One of the reasons students have a higher supervision ratio than that of qualified colleagues is because at the start of their careers, they need to draw on the experience of their supervisors.

Starting out in practice can be a steep learning curve with a lot of 'firsts.' The first client, the first ethical dilemma, the first sensation of becoming stuck and feeling out of your depth are all areas where supervision can educate and support.

However, there is one area that is implicit in the development of student counsellors—that of developing what is known as the 'Internal Supervisor.' This refers to the ability to take what you have learned in supervision and apply it to yourself.

The term 'internal supervisor' is attributed to British psychoanalyst Patrick Casement, who first coined the phrase in his book *Learning from Our Mistakes*.

Casement (p.18) describes internal supervision as an “internal dialogue by which analysts and therapists can monitor, moment by moment, what is happening in a session and the various options open to them, the various ways they might respond to this and the implications for the patient in each.”

In other words when working with the client, draw your process to consider areas such as:

- **Transference/Countertransference.** Is this in play in the therapy room and if so, how do you step out of it and work in the here and the now?

- **Boundaries.** Is the client pushing boundaries? If so, how do you address this?
• **Games.** Sometimes clients will 'act out' in the therapy room, maybe trying to gain the attention they historically needed from a parent or caregiver.

• **Projective identification.** This is where a client may say something about others they really see in themselves.

• **Legal/Ethical issues.** Areas where you may need to act to stay within the law or ethical boundaries.

• **Self-care.** Do not overstretch yourself and make sure you get some 'me time.'

• **What we learn from our clients.** This final point is crucial as it allows you to consider how you best serve the client and tailor your responses to their unique worldview.

Developing your internal supervisor is an important personal milestone in the journey to becoming a qualified counsellor.

**Reference**