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Abstract

Despite the increasing interest in racial dynamics within the supervisory relationship, the number of studies in this area remain limited. In particular, there have been no British studies to date.

In order to get a detailed sense of the individual's perception, this study employed the use of the unstructured interview process within Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in exploring the experiences of Afro Caribbean trainee counsellors and psychotherapists with regards to the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their supervision.

Data gathered showed that trainee apprehensions about addressing the notions of race within their supervisory relationships were in part due to expectations based on their experiences of being Afro Caribbean in British society. Results also showed that a lack of discussion on the notions of race in supervision affected the developmental processes of supervisees.

The data collected fell into four categories:

- I. Focus on thinking regarding trainee raising issue of race within supervision*
- II. Focus on thinking regarding issues of race being addressed or otherwise by supervisor*
- III. Focus on trainee's sense of self as Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor or psychotherapist within supervision*
- IV. Focus on thinking regarding legacy of colonization*

This study indicates that implications for future practice involve supervisors not only examining their own perceptions around issues regarding race but facilitating open discussion on the subject in order not only to encourage a stronger working alliance with the supervisee but also for the beneficence of clients who may be helped by a frank discussion of case material between supervisor and supervisee

Background

Husband (1982) asserts that the word race made its first appearance in the English language in a verse of William Dunbar's (1508) *Faternis Evin (Shrove Tuesday) in Hell* and was supposedly a literary word devoid of scientific aura, denoting a class of persons or things (in this case, types of dishonourable characters)

'Race' is however thought to have become more widely employed¹ as a method of power, control and subjugation following the European Enlightenment, which regarded reason as the highest value as Europe came to rely more on science than religion. As a result of this, a spate of dichotomies was formed, including race (Banton 1998, Altman 2000). While some camps firmly view race as a biological category², it could be argued that most authors appear to view race as a form of social constructionism³. Whatever camp one happens to fall into, be it either of these or another entirely⁴ there is no denying that race is used as a means of distinguishing between groups of human beings (Dalal 2002) and as a result, could be seen as inherently influencing our perceptions of one another and affecting the ways in which we communicate.

Such perceptions have been arguably deepened by the imperialism and colonisation of non-Europeans. In the late eighteenth century, expressions of British superiority were based on morality, law, religion and political institutions and there was a belief that certain factors made non-Europeans different (Johnson, 2003) This difference was usually synonymous with inferiority and the basis for the rationale for colonisation⁵.

This qualitative study aims to explore what impact, if any this colonial legacy may have on the experiences of Afro Caribbean trainee counsellors and psychotherapists in Britain today with regards to the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their clinical supervisory relationships.

¹ Bernasconi (2009) writes of the subjugation of various races dating back to the sixteenth century

² Smith (1988) describes race as 'an essentially biological concept' (p.189)

³ Gergen (2009) writes extensively about the theories of social constructionism and race

⁴ In 'Racial Theories' (1998) Banton details seven 'racial theories' ranging from *Race as designation* to *Race as social construct*

⁵ Said (1994, p.8) refers to this as the ideological formations which include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination.

In his seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1982) Fanon employs the use of object relations theory (Klein 1975), aspects of the theory of the collective unconscious (Jung 1990) and Freud's (1991) theory of personality in discussing the effects of colonisation on the Afro Caribbean psyche. He asserts that the ideas of the colonizer are internalised in the *superego* whilst the colonised person's values and ideas are personified in the *id* thus resulting in the potential for the colonised person possessing a fragile *ego*. He uses the analogy of family in explaining how internalised ideologies can be projected into social interactions: "The white family is the agent of a certain system. The society is indeed the sum of all the families in it. The family is the institution that prefigures a broader institution: the social or the national group (Fanon, 1982 p.149)

Fannon's ideas about the individual's sense of self being affected by environmental factors have been supported by several theorists⁶ including Winnicott (1962) whose theory of *Ego integration in child development* (cited, in Winnicott 2005) offers the suggestion that a non-conducive environment can affect ego maturation which in turn affects ego strength. In relation to Fannon's theory, it could be argued that the social construction of Afro Caribbean people in British society may hinder the maturation of a strong ego or sense of self within the individual Afro Caribbean person. (McKenzie-Mavinga 2009)

Whilst some may argue that there are likely to be internal factors which may contribute to an Afro Caribbean trainee feeling oppressed, 'not good enough'⁷ or possessing a fragile sense of self (Bradshaw, 1982), it could be argued that even where internal factors are involved, the reactions and experiences of the individual may be exacerbated by the historical context and legacy (McKenzie-Mavinga, 2009). In the same vein, it could also be argued that the individual's responses to external factors could be exacerbated by a fragile sense of self (Winnicott, 2005) which then sees one's inner conflicts projected (Klein, 1975) onto the legacy of colonisation.

The purpose of this study was therefore, to explore the experiences of trainee counsellors and psychotherapists in Britain who identify as Afro Caribbean in order to gain some insight into their experiences of the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their clinical supervision, what if any difference this has made to their ability to disclose regarding

⁶ See Klein (1975) and Freud (1984)

⁷ Winnicott (2005) *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*

issues of race within the supervisory relationship and what consequences this ability (or inability) might have on the supervisory alliance.

Given that I do not assume any homogeneity of perceptions regarding the addressing or otherwise of race within supervision or indeed race in general amongst Afro Caribbean trainees, I acknowledge these ideologies will not resonate for all trainees, however it could be argued that it may resonate for some.

My personal interest in this study arises from the fact that as an Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor, there were occasions in my supervision when matters of race arose which I did not always feel I had the resources or support to explore perhaps as a result of my own anxieties regarding broaching the subject or feeling it was not fully explored when broached. This led to my interest in greater examination of the topic of the power divide in the supervisor and trainee supervisee relationship especially given its added element of evaluation (Cook, D.A 1994). I wondered if this (the supervisory relationship power divide) combined with ideas of inherited and continuing psychological and social effects of colonialism (Dalal 2002, Lowe 2007, Mckenzie-Mavinga, 2009) in Britain played a part in my ability (or lack of) to disclose or challenge regarding issues of race within my supervision and what the experiences and perceptions of other Afro Caribbean trainees might be.

Whilst there have been many empirical studies examining race within counselling⁸ and counselling and psychotherapy training⁹ over the years, there appears to have been a scarcity of studies examining the issue of race in supervision. This may be owing to the fact that supervision as a whole is under-researched in counselling and psychotherapy (Goodyear& Bernard, 1998)¹⁰

The first noted empirical study which examined ethnic minority trainees' perception of supervision was conducted by American psychologist Vander Kolk in 1974. This quantitative

⁸ Hunt (1987) examines, the attitudes and behaviours of White and 'Black' counsellors towards 'Black' clients and suggests a supervisory model for supervisors working with trainees seeing 'Black' clients

⁹ Worthington & Roehlke (1979), Heppner & Roelhke (1994), McKenzie-Mavinga(2009)

¹⁰ Although the literature has long indicated the importance of acknowledging racial difference within the supervisory relationship (Jones et al 1970, Remington and Dacosta 1989) there has previously been a dearth of research exploring race in supervision. The first three published studies appear over a two-decade span between 1974 and 1994.

study was conducted using various measuring tools to assess the responses of 50 participants (41 white, 9 black) in relation to their anticipation of the supervisory relationship. He found that 'Blacks'¹¹ displayed much lower levels of positive anticipation regarding the supervisory 'relationship'. Van Der Kolk describes this as "not very surprising" as "subcultural experiences with whites previous to entry in a counselling program provide a foundation for and explain to a large extent the evidence presented..." (p.45)

In the second noted study examining race in supervision (Helms and Cook 1988), quantitative methods were employed in an attempt to assess the perceptions of Asian, Black¹², Hispanic and Native American trainees' perceptions of their supervisory relationships. They found that trainees' satisfaction with their supervisory relationships was based on their perceptions of liking and interest towards them from their supervisors. The study also showed that Black and Native American supervisees perceived significantly lower levels of supervisor liking than their Asian counterparts. The authors of this study indicated that perhaps a sense or perception of cultural familiarity or unfamiliarity with supervisees affected the manner in which supervisors interacted with different groups and that supervisors needed to be mindful of their attitudes when interacting with various groups. Later authors such as Hays and Chang (2003) and Altman (2000) have also supported these ideas.

