Developing Practitioner Permeability: A new take on training for uncertainty for the health and care professions?
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The next 15 minutes are about ......

- Insights from research AHP **supervision**

- Career-long **practice uncertainty** and what this reveals about the **sources of uncertainties**

- How **'permeable practitioners'** seek to **resolve uncertainties** through **recalibrating practices**

- What this might mean for **supervision**

- What this might mean for **pre-registration, practice educators and continuing professional development**….

  - *Research conducted as part of PhD studies at St George's University of London*
    - *Writing up supported by NIHR PhD write-up stipend 2018*
    - *Photographic images from https://unsplash.com/*

Why look at AHP supervision practices?

'The terms used in this area may sometimes overlap and in practical terms, it may sometimes be difficult to separate them from each other.' CQC 2013

- Literature confirms **debate**: definitions, terminology, purpose, concerns etc

- **Professional registration** requires sign-up to the importance of training, supervision and mentoring

- Professional bodies refer to link with **governance**

- **Paucity of AHP voices** in supervision literature

Research grounded in accounts from:
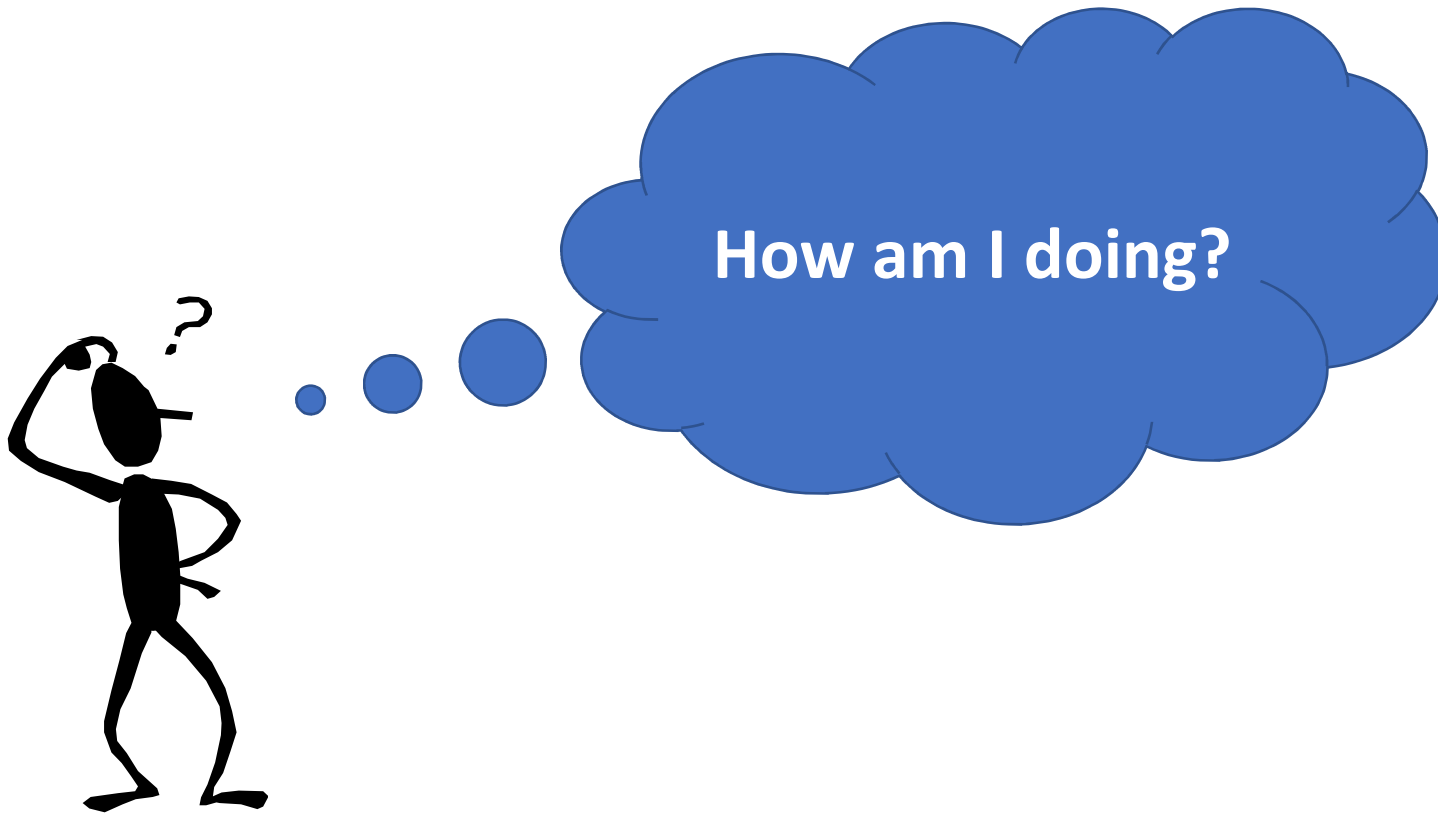
Occupational Therapists (5)
Physiotherapists (9)
Speech and Language Therapists (5)

