

# Can restorative supervision positively impact the emotional wellbeing of HEI lecturers in Healthcare?

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# Study overview

## Title:

- Can restorative supervision positively impact the emotional wellbeing of HEI lecturers in Healthcare?

## Study Aim:

- This descriptive, qualitative study explores whether Restorative Supervision can be used to support health care professionals working in a higher education setting.

# Design and methods

## Design:

- A descriptive, qualitative study

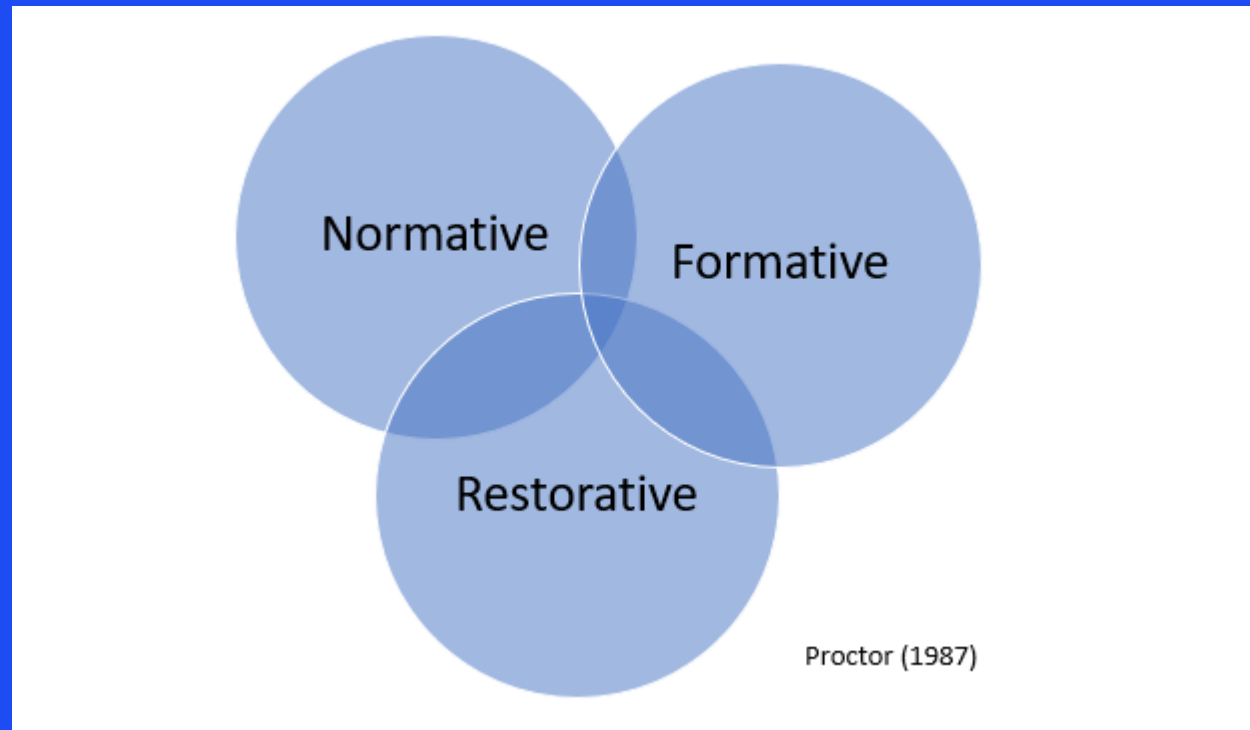
## Methods:

- Participants -Fifteen academic staff (with a health professional qualification) from the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- 1hr restorative supervision (1-1) sessions x6
- Held over 6 -months between February and August 2022.
- Each participant attended a 90 -minute focus group in November 2022.

# Background

- Studies have documented higher levels of reduced mental health among HEI staff, **increased levels of burnout** in the profession- compared to the general population (Berry and Cassidy,20 13;Watts & Robertson, 20 15; Morrish,20 19).
- **Health professional lecturers** suffer poor mental health and burnout due to increased **workload** , **reduced autonomy** , **isolation and adaptation** to a **constantly evolving environment** (Dougal et al,20 2 1;Muller et al,20 14; Wray and Kinman, 20 2 1).
- Maintaining HEI staff wellbeing is crucial to providing a **high standard of education for students** (Mixer,20 13;Oberle and Schonert-Reichl,20 16).

