

**The use of Contracting Circles in Supervision:
Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting**

Maria Valdrighi

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Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust/ The University of Essex

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Abstract

Contracting Circles (CCs) are a novel tool initially developed for facilitating the contracting phase in supervision within the educational psychology doctoral training course at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. While existing theoretical foundations draw from counselling and psychodynamic psychology, models of supervision often reference the contracting process without delving into its practical development. Therefore, this research sought to explore the experience of using CCs in educational psychology practice, given the professional and ethical responsibility of educational psychologists (EPs) and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) to engage in supervision. Eight participants, consisting of four EPs and four TEPs, agreed to partake in semi-structured interviews, yielding qualitative data that underwent systematic analysis using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA).

The findings have been categorised into five main themes. Firstly, the impact of CCs on the supervisory relationship was highlighted, particularly in how they influenced the approach to addressing difficulties, navigating power dynamics, and fostering relational reflexivity, which was perceived as a delicate process within supervision. Secondly, CCs were found to facilitate the contracting process, enabling discussions on challenging topics and sharing previous supervisory experiences. The third theme focused on the content of CCs, with Identity and boundaries emerging as key areas. The fourth theme underscored the utility of CCs, adaptable for different types of supervision, and perceived as clear by EPs and TEPs following supervision training. Lastly, challenges associated with the use of CCs were identified, including the perceived overwhelming number of circles/areas to discuss and time constraints during sessions. Overall, CCs were deemed relevant during contracting, unravelling nuanced layers within the supervisory relationship, and offering flexibility for adoption in various

supervisory contexts. It is argued that CCs have the potential for widespread adoption within educational psychology practice.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved father. This work is the result of his teaching; to persevere with my education and to be at the service of young people and their parents when they need help.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

A table of acronyms/abbreviations used within this thesis, for references.

Acronyms	Expansion
BPS	British Psychological Society
CCs	Contracting Circles
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DECP	Division of Educational and Child Psychology
DfE	Department of Education
EHCP	Educational, Health, Care Plan
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EP	Educational Psychologist
HCPC	Health Care Professions Council
LA	Local Authority
RQ	Research question
RTA	Reflexive thematic analysis
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
TREC	Tavistock Research Ethics Committee
UK	United Kingdom

1. Introduction

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter provides an overview of the role of contracting in supervision within the field of educational psychology practice. It discusses one theoretical function of supervision, which informs two main theoretical frameworks for the use of contracting in supervision. It explores the supervisory relationship, emphasising the role of the contracting process in its development.

The chapter also outlines the current legislative and national background that influences the contracting phase, highlighting changes and their impact on the practice of educational psychologists (EPs) in supervision. Additionally, it discusses four models of supervision, each of which addresses the role of contracting and serves as the foundation for this research study. This analysis includes a description of the contracting circles tool that the research investigates.

1.2. Definitions of supervision

Supervision is an essential aspect of work in the helping professions, and its utilisation has increased over the past few decades (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). Since the introduction of the EP training doctorate in 2006 (Frederickson, 2013), supervision has progressively gained importance. To understand the context of the contracting phase, it is crucial to consider the complexity of supervision.

Supervision has increasingly become significant in applied psychology, particularly in client service delivery (Hill et al., 2015). Its role encompasses skill development, theory application across different contexts, and client outcome development through high-quality practice (Kennedy et al., 2018). Drawing an analogy to a Russian doll (Proctor, 2006), where each

doll represents a phase of supervision, contracting can be likened to a stage within the supervision process, characterised by different functions and theoretical models.

Supervision is defined as a relational process involving two individuals, the supervisor and the supervisee, each approaching it with distinct aims, hopes, and expectations (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). Variations in supervision practice arise not only from the type of supervision but also from differing disciplines, functions, outcomes, and ontological and epistemological positions (Kennedy et al., 2018). Scaife (2019) suggested that considering various models or frameworks can be supportive for supervisory dyads, influencing their reflections on the use of the contracting phase.

However, this perspective contradicts the notion of a generalised and unified supervision framework perpetuated by evidence-based practice (Milne, 2017). Various models in the UK have been employed to provide structure to the supervisory relationship (Scaife, 2019). These models consider differences in roles, relationships, and functions. Therefore, the influence of different models and supervision functions on the contracting phase should be considered.

1.2.1 The different forms of supervision

Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) delineated three types of supervision that EPs can provide:

1. EPs offering supervision to other EPs, adhering to organisational policies and guidelines to ensure that EPs leverage specific competencies and skills.
2. EPs providing supervision for Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) as part of their doctoral training course, following the requirements set by universities.
3. EPs offering supervision to other professionals within Local Authorities (LAs).

Additionally, specific modalities of supervision can be extended to school staff included within their traded services.

1.3 The functions of supervision

Different conceptualisations of supervision exist across the range of professions that engage in its practice (Scaife, 2019). For instance, Kadushin (1976) examined supervision in social work, emphasising the role of supervisors, whereas Soni and Calicott (2023) discussed the concept of supervision as a relational process between supervisor and supervisee. The role of supervisees is considered crucial for executing the functions of supervision, as supervision influences their ethical and accountable practice and the delivery of services to clients (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). Therefore, the focus of this research will be on exploring the functions of supervision that facilitate the supervisory alliance as a process and how they can influence practice for supervisees.

1.3.1 The function of supervision as a supervisory process

Hawkins and Smith (2013) defined the functions of supervision as developmental, resourcing, and qualitative, focusing on the process in which the supervisor and supervisee engage in the supervisory relationship. The developmental function involves developing the supervisees' skills and understanding their abilities and expertise through reflection on their practice and exploring interactions with their clients. The supervisor assists the supervisee in exploring reactions and responses that arise in their client relationships.

The resourcing function entails supporting supervisees in coping with the distress and discomfort that their clients may experience and share during interactions. The supervisor collaborates with the supervisee to explore these feelings, enabling supervisees to recognise and manage their reactions effectively. This function allows supervisees to address emotions

as they arise, facilitating their effectiveness as workers (Hawkins & McMahon, 2020).

Failure to undergo this process may lead supervisees to become overly identified with or defensive toward their clients (Scaife, 2019). For example, considering the role of TEPs in their relationships with clients, feelings of discomfort may increase as TEP supervisees strive to present themselves as competent and not vulnerable. Supervision can mitigate these dynamics by enabling the supervisor to support the supervisee in recognising such feelings.

Scaife (2009) suggests that the cultural background of the supervisee may inhibit the willingness of supervisees to share their vulnerabilities, for example in cultures where error is perceived as a risk to one's social reputation. The supervisor's role is to support supervisees in learning these dynamics from their experiences to improve their practice. However, supervisees may find this process unhelpful in understanding difficulties with their work, leading them to hide information from their supervisors (Yourman, 2003).

The qualitative function represents the quality-assurance aspect of supervisees' work. Supervisors bear responsibility for ensuring that their supervisees' practice is appropriate and adheres to specific ethical and professional standards. For example, in a placement setting, an EP supervisor's responsibility is to ensure that TEP supervisees comply with the rules of the LA they work for. Additionally, the contract between a TEP and the Department for Education (DfE), specifying the number of practice hours and Education, Health, Care Plans (EHCPs), needs to be discussed and agreed upon during the contracting phase between supervisor and supervisee. (see section 1.6 for details related to the legislative and national context within which EP practice is situated).

1.4 The supervisory relationship

The supervisory relationship plays a crucial role in supervision (Soni & Callicott, 2023).

Referring to the image of the Russian doll, the supervisory relationship represents another

layer or doll that needs to be explored within the supervision process, for which contracting plays an important role in its development. Forming a supervisory relationship helps the supervisory dyad use their space in a safe manner, establish trustworthiness, and understand each other's expectations. In fact, Falender and Shafranske (2010) suggested that the quality of the supervisory relationship may influence the effectiveness of supervision.

There is a plethora of evidence suggesting that trust forms the foundation of the supervisory relationship (Scaife, 2009) and determines its effectiveness (Pearce et al., 2013). This is supported by McMahon & Errity's (2014) research, which highlights the relevance of trust within the supervisory relationship. They noted how supervisors contribute to creating a positive relationship using relational skills. Carroll (2014) suggested that the initial supervisory session may have a significant impact on the supervisory relationship and on practice. To facilitate this, Osborn et al. (2007) proposed that the use of a contract can be beneficial in developing the supervisory relationship. By initiating conversations about values and exploring previous experiences, a supervisory alliance can be established.

1.5 Models of supervision within the Supervisory Relationship

Authors across different disciplines have developed models to provide guidance on structuring and planning supervision. Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) highlighted two of the most common models used within the EPS training programs: Hawkins and Shohet's process model (2012), which identifies the functions of supervision, and the General Supervisory Framework (GSF) by Scaife (2009), which emphasises supervision and the role of the supervisor. Additionally, the cyclical model of supervision by Wosket and Page (2001) is increasingly being discussed in the literature (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). The relational model by Kennedy et al. (2018) focuses on the relational process between supervisor and supervisee within the broader context of EPs' work. Since the dynamic process of supervision is

considered fundamental for developing the supervisory relationship, the contracting phase is integral to it. Both the cyclical and relational models of supervision (Wosket & Page, 2001; Kennedy et al., 2018) will be described and critically evaluated in terms of how effectively they inform the practice of contracting.

1.5.1 The cyclical model of supervision

A model frequently utilised by EPs in their supervisory practice is the cyclical model of counselling supervision by Wosket and Page (2001). This model outlines the supervision process, drawing from psychoanalytic and cognitive-behavioural theories, with a particular focus on establishing and incorporating a structured approach to contracting. The model comprises five stages, each divided into five steps.

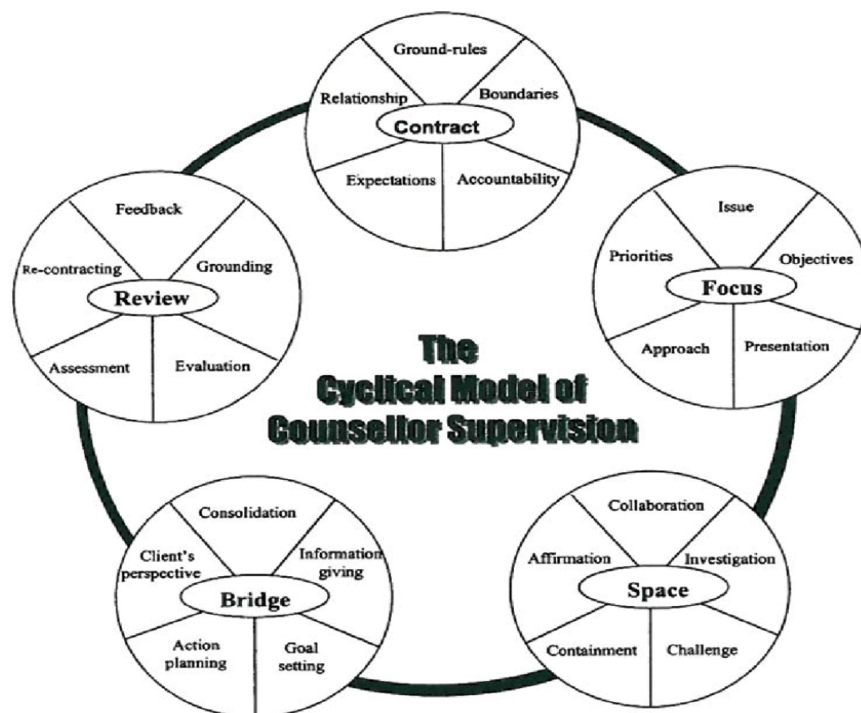


Figure 1: The Cyclical model of Counsellor Supervision. From Callicott and Leadbetter (2013), page 387.

The first stage, contracting, defines the supervision process, providing structure and purpose to the supervisory relationship. Subsequent stages include (1) focus, enabling supervisees to agree on discussion topics; (2) space, providing a safe environment for supervisees to share vulnerabilities and uncomfortable feelings; (3) bridge, linking supervision reflections to practice; and (4) review, evaluating the supervisory process.

The first cycle, the contracting stage, is divided into five components, each addressing specific practical aspects. Ground-rules establish procedures for supervision, including timing, frequency, and location of sessions. Boundaries define clear limits within the supervisory relationship, such as confidentiality and conflict resolution. Accountability outlines the supervisor's responsibilities to clients, supervisees, organisations, and professional guidelines. Expectations involve a mutual exchange to clarify supervision's purpose and responsibilities. Finally, the relationship establishes general principles of respect, empathy, and genuineness.

The model clarifies the contracting process and provides a structured foundation for supervisor-supervisee interactions. It facilitates a containing space for reflection and insight development by both parties (Bion, 1962). The model also guides each phase's completion before progressing to the next, promoting discussion and reflection. Thus, it aims to structure the supervision development process. The model's approach to explaining supervision mirrors the metaphor of Russian dolls (Proctor, 2006). Contracting represents the first layer, creating a solid foundation for subsequent phases of the supervision process.

1.5.2 The relational model of supervision for applied psychology practice

The Relational Model of Supervision for Applied Psychological Practice (RMSAPP) is conceived as a hands-on learning relationship centred on reflections on experience (Kennedy et al., 2018). This model underscores practitioners' awareness of their emotions, thoughts,

values, and beliefs, and how these shape their behaviours in relationships. Consequently, the supervisory relationship becomes pivotal in fostering this awareness. The RMSAPP integrates three theoretical perspectives: systemic, psychodynamic, and attachment, selected for their relevance in the context of EPs.

The systemic thinking in the RMSAPP model acknowledges the mutual roles of supervisors and supervisees, using reflections on their experiences within the supervisory space, which are interconnected with the systemic and organisational dynamics (Kennedy et al., 2018). The model emphasises feedback within systems and understanding the systems in which both parties are embedded. It utilises the Social Graces (GRRACCEESS) framework (Burnham, 2012) to explore gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith, culture, and class differences in the supervisory relationship. The RMSAPP highlights intersectionality and the need to consider the diverse experiences of those involved in supervision.

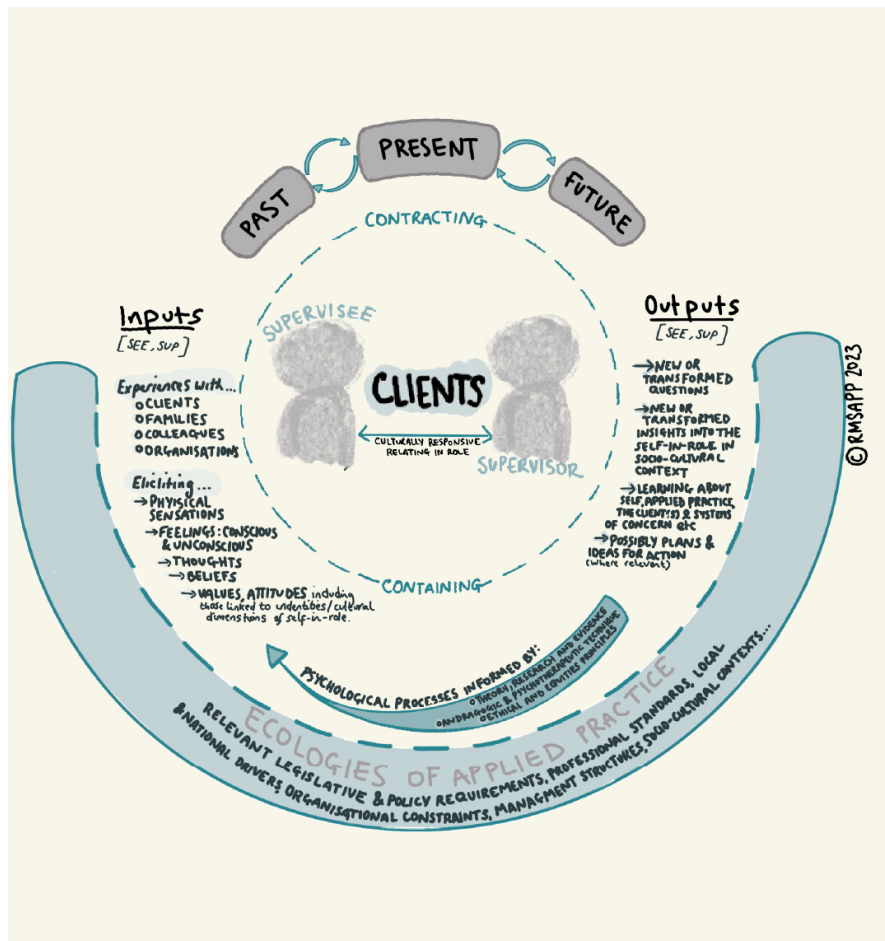


Figure 2: *The Relational Model of Supervision for Applied Psychological Practice (RMSAPP) with permission from the main author.*

Psychodynamic theories play a crucial role in the RMSAPP model and are effective in educational psychology practice (Bartle, 2015). The RMSAPP utilises Bion's (1963) theory of 'container' and 'contained,' originally explaining the parental function. A supervisor acts as a container, managing the supervisee's uncertainty, anxiety, and confusion, helping them understand their emotions and experiences. The model also considers transference and countertransference, where past experiences affect current relationships (Freud, 1920). For example, a supervisee with a history of high expectations may see their supervisor as judgmental, inhibiting openness in the learning process.

The RMSAPP model incorporates attachment theory, focusing on relationships formed around secure bases, caregiving systems, and dispositional representations (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby (1988) described how individuals form attachment bonds, expressing themselves through behaviours that consider others, fostering exploration (the secure base). Dispositional representations involve attachment avoidance and anxiety (Hill, 2009). Anxious adults may vacillate between seeking closeness and self-reliance, seeking confirmation of well-being. Caregiving systems analyse interpersonal dynamics between supervisor and supervisee. For instance, a supervisee expressing needs minimally might lead the supervisor to overlook them. These concepts help EPs understand the supervisory relationship's quality, avoiding attributing success or failure solely to either party.

Kennedy et al. (2018) highlight challenges in applying attachment and psychodynamic theories to supervision, especially regarding terms like "safe haven" and "safe space," questioning if supervision truly provides safety and suggesting that learning involves risk-taking. They emphasise the crucial roles of training and supervision for supervisors using the RMSAPP model. The authors stress the importance of contracting and outline three main elements guided by the aforementioned theories:

- A commitment to engage purposefully in learning through the supervisee's experiences,
- Developing a learning process where materials are processed into experiences to achieve outcomes,
- Initiating, maintaining, and ending the supervisory relationship, involving containment, attunement, and challenges.

1.6 The use of supervision and contracting and the legislative context

Before 2006, the year in which educational psychologist training became doctoral training, Carrington (2004) had already outlined the relevance of supervision in EP practice, even though the professional accreditation of the HCPC was not applicable. Carrington (2004) highlighted the importance of the mutual element of supervision in the learning process. She also suggested that this would enable EPs to develop their reflective and general skills.

Before the revision undertaken in 2022, the HCPC's standards of proficiency indicated that practitioners would need "to be able to reflect on and review practice" and "understand models of supervision and their contribution to practice" (HCPC, 2022, 10, 10.4). The use of "to be able to" suggests that EPs would have enough power, resources, and skills to undertake and apply these competencies. However, the standards do not explicitly mention that practitioners should also reflect on and evaluate their practice with reviews of their work.

It is important to note that these standards are dated 2015 and were amended in August 2022, and after significant revision, changes were made effective from September 2023. The language used to describe the competencies in supervision underwent a change, and "to be able to" was removed, outlining that it is vital for EPs to be aware of models of supervision and their impact on their practice, as well as the importance of reflecting on their practice and considering different ways of working (HCPC, 10.3, 2023). Similarly, the recent HCPC changes to the standards of proficiency indicated that "the reflective practice" and the recording of "the outcomes of such reflection" are necessary "to support continuous improvement" (HCPC, 2023, 10.1, 2023). The change of wording emphasises the vital importance of supervision to EP practice as a dynamic process where exchanges of such reflections are possible. The quality and outcomes of these conversations have an impact on children, young people, and their families as well as the professionals and stakeholders

involved with them (Morrison, 2005). As the context in which EPs position themselves appears complex, it is important to acknowledge how supervisors and supervisees have a responsibility to address the different areas of their practice, ranging from discussing practicalities of supervision to reflecting on feelings and ethical dilemmas. Recommendations and guidelines on contracting in supervision are not clear, and research on this phase of supervision seems scarce.

The changes mentioned, therefore, encourage EPs to be accountable for their practice and for reaching their clients' outcomes. These changes seem to reflect the Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics (HCPC, 2012), which suggest that "professionals are responsible for supervising tasks that they have asked other people to carry out" (p.12), highlighting the importance of EPs being accountable to their clients when working with them. A challenge that EPs can encounter when applying these standards is the lack of guidance on how the supervisor and supervisee should address the reflective space at the beginning of the supervisory relationship, indicating that reflections depend on the type of EPs' practice and on specific client outcomes.

Similar to the HCPC competencies (2023), the British Psychology Society (BPS) guidelines (2017) indicate supervision as an essential part for psychologists in general, and for EPs specifically. However, the BPS (2017) does not indicate contracting as a component of supervision in their guidelines (Soni & Callicott, 2023). They mention instead that the different aspects of EPs' practice can be pertinent to discuss in supervision (Soni & Callicott, 2023), indicating different areas of practice that can be addressed including research activity, administrative work, teamwork, teaching, and aspects of inter-professional supervision. In addition, they recognise that the supervisor and the supervisee can experience power imbalances in their relationship and should be aware of this. However, the how and what

would help to discuss to make sure that their awareness is recognised (the contracting of how to recognise and discuss it) is not present, leaving them in a state where it can be difficult to openly discuss these issues, with the possibility for them to avoid talking about it.

In contrast, in the Guidelines for practice for EPs from the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP), Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) indicate contracts as important within the practice of supervision. They outline elements that should be addressed in the contracting phase, such as establishing roles and responsibilities, the purpose of supervision, details about the supervisory relationship, accountabilities and confidentiality, as well as considerations of differences and difficulties in the supervisory relationship. Although an example of the contract and information about practical guidelines were given, the focus appears to be on the written form of the contract (Soni and Leadbetter, 2023) rather than on the process of contracting. This may resemble the common meaning of a contract which contains the legal requirements about boundaries, rules, and responsibilities (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). Conversely, it would be inconsistent with the literature on supervision in which contracting is theorised as a process that takes place in the supervisory relationship (Scaife, 2019, Wosket & Page, 2001).

Supervisor:.....

Supervisee(s):

.....

.....

Purpose for supervisor:

Purpose for supervisee(s):

Purpose for the service/line manager(s):

Frequency:.....

Time and duration:

Location:

Scope:

Confidentiality and exceptions:.....

Records and their purpose:

How will dual relationships or conflict be addressed?:.....

What to do if advice is needed between sessions:

Systems of review and their frequency:.....

Date:.....

Review date:

Signatures:

.....

.....

.....

Figure 3: Example of a supervision contract from the DECP. From Dunsmuir & Leadbetter (2010), page 21.

1.7 The role of EP and the contracting phase

Contracting can be conceptualised as being involved in an explicit exploration of different areas that interplay in the supervisory relationship and need to be discussed and agreed upon. Hawkins and McMahon (2020) outlined six main areas to include in the contracting phase: the working alliance, supervisory relationship, practicalities, roles and responsibilities, session format, boundaries, and organisational context. Lawton (2000) investigated eight

supervisory relationships, and the findings suggest that contracting constitutes a patchy experience, indicating that rigour in this phase could yield a more positive relationship as a result. This will be explored further in the literature review chapter.

In the last decade, the way EPs work has changed (Lee & Wood, 2017). Within the field of educational psychology in the UK, studies on the use of supervision and the number of EPs delivering and receiving supervision have increased (Leadbetter, 2000; Nolan, 1999). Since the issuance of the Children and Family Act (2014), organisations and professionals involved in working with children have been responsible for their safeguarding and promoting their well-being. This has influenced EPs' practice and the expectations required from their work, one result being an increase in cross-professional supervision (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). The reflective and consultative skills EPs possess should facilitate them in acting as supervisors in inter-professional supervision contexts, however there is still not enough guidance on how to explore and discuss expectations and experiences in this capacity.

Additionally, traded services have impacted EPs' work as they have begun to charge schools for delivering supervision and other services (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010); therefore, effective supervision appears to be central to positively enhancing the supervisory relationship and ensuring that the service meets high-quality standards (McIntosh & Phelps, 2000). For example, when school staff and EPs first meet, it would be highly valuable to explore their expectations during the contracting phase and how to develop trust in the relationship. Additionally, discussions could revolve around how to handle difficult situations that may arise due to disagreements about how best to support children.

1.8 Rationale of this study

As outlined in the sections above, there are multiple reasons to justify the use of contracting in supervision, including legislative and professional requirements. EPs seem to be well-placed to deliver supervision and are well-equipped with a variety of models and frameworks to carry out supervision effectively.

However, there is not yet a clear and standard approach to contracting at the beginning of the supervisory relationship. The most recent national survey on the use of supervision within educational psychology has indicated a ‘patchy’ scenario in which the use of contracting is not consistent. This inconsistency may stem from different factors that may concern the use of different supervision models or EPs’ experience within their supervisory relationship (Kennedy et al., 2018). Additionally, different EPs may favour specific models and functions of supervision, relying on the general assumption of contracting provided by the DECP (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). Finally, the variety in teaching provided to trainee EPs on doctoral training courses may have focused on specific models or frameworks.

1.9 The Contracting Circles

On the Tavistock and Portman Educational Psychology Doctoral training course, contracting is taught as an integral part of supervision, with reference to a specific tool called contracting circles (CCs), created by Dr Chris Shaldon, which is also recommended for use with external supervisors. The CCs are also included as part of the content of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course on supervision delivered to professionals working in school and community contexts (Supervision in schools and community contexts: Working relationally and reflectively, CPD32). Founded on the theoretical model of supervision described by Kennedy et al. (2018), the CCs can be firmly considered a contracting tool. Developed by academic and professional tutors at the Tavistock and Portman, the CCs are utilised in

supervision with EP trainees and are part of the CPD course content, allowing EPs to explore and apply them in their practice.

The CCs consist of a visual representation comprising nine circles, each corresponding to a specific area pertinent to supervision (such as beliefs and attitudes, boundaries, difficulties, ethics and values, feelings and experiences, hopes and fears, identity, learning and outcomes, process and relational reflexivity). The CCs have been employed in supervision with trainee EPs, EPs, and other professionals at the outset of their supervision. They can also be revisited during mid-evaluations of the supervisory relationship (SR) and for re-contracting areas needing further exploration or clarification between the dyadic relationship.



Figure 4: The Contracting Circles, with permission from the author, Dr Chris Shaldon.

Despite the reported importance of contracting for EPs' practice (Wosket & Page, 2001), its use is not consistently observed (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). Thus, there is a strong rationale from the literature that contracting is indispensable for building the supervisory relationship (Carroll, 2014). Finally, although the CCs are taught on the Tavistock and Portman educational psychology doctoral training course, there has been no research conducted on their use within EP practice. Therefore, this thesis aims to explore the use of CCs as a tool for contracting in the context of EP supervision.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the legislative context in which supervision and the use of contracting are situated, along with an exploration of theoretical models on supervision that recognise the use of contracting in the supervisory relationship. This provides the foundation for introducing the focus of this research. The following chapter will provide a review of the relevant literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the systematic approach employed to review the existing research literature, which serves as the foundation for the current research. The main objective of the literature review was to conduct a critical evaluation of the available evidence and practices related to contracting in supervision within the field of educational psychology practice. This purpose is in line with the rationale outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis.

The literature review sought to address an essential question:

- What are the prevailing practices adopted by EPs when engaging in contracting during supervision and what contracting tools have been used?

The primary focus of this chapter is to outline the strategy employed to gather relevant literature, meticulously select pertinent studies, and critically assess these studies through a rigorous analysis of their findings (Booth et al., 2021). The insights gleaned from these studies will be utilised to substantiate the aims and objectives of the present study. This chapter serves as a pivotal bridge between existing knowledge and the intended contributions of the current research.

2.2 Search Strategy

Electronic databases were chosen based on alignment with the research question and the terms used, which encompass concepts included in the Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome, and Study (PICOS) (Amir-Behghadami & Janati, 2020) question framework concerning population, educational psychology, and intervention. Specifically, the focus was

on the use of contracting and contracting circles in educational psychology supervision. The terms were combined using the EBSCO online platform in August 2023, December 2023 and July 2024.

The selected electronic databases pertain to the subjects of education and psychology were APA PsycINFO, APA PsycArticles, Psychology and Behavioural Science collection, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC). The search aimed to encompass the following areas: EPs and TEPs (the population), their experiences (the outcomes), the role of contracting in supervision (the process), and the field of educational psychology practice (the specific area of interest in the search). Table 1 provides an outline of the research syntax employed across all the databases mentioned above.

It is important to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to conducting a literature review. As such, this review represents an effort to synthesise the existing evidence regarding the use of contracting circles in supervision within the field of educational psychology.

Table 1.

Key terms used in literature syntax.

Subject Area	Utilising Boolean operator “OR” with search term	Fields included
Contracting	Contract* OR Contracting OR Contract* tool* OR Contracting process* OR Contract* process	Title and abstract
Supervision	Supervision* OR individual supervision* OR group supervision* OR peer supervision* OR supervisory relationship*	Title and abstract
Supervisor	supervisor* OR educational psychologist* OR supervisee* OR trainee* educational psychologist	Title and abstract
Educational psychology	Educational psycholog* OR school psycholog* OR child psycholog*	Title and abstract

(Note that the asterisks were used as truncations which enabled the search to be broadened to words that begin with the same letters).

2.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to ensure that the most relevant literature was captured in this search made as provided in Table 2.

Table 2.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Rationale
Publication date between 2010 – 2023	Publication date prior to 2010	The use of contracting is investigated after the publication of the DECP guidelines on supervision in 2010.
English language	Other languages rather than English	Different types of language would have impacted the understanding of the topic differently.
Published Journal articles	Textbooks and books reviews	Empirical research should be taken into account when considering this topic.
Educational psychology discipline	Papers focused on supervision with no reference to contracting in the articles.	Supervision from other disciplines can vary and have different impact on practice compared to supervision within educational psychology.
Contracting in supervision between EPs, between EPs and trainee educational psychologists (TEPs), or between EPs and other professionals	Supervision without any reference to contracting.	As per the DECP guidelines (2010), EPs, trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) and other professionals when receiving supervision by EPs should be the main three categories of participants in the practice of contracting.
Full text available	No full text available	Without access to full text, the researcher is unable to conduct a critical analysis.
Research conducted in the UK or other countries with similar legal background of training and legislation,	Research from countries not included in the inclusion criteria.	The main focus of this research is on studies conducted in the UK, although countries with

such as US.

similar legislation may also be considered due to similarities in their practice.

2.4 Screening and selection

Following the application of filters related to the English language, the timeframe of 2010-2023, and the inclusion of only published journal articles, the search was refined to yield two hundred and twenty-eight papers for assessment. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were subsequently applied during the analysis phase. Initial scrutiny involved eliminating duplicate articles and reviewing titles and abstracts. In cases where clarity was lacking, a thorough examination of the full articles was conducted. As a result, seven relevant articles were deemed suitable for detailed examination, while two hundred and twenty-one articles did not meet the inclusion criteria. The preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (PRISMA) (Liberati et al., 2009) was completed to help the researcher to outline the records identified and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A copy of the diagram can be found in appendix B.

Notably, the researcher incorporated the time frame of 2010-2023 as a part of the inclusion criteria. The work of Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) holds particular significance in this context. Their guidance on supervision for EPs encompasses directives about the practice of contracting. The formation of the supervisory working group, dedicated to this purpose, aimed to provide professionals with guidance and enhance the understanding of supervisory skills, including the practice of contracting. Given this perspective, the researcher deemed this paper as crucial due to its role in offering guidance on the use of contracting within supervision, potentially impacting the field of educational psychology practice up to the present day.

2.4.1 Supplementary search

A snowball search strategy was employed, involving a meticulous examination of the reference lists of each of the included articles due to the fact that electronic searcher may not necessarily capture all the evidence (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005). If any articles identified through this snowballing process were deemed pertinent, they underwent a screening process against the aforementioned inclusion and exclusion criteria. The snowball search yielded two articles that were deemed relevant for inclusion in the review: Gibbs et al. (2016), and Soni (2013). The researcher also took into account the DECP special edition in Supervision released in December 2023 and one article by Soni and Callicott (2023) was extrapolated to be included in this literature review.

2.5 Quality assessment

The ten articles garnered through the three distinct search approaches were subjected to a meticulous screening process. As outlined in Table 2, the initial screening involved an assessment of the titles and abstracts. In cases where these two elements did not offer sufficient clarity, the full articles were scrutinised in more depth. Each article underwent analysis and summary, which the compiled information can be found in Table 3. This table contains details about the methods of data collection, key findings, the sampled population, the article's relevance to the literature review, as well as the strengths and limitations of the respective articles.

The researcher utilised the CASP (2014) (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) checklist to assess the quality of the papers, categorising them as either 'relevant' or 'less relevant.' The strengths and limitations of each paper were also outlined. The relevance of each study was determined by considering three questions from the CASP checklist that evaluate relevance, specifically: 'Can the results be applied to the local population?' 'Were all important outcomes

considered?' and 'Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?' (please refer to table 3). It is important to note that the researcher also explored reviews with a disciplinary perspective, exemplified by the work of Davoudi et al. (2015).

Table 3.*Summary of the Literature Review*

Author(s) and date	Aim	Relevance	Location	Sample	Method	Strengths	Limitation
Kennedy and Laverick, 2019	The article explored the experience of a headteacher of using the relational model of supervision	Relevant	UK	One secondary school headteacher	Case Study	The study emphasised the significance of containment in the process of establishing a supervisory relationship. Contracting was identified as a pivotal element within this process. The work context for headteachers was elucidated to encompass various domains (such as emotional, legal, procedural, and professional), all of which influence the initial contracting phase.	The author opted for a case study approach. However, the study might lack scientific method and rigour necessary to ensure the accuracy of the collected data. It would have been advisable to employ a qualitative methodology involving a larger number of participants. This approach would have facilitated a more comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the theme of contracting.
Dunsmuir et al., 2015	The article elucidated main trends of supervision practice within EP practice. Findings on Contracting are included in their investigation.	Very relevant	UK	Two hundred and forty-six EPs	Content analysis of semi-structured questionnaire	The article demonstrated that the use of contracting in EP practice appears to be inconsistent. The authors conducted an online questionnaire, which offers several strengths. It is accessible to participants in various geographic locations, efficient in terms of time and cost, and facilitates accuracy during data transcription.	There are limitations associated with using a self-selecting sample and a self-report method. The data collected may contain biases from participants, and they might misinterpret the questions, responding in a socially desirable manner. These selection biases may hinder the possibility of applying generalisations

							based on the collected data. To address these limitations, a mixed-method approach could be employed to extract themes from the data and delve more deeply into the experiences of the participants.
Ayres et al., 2015	The aim of the article was to explore the principles and practice of one supervision approach (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006) for educational psychologists, trainee educational psychologists and other professionals.	Relevant	UK	One EP service	Case study	In exploring the key features of supervision used by an EP service, the article outlined relevant aspects of the practice. One of these aspects is introduced by the authors as a query regarding how to keep supervision 'on the agenda' (Ayres et al., 2015, p.27). This implies that contracting is useful for keeping supervision in focus and addressing practicalities such as when and how to conduct supervision. This implication also reflects the changing context in which educational psychologists work.	The exploration of key elements of supervision was conducted through a case study. However, the study lacks robustness in demonstrating the effectiveness of supervision among participants. Moreover, it was noted that there was no evaluation of the skills developed by participants.
Rawlings and Cowell, 2015	The study aimed at exploring the	Relevant	UK	Eight EPs	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	The article explored the experiences of EPs using group supervision. This	The authors employed IPA to gain an understanding of the experiences of EPs. The

	experience of supervision using group supervision					phenomenon was described as consisting of three different layers: purpose, process, and needs. While exploring the process layer, the author highlighted a sense of belonging among EPs within the group. This sense of belonging was identified through 'the use of grounding rules,' which facilitated a sense of belonging to the group.	data were obtained from a small sample, which concentrated on the specific experiences of the participants. However, using a different qualitative method could have allowed for the exploration of themes that cut across participants' experiences, revealing both similarities and differences.
Soni, 2015	The study explored the experience of learning mentors using group supervision facilitated by EPs.	Relevant	UK	Six learning mentors	Case study	The study provided insights into the use of contracting within group supervision. The author drew a connection between the content, aim, and format of group supervision and the concept of contracting, using the analogy of a Russian doll. Each doll represents a layer of contracting that is important to maintain in group supervision, such as setting the agenda for the session and establishing a group work agreement. Furthermore, the author explained that the contracting format suggested	The authors conducted a case study spanning three years to collect data through group questionnaires. A different method might have been more beneficial. Specifically, a qualitative study employing thematic analysis with individual interviews of participants could have provided valuable insights into the experience of contracting, its key features, and what aspects were considered useful or less useful.

by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) was utilised.

Mills and Swift, 2015	The article addressed the practical implications of running a peer group supervision.	Less relevant	UK	Two TEPs	Enquiry-based learning approach	The outcomes of the paper consisted of themes extrapolated from participants in the peer group supervision, providing insights into their experiences. The themes revolve around skill development, progress, sharing, support, and well-being. Under the theme of equality and power-sharing, the authors discuss the importance of contracting and specifically how to agree on discussing cases. The authors explain that within the group, 'requests for possible assistance' during case discussions are recognised as informal agreements on how the case discussions are developed among the participants of the peer group supervision. This falls within the overarching theme of equality and power.	The method employed in this study explored and reviewed the reflections of the two trainees about their experiences. However, this approach may be prone to biases and lacks rigor and trustworthiness. An alternative methodological approach could involve qualitative interviews, which would provide a more in-depth understanding of their experiences. Using IPA for this purpose could be beneficial. Furthermore, the themes extracted from this study could potentially be utilized to design a questionnaire that includes items reflecting these themes.
Callicott and	The paper aimed at	Relevant	UK	Six EPs (supervisors)	Thematic Analysis (TA)	The paper's findings highlighted the positive	A limitation encountered is the selection of participants.

Leadbetter, 2013	exploring factors involved with EPs when providing supervision to other professionals.			and four professionals (supervisees)		experiences of participants when using interprofessional supervision. Employing thematic analysis (TA), the authors identified recurring themes in the data and reflected upon them. One of the themes extracted from the analysis pertains to the use of contracting in supervision, which was described as 'patchy' among participants. Additionally, the authors outlined how varying conceptualisations of supervision can influence the supervisory relationship.	Out of the ten participants who agreed to take part, four engaged in group supervision, while six participated in individual supervision. Consequently, there was a lack of homogeneity in participants' experiences. As a result, the article did not fully capture the dynamics of group supervision and, consequently, did not extract themes related to it. A more homogeneous sample could have better illustrated the contextual issues.
Gibbs et al, 2016	The study aimed at exploring different factors that are prioritised by school psychologists at the different stages of their training.	Relevant	UK	Three hundred and eleven TEPs	Exploratory analysis	The findings from the study revealed several themes related to the participants' perceptions of safety and learning levels, as well as instructional support, professional practice, and ethical guidance. The latter encompasses how supervisors provide feedback within the supervisory relationship. For the authors, this last element seems to fall under the	The study primarily focused on the perspectives of trainee educational psychologists. This perspective may not fully reflect the experiences of newly qualified or experienced educational psychologists. Exploring their knowledge of contracting and its use could have yielded valuable insights

competencies, code of conduct, and theoretical model of supervision. Internationally, the use of contracting is employed to address issues related to ethical guidance and professional practice. This provided a snapshot of how the use of contracting is regarded—or perhaps not regarded—in educational practice.