Supervisor and **supervisee** experiences

Current employment setting			
Acute	**Community**		
NHS	NHS	Local Government	Not-for-profit
5	12	1	1

length of practice		Whole time equivalent	
Range	Mean	Full time	Part time
8 months – 30 years	11 years	13	6

Sources of Practitioner Uncertainty:

Do I know enough?

Do I know what to do?

Do I look like an AHP?

Am I doing what people expect me to do?

Having too much to do
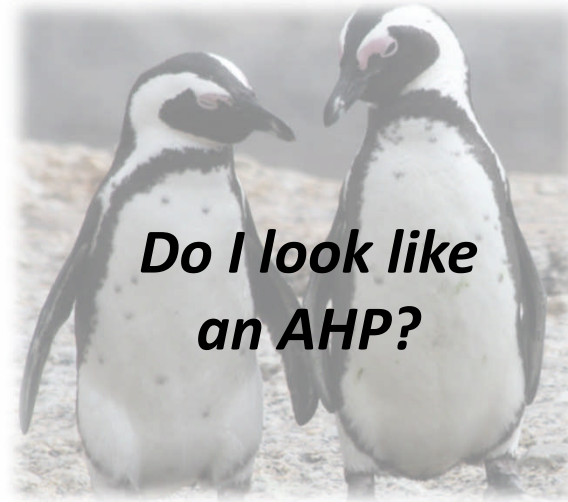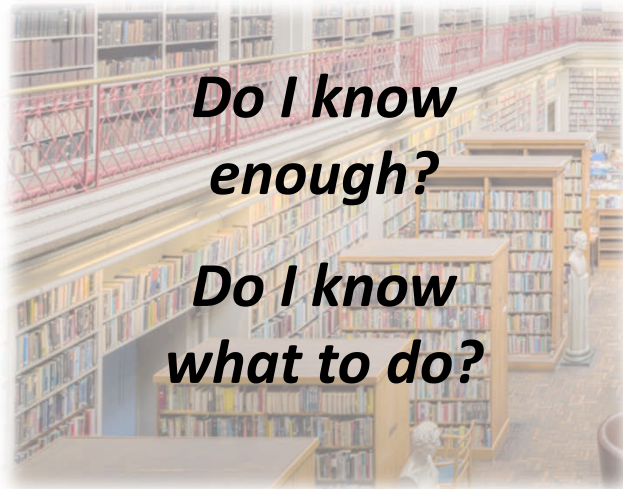
Conceptualising Practitioner Uncertainty:

Do I know enough?

Do I know what to do?

Do I look like an AHP?

Platform for Practice

Socio-professional

Practice Demands

Am I doing what people expect me to do?

Having too much to do
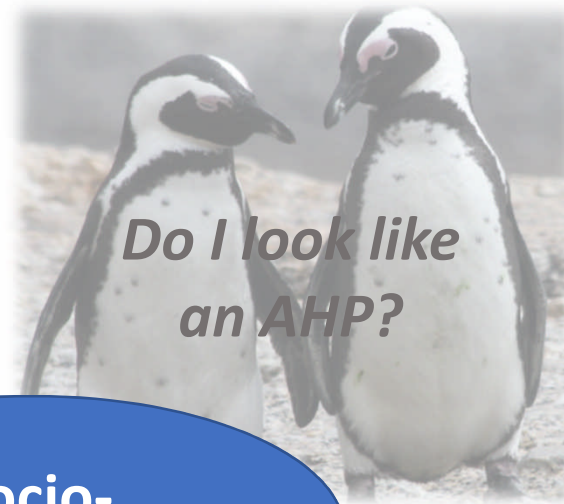
In reality: overlapping ✦ ill-defined ✦ messy

What do I mean by a 'platform for practice'?

