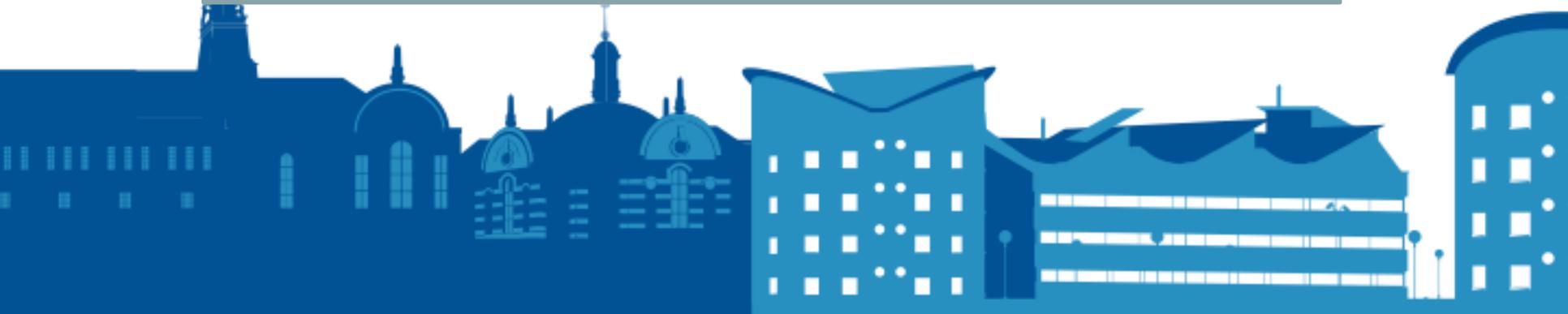


Having “Courageous Conversations” with students struggling or failing in practice learning settings.



**NOPT Conference
July 2019**

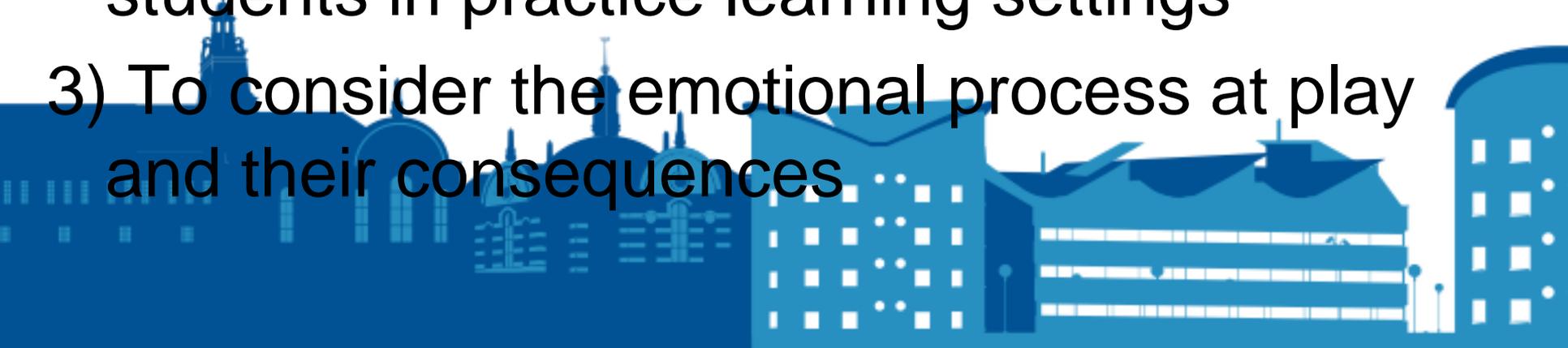
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Aims of the Workshop



- 1) To understand the emotional challenges practice educators, mentors and supervisors may face when working with struggling or failing students
- 2) To develop skills and confidence in having “courageous conversations” with social work students in practice learning settings
- 3) To consider the emotional process at play and their consequences



BUT FIRST!!!!!! INTRODUCTIONS

YOU

- **Name**
- **Where you work and role?**
- **Any experience of working with a struggling or failing students?**
- **Tell us a “secret” about yourself that no one else will know!**

ME

- Social work educator for 15 years.
- Long standing research interest in all things practice learning - with a focus on failure
- Currently writing about social work, PREVENT and radicalisation (with David McKendrick).
- Former C&F social worker, play therapist and practice educator.
I am a Secret Viking!!!