Over the last three decades especially, there has been increasing interest in the experiences of ethnic minority trainees in supervision. Most of the research on the experience of non-white trainees in their supervision refers to the all-encompassing 'ethnic minority' therefore, including everyone from those identifying themselves as Hispanic to South East Asians and although some of the literature employs the term 'Black' it is not always made explicit whether this is referring solely to Afro Caribbean trainees. Race and culture also appear to be viewed as synonymous or at least interrelated to one another¹³ therefore the terms 'multicultural' and 'cross-cultural' are used in the majority of the existing literature¹⁴ When

¹¹ Van Der Kolk's description of ethnic minority group although it is unclear whether this only refers to Afro Caribbean Americans

¹² Again the term 'Black' appears to refer to Afro Caribbean people although this is not made explicit

¹³ Fukuyama (1994) Leong and Wagner (1994) appear to view race and multiculturalism as synonymous in their respective papers

¹⁴ Empirical qualitative studies such as that of Fukuyama (1994), Daniels et al (1999) and Hird et al (2001) have examined the experiences, perspectives and expectations of ethnic minority trainees in what they term either

these terms (ethnic minority, multicultural, and cross-cultural) are used with reference to the current literature, they will be a direct quote of the authors' words and uses of the terms.

Hilton, Salmi and Russell (1995) conducted a role-play based study examining the effects of levels of supervisor support and supervisor race on supervisees' perceptions of the supervisory relationship. Sixty Caucasian female counsellors were paired with either African American or Caucasian female supervisors with various tools being used to assess the strength of the relationship. The researchers found that supervisees felt that level of supervisor support was more of an influence than race.

It could, however be argued that due to the brief nature of the supervisory encounters (supervisors only met with supervisees for a one-off twenty minute session), the role-playing aspect (supervisors were trained and instructed to either provide low level or high level support) and task-focused nature of the study, there was little or no opportunity for transference or countertransference issues to emerge.

Fukuyama (1994) employed phenomenological methodology in examining positive and negative critical incidents related to multicultural issues that occurred during the clinical supervision of ethnic minority supervisees working with supervisors of a different race to theirs in American training institutions. She found that positive events within supervision which enhanced trainees' experiences could be grouped into three categories which included: openness and support, culturally relevant supervision and opportunities to work in multicultural activities. Events deemed negative came under the categories of: lack of supervisor awareness and questioning supervisee abilities. Supervisees were also questioned regarding organisational and environmental factors that contributed to their experiences. The positives of this included having another trainee from the same background and being allowed to be themselves. Negative effects included a sense of social isolation experienced at the start of the traineeship. Participants suggested that supervisors initiating discussions of multicultural issues would make supervision more multiculturally sensitive.

'multicultural' (Hird et al and Fukuyama) or 'cross-cultural' supervision (Daniels et al, 1999). In using these terms, these researchers refer to relationships in which there is a difference in racial identity between supervisor and supervisee.

Some of the findings of Fukuyama's study are corroborated by Ladany et al who in their 1997 study examining the Influence of Supervisory Racial identity Interaction on the Supervisory Working Alliance, found that racial identity interaction was significantly affected by the emotional bond between supervisor and supervisee. Ladany and his colleagues found that supervisors with higher racial awareness tended to foster relationships with stronger emotional bonds whilst facilitating their multicultural competence¹⁵ of their supervisees. They also found that race appeared to have an impact on supervisees' perceptions of the supervisor's influence on their multicultural competence. It seemed that for white and non-white participants having a non-white supervisor provided an opportunity for discussion and exploration of multicultural issues).

The literature, therefore, appears to suggest that the manner in which the issue of race is addressed (or not) within a supervisory relationship can have a bearing on the development of the supervisory relationship as well as the trainee or supervisee's personal and professional development.

Although the afore mentioned researchers and others since them have examined the effect of race-related events on non-white supervisees in their supervisory relationships, there do not appear to have been any studies looking specifically at the experience of 'Afro Caribbean' British trainees. I could not help wondering, given the ideas of inherited transference and a collective unconscious within the Afro Caribbean community (Fannon 1982, Lowe 2007, McKenzie-Mavinga 2009), and given that all the empirical studies have been conducted in America, whether there might be a difference in how Afro-Caribbean trainees in Britain perceive issues regarding race being addressed within their clinical supervision in comparison to their American counterparts who although share a legacy of colonialism, are arguably operating within a different historical context.

Aside from the colonial contexts shared by both nations, it could be argued that whilst Afro Caribbean American identity is tied to a history of slavery, violent segregation and the civil rights movement, British Afro Caribbean history is steeped in immigration, class divisions and more subtle forms of segregation and discrimination¹⁶ and although it could be argued

¹⁵ Ladany and colleagues use this term to describe an awareness of cultural issues

¹⁶ Panayi (2010) writes about Britain's history of immigration, while Malik (1996) writes about slavery and the civil rights movement in America

that many Afro Caribbean people living in Britain are descendants from slaves or have a legacy of experiencing violent segregation, the nature of employing a qualitative methodology which honours the individual's own frame of reference, should ensure that these personal experiences are acknowledged where presented. (Flowers et al 2009)

While some may make the criticism that looking only at one race creates limitations within a study such as this (Cook 1994), it could be argued that within the hermeneutic circle that is ethnic minority within Britain, there may be varying stances regarding people's perceptions of their race especially given that various groups have differing historical legacies and it would be somewhat diminutive to lump all ethnic minority groups together¹⁷.

¹⁷ Hardy (1989) criticizes the homogenous treatment of ethnic minorities which hinders the examination of differences within racial groups

Method

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as it was felt this would allow me as the researcher to obtain greater detail in my attempt to closely understand the personal meaning which the trainees attach to their experiences of the notions of race being addressed within their supervision. In other words how they construct this aspect of their 'world' (p.2 McLeod, 2001). Furthermore, by using a qualitative method, I also hoped to produce '.....integrated descriptions...' (p.164 Polkinghorne 1991) of the phenomena¹⁸ I would be studying. Essentially, a qualitative study seemed the only way to access the level of detailed information I was hoping to gather.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected as this study is concerned with examining the 'phenomena' (in this case, the individual's perspective of his or her lived experience of supervision) with particular attention being paid to the 'particular' (Smith et al, 2009, p.3) in terms of the sense of detail and how a specific experience has been understood by individuals in a particular context, examining the phenomena in its own terms rather than in 'predefined category systems' (Smith et al 2009, p.32)

Furthermore, the use of IPA requires the researcher to draw on their own experiences in order to make sense of and contextualise the participants' accounts of their experiences. This encourages the researcher to reflexively engage with the data whilst remaining steadfastly focused on the participants' accounts. Also, as I am not looking to generalise or produce a wide spectrum of experiences, IPA with its concern for the micro analysis of human experience (Smith et al) and placing of said experience (notions of race in supervision) within the hermeneutic circle, makes it the most appropriate method for this project.

For my part, I have taken a social constructionist perspective (Gergen, 2005) for this project as my aim was to explore the use of reflexive enquiry in examining how the social construction of the Afro Caribbean race in Britain is replicated within the context of the relational dyad (or group) of the supervisory relationship. It was also my aim to co-construct (through close attention to participant data and personal reflexivity) experiential accounts

¹⁸ Husserl. E (cited in Smith et al 2009, (p.12) describes this as reflecting on and becoming aware of our subjective experiences.

of the phenomena in question i.e. ***‘What are the experiences of Afro Caribbean trainee counsellors and psychotherapists in relation to the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their supervision?’***

Participants

For this particular study, I sought to explore the experiences of trainees for whom their race is likely to be one of if not the most significant and present otherness within the supervisory dyad.

In order to meet the criteria they would have had to have at least been in the United Kingdom since the beginning of secondary school age as this would make them more likely to have a shared understanding of the culture (Nilsson & Dodds 2006) the rationale for this being that more transient trainees may bring to the relationship other more immediate cultural differences and more ‘otherness’¹⁹ which will make it harder to ascertain their experience of the phenomena with regards to the research question.