# Restorative supervision



# Restorative supervision

- Offers individuals a **safe environment** to consider their **options** , **challenge** negativity and **reflect** in a constructive way.
- **Empowers individuals** to realise what they can do themselves- to improve their working lives , **reduce levels of stress and burnout** (Gilbert,2010: Wallbank, 2012:Wallbank & Woods, 2012).
- The **restorative function** is most valued when facilitated in an **environment** where **humanistic principles** are present (non-judgement, empathy and trust) (Proctor, 1986:Sheppard et al,2018).
- Using RS, **staff feel supported** in their roles and **build resilience** , which in turn reduces stress (Wallbank, 2012:Pettit and Stephen, 2015).
- Studies have shown that RS has a positive effect on **clinical staff** and healthcare **students** (Munn,2018;Sheppard et al,2018;Stacey et al,2017;Stacey et al,2020).

# Why RS for lecturers?

- Lecturers are **members of the 'helping professions'** group (some with a dual role).
- They provide emotional and behavioural student support which takes **empathy, time, and heart** (Muller et al., 2014).
- For this reason, lecturing work is potentially challenging and may leave staff feeling **emotionally depleted** (Demirdag, 2016).
- RS supports **understanding** of both challenges and rewards intrinsic to high quality teaching.
- Allows **time and space** for reflection on the psychological impact of their work .

# Why RS?

- RS enables reflection on the **emotional and psychological impact** of their roles on work/life balance.
- This approach could help **academic staff** to build resilience and reduce levels of stress and burnout.
- key principles and benefits of the RS approach are considered **transferable for other professional groups** (Whatley, 2022).
- RS assists the **development of three core work needs** that must be met to ensure wellbeing and motivation at work
- Thus minimising workplace stress by promoting; **autonomy, belonging and contribution** (West et al, 2020).



# 2022-23 Project outline



# Project Team

Nicki Credland - Project Lead



Lisa Jennison, Jayne Walker - Project team (research and RS delivery)

Sarah Butler, Luke Sargent - Project team (RS delivery)