Soni and Callicott (2023)	The study aimed at evaluating the impact of teaching about contracting on educational psychology supervision practice.	Relevant	UK	Sixty-three EPs	Mixed method	The study highlighted the use of training on contracting for EPs and the positive impact on the formation of the supervisory relationship. Findings showed that participants have an increased understanding of contracting and confidence of the use of it. It also gives a snapshot of how there are still barriers to the use of contracting and a continued uncertainty and confusion of what contracting involves.	The findings were obtained through surveys, and the responses could introduce biases into the results, as participants with extremely positive or negative experiences might have been more inclined to complete the survey. The use of a survey also may have limited the number of details gathered from participants. A qualitative approach could have been beneficial to delve into the participants' experiences in more depth.
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Soni, 2013	The study explored the use of interprofessional group supervision in an Early Years setting.	Relevant	UK	Twelve families support workers and three managers	Realist evaluation	Contracting emerged as one of the primary mechanisms, encompassing the group agreement, ground rules, and agreement on how to facilitate the group. The study offered detailed descriptions of the identified steps, which could be implemented in different contexts.	The study provided outlines and descriptions of the mechanisms experienced during the contracting phase. However, it lacks in-depth accounts of participants' experiences, Therefore, a more explorative investigation could have been undertaken.
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2.6 Relevant findings from the review

2.6.1 Examination of Contracting and Supervision

The literature review delves into the domain of contracting and supervision across three distinct subdivisions of supervision: the significance of contracting in inter-professional supervision, diversity in using contracting in educational psychology in the UK for EPs and TEPs, and the practice of peer and group supervision. Each of these subdivisions are explored in depth in the subsequent sections to unfold the social context and the practice of the use of contracting and its process.

2.7 The role of contracting in inter-professional supervision

Kennedy and Laverick (2019) illustrated how inter-professional supervision serves as a platform for headteachers to reflect on their experiences, introducing a relational model of supervision. This model enables supervisees to express their feelings in response to systemic challenges encountered at work. Findings from their study suggest that the relational model provides headteachers with a space to reflect on and process patterns in their working relationships while applying psychological knowledge to address school challenges. When examining the reflection process and acknowledgment of headteachers' feelings, Kennedy and Laverick (2019) identified the contracting phase as a crucial step for both supervisees and supervisors to commit to the supervisory relationship. This stage involves establishing the supervisory space (where) and the session duration (when and frequency), with both parties agreeing to be punctual and for headteachers to come prepared with relevant items for each session. The authors also highlighted the use of a further stage of re-contracting, seen as a 'health-check' phase (Kennedy & Laverick, 2019, p. 452). This phase allows supervisees and supervisors to evaluate whether the supervision is beneficial in terms of reflecting on practice to enhance learning and development.

Kennedy and Laverick (2019) highlighted challenges in exploring the role of identities and how these may impact the supervisory relationship for headteachers. Considering the SOCIAL GRRRAAACCEEESSS framework (Burnham, 2012), it becomes apparent that both similarities and differences between supervisees and supervisors may be explored, acknowledged and reflected upon when in supervision. However, Kennedy and Laverick (2019) suggested that these aspects can be avoided by both supervisors and supervisees, focusing instead on urgent concerns arising in school related to children, young people, and staff. This dynamic suggests that during the contracting phase, there might not have been an opportunity to contemplate and reflect on the role of identities and their impact on the supervisory relationship and the relationships between headteachers and their staff while working in service of children and young people. Questions arise about the potential differences in outcomes in this specific instance if similarities and differences were explored during the contracting phase. More specifically, it prompts an inquiry into the impact contracting could have had when supervisors support supervisees in facing and 'staying with the discomfort' (Kennedy & Laverick, 2019, p. 454).

Kennedy and Laverick (2019) prompted inquiries into the implications of using contracting in inter-professional supervisory relationships, while Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) explored, more broadly, the factors involved when EPs engage in inter-professional supervisions. The literature on contracting suggests that it is a process that evolves during the supervisory relationship (Scaife, 2009). As outlined in the introduction, the supervisory relationship forms the basis of the contracting process, during which assumptions and expectations are explored by both supervisors and supervisees. The main points of discussion are then documented in the form of a working agreement, outlining the roles, boundaries, and responsibilities of the supervision.

Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) identified four relevant themes in inter-professional supervision within EP practice, with one of them being the contracting process. Qualitative data analysis revealed that participants found the contracting experience unsatisfactory. Discussions and agreements around the functions of supervision, roles, and confidentiality were reportedly vague. Participants expressed an intention to create individualised contracts in future supervisions to ensure clarity on aspects such as the meaning of roles, boundaries, and responsibilities in professional supervision.

The findings from Callicott and Leadbetter's (2013) research indicate that EPs supervising other professionals have encountered challenges with contracting, leading to uncertainty. While the literature emphasises the importance of contracting in supervision (Lawton, 2000; Hawkins and Shohet, 2006), the results from Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) align with reports by Proctor (2006) describing a 'patchy' experience of contracting. Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) hypothesised possible reasons for this uncertainty in the use of contracting within EP practice. One reason is related to the discomfort that the term 'contract' may evoke, as it typically implies a written agreement with established rules and procedures. This form of contract may trigger anxiety and defensiveness (Kennedy et al., 2018) from both supervisors and supervisees, leading participants to avoid the contracting phase.

Callicott and Leadbeatter (2013) suggested that the focus should be on the process that facilitates discussions of expectations and the cultural and historical background of professionals engaged in the supervisory relationship (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006). Another aspect considered is the lack of a framework guiding the use of contracting in EP practice. As noted by Callicott and Leadbetter (2013), the contracting process is not detailed step-by-step in any EP supervision models. This lack of guidance can leave supervisors uncertain about how to approach contracting and what key features should be included in the contracting

phase. In this context, the role of contracting in inter-professional supervision between EPs and other professionals becomes more crucial due to the assumptions and expectations that supervisees and supervisors have regarding organisational and cultural narratives (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010).

Within the realm of interprofessional supervision, Soni (2013) delved into the effectiveness of group supervision in helping professions, focusing on the experiences of practitioners in Early Years settings who have utilised group supervision in their practice. The findings suggest that contracting and group agreement are essential mechanisms that positively support the group supervision process. Participants used the contract to establish agreements on confidentiality and the mode of communication among group members. It was observed by the majority of participants that these key elements should be reiterated at the beginning of each session. Additionally, the timing and hours of group supervision emerged as crucial components of the group agreement, aligning with elements of contracting discussed by Kennedy and Laverick (2019). However, Soni's (2013) findings highlighted those issues related to time, if not contracted and reminded at each session, can both impact the success of group supervision and hinder its development.

The results from Soni (2013) underscores the significance of ensuring that all participants are aware of and understand the purpose and aims of group supervision at the entry stage. This aligns with literature by Hawkins and Shohet (2001) and Proctor and Inskipp (2013) on group supervision and the use of contracting, employing the metaphor of a Russian doll to illustrate a framework for interconnected types of agreements in the contracting process. Findings by Soni (2013) correspond with some parameters mentioned in the cited model, particularly those deemed relevant in the contracting phase, such as accountability, confidentiality, responsibility, and communication. While Proctor and Inskipp (2013) have detailed areas or

'dolls' containing different aspects of the contracting phase and the agreement, findings by Soni (2013) identified facilitation as both a negative and positive mechanism that can be included in the work group agreement. Hawkins and Shohet (2006) suggest the importance for supervisors to establish a safe space for supervisees to facilitate the sharing and discussion of cases.

In addition to the practical components a contract should encompass, Soni (2013) highlighted a crucial aspect of supervision that requires consideration. The supervisory relationship within the supervision process can induce anxiety due to supervisees' uncertainty about how, for example, to share cases (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). This has implications for group participants and EPs acting as group facilitators. EPs, in their role as supervisors, can recognise this dynamic and employ language that is supportive throughout the supervisory process (Wosket & Page, 2001). If EPs ensure that expectations established during contracting align with those of the supervisees, a sense of safety can be cultivated. This, in turn, fosters an authentic supervisory relationship between supervisees and supervisors, facilitating the reflection on cases and addressing challenges to aid in their professional development (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). However, despite the positive outcomes that inter-professional supervisions can have for reflection and professional development, a contracting framework adaptable to the diverse contexts of EPs in their supervisory roles is lacking. Specifically, Soni (2015) noted that contracting can lack rigour, and its practice can be informal.

In the exploration of the role of inter-professional supervision, Soni (2015) investigated the perspectives of learning mentors using group supervision in their work facilitated by EPs. The results suggest that participants have found the use of group inter-professional supervision useful and highlighted its educative function within their supervisory process

(Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Soni (2015) identified the use of contracting and work agreement as key features that enable attendance at group supervision. Learning mentors indicated that they found the agreement they had with the senior management team from the school before they began group supervision useful to ensure that ethical aspects of supervision, such as confidentiality and accountability, were shared and agreed upon. The support from school members who commissioned the supervision appeared relevant to facilitate group supervision for mentors, as a clear and shared understanding was established between the two groups.

Specifically for the group mentors participating in the study, this translation into a written contract encompassed key aspects of supervision, such as its purpose, frequency, confidentiality, and record-keeping. Moreover, the format suggested by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) was adopted. However, the process by which the contract was facilitated and, specifically, which aspects of the contracting format were relevant to discuss were not explicitly mentioned. This omission may impact the progression and attendance of group supervision, as elements that can create uncertainty or difficult feelings—such as ethics and differences in working group modalities—should be discussed and defined. Soni (2015) recognised the discontinued use or lack of commitment to the agreement stipulated for group supervision attendance as a barrier. These findings let us consider the need to revisit and re-contract the supervisory space as a preventative practice to continually meet the needs of participants.

While Soni (2015) provided EPs with information regarding potential enablers for inter-professional supervision—such as frequency, duration, confidentiality, record-keeping, modality of evaluation, and review—there is no indication of the features within the contracting space that aid in developing the supervisory relationship during contracting. This relationship serves as the foundation for the supervisory space, as suggested by Scaife (2009).

Additionally, insights into what EPs and participants found useful, less effective and what can be missed when using the format proposed by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) appear to be limited to these enablers. The discussion during the contracting phase overlooks other factors that professionals might encounter when working with children and young people, including considerations related to accountability, expectations, and reflection on the relationship itself (Wosket & Page, 2001) as well as aspects of equity, diversity and inclusion, emotional reflexivity, how to face challenges and how to provide feedback. Although the framework by Proctor and Inskipp (2013) provides guidance for EPs in adopting a model for group supervision and recognising the importance of the contracting phase within it, the development of this stage and the diverse challenges participants may face in their relationships, as well as the practical implications for both supervisees and supervisors, remain partially defined.

2.8 Contracting within supervision in educational psychology in the UK

As outlined in the introduction section, the professional supervision guidelines for EPs (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010) provided guidance on developing supervision within the educational psychology practice. This guidance encompassed both policymaking and practice relevant to the profession. The aspects of contracting were evaluated, and suggestions were made regarding what a contracting format should include. Five years after the publication of these guidelines, Dunsmuir et al. (2015) investigated how EPs implemented supervision in their practices and its implications. The authors presented an overview of the primary features of supervision use in the UK, highlighting the role of contracting as a significant component.

Specifically, their findings indicated that 78.5% of EPs who received supervision reported that they did not have a contract at the outset of their supervision. Of those EPs providing

supervision, 60.5% indicated that they did not establish a contract prior to engaging in the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, Dunsmuir et al. (2015) pinpointed key elements that should be included in a contract. Both EPs receiving and providing supervision identified roles and responsibilities, ethical practices, and practical arrangements as essential components during the contracting phase. Additionally, 24.7% of EPs providing supervision highlighted the selection of the supervision model as a crucial element influencing the supervisory relationship.

When examining the use and purpose of contracting, Dunsmuir et al. (2015) revealed that only a minority of EP participants utilised contracting in their supervision. The survey's findings suggested that both supervisors and supervisees focused on aspects such as accountability, ethical responsibilities, and evaluation within their supervisory practices. However, the data also indicated discrepancies in responses regarding the use of contracting between EPs delivering and receiving supervision, underscoring the heterogeneous nature of contracting practices within EPs, consistent with earlier literature that described the experience of using contracting as 'patchy' (Scaife, 2009).

Various hypotheses can be formulated to understand the discrepancy of contracting within EP practice, especially when comparing it to models of supervision outlined in the introduction section. One plausible hypothesis suggests that there has been limited investigation into the mechanisms facilitating the contracting process, including detailed discussion areas. Conversely, there is a lack of exploration into potential barriers hindering this process. The observed inconsistency in the use of contracting within educational psychology practice implies an inclination towards practising contracting. Yet, the data indicate that this process often does not materialise.

As previously noted, Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) hypothesised that the term 'contracting' might elicit discomfort, potentially leading to avoidance behaviours between supervisors and supervisees. This avoidance could also be attributed to shifts within the profession and changes in public service funding. With educational psychology services (EPSs) transitioning to traded services, tensions arise concerning the specific services schools and academies aim to procure (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is mounting pressure on EPs to deliver high-quality services, even with limited opportunities to apply psychological theories effectively, such as in early interventions and preventive work (Atfield et al., 2023).

In the same year that Dunsmuir et al. (2015) presented a snapshot of supervision and contracting within the EP service, Ayres et al. (2015) explored the supervision experience in an EP service aligning with national guidelines. Interestingly, Ayres et al. (2015) did not explicitly highlight contracting as a pivotal element for fostering an effective supervisory relationship or influencing EPs' practice. Instead, they underscored three primary aspects illustrating supervision's impact on EPs' practice: reflective thinking on work issues, emotional support, and work management. This prompts questions about whether these professional dimensions should be explicitly integrated into the contracting process and why they were not initially highlighted as components of the contracting phase. As Dunsmuir et al. (2015) pointed out, despite existing literature offering models for contracting, there remains a conspicuous gap in research focusing on the enabling mechanisms of this process and a clear definition of what contracting entails, reinforcing the sporadic nature of its implementation.

Research conducted by Gibbs et al. (2016) substantiates the previously mentioned hypothesis regarding a potential lack of clarity surrounding the contracting phase and its implications for the supervisory relationship and the effectiveness of EP work. Their findings indicate that, for

school psychologists in training, supervision comprises three key elements: a secure environment for learning, informative and instructional support, and opportunities for professional learning. This latter aspect encompasses models of practice and ethical guidance. Participants' responses suggested that the Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2021) and supervision models serve as foundational sources for embedding values and knowledge within this framework.

However, Gibbs et al. (2016) highlighted an international variance, noting that the component of professional learning in supervision is governed by various processes, including contracting. This raises the question about why the use of contracting is acknowledged internationally, yet within the UK, specifically within TEPs and more broadly within EP practice, there is minimal reference to this process. Furthermore, it appears that within professional Codes of Conduct and guidelines, contracting is not recognised as a potential contributor to the educational function of supervision. This observed oversight suggests a pressing need to delve into the mechanisms facilitating the contracting phase and to conduct research on the experiences associated with contracting tools within the UK's EPs' practice.

A recent investigation on the use of contracting for EPs was carried out by Soni and Callicott (2023) who evaluate the training on contracting for EPs. Findings suggest that the training increase knowledge and confidence in the use of contracting. Modelling contracting and the use of the transcultural activity were indicated useful to foster contracting, emphasising the concept of contracting as a process to undergo to enhance the supervisory relationship.

However, participants shared that the use of a formal contract can provoke a sense of hesitation which may inhibit the use of contracting process in supervision. These findings are consistent with research by Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) which suggests that participants experiencing uncertainty with the use of a formal contract and the less clear understanding of

the contracting process. Soni and Callicott (2023) study reiterated again how the contracting phase can be misleading for EPs and the concept of using a formal contract can inhibit the development of the process, dismissing areas of contracting that are useful for building the supervisory relationship. The authors suggested EPs should use of a model which combines the use of the transcultural activity, the contract and mini contracting between sessions. This research, however, did not specify the type of supervision EPs carried out and the model suggested has not empirical evidence of the impact on EPs' experience which this study, instead aims to investigate with the use of the CCs tool.

2.9 Contracting in peer and group supervision

Mills and Swift (2015) delved into the experiences of TEPs engaged in peer supervision, revealing that enhancing participants' well-being and skill development were significant outcomes. The authors noted that peer supervision can foster vulnerability and occasional anxiety among participants when discussing challenges in their practices. Despite these insights, Mills and Swift (2015) observed an absence of explicit contracting at the onset of peer supervision. Instead, participants described how they would address issues and specify the support they sought. In a related study, Rawlings and Cowell (2015) examined EPs' encounters with group supervision. Their findings highlighted three pivotal aspects: the objectives of group supervision, its procedural aspects, and the personal needs fulfilled through this process. The study emphasised the enhanced learning fostered by group supervision, attributing it to reduced anxiety stemming from peer interactions. Participants also highlighted the value of clear feedback within this context.

However, a notable gap emerges concerning how these essential elements of group supervision are agreed upon and contracted within the supervisory relationship. Rawlings and Cowell (2015) identified a shared group identity among participants, fostering valuable social

support conducive to effective group supervision. Yet, the study did not elucidate the factors or frameworks facilitating this sense of 'groupness'. Although research underscores the significance of the supervisory relationship and group dynamics in both group and peer supervision, the role of contracting remains largely overlooked.

Interestingly, when exploring inter-professional supervisions among EPs, the utility of contracting becomes evident. Soni (2015) found that participants viewed contracting as instrumental in establishing and navigating group supervisory relationships. The study highlighted how contracting streamlined complexities between line managers and supervisees regarding group supervision terms and processes.

It is plausible to suggest that the context (inter-professional versus within educational psychology practice) and the specific roles of EPs (supervisor or supervisee) might influence contracting practices. Yet, while contracting emerges as valuable in inter-professional contexts, its mechanisms and utility remain underexplored within EP-specific settings. This recurring theme echoes Dunsmuir et al.'s (2015) characterisation of the experience surrounding contracting within EP practice as 'patchy,' underscoring the need for further research and clarity.

2.10 Research aim and purpose

The literature examined provides a nuanced understanding of EPs' practice concerning the use of contracting in supervision. Several compelling reasons underscore the need for a more in-depth analysis and exploration of contracting mechanisms, especially given the theoretical models, its perceived importance, and the limited research on practical tools facilitating its application within educational psychology practice.

Research practice has highlighted themes crucial for establishing effective supervisory relationships. Notably, the literature emphasises themes such as clarifying expectations and acknowledging emotional involvement in the relationship. Yet, a recurring observation is the 'patchy' nature of data concerning contracting experiences. This inconsistency is influenced by the type of supervision EPs engage in and their specific roles within the supervisory dynamic. Interestingly, despite referencing the DECP guidelines by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) for clarity, literature indicates a lack of approaches or frameworks for contracting at the onset of supervisory relationships. A significant observation from the literature review is the relative neglect of the contracting phase within EP supervision theoretical models and research, as highlighted by Nolan (1999).

Given the reliance on DECP guidelines (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010) for clarity, there remains a gap in providing evidence-informed tools that discern what strategies are effective or ineffective in practice. Addressing this gap, the present research endeavours to explore the contracting process through the lens of using the CCs - an informed practice tool, and supervisors' and supervisees' experiences using the CCs,

By exploring the use of CCs - a visual tool - in the contracting process, this study aims to elucidate key features and process in the supervisory relationship that are perceived by both supervisors and supervisees. From the literature reviewed there is the absence of research exploring how contracting features might shape experiences within individual supervisory contexts among EPs. Consequently, the study intends to ascertain the impact of CCs on the supervisory relationship's short-term and long-term dynamics, investigating if specific areas, or 'circles' within the CCs tool have been utilised in their supervisory relationship.

2.11 Research questions

To address the objectives of the present study, the following research questions (RQs) have been formulated, along with sub-questions that delve deeper into the overarching inquiries:

RQ1) What are the experiences of supervisors and supervisees of contracting and the utilisation of CCs?

- a) What are the primary features associated with the use of CCs?
- b) Which specific areas or 'circles' within CCs have been employed?
- c) Are there any contracting models that supervisors and supervisees draw on, for use in supervision?

RQ2) How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the use of CCs?

- a) Which aspects of using CCs do supervisors and supervisees find particularly beneficial or challenging?
- b) In what ways do CCs enhance or detract from the overall contracting experience?

RQ3) What influence does the utilisation of CCs exert on the experience and practice of contracting among supervisors and supervisees?

- a) How do CCs impact the overall supervisory relationship?

This current research aims to answer these questions using the methodology that is provided in the subsequent chapter.

2.12 Chapter summary

The systematic literature review has unearthed a nascent yet evolving foundation surrounding the utilisation of contracting in supervision within the EP domain. This literature was categorised into three distinct supervision types: inter-professional, individual EP supervision, and EPs' group-peer supervision. Interestingly, the reviewed literature indicates that inter-professional supervision exhibits a more consistent application of contracting compared to its individual and group supervision counterparts within the EPs' practice.

While the benefits of utilising contracting are occasionally highlighted, the literature consistently underscores a notable absence: the systematic use of a specific contracting tool. This inconsistency has rendered the practice of contracting within the EP field somewhat 'patchy' (Scaife, 2009) and lacking clarity.

Given this backdrop, the present study aspires to bridge this gap by contributing evidence on the experience of a specific contracting tool. By doing so, the study aims to enrich the existing research literature, offering invaluable insights that can fortify the educational psychology supervisory practices.

3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in this research. It includes a description of the research's aims and rationale, which are intended to seek answers. The research design and the ontological and epistemological stances will be discussed. The chapter outlines the process by which participants were recruited, and it describes the data analysis. Finally, the study's reflexivity and trustworthiness will be examined, considering the implications and ethical practices associated with this methodology.

3.2 Research aim of the use of contracting circles in educational psychology supervision

The research aims to investigate the experiences of EP supervisors and EP/ TEP supervisees when using CCs in supervision. The study intends to identify the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the utilisation of CCs within the supervisory relationship between EPs and TEPs. CCs have been a tool employed by EPs and TEPs from doctoral training course from The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust over the last decade to initiate the contracting phase during supervision. Comprising ten circles, this visual tool corresponds to specific areas or topics from which supervisors and supervisees can choose during contracting.

This approach allows for clarity in defining the focal points, encourages the exchange of opinions, and facilitates agreement on the appropriate practices for both supervisors and supervisees. Although DECP national guidelines have provided instructions for the contracting phase (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010), no specific research has investigated the use of this particular contracting tool. A survey on the employment of contracting demonstrated that a high percentage of EPs consider it an important phase in supervision (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). Nevertheless, in response to the question of whether they actually drew up a contract in supervision, a high percentage (60.5%) of EPs reported that they did

not create a contract when providing supervision; an even higher percentage of EPs (78.5%) stated that they did not have a contract in place when they received supervision (Dunsmuir et al., 2015).

Hence, this research aims to delve deeper into the interplaying factors when utilising contracting circles, exploring influences on the adoption or avoidance of contracting. The researcher strives to inform the practice of supervision in the field of EP practice and extract valuable insights for future research endeavours.

The study is designed as an exploratory research endeavour, with its primary focus on participants' experiences of utilising CCs during the contracting phase. The aim is to delve into the themes that emerge from these experiences. This study aims to explore the experience of supervisors (EPs) and supervisees (EPs/TEPs) during the contracting phase when using the CCs. It seeks to understand their views and perceptions of the tool and examine the influences that the use of CCs has had on their experience (please refer to the literature review chapter for the detailed RQs).

3.3 The Philosophical position

The philosophical ideas that underpin a study have a significant impact on the research process and must be identified. Guba (1990) categorises these ideas as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action" (p. 17). Other scholars refer to them as epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998), which shape the choice of methodology and research questions that help gain insights into reality (Fox, 2003). Ontology and epistemology can be understood as philosophical positions that shape a researcher's assumptions about reality.

In this study, a critical realist stance has been adopted to guide the researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives in exploring the experiences of EPs and TEPs who use CCs

during the contracting phase in supervision. In the following sections of this chapter, the researcher will expound on the concepts of ontology and epistemology and elucidate their significance in selecting a qualitative research design. The main focus will be on the researcher's utilisation of a critical realist stance as their primary philosophical foundation.

3.3.1 Ontology and epistemology considerations

Considerations of the ontological and epistemological positions are crucial for aiding the researcher in formulating fundamental assumptions about reality. Ontology and epistemology are intertwined aspects in the development of a research study, often raising intertwined concerns (Crotty, 2005). Questions regarding the interplay between these two positions also come to the fore (Ejnavarzala, 2019). Recognising these connections enables the researcher to provide a rationale for the study's methodology. Furthermore, it facilitates the definition of the methodology employed and delineates the approach to data collection and analysis (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

The term "ontology" in this context refers to the study of existence (Crotty, 2005). It delves into the inherent structure of reality itself. On the other hand, "epistemology" pertains to how reality is comprehended (Hathcoat et al., 2019). It seeks to provide insight into the formation of knowledge. In simpler terms, these terms seek to address the question of 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 2005, p.8). A research paradigm embodies the researcher's worldview, encapsulating "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p.17), including their ontological and epistemological perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Diverse paradigms exist within social science research. Guba and Lincoln (2005) outlined four paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Positivism, the initial paradigm, is founded on a realist ontological stance. Its objective is to objectively explore the world. This perspective holds that objective knowledge is attainable through

scientific methods, often yielding quantitative data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Constructivist paradigms operate within a relativist ontological stance, viewing reality as composed of locally co-constructed realities. These realities are understood by the individuals navigating them (Mertens, 2014), suggesting the absence of a single, objective truth.

In the critical theory paradigm, historical realism is acknowledged, recognising that reality is influenced by diverse factors like social, economic, or cultural elements. Consequently, knowledge of this reality is shaped by the perspectives of those navigating these multifaceted realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

However, the fourth paradigm of post-positivism derives its ontological foundation from critical realism, viewing reality as difficult to understand or to explain clearly (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) due to the flawed cognitive mechanisms employed by human beings. Within this framework, reality is subjected to critical examination to achieve a deeper comprehension of its nature.

It is crucial to note that the adoption of one paradigm over another does not inherently dictate or meld the research process (Hitchcock et al., 2022). Rather, one can argue that the research is shaped by its intrinsic purpose, while referencing a specific paradigm can aid in clarifying that purpose and the research's nature. Moreover, paradigms are coherent and singular in their conceptualisations. Instead of being rigid divisions, they can be seen as tools to provide initial understanding of research purpose (Hitchcock, et al., 2022). In this perspective, the purpose of this research is guided by a paradigm, anchored in the ontology and epistemological stance of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978).

3.3.2 The Critical realism position

Bhaskar's (1978) conception of reality comprises three distinct ontological domains: 'the real,' which encompasses structures influenced by actions; 'the actual,' referring to actions governed by structures from the real domain; and 'the empirical,' linked to the observable and experiential aspects of reality. This amalgamation of ontological domains can be likened to the tiers of a wedding cake, with each layer corresponding to one of the three types of ontological domains. However, when these three ontological domains (Bhaskar, 1978) are examined through a qualitative lens, the layers of the cake do not stand isolated; instead, they seem to represent interconnected strata. Viewing this conception experientially, one can define experiences as encompassing the real, actual, and empirical aspects concurrently, rather than isolating one domain at a time.

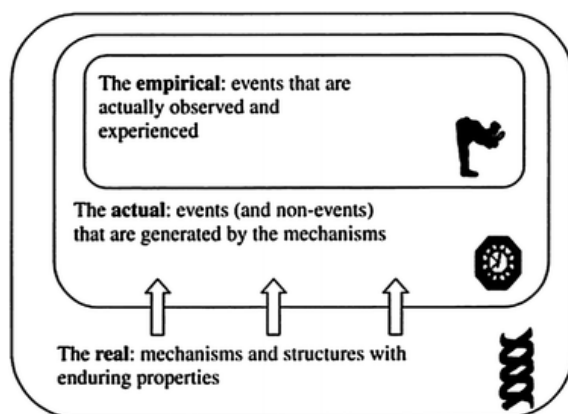


Figure 5: The three ontological domains of critical realism. From Heeks & Wall (2017), page 162.

In the realm of critical realism, the recognition of the presence of three stratified ontological domains of reality (Fletcher, 2017) implies that the observed events emerge as a consequence of actions transpiring within social structures. These structures are in constant flux due to ongoing activities that unfold beneath the surface, at the 'actual level'. These activities remain unobservable immediately but can be comprehended and explored through research

(Stutchbury, 2022). In the context of the present study, Bhaskar's (1978) stratified reality concept can be applied. Specifically, the supervisory relationship embodies a tangible reality ('the real'). In this reality, EPs and TEPs employ mechanisms (CCs) that may be applied and produce behaviours or event ('the actual') to delve into diverse observations arising through the use of the CCs lens ('the empirical').

Critical realism presupposes the existence of structures or social forms that either facilitate or impede individuals' actions within a specific context (Fletcher, 2017). Research conducted under the critical realism framework seeks to grasp the interplay between the context and these structures (Bhaskar, 1998). In this research, the structures involve the evolution of the contracting phase and the outcomes generated by implementing CCs within the supervisory dynamic between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Adhering to the critical realist epistemological stance of this research, Archer et al. (2013) introduced the term "epistemic relativism," which denotes the construction of knowledge in relation to individuals and their efforts to comprehend the acquired knowledge. From this perspective, Archer et al. (2013) propose that knowledge is situated within a specific historical epoch, society, and culture. In this context, critical realism rejects the notion of universal truth, instead acknowledging truth to manifest in diverse forms, be it personal or communal (Kvale, 1995). A critical realist epistemology is particularly relevant when exploring the utilisation of CCs in EPs' practice. These circles offer a tangible graphical representation of various topics earmarked for discussion during the contracting phase. However, the selection and content of each circle's discussion may diverge based on the distinct viewpoints, experiences, and perspectives of supervisees and supervisors.

Opting for a critical realist position appears to be highly appropriate for the current research, given its objective of uncovering the fundamental attributes of the tool and simultaneously delving into the experience of employing CCs in the context of educational psychology practice, from both the supervisor and supervisee viewpoints. By adopting a critical realist standpoint, the tangible and organised nature of the tool is acknowledged, all the while seeking insights about it through the participants' lived experiences. This approach holds the potential to enrich the field of educational psychology practice, offering valuable insights into the effective utilisation of CCs (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 The choice of the qualitative Research Methodology

Research designs encompass the chosen approach that researchers take to address the research questions in their study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Two primary methodologies can be discerned: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative studies aim to identify connections between variables, often numerical in nature, to predict outcomes or offer generalised explanations of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phenomena are assessed objectively, perceiving reality as external to the observer (Yardley, 2000). Researchers employing quantitative studies tend to perceive the research context as straightforward and unambiguous, facilitating the extraction of answers from the social landscape (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

On the other hand, qualitative methodologies are typically rooted in an ontological perspective that acknowledges a unique and distinct reality to which reference is made. Unlike the former, these methodologies acknowledge the existence of multiple realities intertwined with the contextual milieu in which these realities manifest (Cohen et al., 2007). Under this paradigm, knowledge is gathered through participants' subjective CCs accounts of

the experiences of CCs, enabling an exploration of the layered essence of reality (Fletcher, 2017).

Given the focus of the current study, which revolves around the exploration of the novel tool of CCs in the context of EP practice, the researcher has narrowed the scope of application to the realm of EP supervision. Hence, a qualitative methodology is well-suited to the study's objectives, as the research seeks to explore the use of the tool and its associated processes, which are inherently difficult to quantify. Additionally, given that the tool in question, CCs, is relatively novel and lacks extensive research, qualitative methods are ideal for expanding and refining our understanding of its utilisation. Furthermore, qualitative studies are deemed suitable for exploratory research purposes, akin to the present study, which seeks to comprehend a particular subject (the utilisation of contracting circles) through the viewpoints of participants (supervisees and supervisors) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As previously elucidated, the critical realism standpoint views reality as composed of layers: the real, the actual, and the empirical. In the context of this research, the aim is to delve into and comprehend the processes that occur at the actual and empirical levels. To put it differently, the research is not primarily concerned with the "what" but rather with the "why". The study aims to investigate how CCs are utilised and the influences that arise when they are employed during the contracting phase. Through exploring the experiences of participants, the research seeks to understand the factors that facilitate or inhibit the use of CCs in practice. This distinction aligns with the divergence between quantitative studies, which often address the "what," and qualitative studies, which delve into the "why."

It can be asserted that within a critical realism research design, the objective is to uncover the mechanisms that provide explanations for why events unfold. From this perspective, the adoption of a critical realism stance is well-matched with the chosen qualitative methodology for this study. Specifically, the research endeavours to probe the dynamics within the context of educational psychology supervision interactions between supervisors and supervisees. Moreover, discerning the role of context is not straightforward or easily answered when inquiries are directed at the social realm (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2010).

Taking a case from Jankins and Delbridge (2014), who conducted a study on the happiness levels of low-waged workers in a call centre, we observe that participants reported happiness when their work was linked to delivering quality service, offering them discretion in their tasks and aligning with their elevated work values. However, the authors emphasised that these findings were contingent on mechanisms tied to participants' identifications in their relationships with employers at the workplace. They further specified that these outcomes were contingent on the specific context of a labour market with limited options and a family-run business. This instance illustrates how mechanisms and outcomes are liable to differ contingent upon the diverse contexts in which participants are situated.

Qualitative research data are inherently context-specific, making them less amenable to generalisation across different contexts. Given these characteristics, the critical realist stance finds a suitable home within qualitative studies, as attempting to generalise findings that pertain to diverse realities' perspectives can be challenging (Shipway, 2010). Referring to this particular research, the sample comprises eight participants—four supervisors and four supervisees based in London. The intention here is not to generalise the findings to the entirety of EPs' practices involving contracting across the entire country. Rather, the study's objective is to gather data that enhance the comprehension of the use of CCs within

educational psychology supervision and the intricate factors that influence this reality (Willig, 2013).

Taking into account the importance of investigating the mechanisms inherent to CCs' use in specific contexts, the researcher has chosen a qualitative research design as the appropriate methodological approach to effectively address the research's purpose. This design appears to align well with the critical realist position as well.

3.5 Sampling and Participants

3.5.1 The role of participants in a qualitative study

The involvement of participants in a qualitative study diverges significantly from their role in quantitative research. Qualitative studies aim to explore the lived experiences of participants. Consequently, in qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on valuing the participants' perspectives, as opposed to assessing their behaviours or performance against predefined standards or measures, as it is commonly done in quantitative research (Willig, 2013). Given the critical realist stance of this research, the data collected from participants must be carefully interpreted to glean insights into the mechanisms and structures that underlie the phenomenon under investigation (in this case, the utilisation of CCs).

3.5.2 Sampling strategy

The research employs purposive sampling, a method aimed at attaining a deeper understanding and insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002).

Participants were deliberately selected due to the richness of the data they could provide for examination (Patton, 2002). In this regard, the research's sample consists of EPs possessing experience in utilising CCs as a means of contracting in supervision. These individuals could fulfil roles as both supervisors and supervisees. Initially, the researcher looked to the CPD

course on supervision for professionals working in school and community contexts (*Supervision in schools and community contexts: Working relationally and reflectively*, CPD32), at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust wherein CCs served as the primary tool for contracting. However, when this approach yielded no success, a snowball sampling technique was adopted. This involved identifying two educational psychology services (EPSs) whose members acted as informants, assisting in identifying other EPs interested in participating in the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). To further broaden the recruitment criteria, TEPs from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust who had experience with CCs were also considered.

The assembled sample for this study comprises individuals who possess experience in utilising CCs as part of the contracting process during supervision, whether in the role of a supervisor or a supervisee within the context of EP practice. The research aimed to recruit a total of eight participants, evenly divided into four supervisors and four supervisees, but not dyad. This participant count is deemed appropriate for conducting a reflexive thematic analysis, a method utilised to analyse the data discussed below (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.6 Procedure of recruitment

The researcher initiated the recruitment process for EPs supervisors and supervisees by reaching out to participants of the CPD 32 course in July 2023, focusing on those who had participated during the academic year 2022/2023 as it was intended participants would have had one year of experience of supervision after the course attended. Before making contact, the researcher first reached out via email to the course lead, who also oversees the CPD 32 course, to inform her about the research and seek permission to contact participants through email. After receiving the course lead's consent, a comprehensive email containing general information about the research was sent to all CPD32 participants by the course administrator

(please refer to Appendix C for more detailed information). This email included a letter explaining the research's intent, and a form created by the researcher, that interested participants could complete. The form included questions pertaining to the number of years they had been using CCs and whether they were interested in participating as supervisors or supervisees. This information aimed to help the researcher determine the number of potential participants and to ensure that they met the research's criteria (please see Appendix D and E for a copy of the letter and the form).

However, this recruitment strategy did not yield the intended results. Consequently, the researcher pursued an alternative approach by contacting two EPSs situated within inner-London. One of these services was the researcher's current educational psychology placement, while the other was the previous educational psychology service where the researcher had completed their placement during the first year.

TEPs from The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust were contacted via email to provide information about the research. In the event that no responses were received from trainees within this particular institution, alternative institutions would have been reached out to. However, in this instance, the need to contact other institutions did not arise.

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria have been finalised as follows:

- EPs who hold the Health and Care Profession Council registration (HCPC).
- EPs who consider themselves having experience using experience of CCs as main tool for contracting in supervision. They can be participating as either as supervisor or supervisee for at least one year. This allows participants to talk about their experience which can be drawn upon in the interview.

- EPs who described themselves as supervisors may have attended the CPD 32 course on supervision for professional working in schools and community contexts (*Supervision in schools and community context: Working relationally and reflectively, CPD32*) at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.
- EPs who have trained at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust since 2016, the year where the tool of CCs was introduced to the training course.
- TEPs who have practised the use of CCs for at least one year. The researcher acknowledged the fact that many trainees may have started the training without experience with supervision. This can influence their perception and experience of using CCs in the short term as they would need time to reflect on the use of a new tool. Therefore, only second and third year trainees were included in the study.
- EPs and TEPs working in a London Local Authority (LA), to allow exploration of a variety of settings encompassing diverse demographics and socio-economic backgrounds where EPs and TEPs may have worked.

3.6.2 Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria finalised for this research study are:

- EPs who have experience of using the CCs less than one year.
- Y2 and Y3 TEPs who have no experience of the use of contracting circles.
- EPs and TEPs who are not based in a London LA as per convenience due to the location of placement of the researcher.

3.6.3 Sample

The research is formed by a relatively small sample of eight participants, consisting of four EPs and four TEPs, all working within London EPSs. Two of the EPs who took part in the

study are also university tutors at The Tavistock & Portman NHS trust training doctorate in Child, Community Educational Psychology. The sample size allowed the researcher to be aware of accounts of participants. Pseudonyms have been utilised for all participants throughout the thesis to ensure their anonymity.