The trainees also needed to have at least 50 hours clinical practice. Many accredited courses require at least 100 hours clinical practice as a pre-requisite for qualification. Research has shown that counsellors in training go through certain developmental stages and the more experienced they are, the more likely they will be exploring personal issues such as transference and countertransference (Rabinowitz et al 1986, Leong and Wagner 1994) meaning that potential participants may be more aware of their reactions to the addressing or otherwise of notions of race in their supervision and it’s personal significance, if any, for them. Also, having that level of counselling practice, would equate to a substantial amount of supervision, thereby giving them the opportunity to have built relationships with supervisors and potentially have had the opportunity for ‘notions’ of race to present themselves.

Participants were recruited by advertising with several BACP and UKCP registered training organisations in London and the South East of England. Adverts were also posted in the BACP’s journal *Therapy Today* and on the online version of this publication. The Black and

¹⁹ Winnicott (2005)

Asian Therapists Network also posted the recruitment advert (See Appendix 1 for recruitment advert)

Trainees interested in participating in the study made initial contact by email as indicated on the recruitment advert. In response to the initial email, they were sent a reply thanking them for their interest in the research along with an information sheet (See Appendix 2) which explicitly outlined the purpose of the study and what their participation would involve should they choose to continue with the process.

Five trainees expressed an interest in participating in the study and three trainees completed the entire process. One trainee did not fully meet the criteria and another could not continue due to personal circumstances. All three²⁰ who completed the process identified as Afro Caribbean and were in either group or individual supervision with supervisors who they (the participants) identified as white²¹.

All participants are indicated with the prefix 'P' throughout the study.

Procedure

Once participants agreed to go ahead with the study, there was correspondence via email to ascertain when they would be able to meet the researcher for the taped interview.

Although the initial plan had been for the researcher to book a room at the participants' places of study this was only possible in the case of one participant. It was therefore agreed with the research supervisor that a room would be booked (by the researcher) in a library of the participant's choice (either near their home or at a location that was convenient for them)

²⁰ One participant was still a trainee when she made contact but received her diploma a few weeks before the interview. In this case, enquiries were made during interview regarding reflection on her supervisory process during training

²¹ One participant described one of her three supervisors as Turkish

Participants were then met at the agreed venue. Before the interview began, participants were presented with the consent form (See Appendix 3) (having been advised about it before hand) which was read with the researcher²² and signed.

The consent form advised participants of their right to withdraw at any time and of the researcher's intent to enable them to access support should the interview cause any distress²³

In order to 'induct IPA's epistemology to the fullest extent' (Smith et al 2009, p.70) the interviews were unstructured. Once the tape recorder was turned on, the participants were asked '*What are your experiences with regards to the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within your supervision?*'

Prompts such as '*So what is that like?*' or '*How do you mean?*' were used to draw out further information at various stages. At the end of the interviews, participants were advised that they would be contacted regarding giving consent to the use of quotes (extract from their interviews) to be included in the results section.

Interviews were then transcribed and checked against the recordings for accuracy. The transcriptions were encrypted on the researcher's personal laptop (only used by her) which also needed password access and recordings were kept in a locked drawer (in her home) which only she had access to as were the hard copies of transcriptions used for analysis purposes.

This was all done in order to maintain participant anonymity in line with ethical guidelines.

Upon completion of analysis, participants were sent extracts of their interviews, placed within the context of themes²⁴ for them to read and approve. (See Appendix 4 for sample of results extract) This was to maintain the spirit of co-construction and collaboration (Gergen,

²² Except in the case of one participant who was partially blind and had requested it sent electronically beforehand so her synthetic speech programme could read it to her though the points were still re-iterated by the researcher

²³ In accordance with BACP ethical guidelines

²⁴ There were some constraints to this exercise as these were somewhat abridged versions of the results section owing to the fact that explorations of certain themes could not be fully included as individual participants had to approve their particular 'part' of the 'whole' before it could be merged into the final project as advised by BACP ethics team. Plus, the exploration of the themes was elaborated as the writing up process progressed, but no additional quotes/extracts were added without participants' consent.

2009) pertinent to the project. The initial contact was made via email with the document also being sent in the same message. The researcher then contacted each participant on a supplied telephone number (provided on acknowledgement of the initial email) to issue individual passwords which would enable access to the document. This was done to ensure confidentiality as the document travelled between computers.

Analysis

The process of analysis began with reading and re-reading each transcript, line by line in order for the researcher to completely immerse herself in the data. Initial notes were then made (on the right hand-side of the transcript) (See appendix 5 for Sample Transcript Analysis) with three focuses in mind: descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments.²⁵ (Smith et al 2009)

With further reading and focus on the initial notes came emergent themes (noted on the left-hand side of the transcript) At this point the initial notes became the primary focus (with continued attention paid to the participant's words). This process was then followed by the search for connections across themes which resulted in various themes being grouped together. This was done by typing a list of all themes in the order in which they appeared in the transcript and then moving themes around to form clusters. (Smith et al 2009)

After these processes had been performed on all transcripts, came the process of looking for patterns across transcripts. This was done by comparing how the emergent themes in each transcript resonated with the others to recognise 'higher order concepts' (p.101 Smith et al 2009) which the cases all shared. (Smith et al 2009)

As an Afro Caribbean counsellor who as a trainee had my own experiences of this phenomena, it was important for me to employ reflexivity (helped by journal keeping) in considering my own personal reactions when certain themes in the work resonated for me. I tried to ascertain how to use this in engagement with the data in order to strike a balance of using my own experiences in enabling me to make sense of the participants' perceptions of

²⁵ See Smith et al (2009) for detailed descriptions of these.

the phenomena in question (Smith et al 2009) without skewing the data by transferring or imposing themes of my experiences onto the participants' extracts and perceptions. I also saw this (employment of reflexivity) as a means of exercising self-care when analysing some of the more emotive aspects of the data (Etherington, 2004, BACP 2012)

Results

Analysis of the data revealed similar recurrent themes in the data for all three participants. Upon further exploration, it became apparent that these themes appeared to cluster under four superordinate themes. On reflection, the superordinate themes were inspired by language used by the participants that seemed to represent the emerging clusters during the analytic process. The process of numeration (noting the frequency of the emergence of themes within and across transcripts) as well as abstraction (grouping seemingly similar themes together) (Smith et al, 2009) were also employed. The superordinate themes highlight the main areas of thinking or focus for the participants regarding the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their clinical supervision.

The superordinate themes (See Appendix 6 for Master Table of Themes for the group) were:

- V. Focus on thinking regarding trainee raising issue of race within supervision
- VI. Focus on thinking regarding issues of race being addressed or otherwise by supervisor
- VII. Focus on trainee's sense of self as Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor or psychotherapist within supervision
- VIII. Focus on thinking regarding legacy of colonization

The themes will be discussed separately in the order listed above with quotes from participants illustrating their interpretation of the phenomena.

Focus on thinking regarding trainee raising issue of race within supervision

Themes that appeared in this category included; fear of not being understood (all participants spoke of not feeling their supervisors were equipped to explore issues of race), sense of onus being placed on trainee, doubt in supervisor's abilities and presumption of supervisor's reaction. Other themes seemed to centre on the possible outcomes of raising race in supervision. These included; discomfort, lack of confidence, supervision not seen as a space for exploring and fear of consequence (two participants expressed some anxiety regarding being dismissed).

'I don't honestly think they'd understand '(P1) This statement illustrates the feeling by all participants that their white supervisors would not appreciate their lived experiences as Afro Caribbean people and how these translated and affected them in the context of being trainee counsellors or psychotherapists.

This is further illustrated by P3 *"Well if I'm honest, I'm used to it because I've been brought up around white people who don't really get a lot of stuff...erm I also sense that supervisors erm, well white supervisors from rural areas, don't have the language. They're not very articulate around race. It's a very (pause) unu it's more unusual than usual."*

As well as there being a sense of excusing the supervisor and attempting to show some understanding for the assumed difficulties they (the supervisor) may be having in exploring the issues of race, P3's comment implies an air of resignation which suggests she has more or less given up on the idea of raising the issue of race within supervision before she has even started. There is a sense that her experiences outside of the counselling and psychotherapy training context, may be influencing her interaction with her supervisors. It could be argued that a form of transference (Freud, 1991) occurs with her transferring her experiences and feelings of being Afro Caribbean in a predominantly white society into the situation of being an Afro Caribbean trainee with a white supervisor in a profession that is also predominantly white.