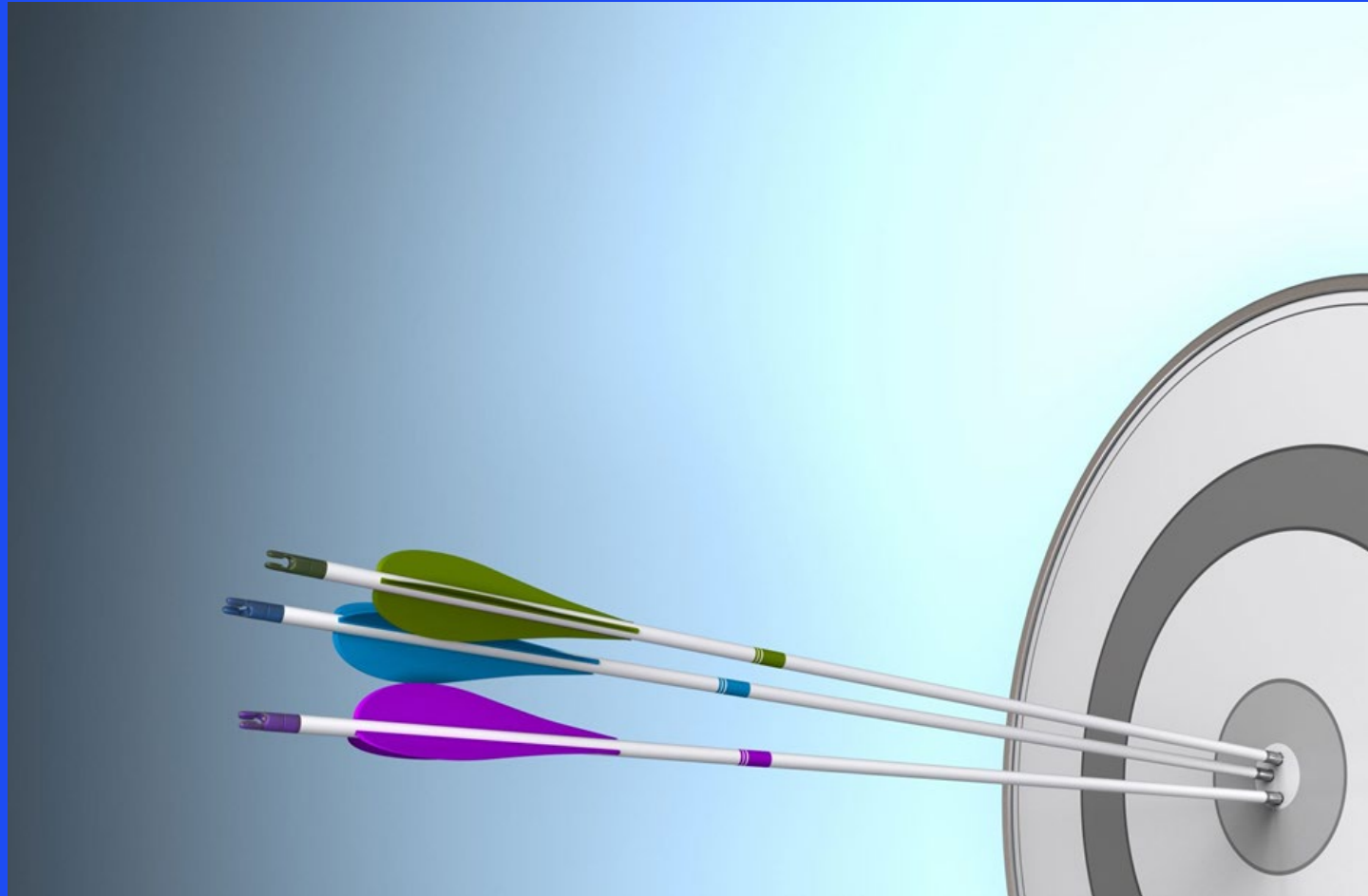
Dr Moira Graham - Focus group facilitator



# Study participants profile

- HEI staff members/participants received 6 months of 1 -1 RS
- HEI staff came from differing disciplines (Nursing, Paramedics , ODP, Radiography, Dietetics) and Schools within the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- Included both NMC and HCPC registrants.
- RS delivered by 4 project team members qualified in PNA/RS techniques.
- Care taken with allocation of RS supervisor - for conflict of interest.

# Results



## 4 KEY themes were identified

**Role identity**

**Compassionate  
relationships**

**Me Time**

**Empowerment  
and impact**

# 1. Role identity

- *“It gave me an opportunity to think about myself because I did feel very low in confidence. I felt huge impostor syndrome”*
- *“As a health professional, you don't really fit, so it was nice to join in with colleagues of other clinical professions coming from a clinical background into an academic one and get some support and wisdom”*

## 2. Compassionate relationships

- *“Someone was basically kind of validating you and saying actually you do have value and what you're doing is good, you're doing a good job. When does anybody in academia, you bust a gut to students for your team, but when do people say, you know what? Well done, you are doing a really good job. And that was what came to me from the supervision. I think it was that like, yeah, I felt valued as a person”*
- *“To me it felt like a very safe space. The best way I can describe it, it felt like I was getting an academic hug”*