All participants who took part of the research (N=8) were female. At the time of the interview, two of the four supervisees were trainees who have just completed their second year of training and were progressing into their final third year. The remaining two supervisees have just completed their training at the time of the interview. All the supervisee participants have received their training from The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. The four supervisor participants work on a full-time basis, and they had an extensive experience working as an EP ranging from 10 to 20 years of experience. Two of the EP supervisors reported to have completed the CPD 32 training on supervision in 2023, whereas one EP was a former facilitator of the CPD 32 training course on supervision. The remaining supervisor did not have training on supervision but has had multi-year experience of the use of CCs. It is important to note that the information related to the participants' experience and training received demonstrate a certain link with The Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust, meaning that there is a limited variance of training obtained, which could have impacted upon the findings.

3.7 Research procedure

3.7.1 Aims of interviews

In accordance with the chosen qualitative methodology, interviews were identified as the primary means to gather data for this study. The research's aim revolves around exploring and comprehending the experience of utilising CCs, without any intention of hypothesis testing. Consequently, a structured interview format was dismissed, as the study does not

involve analysing standardised stimuli or predetermined questions (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Instead, the purpose of interviews in this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of CCs. This necessitates participants' active participation and engagement in the interview process, where they share their individual experiences with the phenomenon – in this case, the use of contracting circles.

Furthermore, the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews, which contribute to the development of conceptual and theoretical knowledge about the use of CCs based on the interviewees' experiences. This choice is in line with the critical realist epistemological stance of the study, as it aims to address the "why" question concerning the phenomenon by offering explanations and/or conceptualisations of its underlying structure (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018).

3.7.2 Developing semi-structured interview questions

The decision to utilise semi-structured interviews was motivated by the desire to elicit unexpected responses from participants and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and potential issues associated with the use of CCs. This approach allowed participants the freedom to express their viewpoints without being constrained by anticipated responses, ultimately fostering a more comprehensive exploration of the subject (Berg, 2009).

Aligned with the semi-structured interview approach, the researcher formulated open-ended questions, such as "What is your understanding of contracting and the use of contracting circles?" These questions were designed to encourage participants to share their insights and experiences freely. Additionally, questions focusing on the mechanisms and structure of the utilisation of CCs were developed, aligning well with the critical realist position. For example, questions like "What are the key features of contracting circles?" were incorporated

into the interview schedule. A complete outline of the interview guiding questions can be found in Appendix F.

3.7.3 Pilot interview schedule

A pilot interview was conducted in person with an EP who had used CCs both as a supervisee and subsequently as a supervisor over the course of the past two years. It is important to note that this participant was not included in the final interview cohort, and the data collected from this pilot interview was not incorporated into the subsequent data analysis.

The pilot interview was meticulously recorded and reviewed multiple times. During this review process, the researcher made note of the various types of questions asked, assessed whether the follow-up questions aligned with the chosen interview format, and identified the strengths of the interview as well as areas that could be enhanced. Subsequently, reflections on the interview process were shared, and points of discussion were explored with the interviewee. This pilot interview and the subsequent analysis helped fine-tune the approach and methodology for the main study, ensuring its effectiveness and alignment with the research objectives.

Reflections and feedback from the pilot interviewee focused on the researcher's experience of interviewing. Reflections on the use of active listening during the interview were made. Feedback from the interviewee concerned the type of questions the researcher asked and noted how similar they were to the questions usually asked by an EP in consultation. For example, "When you said that what do you mean?" or "coming back to the point you mentioned earlier, can you please explain more broadly?". Reflecting on this, the researcher concluded that this type of question may lead the interview to take a specific direction and explore a particular topic drawn by the choice of the interviewer, rather than allowing the

interviewee to share their experience and thoughts more broadly. Reflections on the role of the interviewer were also made. The specific phrasing of prompts was discussed, as these seemed to narrow the research topic to specific subjects. These were taken into account by the researcher and subsequently modified to prevent any additional influence on the interviewee. Following the pilot interview experience, the interview questions prompts were revised, and they can be found in Appendix F.

All eight interviews were conducted online via Zoom, providing flexibility for participants and allowing scheduling adjustments based on their work contexts. The researcher adhered to the BPS Internet-Mediated Research Guidelines (BPS, 2021) to ensure participant privacy. The interviews were recorded using Zoom, and all participants kept their video on. Prior to the interviews, the researcher reminded participants about confidentiality and the consent form they had signed and returned. In line with a critical realist perspective, which posits that social forms and structures are influenced by individual actions within specific contexts (Fletcher, 2017), the researcher did not show the CCs visual during the interviews. The goal was to explore the participants' individual experiences with CCs and their perceived outcomes, rather than prompt a discussion on the CCs visual.

3.8 Qualitative approach

The researcher's epistemological and ontological positions, the stipulated research questions, and the chosen research designs collectively play a pivotal role in guiding the selection of an appropriate research method. They collectively inform and shape the decision on which method aligns best with these methodological components.

For this specific research, the researcher contemplated various methodological options. Considering the critical realist stance adopted in the study, the choice to employ reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022), emerged as the most

suitable approach, particularly in light of the research's objectives. A distinguishing feature of this method is the active involvement of the researcher in the process of generating codes and themes. Even from a critical realist standpoint, where knowledge can be constructed, often non-causally, the research topic— the utilisation of CCs in supervision— might be at an early stage of its development, backed by limited evidence derived from people's experiences.

In this context, the researcher's reflexivity, as applied in this study, serves to create a description of experiences that might possess inherent fallibility (Fryer, 2022). Despite this, such descriptions can prove immensely valuable in informing and advancing the practice of educational psychology. By embracing this approach, the study acknowledges the potential for developing understanding through a critical realist lens, even in areas where a concrete foundation of evidence may be limited.

3.8.1 The choice of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Different methodologies could potentially be employed to address the research questions based on its epistemological stance. While Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered, it was ultimately not chosen for specific reasons.

IPA necessitates a degree of homogeneity within the purposive sample, a criterion that does not align well with the diverse sample chosen as there are two different categories of participants, supervisors and supervisees for this research. Additionally, IPA involves an intricate and in-depth analysis of individual case studies, emphasising the exploration of complex and emotionally charged lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Conversely, in reflexive thematic analysis, themes are derived across multiple cases to yield a broader description of participants' experiences. This approach permits the development of somewhat "fallible" generalisations concerning the reality under examination.

Given that the research questions are aimed at understanding the factors influencing the use of CCs, including the context within which supervisors and supervisees operate, reflexive thematic analysis was considered better suited for this study. This method allows the researcher to construct interpretations of participants' experiences and the contextual backdrop from which these experiences emerge. It aligns well with the research's objectives and the need to explore a range of perspectives and contextual factors.

The researcher also considered the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). However, the researcher did not choose this methodology as it does not sit with the aim and the questions of the research. The grounded theory methodology focuses on producing an explanatory account of a phenomenon led by a theoretical base (Charmaz, 2014), and it is aimed at extrapolating a theory from the data collected and related to a specific context. The theory obtained does not depend on categories and variables from previous theories. As per the literature review showed, there are very few studies regarding specifically the use of contracting and none on contracting circles. Therefore, the aim of this study is exploratory. Moreover, grounded theory appears to be appropriate when a theoretical model is possible to develop. Instead, this research intends to explore supervisees' and supervisors' perspective of the use of CCs and inform educational psychology practice (Braun & Clark, 2013).

In addition, the current research did not aim at analysing the language of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Instead, the researcher views the language used by participants as mere and transparent mirroring of thoughts and feelings from which their experience take form. In this view, the researcher rejected the choice of using discourse analysis for this study.

3.8.2 Introducing Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The data collected from the interviews underwent analysis using RTA, a method described by Braun and Clarke (2022). This choice of method aligns with the research's intent to capture the perspectives and experiences of both supervisors and supervisees, while remaining consistent with the underlying epistemological stance (Braun & Clarke, 2013). RTA is particularly distinguished by its capacity to identify patterns within qualitative data, facilitating the extraction of themes that acknowledge the researcher's reflexivity and its potential impact on interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

RTA was deemed appropriate for this study due to its ability to incorporate assumptions during data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Specifically, the analysis revolves around the use of CCs within the context of supervision within EP practice and inter-professional supervision between EPs and other professionals. The assumptions bear relevance not only for disseminating the research findings but also for potentially implementing the use of CCs. These implications align with the requirements outlined by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2021) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2023), as discussed in the introduction chapter.

Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2022) characterise RTA as an approach that can be comprehensible to a broader audience. This implies that the research findings can be valuable not only within the realm of EP practice, encompassing both EPs and TEPs, but also for inter-professional supervision involving professionals from diverse backgrounds like teachers, headteachers, and school staff receiving supervision from EPs, as indicated by existing literature.

3.8.3 Reflexivity in thematic analysis

RTA was chosen over other types of thematic analysis due to the emphasis placed on the reflective subjectivity of the researcher. It is important to note that the researcher approached the study with preconceived notions about the use of CCs in supervision as TEP, while also considering their prospective application and reflecting on past supervisory experiences. These considerations influenced aspects of the research, such as the development of the interview schedule and the formulation of questions for participants. In this regard, RTA enables reflexivity regarding these factors in both data collection and subsequent analysis processes. The analysis process will be detailed and discussed in the Findings chapter.

As mentioned in section 3.4.1, the function of this research is explorative, aiming to explore themes and patterns across the collected data. The researcher employed an inductive orientation to data analysis for this study. Braun and Clarke (2021) explain that the inductive approach takes a 'bottom-up' perspective, where the analysis originates from the content of the data, driving the development of codes and themes. They differentiate the inductive approach from the deductive one, which is guided by theoretical constructs, with the researcher forming codes and themes based on pre-existing theories. The inductive approach is utilised in this study because the data analysis is not guided by specific theoretical constructs or the researcher's particular interests (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Additionally, the RTA approach ensures that the themes extracted from the analysis are solely based on the data, without attempting to force-fit them into an existing framework. Therefore, the inductive approach allows for the amplification of participants' voices from the interviews and seeks to legitimise the use of a novel tool.

3.8.4 RTA phases

Braun and Clarke (2021) elaborated on six detailed phases of RTA. Each phase was employed in this research and will be described in this section. When outlining each phase, Braun and Clarke (2021) clarified that the process is not necessarily linear, nor is one phase distinctly separated from the completion of another. Therefore, the researcher moved back and forth across the phases as necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The phases of RTA are outlined below.

Phase one	• Familiarising with the data
Phase two	• Initial codes
Phase three	• Generating themes
Phase four	• Development and review of themes
Phase five	• Defining and naming of themes
Phase six	• Findings write-up

Figure 6: The six phases of reflexive thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2021)

Phase 1: Familiarising with the data

In this phase, Braun and Clarke (2021) underscored the significance of thoroughly reading and re-reading the dataset to become acquainted with the data. This approach enables the researcher to immerse themselves in the dataset and capture information pertinent to the research questions. In the context of this study, which involved obtaining video recordings,

the researcher watched the videos and listened to the recordings multiple times to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the data. This entailed active listening to extract the main areas addressed by the data. Furthermore, this process facilitated a deeper familiarity with the data and allowed for the verification of transcription accuracy, as previously described in the transcription section.

During the familiarisation phase of the dataset, the researcher initiated the reflexive process by noting trends and interesting passages that resonated with their values and positioning. For example, the researcher documented thoughts and feelings related to the relational aspect that CCs can initiate, drawing from their own experiences in supervision. Furthermore, as this aspect was viewed positively by the researcher, opportunities for reflection were seized during this initial phase to understand how it could influence the interpretation of the data.

Phase two: Initial codes

The codes serve as the "building blocks" for future themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 1399). This means that once the researcher has familiarised themselves with the data, the coding process is initiated by producing succinct and descriptive labels for pieces of data considered relevant to the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2021) indicated that once the orientation to data is chosen (whether inductive or deductive), codes take form and can represent different levels of meaning. For instance, the researcher may encounter semantic codes, which are explicit and language-driven, termed 'semantic'. On the other hand, latent codes contain implicit meanings for interpretation, known as "latent" (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In this study, the researcher adopted an inductive approach, without using any pre-existing frameworks to create the codes. Microsoft Word and Excel were utilised to work on the transcripts, which were analysed at both semantic and latent levels, with codes assigned

using words and very short phrases. In this initial stage, the researcher formulated 1045 codes, comprising a total of 138 initial themes extracted from the data. Braun and Clarke (2021) recommended refining the codes at least twice, ideally multiple times, to ensure the rigour and thoroughness of the data analysis process and to vary the order in which the dataset is analysed for each round. This helps prevent some data from being missed while others are duplicated. Following Braun and Clarke's (2021) suggestion, the researcher redefined the dataset three times. During this process, some codes were redefined and renamed, others were merged with similar ones, and some were eliminated. An example of the process, including initial codes extrapolated and subsequent changes in names or merged codes, along with interview extracts, can be found in Appendix J.

Phase three: Generating themes

Initially, when Braun and Clarke (2006) defined what a theme is, they described it with the aim of capturing patterns of meaning present in a dataset. However, given the adoption of RTA in this study, differences in conceptualisations of themes have emerged. Specifically, in RTA, a theme should encompass a broad range of data unified by a shared idea that may manifest in various modalities, ranging from clear explanations to more subtly implied meanings. Understanding this, the third phase involves grouping codes together based on shared ideas, thus initiating the theme development process (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Additionally, there is another differentiation to consider regarding 'topic summaries', which, according to Braun and Clarke (2021), capture a summary of responses given about a specific topic or issue. Conversely, in the use of RTA, the researcher is tasked with identifying shared ideas or topics across different contexts. This implies that after familiarising with the data and identifying codes, the researcher needs to adopt an analytical approach and search for meaning beyond the explicit data.

Braun and Clarke (2021) advise using visual mapping to generate provisional themes, initiate their development, explore their interrelations, and review the overall group of themes in the analysis. Following this guidance, the researcher opted to engage in the development of a thematic map, and an excerpt is illustrated below (Figure 7).

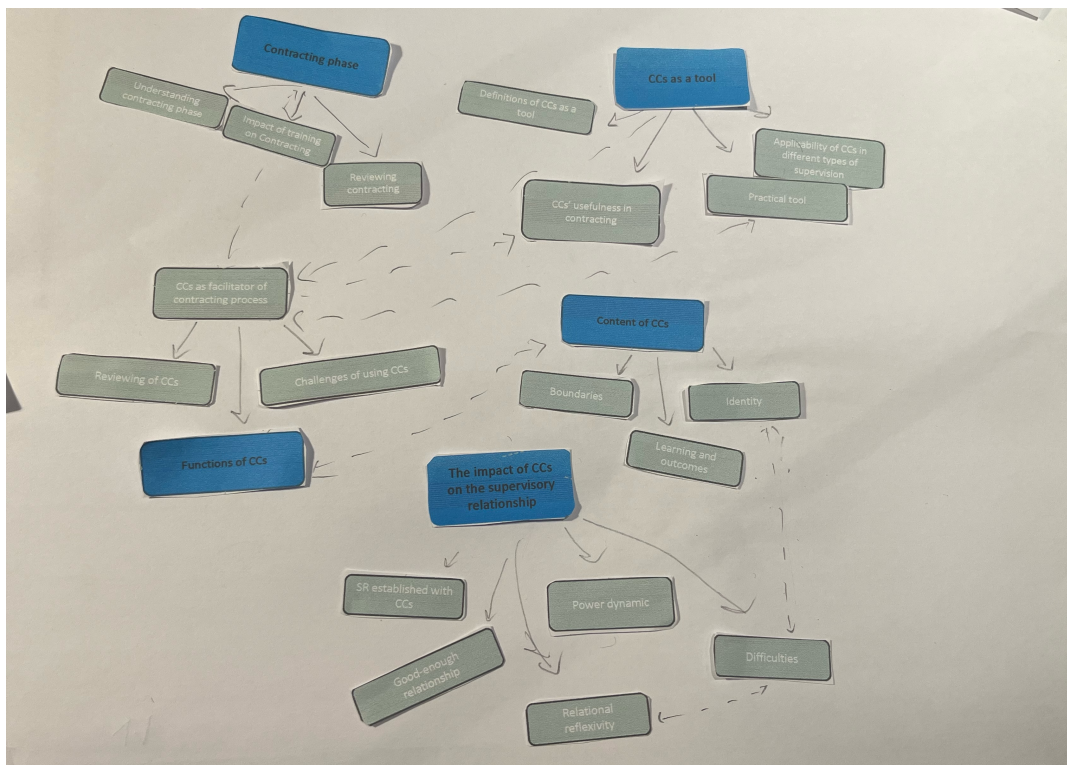


Figure 7: Initial thematic map of themes and subthemes across the dataset

Braun and Clarke (2021) proposed five key considerations during the stage of theme development. Firstly, they suggest that themes may not capture all the information provided by the dataset. Secondly, each theme should incorporate a central organising concept, aimed at achieving clarity of each code and, subsequently, the data. Thirdly, the authors advise against becoming too attached to initial themes extrapolated during phase three of the analysis. Additionally, they note that the number of themes developed at this stage may

exceed the final number achieved after refinement. Lastly, the authors caution against adopting a 'question and answer' orientation when engaging with the data to generate themes.

Given these considerations, the researcher chose to extrapolate themes using an Excel document and organise the codes into columns representing refined codes, provisional themes, main themes and sub-themes. This approach prompted reflexivity, as the researcher questioned assumptions regarding the meaning of the codes extrapolated from the data.

Phase four: development and review of themes

The fourth phase involves a re-engagement with the extracted codes and the dataset. The aim is to assess the suitability of the themes developed in phase three and re-evaluate the initially grouped codes. This process allows for exploration of whether different scopes can be formulated for pattern development. During this phase, the researcher reviewed the initially obtained themes to ensure they were not merely topic summaries, but rather demonstrated a rich and diverse development of ideas within the dataset. To achieve this, the researcher combined some themes and divided others. Additionally, reflexivity was not overlooked during this stage, as the researcher continually engaged with the dataset to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the coded data extracted. Some themes were changed and further elaborated to develop more appropriate themes. Once these themes were validated with the dataset and confirmed to be representative, the researcher could proceed to phase 5.

Phase five: refining, defining and naming of the themes

In this phase, Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest that refining themes is an important precursor to the final phase of writing up. Refining entails validating the themes with the dataset and defining them to ensure their quality. The definition of a theme, which can comprise one or two sentences, provides clarity and information about the key points of each theme. These

definitions also address the research questions concerning the investigated phenomenon. When defining a theme, Braun and Clarke (2021) recommend that researchers ask themselves questions such as: "What is the theme about, and what story is it aimed to tell?" and "How does each theme contribute to the overall analysis of the dataset?" Following these guidelines, the researcher ensured that each theme accurately addressed these questions.

After this sub-phase, the researcher named the themes, considering Braun and Clarke's (2021) advice that names should be informative, concise, and catchy, as one-word theme names may not fully capture the pattern of meaning. At this stage, the researcher created a completed thematic map, which is illustrated in the Findings chapter (Figure 8). Summaries of each theme are included in the Findings chapter, along with an introduction corresponding to the thematic analysis.

Phase six: writing up

Braun and Clarke (2021) defined the writing-up phase as a key component of the RTA process, emphasising that analysis occurs during the writing process of the dataset. They explained that writing up does not commence once the analysis is finalised, but rather begins early in phase 1 of the process. According to Braun and Clarke (2021), the sixth phase of RTA serves as a final step aimed at illustrating the entire analytic work and bringing together all different themes into a cohesive story to address the research questions. Therefore, all writing up from phase one to phase five is considered, as it can impact the RTA process. The sixth and final phase of this study is presented in the Findings chapter.

After completing the analysis, the researcher synthesised the findings in the writing-up phase to produce an accurate and refined presentation of the data. These findings are examined in the discussion chapter of this thesis, where they are considered alongside key points from the reviewed literature to inform the evaluation of the study's results.

3.9 Quality in qualitative research: trustworthiness

The issue of defining quality in qualitative research has been the subject of extensive and contested debate within research studies aimed at evaluating the quality of knowledge generated by qualitative research (Mays & Pope, 2000). There has been considerable debate regarding whether qualitative and quantitative methods should be evaluated using the same quality criteria. In various areas of psychology, debates about assessing qualitative research based on constructs such as "reliability" and "validity" have taken place (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Willig, 2013). Reliability, generalisability, objectivity, and the ability to replicate the same circumstances in a specific study may not always be feasible when qualitative research designs are applied. The existence of different methodologies has led to the formulation of distinct sets of criteria applicable to qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1994) introduced the term "trustworthiness" to indicate the extent to which the findings of a research inquiry can be trusted and considered valuable. In identifying some of the features essential for marking high-quality qualitative research in this study, the researcher identified Lincoln and Guba's (1994) four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings represent the initial concept being measured (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Bearing this in mind, the researcher acknowledged the potential for prolonged engagement with the data to lead to distortions based on previous beliefs or perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). To mitigate this risk in the current research, the researcher immersed themselves in the data from the outset of data collection. During each interview, the researcher used short summaries to verify participants' views and reduce the possibility of conceptual misunderstanding. Additionally, given the small sample size

used in this research, the researcher triangulated the data to cultivate a better understanding of the subject under investigation. This involved analysing the information obtained both at the individual participant level and as a group. Furthermore, the researcher applied a systematic approach to analysing the data using RTA, which enhanced the credibility of the study. Indeed, the similarities and differences in the data were analysed through a process of checking, defining, re-defining the codes, and themes.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings may be applicable or transferred to other contexts (Willig, 2013), and it can be likened to generalisability. One way to ensure transferability is to provide a detailed description of the contextual features of the research. In this study, the researcher acknowledged the limitation of a small sample size, which may affect the generalisability of the study's findings, and this will be discussed further in the discussion chapter. However, the study provides a thorough description of the participants, context, data collection process, and analysis. By offering a detailed account of these procedures, others can assess the research and determine whether its transferability is appropriate for their own contexts.

3.9.3 Dependability and confirmability

Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined dependability as the extent to which research findings can be consistent and repeatable over time. To ensure the dependability of the study, the researcher meticulously documented the procedures and steps of the research (Creswell, 2009). This included documenting the interview recordings and transcripts from the original raw data, as well as the transcriptions, coding, and analysis of the data, to facilitate replication of the study. In addition, the researcher checked the process of analysis in their

supervision and evaluated whether the analysis was in accordance with the chosen design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which the findings of the research are shaped by the participants and the context they are in, rather than the preconceptions the researcher might have (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). To address this aspect, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal to acknowledge their own biases and assumptions regarding the use of the tool, and to demonstrate the process through which the interpretation of the data was conducted. In this process of interpretation and analysis, the researcher also took into account the contextual factors related to participants' involvement with The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust doctoral training course, and ensured that the interpretation was 'grounded in the data' (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p.122). Additionally, the researcher ensured that audit trails of reflections were achieved through detailed documentation of decisions made and interpretations, thereby ensuring transparency in the research process.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully integrated throughout the various stages of this research, anticipating potential ethical issues that may arise when conducting research involving human participants (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The researcher adhered to the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) as well as the BPS Ethics Internet-Mediated Research Guidelines (BPS, 2021) to safeguard the rights and dignity of participants, in accordance with guidance in the UK. Ethical approval was obtained from The Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC), which included submission of the research proposal and risk analysis (please refer to Appendix G for further details). Both information sheet and consent form were checked in line with the ethical review after its submission and adjustments were made to ensure that it was accessible to the potential EPs

and TEPs participants of the study who would have distributed to. Clarification of procedures was necessary, prompting a resubmission of the ethics form.

The researcher prioritised anonymity among the group of participants, particularly considering the small size of the sample obtained for the research. To safeguard anonymity, numbers were assigned to each supervisor and supervisee, and any details that could potentially identify them were removed. This included omitting the names of settings and institutions, as well as any other data that could inadvertently identify other individuals with whom participants collaborated. Furthermore, when conducting interviews online, the researcher ensured optimal environmental conditions were shared with participants, and confidentiality was maintained at all times. If any variations to the software configurations were required, the researcher informed participants in advance of the scheduled interview to ensure a secure and confidential interview setting.

3.10.1 Informed consent

Before participating, all participants were provided with detailed information about the research. This was done by emailing them an information sheet and consent form (please refer to Appendix H and I for more information), which contained information about the aim of the research, the methods involved, confidentiality measures, and instructions on how to withdraw their consent if desired. Participants acknowledged receipt of this information by signing the consent form and emailing it back to the researcher. They were also reminded that they could ask questions at any time and that their participation was entirely voluntary.

3.10.2 Transcriptions

The interviews were completed through the use through online video software and were recorded and transcribed through the use of the specific function. The recordings were listened to multiple time alongside the transcriptions for two reasons: to ensure the accuracy

of the transcriptions and to develop the researcher's familiarity of the content of the interviews. The latter would allow the researcher to develop a preliminary stage of the analysis with the researcher's active engagement with the dataset. An example of a section of the interview transcript can be found in Appendix K. The full transcripts of interviews have been not reported to ensure anonymity.

3.10.3 Confidentiality

All identifiable information within the data that could potentially identify participants was anonymised. Specifically, any references to specific institutions, university tutors, or other individual participants' work with were altered or removed. Additionally, each participant was assigned a unique number to identify them in the interview transcriptions, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

3.10.4 Right to withdraw

During the interview, the researcher ensured clarity regarding the content of the information sheet and obtained confirmation from participants regarding their willingness to participate in the research interview. Procedures for conducting online interviews using an audio recorder were explained, with participants reminded of their right to stop the interview at any time. It was emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw without providing a reason. Upon conclusion of the interviews, participants were thanked and provided with a debriefing, reiterating their rights. The researcher also explained how the findings would be shared with participants if requested.

3.10.5 Data protection

In accordance with the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014), the researcher was cognisant of potential risks that the research might pose to participants. To mitigate these risks, the researcher took steps to ensure the security of electronic data and reports. Specifically, all electronic data and reports were password-protected and encrypted, in adherence to the UK Data Protection Act (2018) and the Data Protection Policy of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. These measures were implemented to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of participants' data throughout the research process.

3.10.6 Protection from harm

When conducting research, psychologists are mandated to mitigate risks to prevent participants from experiencing any form of harm (BPS, 2021). Consistent with this principle, the research must serve a clear purpose and should not jeopardise the well-being of participants (Webster et al., 2014). Consequently, the researcher prioritised the research while also ensuring that potential risks to participants' "psychological well-being, mental health, personal views, privacy, or dignity" were minimised (BPS, 2021, P.9).

Undertaking qualitative research entails the possibility that participants may lead the research in unforeseen directions. While it may not be possible to anticipate all potential risks, this research considered potential risks throughout its processes (Bryman, 2008). It is important to acknowledge that interview methodology presents ethical challenges, as it seeks to gather in-depth information about participants' feelings and thoughts (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Interviews can often lead to discussions about specific topics that are not commonly spoken about, or they may resemble therapeutic conversations (Willig, 2013). Additionally, consideration must be given to how participants may feel after completing the interview, as

discussions could delve deeply into sensitive topics and leave participants emotionally affected (Webster et al., 2014). Therefore, the researcher aimed to respond reflectively to participants' responses throughout the research process.

While it was unforeseen that participation in this research could impact participants' well-being, the researcher recognised that recalling episodes of conflicts or challenges during the contracting phase in the semi-structured interviews may have posed a potential psychological risk for participants. To mitigate this risk, the researcher consistently considered the ethical principles appropriate to both the Tavistock and Portman Trust and Essex University.

3.10.7 Debrief

The researcher allocated time after each interview to debrief participants and discuss any emotions or challenges that may have arisen during the interview process. The researcher was aware that if participants experienced any distress, it would have been necessary to provide them with appropriate support services, as indicated in the ethics form. For example, participants could access external counselling services available outside their organisations or LA. Additionally, participants were reminded of the researcher's contact details should they need to discuss anything further related to their participation in the research.

3.11 Reflexivity

In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2021) RTA guidance, reflexivity was a key consideration throughout the research process. Reflexivity enhances the rigour of the research by prompting the researcher to critically reflect on their role, the research itself, and the interactions between the researcher, participants, and the data collected. The researcher took

into account their interests, past experiences, pre-assumptions, and biases, reflecting on these aspects using a research diary. The chapter on Findings within this thesis offers a more detailed examination of reflexivity and its various dimensions.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter delineates the researcher's philosophical orientation and the methodology employed in the research. It elucidates the process and methodological approach of the study, encompassing data collection, sampling, and analysis. Various research methods were evaluated for suitability, with some being excluded based on this assessment. Additionally, the procedures of the research were validated through quality assurance of the data, while ethical and safety measures were outlined and adhered to.

4. Findings

4.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter, the qualitative findings of the research are outlined and explored, with an emphasis on their connection to the research questions posed in this study. Following the execution of the RTA analysis process, a concise overview of the identified themes is provided. These research themes are visually depicted through a thematic map (see Figure 8), which illustrates the relationships between subthemes and main themes. The analysis of themes and subthemes is supported by quotations from the data, offering evidence for the process of theme identification. Participants were grouped in two main categories, as discussed in the methodology chapter: supervisors and supervisees. The themes extrapolated refer to the combined experiences of both groups.

To ensure transparency in the analysis process, an example of the process of coding is included in Appendix J and M. In this section, quotes from participants' interviews are presented, with specific typographic conventions utilised as follows:

- Participants' verbatim quotes are italicised.
- The number of participants and indication of whether they are supervisors or supervisees will follow the quotes.
- Stand-alone ellipses "... " are used to indicate pauses in speech.
- Quotations that have been truncated will be indicated with ellipses in square brackets [...].

4.2 Overview of findings

A total of five themes have been derived from the RTA concerning supervisors' and supervisees' experiences with using CCs as a contracting tool. These are identified as follows:

1. The CCs' impact on the supervisory relationship, 2. CCs enable the process of contracting, 3. Content of CCs, 4. CCs as a useful tool, and 5. The contracting phase. Table 4 provides an overview of the themes and the associated subthemes, along with the frequency of each subtheme raised.

Table 4.
Themes and subthemes and number of the codes extrapolated.

Theme	Subtheme	Number of participants data included (supervisees)	Number of participants data included (supervisors)	Number of coded extracts
1. CCs' impact on the Supervisory relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	4	4	20
	Power dynamic	4	3	79
	Relational reflexivity	4	4	61
	Difficulties	4	4	62
2. CCs enable the process of contracting	CCs are facilitator of in-depth discussions	4	4	106
	CCs enable discussion of past experiences	4	2	25
	Pragmatics of using CCs	4	4	84
3. The content of CCs	Learning and outcomes	4	4	37
	Boundaries	4	4	106
	Identity	2	2	20
4. CCs as a useful tool	What type of tool are CCs?	3	4	52
	CCs make contracting accessible	4	4	127
	Applicability of CCs in different types of supervision	4	4	97
5. The contracting phase	Participants' understanding of contracting	4	4	97
	The impact of training on contracting practice	3	3	36
	The experience of re-contracting	3	3	35

The relationship between themes, subthemes, and codes is detailed in Appendix N, and an illustration of the coding process for theme 1, the CCs impact on the supervisory relationship can also be found in Appendix O.

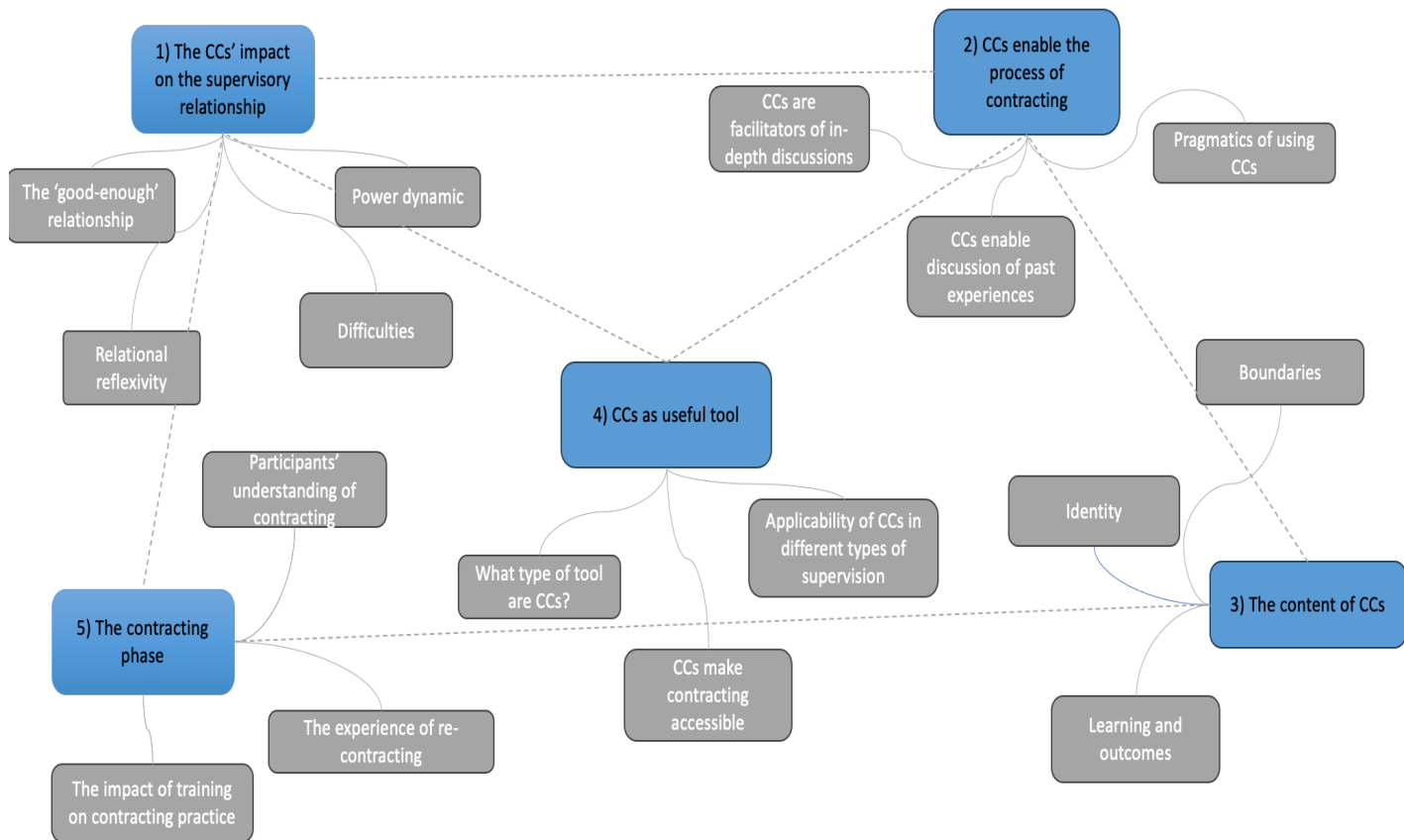


Figure 8: Thematic map containing themes and subthemes from RTA

4.3 Theme 1: The CCs' impact on the supervisory relationship

Participants found that using CCs had a significant impact on their supervisory relationship. They viewed CCs as a dynamic tool that facilitated exploration and discussion of various topics, ultimately shaping their relationship. This process helped address the needs and aspirations of supervisees while enhancing supervisors' understanding of how to provide support within a safe and contained space. Both supervisors and supervisees regarded the supervisory relationship as the cornerstone of supervision, with CCs playing a pivotal role in building this foundation. The key areas where CCs supported the SR foundation are detailed in the following subthemes.

4.3.1 The good-enough relationship subtheme

The concept of the "good-enough" relationship pertains to the development of the supervisory relationship as a safe and supportive space for supervisees, particularly during the contracting phase. Participants perceive their relationship as *“a space where we can grapple with stuff. It’s not just a problem-solving space, which if you are just doing what’s that process, how we can do”* (Supervisor 4, line 394). The "good enough" relationship suggests that supervisors provide enough consistency and understanding to facilitate the supervisory relationship, rather than striving for perfection. Indeed, this is conceptualised as *“a place where you can be real about how you’re experiencing things”* (Supervisor 4, line 400). This complexity highlights the role of the supervisory relationship, with CCs serving as the bridge between the contracting phase and the various aspects of the relationship that need to unfold explicitly, involving *“respecting that [supervisory] space. It felt that if that’s not, properly agreed, then obviously you’re not going to have a very kind of containing experience”* (Supervisee 1, line 330-332). In practice, this means that CCs allows supervisees to feel safe enough to bring *“something that felt quite exposing. But actually, then there was a connection made and we [supervisor and supervisee] were able to bring it back full circle and apply it to practice”* (Supervisee 3, lines 1048, 1054).

Supervisees acknowledged that opening up requires a level of vulnerability during the contracting phase. The prompts and questions provided by CCs enable them to express their emotions and thoughts regarding various aspects of their work with clients and their learning. For instance, Supervisee 4 mentioned instances when tears were shed during supervision. Beyond the emotional content of the discussion, there is also a relational aspect to their interaction, which *“started off in a way which felt so open and the supervisor’s reaction to the fact that I had been open was very welcoming, being very good at listening”* (Supervisee

4, line 459). The use of CCs thus serves as a platform for supervisees to open up and engage in emotionally charged conversations. Meanwhile, supervisors are tasked with maintaining awareness of how to respond to supervisees' vulnerability, ensuring that the space remains safe enough to contain the emotional intensity that sharing feelings may entail.

As the contracting phase is facilitated by supervisors through the use of the CCs tool, supervisors perceive CCs as offering:

“An ethical base, where you [supervisors] thought very carefully, sensitively, in a detailed way about the relationship the tasks, the function of it. It’s really a way of drawing your attention to things that might not come too much and raising awareness of the importance of paying attention to the relationship” (Supervisor 3, line 127).

Supervisors and supervisees acknowledged that it can be challenging for supervisees to discuss their feelings related to their work. They believe that addressing these feelings at the outset of the SR using CCs can facilitate future discussions in supervision.

4.3.2 Power dynamic

Participants have regarded the supervisory relationship as inherently containing a power dynamic between supervisors and supervisees. This theme of power dynamics was perceived by supervisees as having two facets, both of which influence the supervisory relationship. On one side, supervisees viewed the power dynamic in the supervisory relationship with supervisors negatively. Specifically, they refer to it as *“an unequal relationship”* (Supervisee 1). When using the CCs, supervisees considered the supervisory relationship:

“Feeding into a power imbalance. As a supervisee there is an expectation that you bring a lot, the whole self and with the circles it taps in even more personal experiences. It puts in a position where they [supervisors] ‘saw their person’. They know so much about you [supervisee] and you don’t know anything about them (Supervisee 1, lines 217-220).

In this perspective, supervisees may feel vulnerable or exposed when sharing certain aspects, while supervisors occupy a relatively neutral position and are less vulnerable compared to supervisees. In the dataset, supervisees displayed an awareness of the power dynamic within the SR, recognising that the focus is often on their reflections and experiences.

On the other side, supervisees also perceived the power dynamic within the supervisory relationship as somewhat one-sided, but they viewed CCs as a tool to regulate this dynamic. The supervisory relationship was likened to “a teacher-pupil-power relationship” and supervisees suggested that the use the CCs can:

“Help to balance that relationship because they’re not questions that are not directed at you as supervisees, they are directed at everyone involved in the supervisory process. So, in the same sense, supervision can be exposing in some experiences and the circles expose you and your supervisors” (Supervisee 3, lines 937-949).

