Reflecting on encounters with vulnerable users

An Interpersonal Process Recall and focus group study of social work professionals

Mari Husabø

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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Mari Husabø

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Name: Mari Husabø

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Scientific environment

My research has been funded by the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), where I have worked at the Department of Welfare and Participation. From January 2018, I have been a PhD student at the Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Bergen (UiB). I have been part of the department's research group for Health Science and Research on Experience.

My main supervisor has been Aud Marie Øien, Associate Professor at HVL. My co-supervisors have been Professor Magne Mæhle (HVL) and Professor Målfrid Råheim (UiB).

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6

Abstract

This thesis presents an in-depth exploration of one-on-one encounters between social workers (*sosialarbeidarar*)[1] and their service users. The research aim was to gain a deeper understanding of professional social workers' experiences in these meetings, including the utilization of professional knowledge, reflections on practice and the dilemmas and challenges encountered in real-life situations. The project employs a multi-method approach, combining the video-assisted qualitative interviewing method Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) with focus group interviews. The application of IPR in studies on professional practice in social work is a novel contribution, and this project represents the first integration of IPR with focus groups. Hence, an additional aim was to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with this multi-method approach in the study of professional social work practice. The findings of this research have been reported in three studies.[2]

The first two studies are case studies from two different social welfare services. **Study 1** draws on data from five IPR sessions and one focus group and explores the experiences and reflections of five educated social workers (*sosionomar)* from conversations with vulnerable youth not engaged in work, education or training. The social workers worked at two regional offices within the work and activation field in the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV). We found that the social workers perceived their work with vulnerable youth as highly complex, negotiated, and ambiguous. Although they, as social workers, particularly emphasized integrated and holistic approaches toward the service users, the social workers nevertheless identified and articulated the use of specific knowledge and skills in their own in-situ practice. These included communicative tools, theoretical knowledge, and capacity- and relationship-building competencies. However, we found that the issues related to time and ethical considerations were not perceived as part of professional knowledge by the

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[1] For a distinction between the Norwegian translation of social workers to *sosialarbeidar* vs *sosionom*, please refer to sections 1.1 and 2.2.3

[2] The included versions of studies 1 and 2 are reprints of published papers, while study 3 is a prepublication version.

social workers but rather individualized and treated as a personal responsibility or inadequacy.

Study 2 had a similar design to the first study and explored the experiences of five educated social educators working in municipal services for people with learning disabilities in a large Norwegian municipality. We explored the social educators' perceptions from one-on-one encounters with service users at home or at institutions. We found that the social educators granted primacy to two aspects of their work: 1) relationships are imperative to all practice with their group of service users, and 2) the ideal of service user autonomy is fundamental to the social educators' practice and profession. We further found that the foundational roles of relationships and the importance of supporting self-determination led to a range of dilemmas and challenges in in-situ practice. The relational dilemmas mainly concerned reciprocity and ambivalence inherent in individual relationships between social educators and their service users. While the dilemmas relating to the ideal of service user autonomy concerned an overall well-known balancing act between supporting self-determination and protecting from harm, we identified a contrasting challenge. Service users' increasing use of the internet and social media was an unknown and difficult terrain for social educators.

Study 3 was based on the data material from studies 1 and 2 but turned its attention to the ten professionals' experiences and reflections on participation in research applying combined IPR and focus group methods. We found that the professionals generally appreciated the opportunity to observe, explore and reflect on their own practice during the IPR sessions and participate in further joint discussions in the focus groups. While the professionals´ familiarity with reflection and reflexivity from education and practice meant they were well prepared for participation in such research, we also identified certain participation challenges. These challenges were especially related to the risks of getting distressed by participation or engaging in overtly self-critical processes that may harm the professional self.

In conclusion, the findings from the three studies indicate that the professional social workers' critical and reflective skills made participation in this project beneficial. The

multi-method approach, emphasizing recall, reflection, and shared exploration, encouraged the professionals to reflect deeply on their own in-situ practice. Moreover, the professionals utilized their involvement in the project to develop their own professional practice and, as such, demonstrated agency. By encouraging social workers to engage in such reflections and dialogues within their own profession and practice, this project holds the potential to reduce the tendency to personalize responsibility and foster a heightened awareness of the importance of reflection in practice. Hopefully, such development in practice can facilitate professional growth and, ultimately, enhance the quality of services provided to vulnerable populations.

Through in-depth explorations of real-life encounters, we have enabled examinations of on-the-spot use of social workers' heterogeneous and complex professional knowledge base. Furthermore, this approach facilitated investigations into the social workers' experiences of moral and ethical dilemmas, challenges, and concerns, which are often difficult to access and sometimes overlooked in professional practice. In summary, the combination of IPR and focus group interviews presents itself as a valuable approach for gaining deeper insight into professional practice in social work. However, its application requires careful consideration and adjustments tailored to the field and participants involved.

Samandrag

Denne avhandlinga er ei djuptgåande utforsking av ein-til-ein møter mellom sosialarbeidarar og dei sårbare brukarane deira. Målet med avhandlinga er å få ei større forståing av sosialarbeidarar sine erfaringar frå, og refleksjonar kring, desse møta. I dette inngår bruk av profesjonell kunnskap og erfaringar og refleksjonar knytt til dilemma og utfordringar dei møter i in-situ praksis. Forskingsprosjektet har ei multimetodisk tilnærming som kombinerer den kvalitative og video-assisterte intervjumetoden Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) og fokusgrupper. IPR har ikkje tidlegare vore nytta i profesjonsforsking innanfor sosialt arbeid, og dette prosjektet er òg det fyrste som kombinerer IPR med fokusgrupper. Eit sentralt mål med forskinga har difor vore å utforska moglegheiter og utfordringar med å bruka ei slik multimetodisk tilnærming i studiar av profesjonelt sosialt arbeid. Funna frå forskingsprosjektet er publisert i tre studiar.[3]

Dei to fyrste studiane er case-studiar frå to ulike velferdstenester. **Studie 1** er basert på data frå fem IPR-sesjonar og ei fokusgruppe, og utforskar fem sosionomar sine erfaringar og refleksjonar frå samtalar med sårbare unge utanfor arbeid og aktivitet. Sosionomane arbeidde på to regionale kontor innan arbeids- og aktiveringsfeltet i NAV. Mellom funna var at sosionomane opplevde arbeidet med sårbare unge som særs komplekst, forhandla og ambivalent. Trass i at dei som sosionomar la særleg vekt på heilskaplege tilnærmingar i møte med brukarane, klarte deltakarane likevel å identifisera og skildra bruk av meir spesifikke kunnskapar og dugleikar i si eiga utøving, slik som bruk av teoretisk kunnskap og kommunikative og relasjonelle verktøy. Eit anna funn var at sosionomane ikkje opplevde at tema knytt til etikk og tid var ein del av den profesjonelle kunnskapen deira. Slike tema vart heller individualiserte, og forstått og handtert som noko ein var personleg ansvarleg for, eller noko som skuldast svikt eller manglar hjå den einskilde profesjonsutøvar.

Studie 2 hadde same forskingsdesign som den fyrste studien, og utforska erfaringane til fem vernepleiarar som arbeidde innanfor kommunale tenester til brukarar med

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[3] Dei vedlagde versjonane av dei to første studiane er tidsskriftspublikasjonar, medan studie 3 er ein førehandspublikasjon.

utviklingshemming i ein stor norsk kommune. Denne studien utforska vernepleiarane sine opplevingar frå ein-til-ein møter med brukarar heime eller på institusjon. Me fann at vernepleiarane særleg legg vekt på to aspekt ved sitt eige arbeid: 1) relasjonar er føresetnaden for alt arbeid med brukargruppa deira, og 2) idealet om sjølvbestemming er grunnleggjande for vernepleiarane sin praksis og profesjon. Vidare fann me at vektlegginga av relasjonar og å støtte opp om sjølvbestemming hjå brukarane førte til ei rekkje dilemma og utfordringar i vernepleiarane sin in-situ praksis. Dei relasjonelle dilemma handla stort sett om det individuelle forholdet mellom vernepleiar og brukarane deira, noko som synleggjer gjensidigheita og ambivalensen som er ibuande i sosialt arbeid sin praksis. Dilemma knytt til idealet om brukarane sin autonomi er knytt til ein velkjent balansegang mellom å støtta opp om sjølvbestemming og å verna brukarane frå skade og risiko. Brukarane sin auka bruk av internett og sosiale media synte seg derimot som ein ukjent og vanskeleg tematikk for vernepleiarane.

I **den tredje studien** nytta me datamateriale frå dei to fyrste studiane. Denne studien rettar søkjelyset mot dei ti profesjonsutøvarane sine erfaringar frå, og refleksjonar kring, deltaking i eit forskingsprosjekt som nyttar IPR og fokusgruppe. I studien fann me at profesjonsutøvarane stort sett sette pris på moglegheita til å sjå, utforske og reflektere kring deira eiga utøving i IPR-sesjonane, og å delta i felles diskusjonar i fokusgruppene. Kjennskapen til refleksjon og refleksivitet, både frå utdanning og praksis, gjorde at sosialarbeidarane var godt egna og førebudde til å delta i eit slikt prosjekt. Likevel identifiserte me somme utfordingar med deltakinga. Desse var særleg knytt til risikoen for å bli stressa av deltakinga eller å ta til med overdrivne sjølvkritiske prosessar, noko som i verste fall kan skada det profesjonelle sjølvbiletet til deltakarane.

Dei samla funna frå dei tre studiane tyder på at sosialarbeidarane sine kritiske og refleksive eigenskapar gjorde at dei kunne dra nytte av deltakinga i dette prosjektet. Vektlegginga av «recall», refleksjon og felles utforsking i den multimetodiske tilnærminga gjorde at dei vart oppmoda til å reflektera inngåande kring sin eigen in-situ praksis. Vidare synte profesjonsutøvarane agens ved å nytta deltakinga i prosjektet som eit høve til å utvikla sin eigen profesjonspraksis. Gjennom oppmodinga til sosialarbeidarar om å ta del i refleksjonar og diskusjonar innan eigen profesjon og praksis, kan denne studien vera med på å redusera tendensar til individualisering og

privatisering av etiske aspekt for den einskilde sosialarbeidar. Eit anna viktig mål med å auka merksemda kring refleksjon i praksis, er å på sikt bidra til ei utvikling og styrking av tenestene til dei mest sårbare brukarane.

Gjennom djupneutforskingar av faktiske samtalar og møter har prosjektet mogleggjort utforskingar av her-og-no-bruk av den heterogene og mangfaldige kunnskapsbasen til sosialarbeidarane. Forskingstilnærminga har òg gjort det mogleg å undersøka sosialarbeidarane sine erfaringar med moralske og etiske dilemma, utfordringar og bekymringar. Dette er erfaringar som ofte er vanskeleg tilgjengeleg for forskinga, og som ofte vert oversett i profesjonsutøvinga.

Kombinasjonen av IPR og fokusgrupper synest altså å vera ei verdifull tilnærming for å gje djupare innsikt i profesjonsutøving i sosialt arbeid. Likevel krev tilnærminga grundige vurderingar og særskilte tilpassingar til både praksisfelt og involverte deltakarar.

List of Publications

Husabø, M., Mæhle, M. Råheim, M., & Øien AM. (2022): Balancing responsibility, boundaries and time: social workers' experiences in service user meetings – a multi-method study based on Interpersonal Process Recall
Nordic Social Work Research, DOI: 10.1080/2156857X.2022.2092541

Husabø, M., Mæhle, M. Råheim, M., & Øien AM. (2023): Persevering professionals: dilemmas of relationships and self-determination in work with people with intellectual disability– a multi-method study based on interpersonal process recall
Journal of Intellectual Disabilities, DOI: 10.1177/17446295231154126

Husabø, M., Mæhle, M. Råheim, M., & Øien AM. (In review): Possibilities and pitfalls: exploring social welfare professionals' experiences with interpersonal process recall followed by focus group discussions
European Journal of Social Work, DOI: 10.1080/13691457.2023.2266589

List of Abbreviations

IPR: Interpersonal Process Recall

NAV: The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration

NEET: Young people not in employment, education or training

NSD: Norwegian Centre for Research Data

PWID: Persons with intellectual disabilities

SE: Social educator (Norwegian: *vernepleiar*)

SW: Social worker (Norwegian: *sosionom*)

STC: Systematic Text Condensation

(R)TA: (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis

Contents

1. Introduction

Every year in Norway, approximately 2500 graduates complete bachelor's degrees in social work, social education or child welfare (The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, n.d.). These graduates undergo extensive professional education, where they are expected to acquire and integrate knowledge from diverse sources and disciplines. In their future careers, they will be required to apply this knowledge, along with their other skills and competencies, to address complex cases and situations. They will be working with service users who confront multifarious issues and challenges, and they will be tasked with handling "wicked problems" - societal challenges that are multifaceted, ambiguous, and hard to define or delineate from neighboring issues (Raisio et al., 2018). Although perfect solutions to these problems may not exist, the skills and understanding of professionals in the field play a vital role in helping and supporting service users. Higher education institutions have a responsibility in this regard as they educate and train the workforce of tomorrow. Through education and practice-oriented research, the institutions are supposed to contribute to sustainable development, the improvement of the health and welfare services, strengthening the competence and knowledge within the professions, and educating qualified professionals (cf. Schiøll Skjefstad & Nordstrand, 2022). Within the realm of social welfare services, these professionals will directly impact the lives and well-being of service users, many of whom are vulnerable due to their age or level of development, limited resources, health issues, or crises that impede their ability to make their own judgments and decisions. As such, further development of knowledge on this professional practice is crucial. It is, therefore, necessary to deepen our understanding of what professionals do in meetings with vulnerable service users and how they apply their knowledge, experience, and professionalism in these interactions. Such exploration is best undertaken within the context of professional practice.

In the multidisciplinary research on professional practice, increasing attention has been directed toward the nature, origins, and use of practical knowledge, stories from practice, and professionals' reflections on their own practice (Fossestøl, 2017). By utilizing stories from practice, researchers can gain valuable insights into aspects of professional practice that may be difficult to access through other means. The approach enables the exploration of internal and hidden experiences, shedding light on experiences and reflections that might otherwise remain unexplored. Moreover, the purpose of exploring practice and practical knowledge has to be explicit to improve it (cf. Jenssen, 2011; Lindseth, 2017). However, improvement is impossible without understanding what factors inform, influence, and determine this knowledge. An approach rooted in reflexive practice research highlights the importance of reflecting on practice and asserts that practitioners' experiences inherently hold implicit knowledge that should be articulated (Lindseth, 2017).

With these assumptions as starting points, this thesis seeks a deeper understanding of social welfare practitioners' experiences from one-on-one encounters with service users. It explores what guides the social welfare practitioners' actions, how they use professional knowledge, and how they reflect on concrete happenings in in-situ encounters.

The knowledge-to-practice gap is a common finding in health services research (see for example Alley et al., 2015; Bjørk et al., 2013; Curran et al., 2011; Grimshaw et al., 2012). Several studies find that knowledge translation from research into practice within the social welfare professions is challenging and that the knowledge claim of social work is weak (e.g., Beddoe, 2013; Börjeson & Johansson, 2014; Fossestøl, 2019; Gray & Schubert, 2012; Heggen, 2008; Iversen & Heggen, 2016; Røysum, 2017). However, rather than filling a defined knowledge gap with factual knowledge, the reflexive research that departs from experiences, impressions, and reflections in practice aims to provide professionals guidance, so-called orientation knowledge, in challenging and complex situations (Lindseth, 2017). In addition to understanding complex dilemmas in professional fields, research exploring experiences from practice

can also give access to professionals' moral and ethical concerns (Fossestøl, 2017). While dilemmas, tensions, doubts, uncertainties, and uneasiness are prevalent in professional work, such aspects can also drive reflexive practice research (Halås, 2017; Lindseth, 2017). A crucial part of understanding what professionals do in challenging situations and what knowledge they use is thus gaining insight into the dilemmas and challenges they encounter. Therefore, this thesis pays close attention to how professionals experience, recall, and reflect on dilemmas, ambivalences, and challenges faced in their own practice.

In order to access these experiences, the thesis combines Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), a qualitative video-assisted interview method that emphasizes recall and reflexivity, with focus group interviews. As a research method, IPR enables the exploration of in-session interactions and events and makes conscious possible unconscious, unspoken experiences of the interaction (Elliott, 1986; Larsen et al., 2008; Macaskie et al., 2015). The method originates from therapy and counseling, and despite increasing use in studies outside these professions (cf. Larsen et al., 2008), the method has yet to be applied in studies of social work professions. Therefore, this thesis also examines the use of IPR within two social welfare practices, intending to identify opportunities and challenges for future use in professional studies in social work.

The aim of this thesis is thus threefold: 1) Understanding more of the professionals' experiences from one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users, including the use of professional knowledge. 2) Exploring the professionals' reflections on and experiences of dilemmas and challenges in in-situ practice. 3) Exploring the potential use of IPR as a research method within the social welfare professions.

The rest of this chapter will provide a general overview of the services explored in this thesis. It first briefly outlines the two professions participating in the studies, social workers and social educators, before describing the context of the two first studies: the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and municipal services for

people with intellectual disabilities. Finally, the chapter describes the organization of the thesis and the outline of the remaining chapters.

1.1 Social work professionals and research context

In Norway, the professional title 'social worker' (*sosionom*) is earned after completing a bachelor's degree in social work; similarly, the social educator holds a bachelor's degree in social education, and both have protected titles. However, translating these professional titles might lead to confusion: a direct translation of "social worker" to Norwegian is *sosialarbeidar*, which covers four professions: child care workers (*barnevernspedagogar*), social educators (*vernepleiarar*), welfare officers (*velferdsarbeidarar*) – and social workers (*sosionomar*) (*FO*, 2022; *IFSW*, n.d.). The English term "social work" consequently translates into both the general *sosialarbeidar* and the particular *sosionom.* The confusion increases as social educators (sometimes also translated as learning disability nurses) in Norway are authorized as health personnel through the Directorate of Health, while similar professions in other countries have partly different educations and are considered pedagogical personnel. This thesis will use *social work*, or in some cases, *social welfare,* when addressing the field in general, and similarly, use *social workers* when addressing *sosialarbeidarar*.[4] When it is necessary to define precisely, the abbreviation SW will denote *sosionom*, while SE will be the shortening of social educator (*vernepleiar*).

1.1.1 NAV and the activation context

The public welfare agency NAV is responsible for implementing policies and administering services and benefits, such as pensions, child care, sickness, and unemployment benefits. In Norway, as in the rest of Europe, vulnerable, young users of services who are not engaged in work, education, or training, so-called NEETs ('Not in Employment, Education or Training'), represent a growing social challenge (Mawn

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[4] This usage also corresponds to the international understanding and global definition of social work, c.f. the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2014)

et al., 2017; Sveinsdottir et al., 2018). These youths constitute a diverse group with complex problems, such as poverty, low levels of education, limited work experience, and mental and addiction-related problems (Solheim et al., 2020). Many of them have grown up in low-income families that are longstanding recipients of various welfare benefits (Frøyland, 2019). In public policy, there is an increased emphasis on activation efforts directed towards this group, such as providing labor market programs (Djupvik & Eikås, 2016). The goal has been to prevent poverty and social exclusion and enable individuals to support themselves through paid work, with a political priority placed on those under thirty (Kojan et al., 2019; Moreira & Lødemel, 2014; Olsen, 2022). The context of the first study was SWs who work with these service users on work and activation programs.

1.1.2 Municipal services for people with intellectual disability

While medical understandings have explained disability in terms of individual bodily impairments, social models locate disabilities in contexts when people experience discrimination based on perceived functional limitations (cf. McKearney & Zogas, 2021; Reid-Cunningham, 2009). In the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, disability is understood as the result of interaction "between individuals with a health condition, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and depression, with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support" (WHO, n.d.). This understanding, though not universally held, includes people with intellectual disabilities (PWID); "... [people with a] a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence)" (WHO, n.d.).

In Norway, health and care services for PWID are provided mainly by municipal services. The second study was conducted with SEs working in different parts of a large municipality's agency, specifically with service users with mild or moderate disabilities. As professional practice and experience are in the foreground in this thesis,

the people receiving services will be referred to primarily through the general term 'service users'. PWID and NEETs where more precise definitions are needed.

1.2 Chapter outline

The first part of this thesis is the synopsis, covering the studies' contextualization, presentation, and discussion. The three studies, two published and one in review, are the second part of the thesis.

The first four chapters of the synopsis cover the project´s background and research design. After briefly introducing the subject (chapter 1), chapter 2 outlines an overview of philosophical foundations, theory, and previous research about professional knowledge and encounters with vulnerable service users within social work practice. Chapter 3 presents the overall research aim and questions that guided the work with the thesis and examined in the three studies. In chapter 4, the methods used for developing and analyzing data are described. This chapter also contains a short discussion of ethical procedures.

The findings from the research are presented and discussed in the last three chapters of the synopsis. In chapter 5, I present the main results from the three studies. These findings are discussed in chapter 6, both in light of the previous research and relevant theory and the research questions posed in chapter 3. This chapter also includes a methodological discussion. The synopsis concludes in chapter 7 with a summary of the thesis's knowledge contribution and a discussion of possible implications for the practice field and further research.

2. Theory and previous research

In this chapter, I will account for the theoretical perspectives used in the thesis, which have guided its theoretical orientation and the studies' analytical focus. The chapter starts with an introduction to the philosophical foundations. I, then, give a brief overview of «knowledge», firstly in its most general sense, before focusing on understandings of professional knowledge, marked by its complexity with a heterogeneous theoretical and practical knowledge base. Discussing knowledge that informs and guides professionals' practices is relevant because this thesis has professionals and their experiences and reflections on professional practice from service user meetings at its core. Understanding knowledge as not confined to theoretical and science-based knowledge brings us closer to the discussion of knowledge in social work. As the data material in the thesis derives from daily frontline work in two different social welfare services, the remainder of the chapter provides a brief overview of previous research on service user meetings in the work and activation field and on professional practice within services for PWID.

2.1 Philosophical foundations

Philosophical assumptions inform our choice of theories that guide our research (Creswell, 2013, p. 15). Thus, before turning to the theoretical framework, I will make explicit these assumptions and situate the study within them.

Social constructionism forms the paradigm interpretative framework for this research. In their classic *The Social Construction of Reality*, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Berger & Luckmann, 1990 [1966]) argue that society is manmade, derived from, and maintained by social interactions. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, and multiple realities are constructed through people´s lived experiences and interactions with others. As a result, social reality is the perceptions

and interpretations that are developed, transmitted, shared, and maintained through social interaction. Research informed by social constructionism looks for the complexity of views rather than narrowing the meanings into a few categories or ideas and aims at relying as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell, 2013).

However, social constructionism cannot be separated from phenomenology or hermeneutics in an absolute matter (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2021). The social sciences deal with man *as* a man and are, in that specific sense, a humanistic discipline, Berger and Luckmann (1990, s. 189) emphasize. They originate their social constructionism partly from the phenomenological framework. As it was originally described by its founding father Husserl, phenomenology is "a philosophy, an approach, and a method" (Tanggard, 2017, p. 81), which has the consciousness as its primary object of study. The phenomenological orientation places importance on the first-person perspective and how individuals perceive phenomena. A key concept in phenomenology is the lifeworld, which describes the world as it is taken-for-granted, and immediately experienced within the subjective realm of everyday life (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020; Tanggard, 2017). The philosopher and sociologist Alfred Schutz (1972) greatly influenced the sociology of Berger and Luckmann. Through the utilization of phenomenology and Husserl's lifeworld concept, he explored how members of society make sense of the world in interaction with others. Therefore, with its focus on exploring the experiences and reflections of social welfare professionals on their interactions with vulnerable service users, this thesis has a phenomenological, as well as a social constructionist, strain.

2.2 What is knowledge?[5]

According to Berger and Luckmann (1990, s. 19), *The social construction of Reality* presents a sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life, or more precisely, of the knowledge that guides conduct in everyday life. However, this notion of knowledge is

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[5] This section is based on a literature review submitted in the course SPOPT Theory of Professions at OsloMet fall 2019

described as everything that passes for "knowledge" in society (p. 15), the ordinary common-sense knowledge, not specialist or scientific knowledge. From an anthropological perspective, Ingold suggests that we should acknowledge that scientific knowledge, as much as the knowledge of inhabitants, is generated with the processes of wayfaring (Ingold, 2022, p. 189) – learning as we go through the world and along different paths - processual, integrated and in movement. As such, Ingold deemphasizes some differences between the knowledge of inhabitants, common-sense knowledge, and scientific knowledge. After all, scientists are people, too, and inhabit the same world as the rest of us (Ingold, 2022, p. 189).

Having previously completed an anthropology education, I am sympathetic to such conceptualizations of knowledge as *meshworked* (Ingold, 2022, p. 199) and accumulated from learning from others, constructed within the traditions of knowledge each of us partakes. As Barth (2002, p. 3) argues, the academic prototype is narrow: "[Textbooks, encyclopediae and dictionaries] lay out knowledge as if it were context-free—a mode that collapses historical time in acquiring knowledge, elaborates taxonomies, and prizes coherence. It simulates a knowledge without knowers.". According to Barth, modern academic knowledge is just one tradition of knowledge among many, a way of knowing that has evolved historically through the union of several ideas, such as from the Enlightenment and rationalist individualism.

This Western knowledge paradigm has traditionally privileged theoretical, abstract, and formally learned knowledge as the primary and most reliable form. Even though Aristoteles included practical action in his trisection of knowledge (*episteme, techne, and phronesis*) (Gilje, 2017), valid knowledge in traditional philosophical epistemology must be articulable and supported by empirical or formal reasons (Johannessen, 2013). Following this reasoning, legitimate knowledge is understood as propositional knowledge, free from context and verifiable, intersubjective accessible, and must be supported by empirical or formal proofs.