# 3.Me Time

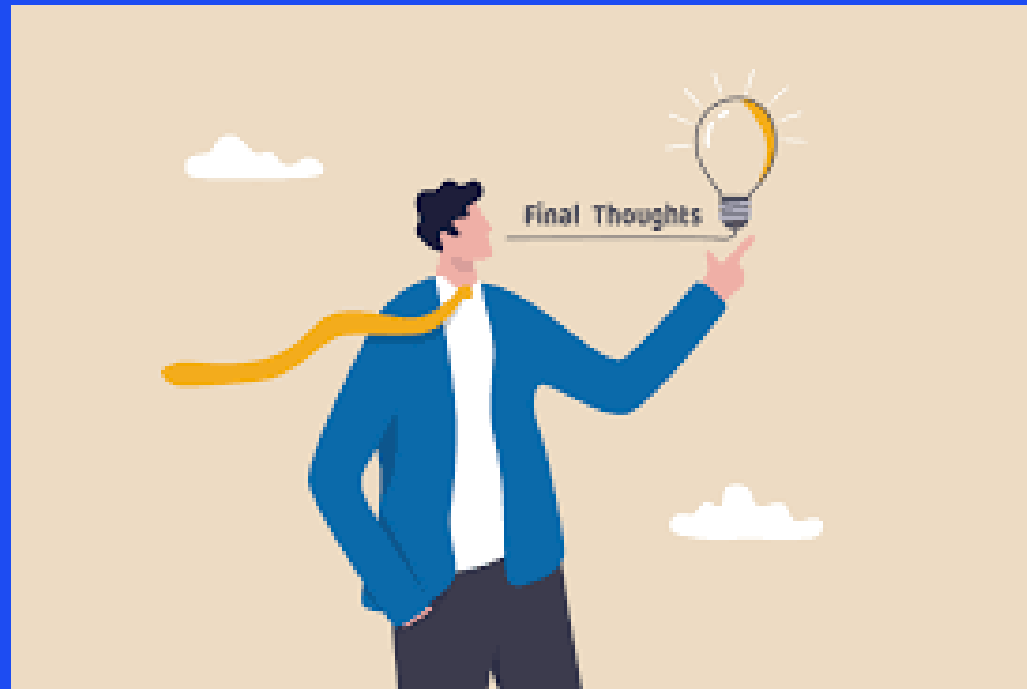
- *“Having that space and that time and that just concentrating and focusing on yourself .....it did really help me as it was really positive. It gave some clarity to my thoughts at that time.....thinking about yourself that none of us ever get in daily life or in work life either do it so really much appreciated”*
- *“It was sort of that rare opportunity to stop for someone to actually listen to give us that really valuable time to explore ourselves as people that I found absolutely amazing. It was a breath of fresh air. I think it's first time I've sat down in three years and thought about myself”*



## 4. Empowerment & impact

- *“My supervisor was really good at helping me to work through it myself rather than giving me the answers. I've developed a lot of skills through the supervision for solving my own problems..... it also massively increased my confidence in my academic abilities”*
- *“If you get happy lecturers, you will get happy students. The restorative supervision is a way to help support us so that there is that safe space for us to get a sense of value and importance. That then means we can keep doing our job well, which then impacts on the student experience”*

# Study conclusions



# Discussion

- Findings suggest that **RS can have positive impacts on Compassion Satisfaction (CS)**
- **CS** includes positive feelings and pleasure derived from being able to do your work well (Stamm, 2010).
- Needs to be an **awareness** that **lecturers who are also Health Professionals** have **limitations** when providing support.
- **Safe space and time** needs to be prioritized, so they can **debrief** and process emotional and often challenging situations.
- **Carving out spaces for self-care** is vital to supporting staff wellbeing and scheduling time to think.
- Feeling safe to be “**emotionally open**” is essential in this process (Hurd & Singh, 2021).
- **Reframing** how lecturers think **about time spent** attending to self-care may feel like an act of resistance but is vital for wellbeing.

# In summary....

- HEI staff find their roles **challenging for various reasons** .
- RS presents **a strategy for supporting staff** which could impact on retention, stress and burnout levels.
- It can **build skills** of reflection, problem-solving, communication and person-centeredness.
- RS **promotes** deep learning, personal self-awareness, professional growth, respect and trust.
- Provides a **safe environment and space** to consider options, challenge negativity and reflect in a constructive way.

# Recommendations

1. RS sessions to be prioritised – adopted as **best practice** .
2. **Protected time and space** for RS sessions to be **available within FHS** .
3. **RS training to be developed** to upskill lecturers, widen participation.
4. More **research** to explore the **long -term impact** of RS on HEI staff.
5. Explore **application** for RS to be used in **other Faculties** (Education)
6. RS to be rolled out **across the whole Faculty** / University wide..

# Project sustainability and growth



Publish small study findings

Project team to plan updates with project participants.

Support bid for further projects on a larger scale.

Disseminate findings at Conference presentations.

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