While supervisees acknowledge the existence of the power dynamic, they believe that the use of CCs can help balance their relationship with supervisors. However, they also perceive a negative impact on this balance, as the process of contracting can sometimes reinforce the power dynamic: *“Knowing too much about your supervisor, then are they less containing?”* (Supervisee 4, line 1123). The argument made emphasises the importance of certain discussion topics that supervisees believe can enhance the depth of their relationship with

supervisors. Circles such as identity, ethics and values, and previous experiences are seen as valuable because they facilitate a deeper understanding of each other and reveal hidden assumptions. However, supervisees hypothesise that sharing feelings and thoughts about the supervisors' experiences may create a less supportive environment and potentially confuse the purpose of supervision.

Supervisors also acknowledge the presence of a power dynamic, aligning with the perspective presented by supervisees. They share the view that this dynamic can be counterbalanced through the use of CCs. However, supervisors also imply that the power dynamic is inherent to the supervisory relationship, given its focus on supporting the supervisee's work and facilitating their growth through relevant contracting circles or areas. They see their role as being in service to supervisees, aiming to foster collaboration and support in the supervisory process of learning and development. For instance, Supervisor 2, discussing their supervisee's report writing tasks, emphasised the relevance of CCs for supervisees when: *“the process is collaborative and we’re thinking together rather than me saying ‘you need to change/do this because it’s not done properly, or you left this out’”* (line 854). In this perspective, supervisors prioritise supervision as a space where CCs can facilitate a comprehensive learning process that incorporates the supervisees' perspectives, aiming for less directiveness in their approach.

4.3.3 Relational Reflexivity subtheme

The relational reflexivity subtheme highlights the significant role that CCs play in the supervisory relationship between supervisors and supervisees. This term is chosen because it encapsulates two essential elements of reflexivity: the process of giving and receiving

feedback to one another, and the self-reflection on one's own feelings in relation to the feedback received and the work of educational psychology.

Supervisees emphasised the utility of CCs in facilitating conversations about the role of feedback in the supervisory relationship. Feedback is regarded as:

“Key because as supervisees it is in the supervisor role to provide feedback and it’s really helpful to have that discussion about how you as an individual respond to feedback. What type of feedback you find helpful or unhelpful” (Supervisee 1, lines 317-321).

The conversations facilitated by CCs encourage supervisees to engage in a process of self-reflection, prompting them to consider the types of feelings that may arise when receiving feedback and when sharing their views on what is helpful or unhelpful in feedback.

Consequently, supervisees shared a *“non-attack way”* (Supervisee 4, line 372) when sharing views and feelings about feedback when using the CCs. All participants have acknowledged that feelings and the reflection upon them to make sense of their significance can often be overlooked, leading to a tendency to avoid them and become *“caught up in your context”* (Supervisee 3, line 1194).

Supervisors, recognising this tendency towards avoidance, emphasised the role of CCs in overcoming this avoidance. By discussing feedback and the associated feelings, they establish a clear agreement between supervisor and supervisee. This is seen as a way to build confidence between both parties that there has been a structured process followed in the supervisory relationship. It was implied that addressing the supervisees' feelings, even when they are not explicitly expressed, is crucial for supervisors. As supervisor 4 outlined: *“it’s acknowledging that we talked right at the beginning about easy or hard feelings are. It gives*

a bit of a guide of themes or things, but want to focus on across around the year” (lines 797 – 800).

4.3.4 Difficulties subtheme

Participants regarded the use of CCs as instrumental in facilitating conversations when supervisees encountered challenges in their work and in the supervisory relationship, such as navigating the role of feedback, as discussed earlier. These challenges may involve how supervision is utilised and the agreements made within the dyad regarding leadership roles and the types of work suitable for discussion during supervision. Both supervisees and supervisors emphasised the importance of addressing these difficulties in the supervisory relationship, recognising that the use of CCs can aid in this process. Supervisors paid close attention to this aspect, noting:

“People [supervisees] find it hard to imagine how to talk about that [difficulties]. Outside the teaching course, it feels quite unfamiliar to EPs to talk about like: ‘what happens if it’s related to the tricky stuff in relationship” (Supervisor 4, lines 243 - 258). The implication arose that qualified EPs found it more challenging to discuss difficulties in the relationship compared to TEP supervisees. This suggests a higher level of avoidance in addressing such issues and highlights potential barriers within the supervisory relationship. However, supervisors posited the idea that talking about difficulties:

“It’s not the end of the world and you are ok at the end of it, we haven’t ruined anything and it’s to talk about it and then be ok, it’s probably quite helpful thing, and I know people always phrase like: ‘we don’t need to use this [circle]’, or ‘it’s not going to happen’, it’s like

people paraphrase it a little bit. If it ever was, it must be such as relief to know we have a process that we are going to use it, we know what we can do” (Supervisor 3, lines 212 -216).

4.4 Theme 2: CCs enable the process of contracting

The theme highlights the pivotal role of CCs in facilitating discussions that are often challenging, avoided, or overlooked within the SR. It underscores their function as facilitators of difficult conversations and emphasises the significance of sharing past experiences of supervision. Moreover, it sheds light on the challenges encountered in the process of contracting when employing CCs.

4.4.1 CCs are facilitator of in-depth discussions subtheme

The collaborative nature of CCs serves as a valuable facilitator in the contracting process. By providing structured questions and prompts, CCs enable supervisees and supervisors to address topics that may otherwise be challenging to explore. This allows for explicit and deep discussions that contribute to a more thorough understanding of each other's perspectives and the dynamics of the supervisory relationship. Overall, CCs play a crucial role in guiding and facilitating these in-depth conversations during the contracting phase. It is *“a layer to facilitate those conversations that will then shape how your supervision goes”* (Supervisee 1, lines 262-263). In this procedure, though, the subjects that supervisees might typically avoid discussing are raised during the conversation and examined in a manner that isn't perceived as frightening. Participants felt that *“the CCs kind of give you a way into exploring some of those elements without feeling so abrupt, but also like invasive, a way to understand each other”* (Supervisee 3, lines 72-75).

Furthermore, questions and visual aids would assist supervisees and supervisors in facilitating a process of reflection on the topics they wish to explore, allowing their thoughts on a particular theme to emerge through the use of CCs:

“Give you themes to explore, and they help make these themes to be very explicit that not be used to talking about, but they have a lot of assumptions about the relationships, and they also allow you to talk about tricky things, in a quite neutral way” (Supervisor 3, lines 20-25).

The process of facilitating in-depth conversations can manifest in various scenarios, as exemplified by Supervisee 3 with the following practical examples:

“It might be a way of untangling things. Sometimes things you can bring to supervision or maybe thoughts that are sort of half formed might come out in general discussions. CCs can help this sort of structure those thoughts a little bit or think about them in a slightly different way to help to expand your thinking” (Lines 363 – 369).

The role of CCs as facilitators of conversations should also be acknowledged at the onset of contracting. In the initial supervision meeting between supervisor and supervisee, the contracting phase was perceived by supervisees as a process wherein they were uncertain about what to discuss and agree upon. For instance, if supervisees do not utilise CCs and if it is their first supervision, when asked "what you want from this space?" they might have contemplated saying:

“Whatever pops into your mind, [and] whatever happens, you are not happy, or your supervisor is not happy. And then you try to talk about it and then [you realised] that actually

I didn't know that will make uncomfortable or that's not what you wanted" (Supervisee 1, lines 402-407).

Supervisees did not underestimate the role of the questions in facilitating the discussion process and considered a possible scenario in which they might overlook certain items during the contracting phase. Therefore, using CCs "*you have direction and is around managing uncertainty and you have direction* " (Supervisee 2, line 164) when navigating the circles. Participants recognised that having clarity on what to address and deciding which topics to discuss would establish a structured approach to contracting and transform difficult conversations into more manageable ones. This, in turn, contributes to laying the foundation for building the supervisory relationship.

The subtheme aims to illustrate how participants reflected on the process facilitated by the use of CCs. However, this process does not appear to be straightforward: "*It's deceiving the circles that look like something very simple but actually very complex, and it can take you to conversations that you know much*" (Supervisor 3, lines 155-156). There is an understanding that contracting is a delicate but complex phase in supervision, and it needs to be thoroughly developed for the future of supervision. Without this, supervision can be perceived as disappointing by supervisees when "*we skated over some of the things and not talk about them in so much depth and [...] it wasn't a very helpful supervisory relationship*" (Supervisee 4, lines 196, 199), (These findings will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

4.4.2 CCs enable discussion of past experiences subtheme

This emerging subtheme sheds light on the role of discussing previous experiences in facilitating the contracting phase. Previous experiences are encapsulated in one of the circles titled 'Belief and Attitude,' which includes questions about past experiences and how they shape expectations for new supervision. All supervisees unanimously agreed that sharing their previous experiences of supervision is vital to facilitate the contracting process. They drew on their own experiences as TEPs in their first year to underscore the importance of sharing past experiences of supervision. Despite the evolution of their experiences over the three years of training, participants appreciated the questions within the circle to “*understand what the person is coming in with and what knowledge of supervision they have*” (Supervisee 4, line 598). This was considered a key feature of CCs, enabling contracting to occur in a more open and honest manner. Participants provided more detailed explanations of why previous experiences are useful for contracting, conceptualising:

“Everyone has their own way of doing supervision, whether it’s the supervisor or the supervisees. Coming alongside each other, how you like this potentially new supervision to run. It is quite challenging because fundamentally you both probably bring a lot of baggage to the conversation, and I think it’s probably really important to be acknowledging those previous experiences” (Supervisee 3, lines 490-505).

The purpose of sharing previous experiences is considered by supervisees as twofold. On one hand, supervisees have the opportunity to reflect, asking themselves: “*what was it from those experiences that I’ve enjoyed? What was helpful and what do you want from that space?*” (Supervisee 1, lines 105-108). On the other hand, supervisees recognised that sharing previous experiences can be useful for supervisors and can support them in facilitating the contracting phase because “*they are new supervisors for that relationship, a different person*

so they'll have their different style as well" (Supervisee 1, lines 109-110). The purpose of sharing previous experience was conceptualised by supervisors as something to *"not underestimate how often it comes into the relationship and how to go about that in a sensitive way with the person"* (Supervisor 3, line 167). This suggests that if the supervisor can collaborate with the supervisee to understand what shaped the supervisee's feelings and thoughts in those experiences, they could support supervisees in using contracting and supervision in a helpful way. It can also be suggested that participants may be influenced by psychoanalytic theories that underpinned the training course they are from and are emphasised in their conceptualisation.

4.4.3 Pragmatics of using CCs subtheme

As participants discussed, the use of CCs is not without its challenges. All participants shared that using CCs during contracting can be emotionally overwhelming due to the number of circles presented in the visual. They expressed feeling pressured to complete and discuss all the information prompted by the questions contained in the CCs visual. Supervisees have been questioning: *"Do I need to explore all of them to make sure that my supervision is going to be really good?"* (Supervisee 3, line 757). Although they found the CCs useful, they perceived them as overwhelming: *"I can't think about this all right now"* (Supervisor 4, 675), suggesting that the amount of information and commitment required may not align with their expectations for contracting. Some areas may be perceived as more important than others. This can pose challenges in the supervisory relationship as contracting may be influenced by the choices that supervisees make. This can also influence the discussion of certain topics that may be consciously avoided to sidestep challenges during the contracting phase as it may depend on *"how they [CCs] were seen and how mis seen]. It's just a prompt, isn't it?"* (Supervisor 3, line 237). For instance, certain topics within the circles may be sensitive (e.g.,

identity), necessitating thorough discussion and exploration, which in turn demands a substantial amount of time: *“It’s really up to your supervisee and your supervisor to facilitate”* (Supervisor 3, line 237). Hence, the content of the discussion and the nature of the supervisory relationship may vary depending on the choices made and how the prompts are perceived by both the supervisee and the supervisor.

The second main challenge described by participants is linked to time constraints inherent in the discussion process. Participants shared that they typically dedicate the first supervision session to contracting using CCs. However, within this allocated time frame, they have noticed that it is difficult, if not practical, to cover all the circles. Supervisors highlighted how these time constraints impact supervisions delivered to EPs. The national, legal, and policy context within which EPs are working has led to an increase in the number of referrals without a corresponding increase in work capacity. With an increased workload for EPs, the time available for supervision may be negatively affected. In this scenario, supervisors believe that it is not possible *“to spend the whole hour on doing CCs when I am not seeing them [EPs] again for however long”* (Supervisor 4, line 636). This was particularly evident for supervisors who were unable to access supervision on a regular basis due to the constraints mentioned above. This type of arrangement differs from supervisions carried out for TEP supervisees.

Despite the regular schedule of supervision due to the commitments and deadlines that TEPs have to meet, their supervision may still be affected by the current situation. This trend was mirrored across all participants' experiences, indicating that quantity often prevails over quality in the supervision experience. This implies a preference for exploring only the circles that are more immediately useful for EPs' practice rather than focusing on developing the

supervisory relationship between supervisor and supervisee by considering all the different areas that comprise the process. To illustrate the reality that supervisees are encountering, Supervisee 2 shared that:

“If you’re in a service where it’s really workload heavy that’s quite a lot of pressure to get that work done and you need your supervisor to help you. It is quite difficult to concentrate on the relational side”. (lines 215-217)

Despite these two main challenges, participants felt that some adjustments could be made to make the process of contracting more efficient and accessible. Participants suggested *“to make it look cleaner, so visually a lit bit less overwhelming.* (Supervisor 3, line 230). The layout is not the only aspect to be addressed. Regarding the content of the CCs and how it is experienced and perceived, participants suggested if: *“it would help to have a little guidance alongside the tool, a pack on how to use the tool. It can be easy to just learn how to use it well”* (Supervisor 3, lines 231-234).

4.5. Theme 3: The content of CCs

This theme encompasses the various contents present within the CCs circles that participants referred to during their utilisation of the tool. Among the diverse contents, three emerged as particularly significant and prevalent across the experiences of the eight participants: learning and content, boundaries, and identity. Each of these content areas engenders specific conversations and plays a distinct role in shaping the supervisory relationship. These will be explored further in the subsequent three subthemes and in the discussion chapter.

4.5.1 Learning and outcomes subtheme

Participants acknowledged the significance of learning and content within the contracting phase. By addressing this content area, supervisees felt they could delineate more clearly the objectives they sought to achieve through their use of supervision. Within the learning and outcomes circle, supervisees considered two key elements. Firstly, they discussed how the this circle helped them conceptualise how they wished learning to occur in supervision, drawing on their past experiences and approaches to task completion. Secondly, they emphasised the importance of remaining open to alternative modes of learning, even if they had initially outlined specific learning preferences. For instance, supervisee 3 remarked that the learning and outcomes circle facilitated an understanding of how:

"We also realise things about work, [and] do like: 'damn, probably need to work on that bit' [...] which might be something that you already need out of supervision. It might be something that comes up in conversation because of using the circle." (Lines 206, 520, 523)

It became evident that while exploring the learning and outcomes circle, there exists a connection between "*learning and reflection*" (Supervisee 3, line 529), aiding in conceptualising how supervisees desire learning to unfold in supervision. Supervisees have the opportunity to articulate their preferences regarding learning modalities in supervision, drawing from experiences of working with clients outside the supervisory context and considering how to translate learning into practical application. This affords them a safe space for reflection, enabling exploration of topics such as understanding the needs of a child and formulating assessments that comprehensively address the underlying causes and impacts of the young person's difficulties.

While supervisees acknowledge the importance of explicitly exploring the learning and outcome circle during the contracting phase, they also raise questions about whether such discussions are necessary. They note that learning naturally occurs irrespective of whether this circle is addressed. Supervisee 4, for instance, suggests that "*learning and outcomes come naturally when you have a good relationship*" (Line 565). This aspect of learning, recognised by supervisees, seems to be inherent in the contracting phase, particularly when the supervisory relationship is well-established and characterised by open communication. It can be likened to a form of intergenerational wisdom-sharing, where being in a relationship with more experienced EPs enables supervisees to learn and grasp various aspects of EPs' practice through the experiences and wisdom of their supervisors. This aspect of learning will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

On the other hand, supervisors have mentioned that understanding the supervisees' views on learning comes from "*what other people [supervisees] have learnt, what helps them and the previous supervision that they like, that can be very helpful*" (Supervisor 3, lines 167-168).

For example:

"Some people like to see models, or things where they come from, and some people ask about linking theories into practice and more reflections, they want to focus on that. Some people have asked for me to focus on certain things in the relationship and think of their role in the relationship" (Supervisor 3, lines 173-177)).

In a more specific example, the learning and outcomes circle:

“Helped to expand what they’ve just like talking about what they’ve learned from other things, but what has helped them learning in previous supervision sessions and their individual kind of way of learning. That’s also helped us to open up conversations about challenges as well, like how does that feel to be, you know, to see, to be challenged”

(Supervisor 3, lines 520-526)

With all these different aspects of learning being shared, supervisors gained insights into how to best support supervisees' learning and how to align with the learning process occurring in supervision. In this instance, the connection with the utility of CCs as a tool became evident.

4.5.2 Boundaries subtheme

Both supervisees and supervisors refer to boundaries as the demarcation lines within which contents about professional relationships and responsibilities between the supervisor and supervisee are explored and contracted. A key concept that emerged from supervisees is that *"Boundaries can cover quite a lot of things [...] different things for different people"*

(Supervisee 4, line 519). The questions contained in the boundaries circle are seen as a way to alleviate the confusion that contracting can evoke, as mentioned in the previous theme.

This provides structure to the supervisory space and develops awareness of the extent to which personal and professional dimensions can intersect in this space.

What emerged as dominant for supervisees was the use of the boundaries circle to delineate the contracting space from other work relationships, such as training, coaching, or therapy, thus determining how to establish supervision as a contained space. For supervisees, boundaries are seen as a means to establish *"what you bring to supervision"* (Supervisee 3, line 18) and to define their role more clearly within that space. Additionally, supervisees

found the boundaries circle helpful for exploring the boundaries within their supervisory relationship. As supervisee 3 reiterated, "*I needed something like the CCs to give it a basis and to work out what I bring to this space and how this space works*" (Line 625). By explicitly delineating the type of supervision space and exploring its differences from other types of work relationships, supervisees gain clarity about the boundaries of this space and define their expectations accordingly.

Similarly, supervisors emphasised the same aspect regarding how the boundaries circle can delineate the distinction between supervision and other professional spaces. However, their conceptualisations are linked to what supervisors can provide in supervision and what supervisees may occasionally seek to contract during the contracting phase. For instance, supervisor 3 shared that:

"It's not reasonable what they are asking because I am a person too, and this is a supervisory relationship, not a therapeutic relationship [...], so I think an additional wall for the supervisor it's to think about maybe boundaries around some of the conversations of what it's possible and what it's not possible" (Lines 185-187).

This principle can also be applicable to other types of supervision, such as inter-professional supervision, where the boundaries circle assisted participants in exchanging "*things they do and might not want to talk about quite explicitly*" (Supervisee 4, line 76).

Another aspect highlighted is how supervisors perceive themselves being positioned by supervisees in the supervisory relationship. Supervisors are keen to use the boundaries circle

to prevent themselves from being seen as the 'saviour' of the supervisory relationship, as they “*can't fix all of it*” in supervision (Supervisor 4, line 185).

Within the boundaries circle, supervisors emphasised the importance of respecting confidentiality and ensuring that supervision remains a safe space for open discussion, particularly within educational psychology practice. Supervisors acknowledged the delicate nature of confidentiality, and the challenges EPs may face when participating in peer group supervision within the same EPS:

“Often especially in an EP team [...] we've always sort of had peer supervision group and they have always kind of been... around and then got cancelled and then started up again. So sometimes you'll be doing supervision with a colleague that you're really good friends with as well or a colleague that you're not good friends with” (Supervisor 1, lines 314-317).

The boundaries' sub-themes have been depicted as complex content in contracting phase, which may have ethical implications for the EPs' practice, as suggested by supervisors.

Professionally, boundaries serve to outline the items that supervisees consider relevant for clarification in their supervision.

4.5.3 Identity subtheme

The subtheme of identity delves into two primary circles within the CCs: the Ethics and Values circle and the Identity circle (refer to Figure 4 for the detailed questions). Participants unanimously found that utilising these circles facilitated exploration of their own identities and spurred discussions on various related topics. These discussions encompassed reflections on 'Social Graces' (Burnham, 2012), considerations of the differences and similarities in

identity between supervisors and supervisees, particularly in the context of client work, and strategies to maintain ethical mindfulness.

Supervisees underscored the effectiveness of employing CCs to facilitate discussions concerning identity, particularly in situations where supervisees and supervisors aimed to address both visible and invisible aspects of identity pertaining to the 'Social Graces'. These discussions typically occurred at the outset of the contracting phase and were believed by participants to significantly influence their supervisory relationship with their supervisors. Specifically, supervisees placed significant importance on CCs for aiding them in recognising elements of their identity such as race, gender, and class, as well as fostering discussions about differences and similarities within the supervisory relationship. There was an acknowledgment that engaging in conversations about identity within the relationship helped in understanding how these differences might impact the relationship between supervisors and supervisees. Participants expressed that CCs served as a reminder to acknowledge these aspects during conversations with their supervisors. This facilitated thoughtful consideration of how to utilise the supervision space to reflect on the experiences and perceptions of identity, both for supervisees, supervisors, and their clients. For instance, supervisee 3 articulated this concept clearly by stating:

“Talk about these aspects with your supervisor because otherwise it would just be a person that you’re kind of talking to. I mean, I could have supervision with you technically and I probably still have like a similar experience in terms of things that I’m making the most of in supervision. But my supervision with you, [...] would be probably different than it would be with another female [...] or something like that” (lines 703-709).

The subtheme not only acknowledges the significance of differences but also recognises the importance of similarities in the supervisory relationship between supervisors and supervisees. However, exploring these similarities is not always a straightforward process, as supervisees noted. They shared their understanding that sometimes, it is through delving into discussions about differences that the similarities between supervisors and supervisees can be uncovered. It can be argued that there is a transformative aspect to discussing differences, which may facilitate the exploration of hidden similarities that would not emerge without open and honest conversations. As articulated by supervisee 2:

“With my last supervisor, we spoke a lot about differences in the beginning as we went through there were just so many more similarities, so much sameness that when we came to the end of our supervision and brought back up the differences, I just kind of dismissed them because they just didn’t seem relevant” (Lines 91-94).

Another common theme in the dataset was supervisees contemplating the influence of discussing the contents of the two circles on their role as EPs, reflecting on questions such as: *“what about identity is interacting and sort of constructs me as an EP”* (Supervisee 3, line 161). In articulating aspects of identity during the contracting phase, participants acknowledged the CCs as a helpful tool for understanding themselves, their identity, and their role in practice. This process may also involve sharing personal experiences, including those from one's own family and the impact they have on the role of an EP. For instance, Supervisee 4 reflected on:

“How that plays a role in how I take up my EP role and the blind spots I have, so who am I more sensitive to what cases do I go over my boundaries? What cases do I stay away or avoid because it’s too emotional?” (Lines 676-679)

Discussing aspects of identity using CCs during the contracting phase anticipates how exploring identity will impact EPs’ practice in the long term because:

“If it does need to be spoken about or if you want to bring things which are related to your identity or the identity of your clients, that feels like a space where it can be brought because you’ve already brought it once because you did it in the CCs. Like it’s now been named, it feels less pressure to bring it” (Supervisee 4, lines 679-682)).

The above explanation also implies how the use of CCs makes contracting accessible, as explored in the previous theme. To utilise the discussions and reflections made during the contracting phase, supervisees need support in exploring which aspects of identity or social graces to discuss. Supervisors acknowledged their role in accompanying supervisees in this exploration. For example, when the circle of identity is chosen, this is *“led almost by the supervisee in terms of which ones [aspects of identity] are drawn on and which ones are allowed to explore”* (Supervisor 3, line 22). The understanding of identity is not a one-off stage but a continual process:

“Having a supervisor that knows you well and knows your experience [...] it's about the supervisor knowing you and knowing what you bring. Being in a helping profession, we’ve all come into it for specific reasons, and those reasons you need to be in a psychologically

safe space to be able to think about them and have them challenged. So you know how they are impacting you” (Supervisee 4, line 22).

The data suggested that the use of CCs was complemented by other supervision models for contracting. For example, the transcultural activity by Soni et al. (2022) was utilised to complement the use of the circle about Identity:

“The identity [circle] properly surfaces it and names it [...], and the transcultural activity then allows us to put in a table, we know we are talking about this, a little bit closer and then connect with these similarities and differences more. It stops just being naming the similarities and differences, it makes it more, more personal, more stories, and experiences” (Supervisor 3, lines 212-216).

However, participants highlighted how discussions about visible and invisible aspects of identity may have presented challenges in the exploration process of contracting, particularly in established SR. It was suggested that when supervisors and supervisees have already worked together and developed a working relationship, visible characteristics of one's identity can lead to assumptions that may affect the supervisory relationship. For example, supervisee 1 shared how *“visible aspects of identity made some assumptions about what the important ones are for me such as ‘you come from a different country, or speaking English as an additional language, or like your culture’” (Lines 170-173).* This raised questions about whether supervisee 1's visible aspects of identity represented to the supervisor *“the main aspect of identity”* rather than asking, *“What social graces do you think would be helpful for us to keep in mind in our supervision?” (Lines 180-183).* Despite the content and prompts in the circles, it seemed that personal assumptions influenced the supervisory relationship,

leading to a closure in the supervisor's curiosity to understand the supervisee's identity further because "*the assumption was made from the beginning*" (Supervisee 1, line 196).

Consequently, Supervisee 1 felt there was no opportunity to openly share other aspects of their identity, creating a sense of disappointment that may have impacted the supervisory relationship. This will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

4.6. Theme 4: CCs are a useful tool

Participants have recognised CCs as a tool to use in supervision and to facilitate the contracting phase. Various connotations have been employed to define CCs, all of which emphasise their utility. These definitions highlight the practical aspect of CCs, which are prominent not only in their use within educational psychology practice, but also in different types of supervision that EPs can offer, such as inter-professional supervision.

4.6.1 What type of tool are CCs? subtheme

All participants have characterised CCs as a tool, yet they have employed different definitions and chosen various connotations to describe what CCs are and how they function in contracting. Despite the diversity in definitions, they all convey a similar meaning: CCs are a valuable tool. These descriptions have aided in understanding how participants conceptualize the tool and their initial perceptions of its functions, which will be further explored in a different subtheme later on. Participants have likened CCs to figurative images to elucidate the tool's nature. For instance, CCs were compared to "*like a door, an open door, that you can go to different spaces, that you wouldn't go [...] thinking to go when in the relationship*" (Supervisor 3, line 24). By employing these analogies, participants aimed to illustrate CCs as a tool that plays a crucial role in unravelling the entire process of contracting and ultimately in building the supervisory relationship.

Both supervisees and supervisors have observed the utility of CCs, noting that they provide access to topics in an open manner that may not otherwise be explored in the supervisory relationship. They also remarked that CCs are comprehensive, containing different topics for exploration during contracting that may not be easily considered. For supervisees, this access fosters curiosity to explore the meanings of various topics: "*Something coming up and you're not sure, it's a nice prompt [...] maybe if I answer some of these questions, I'll be able to work out what it is*" (Supervisee 3, lines 391-393). For supervisors, CCs are viewed as a collaborative tool that guides them in initiating conversations about different topics or "*questions into the space that might not be thought about in a more traditional way*" (Supervisor 4, line 102). Supervisors recognised that while CCs are useful, they are not simplistic models or frameworks like the contract formats provided by the BPS. They explained that "*It feels different from a standard contract or contracting arrangement*" (Supervisor 4, line 96). In this regard, supervisors discussed how CCs are not a 'tick-the-box' list where tasks need to be completed; instead, participants tend to focus on exploring the contents, ensuring that the most relevant circles and their contents are discussed.

When describing CCs as a useful tool, supervisees also expressed an empowering connotation of the tool. They discussed how using the tool has enabled them to share their views during contracting and choose which circle/content to discuss, without being led by their supervisors during the contracting phase. The supervisees' accountability in selecting the circles is also acknowledged by the supervisors, who noted:

“The possibility to think about which one is more important for them [the supervisees], give time to think about them, and then they can use them in different times in the relationship and which one they would like to explore more” (Supervisor 3, line 49-50).

Supervisees felt accountable for introducing CCs and making choices about which circle/content to bring in, especially when their supervisors were less familiar with the tool. Additionally, they perceived empowerment in being able to bring and share the tool even when their supervisors were unaware of it during supervision. This allowed supervisees to suggest, *“look, this is what we use, can we use the CCs?”* (Supervisee 2, line 43). Supervisees recognised that having received a lecture on contracting helped them understand the context of supervision in which CCs could be used and shared, as discussed in the previous theme explanation on understanding the contracting phase. The empowerment gained from this knowledge allowed supervisees to take an active role in introducing and utilising CCs in their supervisory relationship.

4.6.2 CCs make contracting accessible subtheme

Participants valued the circles present in CCs as they serve as a key framework for comprehensive discussion. They described the visual aspect of the circles as practical, as each circle corresponds to a topic of discussion. This visual organisation supports participants in selecting and exploring topics and initiating conversations, thereby avoiding overlooking any important content. Both supervisees and supervisors noted that each circle contains unique information and prompts. Participants found these questions and prompts helpful for their reflections during contracting. As supervisee 3 noted: *“You might pick a circle to talk about and then your supervisor might pick a circle to talk about or it might be that you try and discuss sort of why that circle was relevant to you [...]”* (Supervisee 3, line 25).

Furthermore, supervisees felt that understanding the content of CCs and their prompts would assist them in navigating meetings when unsure of what content to bring and what to expect from their supervisors. Participants described the visuals of CCs as *"less task focused [...]. There is something about it because it's their circles. It's not linear. It's circular. I think it seems to draw out more areas to think about than a more traditional contract"* (Supervisor 4, lines 78-84). Supervisors recognise the importance of the circles as a foundational element for structuring the contracting space and facilitating conversations about the process. They contrasted this with the traditional approach of using a table-based contract format, where each step is systematically discussed, emphasising that the visual representation of the circle encourages a more comprehensive exploration of the supervisory process. Indeed, supervisor 4 added that CCs *"bring to other questions into the [supervisory] space that might not be thought about in a more traditional contract"*. (Line 107).

Supervisors also reflected on how the visuals of CCs helped them capture what they covered during the contracting phase, with content that both supervisors and supervisees agreed to explore. They perceived the visuals as a means to document in writing *"what the discussion has come about and what we've agreed on"* (Supervisor 2, line 266). This was considered helpful by participants as they could later refer to it or *"adapt it if we need it"* (Supervisor 2, line 293) and review the circles discussed.

Another aspect of the subtheme relates to the significance that both supervisees and supervisors attribute to the learning potential of using a visual tool for their contracting. Participants perceived the use of CCs as a visual tool that facilitates the learning process by engaging with and responding to the questions presented in each circle. As noted by

supervisee 4, "*Even if you do skate over some of the things like I did [...], the learning kind of happens due to the challenging and questioning that you get*" (Line 507, 668). Interestingly, supervisees did not view the learning process through the questions posed to them negatively, regardless of the varied contents contained within the circles.

Supervisors highlighted a specific visual component that they deemed easy for supervisees to comprehend—the circle concerning the process, which pertains to the logistical aspects of how supervision will be organised. For instance, Supervisor 2 elaborated, "*it could be how often we meet, where we meet, [...] if it's virtual or face-to-face*" (Line 355). Supervisors noted that this circle is often underestimated by supervisees, who may simply think, "*it'll be fine,*" and that they'll "*just deal with it*" (Supervisor 4, line 219). The data from supervisees largely corroborates this observation, with only one supervisee mentioning the significance of the 'process' circle for the development of the supervisory process, suggesting that it provides structure and guidance. However, the supervisee acknowledged that this aspect might be considered less important compared to other circles. Therefore, it could be inferred that this circle serves to manage supervisees' expectations. For supervisors, effectively utilising this content enables them to assume a role as containers within the supervisory relationship. This concept will be further explored and discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

4.6.3 Applicability of CCs in different types of supervision subtheme

Another aspect to consider regarding the usefulness of the tool is its versatility. Indeed, both supervisees and supervisors have acknowledged that CCs can be utilised across various levels of supervision, including inter-professional supervision.

Supervisees have acknowledged the utility of CCs across various types of supervision encountered during their training as trainees, including placement supervision, sessions with their personal tutors at university, and interactions with their research supervisors. In each distinct supervisory setting, supervisees found CCs valuable for tailoring their use to address the specific needs and dynamics inherent to that particular type of supervision. However, they also noted that the emphasis placed on different aspects of the CCs varied depending on the supervisory relationship. As one supervisee 4 articulated, "*CCs are used differently. We still go through all the bubbles (circles), but people always pick up on different things, and different things are important [in] different relationships*" (Line 43-45).

To illustrate this adaptability in practice, Supervisee 4 shared the type of experience of using CCs in research supervision. Supervisee 4 explained that while there was a greater focus on outcomes and tasks due to the nature of research supervision, discussions also encompassed challenges such as addressing issues of race and racism within the research. However, Supervisee 4 recognised that navigating such challenges required sensitivity to the power dynamics inherent in the supervisory relationship. As supervisee 4 aptly stated, "*the challenge might not always be appropriate at certain times when we're thinking [about] the kind of power dynamic between each other*" (Lines 61-64). Consequently, the selection and emphasis placed on specific circles within the CCs may vary based on the choices made by both supervisees and supervisors, resulting in diverse outcomes in the contracting process.

Supervisors acknowledged the versatility of CCs within the context of EP practice, although they primarily focused on utilising CCs during inter-professional supervisions, particularly with school staff at both individual and group supervision levels. According to supervisors, CCs served as a valuable tool for explaining the concept and structure of supervision to school SENCOs and safeguarding leads, aiding in clarifying the scope of supervision and the

topics it may cover. As expressed by Supervisor 1, CCs were “*a way to help explain what supervision is, what it might look like and what things might cover*” (Supervisor 1, line 107).

Similarly, supervisors found CCs beneficial for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) practitioners, enabling them to grasp the anticipated dynamics and content of their supervision sessions. Supervisor 3 highlighted that CCs played a role paying attention to their nuances and to “*how carefully contract a relationship they [school staff] need to begin*” (Supervisor 3, line 127).

Supervisors emphasised the challenge of applying CCs in inter-professional settings, particularly due to the demanding nature of the work environment for school staff. For instance, SENCOs were noted as preferring “*to just get on with talking about some of the issues that had in mind*” (Supervisor 1, line 409). This scenario parallels the experience of supervising EPs, where supervisors often find themselves “*busy, we’re busy, busy, my colleagues who I supervise coming to me with like: ‘how do we do this?’*” (Supervisor 2, lines, 499-505). Supervisor 2 reiterated the importance of preserving the investment made during the contracting phase, underscoring the need for EPs to actively engage in establishing the supervisory relationship within the allotted time frame.

4.7 Theme 5: The Contracting Phase

This theme encompasses participants' perceptions of what the contracting phase entails and comprises. Overall, it is regarded as a designated space where matters pertaining to the utilisation of supervision can be deliberated and agreed upon between the supervisor and supervisee dyad.

4.7.1 Participants' Understanding of Contracting subtheme

Contracting is viewed as the initial and fundamental stage in the utilisation of supervision in practice. Participants recognise its significance in establishing this process prior to commencing supervision, ensuring mutual understanding of expectations between supervisors and supervisees. Understanding these expectations is particularly crucial for supervisees, as it provides clarity on the approach they wish to adopt in their interactions with supervisors. One supervisee remarked, "*it is an opportunity for both to share their expectations of what supervision is*" (Supervisee 1, lines 9-10). Consequently, participants acknowledge that contracting provides a platform for the exchange of perspectives between supervisees and supervisors, leading to the formulation of an action plan.

Viewing the contracting phase as the initial stride into the supervisory relationship, participants perceive it as "*that idea of these really important conversations happening before you enter supervision [...]*" (Supervisor 1, line 10). Expectations are not the sole considerations at the onset of the contracting phase. Supervisors also deem it pertinent to establish ground rules, aiming to establish a mutual understanding of how to cultivate the supervisory relationship and ultimately address "*how supervision could be or should be*" (Supervisee 3, line 476). Thus, participants' comprehension of contracting embodies a sense of purpose that must be fulfilled to ensure continued use of supervision in a manner that aligns with supervisees' needs. Supervisors characterise the contracting phase as "*the way to protect and preserve it to make sure that lots of different aspects have been discussed [...]* before beginning" (Supervisor 4, line 13). In this context, contracting is likened to a '*sacred relationship*' (Supervisor 1, line 11) which emphasises how this phase cannot be avoided or modified, rather it is something that needs to be cultivated and protected as it something being delicate, confidential and private, to be grounded within supervision and give structure to it.

Participants acknowledged that the term "*contracting is a funny term because it might imply something is needed, legal, something that could be quite related to relationship*"

(Supervisor 3, line 4-5). Indeed, participants described how the use of the term "contracting" can imply a need for negotiation and potentially affect the relationship. With this understanding, participants likened contracting to an "*agreement between two or more people*" (Supervisor 4, line 67) regarding various aspects of the supervisory relationship that is being established. The content agreed upon during contracting may vary and extend beyond the aforementioned expectations, encompassing "*boundaries, limits, and focus of the supervisory space*" (Supervisor 4, 16). Differences in content during contracting were categorised as both "*practical and less practical*" aspects (Supervisee 1, line 12).

Additionally, supervisors considered the challenge of implementing contracting in inter-professional supervision with school staff. They noted how introducing contracting in this context can be difficult and how the term may evoke a negotiation phase where supervisees are required to fulfil certain tasks for them.

However, supervisors emphasised their tendency to document the items discussed and agreed upon in written form. This practice seems to underscore the significance of contracting, providing a tangible resource for reference as evidence of the agreements made, akin to the negotiation process involved in a contract. In discussing the concept of agreement, participants explored a sense of mutual responsibility between supervisee and supervisor to ensure the formation of a constructive relationship. There was a shared sense of inquiry among participants regarding how to cultivate the supervisory relationship. For instance, Supervisor 4 queried if, "*are we making that [contracting] very honest, very intentional and very explicit?*" (Line 16). The notion of accountability emerged as a recurring theme among both supervisees and supervisors.

Another element emerged concerning the emotional impact that the contracting phase can have. Specifically, supervisees observed that the term “contracting” may evoke feelings of overwhelm, particularly if they are unsure of what to expect during this phase. Despite its recognised importance and role at the forefront of the supervisory relationship, this uncertainty can lead to uncomfortable emotions that, if left unexplored and unacknowledged, may negatively impact the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, it suggests that participants may associate the term "contracting" with a task to be completed, potentially diverting attention from the process of building the relationship between supervisee and supervisor.

4.7.2 The impact of training on contracting practice subtheme

Supervisees have found the introductory lectures on supervision to be beneficial for grasping the concept of contracting and its significance. In particular, the lectures provided valuable insights for TEPs in understanding what to anticipate during the contracting process.

Participants noted that the training sessions aided them in recognising "*how helpful it was*" (Supervisee 4, line 136) in facilitating the establishment of the supervisory relationship with their supervisors.