2.2.1 Practical, tacit, and embodied dimensions of knowledge

Under the belief that all knowledge must be linguistically expressed as propositional knowledge, practical knowledge, and its distinct expressions are unrecognized. In this perspective, practical knowledge is often considered merely the application of theoretical knowledge, making it inferior and subsequent to academic knowledge. However, this privileging of theoretical knowledge has been contested, notably by Ryle (2000 [1949]), who examined the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge. Ryle argues that the ability to act, known as "knowing how," is a form of knowledge distinct from knowing something, or "knowing that." While one can act without formal knowledge, possessing theoretical knowledge does not guarantee the ability to act. Ryle's distinction establishes "knowing how" as an independent type of knowledge (Gilje, 2017).

Polanyi, like Ryle, challenges the dominant perspective on knowledge, asserting that "We know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 2000, p. 16). This counters the one-sided emphasis on propositional knowledge. Implicit or tacit knowledge exists beyond what can be explicitly articulated, and diverse categories are needed to handle its various forms. Tacit knowledge is not a singular concept; it is employed in various, sometimes conflicting, ways, described as implied, immanent, indexed, and personal. The tacit and embodied dimensions of knowledge should neither be viewed as complete silence, as Molander (1996, p. 42) argues: "(..) it does not exist any completely silent action, therefore no complete silent knowledge. "The tacit" is everywhere – and nowhere."[6]

2.2.2 Professional knowledge

The presence of professions as occupational groups that assert authority over specialized knowledge, differentiating it from generalized lifeworld knowledge (Freidson, 2004; Stichweh, 2008) raises concerns about the interaction between

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[6] [6] In Bengt Molanders' original quote, the words used are *tyst verksamhet*, *tyst kunskap* and *"det tysta"*. The Swedih *tyst* can be translated both into English *silent* and *tacit*. When translating the quote, I chose to use both translations, to underscore Molanders' point that descriptions are crucial in learning – the language is therefore important to most actions. Actions are therefore not completely silent – or totally tacit (B. Molander, 1996, p. 41).

theoretical and practical knowledge. It also raises concerns about the translation of theory into practice and the practical application of knowledge.

In the sociology of professions, the prevailing views regarding knowledge align with the traditional Western paradigm privileging theoretical knowledge. Professions "apply somewhat abstract knowledge to solve particular cases" (Abbott, 1988, p. 8), a knowledge that should be acquired through higher education. Therefore, scientific (theoretical) knowledge defines professionalism and plays a crucial role in professional autonomy and the exercise of discretion (Freidson, 2004; Parsons & Platt, 2013). However, to effectively utilize theoretical knowledge, practical skills and contextual understanding are also necessary (A. Molander & Terum, 2008).

Practical synthesis

Grimen (2008) challenges the homogeneity of professional knowledge, the distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge, and the interplay between theory and practice. He posits that practical knowledge is embodied and relies on personal experience for its acquisition. As such, practical knowledge is *indexed*; intimately linked to the individual who possesses it and the specific situations in which it is learned and applied. Similarly to Polanyi (2000 [1966], 2009) and Molander (1996), Grimen (2008), emphasizes the need to view theoretical and practical knowledge as a continuum with complex interplay and tension rather than as a dualistic relationship. Grimen introduces the concept of practical synthesis, which signifies the interconnectedness within the heterogeneous and fragmented professional knowledge base. A practical synthesis occurs when professionals integrate and synthesize different knowledge elements based on the demands they encounter in their practice (Grimen, 2008). The synthesis prioritizes purposefulness, or significance, over homogeneity or direct theoretical connections.

Gilje (2017) expands on the concept of practical synthesis and highlights the significance of practical knowledge in this process. Tacit knowledge, "know-how," and phronesis form the foundation of professional knowledge, manifesting in professionals' actions. Given the diverse demands of practice, professionals draw upon various forms

of practical knowledge and theoretical disciplines. Therefore, the heterogeneous character of professional knowledge is essential (Gilje, 2017). Further investigations into this practical synthesis are essential for comprehending how practice is learned in professional education and its subsequent management and ongoing development in practice (Halås et al., 2017).

2.2.3 Knowledge in social work

In professional studies, social work is traditionally cited as a semi-profession characterized by limited jurisdiction and control of bounded knowledge (Dahle, 2008; Etzioni, 1969; Nottingham, 2007; Parsons & Platt, 2013; Stichweh, 2008).[7] Grimen (2008) argues that social work is a theoretically fragmented profession, not only due to its incorporation of various scientific knowledge fields but also because some of these fields themselves lack theoretical cohesion. The fragmentation becomes more pronounced as knowledge moves from scientific research to application in professional practice (Grimen, 2008, p. 73).

The heterogeneity of social work is evident in the global definition provided by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), which defines social work as " [..] a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development [..] and the empowerment and liberation of people." (IFSW, 2014). Social work is defined as both an academic discipline, an occupation, and a profession (Ellingsen et al., 2015). This has sparked discussions of the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge and the challenges in the articulation of its knowledge base (see Börjeson & Johansson, 2014; Finne et al., 2020; Fossestøl, 2019; Gray & Schubert, 2013; Trevithick, 2008, 2012; Vindegg, 2009, 2014 for further discussion). Various perspectives on practical, tacit, and embodied knowledge have played a crucial role in understanding knowledge within social work and advancing knowledge production in theory and practice (e.g., Adams et al., 2009; Brottveit, 2008; Hudson, 1997; Sodhi & Cohen, 2012). Multiple studies critique the conventional

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[7] For a more recent discussion of professionalization of social welfare professions in Europe, see for example (Blom et al., 2017b).

Western knowledge paradigm's focus on theoretical, propositional knowledge, highlighting its inadequacy in capturing the complexity of social work knowledge. These studies advocate for an inclusive understanding of knowledge in social work that incorporates dimensions like ethics and time (e.g., Banks, 2013; Dominelli & Holloway, 2008; Fossestøl, 2019; Trevithick, 2008, 2012; Tsang, 2008). Concepts like professional or practice wisdom (Banks, 2013; Tsang, 2008) emphasize the value of holistic approaches (Ruch, 2005). Another embedded aspect of holistic approaches is relational knowledge, given that all social work interventions inherently encompass an interpersonal dimension and are, as such, relationship-based (Ruch, 2005, p. 113).

This emphasis is supported by findings in empirical studies from Norway, which indicated that social workers defined their characteristics by "thinking holistically" and utilizing integrated approaches (Fossestøl, 2019; Røysum, 2017). The social workers recognized and drew upon various sources of knowledge, but practice and relational knowledge, including insights from clients, colleagues, supervisors, and personal work experience, were valued more highly than theoretical knowledge (Finne et al., 2020; Iversen & Heggen, 2016).

As explained in chapter 1, the term "social worker" in this thesis refers to four bachelor education programs in Norway, and the concepts, definitions, and knowledge discussed applies to both the SWs in study 1 and SEs in study 2. However, it is important to note that there are variations in the curricula between the two bachelor's programs. A significant difference is that SEs, after completing the bachelor program, are qualified to be authorized as health personnel by the Norwegian Directorate of Health. The SE education incorporates health sciences, medication management, and rehabilitation, focusing on equipping professionals to provide safe and comprehensive health and social services, particularly emphasizing individuals with complex needs. PWID are recognized as a key target group. To the best of my knowledge, few studies in international literature discuss SE education or profession (see Fjetland & Paluga, 2022; Folkman et al., 2019, for examples).

To align with the international focus of the published papers in studies 1 and 2, I have not extensively addressed the distinctions between the knowledge base of SWs and SEs in Norway. Instead, I have adopted a broader definition of social work in line with international scholarly discourse. Furthermore, the primary emphasis of this thesis on the perspectives, experiences, and reflections of the participating professionals in their own practice turned out to render the differences between SWs and SEs as professional groups irrelevant. However, it is important to acknowledge that a different focus during data development and analysis could have yielded different findings, such as the potential influence of health assessments and knowledge on professional practice.

2.2.4 Reflexivity and reflection

In addition to tacit knowledge, practical knowledge, and holistic approaches, social work emphasizes "reflection in action". Schön pioneered this concept, which involves professionals simultaneously thinking and acting while addressing problems (Schön, 1987; Trevithick, 2012). Rooted in social constructionism, the theory of reflective practice recognizes the knowledge generated from practical experience and diverse sources of knowledge such as practice wisdom and tacit knowledge (Ruch, 2005). As such, reflective practice can bridge different knowledge understandings, address the alleged gaps between theoretical frameworks and actual practice, and explain how practitioners can enhance practice and gain new understandings through critical self-reflection (Ruch, 2005)[8]. Reflective practice is a widely recognized theoretical perspective in professions such as teaching, health, and social care (Ferguson, 2018) and was intentionally developed for formal educational settings (Askeland & Fook, 2009). Self-reflection through self-analysis, self-evaluation, self-dialogue, and self-observation is encouraged in social work education (Yip, 2006).

Reflective practice, reflexivity, and critical reflection tend to be somewhat conflated terms within the social work literature (Askeland & Fook, 2009). D'Cruz et al. (2007, s. 83) find similarities between reflection in action and reflexivity, as: "[The reflexive

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[8] For an extensive discussion of reflective practitioners, including a categorization of technical and holistic reflective practice in social work, see (Ruch, 2005)

practitioner] is constantly engaged in the process of questioning (self-monitoring) their own knowledge claims and those of others as he/she engages in social interaction and the micro-practices of knowledge/power." Similarly, critical reflection involves social workers identifying and reflecting on their own emotional content when interacting with service users (Yip, 2006). While there exists a diversity of meanings and usages of reflexivity and concepts of reflectivity, a common feature in practice is their emancipatory and ameliorative aims for both clients and practitioners (D'Cruz et al., 2007). However, despite the emphasis on reflective practice in literature and education, there are limits to reflection in practice. Some studies (e.g., Ferguson, 2018; Trevithick, 2011) argue that the demands in social work practice are sometimes so great that workers cannot think or feel about the complexity of a situation but instead have to limit their reflection in order to defend themselves. Additionally, the social workers might lack the time required for personal reflection and analysis (Herland, 2022), or inappropriate conditions, such as heavy caseloads or lack of organizational support, might cause self-reflection to be destructive and damage professional and self-development (Yip, 2006).

2.3 Professionals in the frontline

The social workers in this thesis can be described as street-level bureaucrats, and their practice as frontline work. In his classic study, Lipsky (2010, p. 3) defines street-level bureaucrats as public service workers who interact directly with citizens during their work and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work. The street-level bureaucrats are characterized by limited control but extensive influence over the performance of their clients, often accompanied by high demands and expectations (Lipsky, 1976, 2010). Even though the traditional street-level bureaucracy and frontline work literature has paid little attention to the role of professional knowledge, recent studies within public administration have explored professional identities and the use and role of professional and experienced-based knowledge among first-time hospital nurses and school teachers, respectively (Cecchini & Harrits, 2022; DiBenigno, 2022). While discussions on expertise, professional autonomy, and authority within the

sociology of professions or street-level bureaucrat studies are not further addressed in this thesis, such explorations of knowledge use in daily frontline work are noteworthy. These explorations are of particular interest in light of a growing demand for further research on professionalism and the use of knowledge in frontline work within social welfare services (see for example Evertsson et al., 2017; Gjersøe, 2016; Hagelund, 2016; Møller, 2022; Nothdurfter & Olesen, 2017).

Lipsky argues that street-level bureaucrats, as relatively low-level public service employees, labor under huge caseloads and ambiguous agency goals. When addressing resource inadequacy, two of the most critical ways in which street-level bureaucrats typically lack the necessary resources to perform their job adequately are the ratio of workers to clients or cases, as well as time constraint (Lipsky, 2010). Extensive research has been conducted on street-level bureaucrats, including examining working practices in public services, exploring how frontline workers enact public policy and function as policymakers, and analyzing the disparities between policy in theory and its practical application (for a more comprehensive literature on this, see for example Hupe, 2019). Although this thesis is not a traditional street-level bureaucracy study, it is essential to consider perspectives from this field to comprehend factors such as structural constraints on the social workers´ practice. For instance, the issue of time constraints, coupled with heavy workloads, has been identified as a significant source of stress for social workers (Beer et al., 2020; Nissen, 2019; Olsson & Sundh, 2019).

Moreover, political and administrative regulations, guidelines, and neoliberal management structures can be viewed as mechanisms that deemphasize the political, societal, and structural aspects of clients´ problems, framing them instead as individual problems (Kamali & Jönsson, 2019a). As such, social issues arise from personal inadequacies and shortcomings, making individuals – service users and social workers – responsible for them (Kojan et al., 2019; Rasmussen, 2019). Consequently, social workers may face ethical dilemmas when organizational demands conflict with their professional values, knowledge, and approaches (cf. Ohnstad et al., 2014).

2.3.1 Interaction, frontline work and social work in NAV

Frontline workers in social welfare services are thus responsible for balancing government policy goals and the interests of service users. Several studies (e.g., Astvik et al., 2014; Diop-Christensen, 2019; Djuve & Kavli, 2015; Hansen & Natland, 2017; Håvold, 2018; Kjørstad, 2005; Lundberg, 2018; Nothdurfter & Olesen, 2017; Røysum, 2017; Rugkåsa, 2014; Saario et al., 2018; Skjefstad et al., 2019; Vike, 2004) have shown how these workers face complex and sometimes conflicting tasks. Regarding NAV, recent studies on encounters between service users and counselors challenge previous dichotomous understandings of social work in NAV as either care- or rule-oriented (such as Djuve & Kavli, 2015; Hansen & Natland, 2017; Øvrelid, 2018; Terum & Jessen, 2015). While studies have examined encounters, only a few have explicitly focused on counselors with specific educational backgrounds (Fossestøl, 2019; Øvrelid, 2018; Røysum, 2012, 2017). As a result, there is a need for more research to investigate the connections between counselors' educational backgrounds and their approaches and practices, as highlighted by Hansen and Natland (2017).

While there is much research on NAV, relatively little attention has been given to face-to-face interaction in service user meetings. Riis-Johansen et al. (2018) conducted detailed linguistic analyses of service user meetings in NAV, focusing on the counselors' management of the interaction and facilitating user participation, while Solberg (2011, 2017) did close examinations of interactions in activation encounters in NAV, identifying how policy goals, plans, and ascribed identities are negotiated. Additionally, Olsen's (2022) recent study looked at ambivalence in discussions about activation processes, aiming at expanding the understanding of ambivalence in social work and how it is interactionally handled. Despite these valuable contributions, none of these studies focus specifically on the experiences and reflections of social workers in their encounters with service users.

Whereas Olsen´s study analyzed audio recordings of face-to-face encounters in NAV, Ylvisåker and Rugkåsa took a different methodological approach, analyzing written texts in which social workers describe experiences and reflections on their own practice

(Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022). They identify a range of conflicting pressures, contradictions, and dilemmas social workers encounter in their practice. In addition, the study points to an apparent dearth of studies of social workers' actual interaction with clients and the challenges they face in their workplace. The need to pay greater attention to the social workers' voices and perspectives is also highlighted in an international narrative literature review, which identifies a gap in the knowledge of their views and practices (Gordon, 2018). More practice-based research and knowledge about what happens in face-to-face encounters - or studies on social work practice from "the bottom up" - is crucial, both to develop better services and to understand the perspectives and experiences of practitioners (Börjeson & Johansson, 2014; Ferguson, 2016; Gordon, 2018).

2.3.2 Interaction, ethical challenges and dilemmas in work with vulnerable people

While social workers on the frontline often face dilemmas and pressures that arise from insufficient resources, conflicting legislation, and organizational conditions (cf. Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022), they also face other situations in practice that are ethically challenging. Banks and Williams explore several accounts of ethical dilemmas and problems from social welfare practitioners and describe "selective, situated, complex and messy [stories] with political, ethical, technical and practical elements intertwined" (Banks & Williams, 2005, p. 1018). Ethical concerns and considerations are integral aspects of social work with vulnerable people, and ethical issues are inherently embedded in everyday practices (Banks, 2016; Banks & Williams, 2005). Not all ethical decision-making that poses a challenge is dilemmatic. However, in many countries in the global North, contradictory pressures exist between the push for service user autonomy and the desire to avoid risks (Saario et al., 2018). An ethical challenge in professional practice with vulnerable people is the balancing act between safeguarding service users against potential harm and supporting them to lead more independent lives. This ethical tension is especially evident in work with PWID, and several studies across different fields have explored this issue, such as Hawkins et al.

(2011), Wilson et al. (2008), Mjøen and Kittelsaa (2018), Pols et al. (2017) and McKearny (2020).

The literature on self-determination for adults with intellectual disabilities has highlighted the importance of enabling and supporting self-determination (Gjermestad et al., 2017; Gjermestad & Skarsaune, 2022; Wehmeyer, 2005; Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003), and several studies have emphasized the importance of relational understandings of self-determination such as the notion of relational autonomy (e.g., Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Davy, 2019; Dowling et al., 2019; Lid, 2022; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Stefánsdóttir et al., 2018). Many recent studies explore PWIDs own perspectives and understandings of self-determination (e.g., Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Chalachanová et al., 2021; Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; Dodevska & Vassos, 2013; Hutchinson & Sandvin, 2019; Kittelsaa, 2014; Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011; Reisæter, 2021; Vaucher et al., 2019; Witsø & Hauger, 2020). These studies validate that building positive relationships with support staff is essential for promoting self-determination and represent a vital turn from previous research that almost solely relied on the perspectives of parents and carers. Through examining the interaction between support staff and PWID, studies find that the quality of relationships between them is crucial (Chalachanová et al., 2021; Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020). To create a supportive environment that encourages communication of preferences and choices, support staff must be attentive and responsive to the individual's needs and wishes (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015). Achieving this goal requires both professional skills and knowledge, as well as interpersonal skills (Dodevska & Vassos, 2013; Pallisera et al., 2018). Research that has contributed to raising the voices of PWIDs themselves has been overtly important to display, for example, how they are often met with belittling perspectives (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015), have reduced possibilities for social inclusion and community participation (Chalachanová et al., 2021; Witsø & Hauger, 2020) and experience encroachment of their own decision-making (Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011).

While a recent Norwegian sociological dissertation by Henriksen (Henriksen, 2022) investigated how the understanding of residents with intellectual disabilities by support staff affects the use of force in a residential setting, few studies have looked into support staff's overall experiences and behaviors (cf. Hastings, 2010). Most research on support staff in intellectual disability services focuses on work-related stress and burnout (cf. Ryan et al., 2021). However, there has been little exploration of professionals' reflections on their actual practice during one-on-one meetings with service users with intellectual disabilities.

2.3.3 Summary

In summary, the literature reviewed has explored social work on the frontline, including activation encounters and interaction in service user meetings. The research has also identified dilemmas and ethical challenges related to balancing service user autonomy and protection from harm. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of elevating vulnerable people and service user voices and perspectives to better understand their needs and wishes and gain essential insights into their knowledge contribution.

However, to further enhance the quality of social work practice and, as such, improve the lives of the service users, it is essential to gain a deeper insight into how social work is performed in everyday practice and explore the experiences and reflections of social workers themselves (cf. Gordon, 2018). Furthermore, the need to gain a deeper insight into the professionals' reflections aligns with the aim of reflexive practice research, which seeks to develop knowledge and improve practice through exploring practitioners' knowledge and reflections (cf. Fossestøl, 2017; Lindseth, 2017).

3. Research aims

As described in chapter 2, research on social work, frontline work, and service user meetings is comprehensive. There is also extensive literature on professional knowledge and the importance of reflexivity and reflection in professional practice. However, research on how one-on-one encounters between professionals and service users actually unfold is still scarce.

The primary research aim, therefore, was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of professional social welfare practitioners during in-situ encounters with vulnerable service users, which includes exploring the on-the-spot utilization of professional knowledge and their reflections on their own practice.

To explore potential differences in perspectives and understandings, we selected two different social work professions operating within two different welfare services. Specifically, our focus was on one-on-one encounters involving SWs at NAV within the work and activation field with young vulnerable service users and municipal-employed SEs interacting with service users with intellectual disabilities.

The rather broad main questions examined in studies 1 and 2 are:

How do the professionals experience their own practice in one-on-one encounters?

How do they reflect on concrete happenings in in-situ encounters?

How does professional knowledge and experience inform the social workers in these encounters?

How do professionals experience and reflect on challenges, dilemmas, and ambiguities that arise in in-situ practice?

Furthermore, since the combination of the video-assisted interview-based IPR method and focus group has not been previously employed, an additional objective of this research project was to explore the potential opportunities and challenges inherent in this approach for studying professional social work practice. Given the primary focus on social workers' experiences, the research questions guiding the third study are:

How do the professionals experience and reflect on participating in research applying combined IPR and focus group methods?

4. Methods and materials

As described in chapter 2, this thesis is situated within a social constructionist framework, which is also rooted in phenomenological thinking. With this starting point, this chapter first describes the overall research design and the case study framework for the thesis. To explore the experiences and reflections of the professionals, a multimethod qualitative research approach was chosen. This multimethod approach - the combination of the video-assisted interview-based method IPR and focus group interviews - is described along with an overview of the sample and how data was collected and developed. Following the description of the analytical approach in the three studies, ethical considerations in the research project are discussed.

4.1 Research design

Creswell describes qualitative research as a process that flows from philosophical assumptions, to interpretive lenses and on to the procedures involved in studying social or human problems (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). There is no general agreement about the nature of qualitative research. Silverman rather describes it as "a terrain on which diverse schools of social theory have fought their mock battles" (Silverman, 2021, p. 6), and there are a variety of approaches to qualitative research.

However, there are some common threads in the characteristics of qualitative inquiries, such as a natural setting/field (as compared to a contrived situation, for example, a lab), complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic, and the focus on participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is conducted when a problem or issue needs to be explored, when variables that cannot be measured easily need to be identified, when we require a detailed understanding of the problem, hear silenced voices, or for a range of other reasons.

As previously stated, this thesis is situated within the realm of research on professional practice, specifically reflexive practice research. Using qualitative approaches to explore and address social problems and dilemmas (see for example Koppel & Telles, 2021) is congruent with reflexive practice research´s attention to dilemmas, ethical concerns, and doubts that arise in professional practice. As a research strategy, practice research aims to conduct research in, along with, and for the practice field. It builds on the knowledge that emphasizes action, participant orientation, and practice field actors' knowledge (Fossestøl, 2017; Jenssen, 2011; Lindseth, 2017). Both practitioners' and users' knowledge is seen as significant contributions to knowledge development. In this research project, a case study design combined with a multimethod approach was chosen to explore the professionals' knowledge, experiences, and reflections on in-situ practice.

4.1.1 Case study

Case study research has a longstanding tradition across many disciplines, and a unified definition of what case study research is, or what constitutes a case, does not exist (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2005). Instead, case study research can be understood as a methodology, a strategy of inquiry, a comprehensive research strategy, or simply a choice of what is to be studied (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). In this research project, I follow Yin (2018, p. 15), who describes case study as an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context. Case study research often involves multiple sources of information, and units of analysis might be a single case or multiple cases (Creswell, 2013). An essential step in describing a case study is defining and bounding the case (Yin, 2018). In this research project, we chose a multiple case study, where one issue was selected, but multiple case studies illustrate the issue. The issue to be investigated was "professional experiences and reflections on one-on-one encounters with service users." Initially, three social work professions were chosen as cases to show different perspectives and variations. However, I faced difficulties with recruiting, especially after the lockdowns

and restrictions that followed the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was therefore reduced from three to two cases and further developed towards a more methodological orientation in the third study.

4.1.2 Multimethod approach

A strength of case study research is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). In this project, we combined two qualitative methods: video assisted IPR and focus group interviews. There are many reasons to opt for multimethod approaches to research. Personally, I am particularly convinced by Mik-Meyer´s constructionist argument: Multimethod approaches have the potential to help collect more voices and features from participants, aiming for multifaceted analysis in compliance with the social world that is complex and multilayered (Mik-Meyer 2021, p. 362).

As described previously, research informed by social constructionism looks for a complexity of views and aims at relying as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell, 2013). This complements the aim of reflexive practice research of gaining insight into aspects of practice that are otherwise difficult to access. To the best of my knowledge, this project is the first to employ a multimethod approach that incorporates both IPR and focus groups. By employing this approach, we were able to explore the professionals' perspectives, gaining a deeper insight into their experiences, as well as the dilemmas and challenges they encounter. One of our primary aims is to elevate social workers' voices and reflections, ensuring that their experiences from, and reflections on, practice receive due recognition. This objective is aligned with phenomenological research approaches, which seek to comprehend phenomena from the participants' own viewpoints, presenting rich and detailed descriptions as the participants themselves experience them (cf. Finlay, 2003b; Tanggard, 2017). To contextualize and theorize the experiences brought forth was furthermore part of our aim of deepening the understanding.

4.2 Sample

The selection of participants was based on purposeful sampling, aiming at identifying and selecting information-rich cases – individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015). Orienting ourselves within the myriad of sampling designs and options presented in the literature on qualitative research methods, I believe our strategy is best described as a form of group characteristics sampling, as described by Patton (2015), aiming at both typical cases and key informants/knowledgeable to create specific information-rich groups that can reveal important patterns. Stratified purposeful sampling (cf. Palinkas et al., 2015) also played a part in our strategies, as we aimed to capture both variations and common cores in the professionals' experiences.