It seems like they (P1 and P3) are attempting to protect themselves by perhaps not giving the supervisor the opportunity to dismiss them but arguably dismissing the supervisor in doing so.

This is further compounded by P3 referring to a situation with a client in which P3 felt the client appeared to react negatively to her (P3) based on her skin colour:

"... I'm not sure the supervisor would get it because it's a fleeting thing that you think... so I wouldn't feel (pause) but also there's something about, she wouldn't share that experience? Do you know what I mean?"

A comment from P1 enhances this further *"...I don't know, not sure if they'd get it or understand where I'm coming from....they've not experienced being black, they have no real understanding of what it's like....and I think they'd probably be a bit too sensitive around the*

issue, you know for political correctness and trying to be careful, I think they'd be a bit care, they'd try to be a bit careful what they say and what they don't say. I don't think it would be addressed properly cos I think (pause) yeah erm (pause) cos I think in certain cases especially when it comes to ethnicity and the colour of your skin, I think society is erm (pause) a bit no pol, what am I saying? (pause) too politically correct...everybody is trying to be politically correct"

Apart from her expression of her assumptions about her supervisors' abilities to explore the issues of race within supervision, what is striking about this extract is P1's apparent difficulty in articulating her feelings about this issue. Given the other emergent themes within wider the hermeneutic context of the interview and the study as a whole, this appears to echo the sense of discomfort and lack of confidence supervisees feel in raising race in supervision.

This appears to be exacerbated by the perception openly expressed by one participant that the onus was placed on her to raise issues regarding race within their supervision.

"...but issues of diversity rarely come into our room unless I bring them in. It's almost like I have to name them. So it's not you know, nothing's ever named..."P2

Although she expresses no frustration in relation to this theme, P1 appears to unquestioningly assume onus:

"...yeah so I was gonna say that my clients, the clients that I've seen haven't been of Black Caribbean origin so it wouldn't have been an issue, but only one has and I don't know it just wasn't brought up? It just, I never mentioned it so obviously my supervisor never mentioned it...."

The use of the word 'obviously' here appears to indicate that as the 'other'²⁶ in the room, P1 sees it as her place to 'name' her difference.

'I feel as though I'll be seen as playing the race card.' P2 She goes on to add" *I feel as if (pause) I imagine the phantasy is that if I say something about race, I'll be met with a load of*

²⁶ Winnicott, D.W. (2005)

eye rolls you know rolling their eyes looking up to the heavens as if to say Oh my God not again!”

This possible anxiety about the reaction of her supervisor and group members expressed by P2 illustrates some of the thought processes of P1 and P2 who indicated a belief that supervision may not be an accommodating space for the discussion of issues surrounding race and they may be told to **‘take it to therapy’**.

“..I think if I brought it up and (pause) do you know I , I , think if I was to bring it up (pause) and sort of relate it to (pause) my colour (pause) I think, I don’t think they would, as the supervisor, I don’t think it would be addressed, I don’t think it would be dealt with and I’ve got a funny feeling they’d probably (pause) tell me to take it to therapy, that’s what I don’t know, that’s what I think.” P1

Whereas for P1 the idea of being told to *‘take it to therapy’* is an imagined response or phantasy²⁷ of her supervisor’s reaction, for P2 this appears to be based on actual experience

“...anything that comes up or is really raw or against the bone, the default answer is: ‘take that to your personal therapy’. So it’s almost a case of well are they dismissing my personal agenda? Are they saying you go and work it out for yourself? Are they saying this is not the place or I’m not the person? Erm they could be saying all or one of those things. None of those things, they may simply don’t know(sic). Erm they may want me to be self-actualising, they may want me to thread that part and find out for myself. It could be either, either thing, erm but it’s because I don’t know (laughs) but that’s where the frustration lies.”

The sense of being unsure of the supervisor’s processes, abilities and intentions in relation to the issues of race appears to thread through the data. Even in the case of P3 who did not express some of the other anxieties regarding possible dismissal and accommodation, there still appears to be an inherent doubt in the supervisor’s abilities to ‘hold’ an exploration of issues regarding race.

“Yeah I’ve never felt erm (pause) I have to say I’ve never felt anything negative or unfeeling but I sense the boundaries of my supervisors so I don’t I don’t go much beyond those and I’ve

²⁷ Freud (1991)

not needed to cos it's not really come up? So you know if a big race thing came up, I don't know, I can't imagine what, I'm not sure (laughs) my supervisors would be able to deal with it really"

The notion of imaginings and 'phantasies' regarding how supervisors may react can result in fear of consequence:

*"Erm but looking back maybe (pause) I sh I must try and be more assertive but I suppose my fear would be that maybe I would be perceived as someone who's angry and aggressive i.e. the angry black woman. That's my fear of what I would be perceived as."*P2

As well as echoing the idea of transference mentioned earlier, this statement by P2 seems to invoke ideas around being seen in terms of a collective stereotype (angry, overly sensitive, confrontational etc)²⁸ and not as an individual and it (the stereotype) possibly (according to my interpretation of the participant's words) acting as a form of detraction from the points raised as well as a possible defence on the supervisor and group's part²⁹. Essentially, the theme of fear of not being understood:

"...erm I don't think it would be dealt with in an authentic and genuine way, cos I think they would be more concerned about upsetting (pause) anyone or causing offence or saying the wrong thing (pause)

*I think everybody would be conscious about saying the wrong thing or (pause) and I think it would put other people in the room because we have group supervision, so I think it would put the others on the (pause) so I think it just (pause) maybe that's the, maybe that's just my (pause) perception, I don't know if it would play out like that but maybe that's just me, but I think people would be a bit (pause) yeah that's cos I don't think it would be played out (pause) I don't think it would be authentic..."*P1

²⁸Frosh,(2002), McKenzie-Mavinga (2009)

²⁹ Winnicott (2005)

Focus on thinking regarding issues regarding race being addressed or otherwise by supervisor

Themes arising in this category included: sense of race not being acknowledged, defensiveness as protecting supervisor and self/contradiction, supervisor inconsistency, supervisor willingness to learn/supervisor curiosity, sense of overcompensation by supervisor, ambivalence

“No one’s mentioned race...it’s not really being a problem so I’ve not really looked at it and thought they haven’t spoken about race so it hasn’t been a problem for me”P1

This statement made at the beginning of P1’s interview is remarkable in terms of the context of hermeneutic circle of this study, bearing in mind the quotes that have already been attributed to her the first superordinate theme and the comments she makes later in the interview.

What is striking about this extract is the use of the word ‘problem’ which appears twice when it was in no way used or mentioned by the researcher. It almost appears as though the theme of discomfort which appears in the superordinate of ‘*Focus on thinking regarding trainee raising issue of race within supervision*’ is being paralleled within the research interview process.

P3 gives further insight into this in an extract from her interview:-

P3: Yeah I reckon. Except it has, it has come up, because of that one client who presented ...

Researcher: The young man (laughs) who came and said “I’m a racist.” It’s quite bold really.

P3: ...having worked through it. It was a kind of (pause) like I say it was a kind of exoticism in the supervision space that was soon got through with a lot of humour.

Researcher: I also sensed that you said something about that was that, you felt you weren’t talked about in it, I think you used the words “there wasn’t care for me” and...

P3: ...No it was assumed that I was caring for myself. That’s right.

Researcher: Yeah and that you were okay cos you were a toughie (laughs)...

P3: That’s right

Researcher: ...more or less and you weren’t sure how somebody else might have felt...

P3: That’s right

Researcher: ...in that situation...

P3: Yeah I think somebody else may have wanted more...

Researcher: ...a bit more

P3:... a bit more, yeah

Researcher: Mmm

P3: Cos he was quite a confronting character you know ...

Researcher: Mmm. Do you think you might have wanted a bit more? Cos I feel I'd be a bit, cos I'm trying not to put words in your mouth I feel I'd be bit remiss if I didn't ask.

P3: Erm I (pause) well if I'm honest, I'd say yes in terms of (pause) in understanding and around. Do you know what I mean? I got, once we'd, what's the word picked it and got down to detail...