Platform for Practice

Knowledge and Skills
+
Experiences
(professional and personal)
+
Personal Qualities and Attributes

- **Foreground and background** different elements depending on the nature of the **practice demands**

- **Make predictions** about **practice demands** which turn out in **expected and unexpected** ways

How new is all this?
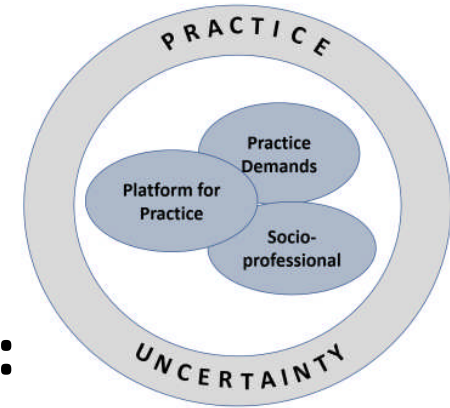
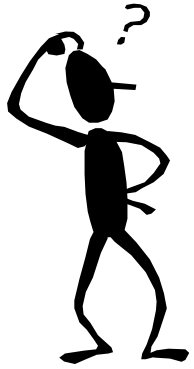**Include evitability of uncertainty in training:**

- Fox (1957)

Recognise impact of uncertainty on practice:

- Maben, Cornwell and Sweeney (2010): *(Nightingale; 1860);* Peyton (1998); Dreyfus (1995); Benner (1984); Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986)

Being a professional as knowledge + know-how + knowing how to be:

- Dall' Alba (2009)

BUT ....

- Has **evidence-based practiced** prompted a **stronger focus** on **knowledge** and **know-how?**

- Has **uncertainty** become a **marker for risk and error?**

- *Has this focus been at the expense of:*

  - *preparing for inevitable uncertainty?*

  - *recognising uncertainty as a precursor for learning?*

  - *encouraging ongoing development of professional ways of being in the context of ongoing lived experiences?*

Therapists' accounts indicate that:

- Therapists **vary in the extent to which they recognise uncertainties**

- Therapists **vary in the extent to which they may be willing to address and resolve/learn from uncertainties**

- Therapists who expect, recognise and seek to resolve uncertainties demonstrate a **combination of behaviours and characteristics**

- These behaviours and characteristics are **important for both supervisors and supervisees**

- These behaviours and characteristics can be thought of as being a **'Permeable Practitioner'**

How new is all this?

Recognising link between uncertainty and learning:

- D'Agnese (2017); Webster-Wright (2010); Schön (1983); Dewey (1910)