Initially, the ambition behind the present research project was to conduct the research within the three Norwegian social welfare professions social work, social educator, and child welfare officer/childcare worker. The recruitment process, however, proved to be challenging. Initially, I reached out to managers at regional levels in different regions and in various public social welfare services. They acknowledged the relevance of the project and assured me that they would share contact information with eligible personnel who met the inclusion criteria. However, on multiple occasions, I did not receive any additional information, and when I followed up with them, they informed me that they had been unsuccessful in recruiting participants. This was especially true in the case of recruiting child welfare officers, as I encountered significant difficulties during the recruitment process.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the following closings and restrictions additionally affected the research and recruitment process, resulting in the project being amended to include only SWs and SEs. It also led to more instrumental-use sampling (cf. Patton, 2015): As several of the participants initially recruited (both professionals and service users) opted out of the research project, we turned to the snowball strategy, starting with a few knowledgeable interviewees, and asked them for additional relevant

contacts, thus creating a chain of interviewees. While this strategy is often used and is a pragmatic, effective choice in qualitative studies, it requires awareness of possible consequences for the range of variation in a sample and concerns about ´which way the ball rolls´ (Tjora, 2017). The intricacies of recruitment, the structure of the sample, and the potential ramifications for both sample variations and findings will be examined in greater detail during the methodological discussion in chapter 6.

Professionals

The inclusion criteria for the professionals in studies 1 and 2 were a bachelor's degree in social work and social education, respectively, and at least five years of experience in professional practice.

The participants in study 1 were employed within work and activation programs in NAV. They were recruited after initial contact and agreement with NAV managers, first at the regional, followed by the local level. Five female SWs aged 35 to 45 from two different NAV offices in middle-sized municipalities participated. All had diverse work experience with service users, ranging from ten to twenty years, and all had participated in professional supervision.

In study 2, we recruited five SEs between the ages of 35 and 45. Among them were three females and two males. The participants were recruited after initial contact with the municipal research unit and the responsible adviser in the agency for services for PWID in a large municipality. The adviser led the recruitment process and recruited SEs that worked in different parts of the agency's services. Their practice experience ranged from eight to sixteen years, including work within the disability field, geriatric care, psychiatry, and substance use.

Each of the ten participating professionals recruited one service user with whom they were actively working to participate in the IPR recording. The service users' participation was confined to the video recording of a single typical interaction with the social worker. The professionals recruited service users who had the capacity to

consent and who they believed could handle the encounter being video-recorded, as well as decline participation if they felt uncomfortable.

Service users

In study 1, three of the participating service users were in their early twenties, while two were aged 30–40. None of them were currently in work, education, or training. All had diverse and co-existing social and health challenges, such as drug addiction and long-lasting psychiatric challenges, experienced child welfare interventions, and lengthy phases of being on the margins of society. All five IPR recordings were from conversations at the NAV office.

The SEs in study 2 recruited service users with inclusion criteria of mild or moderate intellectual disability. Two service users were in their early twenties, two were in their early thirties, and the fifth was in her sixties. All had varied living conditions and different additional diagnoses, such as problems with addiction and psychiatric and somatic challenges. The recordings occurred in various settings: two were recorded in residential facilities ("supported housings"), one in a daycare center during interaction in an arts and crafts activity, and two during weekly home visits to service users who lived independently.

In the initial research design, I included an age criterion to enable comparisons of social work practice across fields; service users had to be between 16 and 40. As such, the project could also include youth from the age of 16 from child welfare services, who, unlike younger children, are legally considered to have the capacity to consent. However, due to the changes in the overall design and the recruitment challenges, we included one service user in study 2 whose age exceeded the upper limit of the age criterion. Looking back, I see that the age criterion turned superfluous when the child welfare officer case had to be omitted. Professional practice is in the foreground of this project, and the service users´ age did not have any substantial impact.

4.3   Data development

Under the social constructionist assumption that social reality is the interpretations and perceptions developed, transmitted, shared, and maintained through social interaction, research interviews are understood as interactional accomplishments (Holstein & Gubrium, 2021). Interviews are not neutral conduits for undistorted data but social encounters and active occasions in which meanings are produced. The stories we get are created with rather than by someone; they are contextually made, designed for particular audiences, serve purposes locally grown, and embedded in broader cultural contexts (Ryen, 2021, p. 42).

However, in-depth qualitative interviewing, inspired both by phenomenological lifeworld perspectives and constructionist and interactionist perspectives (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), is a valuable method to provide access to social worlds and examine the research participants' views and experiences within these worlds (J. Miller & Glassner, 2021). In addition, focus groups offer the opportunity to explore collective experiences and perspectives and to access and study the interaction between research participants (Malterud, 2012a; Wilkinson, 2021).

4.3.1 Interpersonal Process Recall

IPR was initially developed as a skill training program within therapy and counseling (Kagan et al., 1969). As a qualitative research method, IPR is an in-depth interview method based on video-assisted recall designed to gain access to and describe the moment-by-moment experiences of participants in interactions in educational, clinical, or similar professional settings (Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Larsen et al., 2008). An encounter is video-recorded and played back for the participant (primarily client or caregiver) as soon as possible after the interaction, preferably within 48 hours. Both participant and researcher can pause the recording and comment on specific sequences. During the interview, the participant is asked to remember and describe immediate experiences associated with occurrences in the video-recorded encounter. This enables explorations of in-session interactions and makes conscious some aspects of the

unconscious, unspoken experiences of the interaction (Elliott, 1986; Larsen et al., 2008; Macaskie et al., 2015). It also enables the researcher to examine usually inaccessible events, such as the participant's emotional and cognitive processes, which are recollected in dialogue in the interview (Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021). The explorative and video-assisted design in IPR thus made it possible for us to gain insight into aspects of the social workers' in-situ practice that would be difficult to access in an in-depth interview on concrete encounters without similar video assistance.

While previous understandings of IPR were that of reification of earlier feelings and thoughts as objective data, more recent approaches emphasize intersubjectivity and creating a mutually constructed experience (Macaskie et al., 2015). This framing of the IPR interview as an actively constructed conversation where stories are produced is consistent with the social constructionist understanding of interviews as interactional accomplishments (cf. Holstein & Gubrium, 2021).

IPR is also congruent with more phenomenological approaches (Kettley et al., 2015). The enabling of the researcher to examine normally inaccessible events in the recorded conversations makes it possible to get close to the participant's original experience and deepen the awareness through recall. An emphasis on the role of the researcher/interviewer as a non-judgmental explorer, trusting the participant's experiences, resonates with the aim of phenomenological research to enter the participant's lived experiences and attend genuinely and actively to their view (Finlay, 2003b, p. 110).

As such, the IPR method can be seen as inspired by both phenomenological and social constructionist approaches, and a joint congruence of the approaches is the emphasis in IPR on reflection and reflexivity. This emphasis is further congruent with reflexive practice research, aiming to gain insight into and explore the practitioners' reflections and experiences. The intersubjective and reflexive lens offered by IPR additionally pays attention to the relational dynamic interplay of researcher and participants and makes a collaborative reflection on the research process possible (Macaskie et al., 2015). A discussion of the researcher's position, including self-reflexivity and self-

awareness, is essential in research in general and even more so when applying reflexive approaches. I will return to this as part of the methodological discussion in chapter 6.

Turning to previous research, IPR is most commonly used in the counseling and psychotherapy profession (e.g., Burgess et al., 2013; Elliott & Shapiro, 1988; Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Levitt, 2001; Lloyd-Hazlett & Foster, 2014; Macaskie et al., 2015; Meekums et al., 2016; West & Clark, 2004), but have also been used within studies on higher education, medicine, and sports (see for example Moskal & Wass, 2019; Schwenk, 2019; Wass & Moskal, 2017; Yaphe & Street, 2003). In Norway, two recent studies apply IPR methodology, studying patient-practitioner interaction in post-bariatric surgery consultations (Natvik et al., 2022) and clients' experiences from psychotherapy sessions (Solberg Kleiven et al., 2022). Additionally, IPR as a data-gathering method was intended in a study of Norwegian systemic couple therapists but was abandoned due to methodological and ethical concerns (Øfsti, 2008).

Within the field of social work research, IPR has been absent with the exceptions of a recent study of the interaction between autistic and non-autistic adults (Cook et al., 2021) and an earlier study developing and testing a model for social work with frail elderly (Naleppa & Reid, 1998). To the best of my knowledge, before this project, IPR had yet to be used as a research method in studies of professional practice in social work.

Conducting IPR-sessions

The ten individual IPR interviews were each based on one video-recorded encounter between a professional and their recruited service user. As accounted for previously, the five video sessions in study 1 took place at NAV offices, while the five sessions in study 2 were in different contexts. In all ten sessions, I met with the social worker and service user before starting the recording. I introduced myself and explained the project, including a summary of the declaration of consent they had already signed. We then chit-chat about this and that, ranging from today's weather to their leisure interests and, in some sessions, their expectations about being filmed. I then briefly introduced both the professional and service user to the technicalities of the video camera and

assured them that they could pause or stop the recording at any time if they felt uncomfortable. In seven of the ten sessions, I left the room, while in three sessions, I stayed in the room to observe (the choice of leaving or staying during the sessions is discussed in section 6.3.1).

After finishing the conversation, some service users wanted to have a word again, while others left before I reentered. Before the scheduled IPR interview, I roughly transcribed the entire video recording to gain familiarity with the issues and occurrences in the conversation. I selected specific moments and happenings I wished to explore further. At the beginning of each interview, we had a small debrief and free recall from the video-recorded session. During the interview, we went through the recorded session. I paused the video recording at the selected moments and asked the interviewee about the extracted events. The interviewees could also pause the recording and comment on specific sequences they found interesting, significant, or surprising or if they wished to add something (cf. Macaskie et al., 2015). All ten interviews were completed within a few days after the video recording. While most of the interviews related to happenings in the video recording, the professionals were also acquainted with a brief interview guide at the beginning of the interview (appendix II). This addressed a few fixed topics, such as work experience, aims and expectations before the recorded encounter, degree of service user participation, professional – user relationship, and experiences of being recorded and interviewed.

Using video in social work research
Video and digital-based methods are used increasingly across various methodological and theoretical approaches and offer new ways of collecting data, analyzing social actions and activities, and presenting observations and findings (Danby, 2021; Heath, 2021). Social interactions are accomplished "in situ" – within the context of their production – and are thus momentary and easy to miss. The use of video provides a methodological resource to explore and understand social interaction, allowing us to slow down the research process of working with data: what we are seeing and hearing, go back and review, give detailed attention, and slow down analysis enough to see the event unfold moment by moment (Danby, 2021, p. 294). As such, video-assisted

methods can help us to make visible what was not visible to us before, consistent with the aim of reflexive practice research of gaining insight into aspects of practice that are otherwise difficult to access. At times there are also moments where the camera's presence allows us to capture situations that might never have been caught if the researcher had been present. This is especially true in research within health and social services, where a video camera can be far less intrusive for vulnerable people than the presence of an observing researcher (Danby, 2021). On the other hand, the presence of a camera also has its challenges. A discussion of the effect of the camera's presence in the sessions, and the occasional presence of the researcher, will be discussed more in-depth in chapter 6.

Within the field of social welfare, studies have used video recordings of interactions in actual client situations (such as Dowling et al., 2019; Juhila et al., 2021). However, in a review study, Miller Scarnato (2019) argues that video data are still under-utilized in qualitative social work research despite their great potential to enhance the research process, including the opportunity for engaging participants in participatory action research. My belief is that IPR presents social work researchers with a valuable methodological contribution and approach to video-based research.

4.3.2 Focus group interviews

In studies 1 and 2, we conducted a focus group with the participating professionals, aiming at adding depth to the reflections from the IPR sessions, letting multiple voices surface, and allowing for a joint conversation on experiences from general practice and participating in the project. I moderated the focus groups, while my main supervisor acted as co-moderator.

According to the social constructionist perspective, this thesis assumes that we, as researchers, construct aspects of reality in collaboration with our subject(s) (cf. Holstein & Gubrium, 2021). This is undoubtedly the case with focus group interviews as an interactional accomplishment, where the moderator facilitates group discussion

and encourages group members to interact with each other (Wilkinson, 2021). Interaction in focus groups generates different stories on experiences than from individual in-depth interviews (Kvale et al., 2015; Malterud, 2012a): A natural, relatively free flow of discussion between the participants provides access to participants' own language, concepts, and concerns (Wilkinson, 1998) and is thus concurrent with this thesis´s aim of exploring aspects of practice that are often left unexplored. Additionally, the potential of focus groups to provide social contexts for meaning-making and shifting the balance of power away from the researcher toward the research participants (Wilkinson, 1998, 1999) made it a valuable tool in our attempt to raise the social workers' voices. Due to professional secrecy, the focus groups were unable to delve into personal details regarding the service users. Instead, each participant shared their most interesting and challenging experiences from their IPR session. In addition, I shared some preliminary themes, patterns, common experiences, and characteristics from the IPR sessions in the focus group. The dialogue in the focus groups thus served as both a continuation of reflections from the concrete IPR sessions and a collective exploration of professional practice experiences. Particularly, the SWs in the first focus group expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on, articulate, and discuss dilemmas and difficulties encountered in both the specific conversations and generally in their practice. When researchers asked about the impact of these challenges on their professional lives, some participants were emotionally affected. The SEs, who represented various departments within the municipal services, embraced the focus group as an opportunity to share experiences and reflections on working with PWID as a vulnerable group. The dilemmas, ambivalences, and challenges faced by social workers took center stage in both focus groups, serving as the focal point of extensive discussions.

The data collection period in study 1 lasted from December 2018 to June 2019. The first IPR interview in study 2 was conducted in December 2019, and I aimed at finishing data collection in early spring 2020. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and extensive restrictions in the municipal services for PWID, I was excluded from data collection for nine months in 2020 and then again for three months during spring 2021.

The focus group interview in study 2 was thus not conducted until June 2021. The time gap between the IPR sessions and the focus group therefore varied significantly for the participants, making it challenging for some to remember the specific details of the IPR sessions and access their recall. To aid their memory, I provided a shortened transcription to the two participants who had the longest time gap. While this prolonged process presented some challenges, the extended time gap also allowed for further reflections as the participating SEs process of raised awareness on their service user were continued. Moreover, one of the SEs told of changes in her practice by allocating more time to one-on-one conversations with her service users. This change could be attributed to her positive experiences with such conversations through her participation in the research project.

4.4   Data analysis

Following the diversity of qualitative research, there is also a range of approaches and procedures for analysis. To have a transparent and detailed description of the path from data to findings, that is, to be clear about what one is doing, is necessary, whichever approach one chooses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Malterud, 2001). In this project, I chose thematic analysis (TA), as it is a method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions (Nowell et al., 2017). A key characteristic of TA is its theoretical freedom, flexibility, and accessibility, and some, such as Braun and Clarke (2006), assert that the approach should be regarded as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. The approach is considered useful for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights (Nowell et al., 2017). As such, TA corresponds with the aim of this thesis to access and explore aspects of the professionals' reflections and experiences that are otherwise difficult to access.

Simultaneously, I recognize that the analysis of interviews, just as the data gathering and development, are active occasions in which meanings are produced (cf. Holstein

& Gubrium, 2021) and that I, as a researcher, am also part of this knowledge production. As such, the analysis has strains of what Järvinen (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2021) calls constructionism-interactionism, acknowledging the interaction between interviewer and interviewee, the interviewees' self-presentation and accounts, as well as narrative characteristics of the interview.

As with any choice of analytical approaches, the choices in this research project also had their consequences and omissions, which will be discussed more in-depth in the methodological discussion in chapter 6. Another note of concern is the claim that I have approached our material inductively. According to Malterud (2001, p. 486), I am then guilty of failing to realize that my stance is unavoidably affected by theory and previous knowledge. I concur with this view but strive to aim for induction in the sense of the development of theory from empirical data and not the other way around. I am nevertheless theoretically informed by my background, and especially in the latter stages of the research process, theory and literature influenced the analysis. The analysis, therefore, has an evident, partly abductive approach (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018).

4.4.1 Study 1

In study 1, the procedure Systematic Text Condensation (Malterud, 2012b) was chosen as a systematic thematic cross-case analysis strategy that allows using different methodologies. STC is an inductive, descriptive approach that aims at presenting the experience of participants as expressed by themselves as vital examples from people´s life-worlds, not covering the full range of potentially available phenomena. As such, it was a pragmatic choice in our study, which aimed at eliciting the participating professionals' experiences. Simultaneously, STC shares the underlying theoretical foundation of social constructionism, of knowledge as a situated and temporary outcome of dynamic interpretations of several possible versions of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1990; Malterud, 2012b).

The data material to be analyzed consisted of audio recordings and transcripts from the five IPR interviews with the SWs and audio recordings, transcriptions, and field notes from the focus group interview. True to the IPR method, the video recordings were support-material and were not to be analyzed separately.

STC is conducted stepwise and includes de-contextualizing, coding, synthesizing, and re-conceptualizing text data. Compared to other analysis strategies, STC relies on a limited number of themes and codes (Malterud, 2012b). The analytical team consisted of my three supervisors and co-authors, and me. After establishing a total impression in the first step, we identified the following preliminary themes: *relational work, time, exploring, difficult challenges, reflections on the role as an SW,* and *the significance of regulatory frameworks*. The second step is identifying meaning units and organizing the data material into codes. With STC, only parts of the whole text are meaning units. After sorting the data material, I was left with four code groups: *ˊTimeˊ, ˊBetween exploring and challenging – specific approaches and toolsˊ, ˊBetween entirety and boundaries – professional practice within NAVˊs regulatory frameworkˊ,* and *ˊBetween frustrations and wonderments – reflections on challenges in practiceˊ*. Each code group had two or three subgroups, according to the STC approach, and the codes were justified and defied during the process and after counseling with the co-authors. In the third step, condensation, the content within every meaning unit in the subgroups is reduced into a condensate, or an artificial quotation, while maintaining the original terminology applied by the participants. Central to STC, a first-person format is applied in the condensates (Malterud, 2012b). In our analysis, I abstracted condensates from each group and subgroup before a joint discussion in the analytical team. I found this step to be the most difficult in the analytical process, as I struggled to create a joint first-person voice from the five IPR interviews, which had such a narrow and detailed focus on a single conversation. However, through discussions and adjustments in the analytical team, we ended up with a decontextualized selection of thematic code groups across the five participating professionals.

The fourth step entails reconceptualizing the condensates in order to create synthesized descriptions and concepts. According to STC, this analytic text is written in the third-person format, and the analytic text for each code group is compared to the entire transcript to make sure that the results still reflect the validity and wholeness of their original context (Malterud, 2012b). I discussed the text and the authentic illustrative quotations with the analytical team to ensure that the findings described the SWs' reflections on practice and their experienced challenges and ambivalences. The analysis finally yielded four main themes: *'Balancing an integrated approach within the NAV system,' 'Tools, possibilities and limitations in the individual conversations,' 'Ambiguous experiences of responsibility'* and *'Time as a resource and consolation, shortage and threat.'*

4.4.2 Study 2

Conducting the analysis in study 1 gave me some valuable insights and knowledge. Firstly, this related to the usefulness of the thematic approach for my overall research question. Secondly, the insights were related to the importance of reading and re-reading the data material, reflecting, and "living in the detail" (Rapley, 2021) when doing qualitative analysis.

I also learned from the challenges I encountered by doing STC. The detailed prescriptions and procedures for analysis in STC, such as the condensation in step 3, facilitate transparency and intersubjectivity (Malterud, 2012b). As such, the procedures are simple and accessible for novices. As accounted for, I struggled with the condensate and the first-person format in step 3, as well as the limited number of suggested preliminary themes to begin with in the first step. I, therefore, decided to turn to a different approach within the thematic landscape - or described through Malterud's (2012b) colorful metaphor of "dancing". If qualitative analyses can be aligned to dancing, I learned STC as my basic steps, and was then ready for more advanced and improvised dance moves.

We found a TA approach following the six phases of Braun and Clarke (2006) to be appropriate for exploring the SEs´ perspectives in the second study. Braun and Clarke emphasize the flexibility of TA as a strength of the method and further that their six phases should be understood as a guide and tools for describing patterns across qualitative data and not rigid rules to be followed slavishly (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021, 2022).[9] This emphasis resembles the warnings against methodaltry, i.e., the privileging of methodological concerns over other considerations, often at the expense of interpretation, leading to objectivation and exclusion of the actual substance of the stories we wish to tell (cf. Chamberlain, 2000; Malterud, 2012b).

As in study 1, the data material to be analyzed consisted of audio recordings and transcripts from five IPR interviews, along with audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes from the focus group interview. The analysis concentrated on the SEs' recall and reflections upon occurrences from the video-recorded encounters and the reflective dialogues that followed in the focus group. During the first phase, I transcribed the six interviews, followed by readings and re-readings to familiarize myself with the data and form an overall impression. As in the first study, the analytical team consisted of me and my three supervisors and co-authors, and my main supervisor also read the transcriptions and provided her initial ideas. In the second phase, where the emphasis is on generating initial codes, I conducted a broad coding of the entire data set, ending at 48 initial codes. In the third phase, I discussed these initial coding with the main supervisor before collating the codes into the following potential themes: *being professional, dilemmas of autonomy, being responsible, tools and possibilities in the conversations, the importance of knowing, outside forces, friendship,* and *challenging social media.*

Reviewing these potential or candidate themes in relation to the coded extract and to the entire data set is the fourth phase suggested in this TA approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I reviewed and refined the themes with an emphasis on the questions of

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[9] For a comprehensive reading on TA, including its relation to constructionist approaches, refer to Braun and Clarke's most recent handbook (2022).

autonomy and relational work. At the end of the fourth phase, we were left with a thematic map with two main themes: "*The importance of relations",* and "*The question of self- determination"*, each with five subthemes.

In the fifth phase, the analytical team defined, refined, and named the themes. During this phase, the dilemmas related to SEs' emphasis on relational work and their ideal of supporting self-determination became more apparent and more interesting. In the process of identifying the essence of each theme, the two overarching themes were renamed and structured with new subthemes. After that, I selected extract examples to illustrate the themes and analytical points before the final analysis and write-up of the report were done in the sixth phase. The final analysis yielded two core themes: "*Dilemmas of relationships*" and *"Dilemmas of self-determination"*, including subthemes and extract examples.

4.4.3 Study 3

The use of the TA approach was continued in the analysis of the third study. However, in more recent publications, Braun and Clarke reflect on the varieties of practices in studies and approaches since their 2006 papers. In order to facilitate what they term ´better TA practice´, get rid of misunderstandings and confusions, and explain and demarcate their approach more clearly, they decide to label their approach ´*reflexive TA´* (RTA) (see for example Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2021). This labeling emphasizes the importance of the researcher's subjectivity as analytical resources and their reflexive engagement with theory, data, and interpretation. RTA emphasizes flexibility and views the analysis as a process of developing results, and not one of finding evidence. I believe that our thematic analytical approach already in study 2 entailed reflection on researcher subjectivity, was relatively organic and recursive, and engaged deeply with our data material independent of these demarcations. However, we appreciated the clarifications and revisions in RTA, and included them in the analysis in study 3.

The data material consisted of transcripts from the two previous studies: ten IPR interviews and transcripts and field notes from the two focus groups. All twelve transcripts included sequences exploring the professionals' experiences of being filmed during the interaction and their reflections on and experiences of participating in the research project. While they had been initially coded during the analysis in the two preceding studies, these sequences were extracted and analyzed as a whole for the purpose of this third study. In this process, we concentrated on what the professionals said about the use of video recordings, their experience of and reflection on IPR and the effects participation in the research project might have on their own professional practice.

In the first phase, I re-read the transcripts to familiarize myself with the content again and go deeper into the experiences related to the research design, use of methods, and possible effects of participating. After re-reading and immersing, I discussed the material with the main supervisor. The initial codings from the analytical processes in studies 1 and 2 were dismissed, and in the second phase, I coded the current dataset. After coding, I shared the coded material with the main supervisor, and we discussed the coded material aiming at developing broader patterns of meaning. The initial codes were plentiful as the dataset comprised ten participating social workers compared to five in the two previous studies. However, during this third phase, we could relatively easily collate the codes into five candidate themes centred around the professionals' reflections: *reflections on being recorded while working, reflections on sample/service user participants, participants' self-critical reflections*, *reflections on IPR,* and *reflections on future practice.*

In the fourth phase, I discussed the initial themes relative to the coded extract and the entire dataset with my main supervisor before sharing the preliminary text with the analytical team. Following our discussions, themes were reduced from five to two, as themes 1 and 4 were combined, as were 3 and 5, and theme 2 was discarded as an independent theme. I then selected extract examples to illustrate themes and analytical points before all four authors participated in defining, refining, and naming the themes.

In the sixth phase, I conducted the final write-up. The two main themes that developed were *"Reflections on the method in use: awakening or checkmating"* and "*Reflections on present and future practice."*

As we had been through two analytical processes during studies 1 and 2, the recursive traits became important in the current analysis: The intimate knowledge was, on the one hand, an advantage that made us capable of immersing ourselves relatively unstrained with the data material. On the other hand, it meant that we could quickly and unconsciously jump to conclusions, and we therefore pursued a reflexive and dynamic engagement in the process.

Due to the emphasis on the researcher's subjectivity and reflexivity in the RTA approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019), and this research project´s position within social constructionism, understanding data development and analysis as interactional accomplishments, I considered including the role of the researcher as an independent theme, and thus explicitly in the findings. However, after discussing it with the analytical team, we decided to attend to this in the methods and discussion section due to the overall clarity and design of the article.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The research project was approved by NSD (appendix I). NAV additionally approved study 1 at the regional level before passing it on to offices at the local level. Study 2 was approved by a municipal research unit before the inquiry of participating was directed to the agency for services for PWID.