Similarly, supervisors found the CPD training course on supervision to be enlightening, as it heightened their awareness of the role of supervision in educational psychology practice and the significance of contracting in developing the supervisory relationship. The training served as an eye-opener for them, shedding light on the importance of discussing needs and determining effective communication strategies. As expressed by Supervisor 1, the training "*really opens the eyes to this whole idea of talking about needs, what works, what doesn't work*" (Line 7). Attendees of the course shared how it prompted them to take the use of

contracting in supervision more seriously, leading to a more thoughtful approach in the supervision they offer. This newfound awareness is contrasted with their previous experiences of supervision, which were likened to line management with a focus on tasks to be completed. Supervisors also noted the differences in the supervisory relationship when contracting was not thoroughly utilised. Reflecting on their past experiences, they expressed doubts about the effectiveness of supervision that lacked a comprehensive contracting phase. Supervisor 2 acknowledged that supervision "*was probably less effective*" (Line 688), emphasising the importance of the contracting phase in supervision.

4.7.3 The experience of re-contracting subtheme

Participants have acknowledged the significance of reviewing the initial contracting agreements and have emphasised the value of the review phase. For both supervisees and supervisors, revisiting the agreed-upon terms makes the contracting phase a dynamic process. However, supervisees seem to place greater importance on re-contracting. They have discussed the benefits of re-contracting, particularly when initiating a new supervisory relationship with a different supervisor. Despite the initial contracting at the onset of the supervisory relationship perspectives between supervisees and supervisors may diverge over time. As expressed by supervisee 1:

"You might come with these [...] different aspects that you are setting at the beginning, and you've got an idea in your mind of how it's going to run and what means in practice. But actually, your supervisor might think something else" (Lines 46-50)

Supervisees also emphasised the importance of re-contracting, especially in cases where their previous experiences of supervision were not positive. They highlighted how re-contracting instils a sense of accountability, allowing them to address aspects of the supervisory

relationship that did not work well for them and to reflect on other relevant topics. For instance, supervisees actively utilised re-contracting to introduce topics that were not previously explored but were important for discussion at the outset of the supervisory relationship. As articulated by supervisee 4: “*Another good thing about contracting, you can always re-contract [...] and be like ‘well, actually maybe last time we didn’t touch so much on ethics or difference. Maybe we can think a bit about that now’*” (Lines 106-109).

Supervisees also recognised that the agreements made during contracting may not remain static throughout the supervisory relationship, owing to various factors. For instance, participants explained that “*however long you have contracted with your supervisor, [...] it will change, depending on what you’re bringing*” (Supervisee 4, line 935). Hence, supervisees acknowledge the dynamic nature of contracting and the necessity for re-contracting, particularly due to changes in the needs of children and young people, which may influence their work in practice and, consequently, the quality of their supervisory relationship with their supervisors, leading to a re-evaluation of expectations.

All participants discussed the frequency of re-contracting, although their emphasis varied based on the type of supervision and the perceived usefulness of more frequent re-contracting. Supervisors recognised that the evaluation of re-contracting frequency depends on the type of supervision offered, acknowledging that at the university “*there is no space for re-contracting [...] because ‘the role of the relationship is about one year’*” (Supervisor 3, line 49). Instead, within the EPS there are “*more opportunities to bring them again*” (Supervisor 3, line 50).

On the other hand, supervisees questioned whether re-contracting too frequently might be redundant. They expressed varying opinions, ranging from "*you can't contract every supervision*" (Supervisee 4, line 854) to considering whether re-contracting should occur "*every month or every term [...] to see if anything changed or anything needs to re-negotiating*" (Supervisee 3, line 862-868). However, all supervisees seemed to share the common experience of noticing changes in the supervisory relationship over time. As a result, they recognised the long-term need to review what has changed and examine the factors influencing these changes in the supervisory relationship.

4.8 Reflexivity

The process of RTA underscores the significance of reflexivity throughout all phases of data analysis. The researcher found it beneficial to maintain a research diary, wherein reflections on the process were documented. An illustration of excerpts taken during the analytic process can be found in Appendix P.

The researcher has acknowledged the influence of their personal experiences with supervision and contracting on the analysis of the collected data. Specifically, when CCs were depicted positively, these instances were perceived as validating the researcher's own experiences. The decision to delve into this research stemmed from the author's favourable encounters with CCs in supervision, juxtaposed with less favourable experiences in previous supervisory roles. Consequently, it was imperative for the researcher to maintain a degree of objectivity, particularly during the interview phase, to mitigate the potential development of social desirability bias in participants' responses. Additionally, some participants were former colleagues of the researcher, potentially predisposed to contribute data that aligns with the researcher's perspective. Therefore, the researcher remained vigilant about this dynamic when

conducting the semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility in conversation development.

The researcher is currently completing doctoral training to become an EP at an institution that prioritises psychoanalytic and systemic theories. While it may not be feasible to precisely define the theoretical basis underpinning CCs, it can be observed that the tool is influenced by psychoanalytic and systemic thinking, as well as by the RMSAAP model of supervision (Kennedy et al., 2018). The researcher acknowledged this influence and took it into account reflectively during both the interview and analysis stages. This was ensured by considering various theoretical models of supervision within EP practice, aiming to develop an understanding of the phenomenon from different theoretical perspectives rather than solely relying on the theoretical perspective from the training course. This approach enabled the researcher to evaluate the strengths and limitations of using the tool in the present study.

The researcher identified personal experiences that mirrored some of the difficulties encountered by supervisees during contracting, particularly within the subtheme of '*CCs as a useful tool*', focusing on the role of supervisors' assumptions in the supervisory relationship. The researcher had first-hand experience in a supervisory relationship where supervisors held assumptions regarding personal characteristics, prompting important reflections on these experiences and their potential impact on the research. The researcher found these difficulties particularly significant during the data analysis phase and questioned whether their own preconceptions were influenced by the way these difficulties were described by participants. To mitigate any potential projection of their experiences onto the research, the researcher reflected on both the differences and similarities of the difficulties presented by supervisees.

This aspect of the research journey served as a motivator for the researcher to delve deeper into the data and overcome moments of doubt about the research's progress. The researcher harbours a strong passion for the concept of supervisory relationship and its associated potential for personal growth throughout the three years of training. This passion motivated the researcher to ensure the progression of the research and to choose dissemination avenues that could hopefully prove useful to others.

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative findings obtained from the study. Five themes identified through RTA were discussed, supported by quotes extracted from the interviews' transcripts. These findings will be further examined in Chapter 5.

5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter synthesises the findings from the preceding chapter to address the research questions formulated in this study. The examination of these findings is situated within the framework of the literature reviewed and the theoretical foundations outlined in the introduction chapter. Both the strengths and limitations of the research are discussed, along with their impact on interpreting the findings. Furthermore, the dissemination of the research is considered, alongside suggestions for future research directions. The discussion also delves into the implications for future EP practice. Finally, comprehensive conclusions are drawn from this research.

5.2 Summary of findings

The findings that were explored in chapter four are discussed in relation to the research questions that are outlined for this research. These are:

RQ1) What are the experiences of supervisors and supervisees concerning contracting and the utilisation of CCs?

- a) What are the primary features associated with the use of CCs?
- b) Which specific areas or 'circles' within CCs have been employed?
- c) Are there any contracting models that supervisors or supervisees drawn on their use in supervision?

RQ2) How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the use of CCs?

- a) Which aspects of using CCs do supervisors and supervisees find particularly beneficial or challenging?

b) In what ways do CCs enhance or detract from the overall contracting experience?

RQ3) What influence do the utilisation of CCs exert on the experience and practice of contracting among supervisors and supervisees?

a) How do CCs impact the overall supervisory relationship?

The findings are further examined in light of existing literature and theories on contracting, as elaborated in subsequent sections. A separate section is dedicated to discussing the strengths and limitations of the current study, along with implications for educational psychology practice. This separation aims to provide clarity and transparency regarding these aspects.

The CCs' impact on the Supervisory relationship

Participants discussed how the use of CCs helps to establish a contained and safe space, enabling supervisors to facilitate the process while supervisees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. However, during the contracting phase, the power dynamic was perceived as imbalanced, with supervisees disclosing while supervisors maintained a neutral position.

CCs enable the process of contracting

CCs are defined as a facilitator of conversations on topics that might be avoided, ensuring that valuable discussions are not side-lined by avoidance mechanisms. However, the sheer number of circles may be overwhelming, provoking feelings of being inundated with prompts. The time required to explore each circle was deemed time-consuming. Suggestions were offered to address these challenges, including streamlining the number of circles to create a more concise version.

The Content of CCs

The RTA unveiled boundaries, identity, and learning outcomes as main contents. Participants emphasised the significance of respecting boundaries, especially regarding confidentiality, and underscored how CCs can aid supervisees and supervisors in defining their roles within the supervisory relationship. CCs were seen as tools for facilitating discussions on the similarities and differences between supervisors and supervisees.

CCs as a useful tool

This theme explores participants' conceptualisation of the CCs, emphasising their practical significance. CCs' visual representations enhances understanding of various content within different circles. CCs were described as versatile across different types of supervision, noting variations based on the dynamics of the supervisory relationship.

The contracting phase

The theme of the contracting phase highlights participants' understanding of its significance in supervision within educational psychology practice. Participants reflected on the meaning of contracting, emphasising its legal implications, which may shape supervisees' and supervisors' approach to this stage.

5.3 Findings in context

5.3.1 What are the experiences of supervisors and supervisees of contracting and the utilisation of CCs?

Participants described the contracting phase as being developed with the main guidance of CCs' prompts in their experience. This research question encompasses two aspects of a phenomenon: the general use of contracting in supervision and the specific use of CCs. A variety of responses were generated to address this question. Initially, all participants shared positive experiences regarding the inclusion of the contracting phase in their supervision.

Participants expressed similar views on the importance of this initial phase before delving into more specific topics of discussion, such as case discussion. In the fifth theme, '*the contracting phase*,' sharing expectations and reaching agreements on how to meet supervisees' needs were key elements explored by supervisees during the contracting phase. This aligns with Sills (2012), who views the contracting phase as the preliminary stage of supervision—a foundation where both supervisors and supervisees discuss their expectations of each other.

Secondly, participants explained contracting as 'an investment', suggesting a practical process for initiating the contracting phase and building the supervisory relationship. This contradicts findings from Dunsmuir et al. (2015) regarding the use of contracting in educational psychology practice. While a high percentage of EPs surveyed found contracting useful, a very low percentage reported having experience with contracting or using a contracting tool in their supervision. This disparity between the current research and previous studies is also consistent with reports indicating that the use of contracting is a 'patchy experience' (Scaife, 2009). Although Dunsmuir et al.'s (2015) study differs from the current research in terms of methodology—employing surveys with a large number of EPs surveyed in the UK—it highlights a discrepancy between theoretical recommendations in the literature, which suggest that contracting is useful, and actual practice, where there is limited experience with contracting or the use of tools and models. This suggests that internal factors related to the supervisory relationship, as well as external social, political and policy factors, may inhibit the effective use of contracting (Kennedy et al., 2018).

While supervisees perceived the contracting phase as foundational for exploring essential elements in the supervisory relationship, supervisors held mixed opinions about its use. Some

perceive the contracting phase as 'sacred' to the relationship, an integral step that cannot be altered or omitted in supervision, thus recognising its importance in establishing the supervisory relationship. This perspective aligns with theories proposed by Carroll (2004), which conceptualise contracting as the crucial initial phase in supervision, laying the groundwork for the development of supervision. However, contracting was also likened to a legal contract, wherein both supervisees and supervisors are required to decide and agree upon specific elements such as boundaries, rules, and responsibilities within the Supervisory relationship. This legal connotation was also discussed by Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) hypothesising that the term 'contracting' might prompt participants to envision an actual contract, possibly feeling compelled to address aspects such as rule agreement, leading to discomfort and potential avoidance of the contracting process altogether (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013).

The sub-theme on reviewing contracting lends further credibility to participants' positive experiences with contracting. Participants regarded this phase as relevant in supervision for assessing whether aspects of the supervisory relationship require further discussion or adjustments. Interestingly, supervisees perceived contracting as dynamic, suggesting that elements in the supervisory relationship may vary or require revisiting over time, whether pertaining to specific areas of educational psychology practice or aspects of the supervisory relationship itself. This conceptualisation aligns with theories that view contracting as a reciprocal and ongoing process (Scaife, 2009), acknowledging that the supervisory relationship cannot remain static or immutable. However, the data did not provide clarity on how often reviewing contracting should occur. Nevertheless, participants considered the possibility of re-contracting within the supervision year. Supervisors saw the items discussed in the contracting phase as reminders to revisit with TEPs, given that such supervision

typically lasts a year. Conversely, re-contracting with EPs was perceived as more flexible, as supervisory arrangements may extend beyond a year. Interestingly, in their research on EPs' experiences with contracting, Soni and Callicott (2023) recommended the use of mini-contracting sessions in each supervision session. They argued that this approach helps supervisors ensure that the needs of supervisees are consistently addressed. While the authors suggest that this approach can provide structure to the supervisory relationship, there is a question regarding whether evaluating the supervisees' needs may resemble agenda setting, wherein the focus is primarily on the work of EPs or TEPs, rather than on evaluating the supervisory processes themselves. Despite this plausible suggestion, further investigation into the frequency of re-contracting would be beneficial to understand potential mechanisms that supervisees and supervisors have experienced with the use of an ongoing contracting.

All participants attributed their understanding of both the contracting process and the use of CCs to the CPD training course on supervision for EPs and the university lecture on supervision for TEPs. These training sessions provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the use of CCs, underpinned by psychological theories. Supervisors reported feeling more comfortable and prepared to initiate the contracting phase with the use of CCs following these informative sessions. Specifically, supervisors viewed the use of CCs as an 'investment' in their supervisory practice. The lecture on supervision helped supervisees feel 'prepared' by providing them with insight into what to expect. This likely reduced their sense of 'unknown' when encountering explanations of supervision within EP practice and the use of CCs. These findings extend the theoretical framework proposed by Scaife (2009), highlighting how the implicit content of contracting becomes explicit. Consequently, supervisees gain awareness of their needs and expectations, while supervisors acquire clear knowledge ready to be shared with their supervisees.

What are the primary features associated with the use of CCs?

The aim of this question was to investigate the main characteristics of CCs as a novel tool, aiming for a better understanding of its purpose and utility. The fourth theme, '*CCs as a useful tool*,' sheds light on this inquiry. Specifically, the subtheme '*CCs make contracting accessible*' underscores the practical aspects of using visual representations or circles, a key feature associated with all participants. They found it beneficial to examine each circle separately, as each corresponds to specific themes and areas of discussion. Supervisees are empowered to select specific circles with the support of their supervisors to expand their discussions. This practical aspect of facilitating discussions through visuals made the discussion of contracting accessible for supervisees, while supervisors found guidance through the content of the circles.

Despite the absence of existing research on the content and use of CCs, it can be hypothesised that the organisation of CCs follows a similar modality to the conceptualisation proposed by Hewson and Carroll (2016). As described in section 1.9 of the Introduction chapter, each circle corresponds to a specific supervisory space, providing examples for discussion. If this structure is considered, the use of CCs may reflect the model proposed by Hewson and Carroll (2016), wherein questions and prompts are inserted into each circle to facilitate discussions on each theme. In this view, the purpose of using CCs to develop discussions is preserved and maintained throughout the contracting phase. Additionally, participants shared how the ultimate goal of using CCs is to contract areas that facilitate supervisees' learning and challenge their thinking with the support of supervisors through the prompts of the CCs. This aim aligns with Hewson and Carroll's (2016) theory, which suggests that exploring each relational space/room serves the purpose of learning.

Consequently, through discussions of the areas outlined in the circles, supervisors and supervisees have the opportunity to learn how to utilise the supervisory space and navigate the supervisory relationship.

Within the subtheme of '*CCs make contracting accessible*', participants offered another response to the research question regarding the primary features of CCs. One aspect of the CCs' content, specifically related to the category of 'process', was deemed relevant by participants at the outset of their supervisory relationship. This content encompasses questions aimed at assisting supervisors and supervisees in determining the practicalities of their relationship, such as the frequency and duration of sessions, as well as logistical details regarding where and when they will occur. This underscores a focus on the practical aspects of the contracting process to ensure the smooth initiation and completion of supervision.

This is consistent with a portion of the content from the Cyclical model of supervision proposed by Wosket and Page (2001), which outlines a framework comprising five cycles to be utilised within and between sessions. One of these cycles is represented by the 'contract,' which is further subdivided into five mini steps, including one termed 'ground-rules' (Wosket & Page, 2001). In this section, the authors emphasise the importance of developing a shared understanding of the procedural aspects of supervision, echoing sentiments expressed by supervisors in this study. The mention of contracting ground-rules by supervisors may suggest that their practice was influenced by this theoretical model, prompting them to incorporate this step when contracting with supervisees. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Cyclical model of supervision is referenced in the DECP Guidelines for practice for EPs on supervision by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010) as one of the models utilised by EPs.

Therefore, it is plausible that supervisors were influenced by this paper and its recommendations.

However, supervisors have also noted that the circle of 'process' contained in the CCs is often underestimated by supervisees, as it is considered less relevant compared to other circles during the process of establishing the supervisory relationship. This observation was supported by data collected from supervisees, as only one supervisee reported ensuring that the circle of 'process' is thoroughly explored during the contracting phase. The disparity between supervisors' and supervisees' views and experiences regarding contracting practicalities can be interpreted by hypothesising that there is a discrepancy between the theoretical understanding of contracting and the application of models and frameworks to support their practical implementation. This recurring pattern aligns with the trend observed in Dunsmuir et al.'s (2015) findings, which suggested a 'patchy' use of supervision within educational psychology practice, raising questions about the mechanisms through which contracting is practically developed.

The subtheme *'Applicability of CCs in different types of supervision,'* within the theme *'CCs as a useful tool,'* explored how CCs could be utilised across various types of supervision, highlighting their versatility. Consistent with the literature indicating that different types of supervision are undertaken within educational psychology practice, including supervision of other EPs, supervision of TEPs, and supervision of other professionals (Dunsmuir et al., 2010), participants discussed how CCs can serve as a tool that fulfils the functions of supervision across these contexts. Furthermore, the use of CCs was reported to be beneficial for inter-professional supervision, where CCs facilitated the supervisory relationship with school staff such as SENCOs or safeguarding leads. Supervisors expressed positivity

regarding the use of contracting to underscore the commitment of professionals to the contracting process and, ultimately, to establishing the supervisory relationship. The literature reviewed also suggests that commitment to the contracting phase is demonstrated by addressing the practicalities of the supervisory space (Kennedy & Laverick, 2019). This aligns with the findings of the current research, indicating that addressing contracting practicalities is pertinent in both individual supervision sessions for EPs and in inter-professional supervision sessions facilitated by EPs.

Participants defined contracting for educational psychology supervision as constrained by pressures that lead EP supervisees to prioritise addressing cases and issues in their practice rather than focusing on the supervisory relationship. This aligns with the reviewed literature, which prompts reflections on how to prioritise supervision within an educational psychology service and its practice (Ayres et al., 2015, p.27), suggesting the influence of social factors and work factors on educational psychology practice and its impact on EPs' practice.

Therefore, there is a need to consider these factors as potential influences on the use of supervision for EPs. However, this research found that the use of contracting was perceived by participants as an investment of time that may help maintain supervision as an integral part of EP work.

Which specific areas or 'circles' within CCs have been employed?

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews proved valuable in understanding which contents or circles of the CCs have been utilised and in advocating for their potential use within educational psychology. The theme *'The Content of CCs'* and its subtheme *'Identity'* and *'Boundaries'* offer insight into the main circles that supervisors and supervisees drew upon during their contracting phase. Before delving into a discussion about the primary

contents of the circles, a striking observation noted by the researcher was that all participants, including both supervisors and supervisees, emphasised the importance of discussing the contents of boundaries and identity. Conversely, half of the supervisors and supervisees mentioned the usefulness of discussing how learning occurs in supervision and the desired outcomes to achieve.

It is possible that the heightened awareness, particularly regarding boundaries and identity, stems from the influence of teachings at the Tavistock and Portman Institution. This influence extends to all participants, whether they were TEPs in the doctoral training course or qualified EPs attending the CPD training course on supervision. Therefore, all participants have been exposed to the theoretical perspectives privileged by the aforementioned institution, which draw from systemic, psychoanalytic, and attachment theories, similar to those underpinned by the RMSAPP model of supervision (Kennedy et al., 2018). This also implicitly addresses the question of whether there are contracting models that supervisors and supervisees draw upon in their use of supervision, as participants reflected on the relational aspect of using the CCs in supervision. Based on observations of the findings, the researcher will focus the discussion on boundaries and identity, with links to learning and outcomes, as these points offer reflections with implications for educational psychology practice and the use of contracting in supervision. These will be discussed alongside the relational aspect of supervision in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The subtheme '*boundaries*' elucidates the relevance of this content in the supervision process, particularly during the contracting phase. It was specifically indicated as one of the circles of the CCs and deemed essential for discussions to facilitate the contracting phase. Furthermore, the findings of this research, as discussed in the previous chapter, revealed a

complexity inherent in this content, stemming from the multifaceted roles of EPs. This complexity encompasses two distinct aspects to consider when contracting within the supervisory space: the divergence in the interpretation of boundaries between supervisors and supervisees, and the purpose that boundaries serve in the supervisory relationship.

Supervisees expressed their views on boundaries as content that enables them to discern what is pertinent to discuss in the supervisory space and what is not. This perspective aligns with Scaife's (2009) conceptualisation of contracting as a process to understand the implications of the supervisory relationship for both supervisors and supervisees. Despite the focus being on enabling supervisees' practice and exploring how the supervisory space can be utilised, the findings from this research support the theories proposed by Carroll (2014), which expect supervisors to be prepared to provide a supervisory space that meets the needs of supervisees through contracting. The data gathered from this study corroborated this concept, as supervisors emphasised the importance of clearly defining and contracting the supervisory space.

However, while explaining the role of supervision and contracting it, supervisors expressed concern that supervisees may misunderstand the purpose of the supervisory space. Therefore, they sought to ensure, through the use of the CCs, that the space was not utilised for purposes other than supervision, such as psychotherapy. Additionally, supervisors emphasised the importance of delineating their role and avoiding the risk of supervisees viewing them as the 'saviours' of all issues brought into supervision. Attachment theories (Bion, 1963) can provide insights into the interpersonal dynamics between supervisor and supervisee in the instances mentioned above and help understand the supervisory relationship, particularly when supervisees may feel uncertain about how to utilise the supervisory space, appearing powerless and in need of 'saving' (Kennedy et al., 2018). It is important to acknowledge that

the importance of supervision in educational psychology practice is relatively recent (Nolan, 1999), and disciplines such as clinical, counselling, and coaching have employed supervision in their practice much longer than EPs. This disparity has influenced the development of supervision in educational psychology practice, as the discipline encompasses various functions that must be considered in supervision.

Hence, the contracting phase and CCs must encompass aspects that reflect the multifaceted roles of EPs. For instance, if an EP supervisee is engaged in therapeutic intervention, the supervisor must adopt the role of a supervising EP with expertise in psychotherapy, aligning discussions with psychotherapeutic models. Conversely, if the supervisee brings casework based on consultation into supervision, the models utilised by supervisors for discussion will differ. In this context, it is recognised that supervisors cannot assume the roles of ‘saviours’ or therapists for supervisees. However, they must acknowledge the complexity of EPs’ work and adapt their expertise accordingly. Simultaneously, supervisees are expected to understand the purpose of supervision and utilise it to benefit their practice and ultimately serve their clients (Kennedy et al., 2018).

When contracting boundaries, both supervisors and supervisees can use them to establish parameters for learning and outcomes within the CCs. Inskipp and Proctor (1993) identified the formative function as a key aspect to develop within supervision, which involves the learning process of supervisees. This function can be fulfilled through the recognition of roles between the parties and aiming to achieve intergenerational wisdom-sharing learning (Pillemer et al., 2022), as indicated in section 4.5.1. Supervisees recognise the invaluable importance of the experience that supervisors bring, wanting to leverage it in their supervisory space. However, it is acknowledged that the transmission of this knowledge and

expertise occurs when the relational aspect of supervision is well established. In this regard, the use of CCs can facilitate this process, as contracting the circle regarding learning and outcomes provides an opportunity to identify the learning process and contract how it benefits the supervisees.

To underscore the complexity of the concept of boundaries, it is pertinent to reference the exploration of boundaries by Wosket and Page (2001) in their Cyclical Model of Supervision. Specifically, one of the five steps of the cycle, ‘contracting’, focuses on boundaries. In this step, supervisors and supervisees are tasked with exploring the role of boundaries between them, including limits of confidentiality and the dynamics that may arise between supervisors and colleagues. The findings of this research supported the tenets of this theory, as supervisors expressed the importance of confidentiality in educational psychology practice, particularly within EPSs. According to supervisors in this research, the risk of overlapping boundaries between the roles of colleagues and supervisors is significant and easily breached, potentially resulting in repercussions for the quality of their practice as outlined by Wosket and Page (2001)

The subtheme of ‘*identity*’ provided valuable insights in response to the aforementioned research question, enriching reflections on the meaning of contracting on identity. This involves exploring what aspects of identity are visible and invisible between supervisors and supervisees. Participants referenced the Social Graces model (Burnham, 2012) as a point of reference for their discussions, which included an examination of sameness and differences. Similar to the systemic theories underpinning the RMSAPP model of supervision (Kennedy et al., 2018), Burnham (2012) offers a framework for voicing and recognising differences, distinguishing visible from invisible aspects of identity. For instance, as illustrated by

Kennedy et al. (2018, p.289), the model prompts considerations such as: 'How does a white, female, atheist supervisor invite thoughtful exploration of the experience of a black, female Christian teacher in a supervisory dialogue about a white, male Jewish supervisee?' As expressed in the RMSAPP model (Kennedy et al., 2018), participants highlighted the importance of intersectionality and the utility of CCs to explore this concept.

On the other hand, there was recognition of how CCs could aid in addressing similarities, as they can contribute to acknowledging shared experiences. However, there was also an acknowledgment of the risk of minimising the unique experiences of individuals involved in the supervisory relationship and those of the clients. Research by Kennedy and Laverick (2019) highlights the challenges of reflecting on identity in inter-professional supervision, indicating complexities. Supervisees noted that supervision became challenging when making organisational decisions, requiring exploration of identities, including similarities and differences, in supervisory reflections. Therefore, while the inclusion of identity content in CCs is deemed essential and beneficial, it necessitates careful consideration on how to explore it while maintaining transparency in the supervisory space. Similarities and differences may be conceptualised differently between supervisors and supervisees, requiring caution in facilitating a space to explore personal characteristics in a transparent manner.

Are there any contracting models that supervisors or supervisees draw in their use in supervision?

Hypotheses regarding the theoretical models participants drew upon in their supervision practice were formulated in previous sections. While the RSMAPP model by Kennedy et al. (2018) aided in understanding some conceptualisations of the use of CCs and their key features, participants did not explicitly reference this specific model to explain their use and

perspectives on the tool. Instead, supervisors in this study explicitly mentioned using only the transcultural activity by Soni et al. (2022) as a complementary activity alongside CCs in supervision. Supervisors expressed that this activity allowed for an in-depth exploration of differences and similarities between supervisor and supervisee. This approach aligns with recommendations by Soni and Callicott (2023) for the use of the transcultural activity during the contracting phase for EPs. It can be hypothesised that participants' choice to implement CCs with another activity aims to strengthen the supervisory relationship and trust between the parties and to foster an understanding of each person's value. This can be conceptualised as part of a process toward a supervisory relationship where cultural awareness is enhanced, and cultural sensitivity between supervisor and supervisee is developed (Soni et al., 2022).

5.3.2 How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the utility and efficacy of CCs?

The primary aspect emphasised by both supervisors and supervisees is the procedural utility of CCs in facilitating the contracting phase. This concept is elucidated within the theme '*CCs as a Useful Tool*,' particularly in the subtheme '*What Type of Tool are CCs?*' Within this subtheme, participants emphasised the usefulness of CCs as a tool that opens conversations that might otherwise be hindered by factors such as time constraints, work context, and individual personality traits of supervisees and supervisors. They noted that the visual nature of CCs, along with their prompts and questions, streamlined the process of initiating the contracting phase. This finding contributes valuable evidence to address a gap identified in the existing literature regarding the practical implementation of contracting within educational psychology practice. While previous research acknowledges the importance of contracting, there remains limited understanding of how contracting is actually initiated, developed, and executed in the supervisory context (Dunsmuir et al., 2015; Mills & Swift; Rawling & Cowell, 2015).

Which aspects of using CCs do supervisors and supervisees find particularly beneficial or challenging?

In the current research, participants not only highlighted the utility of using CCs but also perceived the tool as comprehensive due to the various circles/contents contained within the visual. They also noted the collaborative nature of the tool, attributed to the prompts and questions accompanying the initial conversations in the contracting phase. However, challenges encountered with the use of CCs revolve around the number of circles present in the visual and the emotions that viewing the tool can evoke. Supervisees perceived the multitude of circles as pressuring for the outcome of supervision. With participants recognising a large number of circles and contents, this may impact their selection of circles, leading them to opt for 'easier' circles and avoid those requiring complex reflection. This raises questions about whether the number and content of circles can induce anxiety in supervisees and create challenges for supervisors in facilitating the process. This hypothesis is supported by Callicott and Leadbetter's (2013) study, which suggests a lack of specific guidance to support the process of contracting for inter-professional supervision.

Furthermore, as revealed by the reviewed literature, existing research fails to provide a detailed description of the procedural steps involved in the contracting phase. There is a notable absence of guidance on which content should be explored first and why, among other procedural aspects. The DECP guidelines on supervision acknowledge that the contracting process 'is often neglected' (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 13) and offer EPs guidelines regarding the contracting process. However, these guidelines seem to resemble a list of concepts or items that supervisors and supervisees are required to address, without providing insight into 'how' these items should be explored during the contracting phase or what tools

can be employed to facilitate discussions. Consequently, there is a risk that items requiring careful consideration and personal insight, such as identity or boundaries, may be easily overlooked, perpetuating the tendency for incomplete contracting practices as outlined in previous research (Dunsmuir et al., 2015).

In what ways do CCs enhance or detract from the overall contracting experience?

Participants identified that the aforementioned risk can be mitigated through the active utilisation of prompts and questions provided by the CCs. The subtheme '*CCs as facilitators of in-depth conversation*' elaborates on this concept, emphasising that the prompts offer guidance and help manage uncertainty, particularly for supervisees who may be unfamiliar with the supervisory process. The cyclical model of supervision by Wosket and Page (2001) emphasises the focus on the process in establishing the contracting phase, suggesting that the use of steps in each cycle can aid in its development. This is corroborated by existing literature on group inter-professional supervision, which highlights the importance of contracting (Soni, 2013; Soni, 2015). The way CCs are used can enhance the contracting phase, empowering supervisees to bring forth relevant topics for discussion. However, the effectiveness of the contracting process may be compromised depending on how the tool is perceived and utilised by both supervisors and supervisees. The subtheme '*Identity*' elucidates this complexity, highlighting the presence of assumptions and their inhibitory role in contracting and the supervisory relationship. Participants expressed that the use of CCs is intricate and may hinder explicit exploration of various aspects.

The subtheme '*CCs enable discussion of past experiences*' seeks to address this issue by illustrating how sharing previous experiences can foster resolution. Participants noted that discussing past experiences helps to understand the individuals involved in the relationship

and gain insight into their operational dynamics within that space. This aligns with Osborn et al. (2007), who suggest that using contracting to facilitate conversations about previous experiences is foundational for establishing the supervisory alliance. To accomplish this, supervisors must comprehend both their own and their supervisees' past patterns, particularly those recurring in relationships with authority figures (Kennedy et al., 2018). The RMSAPP model addresses this task by incorporating the concepts of transference and countertransference (Freud, 1920). Past experiences can unveil underlying assumptions held by supervisors and supervisees, influencing their perceptions of their current supervisory relationship. Consequently, they may approach contracting through the lens of these assumptions. This may result in supervisors acting based on preconceived notions, potentially diminishing their curiosity, while supervisees may withhold their feelings and vulnerability during the contracting phase.

In this context, CCs serve as a facilitator for surfacing and understanding the underlying assumptions and emotions that may not be readily apparent in a superficial conversation or in situations where they are intentionally avoided. Rather than being a mere "tick-the-box" activity, CCs enable a deeper exploration of these psychological dynamics. The model implies that supervisors do not necessarily need to delve into a supervisee's entire past to grasp these dynamics, but rather to be attuned to the feelings being transferred between the supervisee and themselves. This can provide insights into implicit assumptions and how roles are adopted within the supervisory relationship. Kennedy et al. (2018) also suggested that these implicit mechanisms may be referred to as defence mechanisms, which are based on people's previous experiences and feelings of uncertainty. These mechanisms operate beneath the conscious level and serve to manage the anxiety related to uncertainty. In this study, for example, supervisors considered CCs to enable a process of openness and trust

reducing the possibility of defences to occur. However, navigating this process is complex and delicate, requiring training in psychodynamic lenses to develop an awareness of these mechanisms and the skills to effectively manage them.

5.3.3 What influence does the utilisation of CCs exert on the experience and practice of contracting among supervisors and supervisees?

The findings of this research highlight that the use of CCs has a significant impact on the supervisory relationship, influencing various aspects of it. The theme "*CCs' impact on the supervisory relationship*" addresses the main research question by examining how CCs influence different areas of the supervisory relationship. This theme also responds to the sub-question regarding how CCs impact the overall supervisory relationship.

One of the key influences identified is the establishment of trust and rapport between supervisors and supervisees. Participants noted that the structured approach provided by CCs facilitated open and honest discussions, which in turn fostered trust and rapport. This is essential for the supervisory relationship to thrive, as it creates a safe space for supervisees to share their experiences and concerns without fear of judgment.

Additionally, the use of CCs was found to enhance communication and clarity within the supervisory relationship. By providing visual prompts and structured topics for discussion, CCs helped both supervisors and supervisees to articulate their thoughts and expectations more effectively. This clarity promoted mutual understanding and alignment of goals, contributing to a more productive supervisory relationship.

Furthermore, CCs played a role in promoting reflexivity and self-awareness among both supervisors and supervisees. By prompting discussions on topics such as boundaries, identity,

and learning outcomes, CCs encouraged individuals to reflect on their own assumptions, biases, and areas for personal and professional development. This heightened self-awareness facilitated deeper insights and growth within the supervisory relationship.

The subtheme '*the good-enough relationship*' sheds light on how CCs influence the supervisory relationship by creating a safe and contained space for supervisees. This concept draws upon the RMSAPP model of supervision by Kennedy et al. (2018), which is grounded in psychodynamic theories such as those of Bion (1963). In this context, "containment" refers to the capacity of supervisors to accept and hold the emotional experiences of supervisees, providing a safe container for their feelings and thoughts. Supervisors act as receptacles for the emotional charge of supervisees' experiences, allowing them to process and make sense of these feelings. The use of CCs facilitates this process by providing a structured framework for discussions and prompting reflections on various topics.

Supervisors' ability to effectively contain supervisees' emotions and experiences contributes to the development of a "good-enough" supervisory relationship. This term implies that the relationship meets the basic needs of supervisees, providing them with a sense of safety, support, and validation. Through the relational aspects embedded in CCs, such as prompts and questions, supervisors can engage in reflective conversations with supervisees, enabling them to explore their feelings and thoughts in a supportive environment.

The subtheme '*relational reflexivity*' illuminates how CCs influence the supervisory relationship, particularly in the context of giving and receiving feedback. This aspect is crucial in the learning process, as feedback can often evoke feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty in supervisees (Kennedy et al., 2018). Participants in this study expressed how the process of contracting feedback is essential for creating a safe and supportive environment for learning. This aligns with the findings of Rawling and Cowell (2015), who

highlighted the challenges of self-exposure and the risks involved for supervisees in group supervision settings.

Contracting feedback involves supervisees and supervisors openly discussing their preferences and concerns regarding the feedback exchange. By engaging in this process, supervisors can gain insight into the factors that may contribute to supervisees' feelings of vulnerability and take steps to mitigate them. Additionally, supervisees can feel reassured knowing that the feedback process will be approached in a constructive and non-threatening manner.

The concept of feedback being "no-attacky," as described by participants, suggests that the feedback exchange is conducted in a manner that fosters trust and openness. Supervisors create an environment where supervisees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences without fear of criticism or judgment. Through the use of CCs, supervisors can facilitate discussions about feedback and establish clear guidelines for how it will be given and received. This structured approach helps to normalise the feedback process and reduces the apprehension supervisees may feel about receiving feedback. The subtheme of relational reflexivity highlights the importance of transparent communication and mutual understanding in the feedback process. By contracting feedback in a supportive and non-threatening manner, supervisors can enhance the supervisory relationship and create an environment conducive to professional growth and development.

5.4 Strengths and Limitation of the research

5.4.1 Strengths of the research

The study collected perspectives on how EPs and TEPs perceive a new tool, the CCs, used during the contracting phase in supervision. Its goal was to grasp its main characteristics,

topics of discussion, and its impact on both the contracting process and the supervisory relationship. This research has broadened our understanding of contracting in EPs' supervision and has made a valuable contribution to the field. Strengths include the content of the CCs and their implications for EPs' practice, the tool's role in facilitating the contracting process, and the methodology employed. These aspects will be elaborated on below.

The research delves into the experiences of supervisors and supervisees with the CCs tool, offering detailed insights into its application in EPs' practice. It highlights the significance of specific contents within the CCs, such as identity and boundaries, which reflect the intricate nature of how participants view themselves and their personal attributes (Burnham, 2012) in relation to others during the contracting phase and, ultimately, in their interactions with clients. This sheds light on the implications of this dynamic for EPs, prompting reflections on how they can cultivate cultural sensitivity in their practice, starting with the initial stages of contracting.

The research findings also deepen our understanding of the functions of the CCs tool, as participants reflected on and the researcher triangulated their experiences with theories and frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2013) concerning supervision and contracting, as discussed in previous chapters. It is argued that these findings offer a glimpse into how theories are not always effectively integrated into practice, and the scarcity of research on contracting within educational psychology may account for the limited understanding of this topic, as highlighted in the literature review chapter. Additionally, the findings shed light on the barriers that EPs may face when using a contracting tool in supervision, taking into account the political and policy context in which EPs and TEPs operate within their practice.

Another significant strength of the study lies in the choice of methodology used to analyse the qualitative data: the RTA. As highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2021), this method offers its own advantages, being flexible in its approach and easy to apply. Given the research's focus on exploring participants' experiences with the use of CCs, the researcher employed reflexivity to ensure sufficient analytic depth, as discussed in the Findings chapter.

5.4.2 Limitations of the research

The study is not without its limitations, particularly regarding the sample of participants, which can affect the transferability and confirmability of the findings. The inclusion criteria may have restricted the diversity of perspectives represented in the study, potentially limiting the generalisability of the results to a broader population of EPs and TEPs.

Sample

The sample size can be viewed as a limitation of this research. While the study's exploratory nature aligns with the aim of understanding experiences rather than explaining phenomena and generalising findings, it is important to acknowledge that the research may not have captured the full spectrum of experiences regarding the use of CCs in educational psychology practice. Additionally, the voluntary nature of participation may have introduced bias, as the views of individuals who chose not to participate were not represented in the study.

Consequently, the research may not fully reflect the diversity of perspectives on the topic.