Limited (but growing International and Multidisciplinary research base about the emotional impact



- **Bogo at al (2007) – failing students causes value conflicts for practice educators.**
- **Gizara and Forest (2004) – “I think that it’s an extremely emotional, gut-wrenching kind of experience...I don’t think it feels good on any level.”**
- **Basnett and Sheffield (2010) – experience of failing student a negative one**
- **Schaub and Dalrymple (2013) practice educators reported feeling stressed, isolated and did not feel supported.**
- **Finch (2010) found the experience caused range of challenging emotions**

- Practice educators felt under intense public and critical surveillance
- Felt threatened by students – possible implications if complaints made
- Lack of support from university and tutors
- Intense feelings of isolation contributing to feeling overwhelmed with situation
- Frustrated

- **Schaub and Dalrymple (2013) practice educators reported feeling stressed, isolated and did not feel supported.**

GUILT

ANGER

SHAME

ANXIETY

FRUSTRATION

STRESS

IMMOBILISATION

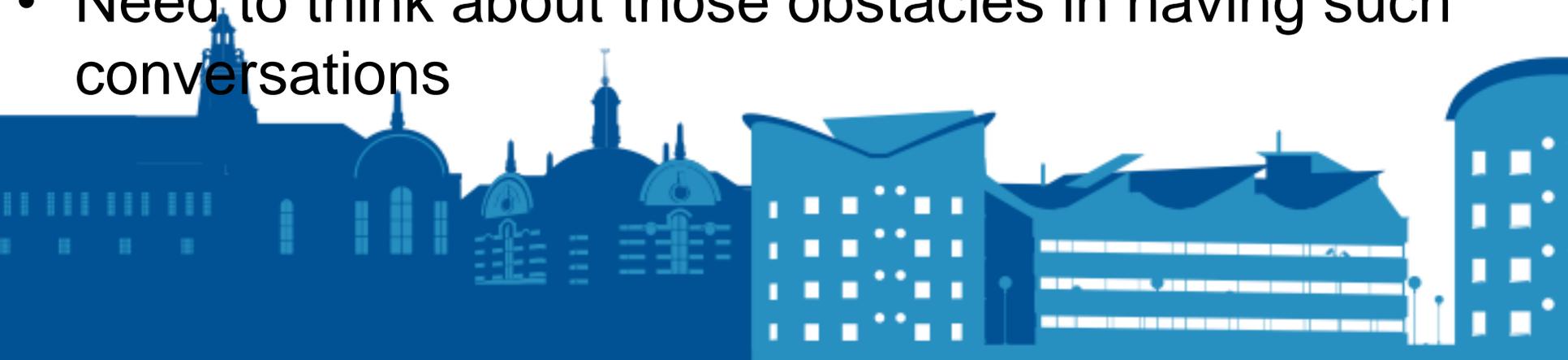
- Finch (2010) found the experience caused range of challenging emotions

Courageous Conversations

(Beddoe and Davys, 2016)



- Or “saying it as it is”! (Jo Finch)
- Conversations associated with some sort of emotion
- Participants may feel ashamed, apprehensive, uncomfortable, angry & embarrassed
- Conversations may be conflicted by introducing different ideas, values or behaviours
- Conversations may cause conflict
- Need to think about those obstacles in having such conversations



Role Play Time !!!!!!!



Reflective Activity



- What did you find difficult/challenging about the role plays
- What range of emotions did you experience?
- Why do you think these emotions emerged?
- What did they tell you?
- What new insights has the exercise revealed between you and the “student”?
- Anything else?