Participation in video recordings, interviews, and focus groups was voluntary and unpaid. However, all ten participating service users received a small gift as a token of appreciation for their participation. All were giftware from HVL and ranged from seating pads, a rucksack, or small earbuds. The participating professionals got a mug

with HVL's badge after the IPR interviews. All participants received oral and written information (appendices III - VI) about the study and their right to withdraw from the project without explanation. All digital records – audio and video – from the IPR sessions and focus groups, in addition to a list of contact information, were kept in HVL's secured research server (SILAF) and deleted in accordance with the requirements from NSD.

Formal ethical guidelines are legally mandated and serve as reminders of the moral obligations that accompany the research. However, formal guidelines are general, but ethical questions, challenges, and dilemmas are contextual and situated and cannot all be prepared for (cf. Ryen, 2021). Additionally, NSD defines PWID as a group of people with circumstances that might make them especially vulnerable (NSD, n.d.). Therefore, research involving PWID in the empirical material raises particular ethical concerns about the information, sampling, and informed consent and requires heightened awareness (Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020). Inadequate linguistic comprehension and communicative difficulties may also pose challenges during data collection. Additionally, the potential vulnerability and reduced cognitive abilities may amplify the uneven power relations between researchers and participants (Sigstad & Garrels, 2017; van der Weele & Bredewold, 2021). Since the PWID in study 2 was only involved in the meetings with, for them, a well-known SE, these issues appeared less urgent.

Like the service users in study 2, the NEETs in study 1 can also be considered a disadvantaged and vulnerable group, and researchers are called upon to have a special responsibility to protect their integrity and interest (NESH, 2021). In the recruitment processes for both studies, I instructed the participating professionals to recruit service users they thought could handle the video recording of their meetings. The responsible adviser in the municipal services in study 2 explicitly instructed the SEs only to recruit service users to whom they could explain what it meant to consent, in addition to the legal right to consent. The SWs in study 1 were particularly attentive to emphasizing to their service users that participation would not negatively affect their current or

future services in NAV. In addition to the information I provided, the ten social workers prepared their service users for the video recording by emphasizing safety and the option to withdraw before or during the session. They also offered the opportunity to talk about participation in hindsight. My impression is that the service users appreciated participating and had a positive experience of the session.

However, despite the social workers' efforts and preparations, challenges, such as misinterpretations, undesirable camera effects, or misunderstandings, may still have occurred. Qualitative research is not for cowards, Ryen (2021) argues as she describes an increased worry about the harm qualitative researchers may impose on research participants. An example of an ethical challenge in this project is related to questions of voluntariness and consent: Despite the SWs' assurance towards the service users that the participation in the research project was voluntary and that neither participating nor withdrawing would affect their present or future services, the SWs' role as ´gatekeepers´ and providers of the services and benefits that the NEETs depended on, made the issue of consent more delicate and intertwined with issues of power (cf. Lipsky, 2010; T. Miller & Bell, 2012). Additionally - despite the efforts of *informed consent*, issues of codes and consent also entail further ethical dilemmas, such as how the filing of qualitative data and use for secondary analyses make it difficult for participants to know what they consent to (for a further discussion, see Ryen, 2021). Questions of research ethics, issues of confidentiality, and trust are complex. The constructionist arguments of the social world as collaboratively accomplished, and the contextual and interactional production of knowledge in qualitative research make it even more complex, as the stories we get are produced *with* and not *by* the participants (cf. Holstein & Gubrium, 2021; Ryen, 2021). Without entering the extensive debate on research ethics, let alone having any readymade solutions and answers, I hope that awareness of them has helped me conduct research in an ethically respectful way.

As mentioned, the potential vulnerability of the service user participants in our studies heightens some of the concerns regarding consent and confidentiality, and both we, as researchers, and the professionals, took measures to meet the heightened concerns.

However, the ethical concerns are not limited to the service users in this project but also the social workers, as they were the primary participants. As already mentioned, I faced difficulties in the recruitment process. While the social workers had received information about the study, their right to withdraw, and the assurances and confidentiality, ethical concerns and challenges were also present. Albeit none of them were forced into participating by their managers or departments, some might have felt pressured to participate.

As exploring experiences from participating was part of the research questions, all were asked questions regarding how the project was carried out. All ten participating professionals described the project as well-organized. Preparation, information, and an initial information meeting had assured them that the project did not have any skill-testing or "measuring" purposes. Together with my own lack of practice and professional experience from social work, this hopefully eased the stress and preoccupation with presenting themselves as competent professionals (cf. Råheim et al., 2016). Despite different levels of stress *during* the video-recorded sessions, none of the participants retold that they had felt unduly anxious or stressed in advance. However, I do not intend to underestimate the inherent researcher–researched power asymmetry, nor any experienced pressure of appearing competent, knowledgeable, and professional in the focus group. Rather, I will return to reflections on the potential positive and negative effects of participation, together with further methodological concerns as part of the discussion in chapter 6.

5. Summary of findings

In this chapter I present the main findings of the three studies, including a short introduction and contextualization and a description of the findings in relation to the research project as a whole.

5.1 Study 1

5.1.1 Context

This study was conducted in two different NAV offices within the work and activation field. The study focused on encounters between SWs and young vulnerable service users and aimed at exploring the social workers' own experiences from and reflections on video-recorded in-situ conversations.

At the time this study was planned, previous research on NAV had paid little attention to how conversations between social workers and service users actually occur (cf. Riis-Johansen et al., 2018). By using video recordings, we wanted to get as close as possible to individual in-situ practice without disrupting the social worker – service user relationship too much. Furthermore, we wanted to narrow the investigation to educated SWs, to gain a deeper understanding of how their professional perspectives and knowledge from their education might inform their current practice.

In the context of the research project and the overall aim of the thesis, the study was also the first step in exploring the use of IPR within the field of professional social work.

5.1.2 Findings

The multi-method approach allowed for an exploration of the on-the-spot use of professional knowledge in encounters between SWs and their group of vulnerable

NEET service users. The participating SWs identified and articulated both the use of specific skills and knowledge in concrete situations as well as more integrated, holistic approaches. Another key finding is that the social workers perceived their daily professional practice as complex, multifaceted, intertwined, and often contradictive. Despite this, complexities and contradictions were balanced and negotiated within the NAV system and not in opposition to it. However, these constant negotiations and balancing acts rendered visible that ethical considerations and dilemmas are constant aspects of social work with vulnerable service users. The SWs experienced that they lacked adequate time for evaluation, including self-evaluation on their own professional practice, collective reflection with colleagues, and professional supervision on challenging cases. Consequently, ethical concerns and dilemmas were often treated as individual and private issues rather than integral components of practice and were not considered part of professional knowledge.

The SWs' experience of time as an ambiguous but ubiquitous aspect of practice was another central finding. The use and experience of time emerged as both a resource and consolation, a shortage, and a threat in professional practice. Similar to how ethical concerns and dilemmas were privatized, the ambiguity related to time was infrequently discussed with colleagues, and SWs tended to address this issue individually.

5.1.3 Key findings relating to the aim of the thesis

The study highlights social work practice's complex and multifaceted nature, especially when working with vulnerable service users. The multi-method approach provided insight into the social workers' ethical dilemmas and challenges, underscoring the value of additional support and counseling to address such issues in practice, which can also facilitate the development of professional practice. These findings moreover support that knowledge in social work goes beyond theoretical, propositional knowledge and that notions of knowledge in social work need to include important ever-present dimensions such as ethics and time. The concept of practical synthesis emerged as a valuable framework for understanding and exploring the on-the-spot use and expression of professional knowledge in concrete encounters. The findings are pursued

further in the discussion in chapter 6 regarding the use of professional knowledge in one-on-one encounters and dilemmas and challenges experienced in frontline work.

5.2 Study 2

5.2.1 Context

This study continued the exploration of professional practice within social work through the use of IPR and focus group interviews. The study context was educated SEs working in municipal services with adult service users with intellectual disabilities. The study had a similar design to the first study and aimed at exploring the SEs' reflections on their professional practice in encounters with PWIDs receiving services. As in the first study, detailed, video-assisted investigations of actual practice in one-on-one encounters in this context had previously been little explored, including the professionals' perspectives and reflections regarding their own in-situ practice.

5.2.2 Findings

The study found that the SEs insisted on two essential dimensions in their work with PWIDs: the importance of relationships and granting primacy to the ideal of autonomy. Using video-assisted recall and reflection revealed the multifaceted nature of ethical challenges in the SEs' day-to-day practice. A frequently experienced dilemma was balancing supporting the service users' autonomy and protecting them from possible harm. The study further examined a dilemma that stood out as especially delicate to handle, namely the service users increasing access to and use of the internet and social media. While the study argues that the SEs' continuous facing, navigation, and perseverance in ethical dilemmas can be understood as a necessary reflective practice or part and parcel of professional work with PWID, the dilemmas related to the online lives of their service users seemed to overwhelm the SEs.

Another central finding relates to how the SEs perceived relationships as imperative to all their work with their service users. Their relational approach to practice gave rise to a variety of challenges that this study identifies as "relational dilemmas". These

dilemmas encompassed difficulties in developing a comprehensive understanding of the service users due to not knowing them "well enough" and navigating the boundaries between professional relationships and friendships. Ethical challenges regarding the service users' right to choose or single out relationships with the SEs also draw attention to the interconnectedness and interdependency inherent in professional practice with vulnerable service users.

5.2.3 Key findings relating to the aim of the thesis

The SEs in this study placed even greater emphasis on the need for holistic approaches and integrated thinking to safeguard the best interests of the service users compared to the SWs in the previous study. The exploratory nature of this study provided a platform for the participants to engage in deep reflection on their work, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the ethical challenges and dilemmas they faced in their day-to-day practice. I will discuss these findings further in chapter 6, particularly related to the importance of supportive structures and opportunities for reflection in practice.

5.3 Study 3

5.3.1 Context

For study 3, we wanted to delve deeper into how the professionals participating in studies 1 and 2 experienced participating in a research project applying combined IPR and focus group methods. By drawing on the data collected in the previous two studies, the objective was to explore how the participants experienced and reflected on their involvement in the project and whether the combined methods facilitated new insights into their practice. Additionally, the study aimed to examine any challenges or pitfalls associated with using the combined methods.

As described in section 4.3.1, the use of IPR in research on social work professions was largely unexplored prior to our two studies. Although the method has been applied in the study of other professions that emphasize reflective practice, such as

psychotherapy and counseling,[10] our studies were, to the best of my knowledge, the first to combine IPR sessions with focus group interviews. The aim of combining the methods was to foster continued and enhanced reflections among the participants.

5.3.2 Findings

The ten participating professionals highly valued the opportunity to engage in introspection, exploration, and reflection on their own professional practice during the IPR sessions. Their ideals and skills in critical reflection and reflective practice aligned well with the focus of IPR on extensive recall, reflection, and shared exploration. The impact of the video camera had differing effects on the professionals and seemed to be related to the quality of relationships they had with the service users and how well-established these relationships were. This finding highlights the interdependency between social workers and service users, underscoring the intersubjective challenges inherent in the IPR method and the research project.

The study also found that the participants used the IPR sessions and focus group interviews as opportunities to develop their professional practice. They perceived the reflective and reflexive methodology as a valuable resource for social workers with extensive practice experience and found it advantageous for both applying the methodology and achieving positive outcomes.

However, the study also identified a potential risk: rigorous reflection processes might be initiated for social workers without researchers having the opportunity to ensure adequate conditions for self-reflection. This included factors like whether the social workers had sufficient time to process the participation and their new insights or if they had access to professional supervision. The study suggests caution in implementing IPR studies without opportunities for debriefing and guidance. While the focus group in this study served as a partial solution to this issue, we do not find similar considerations or discussions in the existing literature on IPR.

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[10] For examples, see section 4.3.1

5.3.3 Key findings relating to the aim of the thesis

This study indicates that the use of IPR in social work research presents new opportunities for understanding professional in-situ practice. It also indicates that participation in a project using such research design can be beneficial for both SWs and SEs. In section 6.3 these findings will be discussed in greater detail, alongside the potential challenges of using the method, such as risks of participants getting distressed or having their professional confidence negatively affected.

6. Discussion

The main aim of this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of social welfare practitioners' experiences during one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users, as well as gain insight into what is influencing their actions and utilization of knowledge in such situations. To achieve this understanding, it was crucial to explore how professionals perceive, recall, and reflect on the dilemmas and challenges they encounter in their practice. By embracing the concept of reflexive practice research, which underscores the significance of articulating practitioners' implicit knowledge, this thesis brings forth significant findings regarding what informs the application of professional knowledge in in-situ practice. Additionally, it deepens our understanding of how practitioners reflect upon and confront moral, ethical, and dilemmatic concerns.

In this chapter, I bring together the findings from the three studies and explore their implications for understanding professional experiences during one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users. Building upon the theoretical foundation presented in chapter 2 and the key findings presented in chapter 5, I also incorporate perspectives from recent research to provide a broader interpretation of the studies' contributions to the field. The first part of the chapter focuses on the research aims outlined in chapter 3 for studies 1 and 2. I begin by examining how social workers' experiences of professional practice can be illuminated through existing literature on knowledge in social work. This exploration involves discussing the differences between the SWs in study 1 and the SEs in study 2. It also delves into how the concept of practical synthesis enhances our understanding of how social workers utilize knowledge during one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users. Secondly, I delve into professionals' experiences and reflections on the dilemmas and challenges they face in their practice, addressing the call made in recent studies to pay more attention to social workers' voices.

The remaining portion of this chapter addresses the research aim of the third study, providing a foundation for a comprehensive discussion of the study's design and methods, including an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses. This examination encompasses an assessment of the choices made regarding data collection and analysis alongside a reflexive discussion concerning the role of the researcher.

6.1 Use of professional knowledge in one-on-one encounters

According to the introductory chapter of this thesis, adopting a reflexive practice research approach entails recognizing that practitioners possess implicit knowledge within their experiences and actions, which should be expressed (cf. Lindseth, 2017). By exploring the social workers' experiences and reflections regarding their own practice, we have gained valuable insight into their practice, including their perception and utilization of professional knowledge.

6.1.1 Similar integrated perspectives but divergent approaches

Overall, the findings from both studies 1 and 2 align with the literature presented in section 2.2.3. This literature argues that the conventional knowledge paradigms rooted in Western traditions, which prioritize theoretical and propositional knowledge, fall short comprehensively encompassing the complexity of social work knowledge. A key finding in our research is that ethical considerations, moral dilemmas, and ambivalences are integral components of social work with service users. This finding broadly supports the findings of other studies conducted on frontline work in social welfare services and will be further explored in the next section. However, this finding also calls attention to the need to conceptualize more clearly social work knowledge to encompass ethics and the dimension of time, as suggested by scholars such as Banks (2013), Fossestøl (2019), Tsang (2008), and Dominelli and Holloway (2008).

In our studies, all ten professionals highlighted concrete ethical challenges and ambivalent situations encountered in their video-recorded interactions while also recounting various dilemmas they faced generally in their practice. Similarly, time-related issues were embedded in their daily work, serving as both a valuable resource

and a prerequisite for their processual and relational work. Time-related considerations were intertwined with their experience-based knowledge but also presented constraints and scarcity that impacted their practice. However, despite these experiences appearing almost commonly shared, they were primarily reflected upon as individual experiences and concerns for which the professionals felt individually responsible. Similar to the findings of Fossestøl (2019), ethical issues were treated as private matters, and time-related issues were considered individual concerns rather than integral aspects of professional and practical knowledge.

The privatization of these experiences in our studies contributed to frustration, a sense of powerlessness, and diminished motivation. It can also lead to stress, burnout, and negative impacts on the well-being of social workers (cf. Astvik et al., 2014; Beer et al., 2020; Lloyd et al., 2009; Olsson & Sundh, 2019). Furthermore, this failure to address and discuss such practice-related and inevitable aspects as part of professional knowledge might hinder the development of practical knowledge and, hence, the improvement of practice. Therefore, we support the call made in previous studies for considering ethics and time as fundamental components of the professional knowledge base (Fossestøl, 2019; Trevithick, 2008). Viewing these elements as components of professional knowledge, align with the principles of reflective practice, which recognizes the significance of diverse sources of knowledge. However, for professionals to address, reflect upon, and discuss these aspects as part of their professional knowledge, and develop as practitioners, it is essential to have organizational contexts that actively promote, facilitate, and allocate sufficient time and space for reflective practice (cf. Ruch, 2005; Yip, 2006).

According to Ruch (2005, p. 116), holistically reflective practitioners possess integrated and multilayered understandings of knowledge, combining technical-rational sources of knowledge with practical, critical, and process-oriented sources. In our studies, the professionals referred to various sources of knowledge, including theoretical knowledge gained during their education, insights from colleagues, supervisors, and their own practice experiences. They were cautious about attributing

knowledge to single sources and instead described their knowledge as a culmination of experiences that had become ingrained over years of practice, often used subconsciously, and challenging to differentiate. Integrated approaches, centering on the best interest of the service user, were emphasized. These findings align with previous studies, which also emphasized core concepts and holistic approaches (cf. Fossestøl, 2019; Røysum, 2017) and highlighted the importance of knowledge sources beyond theoretical knowledge (e.g., Finne et al., 2020; Heggen, 2008; Iversen & Heggen, 2016).

What is intriguing about our findings, however, is the subtle discrepancy in how the SWs and the SEs referred to the knowledge that guided their actions. While both groups emphasized relational knowledge and integrated approaches, the SWs, during the IPR interviews, explicitly identified and expressed the specific knowledge, reasons, and skills that informed their actions in the video-recorded conversations. This finding contrasts with Fossestøl (2019) and Røysum (2017), who noted a lack of specificity when social workers were asked to articulate knowledge and considerations in practice. In our study 2, however, the SEs essentially granted primacy to the relational knowledge, with all five agreeing that the individual service user was the primary source of knowledge. Their intimate knowledge of the user encompassed holistic perspectives, focusing on understanding 'the whole person' and prioritizing 'the user's best interest.' Consequently, this finding in study 2 aligns more closely with earlier studies.

There are several possible explanations for this difference. Firstly, it is important to exercise caution and consider that the disparity may be attributed to the research design and methodological choices. As explained in section 4.1.1, this research project adopts a multiple case study approach, with two cases illustrating the experiences and reflections of professionals in one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users. While there was no explicit aim of comparison, different professions and practice fields were selected to explore diverse perspectives and variations. It is worth noting that the activation field in NAV and municipal services for PWID differ significantly, and this

discrepancy might contribute to the differences observed between the SWs and the SEs. The SWs' conversations were guided by workfare policies, which necessitated a clear agenda of outcomes and activation measures (cf. Hansen & Natland, 2017). In contrast, the SEs' interactions with their service users were less explicitly regulated by political guidelines. In other words, the SWs' work balanced the integrated approaches with positioning NEETs towards work or activation, requiring the use of specific communication tools and goal-oriented approaches. This may have made it easier for the SWs to identify concrete actions, occurrences, and applications of knowledge, compared to the SEs, who were responsible for attending to their service users' overall well-being and life circumstances, necessitating holistic and person-centered approaches.

Hence, the observed disparities may be influenced more by structural factors such as the nature of the services, political and administrative regulations, guidelines, and the characteristics of the service user groups rather than the professionals' educational backgrounds or professional identities. If the study had involved interprofessional collaboration or included mixed professional samples, issues of expertise and jurisdiction might have assumed a central role. This is illustrated in studies conducted by Folkman et al. (2020) on SEs in dementia care and (2019) on frontline managers in healthcare services.

However, it cannot be completely ruled out that the identified differences between SWs and SEs can be attributed to the participants' professional backgrounds. The dual competence of SEs as social workers and authorized health personnel, coupled with the relatively "new" status of the profession in certain situations, can lead to confusion regarding their role and competence (cf. Folkman et al., 2019). This confusion may contribute to discussions and uncertainties within the profession, potentially causing SEs to rely more on general core concepts when describing their knowledge and competencies.[11]

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[11] As an example, the discussion on the SE competence, expertise and professional identity is ongoing on the website www.vernepleier.no, which is associated to The Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers (FO)

As described in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3, discussions, uncertainties and challenges are common in social work literature. However, it can be argued that SWs identifies with a broader and more established discussion of professional knowledge compared to SEs. This distinction arises because the profession of SEs is primarily confined to Norway and does not have the same level of international recognition. Consequently, the professional knowledge base for SEs may not have the same depth and breadth of discourse as that of SWs, whose education aligns more closely with the international generalist social work understanding.[12]

As stated earlier, this thesis does not extensively address the distinctions between the knowledge base of SWs and SEs in Norway. While beyond this project, the identification and articulation of this subtle discrepancy points toward the question of if and how social workers' diverse educational background impact how they perceive, identify, and reflect on professional knowledge. This highlights the need for future research to examine how professional knowledge influences decision-making in everyday frontline work, as well as how various social work professions perceive and utilize knowledge in their practice.

6.1.2 Practical synthesis in one-on-one encounters

Leaving the discrepancies aside, practical synthesis appears as a useful concept not only to address the application of professional knowledge in general, but also to understand how the social workers in our studies applied practical knowledge in in-situ encounters with vulnerable service users. Despite the differences in how specific the social workers were regarding their use of knowledge during the IPR interviews, the findings display their heterogenous knowledge base. Behind the person-centered and integrated approaches in both studies lies a wealth of theoretical knowledge regarding areas such as communication, psychology, and relationships. The SWs displayed

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[12] As in all qualitative research with a small sample size, caution must however be applied when addressing such group characteristics.

knowledge of public administration, law, and social work with drug abuse and mental illnesses, and the SEs had extensive knowledge of complex clinical conditions, including diagnoses, cognitive abilities, and medical issues.

A common trait was the integration and application of this diverse knowledge based on demands and happenings during the encounters (Gilje, 2017; Grimen, 2008). This integrated knowledge was coupled with indexed, practical knowledge, linked both to the professional applying it and the actual service user. This practical knowledge's tacit and embodied aspects were evident, for example, when one of the SEs reacted to her service user's epileptic seizure during the video recording. In the subsequent IPR interview, she recalled and reflected upon her own experiences and perceptions before, during, and after the seizure. The ability to act, the "know-how" (Ryle, 2000), was both indexed and embodied in the SE, and also personal, linked to a specific service user. This knowledge was learned and applied in specific situations, demanding intimate knowledge. The knowledge had tacit aspects but was not entirely silent, following Molander (1996), since she was able to recall and reflect upon it later.

When explicitly asked what knowledge had guided her actions during an occurrence in the video-recorded sessions, one of the SWs answered: *"I think that's valid for all conversations – you carry along experiences and knowledge, right? Then, after working for a while, it's hard to differentiate what you really base your knowledge on. It kind of gets in the brain, and you use it unconsciously, I'm sure"*. While this quote adequately illustrates the embodied, tacit, and indexed aspects of practical knowledge, it also articulates how Grimen (2008) suggests we should understand the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge: as a continuum with complex interplay rather than a dualistic one.

In conclusion, while the concept of practical synthesis primarily exists as a theoretical construct rather than a term employed by the social workers themselves, its emphasis on interconnectedness (Grimen, 2008) and the integration of practical knowledge with professionals' actions (Gilje, 2017) provides a valuable approach for gaining a deeper

understanding of the social workers' actions and their utilization of knowledge in concrete encounters with vulnerable service users.

Further, and as described in study 1, the IPR method, with its in-depth focus on in-session happenings, enabled the social workers, together with us as researchers, to revisit, recall and reflect on their own practice and use of knowledge in concrete meetings. Through the video recordings, we were allowed to slow down the research process: go back, review and give detailed attention, and see the event unfold moment by moment, "making visible what was not visible to us before" (Danby, 2021, p. 294). Based on our experiences during this research, I further suggest that the IPR method's detailed attention to "what happened" makes it not only suitable for investigating professional practice in social work as a whole, but also particularly useful in exploring the practical synthesis that occurs in in-situ encounters.

6.2 Dilemmas in the frontline

Similarly, just as the IPR method proved helpful in uncovering and delving deeper into the social workers' utilization of knowledge in concrete encounters, it also served as a valuable tool for exploring the often inaccessible, ambivalent, and dilemmatic challenges encountered in social work practice.[13]

6.2.1 Structural constraints and intrinsic ethical issues

The literature described in section 2.3 highlights the challenges of balancing government policy goals, huge caseloads, and the interests of service users, leading to complex and conflicting tasks. Our studies observed this consistently in the IPR sessions and subsequent focus groups. In study 1, workfare guidelines regulated SWs' interactions with NEETs. Although we argued, in line with previous research (Hansen & Natland, 2017; Terum & Jessen, 2015) that the SWs were able to adopt integrated, person-centered approaches within the NAV system's boundaries, ethical dilemmas

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[13] I have a made a deliberate choice not to discuss these issues as issues of power, nor have I explicitly discussed relations in social work as dynamics of power. However, I recognize that they can be seen as such, and that this is a vital perspective within research on professional practice.

and ambivalences arose. The professional code of ethics, crucial to their identity, made it difficult for SWs to delimit their responsibilities towards service users, especially when faced with their vulnerability during concrete encounters (cf. Kjørstad, 2005).

In section 6.1, I argued that privatizing ethical and time-related aspects of professional practice might hinder knowledge development, highlighting the need to integrate these aspects into professional knowledge for improvement. However, the issue of privatizing ethical considerations extends beyond the development of social work knowledge. Following the perspectives presented in section 2.3, the observed individualization of responsibility can be understood as resulting from neoliberalism's influence on social work's professional autonomy and identity (cf. Kamali & Jönsson, 2019b; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022). This influence has shifted the focus from structural and political aspects of social problems to individual issues, attributing them to personal shortcomings. Within this framework, it becomes crucial to address Kjørstad's (2005) question: Are social workers taking responsibility for implementing policies that simply do not align with social reality? This dilemma, potentially inherent in all boundary-setting tasks, prompts us to question whether the conflicting pressures and dilemmas faced by frontline social workers will continue to escalate.