The composition of the sample in this research does not reflect the diversity within the educational psychology profession. Factors such as the recruitment modalities, gender distribution, and the concentration of participants in inner-London positions contribute to this lack of representation. The decision to include eight participants was based on convenience

sampling and time constraints, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. It is important to note that these limitations hinder the ability to draw broad conclusions about the experiences of EPs using CCs at a national level or across different institutions and local authorities. While the researcher aimed to explore the experiences of supervisors and supervisees without claiming representativeness of the entire profession, the limited scope of the sample remains a constraint.

The homogeneity of the participant group poses a limitation to the generalisability of the findings. Notably, the gender bias, with all participants being female, contributes to this limitation. The participant group does not reflect the gender distribution within the educational psychology profession - as the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP, 2021) reports that 13% of the profession is male – and therefore restricts the breadth of perspectives represented in the study. Future research efforts could aim to address this limitation by recruiting a larger and more diverse sample, including participants from various settings to capture a broader range of experiences and viewpoints. This approach would enhance the applicability of the findings beyond the specific context of this study.

The sample, composed of four TEPs supervisees and four EPs supervisors, recruited through convenience sampling and snowballing, may introduce biases regarding the perception of the contracting process, particularly due to the difference in experience between trainees and qualified EPs. Furthermore, all participants were affiliated with a specific doctoral training institution, potentially influencing their perspectives and experiences related to supervision. Specifically, participants had connections to the institution either as TEPs undergoing training or as supervisors involved with the institution's training programs. While this

affiliation may have influenced participants' perceptions, it also provided a focused exploration of a tool developed within the same university context.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations in generalising findings beyond this specific context. The study aimed to explore the experiences of using CCs within a particular institutional framework, limiting the applicability of findings to other contexts. As qualitative research often emphasises context-specific insights over generalisability, the study's results offer valuable perspectives within the scope of the researched context. While the findings may not be directly transferable to other settings, they contribute rich insights that can inform similar practices in different contexts, aligning with the principles of qualitative research outlined by Yardley (2008) regarding sensitivity to contextual nuances.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criterion requiring participants to have used CCs for at least one year may have limited the breadth of perspectives represented in the study. By focusing on participants with more extensive experience with CCs, the research may have unintentionally emphasised positive aspects of the tool and overlooked challenges that newer users might encounter. This limitation could have skewed the findings towards a more favourable view of CCs' influence on the supervisory relationship.

However, the decision to include only participants with more extended experience (one year or more) was made to ensure that the study captured insights from individuals who had recent and relevant experiences with CCs, but were not completely new to them. By prioritising participants with recent exposure to the tool, the study aimed to gather up-to-date information without relying solely on retrospective accounts.

Methodology

The researcher is a TEP at the same university where supervisees were identified, as well as supervisors who are tutors or attended the CPD course delivered by the same university. This could be considered a potential limitation for this research and may have influenced the process of gathering the participants' views. The researcher ensured to establish a good rapport with participants and maintain confidentiality. However, the researcher considered that this may have had two types of impact on the results. On the one hand, it could be possible that participants felt more comfortable during the interview as there was a relationship between the researcher and the interviewer. On the other hand, the fact that participants knew the researcher could have influenced their responses by 'pleasing' when answering the questions. However, the researcher was aware of this and ensured that follow-up questions were posed to gain a thorough understanding of their experience. This is reflected in the in-depth results produced, as well as participants' engagement to share the aspects they found useful and the experiences they found challenging with the use of the CCs.

A risk that the researcher could have encountered when collecting data through semi-structured questions is the influence of parameters that were affected by the researcher's values (Winter, 2000). To minimise the potential consequence of this, the researcher ensured rigor in the interview formation process by conducting a pilot interview with a qualified EP to check that the questions were aligned with the research questions and to ensure that the researcher remained neutral in the interview process, thereby reducing the risk of posing leading questions. In addition, the semi-structured interviews were discussed with the research supervisor. It can be argued that in qualitative research, questions can elicit the emergence of new concepts. This was prompted by asking participants, as a final question, if they wanted to add anything else that was not explored during the interview. For transparency

regarding the questions used in the interviews, the interview schedule is included in Appendix L.

Trustworthiness

The researcher remained mindful throughout the research process of Guba and Lincoln (1994) principles of trustworthiness. Despite the supervision provided by the research supervisor, the researcher was aware of the contextual factors pertinent to the participants who trained or are tutors at the same university of the researcher. In this view, the researcher was challenged to “secure the inter-subjectivity of the data” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p.122). Therefore, the claims made regarding the analysis are limited to this level of interpretation.

Furthermore, the researcher’s familiarity with the use of CCs in supervision and their relationships with the participants raise questions about whether the study may have been influenced by these factors unconsciously, in relation to dynamics of transference and countertransference (Freud, 1920). To address this concern, the researcher maintained a research diary and engaged in reflective discussions with the research supervisor.

5.5 Future Research

To address the limitations and gaps identified, it is imperative to propose areas for future research concerning the use of CCs. The researcher has pinpointed aspects that warrant further exploration and could be incorporated into future studies:

- Examining the use of CCs in a broader context: This study focused on a group of participants from specific training programs and theoretical frameworks underlying

supervision practices. Therefore, future research should investigate the application of CCs with EPs and TEPs who have graduated from various doctoral programs at different universities. Such diversity may expose participants to a range of values and practice models, providing a more comprehensive understanding of CCs' effectiveness.

- Exploring the application of CCs in various types of supervision and with different supervisees: This study specifically investigated the use of CCs in individual supervision sessions involving EPs and TEPs. Given the limitations of the sample, future research should delve into the effectiveness of CCs in diverse supervision settings, including group or inter-professional supervision contexts. Previous research has highlighted the relevance of contracting in these varied supervision formats. Additionally, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of CCs' utility in educational psychology practice, future studies should focus on EP supervisees, providing insights into their perspectives and experiences with CCs.
- Exploring the application of CCs across diverse populations: While participants in this study reflected educational psychology practice nationally, the convenience sampling method may have limited the diversity of the sample in terms of gender and ethnicity. Future research should aim to gather data from a more diverse range of participants to ensure a comprehensive analysis of CCs' effectiveness across various demographic groups. This would provide valuable insights into how CCs can be utilised effectively in different contexts and with different populations within educational psychology practice.
- Exploring alternative research methodologies: While this study provided rich data through the use of RTA, future research could benefit from employing different research methods, such as mixed-method approaches. By employing diverse

methodologies, researchers can investigate similar patterns in the use of CCs among supervisees and supervisors from various perspectives. This could offer complementary insights and enhance the understanding of how CCs are utilised in different contexts within educational psychology practice.

5.6 Implications for EP practice

The themes identified through RTA provide a foundation for structuring the implications for EP practice derived from this research. To ensure coherence, some themes have been combined to facilitate exploration of the following implications. These insights were gleaned from qualitative analysis, integrating perspectives from both supervisees and supervisors, and informed by the alignment between the research questions and the existing literature.

The contents of CCs

The data underscored the significance of identity as a crucial aspect for all participants in their practice, emerging as a prominent subtheme. Both supervisees and supervisors shared their reflections on how their personal identities could impact their supervisory practice and their work with clients. These findings suggest two key implications for EPs' practice.

Firstly, the inclusion of two circles within the CCs dedicated to identity and values and ethics equips EPs and TEPs with valuable prompts for reflection and discussion in supervision. By engaging with these circles, both supervisees and supervisors can delve into and explore these topics within the supervisory relationship, potentially reducing discomfort and bridging any perceived distance between EPs and the content.

Secondly, the utilisation of CCs suggests an enhanced awareness of both differences and similarities and their implications within the supervisory relationship. Moreover, it may assist

EPs in cultivating their understanding of how to become culturally sensitive practitioners, benefiting their interactions with clients. By integrating CCs into supervision, EPs may gain insights and principles that can be applied directly in their client work. Consequently, the tool can serve as a catalyst, initiating or furthering the exploration of identity-related aspects within the SR between supervisees and supervisors. Additionally, EPs should remain attentive to integrating other models or frameworks, such as the Transcultural activity by Soni et al. (2022), to further develop their skills, as suggested by both the research findings and the literature review. In this context, the research lends support to the adoption of CCs in EPs' practice.

CCs facilitate discussions on various aspects of the supervisory relationship, including identity challenges, learning outcomes, and boundaries, as identified in this research. However, participants noted that the numerous circles in the visual can be overwhelming. The researcher suggests reconsidering the layout and prioritising circles that impact relationship-building in the short term. For example, discussing the circle of 'process' at the outset can outline the logistics of supervision, while the circle of 'beliefs and attitudes' helps supervisory dyads understand previous supervision experiences and define confidentiality and boundaries, creating a safe space. Once these foundational elements are addressed, other circles can be explored as needed. This method allows the tool to be dynamic, adapting to the supervisee and supervisor's evolving needs. As this research indicates, the dynamics of the supervisory relationship can change over time, influenced by factors such as client work and related emotions. Therefore, the dynamic use of CCs can be further supported by re-contracting every six months or annually if the supervisory relationship is long-term and re-discuss or explore new aspects.

CCs' impact on the supervisory relationship

The time constraints associated with the use of CCs in educational psychology supervision were elucidated, stemming from factors such as line management obligations or the prioritisation of case discussions, as highlighted in this research. EPs tended to favour case discussions over the establishment of a robust and transparent supervisory relationship. It is essential to acknowledge that participants, particularly supervisors, perceived the utilisation of CCs as an "investment". The literature review and supervision models outlined in the introduction emphasise that fostering an initial relationship is pivotal in supervision. Without delving into the categories and elements within the supervisory relationship, supervision may prove arduous, impacting one of its fundamental functions and the EPs' practice with their clients. A pertinent question arises: "How can EPs reflect on their cases if they fail to establish a secure and trusting relationship with their supervisors?". Hence, the findings of this research indicate that the use of CCs can facilitate the supervisory relationship in the long term for EP supervision, suggesting that EPs should consider this aspect in their practice. This aligns with the perspective that "there is an ethical responsibility for all individuals to acquire competence in supervision" (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p.13), which should be developed during contracting or reviewing supervision.

5.7 Dissemination strategy

The aim of this research was to offer implications for educational psychology practice, as outlined in section 5.5. Given that participants emphasised the usefulness of the tool, it is crucial to consider how these findings will be disseminated to ensure their integration into practice.

Initially, the researcher intends to share the findings individually with each participant, with the hope that they will continue using the tool and engage in reflective discussions regarding their thoughts on the findings.

The researcher intends to disseminate the findings to the creator of the tool, who serves as a tutor at the university attended by the participants, as well as the facilitator of the CPD 32 course on supervision at the same institution. Additionally, the dissemination will occur in the presence of the course lead, who has contributed to the development of the tool. These discussions will offer an opportunity to explore potential modifications to the tool based on practical issues identified in the findings.

The research aims to disseminate its findings to the broader educational psychology community with the hope of fostering the adoption of the tool on a national scale. This dissemination plan includes potentially publishing the research in educational psychology journals such as "Educational Psychology in Practice." Additionally, the researcher aims to share the findings on EP online forums and present them at educational psychology conferences.

Furthermore, the researcher intends to collaborate with the tutors of the university doctoral courses, ensuring that the concept of CCs is integrated into the training of TEPs and incorporated into supervision within LA placements. This approach aligns with the feedback from supervisees who described the tool as "empowering," allowing them to utilise it and re-contract when necessary, during supervision.

5.8 Conclusions

The current research delved into the experiences of EPs and TEPs regarding the utilisation of CCs in their supervision practice, shedding light on the interconnected processes within the supervisory relationship. The theoretical models introduced in the introduction offer a guide for understanding the applicability of contracting, while the literature review identified a gap in research regarding its dynamic nature, often overlooked in favour of portraying it as a static process. However, these models explicitly highlight contracting as a nuanced and dynamic process that enhances the supervisory relationship.

Furthermore, the CCs have been implemented at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust by university tutors and incorporated into the training of TEPs through the CPD course on supervision. This context presents a pertinent opportunity for examining the efficacy of CCs within the educational psychology practice.

Overall, participants expressed support for the idea that the use of CCs is beneficial during the contracting phase. They not only provided a comprehensive understanding of the importance and impact of the contracting process in general but also offered positive evaluations of the tool. Throughout the findings, there was a noticeable inclination to transform the static nature of contracting into a dynamic process. The experience of using CCs seemed to embody this dynamic usage, characterised by ongoing discussions and the exploration of new conversation areas as part of a cyclical process. The term "dynamic" used by some participants referred to a description of what CCs entail, offering information about the tool's contents and some of its primary functions. These descriptions often drew from theoretical models of supervision, such as the cyclical model of supervision (Wosket & Page, 2001).

This link aligns with the guidelines proposed by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter (2010), advocating for supervisors to incorporate psychological guidance into practice, despite the inconsistent utilisation of contracting within EPs' practice. However, it is important to acknowledge the influence of the RMSAPP model as another significant theoretical underpinning that shapes the self-reflections of participants. This influence has relevant implications for their practice, particularly in fostering systemic thinking linked to concepts of identity and cultural sensitivity.

This trend was critically evaluated in the literature review chapter. Most of the articles examined in the review provided insights into the usefulness of the contracting phase, with less emphasis on the process itself. It was underscored that the experience of contracting can vary from one supervision session to another, influenced by a multitude of factors. A key factor identified was the diverse experiences of both supervisees and supervisors, and how these experiences may impact the contracting process within the supervisory space.

Challenges regarding the practicalities of CCs were identified, such as time constraints and the potential feeling of being overwhelmed due to the presence of multiple circles in one visual. Despite recognising these challenges, participants expressed a positive outlook on persisting with the use of the tool and provided suggestions for adaptations and changes, particularly in the layout of how the circles are presented and their quantity.

The author outlined several implications of the results for educational psychology practice and future research. These implications include prioritizing certain circles and allowing supervisory dyads to choose others, maintaining the tool's dynamic aspect through periodic re-contracting to meet the needs of both supervisees and supervisors. It is hoped that this

research will contribute to the broader recognition and increased implementation of CCs within the practice of educational psychologists.

Word count: 40000

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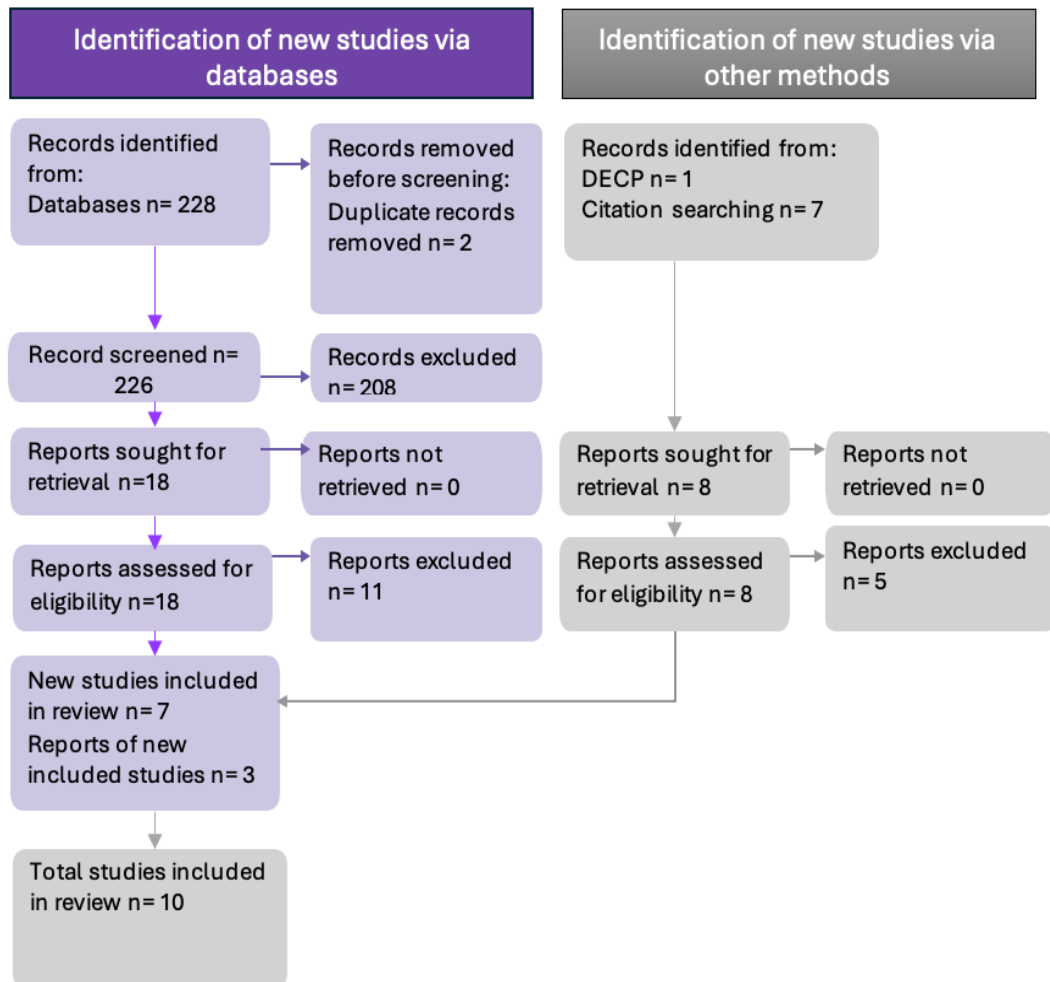
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Appendices

Appendix A: PICOS framework for the current study (Amir-Behghadami & Janati, 2020)

Review question	The function of this literature review is to identify how Educational Psychologists (EPs) approach contracting and how this influences the Supervisory relationship
Population	Educational Psychologists/ trainees educational psychologists (as contracting is using in other disciplines, can I apply the use of contracting to those others?)
Intervention-Contracting	The use of contracting circles? what tool is used in Educational Psychology practice? How does contracting influence the supervisory relationship?
Comparator	Are there any particular contracting tools that have been used and compared? Or are there any that have not been compared?
Outcomes	Positive or negative outcomes. How these outcomes have been evaluated (qualitatively, via experiential accounts of the outcomes or via quantitatively, via evaluation of the causal relationships and/or explanations)
Setting	Educational Psychology practice via Local Authority settings or Institutions/Universities
Language	English
Time frame	2010- 2023

Appendix B: PRISMA Flowchart illustrating the search process



Appendix C: Email correspondence with Course lead regarding recruiting participants who attended the CPD 32 training.

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@tavi-port.nhs.uk>
 Date: Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 08:17
 To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@Tavi-Port.ac.uk>
 Cc: Maria Valdrighi <MValdrighi@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk>, [REDACTED]
 <[REDACTED]>
 Subject: CPD32 participant email

Dear [REDACTED],

Hope this finds you well.

Maria is a student researching supervision who is seeking participants for her research. Would it be possible to forward this email to the last round of people who attended and see if any of them may be interested in following up?

The detail is:

My name is Maria Valdrighi and I am a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. I am conducting my doctoral research on the experience of contracting in supervision from the perspective of supervisor and supervisee.

The research has now received ethical approval, and I am looking to recruit participants and was wondering if you may be interested? If so, please do get in contact with me for further details [my email address is MValdrighi@tavi-port.nhs.uk] or complete the short questionnaire using the link below: <https://forms.office.com/e/4aN8MaZ3TL>.

Responses to this questionnaire will help me determine the number of supervisors and supervisees to interview. If you indicate on the questionnaire whether you are interested in being interviewed, then I will follow up with further details shortly.

Please do forward this email or my contact details to anyone you know who may be interested in participating in the study.

Thanks so much,

[REDACTED]

Dr [REDACTED] CPsychol AFBPsS FHEA
 Programme Director of the Doctorate in Child, Community & Educational Psychology
 CAMHS Lifespan Autism and Learning Disabilities Educational Psychologist

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
 Child & Family Department
 Tavistock Centre
 120 Belsize Lane
 London NW3 5BA
 Tel: +44 (0)20 8938 2240
<http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>

From: [REDACTED]@Tavi-Port.ac.uk>
Date: Tuesday, 18 July 2023 at 10:22
To: Maria Valdrighi <MValdrighi@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk>
Subject: RE: CPD32 participant email

Dear Maria,

This has now been forwarded to participants from the last cohort.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Digital and Short Course Administrator

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London NW3 5BA
E-mail: [REDACTED]@tavi-port.ac.uk
Web Site: <https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/training>

Feel. Connect. Learn

#mytavi



From: Maria Valdrighi <MValdrighi@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 7:00 PM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@tavi-port.nhs.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@Tavi-Port.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: CPD32 participant email

Dear [REDACTED],

I hope you are well.

I'm emailing you to confirm that you received the email regarding my research and that the email has been forwarded to the last round of people who attended the CPD32.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Many thanks,

Appendix D: Letter contained Information for participants

Dear EP (I can insert the specific name),

I hope my email finds you well.

My name is Maria Valdrighi and I am a Year 2 Trainee EP at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. I am conducting my doctoral research on the experience of contracting in supervision from the perspective of supervisor and supervisee. To help me find potential EP participants who have an interest in and received training on supervision, I approached the organisers of the *CPD32 Supervision in Schools & Community Contexts: Working Relationally and Reflectively* course at Tavistock. Through this route I was given the names of EPs who attended this training last year. As the research has now received Ethical approval, I am looking to recruit participants and I would be very grateful if you could complete a very short questionnaire using the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/e/4aN8MaZ3TL>

Responses to this questionnaire will help me determine the number of supervisors and supervisees to interview.

If you indicate on the questionnaire whether you are interested in being interviewed, then I will follow up with further details shortly.

Thank you for your time,

Kind regards,

Maria

Appendix E: Questionnaire form for participant

The experience of using Contracting Circles in supervision with EPs and TEPs

The focus of my research is to explore the experience of Educational Psychologists and Trainee Educational Psychologists in using the Contracting Circles as the main tool for contracting in supervision.

I would be grateful if you could complete the short multiple choice questions below. Your responses will help me to determine the number of supervisors and supervisees to interview in more depth at the next stage of my research.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this form.
Best wishes
Maria

* Required

1. Have you used the Contracting Circles tool as a supervisor? *

Yes

No

2. If yes, how long have you been a supervisor using Contracting Circles tool?

1 year

2 years

3 years or more

3. Who have you supervised?

Qualified EPs

TEPs

Both

4. Have you used the Contracting Circles tool as a supervisee? *

Yes

No

5. If yes, how long have you used the Contracting Circles tool as a supervisee?

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years or more

6. Would you be willing to take part in an interview about contracting circles? *

Interviews will be semi-structured and will last for around 45 minutes. They will be arranged at the interviewee's convenience in terms of location (on-line or in-person) and time and date.

- Yes
- No

7. If Yes, in which role you would like to participate in the interview?

- Supervisor
- Supervisee

8. Please add your name and email contact address

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.



Appendix F: The outline of the Interview Guiding questions and revised prompts questions

- What is your understanding of contracting and contracting circles?
- What is your experience of using contracting circles as supervisee/ supervisor when in supervision?
- How do you – as supervisor/supervisee – perceive the use of Contracting circles?
- What are, in your opinion, the key features of contracting circles?
- What did you find useful when using contracting circles?
- What did you find less useful when using contracting circles?
- How do contracting circles influence your supervisory relationship?
- Is there anything else you would like to add or we have not covered?

Revised prompt questions being used after pilot interview undertaken:

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give me an example?
- What do you mean?
- What did you do?
- How did you feel?
- Why / how come?

Appendix G: Ethical Approval Forms and Attachments

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters. You need only complete sections of the TREC form which are NOT covered in your existing approval

Is your project considered as 'research' according to the HRA tool? (http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html)	Yes/No
Will your project involve participants who are under 18 or who are classed as vulnerable? (see section 7)	Yes/No
Will your project include data collection outside of the UK?	Yes/No

SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS

Project title	The Use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting		
Proposed project start date	March 2023	Anticipated project end date	May 2024
Principle Investigator (normally your Research Supervisor): Dale Bartle			
Please note: TREC approval will only be given for the length of the project as stated above up to a maximum of 6 years. Projects exceeding these timeframes will need additional ethical approval			
Has NHS or other approval been sought for this research including through submission via Research Application System (IRAS) or to the Health Research Authority (HRA)?	YES (NRES approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	YES (HRA approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters.			

SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS

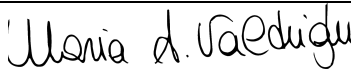
Name of Researcher	Maria Valdrighi
Programme of Study and Target Award	Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology (M4)
Email address	MValdrighi@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Contact telephone number	07984862382

SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

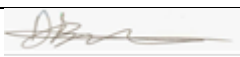
<p>Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please detail below:</p>		
<p>Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p>Are you proposing to conduct this work in a location where you work or have a placement?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please detail below outline how you will avoid issues arising around colleagues being involved in this project:</p>		
<p>Is your project being commissioned by and/or carried out on behalf of a body external to the Trust? (for example; commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation).</p> <p><small>*Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)</small></p> <p>If YES, please add details here:</p>		<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Will you be required to get further ethical approval after receiving TREC approval?</p> <p>If YES, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies (letters received after receiving TREC approval should be submitted to complete your record):</p>		<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If your project is being undertaken with one or more clinical services or organisations external to the Trust, please provide details of these:</p>		


If you still need to agree these arrangements or if you can only approach organisations after you have ethical approval, please identify the types of organisations (eg. schools or clinical services) you wish to approach:	
Do you have approval from the organisations detailed above? (this includes R&D approval where relevant)	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please attach approval letters to this application. Any approval letters received after TREC approval has been granted MUST be submitted to be appended to your record	

SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS

APPLICANT DECLARATION	
I confirm that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date. ● I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research. ● I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding ethical principles and to keep my supervisor updated with the progress of my research ● I am aware that for cases of proven misconduct, it may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research. ● I understand that if my project design, methodology or method of data collection changes I must seek an amendment to my ethical approvals as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct. 	
Applicant (print name)	Maria Valdrighi
Signed	
Date	29/03/23

FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

Name of Supervisor/Principal Investigator	Dale Bartle
Supervisor –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research? YES ▪ Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate? YES ▪ Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient? YES ▪ Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance? YES 	
Signed	
Date	30.3.23

COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD	
Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Signed	
Date	02.04.2023

SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

<p>1. Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)</p> <p>Educational Psychologists (EPs) have an ethical and professional responsibility to use supervision in their practice and contracting has an important role to establish the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Sills (2012) defines contracting as 'an agreement between two or more people concerning the type of relationship they will have with each other' (p.94). Considering these aspects, this research study will investigate the use of a specific tool, Contracting Circles, to facilitate the contracting process in supervision within educational psychology practice. The Contracting Circles were first developed in 2016 out of unpublished doctoral research (Shaldon, 2015) and have been applied at the Tavistock M4 training course and more widely in Educational Psychology Services (EPS) and by other training courses. Specifically, Contracting Circles can be used to establish an agreement between a supervisor and supervisee with regard to their relationships, roles, and tasks (see Appendix A for a graphic representation of the main areas of the tool). The Contracting Circles assume that supervision is a process wherein professional and personal development are outlined. Additionally, it is assumed that supervision contains a reflective and confidential component for EPs to discuss their practice (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010).</p> <p>However, data on how contracting has been agreed and on what has been discussed in terms of expectations and understanding at the beginning of the supervisory relationship is 'patchy' (Proctor, 2006). Carroll (2010) stated that in supervision 'the first meeting is vital: it sets the tone of the texture for the relationship that will unfold' (p.43). Dunsmuir, Lane and Leadbetter (2015) showed how little contracting is used among EPs. Their survey revealed that 78.5% of EPs who received supervision had no contract and 60.5% of EPs did not draw up a contract at the beginning of the supervision relationship. Additionally, their results indicated that there is not a standard approach to contracting at the start of the supervisory relationship. Indeed, the approach may depend on the type of training EPs have completed and/or on the suggestions of the LA/ EPS.</p> <p>Thus, this research study aims to investigate the use of contracting circles in the EPS, including their potential benefits and challenges. This research will aim to provide insights into why contracting is not used in EPs' supervision by identifying themes related to common obstacles faced by supervisors and supervisees. Therefore, a qualitative approach will be used to explore the experiences of supervisors and supervisees when using contracting circles. Specifically, four supervisors and four supervisees who have used contracting circles for at least one year will be recruited and semi-structured interviews will be completed to explore their experiences.</p>
<p>2. Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)</p>

Contracting within supervision has not received much attention in theories and there is a paucity of research in this area (Dunsmuir et al., 2015). Therefore, this research aims to explore the contracting process in EP practice. In particular, there is a need to gain insights into the experiences of supervisors and supervisees when contracting. The research will focus on a particular tool, Contracting Circles, and on the participants' experiences of using it, with the hope of gaining insights into the factors that impact the success of the contracting phase.

The Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC) suggests that practitioners need "to be able to reflect on and review practice" as well as "understand models of supervision and their contribution to practice" (HCPC, 2015, 10, 10.4). The use of "to be able to" implies that EPs should have sufficient power, skills, or resources to undertake these competencies, though it is not explicitly stated that practitioners need to reflect on and review their practice. However, these standards were published in 2015 and were amended in August 2022, with the latest version coming into effect in 2023. Specifically, "to be able to" has been removed, highlighting that EPs need to reflect on their practice as an essential part of their work. As supervision is intended to encourage reflective practice, these changes highlight the importance of supervision to the practice of EPs and suggest that supervisors must consistently provide supervisees with a space in which to reflect.

The study aims to explore the use of contracting circles by answering the following research questions:

1. What is the experience of using Contracting Circles for supervisors and supervisees when they are in supervision?
2. How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the use of contracting circles?

Investigating experiences of using this specific contracting tool may lead to insights that will help EPs to be safe and ethical practitioners. The use of contracting circles could enable the supervisor–supervisee dyad to be aware of a broad range of ethical principles and professional codes of conduct, making sure that these are embodied in their practice. Without an initial space where these topics are explored and agreed, the ability to foster ethical practice could be challenging. Contracting and the use of this specific tool could support practitioners with working 'with differences'. For example, at the start of their supervisory relationship, supervisors and supervisees can use contracting to establish how they want to work with clients from a broad spectrum of cultural and demographic backgrounds, including those for whom 'differences' are linked to experiences of discrimination and disadvantage. More generally, the use of contracting circles can impact the quality of the supervision relationship by reminding supervisors to use their reflexivity and ethical sensitivity so that the supervisee has opportunities to learn about how to work in the service of the client. Without this, reviewing how practice may impact client outcomes is limited.

Practice needs to be considered within the context of the national, legal, and ethical policies relevant to both supervisors and supervisees. Contracting circles allow the supervisor–supervisee dyad to have a supervisory space to pay attention to tensions that may arise between different contexts of practice. For example, supervision may be viewed as primarily having a managerial function in certain contexts, whereas the British Psychology Society (BPS) highlights that supervision allows one 'to think of another with a view of extending knowledge about the self' (2017, p.12).

3. Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, tasks assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)

For this proposed study, a qualitative approach, underpinned by a critical realist ontology and epistemology, will be used.

Four supervisors and four supervisees will be recruited.

After being informed about the purpose of the research and signing a consent form, they will be asked to participate in an individual semi-structured interview. This type of interview consists of a series of

questions that constitutes an interview schedule, but it will contain flexibility in the sequence of the questions asked. In this way, the interviewer has some margin to ask further questions in response to a reply considered relevant (Bryman, 2001). The semi-structured interview will gain an insight of the experience of the use of Contracting Circles from both supervisor and supervisee experiences and allows to extrapolate the main themes. All interviews will be audio recorded. Participants who agree to participate will be given consent forms to sign and these will be completed prior to the interview. All the semi-structured interviews will be audio recorded.

The qualitative data generated from the interviews will be analysed with the use of a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA, 2006, 2021). This method was chosen by the robust quality of the method to form patterns from a qualitative database. These patterns or themes should be identified across the data set with the aim for the researcher to have outcomes that have implications for practice and being organised into 'thematic statements', shared meaning-based themes (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

With the use of RTA, the researcher will extrapolate themes across participants to prevent exposure of the participants' identity. Participants will be reminded by the researcher of protection of confidentiality at all stages of the research, recruitment, interview, data analysis and discussion of data.

When extrapolating themes, the researcher may use participants' quotes. Participants will be informed if part of their interview will be quoted and their consent will be sought before the quote is used. The researcher will reiterate the aim of protecting and respecting anonymity.

Interviews are planned to take place between May and July 2023 to allow enough time for recruitment participants. Data analysis will be initiated subsequently between September and November 2023.

SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

4. Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why these criteria are in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Participants will be:

- Four EPs supervisors who have used the Contracting Circles in their practice either on one occasion or as part of their regular practice. They can be EP supervisors who are supervising EPs or Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs).
- The selection criteria will be that supervisors have to be familiar with the Contracting Circles which is usually from either attending the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) 32 course on supervision for professionals working in schools and community contexts (*Supervision in schools and community context: Working relationally and reflectively, CPD32*) at the Tavistock or from having trained at the Tavistock since 2016. If there is a supervisor who uses the Contracting Circles but has not attended the course nor trained at the Tavistock, they would also be considered as participants.

The researcher is not involved with the teaching of the CPD 32 and does not have any teaching responsibility over the participants of the CPD32 2022/23.

The supervisors will be recruited via:

- participating on the CPD32 course,- either those who have previously completed the course or are currently on the course, which completes in May 2023.
- The Local Authority (LA) where the researcher is in placement. The EPs who work in the same placement and use the contracting circles would be potential participants.
- University/placement tutors from Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust or supervisors who have trained at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust since 2016 (this is the year when the tool of Contracting Circle has been introduced as practice to use in supervision).

The four supervisees could also have attended the CPD32 course or trained at the Tavistock, but they do not have to have done so. They could have been introduced to the contracting circles by another route. The supervisees may be currently supervised by the participant supervisors, but this is not a selection criterion.

Exclusion criteria: supervisors who have no training on the use of the contracting circles.

- Four supervisees EPs and/or TEPs who have experienced/received supervision with Contracting Circles as the main tool for contracting.

Given the small number of EPs and TEPs that have been involved with Contracting Circles, participants will be recruited via purposive sample (Thomas, 2009) in which examples of EPs and TEPs involved with the use of Contracting Circles will be sought.

The researcher acknowledges being a Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust student and is aware of working with people whose personal and social aspects of their identity can be similar or different from the researcher (Burnham, 1984). The researcher acknowledges her characteristics and is aware that these aspects may influence the researcher's practice and reflexivity, specifically during data analysis and discussion of results gathered. The researcher will ascertain that these aspects will be raised and discussed making good use of research supervision and research diary.

There is no specific criterion related to ethnicity, race, age or any other aspects of personal and social identity applied to the process to recruit participants. Participants will be recruited via an open invitation and will choose to respond and be voluntarily interviewed as part of the research study. The researcher, therefore, will draw analysis of the data from what participants will have shared during the interviews.

The process of recruitment will start sending an email to the Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) and EPs working in the London boroughs (inner and outer London) where the researcher is based, describing the background and the purpose of the study. If the research is deemed applicable to EPs and TEPs working in a specific Local Authority, PEPs and EPs will identify suitable EPs and TEPs and share information about the study. EPs and TEPs will be asked to be contacted by the researcher. The researcher will then meet with EPs and/or TEPs, provide information about the study and gain consent. The researcher will contact via email Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 TEPs currently on training at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust to inform them about the study. The researcher will ask TEPs to contact her if they are interested in taking part in the study.

EPs who have engaged in the CPD 32 training course at Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation trust will be contacted via email after the researcher will have obtained consent from the facilitators of the course. The researcher will contact the facilitators to inform them about the study, its aim and purpose. Upon consent obtained, the researcher will then contact previous and current participants of the course, explaining the background and the purpose of the study. The researcher would request participants to be contacted if they are interested in participating in the study. The researcher will meet the participants, provide information, and gain consent.

5. Please state the location(s) of the proposed research including the location of any interviews. Please provide a Risk Assessment if required. Consideration should be given to lone working, visiting private residences, conducting research outside working hours or any other non-standard arrangements.

If any data collection is to be done online, please identify the platforms to be used.

The interviews will take place in quiet rooms at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. In case meeting in person with the participant will not be possible, the interview can be carried out via online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Team. To increase the researcher's flexibility and meet participants' needs, the interviews can be run in the premises where participants work. These will differ from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust location.

6. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?(Tick as appropriate)

- Students or Staff of the Trust or Partner delivering your programme.
- Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
- Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)¹
- Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
- Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.
- Adults in emergency situations.
- Adults² with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
- Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

- Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
- Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent³ relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
- Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
- Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
- Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

¹If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability³, any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

² 'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.' (Police Act, 1997)

³ Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.

7. Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES NO

For the purposes of research, 'vulnerable' participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from:

- the participant's personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment)
- their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness).
- where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable
- children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable.

7.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

If YES, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check within the last three years is required.

Please provide details of the "clear disclosure":

Date of disclosure:
Type of disclosure:
Organisation that requested disclosure:
DBS certificate number:

(NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>). Please **do not** include a copy of your DBS certificate with your application

8. Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES NO

If **YES**, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

9. What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)

Participants for this research are intended to be qualified EPs and/or TEPS still in training. Their English level should be in line with IELTS English proficiency equal to 7 (minimum standard of English required to access training at a doctoral level). Therefore, there is an expectation that this requirement is met.

In case of participants presenting with special communication needs, the researcher will apply adaptations to the interview to accommodate the participants' needs. These can include communication tools or devices to be utilise during interview.

SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

10. Does the proposed research involve any of the following? (Tick as appropriate)

- use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)
- use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection
- use of written or computerised tests
- interviews (attach interview questions)
- diaries (attach diary record form)
- participant observation
- participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research
- audio-recording interviewees or events
- video-recording interviewees or events
- access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes
- administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process
- performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfiture, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction
- Themes around extremism or radicalisation
- investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)
- procedures that involve the deception of participants
- administration of any substance or agent
- use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions
- participation in a clinical trial
- research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached)
- research overseas (please ensure Section G is complete)

<p>11. Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.</p>
<p>12. Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.</p>
<p>The researcher has experience working with adults in a therapeutic setting during the first year of the Doctorate training (and previously in different therapeutic roles). During the placement, the researcher has developed therapeutic skills, such as building rapport and contain the clients' emotions during the therapeutic sessions. These skills have allowed the researcher to manage professionally negative feelings and to engage in conversations that may trigger discomfort to the clients. The researcher is aware that some questions about the participants' experience can cause distress or uncomfortable feelings. Therefore, the researcher is aware of the possibility that this can occur, and actions will be taken if this is the case.</p>
<p>13. Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)</p> <p>NOTE: Where the proposed research involves students, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.</p>
<p>The aim of the study is to explore how contracting circles are used in supervision within the practice of EPs. Additionally, the study aims to gain an understanding of the benefits and challenges EPs and TEPs have encountered when using this tool in the contracting phase of supervision. This will contribute to new knowledge about contracting in supervision, which may impact the practice of EPs. Additionally, the research may benefit the participants (supervisors and supervisees) by providing them with an opportunity to reflect on and gain insights into their practice.</p>
<p>14. Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)</p>
<p>A graduated approach will be used during the interview process to allow participants to stop or pause the interview if they experience discomfort. Participants will be informed, prior to the start of the interview, that they have the right not to answer questions if these make them feel uncomfortable. As distress due to a specific question may arise during the interview, the researcher will pay close attention to any verbal and/or non-verbal signs of distress, in which case the interview will be stopped. The researcher will ensure that the participant has the space and the time to be supported by validating and normalising their feelings. If an interview is terminated due to the participant's distress, the researcher will signpost them to specific services that provide mental health support (please see section 15 for more details).</p> <p>Participants will be informed of the limits of confidentiality in case of safeguarding concerns and if these arise during the interview, the researcher will contact the Local Authority.</p>

<p>15. Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants.</p>
<p>The researcher will debrief participants at the end of the interviews, and they will be reminded of the aim of the study, the use of confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw their data before the analysis stage. Additionally, they will be invited to ask any questions they may have and will have time to discuss and/or reflect on any experience they shared during the interview. Participants will be informed that the researcher can be contacted after the interview if needed and a summary of the researcher's study will be sent to each participant.</p>
<p>16. Please provide the names and nature of any external support or counselling organisations that will be suggested to participants if participation in the research has potential to raise specific issues for participants.</p>
<p>If a participant is distressed after taking part in the interview, they will be signposted to mental health services, such as Mind and the NHS Adult Mental Health Service, including IAPT services.</p>
<p>17. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)</p>
<p>N/A</p>

FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN OUTSIDE THE UK

<p>18. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If YES, please confirm:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have completed a RISK Assessment covering all aspects of the project including consideration of the location of the data collection and risks to participants.</p> <p>All overseas project data collection will need approval from the Deputy Director of Education and Training or their nominee. Normally this will be done based on the information provided in this form. All projects approved through the TREC process will be indemnified by the Trust against claims made by third parties.</p> <p>If you have any queries regarding research outside the UK, please contact academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk:</p> <p>Students are required to arrange their own travel and medical insurance to cover project work outside of the UK. Please indicate what insurance cover you have or will have in place.</p>
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<p>19. Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place. Please also clarify how the requirements will be met:</p>

SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

<p>20. Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in <i>plain English</i>)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:</p>
<p>21. Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in <i>plain English</i>)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:</p>
<p>22. The following is a <u>participant information sheet</u> checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher and Principal Investigator (your Research Supervisor) and other researchers along with relevant contact details.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC or other ethics body.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts 's Data Protection and handling Policies.: https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/</p>

- Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

23. The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

- Trust letterhead or logo.
- Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
- Confirmation that the research project is part of a degree
- Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
- If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.
- The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.
- Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
- Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

24. Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.

- Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?
- The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).
- The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).
- Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.
- Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (i.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)
- The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.
- Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

25. Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.

YES NO

If NO, please indicate why this is the case below:

NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.

SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

26. Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

27. In line with the 5th principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.

1-2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 10> years

NOTE: In line with Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance, doctoral project data should normally be stored for 10 years and Masters level data for up to 2 years

28. Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.

- Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.
- Research data will only be stored in the University of Essex OneDrive system and no other cloud storage location.
- Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.
- Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See 23.1).
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the UK.
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the UK.

NOTE: Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Essex students also have access the 'Box' service for file transfer: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/box>

- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.
- Collection and storage of personal sensitive data (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs or physical or mental health or condition).
- Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.
- Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops).

NOTE: This should be transferred to secure University of Essex OneDrive at the first opportunity.

- All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

- All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

29. Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.

N/A

30. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the UK:

N/A

SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

30. How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? (Select all that apply)

- Peer reviewed journal
- Non-peer reviewed journal
- Peer reviewed books
- Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Promotional report and materials
- Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES

31. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?

N/A

SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

32. Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

- Letters of approval from any external ethical approval bodies (where relevant)
- Recruitment advertisement
- Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
- Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
- Assent form for children (where relevant)
- Letters of approval from locations for data collection
- Questionnaire
- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

34. Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.

Attachments

Email for participants

Title of research: The Use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting.

Dear Colleague,

My name is Maria Valdrighi and I am a second year Trainee Educational Psychologist at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. I am currently looking for Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) who would like to take part in my doctoral research.

The aim of the study is to explore the experience of supervisors and supervisees when using the Contracting Circles tool in their supervision practice. The research will aim to provide an insight of the Contracting Circle's benefits and challenges during the contracting phase of supervision.

Who can take part in this research?

I am seeking to interview 4 EPs supervisors who have used the Contracting Circles tool in their supervision practice either on one occasion or as part of their regular practice. They can be EPs supervisors who are supervising EPs or TEPs. EPs may have attended the CPD 32 course at the Tavistock Portman NHS Trust or from having trained at the Tavistock Portman NHS Trust since 2016. EPs who have not attended the course nor trained at the Tavistock Portman NHS Foundation Trust, they would also be considered.

I am also seeking 4 supervisees EPs and/or TEPs who have experienced/received supervision with the Contracting Circles as the main tool for contracting.

If you think you would like to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kind regards,
Maria Valdrighi
Trainee Educational Psychologist

EPS Email: xxx
University Email: mvaldrighi@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Contact number: xxx

Interview Schedule

Example introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today and for agreeing to speak with me. I am Maria, a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of training and interested in supervision.

Today we are meeting because you agreed to take part in my research study. This research is about the use of Contracting Circles in supervision.

I have been using Contracting Circles since the beginning of my training, and I would like to hear your experience of the use of this tool. I would like to talk about your experience of using the tool as a supervisor or a supervisee and what benefits and challenges you may have found.

Our conversation will be recorded. This will help me to listen carefully to what you are saying.

What we talk today is confidential. However, if you tell me something that worries me about your safety I may have to speak with my supervisor.

If you want me to stop or have a break just let me know.

Do you have any questions?

Example opening statement

Before we start with the interview, I would like to ask you how are you today?

Thank you for sharing.

Interview schedule

What is the experience of using Contracting Circles for supervisors and supervisees when they are in supervision?

- a) How easy/difficult is it to use?
- b) How was the use of Contracting Circles influenced by the work local context where EPs work?
- c) What did you find challenging when using the Contracting Circles?
- d) What did you find beneficial?

How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the use of Contracting Circles?

- a) How do Contracting Circles compare with other types of contracting?
- b) What do Contracting Circles contribute or inhibit with respect to the development of the supervisory relationship?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Possible prompts and probes

Can you tell me more about that?

Can you give some examples?

What do you mean by..?

What did you do?

How did you feel?

Why?

Ending

Summary of the discussion

Do you have any questions for me?

Participants will be reminded of what will happen next.

Researcher will thank participants for talking to her about their experiences.

Risk assessment

Name: Maria Valdrighi	University: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
Student number: 20001478	Supervisor/ Director of Studies: Dale Bartle
Thesis Title: The Use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting	
Fieldwork location: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and/or Local Authorities.	Type of Fieldwork: Face-to-Face and/or online interviews
Proposed dates or periods of Fieldwork: April – December 2023	
Potential hazards or risks: (rate high medium or low)	
1.Safeguarding children – low	2.Participants (where applicable) experiencing strong feelings during or after the interview - low
3.Long working – participants causing physical injuries to the researcher; participants making accusations against the researcher of inappropriate behaviours - low	4.Awareness of cultural norms - low
5.Slips, trips and falls – low	6.Fire safety - low
7.COVID19 – low	8.Data from audio-recording being stolen – low
9.Degree of privacy – low	
Potential Consequences for each hazard: <i>(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants making a safeguarding disclosure during the interview. 2. Participants becoming distressed and being verbally or physically abusive towards the researcher and/or the interpreter. 3. Researcher experiencing high levels of stress 4. If the researcher shows a lack of awareness of cultural norms, the participants might feel offended or emotionally hurt and might display hostility towards the researcher 5. Physical injuries - participants, researcher and interpreter 6. Physical injuries – participants, researcher and interpreter 7. Contracting Covid-19 – participants and researcher 8. Breach of data protection 9. Breach of confidentiality and participants feeling unsafe to share freely during the interview, worrying about others hearing personal information. 10. The participants and/or researcher being verbally or physically abused. 	
Controls in place for each hazard in order of likely risk: <i>(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The researcher will inform participants of the limits to confidentiality when dealing with safeguarding disclosures. The researcher will follow the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures. 	

2. The researcher will not include questions that could cause discomfort and participants will be informed that they have the right not to answer questions. However, despite cautionary measures to minimise and reduce risk, it is still possible that some participants might experience some distress during the interviews. Therefore, the researcher will pay attention to any signs of discomfort and if a participant becomes particularly distressed, the interview will stop. The researcher will use her psychological skills to contain any strong feelings and de-escalate situations. After the interview, the researcher will debrief the participants and signpost to relevant services.
3. The researcher will arrange interview times and venues in advance and let her supervisor know the details of where she will be when.
4. The researcher will familiarise herself with different cultural norms through discussions with the interpreter prior to the interview.
5. The researcher will inspect the room prior to the interview and ensure there are no trips, slips or falls hazards, e.g., cables, spills, broken chairs.
6. The researcher will familiarise herself with the fire procedures of the setting where the interviews are taking place and will escort the child to the designated safe place if needed.
7. The researcher, participants and interpreters will adhere to governmental procedures at the time of interviews, e.g., take a lateral-flow test, wear a face mask, maintain social distance.
8. Save audio-encrypted data on a password-protected device (mobile and/or laptop) and transfer it as soon as possible to the Essex One Drive Cloud.
9. Conducting the interview in a quiet, confidential space.

By signing this document, you are indicating that you have consulted the policy and have fully considered the risks.

Signature of Student:
MARIA VALDRIGHI

Date: 27/01/2023

I agree to the assessment of risk in relation to this project.

Signature of Supervisor of Studies:

Date:

The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699

<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>

Maria Valdrighi

By Email

12 May 2023

Dear Maria,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: 'The Use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting'

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

Please be advised that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc, must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

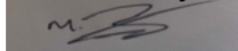
If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Franklyn



Academic Governance and Quality Officer

T: 020 938 2699

E: academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

cc. Course Lead, Supervisor, Research Lead

Appendix H: Information sheet

Researcher Name: Maria Valdrighi

Title of the study: The use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting

Aim of the research

The study will aim to investigate the experiences of EPs as supervisors and EPs and/or TEPs supervisees when using contracting circles during supervision.

Ethical approval

The research can be carried out after ethical approval is received by The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust on (approval obtained on 12.05.2023)

Participants

I am looking for EP supervisors and/or supervisees and TEP supervisees that have used the Contracting Circles tool. EPs may have participated to the CPD Course on Supervision run by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

What the research involves

Participants will be asked to answer open questions in regards to their experiences of using Contracting Circles during the contracting phase of supervision. After the interview, participants will be debriefed about the study.

Possible risks of taking part of the research

It is possible that certain interview questions may cause participants discomfort, though they will be free to skip any questions they do not want to answer. The interviews will take place in a safe space that is agreed upon by the researcher and participant where others will not be able to hear what is said. Alternatively, interviews can take place online. It can happen that some personal data may be disclosed. In case unethical issues arise from the interview, the researcher will decide on a response (if this is necessary) in line with the BPS code of human research ethics. If participants need to talk about issues that emerged during the interview, they will be able to contact the researcher or the researcher's supervisor.

The findings

The data collected from the interviews will be transcribed and analysed. The analysis of the data will be reported in a doctorate thesis, and this may be published in professional psychology journals. The data might also be shared within the university during presentations to doctoral students. The research may also be presented at conferences and/or other similar events. Participants will not be identifiable in the writing up or in any publication that might ensue. The recordings of the interviews and the transcripts will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

What happens if participants do not want to carry on with the interview

Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the research at any time before the analysis.

Confidentiality

Your personal data will be kept and stored confidentially. Interview data will be anonymised and pseudonyms will be used. The data will be collected and used in line with the UK Data Protection Act (2018). In case of concerns of participants being at risk, the researcher can break confidentiality and speaks about it with her supervisor.

The study is supervised by Dale Bartle, who is the researcher's supervisor. If you wish to contact me or my supervisor, our contact details are as follows: mvaldrighi@tavi-port.nhs.uk or Dbartle@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Thank you
Maria Valdrighi

Appendix I: Participants’ consent form



Title of study: The use of Contracting Circles in Supervision: Educational Psychologists’ Experiences of Using a Novel Tool to Facilitate Contracting

I confirm that I have read the information sheet about participating relating in the research study.

I could ask any questions in relation to the research which were answered and have to discuss the details.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason.

I understand that my personal data will remain strictly confidential.

I understand that data will remain anonymised and pseudonymised.

I understand that only the researcher who is involved in the study can have access to the raw data.

I understand that data analysis and extracts and/or quotes from my interview might be used for the write up and it could be shared with the wider public. I understand that any quotations used will remain anonymous. If my quotes are used, I will be notified and my consent will be sought for their usage.

Participant ’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant’ s Signature

.....

Investigator’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Investigator’s signature

.....

Date:

Appendix J: RTA Codes and Definitions

Initial codes and definitions

Code	Definition
Applicability of CCs to other types of supervision	CCs is being used in group and inter-professional supervision.
Assumptions	CCs allow assumptions from both supervisor and supervisee to emerge in the supervisory relationship.
Attending the training on supervision/contracting	The use of contracting was deepened with the training on supervision, which allowed for a better understanding of this contracting tool.
Avoid supervisees to be exposed	CCs facilitate the process of sharing information with supervisors in a safe manner.
Avoidance	Acknowledgement by supervisors and supervisees of the impact of certain areas of discussion and how can be navigated in the supervisory relationship.
Being vulnerable	CCs allows supervisees to feel vulnerable in supervision and consider it a safe space.
Boundaries	CCs enable the definition of boundaries in the supervisory relationship.
Content-heavy	CCs can be the perceived as a tool with multiple contents to cover/discuss.
Contract	CCs defined as a legal contract.
Dependability of person's factors	The choice of specific areas/circles may depend on the values and beliefs of the supervisees and supervisors.
Ethical base	CCs enable supervisees and supervisors to be reminded of the ethical responsibility associated with the use of supervision.

Expectations	CCs enable the sharing and discussion of the expectations that supervisor and supervisee have when entering a new supervisory relationship.
Foundation layer of the supervisory relationship	CCs represent the starting point for building the supervisory relationship between supervisor and supervisee.
Guidance	CCs' practice should come with a guidance for its use in supervision.
Guide	CCs serves as a tool that enables supervisors to provide direction on how to develop the contracting process.
Identity	CCs enable discussions about the identity of both supervisor and supervisee and its implications in the supervisory relationship.
Learning and reflection	CCs enable the contracting of how learning happens in supervision and what its reflections.
Power dynamic	CCs can facilitate understanding of the power dynamic involved in the supervisory relationship.
Practicality	The element of CCs that makes them practical and facilitate conversations.
Previous experience	CCs enable supervisors and supervisees to share about their own previous experience of supervision and contracting.
Private and confidential space	CCs ensure that supervisors and supervisee use the supervisory space in a confidential manner.
Query whether the supervisory relationship is unilateral	Using the CCs in supervision, supervisees and supervisors acknowledged the nuanced relationship that forms in supervision.

Relationship and not only practicalities	CCs enable supervisors and supervisees to establish an authentic supervisory relationship.
Review	CCs involve the practice of reviewing what has been contracted.
Ritual	CCs are defined as a ritualistic tool, which cannot be avoided in supervision.
Sameness and differences	CCs facilitate discussions regarding the 'sameness' and differences between supervisors and supervisees, which impact the supervisory relationship.
Self-in-role	CCs enable discussion and reflections regarding the role of identity in the relationship between supervisors and supervisee, as well as what this means in practice when in relationship with clients.
Sharing, collaborative tool	CCs are defined as collaborative tool, as supervisors and supervisees can share their views.
SOCIAL GRACES	CCs enable the supervisory dyad to discuss the social graces framework and reflect on how it can impact EP practice.
Static vs dynamic?	CCs enable the process of contracting.
The content of CCs	CCs contained areas for supervisors and supervisees to consider during contracting phase.
Time consuming	CCs and their circles can be time-consuming due to the number of circles to cover during in contracting phase.
Visual	CCs' visuals of circles facilitate discussions between supervisors and supervisees.

Merged Codes and Examples of Extracts

Merged/Amended code	Comprised of	Definition	Example of coded extract from interview transcript
CCs facilitator of sharing experience	-	CCs enable supervisors and supervisees to share about their own previous experience of supervision and contracting	“it’s useful to talk about previous experiences of supervision because everyone has their own way of doing supervision, whether it’s supervisee or supervisor” (Supervisee 3).
Identity	Social Graces, visible invisible self-in-role	CCs enable the supervisory dyad to discuss the social graces framework and reflect on how it can impact EP practice	“I had shared social graces like a less physical one and make things just a bit more balanced [...] because we found those discussions from the beginning. I feel comfortable talking to my supervisor about different aspects of children’s or family’s identity’ (Supervisee 1).
Boundaries as one of the contents of CCs	Boundaries Structure Confidentiality Same direction in supervision Content of contracting	CCs enable the definition of boundaries in the supervisory relationship	“I think, an additional wall the supervisor it’s to think about boundaries around some of the conversations, ‘what it’s possible and what’s not possible” (Supervisor 3).
Applicability of CCs to broad EP practice	Applicability of CCs to other types of supervision Modalities of use of CCs Variability of the use of CCs	CCs is being used in group and inter-professional supervision	“I perceive something as something very helpful and used beyond [EP] supervision, like I did when I begin a new relationship with a school” (Supervisor 3).
Importance of visuals	Visuals Cc’s usefulness	CCs’ visuals of circles facilitate discussions between supervisors and supervisees	“ I think having those things done on a paper that you can refer to. I can

			definitely find the visionless of it (Supervisor 1).
The contracting process	Contact contracting phase	The understanding of the function of contracting	“With contracting, it’s something that’s useful to use at the beginning of the supervisory relationship to check out some things and where we are at in that relationship (Supervisor 2).
Practicalities of using CCs	Time consuming	CCs and their circles can be time-consuming due to the number of circles to cover during in contracting phase	“CCs can be time-consuming because it takes more than one session, usually 2 sessions (Supervisor 2).
Difficulties	-	CCs enable the process of contracting	“They help to lay the groundwork for what could be a solid relationship (Supervisee 3).
CCs enables conversation	Sharing, collaborative tool	CCs are defined as collaborative tool, as supervisors and supervisees can share their views	“I think they made me more open to share things with her [supervisor] (Supervisee 2).
CCs’ prompts facilitate difficulties	Conversation difficult to talk	CCs facilitate the process of conversations related to difficulty in the supervisory relationship	“It’s about how to talk about difficult things with your supervisor (Supervisee 4).
CCs facilitators of reflection	-	CCs are perceived as facilitator of reflections about the supervisory relationship and piece of work.	“it’s a support to help us understand [...] some of the feelings that come when you’re doing a piece of work or you’re entering into supervisory relationship” (Supervisee 4)
Definition of CCs	-	CCs was given different adjective to describe their utility.	“CCs are reference, a reflective tool a kind of support” (Supervisee 4).
Relationship	-	CCs enables the process of establish the relationship between supervisee and supervisor.	“With CCs is where we can grapple with staff” (Supervisor 4).
Reviewing contracting during	Review	CCs are identified as useful tool to re-contracting in supervision	“CCs make the process of recontacting useful and accessible” (Supervisor 1)

supervisory process			
Empowering tool	CCs as useful tool	CCs are perceived as enabling supervisee to talk about content that they would like to bring in supervision	“I could share my views and bring staff as actually we didn’t speak about differences for example, shall we go back to it” (Supervisee 2)
Importance of training	-	CCs improve awareness of EPs about contracting	“They improved my awareness about the supervisees’ needs and aspects of identity” (Supervisor 1)
Guidance and direction	-	CCs can enable conversations about how to initiate the contracting phase	“CCs are like gate opener” (supervisor 1)
Supervisory relationship (Safety)	-	CCs enable to build a safe space where supervisees can share feelings and thoughts	“it’s kind of talking about the emotional aspect of work” (Supervisee 1)
Supervisory relationship (Avoidance)	-	There is an acknowledgement by supervisors and supervisees that without CCs’ knowledge, contracting can be avoided	“It was interesting going through with somebody who had no idea. So, I think a lot of things are kind of skated over” (Supervisee 4)
Supervisory relationship (containment)	-	CCs enable to explore items of conversation that can be uncomfortable for supervisees to explore	“It feels less pressure to bring it!” (Supervisee 4)

Appendix K: Sample of the Interview Transcripts

Interviewee4

[Interviewer] 10:10:09
How are you today?

[Interviewee#4] 10:15:25
Good, thanks.

[Interviewer] 10:17:13
Thank you for meeting with me today and for agreeing to speak with me. Our conversation will be recorded. This will help me to listen carefully to what you are saying. What we talk today is confidential. However, if you tell me something that worries me about your safety I may have to speak with my supervisor. If you want me to stop or have a break just let me know.

Do you have any questions?

[Interviewee#4] 10:31:15
No, really... I'm ready.

[Interviewer] 10:36:13
Okay, it must be, must be on. Okay, so the first question is, what is your understanding or understanding or contracting and contracting circles?

[Interviewee#4] 10:36:25
Okay, so my understanding of Let's start with contracting. Is 2 people understanding their boundaries and their role, when they're entering a relationship, whether it's supervision, whether it's to do a piece of work, whether it's, a new job.

[Interviewee#4] 10:36:44
so Contracting to me is really important because I guess it's the first step to understanding what your expectations of the other person are and what their expectations of you are.

[Interviewee#4] 10:36:59
My understanding of contracting circles on the other hand, is kind of.

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:06
A reference, a tool, a reflective kind of,

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:13

Support. To help us understand what. Would be helpful to think about in contracting. I think it brings a lot of useful elements which might be overlooked when we're contracting a piece of work, such as, you know, I don't have the contracting circles off at the moment, so I can't remember them off by heart.

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:35

But such as some of the feelings that come when you're doing a piece of work or you're entering into supervisory relationship.

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:42

So You know, your past experiences, this supervision, how that might impact you in your new supervisory relationship.

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:50

How we might talk about difficult feelings, how we might challenge each other, which I think is really important for like.

[Interviewee#4] 10:37:58

Healthy. Supportive learning relationship.

[Interviewee#4] 10:38:05

So yeah, I guess broadly that's my understanding of. Contracting circles. And I think it really aids the contracting kind of element of any type of work.

[Interviewee#4] 10:38:18

Which is how you starting most pieces of work. Because it gives space to both people to kind of voice some of their Excitement, some of their concerns.

[Interviewer] 10:38:21

Hmm.

[Interviewee#4] 10:38:29

I've used it in every single type of supervisory relationships. I've used it for my thesis supervision, I've used it for my EPS supervision.

[Interviewee#4] 10:38:42

I've used it for my personal supervision and every single time. It's used differently. Yeah, we still go through all the bubbles, but people always pick up on different things, different things are important, different relationships.

[Interviewer] 10:38:47

Oh, interesting.

[Interviewee#4] 10:38:54

So, for example, when I used it in the thesis. Supervisory relationship. I think there was more focus on outcome and task.

[Interviewer] 10:38:55
Hmm.

[Interviewer] 10:39:02
Hmm. Yeah.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:03
Because obviously it's quite tasked. We've got 40,000 words to write. But we still spoke about challenge.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:12
I did my thesis on race and racism. My supervisor was a white man and how challenge might not.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:20
Always be appropriate at certain times when we're thinking about race and racism and kind of the power dynamics between each other.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:29
So, I think it's really important, but I think different. Yeah. So, when you're using it in different spaces.

[Interviewer] 10:39:34
Hmm.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:35
If things kind of get picked up on. And I also mentioned just before we started the recording that I also use this in my work when I'm working therapeutically with young people.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:45
And I think it's really helpful to understand young people's boundaries, things they do and might not want to talk about quite explicitly.

[Interviewee#4] 10:39:53
For example, I worked with a young person who's they had the parents had a messy divorce, and he doesn't see dad anymore.

[Interviewee#4] 10:40:05
And when I said, okay, so what shall we talk about? Let's think about contracting outcomes.

[Interviewee#4] 10:40:09
What shall we bring to this session? What should we do together? First thing he said is, that's off the table.

[Interviewer] 10:40:11

Yeah.

[Interviewee#4] 10:40:15

Interviewee 3

[Interviewer] 16:48:17

The next one, next question is how do you as a supervisee, How do you perceive the use of contracting circles?

[Interview #3] 16:48:31

So, like I said. I think I'd probably prefer not to be my answer, but I do think it's something that the supervisor tends to bring as a tool.

[Interview #3] 16:48:41

I'd like to think it's 2 ways. The reality of. Okay. To it as in I'd like the tool to be brought by trainees and by supervisors.

[Interviewer] 16:48:44

Hmm. 2 ways with me.

[Interviewer] 16:48:54

Okay, okay.

[Interview #3] 16:48:56

I think in reality my experience is probably brought more by supervisors. Not the trainees don't want to use it and aren't aware of it.

[Interviewer] 16:49:01

Hmm.

[Interviewer] 16:49:06

Hmm.

[Interview #3] 16:49:07

Just it's another thing for them to remember to bring to a supervision when they've got lots going on in their head probably.

[Interview #3] 16:49:13

And., I think the sort of I perceive them is.

[Interviewer] 16:49:13

Yeah.

[Interview #3] 16:49:24

A way of like untangling things. So, I think. Sometimes things you can bring to supervision or Maybe thoughts that are sort of like half formed.

[Interview #3] 16:49:39

Might come out in general discussions. And the contracting circles might help this sort of, Structure those thoughts a little bit.

[Interview #3] 16:49:50

Or think about them in a slightly different way. To help sort of expand your thinking.

[Interviewer] 16:49:56

Hmm. Okay, so I understand that the expand but you were saying previously like it. It's how to structure your thinking.

[Interview #3] 16:50:08

Yeah, like sometimes I feel like I paid to supervision, and I have like a half formed thought if that makes sense.

[Interviewer] 16:50:15

Hmm.

[Interview #3] 16:50:16

And I might blur out what I think is some of the thought I don't really know what I'm trying to say.

[Interviewer] 16:50:22

Hmm.

[Interview #3] 16:50:23

And I think the circles can be useful in saying sort of I didn't know say it's around.

[Interview #3] 16:50:33

Like your beliefs and attitudes or something like that. And you thought half got something coming up you're not sure it's a nice prompt to be like okay maybe if I answer some of these questions.

[Interview #3] 16:50:49

I'll be able to work out what it is I'm trying to say if that makes sense.

[Interviewer] 16:50:56

And is there anything else that you would like to add about how you perceive?

[Interview #3] 16:51:03

I didn't think so, not this stage.

[Interviewer] 16:51:07

So, what are in your opinion the key feature of contracting circles?

[Interview #3] 16:51:12
Hmm.

[Interview #3] 16:51:17
I think. It's quite hard to pick one key feature.

[Interviewer] 16:51:23
You can pick up whatever you want.

[Interview #3] 16:51:29
I think they could

[Interview #3] 16:51:36
Probably the prompts that the questions themselves. I know that's like encompassing all of it but like Yes, this had the, the phrase as questions, not like.

[Interview #3] 16:51:46
You could think about this. Means that they're a bit more like directive I think that's quite key.

[Interview #3] 16:51:53
Okay, because I could technically look at the supervision circles by myself and sort of have my own.

[Interview #3] 16:52:01
Conversation answering the questions by myself, and I think that's helpful. To do whether you're thinking about it before supervision or maybe after supervision something's coming into your head.

[Interview #3] 16:52:12
which I think it's just like I don't know. Consider your, hopes and fears.

[Interview #3] 16:52:19
That's quite big to just start considering. That makes sense. I also think a key thing for me is around like I've sort of mentioned before like the identity aspect of it.

[Interviewer] 16:52:33
Hmm.

[Interview #3] 16:52:34
And how it sorts of links into like who you are, your, your, values and your attitudes.

[Interview #3] 16:52:42
And like where your kind of When you sit in society broadly and the way you sit in your profession and then where you sit.

[Interview #3] 16:52:52

In your cohort and then when you sit in supervision and then where you sit completely by yourself.

Interviewee 2

Interviewer

[how did you find useful using CCs while tackling the identity?]

[Interviewee#2]

Yes, I mean, I think, it complements the transcultural activity that is richer because you really start thinking about what sorts of things between me and you. I think, maybe, the identity proper surfaces it and names it and put it in the table, if you like, and the transcultural activity then allows us to put it in the table, we know we are talking about this, a little bit closer and then connect with these similarities and differences as well more. It stops just being just naming the similarities and differences, it makes it more, more personal, more stories, and experiences and learning from one another, I think, it's quite a stepping stone step another a little bit another one I would say, and then the other thing I think it's really important is the difficulties one. Because when would you talk about that, otherwise? You know, and you can see, if people seem awkward by talking about: "ehm.." and sometimes you have to go like, it's 2023 so we start the difficulties to talk about, so, sometimes may be not occurring, but I think, the fact that you, the person can talk about the difficulties it's not the end of the world and you're ok at the end of it, we haven't ruined anything and you know, it's to talk about it and then be ok it's probably quite helpful thing, and I know people, people always phrase like: "we don't need to use this", or "it's not going to happen" and staff like that, it's like, people paraphrase it a little bit. But you will never know. It could be, it could be easy. If Ever, was it, I think, it must be such a relieve to know we have a process, we are going to use it, we know what we can do.

[Interviewer]

What did you find less useful when using contracting circles?

[Interviewee#2]

Maybe the busyness of the tool and it can be quite overwhelming.

[Interviewer]

When you say busyness, what do you mean?

[Interviewee#2]

Visually it's a lot, if you look visually it all. If you look at it. When you first look at it, you're going to say:"who", that's a lot there, where do I start? Because, you know, all the circles of different colours, all the questions... I think it's just both it managing to squeeze all in one page, so maybe, it can look a bit too, it would be nice, to make it look cleaner, and I know C is working on that, so visually a lit bit less overwhelming. I wonder if it would help to have a little, guidance alongside the tool, a pack on how to use the tool, just to, you know, it can be easy to just learn how to use it well, it would be nice to

have some guidance on that. I can't think of anything terribly unhelpful about it, but I've never.. it's a very harmless tool, it causes no harms.

[Interviewer],

So nothing else, you found not useful?

[Interviewee#2]

Maybe something around the themes and the use of them. Something about how were seen and mis seen. It's just a prompt, isn't it? it's not going to cover absolutely everything that prompts to have these conversations and it's really up to your supervisor to kind facilitate really

[Interviewer]

How do contracting circles influence your supervisory experience?

[Interviewee#2]

the definitely enriched my supervision, I feel like I know the person in a more intimate way, it gets pass some of that supervision, you can get some of trust when you meet someone, it allows you to connect in a deeper level very quickly, even though you might not see that person every month, that gives, you know, that's incredibly helpful, you know. It makes me feel, like, I am practicing technically, I'm thinking about, learning in supervisory relationship a lot, I am thinking about, difference, cultural differences and what parts differential and hiding and presently brought to learn and I was thinking about the clients. I think the circles help me, help me the dyad, me and the supervisee, on[...] on how that space is about, it helps to stay on task, staying in law on the task, and keeps it away from the seller, yes it keeps stay away from the seller, it can be far from the beginning saying: "this is the status of the box" so try to fight that, it could be very wrong later on, you know, how to make that kind of commitment to each other, it's like [...] to each other as well. And make sure that there is space they, you know, [trued] what we say, it also changes and shifts more as you learn, more as you go on, all those areas and foundations [...] yea, I don't know what I do outside the [...] what happened [...] it's like a loss, and you made me think of the negative [...] so it is definitely one of my key tool in supervision together with other couple of things.

[Interviewer]

[Is there anything else you would like to add about contracting circles?]

[Interviewee#2]

I can say, you can contract all of these things, and having a sharing understanding of how to be responsible to each other. That's also a new habit, there is also feelings, talking about feelings as a tool, so I have contracted all of these but it does not necessarily mean we talk about these in supervision, maybe we don't, so, there are not like, I guess, as foundational, you can think all the job is done, and all of that, you still need to work really hard on all these things, and make sure that you leave up to the contract, so, it is only, it just worked and then it guaranteed that happen once you

agreed it, it would be very.. at least it can give you a good start, to have all these conversations.

Appendix L: Interview Schedule

Example introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today and for agreeing to speak with me. I am Maria, a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of training and interested in supervision.

Today we are meeting because you agreed to take part in my research study. This research is about the use of Contracting Circles in supervision.

I have been using Contracting Circles since the beginning of my training, and I would like to hear your experience of the use of this tool. I would like to talk about your experience of using the tool as a supervisor or a supervisee and what benefits and challenges you may have found.

Our conversation will be recorded. This will help me to listen carefully to what you are saying.

What we talk today is confidential. However, if you tell me something that worries me about your safety I may have to speak with my supervisor.

If you want me to stop or have a break just let me know.

Do you have any questions?

Example opening statement

Before we start with the interview, I would like to ask you how are you today?

Thank you for sharing.

Interview schedule

What is the experience of using Contracting Circles for supervisors and supervisees when they are in supervision?

- e) How easy/difficult is it to use?
- f) How was the use of Contracting Circles influenced by the work local context where EPs work?
- g) What did you find challenging when using the Contracting Circles?
- h) What did you find beneficial?

How do supervisors and supervisees perceive the use of Contracting Circles?

- c) How do Contracting Circles compare with other types of contracting?
- d) What do Contracting Circles contribute or inhibit with respect to the development of the supervisory relationship?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Possible prompts and probes

Can you tell me more about that?

Can you give some examples?

What do you mean by..?

What did you do?

How did you feel?

Why?

Ending

Summary of the discussion

Do you have any questions for me?

Participants will be reminded of what will happen next.

Researcher will thank participants for talking to her about their experiences.

Appendix M: Example of Transcript with Coding

	Transcript	Codes and definitions
1	Okay, so the first question is, what is your understanding or understanding or contracting and contracting circles?	
2		
3	[Interviewee] 10:36:25 Okay, so my understanding of Let's start with contracting Is 2 people understanding their boundaries and their role, when they're entering a relationship, whether it's supervision, whether it's to do a piece of work, whether it's, a new job.	Understanding of contracting= two people who have clear understanding of boundaries and their role in initiating a relationship.
4		Contracting being applicable to different type of the relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision - Piece of work - New working relationship
5		
6	[Interviewee] 10:36:44	
7	So. Contracting to me is really important because I guess it's the first step to understanding what your expectations of the other person are and what their expectations of you are.	Importance of contracting as first stage to understanding expectations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisor's expectations of the supervisee. - Supervisor's expectations of the supervisee.
8		
9	[Interviewee] 10:36:59	
10	My understanding of contracting circles on the other hand, is kind of.	
11		
12	[Interviewee] 10:37:06	
13	A reference, a tool, a reflective kind of,	CCs is understood as:
14		- A tool
15	[Interviewee] 10:37:13	- A reference
16	Support. To help us understand what. Would be helpful to think about in contracting. I think it brings a lot of useful elements which might be overlooked when we're contracting a piece of work, such as, you know, I don't have the contracting circles off at the moment, so I can't remember them off by heart.	- Reflective support It supports the dyad to think about what to discuss during contracting
17		
18	[Interviewee] 10:37:35	

19	But such as some of the feelings that come when you're doing a piece of work or you're entering into supervisory relationship (SR).	There is an acknowledgement of importance of the circle/topics. However, a risk of overlooking the items is recognised by the supervisee when discussing those during contracting.
20		
21	[Interviewee] 10:37:42	
22	So. You know, your past experiences, this supervision, how that might impact you in your new supervisory relationship.	One element overlooked is the feeling part that impacts - A new piece of work
23		
24	[Interviewee] 10:37:50	
25	How we might talk about difficult feelings, how we might challenge each other, which I think is really important for like.	- A new SR There is a recognition of how past experiences can impact a new SR that a supervisee can embark. - difficult feelings - how to challenge supervisee and supervisor
26		
27	[Interviewee] 10:37:58	
28	Healthy. Supportive learning relationship.	How to challenge in a SR is considered important for a supportive learning relationship.
29		
30	[Interviewee] 10:38:05	
31	So yeah, I guess broadly that's my understanding of. Contracting circles. And I think it really aids the contracting kind of element of any type of work.	Applicability of CCs to other contexts, other types of relationships.
32		
33	[Interviewee] 10:38:18	.
34	Which is how you start most pieces of work. Because it gives space to both people to kind of voice some of their Excitement, some of their concerns.	CCs allows to voice : - the positives – excitement - the negatives – concerns
35		CCs allows to voice :
36	[INTERVIEWER] 10:38:21	
37	Hmm.	
38		
39	[Interviewee] 10:38:29	List of the type of relationship CCs have been used:

40	I've used it in every single type of supervisory relationships. I've used it for my thesis supervision, I've used it for my EPS supervision.	- personal,
41		- research
42	[Interviewee] 10:38:42	- EP placement
43	I've used it for my personal supervision and every single time it's used differently. Yeah, we still go through all the bubbles, but people always pick up on different things, different things are important, different relationships.	CCs is a versatile tool. Variability in the way CCs is used ('every time is used differently'). Variability depends on people's choice which. Same bubbles, different use, different outcomes . Consideration of circles/topics more important than others. Consideration of relationship different from one another.
44		
45	[INTERVIEWER] 10:38:47	
46	Oh, interesting.	
47		
48	[Interviewee] 10:38:54	
49	So for example, when I used it in the thesis. Supervisory relationship. I think there was more focus on outcome and task.	Example of use of CCs in research supervision.
50		
51	[INTERVIEWER] 10:38:55	
52	Hmm.	It was task oriented but there was space to speak about challenges, which was contracted.
53		
54	[INTERVIEWER] 10:39:02	The choice of CCs depends on different spaces where supervision is used, which will influence the type of supervision and its purpose.
55	Hmm. Yeah.	
56		(Thesis on race and racism, researcher Asian female and supervisor White male.
57	[Interviewee] 10:39:03	
58	Because obviously it's quite tasked. We've got 40,000 words to write. But we still spoke about challenge.	Thinking of challenges not always took place, recognising the power dynamic).
59		
60	[Interviewee] 10:39:12	

61	I did my thesis on race and racism. My supervisor was a white man and how challenge might not.	
62		
63	[Interviewee] 10:39:20	
64	Always be appropriate at certain times when we're thinking about race and racism and kind of the power dynamics between each other.	Thesis on race and racism, researcher Asian female and supervisor White male.
65		
66	[Interviewee] 10:39:29	
67	So I think it's really important, but I think different. Yeah. So when you're using it in different spaces.	Use of CCs in a different space: a therapeutic intervention.
68		
69	[INTERVIEWER] 10:39:34	
70	Hmm.	
71		
72	[Interviewee] 10:39:35	
73	If things kind of get picked up on. And I also mentioned just before we started the recording that I also use this in my work when I'm working therapeutically with young people.	CCs was helpful to understand boundaries of the client, things they might want/not want to talk.
74		
75	[Interviewee] 10:39:45	
76	And I think it's really helpful to understand young people's boundaries, things they do and might not want to talk about quite explicitly.	Contracting outcomes = what the client would like to get from the intervention.
77		
78	[Interviewee] 10:39:53	
79	For example, I worked with a young person who's they had a The parents had a, messy divorce, and he doesn't see dad anymore.	
80		
81	[Interviewee] 10:40:05	
82	And when I said, okay, so what shall we talk about? Let's think about contracting outcomes.	
83		
84	[Interviewee] 10:40:09	
85	What shall we bring to this session? What should we do together? First thing he said is, that's off the table.	
86		
87	[INTERVIEWER] 10:40:11	
88	Yeah.	
89		
90	[Interviewee] 10:40:15	

91	Like I don't want to talk about dad. And I was like: "okay". I mean, we got there eventually.	CCs enabled the client to share what made him feel comfortable talking about and what did not.
92		
93	[INTERVIEWER] 10:40:19	
94	Well done.	
95		
96	[Interviewee] 10:40:19	
97	Thank you. That's the whole point of it. But, it was helpful to know at the beginning what he felt safe, comfortable, safe and comfortable talking about and what he didn't.	The use of CCs seems to come from the values, beliefs, and experience of who brings CCs
98		
99	[Interviewee] 10:40:27	
100	'Cause I didn't want to break down that therapeutic relationship straightaway by pushing him on something.	Giving value to the therapeutic relationship, the CCs serves as foundation to understand, in the first stage, what helps and what does not for the client
101		
102	[INTERVIEWER] 10:40:31	
103	Yeah.	
104		
105	[Interviewee] 10:40:33	
106	He was not ready to talk about. Another good thing about contracting, you can always re contract.	Value of Re-contracting when there are no positive results in the relationship.
107		
108	[Interviewee] 10:40:38	
109	Bring out the circles, again, and be like, well, actually maybe last time we didn't touch so much on ethics or difference.	
110		
111	[Interviewee] 10:40:45	
112	Maybe we can think a bit about that now.	CCs is a tool with informed-base practice?
113		
114	[INTERVIEWER] 10:40:48	
115	Hmm, okay.	
116		
117	[INTERVIEWER] 10:40:51	

118	So this is something that you touched on already, but it's about what is your experience of using contracting circles as supervisee when you are in supervision?	
119		
120	[Interviewee] 10:41:05	
121	I think. Training at the Tavistock	The use of CCs depends on the training received by supervisees and supervisors
122		Y1 – the use of CCs was supervisors led. Y2-Y3 – proactive role in using CCs both in supervision and in other contexts.
123	[Interviewee] 10:41:13	
124	At the beginning anyway. It was brought by the supervisor. So my personal supervision and my. EPS supervisor, they brought the contracting circles and they talked me through kind of the different bubbles.	Change on the use of CCs across the years of training
125		
126	[Interviewee] 10:41:27	
127	Whereas once I moved into year 2 and I kind of used it in other areas like I've already said like with young people or with.	I Y2-Y3 – proactive role in using CCs both in supervision and in other contexts.
128		
129	[Interviewee] 10:41:36	
130	My EPS supervisors who might who were not Tavistock trained. I brought it and that was something I actively did.	supervisor did not have training in the Uni where CCs are taught, then there is no knowledge of the tool. This will make the SR different from trainees who have trained in the Uni where CCs are contracted.
131		
132	[INTERVIEWER] 10:41:42	
133	Hmm.	
134		
135	[Interviewee] 10:41:45	
136	Probably unconsciously, cause I realised how helpful it was. It's probably only in third year when I realised it's like, oh, I'm actually like finding it really helpful.	There is a value in talking about different subjects brought by the circles.
137		
138	[INTERVIEWER] 10:41:53	
139	Hmm.	
140		
141	[Interviewee] 10:41:54	

142	But I think Yeah, I think I brought it because I kind of saw the value in going through some of these things and I had quite a difficult.	CCs was helpful to overcome challenging times in supervision.
143		
144	[Interviewee] 10:42:04	
145	EPS supervisory relationship in year 2. And I think that made me appreciate the contracting circles even more.	Experience of using CCs with someone who had no experience.
146		
147	[INTERVIEWER] 10:42:14	
148	Okay.	
149		
150	[Interviewee] 10:42:15	
151	I think I did bring my, Contracting circles to my supervisory relationship in year 2.	Without the use of CCs, some elements of the SR were avoided.
152		
153	[INTERVIEWER] 10:42:24	
154	Hmm.	
155		
156	[Interviewee] 10:42:24	
157	It was interesting going through with somebody who had no idea. About the contracting circles. Yeah, so I think a lot of the things we're kind of, skated over.	Power dynamic imbalance because the supervisor who did not know about CCs was told by a supervisee to talk about unpleasant things within the SR.
158		
159	[INTERVIEWER] 10:42:30	
160	Yes, how did it go? How? Oh.	
161		
162	[Interviewee] 10:42:39	
163	And it puts you in a bit of a weird position because somebody's like, yeah, cool.	
164		
165	[Interviewee] 10:42:43	
166	I'm your supervisor. And you're like, yes, yes, but we need to contract and they're like.	Impact of using CCs with people who have no training on contracting and CCs.
167		
168	[Interviewee] 10:42:47	
169	What are you talking about? And I think they understood the concept of contracting, obviously, because they're an EP, but I think they.	CCs= circles with questions about topics in the SR which might be or might be not pleasant to talk about.

