing supervisory and support systems and processes, frameworks/models is essential in ensuring quality, student satisfaction and support and progression (Nulty et al, 2009).

From our experience the principles of honesty, openness, trust and transparency are essential components of quality supervision, as is building confidence and a trusting relationship between the student, supervisor and supervisory team. The experience on the doctoral journey can be significantly enhanced and influenced by finding ways around problems through adopting a shared responsibility to finding solution's. This is why we are trialling a Solutions Focused Approach to Research Supervision.

Solution Focused Research Supervision as described here has its roots in Solution Focused Brief Therapy pioneered by de Shazer and colleagues in the 1980s (de Shazer, 1985). Solution Focused Brief Therapy has since been adapted for use in education, coaching, and health and social care disciplines like nursing and occupational therapy. The primary aim of solution focused research supervision is the same as the solution focused approach to coaching or counselling: that of helping individuals identify specific goals and preferred outcomes and finding ways to achieve them through effective communication, information, actions and evaluation.

The higher degree journey can be a long one with many ups and downs. However, our experience suggests that in addition to quality supervision, harnessing the collective,

collaborative and collegiate strengths of their Student Cohort Community can have a positive influence on the outcome of their doctoral work (McSherry and Bettany-Saltikov 2014). We would suggest that focusing on both the supervisory approach and support mechanisms for the student and supervisors can positively impact on the doctoral journey.

Aims The presentation aims to share the learning and experiences from an international partnership and collaboration for enhancing supervisory practices. The partnership is between the Doctor of Health and Social Care programme, School of Health and Social Care, University of Teesside, Middlesbrough, England, United Kingdom and the Professional Doctorate programme, School of Health Sciences, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia, their student cohorts and supervisors.

Key presentation issues

The two higher education institutions have collaborated to share and learn together the various ways to enhance the quality of learning and experience for the professional doctorate students. The areas targeted are 'supervisory practices' adopting a solutions focused approach to doctoral supervision and harnessing the strengths of the students through student communities of practice.

Conclusion The presentation highlights the lessons learnt and areas for enhancing the partnership and collaboration in order to ensure students receive the best possible supervision and support in the future.

References

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