Although the video recorded interactions between SEs and PWIDs in study 2 were not explicitly regulated by political guidelines, they still faced structural demands, regulations, and guidelines that could impede their work with vulnerable service users. For instance, all interactions with service users were subject to administrative decisions and acquiring additional resources or providing extra care required extensive applications, justifications, and documentation. Similar to the SWs, the SEs also identified time constraints as a significant obstacle in their professional practice. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Astvik et al., 2014; Beer et al., 2020; Nissen, 2019; Olsson & Sundh, 2019), the lack of time emerged as a shared concern, a source

of stress, and a factor contributing to the loss of motivation among the social workers, which became particularly pronounced during the two focus group discussions.[14]

The dual role of social workers between providing care and implementing policy goals can be particularly challenging for social workers who primarily perceive themselves as helpers rather than bureaucrats and policy makers (Rugkåsa, 2014). In our studies, this challenge was evident in the SWs' feelings of responsibility towards NEETs and their progression in work and activation programs. Additionally, the SEs placed particular emphasis on their role as advocates for the service users' interests within the larger community. It is important to address these concerns, as previous research has cautioned about the coping strategies that social workers might adopt when faced with the resource disparities in their work and their professional ideals. These coping strategies often involve standardization and disengagement, which, in the worst cases, can lead to stress-related health issues or social workers leaving their positions or profession (cf. Askeland & Fook, 2009; Rugkåsa, 2014; Ryan et al., 2021).

Hence, both SWs and SEs encountered ethical challenges and dilemmas arising from administrative regulations, as highlighted in the existing street level bureaucracy literature. However, it is important to note that not all ethical considerations and dilemmas can be attributed solely to structural constraints or managerial guidelines. Parton (2000, p. 452) argues that "uncertainty, confusion and doubt are key elements in characterizing the nature of social work, and always have been". At the core of social welfare work, there exist contradictory pressures and ethical challenges, exemplified by the constant balancing act between promoting service user independence and safeguarding the most vulnerable (Saario et al., 2018).

Our research findings bring to light the extensive ethical challenges faced by social workers. These challenges encompass, for example, making economically significant decisions that have a profound impact on the lives of service users, navigating the

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[14] Similar challenges related to lack of resources and structural constraints are found within healthcare and are discussed in several international and Norwegian studies, such as (Aiken et al., 2013; Ball et al., 2014; Førde et al., 2006; Gautun, 2020; Peter et al., 2020).

boundaries of professional responsibility, and persistently guiding service users towards making "better" decisions. Banks and Williams (2005, p. 1018) highlight that professional practice is selective, situated, complex, and messy, and that social workers inherently encounter ethically challenging situations. In our research, we observed that the participati"g soci"l workers skillfully balanced and negotiated the complex and often contradictory nature of their daily professional practice within the given structural limitations, rather than opposing them. They neither resist nor succumb to the dilemmas and challenges they face. Instead, they take action and persevere. However, to sustain and enhance their professional practice, social workers require recognition, supportive structures, and appropriate conditions.

6.2.2 So what?

By utilizing the IPR method in conjunction with focus groups, we were not only able to make visible what was not visible to us before (c.f. Danby, 2021) but also amplify the voices of social workers, addressing the call for greater attention to their own experiences and reflections (Gordon, 2018; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022). So, what can these voices reveal? While it is acknowledged that professional frontline work is complex and contradictory and that social workers face ambivalence when interacting with vulnerable service users, highlighting their experience and perspectives provides more profound insights into how conflicting pressures emerge and are managed. This insight can be utilized to enhance the education and supervision of social workers and, hopefully, be taken into account by management and policymakers alike.

As demonstrated in the preceding discussion, the ethical challenges faced by social workers cannot be solely attributed to one-dimensional explanations; they stem from both structural factors and the nature of social work itself. Therefore, the strategies for supporting professionals must also be diverse:

Firstly, I concur with Rugkåsa and Ylvisåker that holding political and administrative authorities accountable for insufficient resources, conflicting legislation, and

organizational conditions can alleviate the individualized sense of powerlessness often experienced by social workers (Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022, p. 652). This accountability can also help social workers cope with dilemmas that cannot be easily resolved and enable them to navigate conflicting pressures in their daily practice (c.f. Astvik et al., 2014; Rugkåsa, 2014; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022). Moreover, providing social workers with more appropriate task definitions, increased flexibility, support, and feedback in the workplace, including addressing role issues such as conflict and ambiguity, is crucial in managing work-related stress and promoting job satisfaction. Such measures may reduce the likelihood of social workers leaving their positions (cf. Ryan et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2008). The support of professionals must also include acknowledging that within their practice, there are ethical problems without definitive answers, together with acknowledging professionals' experiences of vulnerability and anxiety (Wilson et al., 2008). Feedback from service users, peers, and supervisors is vital in creating a safe and trusting workplace environment (cf. Bergheim, 2014; Ryan et al., 2021). The social workers in our studies consistently expressed a lack of time for individual and collective reflection. They emphasized the need for professional and peer guidance, as such echoing the call for structural and organizational conditions that align with their professional values and goals.

Secondly, although structural constraints can account for some of the dilemmas experienced by the social workers, as already indicated, not all of them can be resolved solely through structural solutions. Parton (2000) argues that social work's inherent ambiguity and uncertainty should be built upon to open up the potential for creativity and new ways of thinking and acting. As highlighted in section 2.2.4, reflection and reflexivity are significant aspects of social work. Engaging in critical reflection on their own practice, undertaking in-situ ethical work, and practicing "ethical reflexivity" by critically analyzing their knowledge and value claims (Banks, 2016; Banks & Williams, 2005) can enhance social work practice aligned with professional ideals and values. Moreover, this reflective process can contribute to knowledge development and ultimately improve the services provided to vulnerable individuals (cf. Askeland & Fook, 2009; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022). Consequently, social workers also bear

individual responsibility for actively seeking, processing and developing knowledge and experience.

The perseverance displayed by the social workers in our studies, along with their reflective abilities, suggests that they are able to reflect upon and discuss the ethical challenges and dilemmas they encounter and have the tools to use them for professional development. In study 3, we further argued that the SWs and SEs exhibited skills in critical reflection and reflective practice that aligned well with the emphasis on extensive recall, reflection, and shared exploration inherent in the IPR method. However, engaging in reflexivity and reflection requires more than just a supportive environment and organizational contexts; it also demands continuous processing and the individual social worker's open-mindedness (cf. Bergheim, 2014; Ferguson, 2016, 2018; Ruch, 2012; Yip, 2006). By enduring the distress or discomfort experienced in interactions with service users, sustaining ambiguity, and reflecting on it, social workers can uncover new insights and knowledge (cf. Ohnstad, 2014).

However, it is important to acknowledge that there are limitations to reflection in practice. These limitations, along with additional methodological considerations, will be discussed in section 6.3.

The role of higher education

The primary focus of this project is on the experiences and reflections of participating professionals concerning their own in-situ practice. As a result, the current project has no data on curricula within social work education. Additionally, the professional social workers in our project only minimally referenced their education, often in general terms and as essential to their holistic and integrated approaches. However, as highlighted in the introductory chapter, higher education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping professional practice and knowledge, primarily through the education and training of future professionals (cf. Schiøll Skjefstad & Nordstrand, 2022). Thus, I will briefly address some essential considerations relevant to the educational programs.

As previously discussed, navigating dilemmas and challenges, as well as developing professional knowledge and skills, requires social work professionals to both demand structural changes and engage in collective and individual efforts involving critical reflection, self-evaluation, and reflexive thinking. Regarding individual contributions, Ferguson emphasizes the vital significance of personal characteristics, capacities, and qualities in shaping how individual social workers approach their work (Ferguson, 2016, 2018).

The foundation of professional identity is established during education (Blom et al., 2017a), aiming to achieve cognitive and affective goals that encompass values, motivation, and attitudes (Heggen & Terum, 2017, p. 31). Educators responsible for preparing future social welfare professionals hold a significant responsibility. In a systematic review, Heggen and Terum (2017) discuss the impact of education on professional identity and utilize the concept of practical synthesis (Grimen, 2008) to highlight the importance of practice training during education to help students develop meaningful and coherent professional practices. Other studies underscore the importance of skills training and critical reflection in social work education (e.g. Schiøll Skjefstad & Nordstrand, 2022). This necessitates skilled lecturers with professional experience who can effectively integrate research, theory, and practice (Bergheim & Ylvisaker, 2016; Solheim & Mæhle, 2017). Research from the United States (Lay & McGuire, 2010) and Australia (Theobald et al., 2017) additionally demonstrate how structured critical reflection in the curriculum enhances students' ability to reflect, develop reflexive awareness, and identify biases and hegemony.

However, constructing professional identity is an ongoing, complex process requiring dedicated time and space for analytical reflection beyond graduate education and into professional practice (Bell et al., 2017).[15] Given our findings on limited opportunities for reflection and reflexivity in social work practice, educational programs must prioritize cultivating students' reflective skills. Educators should facilitate integrating

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[15] In addition to Bell et al., (2017), Karvinen-Niinkoski et al. (2017) examine professional identity, supervision, and autonomy within the same work.

critical reflection through practical synthesis of teaching and skills training. By equipping students with reflective abilities during education, programs establish a foundation for their continued use in their professional careers.

6.3 Methodological considerations

Thus far, I have discussed the social workers experiences of professional practice in light of previous discussions and concepts of professional knowledge. Additionally, I have deepened the understanding of their experiences of ambivalences, dilemmas, and challenges. This has been done following the belief in reflexive practice research that practitioners' experiences of their own practices contain implied knowledge that should be expressed (Lindseth, 2017). In the following pages, I will turn to the third aim of this thesis: exploring the use of IPR as a research method within two social welfare practices, aiming at identifying opportunities and challenges for future use in professional studies in social work.

In previous chapters I have situated this thesis within the social constructionist framework. Originating from phenomenological thinking, this approach includes the first-person perspective. Furthermore, as described in the introductory chapter, the research project belongs to the field of reflexive practice research. As noted in chapter 4, the IPR method relates to all these approaches, with its emphasis on intersubjectivity, reflexivity, and the aim of gaining access to, and insight into, the participants' experiences and reflections. Based on our experience from the research project, the IPR method presents itself as a valuable approach to gaining deeper insight into professional social work. However, any methodology has its weaknesses and limitations, and choosing a methodology implies prioritizing, and implicitly opting out of certain research perspectives. In the following, I will discuss implications of choices made during recruitment, data development, and analysis, and, lastly, consider the researcher's position.

6.3.1 Reflections on sampling

As highlighted when accounting for ethical considerations in section 4.5, there are considerable issues when recruiting for a project that concerns interaction with vulnerable service users. While the ethical challenges and dilemmas surrounding voluntary participation, consent and trust are complex, I have strived to adhere to ethical regulations and procedures to mitigate potential harm. In the section that follows, I will delve into a more in-depth discussion of the structure of the social worker sample, with a primary focus on investigating the potential negative outcomes and drawbacks associated with their participation and with the application of IPR.

One concern relates to the participants' willingness to participate. As accounted for in section 4.2, the recruitment process involved initial contact with managers at various regional and local levels, which may have created an expectation of participation among potential participants. Furthermore, since the project originated from an educational institution (HVL) that trains social workers, there might have been a perception that the project aimed to test or measure their skills, despite my efforts during recruitment and preparation to counter such concerns. Consequently, those participants who chose to partake might have been social workers particularly skilled in their work, feeling at ease engaging in a project that could be perceived very personal or invasive in their professional practice. As a result, our sample could potentially consist only of participants who trusted their own competence or were too apprehensive to decline. I certainly do not hope that participants felt too much pressure to take part, and/or that only the most experienced and self-confident participated. It is nonetheless crucial to acknowledge and address the potential limitations of our sample composition.

As described in section 4.2, I encountered significant challenges during the recruitment process, particularly when attempting to recruit child welfare officers for the case that was later abandoned. In recent years, the Norwegian public has engaged in fervent debates surrounding child welfare services. Criticism has been raised regarding care orders, the use of foster families, the right of biological families to contact children,

purported deficiencies of the knowledge base within the services, and safety issues at child welfare institutions. The intensity of these debates was further amplified between 2020 and 2021, when the Norwegian state faced multiple convictions by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) for violation of the right to family life (Bufdir, n.d.; NIM, 2021).[16] It is highly probable that the ongoing public debate had a significant impact on many social workers in the child welfare services. While we should avoid overinterpretation, it is reasonable to assume that some of the recruitment challenges I faced within the child welfare services can be attributed to this debate. The timing of our project, which aimed to explore professional experiences and the utilization of professional knowledge in one-on-one encounters, may have been ill-timed considering the heightened sensitivities and concerns surrounding the services, including allegations of inadequate knowledge.

Returning to our sample, the sampling strategies underwent significant changes, particularly in study 2, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent participant dropouts (cf. section 4.2). Notably, the last two SEs were recruited by their managers just days before the IPR sessions, which differed from the process for other social workers. The other social workers had the opportunity to attend an information meeting in addition to read the information sheet, and hence use more time to make an informed decision about their participation. It is challenging to determine the exact influence of this difference on participation. However, during the IPR interview, the SE who felt most uncomfortable during the video recording revealed being approached by one of their municipal managers to participate in the project. The SE felt a sense of obligation and perceived that rejecting the request was not an option. This finding can be taken to support the argument that our sample potentially consists of some participants who were too apprehensive to decline (in addition to those self-confident), raising concerns about generalizing findings from the sample.

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[16] By the 20th January of 2023, Norway had been convicted by the ECtHR in 15 cases concerning the Norwegian child welfare services (NIM, 2021).

Generalizability

Yin (2018) employs the concept of analytical generalization to explain the process of generalizing results from qualitative studies that are based on relatively small sample sizes. Instead of generalizing observations to different populations, the findings should be employed to support or challenge established theories (cf. Peräkylä, 2021). According to Yin, the case study provides an opportunity to shed empirical light on theoretical principles or concepts. The generalization here operates on a conceptual level higher than that of the specific case, with the aim of broadening and extrapolating theories (Yin, 2018, p. 38).

As previously mentioned, exercising caution is imperative when dealing with group characteristics in qualitative research with a limited sample size. Our research does not claim to provide a complete account of everyday social work with vulnerable service users. For instance, it does not encompass experiences, reflections, or perspectives from participants representing all professional groups of social workers. Neither do our studies encompass data from observing social workers as they interact with service users over an extended period. Nevertheless, they do provide valuable insights derived from delving into in-situ encounters between service users and professionals.

According to Kvale and Brinkman (2015), analytical generalization requires a well-reasoned assessment of whether the findings from one study can be extrapolated to provide insights into a different context. As described in section 4.3, I agree with the social constructionist perspective that regards research interviews as interactive accomplishments (Holstein & Gubrium, 2021). This implies that each interview is distinctive, and participants' behavior may vary based on the interview setting, just as every service user meeting can be unique. However, as emphasized in the discussions in sections 6.1 and 6.2, our findings are in line with earlier studies, thereby potentially offering insights into practices and interactions across diverse settings (cf. Peräkylä, 2021).

Moreover, our findings illuminate and provide fresh perspectives on aspects such as the role of ethics and time within professional knowledge, alongside social workers' experiences of and reflections on dilemmas in in-situ practice. In this sense, our findings possess a degree of generalizability, as they contribute to broadening the understanding of social work practice beyond the scope of our two studies.

6.3.2 Reflections on the intricacies of IPR

The concerns discussed regarding the sample can be further challenged by examining Øfsti's (2008) reasons for abandoning IPR as a data-gathering method in a study involving five therapists conducting systemic couple therapy. After piloting an IPR session with one therapist, Øfsti decided to set aside IPR, for one due to the therapist's discomfort during the interview. One of Øfsti's research interests was exploring the different kinds of professional knowledge in use. However, based on the experiences from the pilot study, she worried that the therapists "(..) could be preoccupied with presenting themselves first and foremost as *competent* professionals" and also that " (..) being observed and interviewed about one's way of doing therapy might be too stressful for the therapist's identity as a professional (..)" (Øfsti, 2008, p. 53).

As a trained therapist and supervisor, Øfsti highlights the risk of blurring boundaries during IPR interviewing between an in-depth exploration of the professional participants' thoughts and reflections and a supervision situation. Larsen et al. (2008) also caution against this risk and emphasize the importance for professionally trained researchers to remember that an IPR research interview should not be utilized as an opportunity to provide counseling or supervision. As argued in study 3, this issue was less immediate for me, with no professional experience in social work practice. However, I nevertheless experienced both that the professionals sought advice on in-session challenges during the IPR and that they became overtly concerned with what they should have done and said differently. I, therefore, partly agree with Øfsti (2008) in her rationale for discontinuing the use of IPR, particularly regarding the stress it imposed on participants and the potential risk of their excessive focus on presenting

themselves as competent professionals. However, these concerns did not lead me to abandon IPR, as I still believe in its potential as an advantageous research method, including its applicability in future professional studies within social work.

Furthermore, as discussed in section 6.2.2, social workers who endure distress and discomfort in interactions and tolerate challenging situations can potentially uncover new insights and acquire new knowledge. Given that the social workers also demonstrated self-reflective abilities, it can be contended that instances of uneasiness during the research interview setting may not be detrimental, provided they are appropriately addressed by the interviewer. Nevertheless, I welcome further methodological discussion that comprehensively examines the utilization of IPR, considering both its advantages and limitations.

Considerations on IPR in research on professional social work
Kettley et al. (2015, p. 1096) describes IPR as a process that invites the holistic self-directed self-exploration of the participant, something that can lead to self-discovery, which might then be used as a springboard for reflexivity. However, as highlighted in section 2.2.4, there are limits for self-reflection and self-reflexivity in practice. This might be due to lack of time for personal reflection (cf. Herland, 2022), inappropriate conditions such as heavy caseloads or lack of organizational support (cf. Yip, 2006), or that the demands of face-to-face work are so great that the social workers limit reflection in order to defend themselves as a way of making the work bearable and doable (Ferguson, 2018). We have previously highlighted the alignment between the social workers' familiarity with reflection and reflexivity and the reflective nature of the IPR method. However, it is crucial to consider that participation in this project may have also resulted in negative outcomes due to the limited time frame of the research project. The emphasis in IPR on self-reflection and self-directed exploration (Kettley et al., 2015; Macaskie et al., 2015) can be an emotional experience for the participants (cf. Larsen et al., 2008). This deepened focus, albeit brief, might have initiated processes of self-reflection without ensuring the necessary supportive structures, collegial relationships, sufficient time, and personal resources.

Moreover, self-reflection has the potential to resurface personal weaknesses and conflicts for social workers, demanding their physical and psychological energy, time, readiness, and concentration (Yip, 2006). When coupled with inadequate organizational conditions, self-reflection may become an additional burden rather than a helpful process for individual social workers, potentially causing more harm than good. Our findings on the lack of time in practice, the social workers' call for supervision and peer guidance, and their tendency to individualize ethical and time-related challenges indicate the importance of being vigilant for potential negative outcomes.

While Larsen et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of debriefing with participants at the end of IPR interviews to address any distress caused by their participation, I argue that such debriefing alone is insufficient. Furthermore, Larsen et al. argue that the one-session approach is less intrusive to the therapeutic process and, therefore, more ethically responsible than conducting multiple sessions throughout therapy, and there are, to my knowledge, no studies contradicting this stance.[17] However, our findings suggest several points to consider.

Firstly, there are circumstances where participants may not have appropriate conditions to engage in self-reflection, and researchers do not have the opportunity to ensure those conditions are met. Future IPR studies must account for this and ensure sufficient support and meeting points, preferably both before and after the IPR session. While the focus groups in our studies provided social workers an important opportunity to reflect on their practice and research participation, an additional individual debriefing could have further mitigated the risk of participants over-analyzing and over-evaluating their shortcomings (cf. Yip, 2006). Recognizing the significance of appropriate conditions for engaging in self-reflection and self-reflexivity, I wholeheartedly support the appeal put forth in previous research for management and system-level involvement in

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[17] Some studies, such as Solberg Kleiven et al. (2022), have two IPR sessions instead of one and argue that such thoroughness allows for both a good rapport and participant safety. While the study of Solberg Kleiven stems from psychotherapy sessions, and the main participants are patients and not professionals, their argument can nonetheless be transferred to my research. However, Solberg Kleiven does not address or contradict Larsen et.al's (2008) stance.

offering staff support, creating organizational contexts, establishing reflective spaces, and fostering good leadership to facilitate reflexivity and reflection in practice (see for example Bergheim, 2014; Ferguson, 2016, 2018; Herland, 2022; Ruch, 2005, 2012; Trevithick, 2011; Yip, 2006).

Secondly, the challenges faced by the social workers in our studies regarding the one-session approach in IPR highlight the need for future studies in the social welfare professions to consider designs incorporating multiple sessions. While this approach would introduce different methodological and ethical considerations, such as the potential for professionals to tailor their practice further to align with the IPR method and project competence, it would align more closely with social work's interactive and change-focused nature (cf. Payne, 2014). Additionally, a multiple-session approach could potentially reduce the stress experienced by some participants, allowing them to become acclimated to the presence of a camera and the interview situation, as shown by Solberg Kleiven et al. (2022). This adjustment could be particularly valuable for service user participants, who, due to various reasons, may be vulnerable to the exposure of being filmed.

Considerations on the use of video

In section 4.3.1, I argued that the use of video camera provides a methodological resource and a minor intrusive data collection method in meetings with vulnerable service users within health and social services (cf. Danby, 2021; Heath, 2021). In a study of family therapy sessions, Hutchby et al. (2012) argue that the presence of video recording equipment can be unproblematically and, at best, be experienced as clinically valuable and beneficial for members of the therapy interaction. The use of video also offers repeated reviewing and reflection, which opens new possibilities and perspectives in data development and analysis (cf. Danby, 2021). Nevertheless, as Miller Scarnato (2019) reminds us: like any other research method, the video medium involves several challenges and limitations, ethical considerations, skill requirements, and demands investments in time and resources.

As regards the last aspects, skill requirements and investments, I had access to video equipment used in skill training and education of social workers at HVL. This equipment is used by students engaged in role-play, practicing interaction, and relational and communicational training, and it is easy to operate. As accounted for in section 4.3.1, I started the IPR sessions by introducing the social worker and service user to how they could stop or pause the recording, assuring them that they could do so at any time during the meeting. The camera tripod was placed to capture both participants' movements, talk and expressions in the meeting, but at the same time I pursued an unobtrusive placing.

Despite the measures taken to address potential ethical concerns, some participants in our study reported negative effects due to the presence of the camera, as discussed in study 3. Those affected negatively expressed concerns that their behavior towards the service users might have been influenced, potentially affecting their immediate experiences and relationships. While it is important to note that most social workers did not experience significant discomfort with the camera and perceived their participation as beneficial for their professional development, the instances of discomfort underscore the specific and situated nature of ethical dilemmas, as Ryen (2021) emphazised. Despite thorough preparations and mitigation efforts, ethical challenges can still arise, particularly in research involving vulnerable individuals or sensitive situations, requiring careful consideration to minimize disruption for all involved (cf. Danby, 2021). At the risk of repeating myself, there are no ready-made solutions to ethical dilemmas arising from using video data in qualitative social work research. However, recognizing the benefits of video-assisted methods, I join Miller Scarnato's (2019) call to action for social work researchers to embrace video tools and develop participatory-action designs that incorporate video while establishing particular practical and ethical guidelines.

Lastly, during one of the IPR sessions in study 1 and two of the sessions in study 2, I was present in the room during the service user meetings. In the first meeting I attended, my presence was driven by curiosity as to whether this would provide me with

additional data and better understand the context of the one-on-one encounter. In the second meeting, the service user insisted that I stay, as she enjoyed having visitors and had prepared coffee and a meal. The SE was initially hesitant, but they agreed to throw me out if my presence caused any distress. In the third service user meeting, the SE and the service user simply asked me to stay due to practical considerations, as they did not know where to leave me instead. In the remaining seven meetings, I either took a walk or remained in the facilities, conversing with other staff members and residents.

In the first meeting, both the service user and the SW asserted that my presence had minimal impact on them. The camera's presence had initially stressed the SW during the early part of the interaction with the service user, and she had barely noticed my presence in the room. Similarly, in the third meeting, both the SE and the service user claimed that they had forgotten about my presence during the session. In both meetings, I positioned myself in a distant corner of the room. However, in the second meeting, I sat beside a coffee table alongside the service user and the SE. If the SE attempted to steer the conversations towards topics that the service user found uninteresting or unwelcome, she promptly turned to me and interjected with light-hearted comments or short anecdotes. Therefore, I cannot assert that my presence did not influence the conversation. However, during the subsequent IPR interview, the SE expressed that the service user valued having visitors and had enjoyed the session.

I must acknowledge that I have not engaged in substantial or profound reflections on the difference between the intrusion of the camera and my own presence. It is evident that my intrusion is more physically apparent, and my existence is embodied and human. Adhering to the social constructionist perspective of research as interactional and intersubjective accomplishments (Holstein & Gubrium, 2021), I recognize the mutual influence of all individuals present in a meeting. However, I did not delve into this aspect during the analysis. Instead, I argue that my presence allowed me to become more familiar with the context of the service user meetings. Additionally, I must admit that I experienced a slight sense of joy when being informed that the service user in the second meeting appreciated my presence during the interview.

Considerations on the implementation of focus group in an IPR study

The decision to integrate IPR and focus group methods was driven by the aim to delve deeper into the professionals' experiences and encourage open discussions encompassing diverse viewpoints. As previously mentioned, the focus groups offered an invaluable opportunity for collective reflection among the social workers. They expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to exchange experiences and deliberate on the dilemmas and challenges they encountered in their professional practice.