Emotional Processes



- Finch, Schaub and Dalrymple (2013) argued that practice educators were mobilised by persecutory projective processes...
- ...which immobilises thinking and reflection
- Compound failure – ignored initial misgivings and then internalised students failures as their own (ibid).
- Practice educators overwhelmed with students difficult of failure...
- And involves unconsciously own experiences of failing –
- Students previous failing issues may also be reawakened.



Emotional Process



- Finch, Schaeffer and Dalrymple argued that post-1990s educational policy is a persecutory process

Which all can result in:

- 1) Not following the correct procedures
- 2) Burying head in sand and hope it gets better on its own
- 3) Doing too much for the student, i.e. rescuing them
- 4) Not addressing the concerns explicitly or in a timely fashion
- 5) Feeling angry and hostile towards the student or university

- ...
- Confusion
- International
- Practice
- An
- Student

awakened.



Emotional Process

Failing to Fail
the student

Poor quality
assessment reports
which mean can not
uphold fail decision

can result in:

- 1) Not following the correct process
- 2) Burying head in sand and hoping it will be better on its own
- 3) Doing too much for the student, e.g. rescuing them
- 4) Not addressing the concerns explicitly or in a timely fashion

Due process
not being
carried out
(cant uphold
decision)

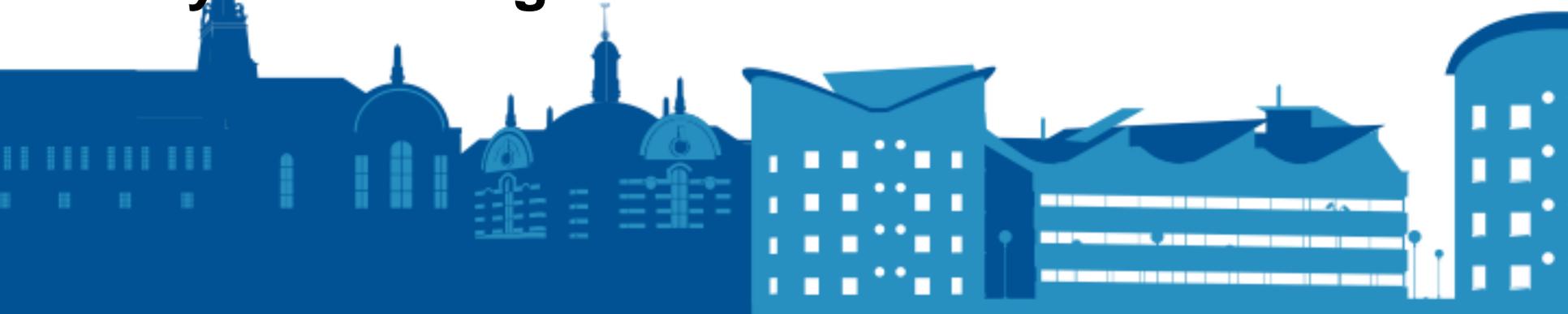
Abruptly
terminated
placements

- Failing to Fail the student
- Poor quality assessment reports which mean can not uphold fail decision
- can result in:
- 1) Not following the correct process
- 2) Burying head in sand and hoping it will be better on its own
- 3) Doing too much for the student, e.g. rescuing them
- 4) Not addressing the concerns explicitly or in a timely fashion
- Due process not being carried out (cant uphold decision)
- Abruptly terminated placements

Learning Check



- **Write down three things you have learnt, thought about or reflected on during this session?**
- **Write down three things you might now do differently as a practice educator as a result of this workshop**
- **Any final thoughts or comments**



Concluding Comments



- Working with a struggling or failing student is an emotionally painful experience.
- Student will be projecting difficult and challenging feelings onto you.
- But I would encourage you to be reflective and consider these feelings as a form of communication.
- Go forth and have “courageous conversations”



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