What works for whom in clinical psychology training?
Unpicking dominant discourses shaping training experiences

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Workshop Aims

• To challenge Heteronormative (& Patriarchal) Models of CP Training
• To challenge White (& Western) Models of CP Training
• To further the develop of intersectional, progressive and inclusive training discourses
What Brought Us To Do This?

• 1. Catherine – trainee/training experiences
• 2. Nick – trainee/training experiences
• 3. Synergy: Stronger Together:
  • The need to work in constructive partnerships and networks, in order to further holistic and transformative approaches to CP training
Main Questions*

• WHO are we Serving?*
• HOW Best Can We Serve Them?
• WHAT are our Training Spaces?
• <On Heteronormative and White Spaces...>
• And How Do We Make Spaces Safe & Productive for ALL?
Experiences of LGB trainees 2002

• Sexuality as a resource, educator, campaigner. But:
• Dominant identity marker vs invisibility
• Difficulties with personal/professional integration
• Feelings of isolation, lack of understanding and support
• Anticipated and actual homophobic responses from peers, supervisors, lecturers and course staff
• Disclosure dilemmas (including related to clients)
• Resulted in rejecting certain models or for some rejecting psychology
The picture 10 years on... Daiches & Anderson

• Disclosure remains a careful choice focusing on when, how, how much and to whom to disclose based on feelings of professional and emotional safety
• Careful balanced between personal and professional roles
• Permanence and stability makes disclosure easier – training therefore represents a time of some of the biggest challenges for disclosure
Similar themes for BME trainees

Rajan & Shaw, 2008
• Ethnocentricity of teaching material and dilemmas about challenging it
• Being positioned as an expect of ethnicity and race issues
• Difficulties in integrating personal and professional identities

Shah, Wood, Nolte & Goodbody, 2012
• Challenges and dilemmas of highlighting race and culture issues
• BME as a resource, strength, additional skill
• Seeking out safe and supportive contexts
• Paulraj, 2016
• Discourses Around & On Relating to Blackness
• Racism, both overt and covert, within cohorts & (training) institutions
• Both Hyper-visible & Invisible -> loneliness
Raising Awareness of Spaces

- Exploring Backgrounds and Perspectives
- The Personal is Professional is Political
- Interfacing with PPD (Personal & Professional Development) &
- Facing/Changing the Political
- Starting Small -> Holding Conversations and Dialogues
- How Do We Weight and Access ALL (Authentic) Voices?
- Transforming the Training Staff Too
Diversity conversations

• Those with marginalised positions/voices are often passed over as their knowledge holds less ‘social currency’

• However, all staff/students will have multiple lived experiences of both privilege and oppression that if seen as a resource can lead to mutual learning and transformation

• **Both** power positions are important to explore

• This develops a ‘critical consciousness’ to acknowledge and unpack a person’s social location
Your intersecting positions of power *

• Use 2-3 Labels to Identify Significant Interstices of Your Identity
• What are the positions you occupy that put you in a privileged position in training relationships?
• What are the positions you occupy that put you in an oppressed/silenced position in training relationships?
• How does the interplay between these different positions impact on you as a course member? – Consider this in relation to 2 different scenarios
• How might this impact on student learning?
• How was it to have this conversation?
Discomfort warning!

• Such conversations in group supervision are not comfortable, initial response is often fear, silence and anger
• hooks (1994) warns that classrooms will echo wider oppressive social discourses, and so it should be expected that discord and discomfort will occur
• Our challenge is to create an environment of respect and safety so that this can be unpacked and explored
• A safe space is not about feeling comfortable; paradoxically unless there is some risk-taking, the group will feel unsafe
• Importance of relational safety, which builds over time
Safety in group supervision

- It is not possible for everyone to feel safe all the time, but is the group ‘safe enough’?
- hooks (1994) suggests that rather than focus on safety, focus instead on developing ‘a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us’
- But sometimes communities are hard to foster without safety, so this may go hand in hand too. (Modelling and exposure, the perfect life does not exist)
- A collaborative endeavour between trainer-trainee is thus vital
- This is helped by the group’s sense of working together towards clearly defined shared goals that could not be achieved by the course staff alone - that everyone is ‘mutually accountable’ - and moving towards all are equally valued
Possible outcomes

• If we can encourage trainees to share their subjective knowledge and for the group to honour this, creates a sense of community and a ‘laboratory of diversity’

• In being able to openly discuss oppression and discrimination, trainees have reported greater satisfaction with supervision and feel more equipped to work with their clients facing these issues

• The caveat being that supervisors need to be equipped to raise these sensitively as they have the power – and of being open to learn and listen from trainees too.

• There is a commitment to the developing relationship with a view to maintaining this when the going gets tough and for all those involved to be open to being transformed through the process (mutual learning)
Choosing What Gets Taught

• What does a ‘fit for purpose’ CP Training Curriculum look like?
• (In a Brexit Britain, with Trump in power in the US?)
• How do we integrate anti-oppressive teaching perspectives?
• Curriculum reviews (& Accreditation visits) –
• How Heteronormative is your Curriculum?
• How White is your Agenda?
• Decolonising Approaches within ‘African’ Psychology
Self-reflexivity as key

• Self-reflexivity allows trainees to tap into their ‘emotional understanding of the dynamics of power’ and in sharing this learn about others’ lived experience

• Avoids positioning those from minority groups as experts or ‘the native informant’, which can make them ‘prisoners of identity’

• Enabling trainees to position themselves

• The position described above continues the lack of initiative by those in power to initiate these conversations and places those within the minority in a vulnerable position of having to ‘explain themselves’ to those with more power
OUR SELF-REFLEXIVITY*

Trainers should use self-reflexivity to examine how their ‘preferred ideas and beliefs impact the training conversation ... to what extent do they constrain and to what extent do they illuminate?’ (Fine & Turner, 2014; pg. 301)

• How would you capture your own identity positions/intersections (3-5 labels)?
• What are your preferred ideas/models/beliefs?
• When might you be transparent about these?
• When might you ‘withhold’ these?
• When might these be a constraining rather than illuminating influence in supervision?
• What can you do about it?
Finding (& Maintaining) Ways Forward

• Homeostasis is Easy
• Change – and especially Maintaining Change – is Hard
• Conversations may be ‘Sticky’, but sticking with them is important
• Grasping the nettles within training – how do we facilitate this?
• On Making ‘nettle soup’ – how do we keep engaging positively with ‘thorny’ issues that require engagement NOT avoidance.
• Wider ways of collaborating to transform curriculums?
Some ‘Talking ‘Race’ References’
Further References


Rajan, L & Shaw, S.K. (2008). 'I can only speak for myself': some voices from black and minority ethnic clinical psychology trainees. *Clinical Psychology Forum, 190*, 11-16