Furthermore, the focus groups played a pivotal role as a platform for debriefing from the individual IPR sessions. During the focus groups, the social workers shared their feelings of uneasiness or nervousness before and during the video recordings. Consequently, the focus groups played a dual role: firstly, in partially counteracting potential negative processes of self-reflection that could be triggered by the IPR sessions, as discussed earlier in this section, and secondly, as an arena to openly discuss experiences of unease and apprehension related to the participation.

By addressing these concerns and providing a supportive environment, the use of focus groups has the potential to alleviate the challenges outlined by Øfsti's (2008) concerning research on the practical utilization of professional knowledge, discussed earlier in this section.

6.3.3 Analytical choices, omissions and validity

As outlined in section 4.4, the research project has a thematic analytical approach. Although I made some modifications to the specific analytical strategies in the three studies, beginning with STC in study 1 and concluding with RTA in study 3, I maintained a combined analysis of the IPR-sessions and focus groups, rather than conducting separate analyses of the two sets of data in each study. This was done aiming at following the participants' reflections on the ambivalent, the dilemmatic, and their moral considerations. Hopefully, this has been conducive to raising the social workers' voices (cf. Gordon, 2018; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022), as well as providing

a better understanding of what happens in concrete encounters with service user (cf. Börjeson & Johansson, 2014; Ferguson, 2016; Riis-Johansen et al., 2018).

Another strategy that could have been employed is conducting a separate analysis of the IPR sessions and the focus groups. This alternative approach might have yielded slightly different findings, particularly in studies 1 and 2. By focusing solely on the IPR sessions, a thematic analysis could have been conducted to specifically identify and examine the intricacies of each professional's practice. While I previously argued that the IPR method, with its in-depth focus on in-session happenings, allowed social workers and researchers to reflect on and examine the practical application of knowledge in their interactions, a narrower analysis of the IPR sessions could have intensified this focus. As a result, it could have provided a more profound insight into the utilization of professional knowledge and potentially uncovered greater variations in practice among our participants. One potential criticism of our combined thematic analysis is, therefore, the missed opportunity to fully leverage the inherent potential of the IPR method in understanding knowledge utilization. Moreover, a separate analysis could have facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the discrepancy in how the SWs and SEs in our studies referred to the knowledge that guided their actions, an issue that I briefly touched upon earlier in this chapter (see section 6.1.1). Such an analysis would also align with previous studies conducted in related fields like counseling and psychotherapy (e.g., Burgess et al., 2013; Lloyd-Hazlett & Foster, 2014; Meekums et al., 2016; West & Clark, 2004).

As articulated by Peräkylä, the validity of qualitative research centers around the interpretation of observations. This pertains to whether the inferences drawn by the researcher find support in the data and align sensibly with prior research (Peräkylä, 2021, p. 447). An integral aspect of validity is the consideration of findings' generalizability, which is explored in section 6.3.1. Other aspects of validity encompass assessing whether the methods employed effectively examine their intended aspects and whether they logically contribute to illuminating our research questions. Throughout this thesis, I have endeavored to lay bare the rationale behind my

methodological choices while aiming for a transparent analysis and interpretation of the data. This approach corresponds to what Yin (2018, p. 134) describes as an attempt to allow readers of the case study to trace the progression from initial research questions to ultimate case study findings and to follow the stages of the research process.

Kvale and Brinkman (2015) underscore the significance of not only considering the methods utilized, but also the researchers themselves, their credibility, and the very craftsmanship of research when validating a study. In line with this perspective, it is vital to acknowledge that methodological choices are also subject to the influence of the researchers. One could argue that selecting an analytical approach that closely examines the individual practices of professionals would be more effective if the researcher conducting the study possessed practical or clinical expertise and experience. Such expertise would enable the researcher to be sensitized to the work, the context, the approaches, and the common issues faced by service users even before the start of data development (cf. Larsen et al., 2008). As highlighted in study 3, most existing research applying IPR involves researchers who are also professionally trained counselors or therapists (e.g., Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Levitt, 2001; Macaskie et al., 2015). In contrast, I lack professional experience in social work practice, which means that I did not have a privileged position from where to scrutinize the professional practice. Approaching the research from an outsider's perspective may have led me to follow different paths during the interviews, focus groups, and analytical processes.[18]

6.3.4 Researcher reflexivity

Despite not engaging in profound reflections on my own presence alongside the camera's presence, I strongly believe in the significance of reflexivity in documenting how research knowledge is generated. Section 2.2.4 highlighted the importance of various terms of reflection and reflexivity in social work. It is suggested (Atkinson, 2005) that social work practice and research share similarities, as the reflective

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[18] As highlighted in study 3, my supervisors and co-authors in the three articles have vast clinical experience and provided guidance and input during the analysis. However, I was responsible for conducting the data collection and took the lead in the analytical processes, ultimately determining the direction and focus of the project. For further information on data analysis as intersubjective accomplishments, please refer to sections 4.4 and 6.3.3.

researcher and the reflective practitioner both utilize reflexivity to comprehend and make sense of their observations. Reflexivity in qualitative research is a multifaceted, contested and heavily debated term in contemporary social science (Finlay, 2003a; Gough, 2003). In the realm of social work research, Probst (2015, p. 46) asserts that reflexivity is a vital tool that enables researchers to maintain critical self-awareness throughout the research process. She further argues that reflexivity in research must go beyond mere honesty or managing the research experience; it should serve as a means to utilize self-knowledge to inform and enhance the research endeavor.

As accounted for in section 4.3.1, IPR emphasizes reflexivity and intersubjectivity (Kettley et al., 2015; Macaskie et al., 2015). Additionally, methodological choices are closely intertwined with the individuals making them, as discussed in section 6.3.3. Being an outsider to the social work professions and research field (holding an M.Phil. in Social Anthropology with no professional experience in social work), I positioned myself in a somewhat "inferior" knowledge position compared to those I intended to study (cf. Råheim et al., 2016). This position had certain advantages, such as related to which degree the professionals strived to present themselves as competent (cf. section 4.5 and 6.3.1) and facilitating a relatively open approach to the data without professional biases. It also allowed me to ask naïve questions and explore aspects of practice that social workers might take for granted. Similar advantages were noted by Ihlebæk (2022) in her ethnographic study in a cancer ward, where the outsider position enabled her to ask similar naïve questions and avoid being perceived as evaluating presence. By holding an outsider or inferior position, I also avoided ambivalence associated with dual roles as a researcher and professional, as well as potential role conflicts (cf. Råheim et al., 2016).

However, as Råheim et al. (2016) highlighted, researcher positionality is not a static concept within the researcher–researched relationships. The dynamic interplay between insider and outsider positions not only influences power dynamics but also guides the researcher's focus. Reflexivity emerges as essential to strive for transparency in the research process, including documenting choices and maintaining an awareness

of the research trajectory (cf. Probst, 2015). In my own research project, I transitioned from an initial outsider position to gradually assuming more of an insider role. This occurred both through getting to know the practice field and discourse during data development, as well as engaging academically with colleagues at HVL and working as a lecturer in various social welfare education courses. Additionally, my participation in PhD courses, conferences and seminars gradually blurred the demarcation between being an outsider and an insider. This evolution became particularly evident to me when I commenced the data collection process in study 2. It was then that I realized I had unintentionally integrated certain language and expressions used by the SWs, such as "tuning in to the service user's need" and "exploring" [as a communicative tool], both during interviews and when reflecting on the empirical data. These instances, symbolic of my journey towards an "inside" perspective, likely facilitated communication in a language closer to the SEs that took part in study 2. This trajectory deeper into the "inside" was further shaped by my engagement with theories and literature, especially during the concurrent processes of writing the manuscript for the first paper and conducting data collection for study 2. Moreover, the research project weaves together an array of perspectives and insights drawn from the social sciences, alongside my personal viewpoints and reflections as a middle-aged, white cisgender woman and academic.

Being mindful of this gradual immersion is essential in understanding one's positionality in relation to the research, and it can serve as a check against claims of "purity" or objectivity (Probst, 2015). Nonetheless, engaging in reflexivity can present challenges for researchers; for example, we can only reflect on what strikes us as requiring reflection, while aspects that should have been examined may remain deeply hidden (Probst, 2015, p. 46). As a result, I assume there are blind spots and areas to which my reflexive gaze has not yet turned.

An area of concern that I am mindful of is the power imbalance inherent in the researcher-participant relationship (cf. Field et al., 2022; Finlay, 2003a; Gough, 2003; Råheim et al., 2016). In addition to the potential asymmetric dynamics between service

users and their social workers, briefly discussed in section 4.5, the relationships between the researcher(s) and the researched are wrought with asymmetry: the researcher plans and leads the project, conducts data collection, interviews, analysis, and ultimately shares the findings, attends conferences and assumes authorship (Field et al., 2022).

On the other hand, as Råheim et al. (2016) suggests, shifts and ambivalences emerge related to the superior–inferior and knowing–not-knowing positions between researcher and researched. Especially the two focus groups in our studies contained an element of "studying up" (cf. Råheim et al., 2016), as the social workers were professionals holding an expert knowledge on social work practice and service user interaction which were out of my reach. Additionally, as Macaskie et al. (2015) argued, the intersubjective element in IPR might also contribute to shifting the power dynamics between researcher and participants towards greater equality. The joint video-assisted exploration between researcher and participant creates opportunities for the participants to take an active part in the research process and, further, the researcher to tease out with participants how they experience and reflect on the research conversation.

Moreover, I argue that the multimethod approach in our studies, combining IPR and focus groups, contributed to greater equality. The focus groups offered another opportunity for our participating social workers to voice their experiences and reflections, including those regarding participation in the research project, contributing to shifting the balance of power away from the researcher toward the research participants (cf. Wilkinson, 1998, 1999). This overall aligns well with the concurrent aims in social constructionist and reflexive practice research approaches: relying as much as possible on participants' viewpoints, collecting more voices and complexities of views, and gaining insight into aspects [of practice] that are otherwise difficult to access (cf. Creswell, 2013; Lindseth, 2017; Mik-Meyer, 2021; Tanggard, 2017).

A final consideration regarding the outsider perspective regards the analytical choices discussed in section 6.3.3. It is evident that my omissions in the analytical process had implications for the research findings. However, I also believe that these omissions may have yielded positive outcomes and findings. By attentively listening to the social workers' reflections on their ambivalent experiences and their joint reflections on dilemmas and challenges during the focus group, I had the opportunity to explore stories from practice that are often overlooked (cf. Fossestøl, 2017; Lindseth, 2017). Consequently, I hope that my contribution has amplified social workers' voices, which, among other things, are vital for the development of improved services for their service users (cf. Gordon, 2018; Ylvisaker & Rugkåsa, 2022).

In this chapter, the objective has been to consolidate the findings from the three studies and analyze what they reveal about social workers' experiences in their one-on-one interactions with vulnerable service users in two social welfare practices. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of the study's design and methods has been presented, with particular emphasis on the utilization of IPR as a research method on professions where it had not been employed previously.

Now, it is time to address the elephant in the room: While I have argued that the design and methods of the project have given space to the perspectives of social worker participants and amplified their voices, the participation of service users is notably absent. In more critical terms, one could accuse the entire research project of being blind to the knowledge and perspectives of service users. However, as highlighted in chapter 2, service user knowledge is considered an important source of knowledge in social work, with numerous studies highlighting the significance of elevating the voices of vulnerable individuals and service users. Furthermore, several previous IPR studies mentioned in this thesis have focused on the perspectives of clients or patients, allowing them to articulate their experiences, and thus allowing submerged voices to be heard (cf. Macaskie et al., 2015). While I wholeheartedly support the emphasis on service user, client, and patient experiences and knowledge, I also believe it is essential to conduct studies that exclusively concentrate on the experiences of professionals. By

encompassing both perspectives, research on social work practice can hopefully offer insights and understandings that contribute to the enhancement and improvement of social work practice.

7. Concluding remarks

Professional social work encompasses a multitude of dimensions and complexities, yet the specific practice of one-on-one encounters with vulnerable service users has rarely been subject to close examinations. This thesis is meant to offer a deepened understanding of the actions undertaken by professional social workers during interactions with vulnerable service users. It aimed to explore the application of their knowledge and experience in these encounters, as well as their personal reflections, recollections, and experiences during these meetings.

The aim of this thesis was threefold. Firstly, it was to understand more of social workers' experiences and use of professional knowledge, secondly, to explore their experiences and reflections on ambivalences and dilemmas encountered in in-situ practice; and lastly, to explore the potential use of IPR as a research method within social work research. I concur with Lindseth (2017) that the primary objective of exploring professional practice should be to enhance and refine it. Consequently, in this chapter, I will address the potential contributions our research can make to social work practice and research. Moreover, I will address specific issues and approaches that are crucial for future research using IPR in the field of social work.

7.1 Implications for practice and education

As outlined in earlier chapters, our research is grounded in the belief that gaining a deeper understanding of what occurs in practice is crucial for enhancing practice itself and the knowledge that informs and guides it. Reflexive practice research places significant importance on practitioners' experiences and acknowledges that these experiences encompass implicit knowledge that should be articulated (cf. Lindseth, 2017). This perspective aligns with the growing demand for research focusing on the actual 'doing' of social work, with the aim of developing the knowledge of how face-

to-face social work is conducted, understanding practitioners' perspectives and experiences, and, ultimately, improving practice to enhance the outcomes for the service users (cf. Börjeson & Johansson, 2014; Ferguson, 2016; Gordon, 2018). With this in mind, what has our research accomplished by exploring the voices of social workers?

While encountering dilemmas is inherent in social work with vulnerable populations, our findings suggest that professionals frequently face a shortage of time and support within their practice for crucial activities such as reflection, self-evaluation, peer guidance, and expert supervision. This scarcity of time and support can result in unfortunate consequences. Experiencing irresolvable dilemmas and constantly operating under time constraints can leave professionals feeling powerless and diminish their motivation. Moreover, the absence of dedicated time and support to reflect on and discuss ethical dilemmas, tensions, and uncertainties can impede professional growth.

SWs in NAV require additional time to engage with individual service users, complete their casework the way they want to, and adequately prepare for and reflect on meetings. They also need allocated time for peer guidance and expert supervision. However, these changes cannot be initiated solely by the SWs themselves. They necessitate managerial, structural, and organizational adjustments that foster alignment between the professionals' values, desired practices, goals, and workload organization. This primarily falls under the responsibility of political leaders and administrative management.

Similarly, SEs working with PWID require supportive conditions to discuss and reflect on the continuous ethical dilemmas encountered in their practice. These conditions might include regular feedback from supervisors and colleagues, as well as in-service training and supervision relating to emerging issues such as the increasing use of the internet and social media by service users.

Enhancing supportive environments and organizational contexts has the potential to alleviate social workers' feelings of powerlessness and the tendency to shoulder the burden of responsibility alone. Ultimately, this can aid them in navigating and enduring ethical and moral dilemmas they face in practice. Equally important is the opportunity that such structural changes present for social workers to engage in critical reflection on their own practice, self-evaluation, reflexive thinking, and in-situ ethical work (cf. Banks, 2016; Banks & Williams, 2005; Ruch, 2012; Yip, 2006). As argued in section 6.2.2, individual social workers bear a concurrent responsibility to actively seek, process, and develop their professional knowledge and competencies. Ethics and time are among the crucial concerns that necessitate open articulation, discussion, and reflection as integral components of professional knowledge.

However, we acknowledge that there are limits to reflection in practice, as highlighted in sections 2.2.4 and 6.3.2. Moreover, social workers' individual characteristics and qualities significantly influence their approach to their work. Given our findings regarding social workers' experiences of lacking time and support for engaging in reflection, peer guidance, and expert supervision, the responsibility of educators that prepare the professionals of tomorrow becomes even more pronounced. Social work education must assist students in developing the capacity to embrace uncertainty, tolerate challenging situations, identify, and challenge biases and power dynamics, prioritize critical thinking and reflexive awareness, and integrate critical reflection into their daily practice (cf. Ferguson, 2018; Lay & McGuire, 2010; Schiøll Skjefstad & Nordstrand, 2022; Theobald et al., 2017). This is a crucial task for educational institutions if they are to fulfill their responsibility of educating social workers who are well-prepared to navigate the complex and demanding realm of social welfare services.

7.2 Implications for future IPR research

In section 6.3, I pursued a critical perspective on the IPR method and my own methodological approaches, choices, and perspectives within the research project. Despite acknowledging the limitations and pitfalls in my own research, I contend that

the IPR method, emphasizing video-assisted research, recall, reflexivity, and in-depth exploration, presents a valuable approach to gaining a deeper understanding of professional social work. It is particularly adept at examining the practical synthesis that unfolds in in-situ professional practice. Furthermore, IPR has also proven valuable in generating insight into the intricate dynamics of one-on-one encounters between professionals and vulnerable service users - an area that has received limited attention in previous research.

Furthermore, building upon the argument presented in study 3 concerning how social workers demonstrated agency by utilizing their participation in the project as an opportunity for their professional development, akin to participatory action research, I propose that the application of IPR and focus groups in this project can be regarded as a "reflection-oriented intervention". Engaging in this project encouraged social workers to reflect on their professional practice, resulting in the emergence of new ideas for their practice. Thus, the project yielded unexpected outcomes, highlighting the intersubjective approach inherent in IPR (cf. Macaskie et al., 2015), whereby research data can be collaboratively explored, analyzed, and interpreted between the researcher and participants.

Regarding the use of IPR, this project has provided a crucial insight for future IPR studies, underlining the significance of comprehensive debriefing. As discussed in section 6.3.2, several vital considerations and adjustments must be addressed before conducting an IPR study, with one of the most pivotal being the thorough briefing of participants both before and after the IPR sessions. Furthermore, as previously argued, the method's emphasis on reflection and reflexivity strongly suited the social workers in our study. Nonetheless, this focus on reflection might not be equally applicable to all professions within the health and social welfare fields. While IPR's flexibility is certainly a strength, allowing its application to diverse interactions, it also underscores the need to tailor the method to the specific field and participants involved.

Within the realm of social work, this reminder is significant when conducting research with vulnerable service users. Based on my experience with the combined IPR and focus groups in this research project, I strongly recommend expanding the application of this multi-method approach to include diverse professions and groups of service users in future social work research. Such a methodology possesses the potential to deepen our comprehension of face-to-face interactions, providing invaluable access to perspectives and experiences that may otherwise prove elusive. Through such insight, we can hope to contribute to enhancing the care and services provided. Nevertheless, it is imperative that future studies approach the use of this methodological strategy with cautious planning, ensuring careful consideration of the contextual factors and the framing of recordings and interviews. Above all, as researchers, it is our responsibility to prioritize the well-being and safeguarding of our participants, thereby adhering to the principles of ethical and responsible research.

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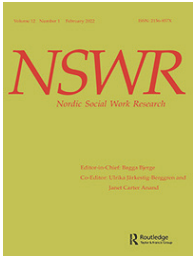
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Balancing responsibility, boundaries and time: social workers' experiences in service user meetings – a multi-method study based on Interpersonal Process Recall

Mari Husabø[a], Magne Mæhle[b], Målfrid Råheim[c] and Aud Marie Øien[b]

[a]Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway; [b]Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway; [c]Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on social workers' reflections on their own professional practice in conversations with vulnerable service users in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav). Drawing on Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), a video-based method, together with a focus group interview, the study explores the experiences and reflections of five social workers of in-situ encounters with service users. A key finding is that the social workers, who worked in two different offices within the work and activation field, perceived their professional practice as highly complex, negotiated, and ambiguous. The social workers nevertheless displayed a multitude of knowledge and competences, expressed through practical synthesis in the conversations. The article argues that more attention should be paid to ethical aspects of professional knowledge, such as when balancing contradictory considerations towards national workfare policies and vulnerable service users, and how to set the limits for their own professional responsibility in the work towards the service users. Furthermore, the article also directs the attention to another area of professional knowledge, as it explores time as an embedded and ubiquitous aspect of, and condition for, professional knowledge to unfold.

Introduction

Front line workers in social services are tasked with safeguarding both governmental policy goals of work and activation and the service users' interests (Lipsky 2010). Several studies (e.g. Astvik, Melin, and Allvin 2014; Djuve and Kavli 2015; Hansen and Natland 2017; Håvold 2018; Kjørstad 2005; Lundberg 2018; Røysum 2017; Terum and Jessen 2015) have shown how front line workers often experience a complex work situation with many and sometimes conflicting tasks. Furthermore, several studies of encounters between service users and counsellors in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav) (e.g. Djuve and Kavli 2015; Hansen and Natland 2017; Terum and Jessen 2015; Øvrelid 2018) challenge dichotomous understandings of social work in Nav as either care- or rule-oriented. Terum and Jessen (2015) found that counsellors with a bachelor's degree in social work reported a more flexible and user-influenced practice compared to colleagues with different professional backgrounds. However, there are few empirical investigations into these qualified social workers' practices in service meetings.

A recent work on participation, interprofessional collaboration and positioning in multi-agency meetings in social welfare has analysed audio- and video-recordings of interactions in actual client situations (Juhila et al. 2021). Through empirical examples from diverse social welfare frontline

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practices, they demonstrate how interprofessional collaboration and service user participation are interactionally achieved, and thus display the contingent nature of interaction in multi-agency meetings. These studies prove the value of detailed examination of interaction in meetings, offering insight to processes and happenings as they occur. However, detailed accounts of how conversations in one-on-one meetings between social workers and service users actually take place has to the best of our knowledge received little attention in the Norwegian context. There have thus been calls for more video-assisted analysis in Nav (Riis-Johansen et al. 2018), as well as more research into the relationship between counsellors' educational background and their approaches and practices (Hansen and Natland 2017). Our study therefore aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of in-situ practice, by employing video-assisted interviews in the study of qualified social workers in Nav. Qualified social workers in Nav work within both state and municipal services, especially with counselling, casework and coordinating services. Within the work and activation field, the aim is to qualify users for the labour market through tailored measures and comprehensive follow-up.

Relationship building is a frequently used concept in social work literature and practice. In a recent study of encounters between service users and counsellors in Nav, we found that the development of good relations is the most crucial factor for the users (Solheim et al. 2020). Taking as its starting point that the social workers' interaction with the users is restricted by the limitations of the work structure (Lipsky 2010) and that the development of good relations is central to well-functioning social work (Solheim et al. 2020), this study intends to explore additional aspects of the professional experience. Leaving the overriding and extensive discussion on knowledge in social work aside, the study explores qualified social workers' on-the-spot use of knowledge in conversations with vulnerable service users. This is done by combining the video-assisted method Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) with a following focus group interview. The aim is herewith to deepen our understanding of how the social workers themselves experience and reflect on their practice.

Use of knowledge in social work practice

Social work as an academic discipline is transdisciplinary and has a heterogenous knowledge base. As a practice-based profession it is processual and socially constructed by the theories that inform practice and the different actors involved (Payne 2014). Both as an academic discipline and in practice, social work has struggled to articulate its knowledge base (Finne, Ekeland, and Malmberg-Heimonen 2020; Fossestøl 2019; Gray and Schubert 2013; Trevithick 2008, 2012). Some studies have suggested that the conventional Western knowledge paradigm, privileging theoretical, propositional knowledge, is insufficient for understanding knowledge in social work (e.g. Fossestøl 2019; Trevithick 2008, 2012). More dynamic notions are needed, and diverse understandings of practical and tacit knowledge have been important to understand knowledge in social work and to develop reflective professional practices through critical reflection (e.g. Adams, Dominelli, and Payne 2009; Øien and Solheim 2015; Payne 2014; Schön 1987; Sodhi and Cohen 2012; Trevithick 2008, 2012).

Empirical studies of social work practice find that social workers refer to several sources of knowledge, and that practice and relational knowledge – personal work experience, colleagues, clients and supervisors – seems to be valued more than theoretical knowledge (Finne, Ekeland, and Malmberg-Heimonen 2020; Heggen 2008; Iversen and Heggen 2016). The problem of articulating and justifying social work as knowledge in practice is highlighted in both Røysum's (2017) and Fossestøl's (2019) studies. They found that the qualified social workers in Nav only in a limited sense managed to articulate what specific kind of knowledge, reflections and considerations underlay their actions in specific situations. However, social workers defined themselves as distinct from non-social workers through the application of core concepts such as 'thinking holistically' or pursuing an integrated approach; the ability to think in general terms, taking all sides into consideration and resisting being locked into a narrow knowledge base (Fossestøl 2019; Røysum 2017).

Despite the articulation of their professional ethical perspectives as 'social work', an ambivalent self-understanding concerning ethics and knowledge was identified (Fossestøl 2019). Ethical values and positions are especially challenging in the contradictory position as gatekeeper implementing national workfare policies, while at the same time ensuring protection of vulnerable service users (Kjørstad 2005; Saario et al. 2018). The concept of 'ethics work', developed by Banks (2016), describes the efforts of people to embed ethical issues (such as reasoning, work on emotion, identity roles and responsibility) into their work practices, further explored by Saario et al. (2018) as jointly constructed and enacted in real-life interactions in service user meetings.

One way to conceptualize a heterogeneous professional knowledge base is offered by Grimen (2008). He portrays the relation between theoretical and practical knowledge as a continuum containing complex interplay and tension. The concept *practical synthesis* denotes the integration of the different elements in the knowledge base. This synthesis is expressed in the professionals' actions – according to demands emerging in practice (Gilje 2017; Grimen 2008). Different parts of knowledge are thus combined because they together constitute a meaningful integrated professional practice (Grimen 2008).

