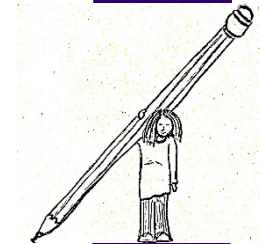


How bereavement counsellors experience returning to therapeutic work after the death of their parent

Colleen Swinen

www.bacp.co.uk



Research Methods

Semi structured interviews that were approximately 60- 90 minutes were audio recorded and transcribed in full and analysed using I.P.A. following steps in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009)

Participants

The study had 4 participants

Findings

There were three major themes:

1. Decisions about returning to work
2. Returning to work
3. Long term implications for clinical practice

Decisions about returning to work

Two of the other counsellors described receiving advice suggesting they might ‘crash’ or ‘breakdown’ when they recommenced work with clients

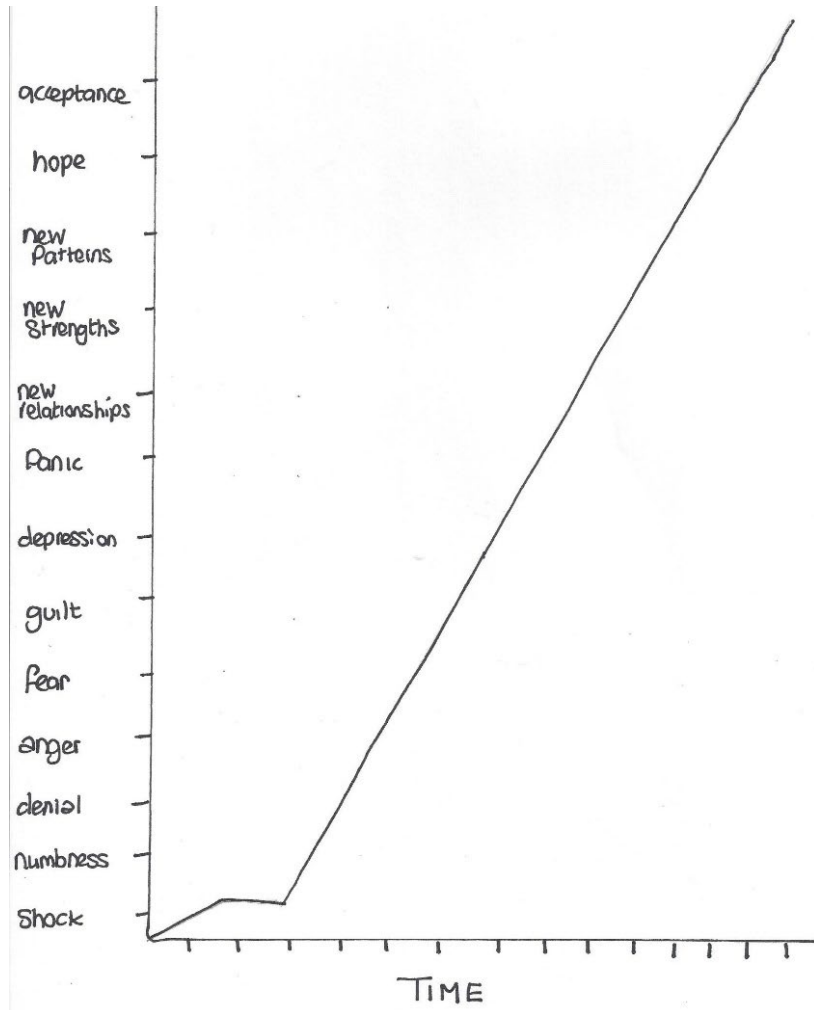
The use of supervision

Sarah described how her supervisor made her aware that the organisation she worked for was short staffed and so Sarah explained that she felt her return to work was 'slightly pressured'.

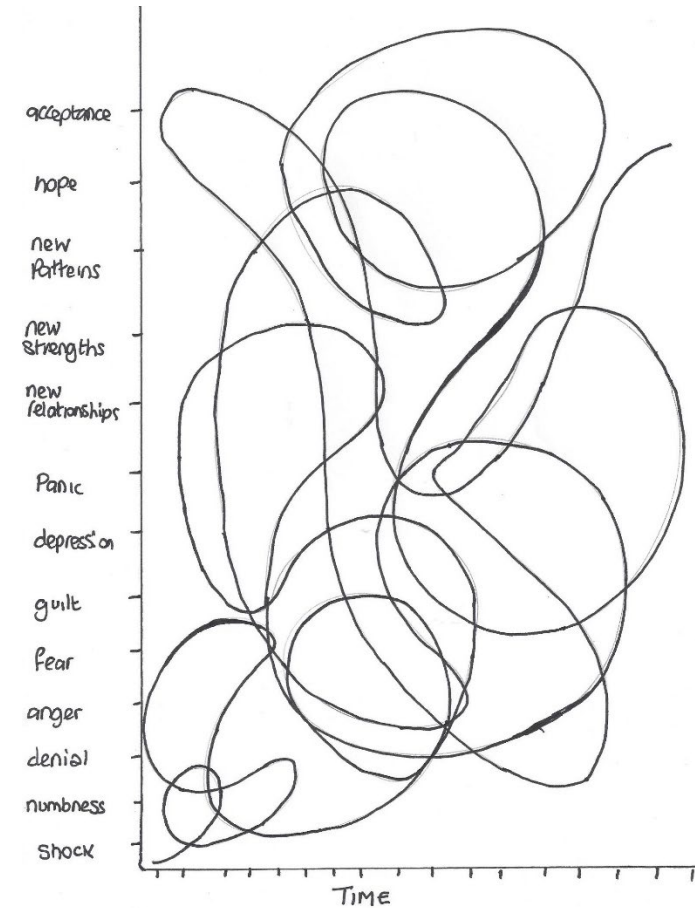
Bringing your own stuff to supervision

Julia expressed how she felt
'awkward' discussing what seemed to
her a personal issues with her
supervisor

How supervisors seemed to view grief



The reality for the counsellors



Each of the bereavement counsellors re-entered client work while grieving

Samantha described how she was aware of her grief
“existing somewhere in the background”

and how she hoped she could

“quietly manage this undercurrent of grief”.

Returning to work

Sarah described how she “*could throw the professional switch*”

Long term implications for practice

The counsellors disclosed their loss to one or more clients and believed the disclosure of personal grief benefited their therapeutic relationships and was a potentially positive therapeutic technique

Looking at the study now the limitations seem endless

- As in any small-scale study the generalisability of the findings is only tentative (Willig, 2013).
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- The sample was not reflective of the bereavement counselling community
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- My researcher subjectivity as a bereaved counsellor may also have influenced the interpretation of data
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- The sample were self-selecting.

So what

- These findings support the existing literature
- A particular training issue for supervisors might be identifying and discussing fitness to practice issues with supervisees.
- There are also implications for counsellors in terms of their knowledge about the use of supervision and the use of self-disclosure in therapy.