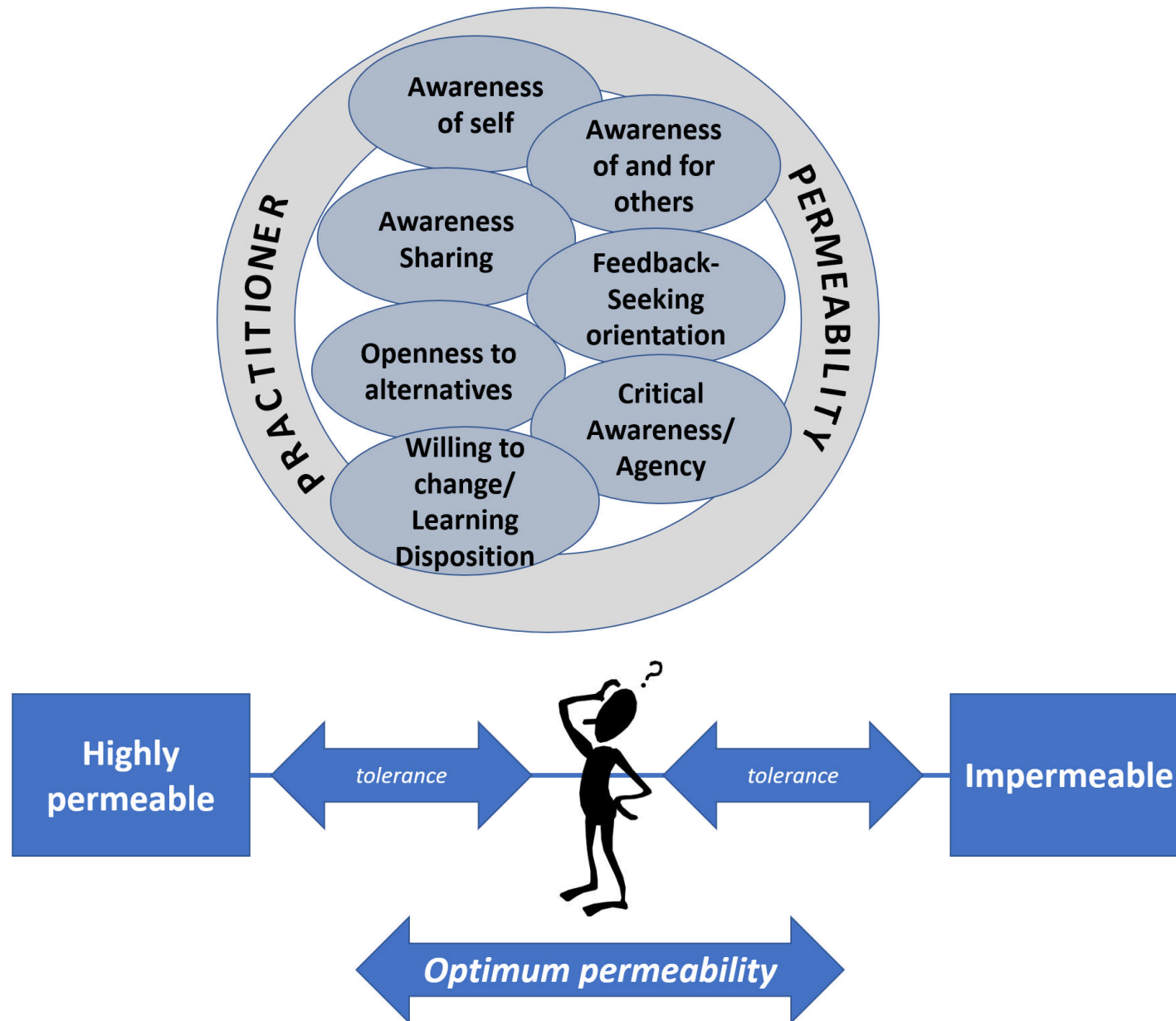**Fit with reflection, governance and continued professional development:**

- Schön (1983); Eraut (1994); Dall' Alba (2009); Webster-Wright (2010); Dall' Alba and Barnacle (2015)

Fit with existing models:

- Peyton (1998); Proctor (2001)

BUT ….

Discovering Permeable Practitioners:

Permeable Practitioners :

- *expect both identifiable and ill-defined career-long uncertainty*

- *seek to resolve uncertainties*

Permeable practitioners seek to resolve uncertainties by:

Checking - Assuring - Adjusting
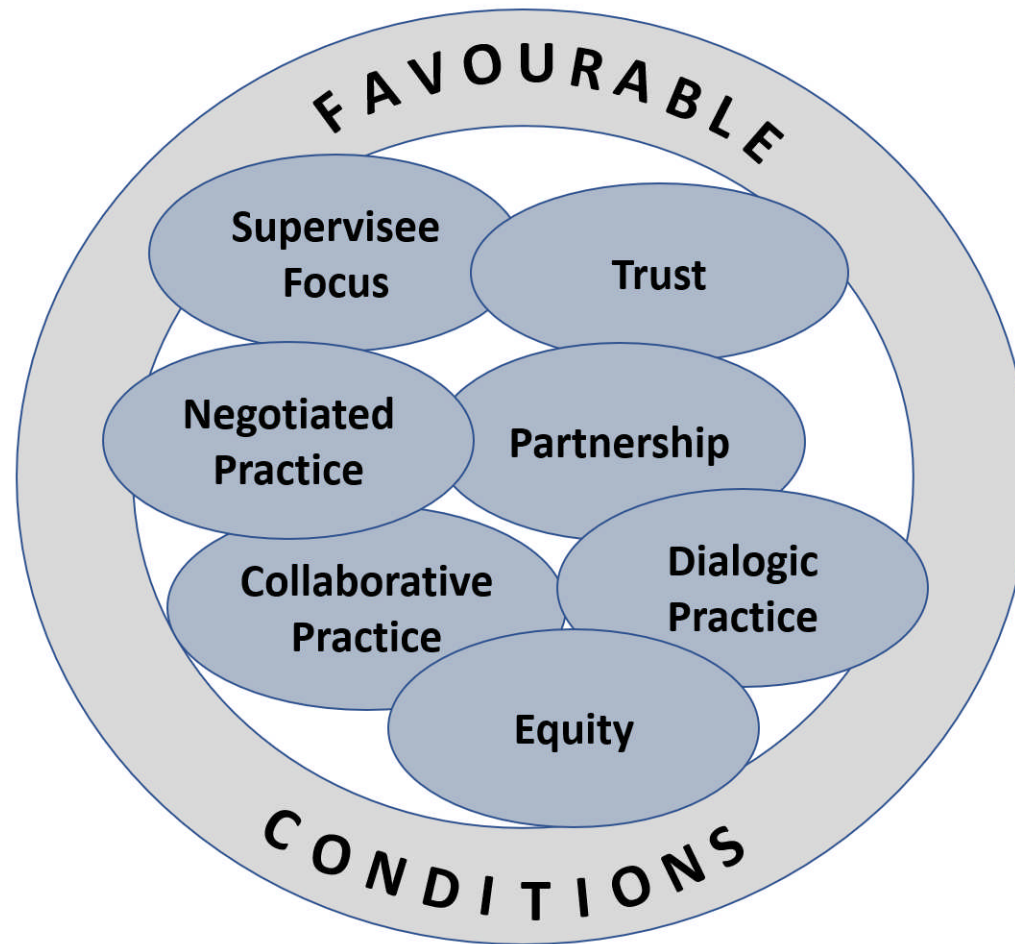

Practitioner Recalibration

Variety of ways in which permeable practitioner will seek to resolve uncertainties:

- Ad hoc discussions with colleagues

- Consult a text book

- Find latest research

- Go on a course

- Use professional social media

- Use **supervision**

Permeable practitioners choose supervision as a place for recalibration when:

How does a permeable practitioner use supervision?

Supervision Practices
Sanctuary and Meta-practice

Sharing practice demands, burden, concerns

A practice about practice

Permeable supervisees:

- Feedback-seeking
- Critical awareness
- Open to alternatives
- Experiment with alternatives

- Don't expect the supervisor to have all the answers

- Recognise good practice comes in many forms

Permeable Supervisors recognise:

Colleagues and students do stuff that doesn't always make sense to us ....

.... but it might have made sense to them .....

.. it's unlikely that our students/colleagues got out of bed that morning, determined to wind us up!

Supervising is not about the supervisor creating a 'mini-me'

Permeable Supervisors:

Recognise others may do things differently but judge when to step in before things get out of hand!

Permeable supervisors and supervisees regard supervision as:

a place for assuring and consolidating

not always about adjusting

Permeable supervisors and supervisees recognise supervision may be:

about sign-posting somewhere else – professionally, personally

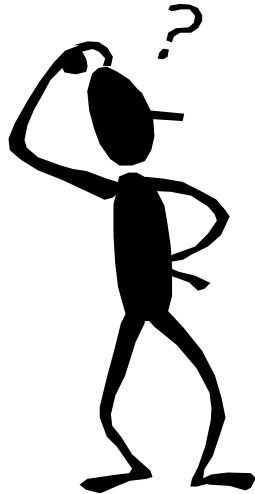they don't have to have all the answers

Permeable supervisors and supervisees regard supervision as:

a place to celebrate success too

not just when there are obvious uncertainties

Permeable supervisors and supervisees

Focus on resolving the practice concern

- Supervisor with **a duty of care to the supervisee**
- Supervisor and supervisee with **a duty of care to patients**

- Supervisor and supervisee **care about and care to resolve the uncertainty**

practitioner well-being + professional development + governance

So supervision is a highly skilled practice. Yet most therapists I spoke to:

- Had **seldom attended any specific training and development** focussed on supervision

- Picked up their supervision skills **vicariously**

- Adopted a **'what works for me'** approach

- Were largely **unaware of models or frameworks**

How is it that this aspect of practice has such little career development currency and is so often left to chance?
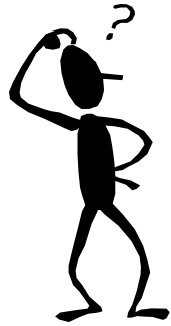
If permeability has important role in:

anticipating uncertainties

recognising uncertainties

resolving uncertainties

Might a contemporary approach to training for uncertainty involve:

- *preparing practitioners for inevitable uncertainties: platform for practice, socio-professional, practice demands?*
- *encouraging practitioners to recognise uncertainties as a precursor for learning?*
- *supporting practitioners to develop permeable behaviours and characteristics?*

Thanks for your interest ....

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