Time perspectives in social work practice

Time, or the lack thereof, is another salient issue for those doing social work. In a study of time perceptions in the Swedish social services, Olsson and Sundh (2019) found that the social workers had a general experience of lack of time. Similarly, Nissen (2019) and Beer, Phillips, and Quinn (2020) identified lack of time combined with heavy workloads as a common concern and a source of stress for social workers.

Rosengren (2006) offers an explanation for such frequently expressed and experienced shortage of time in modern society and life: the coexistence of dual competing time perceptions. Several studies of time at workplaces and in professional contexts have used anthropological understandings to explore such dual concepts: Time, understood as cultural constructs, range from task-oriented time (cyclic, experienced and distinguished by iterative processes) to clock-oriented time (abstract, linear and quantified) (Johansen 2001). A similar opposition between cyclic and linear time discourses at workplaces is from polychronic (more flexible preferences, characterized by multiple activities being carried out simultaneously), to monochronic (the preference to do activities one by one) (Hall 1989; Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999).

Returning to social work, time is essential in several ways: both in the processual work (Payne 2014) and in several of the basic competences, such as the perseverance needed in the relational building (Solheim et al. 2020). Similarly, in reflection-in-action (Schön 1987), the thinking in action entails figuring out what is the best action at a particular moment *in time*, and reflection as a process can only happen across time. Tsang (2008) argues that despite its importance for both professionals and service users, the element of time has been neglected in studies of practice wisdom. Tsang does not enter the discussion of dual competing time concepts, but rather refers to another alternative discourse of time, namely the ancient Greek concepts of time. He argues for the relevance of *kairos* – qualitative time – in social work practice, as a concept that embodies a paradoxical use of knowledges and experiences (Tsang 2008). While Tsang calls for greater attention to the time element in practical reasoning, he also points to the lack of social work research that examines the concept of time. This is offered by Juhila, Günther, and Raitakari (2015), when exploring how discourses of time are produced and negotiated in professional client interaction within mental health services. Similar to previous research, they find that different, and partly competing discourses of time are present.

Design, material and methods

Research design

The study has a multi-method approach, which takes Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), a specific video-assisted research method, as its' starting point, followed by a focus group interview with the five participating social workers.

IPR was initially developed as a skill training programme within therapy and counselling (Kagan et al. 1969). IPR as a research method is a semi-structured individual interview based on video-assisted recall, focusing on the participant's experiences as they occurred during a recorded session (Elliott and Shapiro 1988; Larsen, Flesaker, and Stege 2008). In this study, IPR was chosen as it enabled the researcher to explore in-session interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, as well as experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible (cf. Larsen, Flesaker, and Stege 2008; Macaskie, Lees, and Freshwater 2015). The method further provided possibilities for first-hand clarification from the participating social workers and allowed mutual explorations and reflections between the social workers and the researcher. Despite an increasing use in studies outside the counselling and psychotherapy professions, the method is rarely used within social work (Larsen, Flesaker, and Stege 2008; Naleppa and Reid 1998).

Adding to the strength of video-assisted recall, a focus group was chosen to continue the reflections from the IPR sessions. The focus group allowed for a joint reflective conversation about the experiences from the encounters and from doing social work in Nav.

Sample

The selection of participants was based on a combination of strategic and convenience sampling. Participants were recruited after initial contact and agreement with Nav-leaders, first at the regional, followed by the local level. The inclusion criteria were a bachelor's degree in social work and at least five years of experience in social work. Five female social workers aged 35 to 45 from two different Nav offices participated. All had diverse work experience with service users, ranging from ten to twenty years, and all had participated in professional supervision. At present, all five worked within work and activation programmes.

The five social workers each recruited one service user they were actively working with and whom the social workers trusted that could handle the videorecording of the conversation. The current study is part of a project studying professional practice in different social work fields, where an inclusion criterion is the service user to be in the age range 16–40, in order to make possible comparison of practice between practice fields. Three of the participating service users in the current study were in their early twenties, while two were aged 30–40. They all had diverse challenges, such as drug addiction, long-lasting psychiatric challenges, experienced child welfare interventions and lengthy phases of being on the margins of society.

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved the research project. Names and personally identifiable information are anonymized, and the participants provided written consent. The service users were informed that their participation was voluntary and would not affect their present or future services negatively.

Data development

The data material consists of audio recordings and transcripts from the five IPR interviews and audio recordings, transcriptions, and field notes from the focus group interview. True to the IPR-method, the video recordings were support material and not to be analysed separately.

However, the five individual IPR interviews were each based on one video recorded conversation between the social worker and their recruited service user. As preparation for the subsequent interview, the researcher went through the recording and roughly transcribed it. At the beginning of

the individual interviews, the social workers were introduced to a brief interview guide with a few fixed themes, such as working conditions, aims and expectations before the meeting and degree of service user participation. True to the IPR method, the interviews were mostly related to the video recordings and conducted as closely to them as possible (varying from one to ten days apart). The social workers were invited to stop the video at any point they found interesting, significant, or surprising, or where they wished to add something (cf. Macaskie, Lees, and Freshwater 2015). Addressing events as they occurred in the video recorded session, the social workers' experiences of what happened and their motivation for doing what they did (focus, questions, and comments), were explored. As a result, further reflections on their professional practice were generated.

Prior to the focus group interview, transcriptions were made of the five individual IPR interview sessions, which allowed the researcher to address some preliminary themes. Due to the social workers´ professional secrecy, we could not delve into the details on the service users. Each participant retold what they experienced as most interesting and challenging from the IPR-session, while the researcher presented patterns, common experiences, and characteristics. The dialogue in the focus group thus emerged both as continuations of reflections from the IPR sessions and joint reflections on experiences of professional practice in Nav.

Method of analysis

The transcripts from the IPR interviews and focus group were analysed using systematic text condensation (STC); a qualitative, thematic, cross-case strategy following a stepwise approach that includes de-contextualizing, coding, synthesizing, and re-conceptualizing text data (Malterud 2012). The inductive analysis concentrated on the social workers´ recall and reflections upon occurrences from the recorded conversations and the reflective dialogues that followed in the focus group interview.

During the first step, the first and the fourth author read the six transcripts separately to form an overall impression, before agreeing on preliminary themes. In the second step, the first author identified meaning units concerning the social workers' reflections and experiences, established code groups and sorted the meaning units. In the third step, the first author abstracted condensates from each code group and subgroup, before discussing these with the co-authors. In the fourth step, the condensates were re-conceptualized, creating synthesized descriptions of the social workers' reflections on practice and challenges in the service user meetings.

The analysis yielded four main themes, which will be presented in the findings chapter: 'Balancing an integrated approach within the Nav system', 'Tools, possibilities and limitations in the individual conversations', 'Ambiguous experiences of responsibility' and 'Time as a resource and consolation, shortage and threat'.

Methodology discussion

Developing reflectiveness and criticality in practice are ideals in social work, and self-reflection, through processes of self-analysis, self-evaluation, self-dialogue, and self-observation, is encouraged throughout the social work education (Adams, Dominelli, and Payne 2009; Yip 2006). The social workers were therefore well prepared to participate in a study emphasizing reflection and reflexivity. The complexity of the service users' problems, vulnerabilities and states of transition displayed in the video-recorded sessions, coupled with the social workers' vast experience and knowledge of and ability for reflection yielded thick descriptions.

Following the thematic approach, the data were analysed as a whole. As the IPR sessions and hence actual practical experience lay the foundation for the focus group, the findings from the two sources are not systematically differentiated. Additionally, all data were collected by the first author, who had no professional experience from the field of practice. Even though this influenced the research process and perspectives, the joint analysis with co-authors with vast, differentiated clinical

experience, together with discussions with colleagues in the research field, is conducive to reliable findings. Researchers with practical experience and an educational background in social work considered the findings to be recognizable, supporting pragmatic validity (cf. Kvale et al. 2015).

Findings – complexities at work

The social workers had equivocal and nuanced perceptions of the complex practice in Nav. Hence, the four themes presented below serve analytical purposes, and the processes and understandings described must be viewed in conjunction with each other as deeply intertwined.

Balancing an integrated approach within the Nav system

All the participating service users were enrolled in statutory programmes that involved comprehensive follow-up from the social workers. The social workers explained that the workfare policy goals of work and activation outcomes guided their work with the users. Work or activation was to be a topic in all conversations, and paid employment should be the final goal. An experienced social worker stated: '*I have worked in Nav a long time and, before that, in the social services, and I feel that the guidelines are stronger and more explicit [now] in this matter: Work first. Workfare policy*'.

Despite the policy directions with increasing emphasis on workfare, the social workers rarely used predefined forms during the conversations. Nevertheless, documentation requirements could disturb the conversation as well as jeopardize the relation. In other conversations, policy goals and regulations could be regarded as a support if the social workers considered the users as not sufficiently active or involved. In such instances, the social workers emphasized the work and activation programmes' limitations and the necessity of users making an effort to reach their goals.

All the social workers agreed that it was important that planning was based on the users' experiences and assessments of their own situation. They all had experiences of being too 'eager' in the planning process: '*It is their life, they ought to make the plan*'. Appropriate measures at the right time, considered to be the mantra in Nav, required sufficient time for comprehensive mapping of the users' situations. Rushing did not help, and forcing the users was considered 'unethical'. If necessary, users could participate in programmes with a broader scope than employment, working with challenges related to sleep, physical health, establishing routines and attendance.

The connection between work life, living conditions, mental and physical health, economy, and family relations was fundamental to the social workers. They referred to this as an integrated approach, described as 'picturing the entire challenge'. Together with the ability to encompass the 'entire human being', the integrated approach expressed competences and qualities that the social workers associated with their professional education and practice: '*As social workers, we are concerned with the entirety, you know. You should be an employee, but also live, have economic means, children, and family. We have to bring the whole into the conversation*'. This approach necessitated cooperation with other healthcare and social services. Available templates in Nav could then serve as a final check that all areas were covered. In such instances, the regulations were not regarded as limiting the relationships, but rather as supportive, both enabling the integrated approach and being part of it.

Relational work was another foundational approach for the social workers. Displaying empathy, curiosity, and a genuine interest in helping and understanding were crucial, together with respect and a non-judgemental approach. Difficult topics were not brought up for discussion in the first conversations but raised gradually. The building of good relationships united the integrated approach and the goal-oriented work: '*If we have good relations there is a good chance that we will reach his goal. He needs to feel that I'm genuinely interested in helping him. I think it's a social worker matter*'. Over the course of time, strengthened relations could work as a resource for exploring difficult subjects, such as drug addiction, more thoroughly: '*When we know each other better you can explore matters further, trust each other, and dare to be more direct with the users*'.

Tools, possibilities and limitations in the individual conversations

Exploration was one of the specific approaches identified during the IPR sessions. Others were *open-ended questions, mapping, challenging, recapitulating*, and *delimiting*. The social workers referred to these approaches as 'tools', and reflections on the use and benefits of these were continued in the dialogues in the focus group interview.

The social workers emphasized the importance of 'tuning in' to the user: by starting the conversations with *open-ended questions*, they tried to discover the users' current state and needs. *Exploring* was also central to the *mapping* of the users´ situations: by encouraging the users to recount their experiences, the social workers tried to grasp the users' perspective. One of the aims was to identify, together with the users, the change processes that the users were in, such as moving from unemployment to employment, or from substance use to non-use. Furthermore, focusing on the users´ resources, acknowledging their experiences and emphasizing positive developments were pivotal in building self-efficacy and in motivating the users to endure these processes. One example recounted in an IPR session was that of a young man who had experienced a leap forward in attendance in the Nav programme: '*He had achieved an improvement, and I wanted him to say in his own words what he had done. How did he make it work? It was important to make him conscious that he had succeeded, and how, then hopefully he will do more of the positive stuff*'.

While exploring, the social workers sometimes identified impediments to change. This demanded further exploration, and they additionally *challenged* the users to search for solutions. In most cases, solutions did not emerge immediately, but required work over time. The final important tool was *recapitulation*: by repeatedly summing up the main themes of the conversations, the social workers both checked the users´ understandings and strengthened their agreements. As such, they created a joint understanding, while keeping the momentum of the conversation. Being clear and specific was central to the important, but difficult *limitation* of the content in the conversations. Setting an agenda together with the user was necessary, but during the IPR sessions, several of the social workers criticized themselves for not being sufficiently specific with the users.

In the context of communicative tools and specific approaches, all the social workers mentioned their social work education as an important source of knowledge, in addition to post-qualifying education, supervision and practical experience. However, they often resisted pointing out single sources that guided their actions: '*I think that's valid for all conversations – you carry along experiences and knowledge, right? Then, after working for a while, it's hard to differentiate what you really base your knowledge on. [. . .] you use it subconsciously*'.

Despite the broad knowledge base and the belief that they possessed a variety of 'tools', all the social workers had experiences of failing in conversations. To explore and concurrently be goal-oriented and obtain the required information was especially challenging in conversations where the users did not respond. In such instances, the social workers could feel powerless: '*In a way, we are the only tool – we can't hand out tablets or injections, or such. You know, **conversation** is kind of the knowledge we are supposed to do. And what do I do then, when I feel that I fail? Because **I am the tool**, the conversation is the tool, those measures are the tools. What to do then, when I don't manage to utilize the conversation as a tool?*'

Challenging conversations could also make the social workers feel irritated. On occasions, they displayed impatience towards the users when the users were passive or withheld information. However, the social workers mostly voiced disappointment about their own lack of professionalism when such instances occurred during the IPR sessions. Reflections concerning challenges and limitations emerged as topics in the IPR sessions and continued in the focus group. The social workers all felt they had little opportunity to reflect sufficiently on such ambivalences in their daily practice.

Ambiguous experiences of responsibility

All the social workers emphasized the users' responsibility for themselves and described their own professional responsibility as limited to fulfiling their delegated tasks, such as applying for programmes and writing reports. If a user's plan did not work, the social worker and the user had a joint responsibility to consider changing the course or making a new plan.

Though emphasizing the users' own responsibility, the social workers felt an indirect responsibility if the users' situations had not been clarified during the designated four years of the work and activation programme. At the same time, the social workers found differences between users: '*It is harder when you have a lot of youngsters that may have gone through difficulties when growing up, that are vulnerable and really need help. The feelings are different, and the responsibility is greater*'. As such, the social workers had mixed feelings about the apportionment of responsibility. In the focus group discussion, they displayed diverse understandings of professional responsibility, ranging from an experience of only being responsible for progression in the casework to feelings of great responsibility for the vulnerable users' overall life situations.

The social workers often experienced ambivalence in the specific conversations, like when balancing the goal of employment with challenging family situations. Making decisions in difficult cases, the social workers felt the weight of responsibility: '*I feel it in my bones at times, that I have a responsibility, and that my evaluations have great consequences for people's lives. Especially in cases within substance use, or if people are without money. The electricity has been cut off – should we help them access? Is that the right decision?*'

Another social worker described difficulties in setting boundaries with their personal life: '*It's hard. Leaving the cases when you finish work. Some manage through experience to draw the line, but I find it challenging. The responsibility lies heavy on me*'. Responsibility was also an aspect when *delimiting*; the social workers had to steer the conversation towards the goal without rejecting the users' experiences. This was especially challenging when the users themselves had problems with delimiting the topics, such as in a conversation with an unemployed young man with substance use issues: '*It's challenging: to have the patience to listen to him sliding into irrelevancies like problems with the shower, or very intimate things. I have to show that I listen, I don't want him to feel rejected, at the same time I have to delimit him and try to teach him the time and place for everything*'.

Time as a resource and consolation, shortage and threat

Throughout the IPR sessions and the focus group, the experience and presence of time emerged as an essential, but ambiguous, aspect of the professional practice.

In the conversations, time became a resource of its own. Exploring, challenging and building self-efficacy required work over time. Therefore, time became an inevitable part of the work. Aspects of time were also raised in the relational work. In cases where conversations and processes felt stagnant, the social workers found comfort in the knowledge that building relations often take years. As such, time worked as motivation in the work towards the users: '*We have experienced cases that last for a long time. So, we try to focus on what they have done and managed. Step by step*'. From this perspective, time takes its course rather than flies. Experience, described as professional knowledge achieved over time, was also considered an advantage in challenging conversations. '*You can benefit from your experience with talking with numbers of people in vastly different situations*', one social worker said, '*compared to being newly qualified and insecure*'.

Even though time was an essential resource, it could also pose a challenge. The social workers described the first line service as fast paced, with too many users and a shortage of time for follow-up. The heavy caseload made the social workers feel that they had insufficient time to prepare for the conversations. In this respect, time was antithetical to the desire for integrated working, building relations, and seeing the entire human being.

Contrary to the perception of time as motivational, the impact of experience could also be ambiguous, leading the social workers to pursue their tasks in a less rigorous manner or lose faith in their own work: '*Always believe in the users, it says in the textbooks. But then you have learned that it doesn't always apply at all, you get a bit sceptical. And, eh, you bear the traces of all the cases with unfortunate outcomes, and then you lose some of the motivation and faith in it*'. The decline in motivation was amplified by the lack of time to reflect on both the effects of working in prolonged processes and the consequences of not mastering the available tools. This led the social workers to call for professional supervision and time to reflect together with other social workers: '*I need a boost, I need more time to talk about it, to continue and be motivated to endure the processes together with the users. You know, without hitting the wall*'.

Additionally, non-fulfilment of tasks and subsequent delayed processes increased the feeling of individual responsibility towards the service users. In such instances, time shortages were felt as a stressor in their work, a scarce resource that was always running out.

Discussion

Balancing and negotiating – dynamic interaction with the system

The conversations with the users often focused on activation. Overall, the social workers accepted the workfare guidelines, although they sometimes felt that they interrupted the relation building and the integrated approaches they held in high regard as qualified social workers. The practice can thus be described as a complex balancing act between policy regulations and integrated approaches to the users' challenges. However, this balance took place *within* the boundaries set by the Nav-system, and not in opposition to them. These findings are consistent with Hansen and Natland (2017), who through the notion *working relationship* argue that service providers manage to approach users in a person-centred way without compromising policy requirements. Our findings, however, reveal that the balancing also implies *negotiating* the limitations posed by the regulations. While Djuve and Kavli (2015) identify an ambivalence, and subsequent instances of 'rule-bending', in the implementation of activation policy measures, our findings indicate that the social workers typically acted dynamically and creatively when negotiating with the system. Thus, instead of perceiving the limitations as antagonistic to the integrated approaches, the social workers in our study often used elements in the Nav-system to support and enable their holistic and integrated thinking (c.f. Terum and Jessen 2015). The social workers ability to de-emphasize the activation measures during the conversation and adapt the approach to what is regarded as beneficial for the user is illustrative for how the integrated and dynamic approach is directive for their practice.

Specific knowledge and practical synthesis

Even though the social workers in this study emphasized the integrated approaches, they also identified and articulated specific kinds of knowledge, reasons and skills that informed their actions in the recorded conversations. These findings contrasts previous studies, which found a lack of specificity when social workers were asked to articulate specific knowledge and considerations in practice (Fossestøl 2019; Røysum 2017). A possible explanation is that the IPR method allowed the participants to articulate their use of knowledge in relation to concrete actions and occurrences in actual encounters with users. The social workers identified a broad range of knowledge and competences, such as heterogeneous theoretical knowledge, communication skills and capacity- and relationship-building. Taken together, their practice and subsequent reflections revealed the multitude of sources of knowledge (c.f. Finne, Ekeland, and Malmberg-Heimonen 2020; Iversen and Heggen 2016; Payne 2014; Trevithick 2008, 2012). This points to an on-the-spot combination of theoretical and integrated, communicative embodied knowledge. This combining of different knowledge elements is a clear illustration of Grimen's practical synthesis: the diverse elements are

integrated and synthesized to accomplish specific tasks in the individual encounters (c.f. Gilje 2017; Grimen 2008). By understanding the knowledge used in the conversations as practical synthesis, we acknowledge that the diverse demands in practice determine the professionals' use of the heterogeneous knowledge base, and not the other way around. Furthermore, both the similarities and diversities in the social workers' practices fall into this understanding, as it is events in specific situations that guides the professionals' use of knowledge.

The negotiation of responsibility as professional knowledge

Despite displaying a range of knowledge and skills in the conversations, the social workers could still feel powerless in practice. Similar ambivalences occurred in relation to ethics and the extent of responsibility, as when balancing between the limitations posed by the regulations in Nav and the integrated approaches emphasized by the social workers themselves. While being confronted with the dependency and vulnerability of the users' lives, they also faced ethical considerations as gatekeepers, in line with what Kjørstad (2005), Lipsky (2010), and Saario et al. (2018) describe. Furthermore, our findings support that 'ethics work' is an embodied part of everyday social work practice (cf. Banks 2016), embedded in the communicative character of relational work – in our case between the social worker and the service users (cf. Saario et al. 2018).

The ethical considerations were particularly evident in the focus group discussions about the limits of the social workers' responsibility. Responsibility was complicated by the importance that the social workers placed on pursuing an integrated approach towards the users: Just as the social workers' desire to 'picture the entirety' complicated their efforts to structure the conversations, the same desire made it difficult to delimit their professional responsibility. A common feature of these concerns was the personalization of problems: The nature of social work within the organizational framework of Nav seems to blur the boundaries of the professionals' responsibility, potentially transforming a host of different issues, including organizational deficiencies, as well as users' personal problems, into concerns that the professionals perceive they have an individual responsibility for. This finding is consistent with that of Fossestøl (2019), who found that the social workers kept their professional ethical problems private, despite the understanding of ethics as a fundamental aspect of their professional self. Our study supports the call for a re-establishment of a broad understanding of social work knowledge where 'ethics work' is primary, and not subordinated to, knowledge (Fossestøl 2019; Trevithick 2008). The IPR sessions and the focus group provided an arena for the social workers to discuss 'ethics work' in practice, and furthermore revealed a need for permanent establishment of such arenas. Besides providing a better theoretical understanding of ethics as professional knowledge, mutual professional and ethical reflections might lead to both raised awareness on ethical issues and professional development in practice.

Time matters as professional knowledge in social work practice

One interesting finding was how meaning, use, and experience of time emerged as diverse and ambiguous among the social workers, but nevertheless inseparable from practice.

Time appeared as a concrete resource in the meetings, associated with the use of the specific tools identified by the social workers, and essential to the integrated approach and the gradual relationship-building. Therefore, time was not only fundamental in the relational work (cf. Solheim et al. 2020), but also a prerequisite in the gradual, purposeful process with the users towards work and activity.

Based on the notion of polychronic and monochronic time perceptions (Hall 1989; Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist Jay 1999), it is reasonable to argue that dual, and sometimes competing, perceptions of time exist in Nav. While the linear, clock-related time (Johansen 2001) structures the work and activation programmes, the findings show that a predominant part of the actual work in the conversations was cyclic, processual, and task-oriented. The time-related stress experienced by the

social workers can therefore partly be understood through Rosengren's (2006) description of a temporal clash: they are captured in a double structuring of time, between an array of tasks and a ticking clock. However, while Olsson and Sundh (2019) identified a temporal clash between the social workers' monochronic perspective of time and polychronic work tasks, this study indicates that a polychronic time perception is more appropriate to understandings of social work as processual and dynamic. This might help us to understand why time was also perceived as a consolation by the social workers; the iterative, task-oriented understanding, along with the knowledge that social work requires time, had given the social workers an experience of, and endurance with, long-lasting processes of change. Time in social work must therefore be understood beyond dual concepts: Our findings of individual ambivalence suggest that the social workers were neither monochronic nor polychronic, but rather that their time perception in practice was dynamic, complex, and contextual. These findings are partly contrary to those of Juhila, Günther, and Raitakari (2015), who identified a temporal clash as the professionals held on to a linear time discourse, while the mental health clients brought forward more cyclic time discourse of the mindful body.

However, suggesting that the social workers partly acted dynamically in relation to time is not to say that their perceived lack of time is not worth listening to. The findings show that lack of time impinged on motivation, the ability to fulfil casework in the desired manner, possibilities for preparation prior to meetings and reflection afterwards. The perceived shortage of time also led to less professional supervision and little joint reflection amongst colleagues.

Similarly to how the social workers kept ethical considerations private, they rarely thematized ambiguity related to time, but rather dealt with it individually. These findings support Tsang (2008), who argues that through paying more attention to qualitative time social work practice could embody a complex use of knowledge and experiences, and thus provide both better services and develop professionally. The findings also support Juhila, Günther, and Raitakari (2015) and their call for more research on the presence of different discourses of time in professional-client interaction. Thus – by discussing and articulating time as important to, and embedded in, the heterogenous professional knowledge base, the social workers could experience both raised awareness and professional development in practice. Ironically, such discussions demand the very thing that seems to be lacking, namely time.

Conclusion

Through a multi-method approach with a focus on the social workers' recall and reflection, this study explores professional experiences in service user meetings. By taking actual conversations as starting points, the study enabled an exploration of on-the-spot use of professional knowledge. The use of video assisted recall enabled the social workers to identify and articulate their use of specific skills in concrete situations, in addition to more integrated, holistic approaches. Overall, the social workers' use of knowledge can best be understood through the concept of practical synthesis; expressed in the professionals' actions, guided by occurrences in the single conversations.

Furthermore, the study's explorative approach demonstrates the social workers' perceptions of the complexities in their daily professional practice as multifaceted, highly intertwined, and often contradictive. Despite contradictions, the social workers constantly balanced and negotiated their valued integrated approaches *within* the given limitations in Nav, and not in opposition to the system. However, the findings of how the social workers constantly made ethical considerations and negotiated the limits of their professional responsibility highlight the need to articulate ethical concerns as part of the professional knowledge, and not as personal or individual challenges. By understanding and discussing this 'ethics work' as professional knowledge, the social workers hopefully can be relieved of individual feelings of responsibility towards the users and rather develop professionally. The article also argues for a similar articulation on the notion of time in social work: Akin to how the traditional knowledge paradigm is claimed to be insufficient for understanding knowledge in social work, a linear time concept is inadequate for understanding the

cyclic and iterative perceptions of time in the relation-oriented social work. This finding – the social workers' experience of time as an ambiguous but ubiquitous aspect of practice – points to a need for further exploration of the embeddedness of the time element in social work practice.