Researcher: Mmmm

P3: ...it was fine but sort of in and around (pause) just even issue of did you have the choice to work with this person? Who, who screened this person before they came to see you, because they were supposed to have been assessed before they came to see me...

Researcher: Mmmm

P3...so did you why didn't you get any warning from the assessment? ...

Researcher: Mmmm

P3...that this was going to and you know none of that was, and you know none of that was, so I suppose some of that would have been useful...

Researcher: Mmmm

P3: ...because I'd been more prepared rather than sitting down and just, whoa! Cos if you think someone's been assessed, but I didn't get a form or anything, he just turned up.

Researcher: Mmmm

In this extract, P3 initially insists that she was fine with the way the issue in question was handled in supervision, whilst suggesting that someone else may not have been so robust or resilient. She eventually states that perhaps more enquiry into her process or 'care for me' may have been helpful. Her reluctance to state that perhaps she may have needed 'more' seems almost like a method of transference stoicism in the sense that she has perhaps become accustomed to her experience as an 'other' not being acknowledged and doesn't feel able to highlight or challenge, even in the supervisory situation but projects³⁰ her needs unto an imaginary peer "...I think somebody else may have wanted more."

More acknowledgements of their identities as Afro Caribbean people were felt to be important by all participants:

"I think I would feel more valued as a black counsellor if I was treated like a black counsellor." P2

³⁰ Klein, M (1975) *The psychoanalysis of children*

She goes on to add: *“Because my experience in the room is going to be completely different to my peers. My non-black peers you know. It’s gonna be different...”*

P2’s feelings about her ‘otherness’ or difference within her supervision group and what this might mean for her as a counselling trainee not being acknowledged are echoed by P1:

“...I think because of erm the nature of the work, the nature of the work we’re doing. I feel you do need some acknowledgement of your background and your ethnicity and I think that isn’t always catered for in this line of work...”

And again by P3:

“...my gut feeling is that because it’s very humanistic isn’t it counselling, well the counselling that I do or that I’m involved in is very humanistic that it would really erm (pause) it would (pause) from the lowest common denominator, I would want to hold my client as much as my supervisor would want to hold me regardless of what she understood or didn’t understand about the situation so I suppose that’s what would happen so I guess I might have a hunger for more (pause) proactivity than that which probably I wouldn’t get a lot of...”

Two participants (P2 and P3) indicated an inconsistency in their supervisory experiences with regards to issues regarding race being addressed or otherwise within their supervision. Both participants had worked for multiple agencies and had found different supervisors approached the subject (or rather didn’t) differently

“Erm I had one supervisor who brought it into the relationship actually said you know (sic) race is you know that it’s important we do need to address that difference in our client isn’t just (sic) class difference or gender difference or sexuality or religious you know it’s everything and you know with race being a huge one, erm and I had one, at the time I was, I was new and I’d only had one client but there weren’t actually any issues like that to bring in. However, my personal issues in terms of being a black counsellor and sitting with other as in

other being non-black erm clients that was never addressed either in terms of how do you feel which I also think is really important.” P2

Of her experience of her supervisor in another placement, she states:

“...She does mark out difference, so for example I’ve got a co-supervisee who’s younger. She’s only twenty four and so the whole thing about ageism comes up with myself she thinks because I’m forty and because I speak well, that it’s actually quite, it it’s a nice place to be in terms of providing counselling when I have any form of conflict with my client or any challenge the idea of race is never really brought up in supervision but the idea of class is.”

Here P2 describes two different experiences. In the first, race is considered to be an issue worth exploring but only as far as in relation to the client’s identity. In the second, her other perceived differences to the client (s) are marked out but race is not mentioned.

What is striking about these extracts is that from the participant’s point of view, the supervisors’ interventions mark out and acknowledge differences but not the one which seems to be of significant importance to her (P2)and perhaps most apparent in the room.

P3 relates similar experiences. Speaking of one supervisory experience she states:

“..I got that sense when I walked into my first (supervision) and they were very and they were quite distant and it was only the supervisor, that managed that situation and saw me, saw ME and I think that the reason that she was able to see me rather than anything else around it, was because she works in a drugs rehab place where people come down from London all the time so she’s not seeing she’s not really, she doesn’t really have local clientele she has a mixed race clientele and so it’s much it was much easier?”

Later when comparing the supervisor above with other supervisors, she adds:

“She had a wider, she had a wider (sic) whereas local people from rural areas, they’ve got quite narrow experience really and they mean well it’s nothing you know I wouldn’t criticise them for it’s just sometimes, you know that you’re outside their experience.”

These extracts highlight that for P3 it seems to be as important for her to be seen as an individual rather than as part of a collective 'other' it also seems important that all aspects of her individuality are acknowledged. There also appears to be an acceptance that some supervisors may not be familiar with the issues that her individuality presents as she is 'outside of their experience'

The most positive theme to emerge from the current superordinate, results from an acknowledgement by some supervisors that certain aspects of the participants' lived experiences may be unfamiliar to them. As a result a curiosity and willingness to learn is demonstrated.

"... race was dis-cussed erm as a sort of issue that my supervisor (pause) wasn't familiar with in any person er didn't have much personal experience but was interested in knowing more about. Erm (pause) other people's experiences" P3

P3 also expressed a sense that supervisor ignorance and in turn discomfort with the subject of race may lead to a need to over-compensate:

"I feel ...because they don't really they're not confident and comfortable about race they go for that knee knee jerk (laughs) reaction that white people do "Oh no it's racist, it's racist " it's like hang on a minute it's slightly more complicated. Do you know what I mean?"

Although I did not answer P3's question directly at the time, it did give me pause to reflect on my own experiences as an Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor and I found that as well as experiencing curiosity and genuine interest from some of my supervisors regarding my lived experiences as an Afro Caribbean woman living in Britain, there had also been incidents of client material being viewed as possibly having racist connotations which although a worthwhile and necessary exercise can occasionally become the main focus, leading to perhaps more pertinent aspects of client material being ignored and this is mirrored by the trainee feeling that only one aspect of themselves is being seen .

P3's extract also indicates some transference 'not seeing' of the supervisor as he or she becomes grouped with other 'white' people who may not be capable of understanding the full implications regarding issues related to race.

This in turn leads to ambivalence on the part of trainees regarding whether their supervisor should raise the issue of race within supervision.

"I'd want it to be dealt with properly, I'd want it to be dealt with (pause) openly and honestly and I don't think it would cos I'd think people are too afraid to say the wrong thing when it comes to people's skin colour."P1

"I would say for me, there's a nervousnessbecause I'm not sure the supervisor would get it because it's a fleeting thing that you think. It's not something that's heavy or weighing me down. so I wouldn't feel(pause) but also there's something about, she wouldn't share that experience?"P3

Focus on trainee's sense of self as Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor or psychotherapist within supervision

Some of the themes within this superordinate included: feeling neglected, questioning of self, questioning of abilities, feeling out of depth, sense of isolation, whole self not recognised, anger, frustration, phantasies of different setting/ supervisor and sense of self as 'other'.

"Yeah well I mean, yeah it's (pause) well it's very neglectful and I feel that they don't think it's a dimension of interact of part of the interaction that matters. Erm (pause) you know I don't know whether there are schools of counselling and schools of thought where it doesn't matter what you are you know regardless of that you can be interacted with in many different ways."P2

P3 sheds further light on this with regards to supervision about her encounter with a 'racist' client.

"...I understood that she didn't, she got the funniness of it and the exoticness of the situation but she but not in any, anyway in a sense of erm (pause), care for me kind of way I mean I can handle myself and so that's fine but she ne, she never checked that out you know I could have been (pause) not I may not have handled that situation terribly well..."

It appears that the effects of supervisors paying attention (or not) to their needs regarding exploring racial notions with reference to their interactions with clients, is a potent contributory factor for trainees feeling as if their process matters in the supervisory context.

Thinking back to my time as a trainee counsellor, I was aware of my own experiences regarding my race being discussed (in supervision) in relation to my interaction with clients and how this made me feel 'seen' in some way by my supervisor which mattered to my sense of self as a counsellor trainee in the sense that the whole of me was relevant in the room and in my work with my clients.