170		
171	[INTERVIEWER] 10:42:49	
172	Okay.	
173		
174	[INTERVIEWER] 10:42:56	
175	Yes.	
176		
177	[Interviewee] 10:42:58	
178	Didn't maybe realise it was gonna I was gonna bring out these circles with so many questions and be like, let's talk about all of these.	Avoidance of talking about topics in contracting phase means not exploring them in-depth.
179		
180	[INTERVIEWER] 10:43:04	
181	Yeah.	
182		
183	[Interviewee] 10:43:07	
184	And I think I then was in a position of being like, oh, I don't want to impose myself.	
185		
186	[INTERVIEWER] 10:43:11	
187	Yes.	
188		
189	[Interviewee] 10:43:11	
190	Again, power dynamic. I don't want to put myself in the Tavi way of doing it with Another EP.	
191		
192	[INTERVIEWER] 10:43:15	
193	Yeah. Hmm. Yeah.	
194		
195	[Interviewee] 10:43:20	
196	So I'll bring it out because it's important to me and I find it helpful. But yes, we'll skate over some of the things and not talk about them in so much depth.	Power dynamic of imposition using CCs.
197		
198	[Interviewee] 10:43:26	
199	Which is basically what happened. And that like It wasn't like it wasn't a very helpful supervisory relationship.	Despite negative experience of SR, supervisee brought CCs and this tool seemed to overcome differences in approach and outlook on life.
200		
201	[INTERVIEWER] 10:43:28	
202	Okay.	

203		
204	[Interviewee] 10:43:36	
205	It would. Probably say. And I'm trying not to be too negative.	
206		
207	[INTERVIEWER] 10:43:37	
208	Okay.	
209		
210	[Interviewee] 10:43:43	
211	I don't know whether that was down to not doing the contracting circles properly. I don't think so.	
212		
213	[Interviewee] 10:43:49	
214	I think we had very different. Approach and very different. Outlook on life probably which kind of clashed.	
215		
216	[Interviewee] 10:43:57	
217	Which did come a little bit in contracting circles when we talked about our previous experience and how we trained in different places.	CCs was useful to explore differences and sameness between supervisor and supervisee.
218		
219	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:06	
220	Okay.	
221		
222	[Interviewee] 10:44:08	
223	But that was some sameness as well. We had both. Had some experience in the Middle East.	Although the use of CCs the focus was on the sameness, whereas differences in school thoughts and approaches were avoided.
224		
225	[Interviewee] 10:44:15	
226	And I think what happened was... is that there was a focus on the sameness. During the contracting and less focus on the difference and how maybe we have different schools of thoughts and different.	Avoidance was the result of using the CCs with someone who has no knowledge of the tool.
227		
228	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:21	
229	Hmm. Hmm.	
230		
231	[Interviewee] 10:44:28	
232	Approaches to assessment and stuff like that. So I think, yeah, I think when you're using it with somebody who might be very new to it.	

233		Negatives of CCs: there should be an explanation of:
234	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:32	- what it is
235	Okay.	- how to use it
236		- why it is important.
237	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:38	
238	Yeah.	
239		
240	[Interviewee] 10:44:39	
241	Yeah, I think there needs to be some explanation around it, which may be as a year 2 trainee.	
242		
243	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:44	
244	Hmm.	
245		
246	[Interviewee] 10:44:45	
247	I didn't, I couldn't fully explain maybe of why it was so important to go through it.	
248		
249	[INTERVIEWER] 10:44:50	
250	Hmm.	
251		
252	[Interviewee] 10:44:50	
253	I think also the thing that didn't help is our initial our initial supervisory contracting meeting was done in public.	
254		
255	[Interviewee] 10:44:59	
256	So, yeah, she wanted to go out. So we did it out in a coffee shop.	
257		
258	[INTERVIEWER] 10:45:01	The confidential and private space to use for contracting allows:
259	Okay.	.
260		
261	[Interviewee] 10:45:06	
262	So I think I think there were a number of factors that affected that contracting, which are probably good to highlight.	
263		
264	[Interviewee] 10:45:11	
265	I think it should always be done in a private confidential space. And I think it, that allows you to kind of dig a bit deeper on some of the.	Recognition of the contracting phase as a delicate, confidential and private stage to build the SR.
266		

267	[Interviewee] 10:45:20	
268	Circles and questions that are slightly Personal.	The confidential and private space to use for contracting allows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To explore topics in a deeper way - To explore questions that are personal.
269		
270	[INTERVIEWER] 10:45:26	
271	Yeah, I can see that as you said before that you had 2 different types of approach.	
272		
273	[Interviewee] 10:45:33	
274	Yeah, yeah. So yeah, but it's been interesting. So this in my 3rd year, I used it with my EPS supervisor as well.	Realities where CCs are implemented in a service and included in the TEP policy.
275		
276	[INTERVIEWER] 10:45:42	
277	Hmm.	
278		
279	[Interviewee] 10:45:42	
280	Even though she's not Tavistock trained. She has seen the contracting circles before because the service uses it.	Being familiar with the tool of CCs can influence positively the contracting phase and the SR.
281		
282	[INTERVIEWER] 10:45:49	
283	Okay.	
284		
285	[Interviewee] 10:45:50	
286	It's used within the Service, it's used within the TEP handbook, so all TEPs who come to the service, use the contracting circles, whether they're from Tavistock or not.	- Relevant to think about areas to consider when in a SR or different types of working relationships.
287		
288	[Interviewee] 10:45:59	
289	So they're quite familiar with it. I didn't really need to explain anything. So I think there's something there about.	The familiarity of using the tool can help to understand for both supervisor and supervisee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the CCs is useful - Why CCs is useful. - Why CCs is important in the SR and in contracting.
290		
291	[Interviewee] 10:46:05	

292	Try and knowledge of how the circles are useful. And understanding. Why are they useful? What they used for why it's important to think about these areas when you're entering that kind of relationship.	Example of using CCs with YP. Explaining the rationale why CCs is used - To understand the YP better
293		
294	[Interviewee] 10:46:20	
295	And so when I use it with younger people, I explain it in quite similar way. It's just for me to understand you a little bit better and what might be helpful in our work together.	- to understand what would be helpful to work on in the relationship.
296		usefulness of a reduced version of CCs comprising 5 circles. However, there is no criterium the choice.
297	[INTERVIEWER] 10:46:27	
298	Hmm.	Acknowledgement that using all the circles in CCs can be too much information to handle and discuss over.
299		
300	[Interviewee] 10:46:29	
301	But I've simplified it. So I only use 4 or 5. 4 or 5 bubbles.	
302		CCs used at the 3 different levels of EP work:
303	[Interviewee] 10:46:34	- individual
304	I don't use all of them because it's quite a lot for the young ones.	- group
305		- organisational
306	[INTERVIEWER] 10:46:37	
307	Okay. And they've used also for or like, so individual level, young, with children and also in organisational level.	Caveat of using CCs in organisations: there are many people to contract with therefore, a reduced number of circles can be useful.
308		
309	[Interviewee] 10:46:48	
310	Yeah, so I think with the organisational level it's slightly different because obviously There's a lot of people to contract with.	
311		
312	[Interviewee] 10:46:57	
313	So I'm thinking about my year 3 project. When we did our organizational change work. I did use most of the bubbles, but I couldn't use all of them because There's a lot of people in the organization.	CCs needs to be amended if this is for working in organisations.

Appendix N: Relationship between Themes, Subthemes and Codes

Theme	Subtheme	Refined Code
The CCs impact on the supervisory relationship	Difficulties	Relationship (conflict) Content of CCs (difficulties) CCs' prompts for facilitating conversations difficult to explore
	Power dynamic	Relationship (self-in-role) Power dynamic in SR Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase CCs' perception CC's influence on the supervisory relationship
	Relational reflexivity	CCs facilitator of reflections Contents of CCs (feedback) Relationship (feelings) Relationship (avoidance) Content of CCs (hopes and fears)
	The 'good enough' relationship	Supervisory relationship (containment) Supervisory Relationship (safe space)
CCs enable the process of contracting	CCs as facilitator of difficult discussions	CCs facilitator of discussion Using CCs to set expectation CCs as facilitator of structure CCs of contracting practice

		CCs facilitator of work reflections
		CCs' prompts facilitate conversations (difficult to explore)
	CCs enable discussion of past experience	CCs facilitator of sharing experiences (beliefs and attitudes)
		Supervisory relationship and the dyad's experiences of supervision
	Pragmatics of the use of CCs	Lack of guidance
		Feeling overwhelming
		Pragmatical limitations of using the CCs
		Time consuming
The content of CCs	CCs' content of boundaries	Supervisory relationship (boundaries)
		Using CCs to set expectations
	CCs' content of Identity	CCs' prompts facilitate conversation about accountability
		Diversity and its perception in the supervisory relationship
		Relationship (identity)
		Relationship (biases)
		Relationship (ethics and values)
	Learning and outcomes	Relationship (learning and outcomes)

<p>CCs as a useful tool</p>	<p>Applicability of CCs in different types of supervision</p> <p>CCs make contracting accessible</p> <p>What type of tool are CCs?</p>	<p>Content of CCs (learning and outcomes)</p> <p>Applicability of CCs to broad EP supervision practice</p> <p>Variability of the use of CCs</p> <p>CCs' prompts for facilitation of conversations</p> <p>CCs prompts for facilitation of conversations</p> <p>Importance of CCs' visuals</p> <p>Practical aspects of CCs</p> <p>CCs' usefulness</p> <p>CCs is comprehensive</p> <p>Definition of CCs</p> <p>CCs is an empowering tool</p>
<p>The contracting phase</p>	<p>Participants' understanding of contracting</p> <p>The experience of re-contracting</p>	<p>Balance between guidance and direction</p> <p>Contracting is an experiential process of supervision</p> <p>Contracting is an evaluation process</p> <p>Contracting to be referred as a written document</p> <p>The contracting phase</p> <p>Using contracting to set ground rules</p> <p>Using contracting to set expectations</p> <p>Reviewing CCs</p>

	Reviewing contracting during the supervision process
The impact of training on contracting practice	Importance of attending the supervisor's training Importance of lecture on supervision

Appendix O: All coded extracts for theme 1 CCs' impact on the SR

Participant	line	Question	Code position	Original codes & explanation	Refined Codes	Initial Themes	SUBTHEMES	THEME CODE
Supervisee 1	66	1	16	supervisor assumed that the supervisee did not want direction and guidance.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	Supervisory relationship	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	86	1	21	importance and usefulness of the relationship with own supervisor regarding items to discuss.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	89	1	22	recognising the inequality of the supervisory relationship between supervisee and supervisor.	Power dynamic in SR	The impact on the supervisory relationship	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	91	1	23	examples of inequality of the supervisory relationship: supervisee feeling uneasy/uncomfortable to bring items in discussion with supervisor.	Power dynamic in SR	The impact on the supervisory relationship	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	110	1	33	CCs can allow to know new supervisor which implies he/she has a different style (impacting the relationship)	Using contracting to set expectations	Supervisory relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	118	1	35	CCs enables to contract the safe space to talk about the emotional aspect of work (implicitly being vulnerable?)	relationship (safe space)	Containing relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	143	2	5	If the CCs have been introduced by supervisees, the experience can influence how CCs are used and how open supervisors are.	Modality of introduction of CCs	Influence of CCs on supervisory relationship	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	151	2	8	curious way to use CCs by supervisor = modality of use CCs has an impact on the supervisory relationship.	Supervisory Relationship	Impact of CCs on the supervisory relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	160	2	12	choice to open up and talk about specific topic depending on the quality of the supervisory relationship.	Choice of topics within CCs	Containment in the supervisory relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	163	2	13	The role of assumptions that supervisors may have that influence the supervisory relationship in terms of - choice of specific aspects to bring and why	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The impact on the supervisory relationship	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	182	2	18	assumptions that can narrow the conversation about one CCs instead of asking the supervisees' opinion.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	183	2	20	Assumptions that play the role of closure instead of starting a conversation.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	201	2	22	assumption left small space to other experiences the supervisee might have had and want to share.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 1	217	2	24	CCs is feeding into a power imbalance?	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	218	2	25	power imbalance understood as expectations supervisor has towards supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	225	2	26	supervisory relationship as a place for the supervisee to bring whole self	Supervisory Relationship	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Communication	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	236	2	30	power imbalance in exploring CCs as supervisee shared more than supervisor.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	239	2	31	supervisee's point of view is to allow the supervisor being more open in sharing their experiences more in depths like the supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles: Effects on Supervisory Bonds	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	267	3	4	Supervisee's perception of being not keen to bring the use of CCs	relationship (perception)	Contracting Circles and Their Influence on Supervisory Effectiveness	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	281	3	6	There is a risk for supervisees and trainees to talk about or focus on one thing, e.g., containment.	relationship (safe space)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	281	3	7	it is important to check other aspects in the supervisory relationship that can be difficult to discuss later on or agreed in the relationship.	Supervisory Relationship	Contracting Circles: Enhancing Supervisory Interactions	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	300	4	2	key features identified as practical things to discuss, experiences and hopes.	Content of CCs	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	306	4	4	key features of giving feedback, how and what. especially relevant when trainees.	content of CCs (feedback)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	320	4	5	unfolding the use of feedback and how to give and receive feedback.	content of CCs (feedback)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	344	4	8	CCs helps to contract how the supervision is safe. implication: - for supervise to be able to talk about feelings and thoughts about the job - being in a process where is is possible to tolerate the discomfort and unpleasant feelings.	relationship (safe space)	Containing relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 1	344	4	9	CCs helpful to contract when supervisee is feeling anxious about the job and how this feeling can impact the work.	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	348	4	10	meaning of containment in supervision and how CCs can help to acknowledge this process at the beginning of the contracting phase.	relationship (containment)	Containing relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	363	5	2	Self-reflection as useful aspect of the process of using CCs.	CCs facilitator of reflections	Enhancing Supervisory Relationships Through Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	365	5	3	Example of Self-reflection: it can elicit queries about feedback and how supervisee would like it.	CCs facilitator of reflections	Enhancing Supervisory Relationships Through Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	457	5	16	prompts are useful to facilitate conversations such as emotional impact or conflict.	relationship (conflict)	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	459	5	17	CCs sets conversations about how to talk about conflict	relationship (conflict)	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	465	5	18	acknowledging that CCs were useful to speak about emotions that impacts the supervisees' work. - CCs sets the expectations from the beginning - gives space to talk and agree what supervisees want to develop the supervision, e.g., conflict, emotions and feeling in relation to work,	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	481	6	4	Less useful aspect of using CCs: - the supervisors' assumptions may influence, - guiding the conversation and the choice of CCs related to what the supervisor expect or think the supervisee should bring, not letting the supervisee to choose what circles to discuss and agree	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	498	6	7	The role of supervisors is to push and uncover circles that can be felt uncomfortable and others that are relevant. the role of supervisor can challenge the choice of the supervisees if the action is guided without assumptions.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	502	6	8	example of supervisor and supervisee avoidant of conflict. supervisee avoids the circle of conflict. supervisor avoids the circle of conflict. implicit agreement that conflict will be avoided, and it will	relationship (avoidance)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR

				impact the relationship in case a conflict arises. Avoidance of circles can be risky for the supervisory relationship.				
Supervisee 1	511	6	9	CCs are less useful depending on how they are used by the supervisors. - supervisor lacks curiosity. -supervisor guides the conversation of choosing specific circles influenced by their assumptions/biases? - supervisors being direct about what to use the CCs.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	516	6	10	CCs less useful depending also on how much supervisors want/choose to share.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	521	6	11	Is the supervisor supposed to share his view in contracting too? their expectations? -equal relationship vs weighed relationship?	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	553	6	12	Influence: - supervisee always used CCs in her experience as a trainee. - applied what discussed into practice = supervisory relationship. - actions were based on the agreement made when exploring CCs. - CCs guided the practice of using supervision for both supervisee and supervisor.	Supervisory Relationship	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	568	6	14	Supervisor's practice is influenced by the use of CCs.	supervisor's practice	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	568	6	15	practice of supervisor of giving feedback is the result of contracting how to give feedback.	content of CCs (feedback)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	578	6	16	CCs influence the relationship. It depends on how supervisors use CCs, their personality, their professional experience, their views and their knowledge = 'what they bring'.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	614	7	1	As the supervisee shares her opinions on some aspects of identity, the supervisor did not share this. -this can have an impact on the supervisory relationship.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	666	7	5	the emotional impact of a piece of work's discussion was enabled by the use of CCs. two factors to consider: CCs has influenced the discussion. -the training of the supervisor using CCs has had an impact on the discussion? training on using CCs can help facilitate the discussion based on CCs.	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 1	687	7	7	CCs shapes the supervisory relationship and enables the supervisee to share the space they want.	Supervisory Relationship	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 1	692	7	8	contracting/CCs can prove power imbalance: - supervisor not sharing their views with supervisees. - this can shape the supervisory relationship.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	4	1	4	Feelings in the relationship	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	10	1	8	Feelings nervous about CCS	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	13	1	11	Race: feelings as a result of process	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	17	1	13	Format of relationship	relational model of CCs	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	19	1	15	Differences of feelings and trust in the relationship	relationship (safe space)	Containing relationship	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	20	1	16	Query about the relationship	Supervisory Relationship	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	27	2	3	Content of CCs is useful but there are difficulties with relationship.	Supervisory Relationship	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	30	2	6	CCs enabled openness in the supervisory relationship.	Supervisory Relationship	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	33	2	9	Feeling angry for not having talked about boundaries.	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	37	2	12	Experience of the use of CCs within the SR; affection and linking it!	Supervisory Relationship	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	40	2	15	CCs' use: Outcomes of strengthen the SR but also improve the quality of the relationship after the word has ended.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Contracting Circles and Their Influence on Supervisory Effectiveness	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	54	3	1	Perception of CCs by a supervisee:	CCs' perception	The Interplay Between Contracting	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact

						Circles and Supervisory Connections		on the SR
Supervisee 2	56	3	3	CCs enables to get to know better the supervisor	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Contracting Circles and Their Influence on Supervisory Effectiveness	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	59	3	5	CCs also can regulate the power dynamic in the relationship = not taking for grounded that the supervisor is in charge and lead the relationship	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	70	3	16	Vulnerability as power's balance – as power is taking away from the supervisor.	Power dynamic in SR	Contracting Circles and Their Role in Supervisor-Supervisee Dynamics	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	71	3	17	Perception of supervision using CCs as open	CCs' perception	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	72	3	18	The SR is not unilateral, it's not all about the supervisee	Supervisory Relationship	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	73	3	19	The SR between supervisor and supervisee has/shares things together. Things can be thoughts and ideas	Supervisory Relationship	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	87	4	5	Shared responsibility when choosing key features.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	88	4	6	Choice was to the supervisee – speculation that the choice was given to supervisee due to the evident difference in race.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	92	4	8	CCs helped to reduce the perception of differences.	CCs' perception	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	123-125	4	21	Main elements: conflict and experience. This is important for the participants as a way to learn from other people's experiences.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	132-134	4	24	Key features: feelings and values	Content of CCs (values)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	148	5	8	CCs brings safety to the conversation in SR. Safety net.	relationship (safe space)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 2	169-172	5	12	CCs as scripts to use when feeling nervous, uncomfortable and drying up	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	174	5	16	CCs gives a sense of safety in the SR.	relationship (safe space)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	207	6	4	From the supervisor's perspective, it is their decision to choose which ones.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 2	208	6	5	It's not about the CCs per se but the decision of which one to pick.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	10	1	2	Contracting as a form of understanding the power dynamics and roles between supervisee and supervisor in the supervisory relationship SR.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	12	1	3	Contracting as a phase to acknowledge this power dynamic.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	108	2	8	Initiating the relationship as a way to understand each other.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	140	2	17	Without the use of CCs specific topics would have not talked about= avoided because they are difficult to talk about.	relationship (avoidance)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	203	2	31	SR was facilitated by positive supervisors, enabling a SR to be helpful, containing and challenging in a positive way.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	234	2	36	Example of SR can facilitate discussion about oneself.	Supervisory Relationship (self-in-role)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Communication	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	311	2	42	CCs too was helpful to acknowledge that it is possible to talk about conflict and when the supervisee find the SR difficult.	CCs' prompts for facilitation of conversations (difficult to explore)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Communication	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	312	2	43	Supervisee is aware that there is a power dynamic component in the SR when talking about difficulties	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 3	338	3	2	'Ideal' Power dynamic of CCs' use; idea of SR as a bilateral dynamic where CCs are brought by both supervisors and supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	344	3	3	The reality of the use of CCs is the supervisor using it. Not undermining the knowledge of supervisees about the tool.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	353	3	4	Understanding and empathy of the business of the work and how this can impact the SR.	relationship (feelings)	How Contracting Circles Affect Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	539-540	4	26	CCs indirectly refers to supervision and is assumed to be part of it. Is the content of each circle connected to themes related to supervision?	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	856	6	13	There is a perception of inevitable change in the SR which may indicate the relevance of the process in the SR.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	920	7	1	Power dynamic in the SR.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	921	7	2	Typical scenario of supervisee who is a TEP or NQEP and supervisor who is experienced, staff member, well informed about the system	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	923	7	3	Teacher-pupil-power relationship.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	938	7	4	CCs can help to balance the weighed relationship between supervisor and supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	939	7	5	There is an assumption that the questions are all posed to the supervisee.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	948	7	6	Supervision perceived as exposing to experiences.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	950	7	7	Idea that CCs expose both supervisor and supervisee and not the supervisee only.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 3	1027	7	12	The SR weighed around as the supervisor shared the same experience she had with supervisors of different gender.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	1073	7	15	The fact that the supervisee expose herself in the SR allow for a connection with her supervisor to be made and to apply the reflection into practice.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 3	1203	7	24	Reflexivity that CCs facilitate can prevent to be caught up in own context.	CCs facilitator of reflections	The Transformative Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	13	1	9	CCs is understood as: - Reflective support It supports the dyad to think about what to discuss during contracting.	CCs facilitator of conversations	The Transformative Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	19	1	10	There is an acknowledgement of importance of the circle/topics. However, a risk of overlooking the items is recognised by the supervisee when discussing those during contracting.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	22	1	11	One element overlooked is the feeling part that impacts:	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	Strengthening Supervisory Relationships Through Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	22	1	12	- A new piece of work	Contracting and the impact of feelings on the SR (overlooked feelings)	The Transformative Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	25	1	13	- A new SR	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	25	1	15	Another element overlooked: how to talk about: - difficult feelings - how to challenge supervisee and supervisor	CCs' prompts for facilitation of conversations (difficult to explore)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	43	1	27	Consideration of relationship different from one another	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	151	2	9	Without the use of CCs, some elements of the SR were avoided.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	157	2	10	Power dynamic imbalance because the supervisor who did not know about CCs was told by a supervisee to talk about unpleasant things within the SR.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 4	196	2	13	Power dynamic of imposition using CCs.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	178	2	14	Avoidance of talking about topics in The contracting phase means not exploring them in-depth.	relationship (avoidance)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	226	2	18	Avoidance was the result of using the CCs with someone who has no knowledge of the tool.	relationship (avoidance)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	289	2	29	Why CCs is important in the SR and in contracting.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	372	3	5	CCs has a gentle approach to explore and unfold one self's feelings. 'non- attack way'.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	378	3	6	CCs is a non-threatening way of approaching the SR and establishing a positive relationship	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	411	3	8	Example of using CCs with new supervisor and the circle explored was hopes and fear which was unexpected and let her being off guarded.	content of CCs (hopes and fears)	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	459	3	9	CCs allows space and trigger. Moments where the supervisee can be vulnerable and share their feelings and in a way that is safe.	relationship (safe space)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	607	4	8	- power dynamic	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	613	4	9	Power dynamic opens up to questions that are related to exploring: sameness and differences, ethics and Identity.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	697	4	18	The experiences and beliefs as well as values need a safe space like contracting in supervision in order to safely explored and challenged.	relationship (safe space)	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	745	4	22	The use of contracting depends on the person – self-in-role.	variability of the use of CCs	The Transformative Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 4	872	6	3	Acknowledgment of the fact that things, facts, events, feelings can change within the work of EP.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	884	6	4	CCs gives a baseline to supervisors to understand what the supervisee's views.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1075	7	2	Is the SR reciprocal? Interviewer's experience is that the SR is weighed.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1081	7	3	No information about the use of CCs with supervisors, e.g., do we ask supervisors their fears and hopes?	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1096	7	4	The use of CCs is personal for supervisees and supervisors.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1105	7	5	Can the CCs be used both ways?	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1114	7	7	Sharing identities helped to understand both parts expectations.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1123	7	8	Finding positive the fact to ask supervisors their experience of supervision.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1126	7	9	Using the CCs 2-way can be less containing.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1126	7	10	Assumption given by the interviewee's experience about having a supervisor who have over-shared about her problems.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1135	7	11	This triggered feeling guilty when the supervisee wanted to bring her own difficulties.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1174	7	13	The learning relationship that is enabled by CCs allows space to bring mistakes, questions and curiosity.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisee 4	116	7	17	- Fears,	Content of CCs (feelings)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1189	7	19	- Difficulties	Content of CCs (difficulties)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisee 4	1190	7	20	- Reflexivity	Content (relational reflexivity)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	22	1	16	Results of this awareness is taking supervision more seriously.	Supervisory Relationship	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	34	1	22	Feeling of embarrassment not knowing about CCs and contracting.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	88	1	38	This 2-way exploration helps the foundation of SR.	CCs' influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	140	2	11	Supervisor assumed that the school person who did therapy understood something about CCs because she got experience of therapy. This underlines that there is an assumption that supervision/CCs has something in common with therapy.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	875	4	1	Key features: hopes and fear	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	269	4	3	The supervisor found it out using an informal evaluation tool 'slido' about what the fear and hopes the group had in supervision space.	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	284	4	6	Hopes were around: supervision being useful and having a good supervision	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	299	4	11	If there is a dislike in supervision how supervisee can share that?	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	377	4	20	Power dynamic – supervisee taking leading position.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisor 1	389	4	21	Contracting and CCs could have helped to navigate difficulties in the SR regarding power dynamic.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	392	4	22	Dilemma of who is taking the lead between supervisor and supervisee or sharing the lead.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	401	4	23	Based on experience of not knowing CCs leads to think that CCs would have been useful to understand and respect each other position in the SR.	CCs' influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	419	4	28	CCs helpful to express feelings and clarify the roles in the SR.	CCs' influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	610	7	10	Empathetic approach to use CCs for supervisor: she experienced as a supervisee and can reflect to the relationship she can have with her supervisees.	CCs' influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	646	7	14	CCs influenced the view of supervision and how to approach it. To improve reflection of it.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	679	7	15	No awareness of the need or CCs and contracting in supervision before the course.	Supervisor's assumption in CCs	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 1	688	7	17	CCs gives quality to supervision and SR.	using CCs to raise awareness on topics of relationship	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	40	2	8	Confidence that the dyad will come up always with useful conversations from choice of the 2 bubbles.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	121	2	18	It's a challenge using CCs because it is a different way of working for supervisor when approaching supervision.	CCs' perception	Examining the Role of Contracting Circles in Supervisor-Supervisee Interactions	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	364	5	3	CCs enables to talk about power differentials between supervisor and trainee EP supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	370	5	4	CCs helps to talk about difficult things such as feelings around the work.	relationship (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisor 2	376	5	5	Sharing items in contracting is 2-way? Opportunity for supervisors to share their thinking around aspects of CCs.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	391	5	10	Low confidence of Supervisor in using CCs.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	490	5	22	The use of CCs can be helpful in terms of containing EPs supervisees that have questions about their practice.	relationship (safe space)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	582	6	6	Difficulties encountered are the question and how to respond to them.	Content of CCs	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	612	6	10	Worries around how people can think of each other in a new SR.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	666	6	15	Both equal fitting in terms of supervisor and supervisee being on the same level when discussing items in the bubbles.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	678	6	16	There is this sense of feeling not confident with the use of CCs and how to ask questions. It is considered a factor that could have influenced the SR.	using Contracting to raise awareness on topics of relationship	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	800	7	3	Help supervisee that being in a SR, they are in a process together. It is important to remind them about feedback.	Contracting as a experiential process of supervision	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	827	7	4	Example of report writing and how there is a power difference and how it is important for the supervisor to make sure that the report is correct but at the same time wanting to make sure that supervisor and supervisee are together in a process.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	833	7	5	CCs helps supervisor to remind herself about the power differences.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	848	7	6	The collaborative connotation is very important for the supervisor to transmit to the trainee EP supervisee.	Power dynamic in SR	The Interplay Between Contracting Circles and Supervisory Connections	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	854	7	7	CCs helps supervisor to keep this element of the relationship in mind.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

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Supervisor 2	869	7	8	Being aware of the SR and all the aspects that can influence it.	CCs' influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	875	7	9	Hopes and fears.	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	875	7	10	CCs gives opportunity to name fear but also other feelings.	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 2	912	7	11	Feelings have been expressed by the supervisee and the challenges that the mixture of these feelings can bring, between wanting to please but also being able to stand on her own feet.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	34	1	21	There is a dynamic process to prepare, consult and plan in the SR.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	Supervisory Bonds and the Impact of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	38	1	23	CCs are a tool to facilitate contracting conversations safely.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	42	1	27	- unfold assumptions about the relationship that are taken for grounded.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	43	1	29	All of these in a neutral way = limiting the formation of assumptions to influence the relationship.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	55	1	33	CCs can facilitate the connection in the SR between the parts.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	55	1	34	CCs allows to refer to multiple things that can be related to:	Content of CCs	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	62	1	40	CCs are helpful for supervisors as they help them to understand how to approach the SR.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	87	2	4	CCs considered as a usual procedure in supervision.	CCs' perception	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisor 3	102	2	13	Focus on giving supervisees their space.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	127	3	1	CCs perceived as an ethical base and a quality assurance of the relationship.	CCs' perception	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	128	3	3	Supervisor's perception of delivering 'a good enough' supervision.	Supervisor's assumption in contracting phase	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	132	3	6	CCs helps to draw attention to aspects of the relationship that would not think about.	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	133	3	7	CCs paying attention to the relationship.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	148	3	13	Hopes and fear applicable in other work relationships.	Content of CCs (hopes and fears)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	167	4	13	In practice this means that:	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	167	4	14	- Being in new parts of the SR	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	178	4	17	- Items that supervisees would like to bring.	content of CCs	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	183	4	22	- Thinking of the roles in the relationship	CCs facilitator of sharing experiences (self-in-role)	The Role of Contracting Circles in Strengthening Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	184	4	23	- Their valency	relationship (self-in-role)	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	206	4	32	CCs serves to raise, construct or name these elements in the SR.	CCs' influence on supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	217	5	4	Circle of difficulties is important too.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Supervisor 3	218	5	5	There is an element of avoiding talking about these because there is an assumption that there will be no difficulties. However, it is important to define and contract differences as it gives confidence that there is a process to follow.	relationship (avoidance)	The Dynamics of Contracting Circles in Supervision	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	244	7	1	CCs enriches the SR, and it enables to know the supervisor in an intimate way.	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	245	7	2	CCs develops trust in the SR.	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	246	7	3	CCs enables to connect in a deeper level	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	247	7	4	CCs helps supervisor to learn about the SR in terms of:	CCs influences the supervisory relationship	Supervisory Relationships: The Influence of Contracting Circles	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	247	7	6	· What parts are different that can be shared between the two parties and which one are hidden	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	253	7	10	CCs enables to change and shift the way supervisor and supervisee think about each other, the SR and the themes discussed within the bubbles.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	258	7	12	CCs helps supervisory dyads to be responsible to each other.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Power dynamic in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 3	259	7	13	CCs enables to talk about feelings as a tool for the SR.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	22	1	6	Process of the SR is important: SR as a space for process and for relationship.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	213	2	12	How to respond to difficulties and how to give and receive feedback.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	219	2	13	These are the ones that can be challenging.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR

						Supervisory Relationships		
Supervisor 4	243	2	15	It is difficult to discuss what it is found difficult in supervision and how to give feedback about it.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	258	2	17	The difficulties of sharing feedback when things are not going well and reflecting on these are more common with EP supervisees. This feels unfamiliar for EPs to talk about it.	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	264	2	18	The tricky staff in the relationship happens and there is a need to pay attention to it.	relationship (self-in-role)	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	279	2	19	The reflection on tricky staff is easier for TEPs.	relationship (self-in-role)	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	343	3	3	CCs is a tool that can be containing.	relationship (containment)	Strengthening Supervisory Relationships Through Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	367	3	5	It's containing the fact that supervisees know what to expect and what type/content of conversation they are going to step into. This leads to more authentic conversations.	relationship (containment)	Strengthening Supervisory Relationships Through Contracting Circles	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	394	3	8	Supervision is the place where 'we can grapple with staff',	Supervisory Relationship	The Influence of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Dynamics	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	407	3	11	It's a space to experience things in a real way, allows people to be real about their experiences. CCs helps to set it up.	Supervisory Relationship and dyad's experiences	The Effect of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Rapport	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	461	4	15	· How to relate to each other	relationship (self-in-role)	Understanding the Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Practices	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	461	4	16	· Managing difficulties	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	How to address difficulties in SR	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	462	4	17	· How to use the Supervisory space	relationship (safe space)	The Impact of Contracting Circles on Supervisor-Supervisee Trust	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	524	5	17	3 individual ways of learning	Content of CCs (difficulties)	The Power of Contracting Circles in	How to address	5. CCs' impact

						Shaping Supervisory Relationships	difficulties in SR	on the SR
Supervisor 4	526	5	19	5 the challenges will channel towards exploration of feedback.	Content of CCs	Supervisory Relationships and the Role of Contracting Circles	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	539	5	20	Circle of how to talk about feelings in supervision is important as it can be taken for granted by supervisees/perceived as they know how to talk about feelings/supervisees' view is of easy use.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	586	5	28	How to speak about feelings when these are not explicitly explored.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	593	5	29	From experience of the supervisor, this area can take time to explore and discuss.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	708	6	11	Respect of a natural process of supervision and SR without using as a checklist.	Supervisory Relationship	The Influence of Contracting Circles on Supervisory Dynamics	The 'good enough' relationship	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	788	7	3	Feelings can be avoided by the supervisees.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR
Supervisor 4	797	7	4	CCs of feelings tend to be dodged and supervisor acknowledged that it is important to explore them at the beginning of the SR. specifically, it is relevant to acknowledge that it can be hard talking about feelings. This will help to talk about them throughout the year in the SR.	Content of CCs (feelings)	The Power of Contracting Circles in Shaping Supervisory Relationships	Relational reflexivity	5. CCs' impact on the SR

Appendix P: Excerpt from reflective diary

