

My Work Here Is Done?

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As a senior psychotherapy practitioner considering retirement, I am subjectively aware of the broader notions that there is no pre-determined retirement age or a pre-existing format or structure to guide the process of psychotherapists retiring from clinical work with their clients. This area of professional practice is under-researched and not clearly defined creating a huge potential for the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of these practitioners to simply disappear and be lost.

This research projects acknowledges that knowledge exists in a variety of forms. In existing and tangible forms such as published books and articles acting as a means of retaining knowledge and in less tangible ways, such as in the minds, hearts and experiences of practitioners which is much harder to capture, but when shared and explored with others, can contribute to the creation of knowledge. Is it inevitable that this rich source of knowledge simply disappears when the practitioner retires or dies.? In what ways could it be captured and used as a resource for less-experienced practitioners.

The research project has an innovative approach to data collection and analysis and has been constructed in two parts – In the first part the participants will interact with one another exploring question posted on a private, secure bulletin board.

This data will be analysed to identify themes linked to experience, knowledge and the process of retirement and legacy. Part two will explore these themes using an arts-informed methodology that will allow potential for a more subjective and meaningful exploration of individual contributions to the profession and what might be handed down, in terms of knowledge to less-experienced practitioners and the many forms this might take.

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