This also appears to be the case for the participants as it appears that the manner in which the notion of race is addressed or otherwise, may impact on their development as counsellors. It seems that when trainees feel this is not happening it leads to questioning of self, questioning of abilities and feeling out of depth which were some of the other themes that noted under this current superordinate theme.

"...from the West Indies from the West Indies which is my own heritage erm there's a lot of stuff around separation and being left and abandoned and how it's the norm, erm and sometimes it's very kind of err (pause) it's really challenging because I don't feel that in that placement that there is, the support is there in actually addressing those things. And when I look at myself and when I look at my internal supervisor, internal supervisor (sic) I have to think whether it's my stuff or whether it's their is it my countertransference is their you know, is it, is it, what they're doing re they projecting it into me? And I feel as if I'm working it all out myself and I could be wrong..."P2

Perhaps not surprisingly, anger frustration, a sense of isolation and a sense of self as 'other' (for trainees) are also themes in this category.

"...there was no actual interaction with "what's it like for you as a British Caribbean woman working with a second generation Indian woman who's ten years older than you? What's that dynamic like?" You know. How does it feel for you? You know. How do you feel the client relates to you? Have you addressed it with the client? You know none of that! and it is a case of well I need to do it for myself... and it's almost just like well I've got other things to do and it's an inequality! because my white counterparts don't have to do it for themselves..."P2

"...I do think the nature of the work we're in. I think that's (race) something that does need to be looked at and addressed."P1

"This is sort of erm, there's a slight, there's a slight trickiness because of that unknown, I think because it's about the human, our work is about the human condition... and supervisors don't have (pause) white supervisors don't have you know white supervisors in... don't have, that (pause) ex experience for the most part, and admit as much. There's only so much they can do isn't there? You know they can't....The supervisor that dealt with that racism, boy (pause) it was much more about the exo, the humour of it. It was like "Oh my God, you know and he came to see..." do you know what I mean? it was an exoticism as I say rather than (pause) immediately quite serious. How is this managed and are you okay? I would have expected, you know if I was supervising somebody, I would want to know all of those things, before we got down to what he was talking about. Do you know what I mean?"
P3

It appears this sense of not having their needs met in supervision may lead trainees to imagine a different or better supervisory setting and supervisor as was the case with two participants

“I feel that perhaps if I had one to one supervision, issues around race would be much more prevalent. They’d be out there. Erm they would, they would feature a lot more. That’s my feeling. I could be wrong. Erm but I think as well when there’s a group. I do hold back. I don’t say things as explicitly as I should or I could.”P2

“Yeah I guess if you had a black supervisor you’d feel a bit more at ease to discuss it and I think you’d probably feel that the person you’re talking to would understand what you’re talking about. Erm (pause) so I just think you’d yeah I just think you’d feel more at ease about bring... approaching the subject you’d know that the person you’re speaking to would have an understanding and be able to relate to what you’re talking about rather than speaking to somebody that really doesn’t understand or doesn’t or and trying to get them to understand where you’re coming from. I think that would be a lot harder.” P1

Focus on thinking regarding legacy of colonization

Themes that arose under this superordinate theme included inherited transference, comfort in shared history and anxiety regarding perceived role reversal.

“I don’t know, maybe, no maybe it’s me. Maybe I feel that I would(pause) if I had to discuss that with somebody I’d prefer to , maybe it’s that maybe that’s me. I’d just feel more comfortable talking about that to another black person...” P1

It appears that for P1, knowing that her supervisor has a shared legacy of being ‘the colonised’, would enable her to feel more comfortable to raise issues regarding race within her supervision and perhaps even challenge her supervisor on occasion. There seems to be an assumption that an Afro Caribbean supervisor would share similar experiences of the phenomena in question and would therefore, be automatically empathic towards the trainee.

The data also suggests that Afro Caribbean trainees’ abilities to challenge their supervisors may be affected by a sense of the power difference being compounded by colonial history or the ‘*inherited transference*’ as P2 describes it.

"...so I do have a fear against challenge and a fear of being judged and criticised and things like that so that is something that is part of my inherited transference. As a result of, of, (sic) of who I am as a black woman in the world do you know what I mean? That that forms part of my own heritage and so it's it's it's(sic) perhaps through that that I think well actually I, I cannot assert myself because if I do there will to be a consequence and that consequence will be harsh" P2

"...what I should have done is, if I was more articulate and less (pause) what's the word (pause) in a sense, I'm more knowledgeable than my supervisor... so in a sense because of that power imbalance... perhaps that erm perhaps I should have taken the bull a bit more by the horn and said "look he is a racist but it's not really about that he's (laughs) an unconscious racist if you like... There's something about that? And I didn't have the. I didn't have the language to or feel as if I had the power or right to say that..." P3

Some participants also indicated that as a result of their experiences of being Afro Caribbean in a 'white' world both within and outside their training, they viewed their roles as counsellors of often white clients as a reversal of the status quo and this could have a disconcerting effect clinically, which may lead to a need for support that they may be hesitant to express.

"...obviously erm (pause) you're seeing a whole range of people and so their, the way you respond, I don't n (sic).how can I put it? Erm (pause)How you might feel about certain about certain (sic)people (pause) erm (pause) you know your own transference or counter transference that you might have on the client... could be linked to your ethnicity...or your (pause) how can I put it? (pause) your own sort of prejudice. Especially if you're you're speaking to maybe erm (pause) I don't know if you're if you're trying to give erm if your if your client is maybe erm a white middle class person and as a black person you might feel a little bit (pause) I don't know you might feel a bit erm (pause) like out of your depth or... It might feel a little bit cos, that is a complete, that's so sort of like a role reversal, some erm.. So maybe that (pause) would be something that you would talk to another black person about but not necessarily go to supervision to a white supervisor and talk to him about it." P1

It seems that due to her assumptions regarding her supervisor's empathic capabilities, P1 is unable to communicate what appears to be a developmental need i.e. 'feeling out her depth' in her relationship with the client and perhaps needing support in exploring the possible reasons for that.

Difficulties in expressing need for support due to what might be a perceived impingement on the supervisory relationship based on experiences both within and outside the supervisory relationship are echoed by P2.

"...Because my experience in the room is going to be completely different to my peers. My non-black peers you know. It's gonna be different. Erm if I have a black client there's a there's almost like an unspoken expectation .Erm if I have a white client it's, again it's a different dynamic. You know but as me as a black counsellor and what it means , when you know if I've got an upper class client or something who speaks very plummy. That has a bearing on me and how I react. I tend I think what then happens is people say, when you can tell when supervisors can't handle anything because they say that's something for your personal counselling..."P2

Discussion

This study provides some insight into the ways in which Afro Caribbean counsellor and psychotherapy trainees perceive and process their experiences with regards to the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their supervision.

It highlights the sense of transference (Freud, 1991) that occurs as trainees expect their lived experiences as Afro Caribbean people in Britain to be replicated within the supervision context, therefore affecting their expectations of the supervisory relationship. This is also indicated in the works of Van der Kolk (1974) and Fukuyama (1994).

The transferring of feelings onto the supervisory relationships can lead to trainees inadvertently contributing to their 'not being seen' and 'understood' as their 'fear of consequence' or senses of 'stoicism' and 'resilience' are employed as a means of protection.

One could argue that in a sense this form of defence leads to a presentation of a 'false self' deemed necessary to survive the supervision process. (Winnicott, 2005)³¹.

This research has also shown that perceptions of the supervisor's receptiveness to discussing issues of race can have an impact on the trainee's developmental process. Participants indicated senses of feeling out of depth, isolation, frustration, anger and phantasying about different settings or supervisors as a result of feeling their needs were not being met.³²

Based on the data, it could be argued that the supervisory alliance may be affected by the manner in which the notions of race are addressed within supervision as there is an indication that trainees may not fully disclose their thoughts and anxieties due to uncertainty regarding the supervisor's possible response. Alongside indicating fear of consequence, being dismissed and not being understood, two participants reported

³¹ These findings are corroborated by Hird and colleagues' study (2001) in which a participant/co-author reports that in response to his/her supervisors' apparent inability to see or understand his/her point of view he/she adopted a position of 'constantly checking the time to see when supervision would be over and telling supervisors what they wanted to hear.' (P.119)

³² Cook (1994) indicates that supervisees who enter supervision with a sense of racial awareness may find themselves dealing with frustration 'and perhaps even anger in realising that their supervisors are not addressing with aspects of their personal and professional identity development.'

inconsistencies in the manner in which they had experienced the phenomena being addressed. Although Hilton et al (1995) argue that the quality of the relationship matters above all else, in my mind, this raises an issue reminiscent to the chicken and egg dilemma. In other words, which comes first? How strong can the supervisory alliance ever truly be if one or both parties do not feel fully seen or able to explore issues of pertinence?

In this research for instance, participants indicated that although their supervisors were helpful in many aspects of the supervisory relationship, there was still a sense that the area of race may 'push the boundaries' to their limit. In my experience as a trainee, I found inconsistencies in the manner in which the issue of race was addressed or otherwise. Some supervisors acknowledged it in passing, others integrated it into our relationship albeit perhaps placing a little too much emphasis on it on occasion, and some others with whom I would otherwise describe my relationship as 'holding' and supportive have not mentioned it at all. On these occasions I have felt not fully seen but have also wondered why I have felt unable to raise the issue myself. Could this be due to some of the themes raised in the research, e.g. fear of consequence, not being understood, or my own sense of internalised inherited colonial transference?

Mckenzie-Mavinga (2005) and Tumamla Narra(2004) have both written about the role played by shame with regard to trainees and supervisees raising the issue of race. Tumamla Narra (2004) suggests that discussions regarding race may induce feelings of anxiety and shame within both supervisor and supervisee.

Of course if the trainee is in group supervision, this may add more dimensions to the dilemma. In this study, all participants had been or were in group supervision and seemed to indicate a compounded sense of isolation as the only Afro Caribbean member of the group. Some participants also implied that the sense of discomfort at raising the subject or fear of being dismissed was enhanced in a group situation.³³ It was worth noting however, that one participant who had experienced both at the time of her interview, still expressed discomfort around raising issues regarding the notions of race in one-to-one supervision.

Additionally, taking into account Fannon's ideas about the family being 'the institution that prefigures a broader institution' (1982, p.149) and considering the fact that every group we

³³ Omand (2009) writes about the possibility of supervisees 'feeling exposed' in groups.(p.87)

are in (including the supervisory one) is arguably a replication of that³⁴ and given that one participant indicated that her fear of consequence was compounded by her familial experiences as a child, it could be argued that a combination of experiences during their maturational processes along with a sense of internalised oppression due to the legacy of colonisation and the social construction of Afro Caribbean people in Britain may contribute to the manner in which Afro Caribbean trainees broach the issue of race within their supervision.

Several authors (Remington and Dacosta 1989, Cook, 1994, Leong and Wagner 1994, Hird et al 2001) have suggested that it is part of the supervisor's role to raise or address issues of race within the supervisory context not only for the developmental benefits to the supervisee but with regards to its impact on client work. As this research has shown, race not being addressed within supervision, can leave the supervisee grappling with issues of transference and countertransference which they feel unable to discuss. This in turn, may affect their way of being with the client. (Omand 2009)

Elements within the existing literature (Leong and Wagner 1994, Helms and Cook 1999,) have placed emphasis on the importance of supervisor training and the implementation of supervision models which enhance awareness of 'multicultural' issues. Many authors³⁵ have also encouraged supervisors to examine their own attitudes to issues of diversity and to initiate the conversation within the supervisory context in order to develop a good working alliance with their supervisees and assist in their developmental process.

These suggestions have implications for supervisors working with Afro Caribbean trainees in Britain. With more Afro Caribbean trainees entering the field³⁶, it becomes even more pertinent that supervisors are aware of the effects of addressing the issues of race within supervision. As one participant reflected upon reading her quotes, *"What I think I've learnt from re reading my past words is precisely how vulnerable 'BME practitioners' within therapeutic training are.."*P2

³⁴ Freud (1959), Fanon (1982)

³⁵ Remington and Dacosta 1989, Cook 1994, Fukuyama 1994, Ladany et al 1997, Cook and Helms 1999, Hird et al 2001, Hays and Chang 2003

³⁶ Figures from BACP Research Team (July 2012) show a 1.6% increase in BACP members of Afro Caribbean origin between 2008 and 2012

As well as strengthening the findings of previous research, this study extends the data in the sense that for the first time, there is data about British trainees' experiences of the phenomena in question providing a chance to compare whether their experiences are in any way different to those of their American counterparts and the data has thrown up no apparent differences. It appears that experiences associated with identifying or being perceived as the racial 'other' may transcend differing cultural and historical contexts.

There are however, several similarities in the experiences of Afro Caribbean trainees in Britain to those of their American counterparts. These include their sense of transferring their lived experiences as Afro Caribbean people within British society and their resulting relational expectations onto the supervisory relationship (Van Der Kolk 1974, Helms and Cook 1988), their sense of having their development impinged in environments or supervisory relationships where they feel unable to explore notions of race (Hird et al) and the fact that openness and curiosity on the part of the supervisor, can encourage conversation regarding notions of race and perhaps strengthen the supervisory alliance (Remington and DaCosta 1989, Fukuyama 1994, Tummala-Nara 2004, Gatmon et al 2006)

The other factor which makes this study unique is the fact the interviews of two of the participants were conducted over a year before the writing-up stage of the research so when they were shown their extracts to approve, they noted that due to the fact that they had moved on to different developmental stages,³⁷ they had moved on in terms of their thinking and feelings in relation to the notions of race being addressed within their supervision. One participant indicated that where she had felt less able to speak before, she felt more comfortable in not only raising the subject but in naming her needs.

These findings add depth to one of the original ideas about this project. Part of the original ontology was that the significant power difference between trainee and supervisor coupled with the trainee's developmental stage (Cook, 1994, Goodyear & Bernard 1998) may affect trainees' views and perceptions of the phenomena in question and although the research sample size is relatively small, by employing the use of IPA, this study has provided a detailed insight into the perceptions and experiences of some Afro Caribbean trainees.

³⁷ One participant who had been in her second year of a two year counselling course was now qualified and another who had just entered the second year of a four year psychotherapy course was now in her third year

On reflection, enquiring more about the participants' overall relationship aside from issues regarding race may have been helpful. Information gleaned from the data provided indications that even when trainees found their supervisor to be generally competent, there still appeared to be a hesitancy on both parts to discuss the issue of race and that may have been interesting to explore. Was this perhaps related to the sense of shame referred to by Tummala-Narra (2004) or the 'elements of fear, history, guilt and racism present in the dynamic of race issues?' (Mckenzie-Mavinga, 2005). As the researcher, I am personally aware of the gamut of emotions I have experienced during this process, including a sense of anxiety about perhaps being seen as attacking of my non Afro Caribbean colleagues, this resulted in me going back over the data to ensure that I had not missed participants' accounts of more 'positive' experiences of issues regarding notions of race being addressed within their supervision. In a way the sense of discomfort and fear of not being understood present for the trainees within their supervision and paralleled within the research interview process has also being paralleled in the writing-up process.

Implications of this study are apparent in the fact that it highlights the need for greater supervisor awareness and reflection on issues regarding race and the need for supervisors to initiate and encourage discussions which explore notions of race within the supervisory relationship.

It does however, have some limitations. All participants were female and it could be argued the social construction of women and the continuing perpetuation of 'patriarchal ideologies' (Frosh, 1997. p.190) may have an added impact as to how they experience the phenomena.³⁸

The perspective of Afro Caribbean male trainees may have added a different perspective and depth to this study.

With regards to future research, it would perhaps be beneficial to examine the perceptions of white supervisors regarding addressing the notions of race within supervision and exploring areas such as: How comfortable are they with raising race within supervision? What factors do they think may affect their level of comfort or discomfort with the issue?

³⁸ Nelson and Holloway's 1990 study showed that female trainees less likely to challenge authority figures.

How do they feel it may or may not affect the dynamic? It may also be useful to track supervisors at various developmental stages as their perceptions may change as they progress as supervisors (Omand 2009). This may open up the dialogue and provide an insight into how barriers to discussing notions of race within supervision may be overcome.

It would also be interesting to look at Afro Caribbean and trainee and supervisor dyads to get a sense of what if any differences may present with regards to the notions of race being addressed. Would it really provide the comfort some of the participants in this study suggest or anticipate? Or might differences in each individual's perception of the phenomena present its own issues?

Taking all this into account, one thing seems clear. In a profession which centres its very essence and purpose on the exploration of and engagement with the more difficult aspects of human relationships or as a former lecturer once put it, 'laying the fish on the counter', there appears to be some continuing anxiety and reluctance in exploring and engaging in the more challenging aspects of our relationships with one another as colleagues. One cannot help but wonder how this affects our engagement with clients.

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Appendix 1

Recruitment Advert

Dear Student

My name is Angela Ike and I am studying for an MA in Psychotherapeutic Counselling at the University of Brighton. For my research project I intend to examine the experiences of Afro Caribbean trainee counsellors and psychotherapists with regards to the 'notions' of race being addressed or otherwise within their clinical supervision.

I intend to meet with participants on one occasion at an agreed location for a recorded interview lasting about one hour.

Participants will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be currently studying on a BACP or UKCP accredited course.
- Have had at least 50 hours of supervised counselling practice with a supervisor who is an accredited member of BACP or UKCP.
- Currently in personal therapy
- Have been in the UK since at least the beginning of secondary school age.

Further details about my research project or how to participate and what can be expected if you decide to take part can be obtained by contacting me at angieike@hotmail.com

Appendix 2

Information Sheet

You have been selected to participate in a study examining African Caribbean counsellor trainees' experiences of the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within their supervision. This information sheet advises you of what it will involve and what will happen to the information you have given.

Please read this information sheet and discuss it with others if you wish.

Please ask the researcher if there is anything you would like clarified or you feel is not addressed here.

Why have I been selected?

You have been identified as an African Caribbean trainee counsellor who has met the selection criteria.

What happens now?

If you are still willing to take part, I will arrange to meet with you at an agreed venue for a taped interview lasting one hour during which we will discuss your experiences of supervision. You will also sign a consent form confirming your agreement to participate in the study.

What happens after that?

I will then transcribe the interview which will be used as part of my research study. I will ensure you anonymity is maintained and the transcript will be destroyed after my project is completed.

What if I change my mind?

You will be able to withdraw at any time.

What are the risks of me taking part?

You may experience some distress over the course of the interview. If this should happen, I will terminate the interview and help you to access the appropriate support.

What are the possible advantages of me taking part?

The study may not benefit you directly but it will hopefully help shed light on the issues that may arise for Afro Caribbean trainee counsellors in their supervision with regards to notions of race.

What if I'm unhappy with the researcher?

I intend to adhere to the ethical codes of the University of Brighton's Ethics Board and the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy's Ethical Framework to prevent any harm to the participants. However, if you are unhappy with my conduct in anyway, please contact my supervisor whose details are provided below.

Supervisor details:

Sue Sully

Senior Lecturer

Course Leader

Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic Therapeutic Counselling

School of Applied Social Science

Mayfield House

Falmer

BN1 9PH

01273643492

Email: s.e.sully@brighton.ac.uk

Appendix 3

Participant Consent Form

- I understand that I am taking part in a study about my experiences of the notions of race being addressed or otherwise within my supervision
- I agree that the researcher has explained to the purpose of the research and the possible risks involved in a manner which I have understood.
- I understand that my anonymity will be maintained by the researcher
- I understand that I will have the right to review any extracts from my interview which may be seen by others.
- I am aware that I am able withdraw from the study at any time.
- I understand that my interview transcripts and recordings will be destroyed on completion of the researcher's course and that during that time they will be stored securely and only accessible by the researcher
- I understand that the researcher is obliged to disclose any revelation of ethical breaches on mine or my supervisor's part to the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy or the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. I also understand that any intention by the researcher to disclose to the relevant bodies will be discussed with me first.

Signed

Date

Appendix 4

Sample of Participant Extract Document for P1 (As seen and approved by participant)

Focus on trainee's sense of self as Afro Caribbean trainee counsellor or psychotherapist within supervision

It appears that the effects of supervisors paying attention (or not) regarding exploring racial issues for the participants with reference to interactions with clients, is a potent contributory factor for trainees feeling as if their process matters in the supervisory context.

"...I do think the nature of the work we're in. I think that's (race) something that does need to be looked at and addressed." P1

It appears this sense of not having needs met in supervision may lead trainees to imagine a different/ better supervisory setting and supervisor

"Yeah I guess if you had a black supervisor you'd feel a bit more at ease to discuss it and I think you'd probably feel that the person you're talking to would understand what you're talking about. Erm (pause) so I just think you'd yeah I just think you'd feel more at ease about bring... approaching the subject, you'd know that the person you're speaking to would have an understanding and be able to relate to what you're talking about rather than speaking to somebody that really doesn't understand or doesn't or and trying to get them to understand where you're coming from. I think that would be a lot harder." P1

Appendix 5

Sample Transcript Analysis

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
<p data-bbox="188 530 475 667">Sense of race not being acknowledged Phantasies of different setting/supervisor</p> <p data-bbox="188 920 405 949">Sense of Isolation</p> <p data-bbox="188 1211 547 1308">Frustration? Sense of self as other Doubt in supervisor's abilities</p>	<p data-bbox="619 530 991 770">P1: Yeah I guess if you had a black supervisor you'd feel a bit more at ease to discuss it and I think you'd probably feel that the person you're talking to would understand what you're talking about.</p> <p data-bbox="619 815 826 844">Researcher: Yeah</p> <p data-bbox="619 889 983 1413">P1: Erm (pause) so I just think you'd yeah I just think you'd feel more at ease about bring... approaching the subject, you'd know that the person you're speaking to would have an understanding and be able to relate to what you're talking about rather than speaking to somebody that really doesn't understand or doesn't or and trying to get them to understand where you're coming from. I think that would be a lot harder.</p>	<p data-bbox="1018 530 1347 734">Does she feel at ease now? Seems like some of her experiences are not being acknowledged? -Are parts of her not being acknowledged?</p> <p data-bbox="1018 815 1394 880">-Seems to feel unconnected to supervisor.</p> <p data-bbox="1018 889 1378 954">-Does not seem to feel white supervisor would understand.</p> <p data-bbox="1018 963 1145 992">-Why not?</p> <p data-bbox="1018 1001 1326 1066">-How better might 'black' supervisor understand?</p> <p data-bbox="1018 1075 1342 1140">Would he/she be 'Afro Caribbean' or 'Caribbean'?</p> <p data-bbox="1018 1391 1398 1487"><i>Maybe there's some transference here from 'outside counselling'</i></p>

Appendix 6

Master Table of Themes for Participant Group

	P1	P2	P3
Focus on thinking regarding trainee raising issues regarding race in supervision			
Discomfort	√		
Lack of confidence	√	√	√
Doubt of supervisor's abilities	√	√	√
Presumption supervisor's reaction	√	√	
Doubt of supervision being seen as a space for exploration	√	√	√
Fear of consequence	√	√	√
Onus placed on trainee		√	
Fear of not being understood	√	√	√
Focus on thinking regarding supervisor raising issues regarding race being addressed by supervisor			
Sense of race not being acknowledged	√	√	√
Denial as protecting supervisor/self/Contradiction	√		√
Inconsistency		√	√
Supervisor's Curiosity			√
Sense of overcompensation			√
Ambivalence	√		√
Focus on trainees' sense of self within supervision			
Questioning of self		√	√
Questioning of abilities	√	√	
Feeling out of depth	√	√	
Sense of isolation	√	√	√
Anger		√	√
Frustration	√	√	√
Feeling neglected		√	√
Phantasies of different setting/supervisor	√	√	
Sense of self as other	√	√	√
Focus on thinking regarding legacy of colonization			
Inherited transference		√	√
Anxiety regarding perceived role reversal	√	√	
Higher value placed on shared history/heritage	√		

Appendix 7

Preliminary Participant Information

Participant Number	P1	P2	P3
Gender	F	F	F
Training Discipline	Psychotherapy	Counselling	Counselling
Hours of supervised practice at time of interview (Approximate)	50	80	150
Experience of one-to-one supervision (at time of interview)	No	No	Yes
Experience of group supervision (at time of interview)	Yes	Yes	Yes