Taken together: the discussion of the most obvious finding – professional social work practice as highly complex, often negotiated and seldom without ambiguousness – suggests that the social workers need more time for reflection, self-evaluation, and supervision. This would be consistent with a broad understanding of knowledge, ethics, and time in social work, and could contribute to further development and strengthening of professional knowledge in practice.

This study is limited to qualified social workers' experiences; thus, the service users' experiences are left unexplored. A natural progression of this work is therefore to explore and analyse users' experiences and reflections, as well as the experiences in service user meetings of professionals with different educational backgrounds.

Disclosure statement

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II

Original Research

Persevering professionals: dilemmas of relationships and self-determination in work with people with intellectual disability – a multi-method study based on interpersonal process recall

Mari Husabø, MPhil (ORCID)
Department of Global Public Health and
Primary Care, University of Bergen, Norway

Department of Welfare and Participation,
Western Norway University of Applied
Sciences, Sogndal, Norway

Magne Mæhle, PhD
Department of Welfare and Participation,
Western Norway University of Applied
Sciences, Sogndal, Norway

Date accepted: 13 January 2023

Målfrid Råheim, Dr.Philos
Department of Global Public Health and
Primary Care, University of Bergen, Norway

Aud Marie Øien, PhD
Department of Welfare and Participation,
Western Norway University of Applied
Sciences, Sogndal, Norway

Abstract

The article focuses on social educators' reflections on their own professional practice in encounters with people with intellectual disability receiving services. Drawing on Interpersonal Process Recall, a video-assisted method, together with a focus group interview, the study explores the experiences from in-situ encounters of five social educators employed in a Norwegian municipality. The key findings are that they view relationship-building as integral to their work, they grant primacy to the ideal of autonomy and they strive towards realizing this in their daily work. The study however displays how these emphases might lead to dilemmas, especially between the wish to support the service users' self-determination and the urge to protect them from harm. Of special note was how the service users' increasing use of social media was perceived as a particular challenge for social educators, who were left with an experience of being unable to protect.

Corresponding author:
Mari Husabø, Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Røyrgata 6, Sogndal 6856, Norway.
Email: Mari.Husabo@hvl.no

Introduction

Professional practice with people with intellectual disability receiving services has undergone major changes during the last thirty years. In line with the international human rights treaty The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations, n.d.), Norwegian laws and conventions, as in most Euro-American societies, recognize the equal rights of all peoples with disabilities to live independently, have full participation and inclusion, equal opportunities, and accessibility in society. In Norwegian policy reforms, a rapid deinstitutionalization process in the 1990s (Hutchinson & Sandvin, 2019) was followed by increased attention to the importance of values centering on self-determination. The expression of self-determination is influenced by the interaction between personal characteristics and environmental conditions. Support and accommodation enabling the exercise of self-determination is especially important for adults with intellectual disabilities (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003). This calls for a relational understanding of self-determination conceptualized through *relational autonomy* (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). This concept refers to a range of perspectives on autonomy in feminist theory highlighting the importance of interdependence and relationships, rather than independence, as preconditions for control and agency. The understanding of autonomy as emerging through the support and enablement of others (Davy, 2019) and the acknowledgement of the connection between the self and the context allows for a wider understanding of autonomy among oppressed individuals, useful in disability studies (e.g. Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Dowling et al., 2019). The term fits well with the relational approach to disability, which takes precedence in the Nordic countries, where disability is understood as formed in the relation between a person and the human-caused environment (Tøssebro, 2009, 2013). Hence, disability is a relationship, situational and contextual, and autonomy of the self is constituted in and through relationships (Davy, 2019).

While previous studies on autonomy and self-determination for people with intellectual disability largely have focused on the perspective of parents and professionals, recent studies (e.g. Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Chalachanová et al., 2021; Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; Dodevska & Vassos, 2013; Hutchinson & Sandvin, 2019; Kittelsaa, 2014; Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011; Reisæter, 2021; Vaucher et al., 2019; Witsø & Hauger, 2020) have increasingly brought out voices of the people with intellectual disability. These studies confirm that good relationships with support staff can promote self-determination. To know, trust and like the support staff creates a context for all supportive actions to follow. The quality of relationships is crucial (Chalachanová et al., 2021; Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011), and professionals must be sensitive to the individual's needs and wishes to create an atmosphere which encourages the communication of preferences and choices (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015). This requires both professional skills and knowledge as well as interpersonal skills (Dodevska & Vassos, 2013; Pallisera et al., 2018). In addition to providing new insights into the understandings and perceptions of people with intellectual disability, this literature contributes to development of professional practice. To date, however, research has paid little attention to *professionals'* perceptions of the role of relationships in their work with people with intellectual disability (cf. Hastings, 2010).

A distinguishing feature of professional practice with vulnerable service users is the tension between protecting them from harm while also supporting them to lead more independent lives

(Saario et al., 2018). This dilemma is present in all services working with people with intellectual disability, and various studies explore how support staff manage this tension (see for example Hawkins et al., 2011; Mjøen & Kittelsaa, 2018; Wilson et al., 2008). Similar complexities are explored in the literature of intellectual disabilities within the anthropology of care, where studies have probed questions of dependency, autonomy, and moral dilemmas (such as McKearney, 2021; Pols et al., 2017). These perspectives, which also have ties to feminist theories, supplement understandings of the professional moral dilemmas, by questioning positive approaches to care, and portraying care as a terrain of ambivalence (McKearney, 2020; Thelen, 2021).

There are many examples of these dilemmas, such as related to alcohol use (Pols et al., 2017), medical issues (Wilson et al., 2008), and overeating (Hawkins et al., 2011). Another issue, of increasing saliency, is the use of Internet and social media. Taken together, studies find that people with intellectual disability are partly excluded from Internet use, but that some, despite barriers such as safeguarding concerns and language impairments, have positive experiences using social media (Caton & Chapman, 2016; Chadwick et al., 2013), and that social media skills can deepen and extend social networks (Raghavendra et al., 2018). The possible benefits of Internet use have received much less attention than the risks (Chadwick et al., 2013; Glencross et al., 2021), and despite limited knowledge, support staff view people with intellectual disability as a vulnerable group at risk from online dangers, while they themselves lack formal training to promote inclusion and cross the digital disability divide (Chiner et al., 2017, 2021; de Groot et al., 2022). Overall, these studies highlight the need for more research and professional training to support Internet use for people with intellectual disability. Moreover, the professionals' challenge when navigating between supporting autonomy and protecting their service users online is so far unexplored.

Aim of study

The study set out to explore qualified social educators' experiences from in-situ practices. The primary aim was to explore social educators' reflections on their own practice. However, because of their own emphasis on developing good relationships and supporting the service users' self-determination, this paper more specifically turns its attention to how the social educators face dilemmas between promoting independence and protecting their service users from potential harm.

Design, material, and methods

Research design

The study has a multi-method approach, taking Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) as its starting point, followed by a focus group interview with the five participating social educators.

As a research method, IPR is a semi-structured individual interview based on video-assisted recall, focusing on the participant's experiences as they occurred during a recorded session (Elliott & Shapiro, 1988; Larsen et al., 2008). We chose IPR in this study as it enables exploration of in-session interactions and makes conscious, unconscious, unspoken experiences from the interaction (cf. Larsen et al., 2008; Macaskie et al., 2015). The method provides possibilities for first-hand clarification from participants and allows mutual explorations and reflections between participants and researcher.

Adding to the strength of video-assisted recall, a focus group was chosen to continue the reflections from the IPR-sessions. The focus group allowed a joint conversation about the experiences both from the IPR-sessions and general practice. Whilst we applied this multi-method approach in a

recent study of social workers within the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Husabø et al., 2022), and some studies use recordings to analyse interactions between vulnerable service users and support staff (Dowling et al., 2019; Saario et al., 2018), we are not aware of previous research that explore professional practice with people with intellectual disability through similar multi-methods.

Sample

Health and care services for people with intellectual disability in Norway are mostly provided by municipal services which is the context for the present study. The participating professionals are all social educators, the official translation of the Norwegian title *vernepleiar*, also translated as learning disability nurse. As the professional practice is at the foreground, the people receiving services will throughout this paper be referred to primarily through the general term "service users", in some cases people with intellectual disability or residents. When referring to staff in general, care workers or support staff are used.

The selection of participants was based on a combination of strategic and convenience sampling. Participants were recruited after initial contact with the municipal research unit and the responsible adviser in the agency for services for people with intellectual disability in a large Norwegian municipality. The adviser led the recruitment process and recruited social educators that worked in different parts of the agency's services. The inclusion criteria were a bachelor's degree in social education and at least five subsequent years of experience from professional practice. Three female and two male social educators aged 35 to 45 participated (*Maria, Ted, Eva, David, Sarah*). Participants' experience with service users ranged from eight to sixteen years and included work with disability, geriatric care, psychiatry, and substance use.

The social educators recruited the five service users (*Maja, Tim, Eric, Dennis, Silje*), with inclusion criteria mild or moderate intellectual disability and the capacity to consent. Two were in their early twenties, two in their early thirties, the fifth was in her sixties. All had varied living conditions and different additional diagnoses, such as problems with addiction, psychiatric and somatic challenges. The recordings took place in different settings: two were recorded in residential facilities ("supported housings"), one in a day care centre during interaction in an arts and crafts activity, and two during weekly home-visits to service users who lived independently.

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved the research project. Personal identifiable information is anonymised, the participants provided written consent, and names used in the paper are pseudonyms. The social educators were instructed to recruit service users whom they trusted could handle the video-recording of their meeting, and to whom they could explain what it meant to consent. Information letters were also repeated verbally. The service users were informed that their participation was voluntary and would not affect their services, and that they could withdraw at any time.

Data development

The data material consists of audio-recordings and transcripts from the five IPR-interviews and audio-recordings, transcriptions, and field notes from the focus group interview. True to the IPR-method, the video-recordings were support material and not to be analysed separately.

The five individual IPR-interviews were each based on one video-recorded encounter between the social educator and their recruited service user. The first author conducted the interviews, and as a preparation for each interview roughly transcribed the recording. At the beginning of the

individual interview, the social educator was introduced to a brief interview guide with a few fixed themes, such as working conditions, aims and expectations. Following the IPR-method, the interviews were mostly related to the video-recordings and conducted as close in time as possible, all within 48 hours. Creating a safe and trusting interviewing environment for the participants was important (cf. Larsen et al., 2008). The recording was played back for the social educators, and both the interviewee and researcher had the possibility to pause the recording and comment on specific sequences they found interesting, significant, or surprising, or where they wished to add something (cf. Macaskie et al., 2015). Addressing events as they occurred in the video-recorded session, the social educators' experiences of what happened and their motivation for doing what they did (focus, questions, and comments), were explored. This in turn generated further reflections on their professional practice.

The social educators, the first and the fourth author participated in the subsequent focus group. Prior to the focus group, transcriptions were made of the five individual IPR-interviews, which allowed the researchers to address some preliminary themes. Due to the confidentiality, we could not discuss the video-recordings or the service users' personal details. Each participant therefore retold what they experienced as most interesting and challenging from the IPR-session, while the researchers' presented general patterns and common experiences. The dialogue in the focus group thus emerged both as continuations of reflections from the IPR-sessions and joint reflections on professional practice.

Analysis

Data were analysed using an inductive, thematic analytic approach following six phases (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis concentrated on the social educators' recall and reflections upon occurrences from the recorded encounters and the reflective dialogues that followed in the focus group.

During the first phase, the first author transcribed the six interviews, followed by readings and re-readings by the first and fourth author to familiarize with the data and form an overall impression. In the second phase, the first author conducted a broad initial coding which the first and fourth author subsequently discussed in the third phase, resulting in potential themes relevant for understanding the social educators' experiences: *being professional, dilemmas of autonomy, being responsible, tools and possibilities in the conversations, importance of knowing, outside forces, friendship, challenging social media*. In the fourth phase, the potential themes were checked both in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset to ensure validity, with emphasis on the questions of autonomy and relational work. In the fifth phase of the analysis, the first author selected extract examples from the material to illustrate themes and analytical points, before all authors participated in defining, refining, and naming the themes. This prepared the final write-up of the report in the sixth phase, relating the analysis to the research question and literature.

The analysis yielded two core themes: "Dilemmas of relationships" and "Dilemmas of self-determination", including subthemes and extract examples.

Methodological considerations

Research involving people with intellectual disability in the empirical material raises special ethical concerns related to information, sampling, and consent, and requires heightened awareness (Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020). The potential vulnerability and reduced cognitive abilities can also amplify the uneven power relations between researchers and participants (van der Weele & Bredewold,

2021). However, since the participating service users did not directly interact with the researchers, these issues were less pertinent. The social educators prepared their service users for the video-recordings and offered them to talk about the participation afterwards. The service users expressed a positive experience of participating in the project.

The outbreak of covid-19 and extensive restrictions in the municipal services excluded the researchers from doing data development for nine months. This prolonged process led to participant dropout and further delays, and some of the participants found the gap in time between the IPR-sessions and focus group long. While this made it difficult to remember the details of the IPR-session and thus access the recalls, it allowed a process of raised awareness on the cooperation with the particular service user.

Following the thematic approach, the data were analysed as a whole. As the IPR-sessions and hence actual practical experience lay the foundation for the focus group, the findings from the two sources are not systematically differentiated. Joint analysis with co-authors, in our case with three senior researchers holding vast differentiated clinical experience is conducive to reliable findings. Furthermore, researchers with educational background and experience from working with people with intellectual disability considered the findings to be recognizable supporting pragmatic validity.

Findings

The analysis identified how the social educators especially valued two dimensions of their work with their service users, namely the foundational role of relationships and the importance of supporting self-determination. These values were however also related to a range of dilemmas that are explored in the themes and subthemes that follows.

Dilemmas of relationships

The social educators' emphasis on relationship stands out as a key finding of this study. Getting to know the users, learning which approach worked best for them and continually crafting the relationships were considered to be their core business as well as the starting point for working with more delicate and difficult issues and challenges. This was stated several times both in the IPR-sessions and in the focus group discussion, as by Maria, who claimed that 90% of their work consisted of working with what she termed "the good relation" and keeping up the service users' spirits.

According to the social educators, "getting to know" was time-consuming work, built purposely piece by piece. While the frequency of visits and time spent together differed between those working in supported housing and those in home-care services, all five concurred that the most important source of knowledge was the individual service user. They also emphasized interpersonal chemistry and strived to find common areas of interest - spending time together, talking, and performing activities such as basic household chores, walking or game play, was experienced as vital in "getting to know", and often served as entry points into more sensitive issues. The intimate knowledge of the user entailed seeing "the whole person", including diagnoses, compound challenges and awareness of physical signals, conditioned by the day-to-day situation. This was especially important in work with users suffering from severe medical conditions, such as for Sarah, whose user Silje suffered from a disease that caused frequent and often sudden epileptic seizures. During the videorecording Silje had an epileptic seizure, and in the following interview Sarah recalled the physical signals ahead of the seizure, as well as possible triggers during the last 24 hours.

Relational dilemmas: Consequences of "not knowing "the service users well enough. The emphasis on "knowing" could however lead to challenges, as the feeling of "not knowing" the service users sufficiently seemed to lead to uncertainty regarding recourses and needs for assistance. This was illustrated in a peculiar way with Ted, who did not know his service user Tim very well. During the videorecording, Tim agreed to everything Ted said and seldom replied more than "yes" to any question. According to Ted, this was business as usual. Tim had just recently moved away from home, and his meetings with the home-care services were restricted to thirty minutes twice a week. Tim's aloofness to visitors sustained their experience of "not knowing" him, and six months after the IPR-session, in the postponed focus group session, Ted related that Tim now mostly canceled one of the two weekly visits. Ted found it difficult to evaluate Tim's functional level and to decide whether they should assist him in getting a workfare or engage in day activities. He was also unsure whether Tim appreciated their visits or if he just played along and wanted to be left alone. Ted revisited this deadlock; because of the limited knowledge they had of Tim, their possible approaches were limited, and further relationship-building got impaired. Additionally, other factors, such as lack of resources and understaffing, could also impede relational work.

Relational dilemma: Drawing the lines between friendship and professional relationships. Despite the emphasis on common interests and interpersonal chemistry, the social educators relentlessly underlined important differences between friendships and professional relations, as explained by David: "no matter how you twist and turn - when I walk out of here, I leave work behind. And once a month I get paid for being here. And at the end of the day, I must make decisions that a friend doesn´t have to, and I have to give messages that a friend wouldn´t give". However, ambivalences appeared several times. "We can´t pretend in the relation but must care and be interested for real. If we don´t, they get it", Maria argued. "We go through all feelings together, you know – a bit like we do with our own children". The social educators experienced getting emotionally attached to service users, and, despite change of jobs and thus a breaking up of relations, kept them in their hearts.

The social educators were also conscious of the numerous relationships that their service users were part of, such as Dennis, who according to David related to more than thirty staff in the supported housing, besides neighbours, staff, and colleagues at the supported employment. David and Sarah pointed to the ethical dilemma: "We are constantly facing choices when it comes to relations – we go all in to get to know a person, to build relations. And then, afterwards, we fade away. What happens to these people, having to meet all these carers throughout their lifetime? Imagine the number of relations – and grieving processes - through the years. No wonder if that make them hard to get close to and leaves them pondering: Who are really my friends?". The social educators called for more knowledge on how to secure continuous care for service users that had to handle countless relationships and break-ups during their lifetime.

Relational dilemma: The service users right to choose - or single out the relationships. While the service users in some cases had to accept certain invasions in their personal sphere others had greater possibilities to navigate, select, and refuse the services they were offered. This underscored the importance for the social educators of developing good relations, not only as the fundaments of the rest of their work, but also as the very door opener towards the service users. Ted illustrated this with his hard work "getting to know" Tim: "the present problem is to be allowed to visit him twice a week. I try to strike a friendly chord. If he doesn't feel that the relationship is good…., then we won't be allowed to enter at all…". Sarah continued: "…and if they slam that door, it stays closed and it can take ages to re-enter". Keeping the relation going was therefore imperative, as possible intermissions in the relationship could mean having to start all over again. This indicates a perpetual

challenge for the social educators: The service users' right to determine what services to receive and what relationships to enter – or leave.

Dilemmas of self-determination

Another key finding is how the social educators emphasized the service users' right to govern their own life. The ideal of autonomy was considered fundamental to practice and profession, and the strive towards realizing this ideal seemed to be embedded in their daily work. This was thoroughly stressed by Sarah, when challenged on why she placed such importance on Silje's participation in minute detail: "It is her life, her everyday! Of course, you have a wish that all humans could be autonomous, independent and govern their own life! We are not supposed to dictate how they should choose [to] live their lives. That is the human rights act, isn't it!"

Advocating for the service users' needs and furthering their desires were understood as a professional imperative, as described by Maria: "[as a social educator] my main mission remains: helping the service users to be heard". The social educators were emphatic about listening to the service users and understanding their desires. Further, they regarded it as their task to lay the groundwork for the service users to make their own decisions, take care of their interests towards other municipal services, next of kin and the larger society, and make sure that their voices were heard in cases of conflicting interests. Additionally, they emphasized their advisory role and the importance of not acting imperiously or denying the service users autonomy. Rather, service users should know that they were allowed to reject. During the IPR-sessions countless examples appeared, ranging from choice of yoghurt -flavors and day activity to whether to apply for an extra weekly shower from the home nursing care. The risk of marginalization of their service users, due to linguistic or cognitive challenges, was a constant concern for the social educators, who also feared that the social distancing, isolation and lock-down brought on by the covid-19 pandemic could lead to increased marginalization of people with intellectual disability and affect the development of self-determination negatively.[1]

Dilemmas of self-determination: supporting autonomy while protecting from harm. However, despite the indisputable consensus regarding and sensitivity towards the importance of self-determination, several dilemmas emerged. The most basic and recurring was the dilemma between respecting the service users' right to govern their own life and following the urge to act according to what the social educators termed as "the best interest of the user". As the service users had compound physical, psychological and social challenges, the social educators continually faced situations that demanded careful considerations and attempts to lead the service users away from what they considered to be "worse decisions" towards better ones. All five identified situations in the video-recorded material where such dilemma occurred, ranging from minor questions – such as whether to insist that the service users dressed according to the weather - to more serious matters, as in Silje's case, where her severe medical situation demanded Sarah's physical presence. Dilemmas of self-determination were also present in the relational dilemmas, as when David reflected on Dennis' numerous and partly involuntary relationships and in Ted's puzzling over whether Tim wanted to accept visits from the municipal services at all.

One example came from Maria and her service user Maja, an elderly woman with an acquired brain injury from the early childhood years. Maja had a strong will, and an even stronger desire to take care of herself, despite physical disablements and limited mobility. She had however endangered herself several times, and during the video-recorded session, Maria tried to address the possible hindrances in Maja's current housing situation. Maja abruptly changed the theme, laughed

off and refused to answer. When Maria carefully reminded her about a GPS-alarm acquired in order to secure Maja access to 24 hours help, Maja swiftly faced the first author, who was present in the room, and jokingly exclaimed: "I'll throw that dingus through the window!". In the succeeding interview Maria addressed this as the most difficult and urgent dilemma regarding this service user. While both the home-care services and next of kin worried for her safety and wanted Maja to move to a supported housing, the most important matter for Maja was to continue taking care of herself, and she resisted anything she experienced as an attempt to restrain her. The present solution, Maria stated, was therefore to accept Maja's wish to stay at home and rather furnish the apartment with remedies.

Another example appeared between Eva and her service user Eric, a man in his thirties with Down's syndrome. In the video-recorded session Eva and Eric talked about the upcoming New Year's Eve and New Year´s resolutions. Eric declared that he would become a "yes-boy" and tell the truth. And then, he added, "it is important to say sorry and I apologize if I have done anything I shouldn't have". Eva responded that she knew the staff sometimes could appear nagging, but that in the end they only wanted him to have the best life possible. In the subsequent IPR-interview Eva explained: Eric had a history of alcohol use and both staff and next of kin meant that the drinking was excessive and worsening his recurrent depressive disorder. As Eric had the capacity to consent, and, hence, the right to buy and consume alcohol, the staff had proposed a deal: Every Friday evening they should accompany Eric to limit the amount of beer he bought. Eric agreed and they signed the deal. Still, every Friday on his way home from work, Eric would buy beer that exceeded the written agreement. If confronted by the staff, he apologized, promised to change for the better, before repeating the deed once again the following week. Therefore, Eva sighed, she had little faith in his New Year's resolution, but nevertheless felt that it was important to remind him that they had his best interest in mind.

Dilemmas of self-determination: social media and the potential online dangers. Another pressing dilemma resulted from the service users increasing access to, and use of, social media. All five social educators worried about the growing use of smartphones and other gadgets. Many of the service users had inadequate linguistic comprehension and encountered a lot of misunderstandings in their digital communication. The social educators retold of endless hours spent on conciliation between service users, due to misunderstandings often born out of spelling mistakes. Similarly, the service users' difficulties related to friendship intensified in social media, both by the introduction of new relationships such as cyber acquaintances and by altering and adding new layers in existing relationships. Social media also added to the dilemmas of drawing the lines between professional relationships and friendships for the social educators, as the service users texted them outside workhours and sent friend requests through social media platforms. The social educators experienced their service users as exhausted from social media, lacking the proper tools or qualifications to comprehend and navigate the digital landscape. "It has become an extra factor," Maria stated, "and they never get a break – the information keeps coming, and often they don't have the ability to manage it". Additionally, the social educators felt that they lacked professional competences and measures to advise their service users.

The social educators also found that existing regulations left little room for intervening in the service users' use of social media. As an initiative to reduce stress and lack of sleep due to disturbance from social media, the staff at Eva's workplace had, in agreement with the residents and next of kin, arranged for the residents to hand in their gadgets by bedtime and have them returned the next morning. However, despite immediately showing positive effects the initiative was stopped after an inspection from the authorities, as it was determined to breach legal safeguards. Coupled

with the service users limited capacity to understand their repeatedly destructive patterns, the social educators felt trapped in the dilemma between wanting to protect their service users from the negative effects of social media and the ideal of supporting and enabling their self-determination.

The social educators also experienced a darker side of the service users' use of social media. Due to the limited ability to understand both communication and nuances, service users often became victims of economic exploitation. Some had worsened mental illnesses or got negatively affected by extreme or radical opinions and groups, while others got criminalized, for example by stalking celebrities or distributing injurious pictures. In one of the supported housings, medical students from a nearby university had delivered lectures for the residents on topics related to sexuality and social media, but the staff experienced that the residents soon forgot the lessons and returned to their old pattern. A severe example of the powerlessness was offered by Maria, as she told the story of a young female service user whose use of dating apps repeatedly had resulted in severe violent sexual assaults. "Again, the self-determination … I am an ardent follower of the service users right to make, and learn from, their own mistakes. But still, there must be some limits. But I feel paralysed – we send notes of concern to the GP, or to the governor, but nothing happens, and we have to witness these terrible happenings, again and again".

Discussion

In this study, we set out to explore educated social educators' reflections on their own practice in work with people with intellectual disability receiving services. We found that they insisted on the importance of relationships and granted primacy to the ideal of autonomy in their work with the service users. This echoes earlier studies (c.f. Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; Dowling et al., 2019; Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011) that emphasise the interconnectedness between these dimensions in work with people with intellectual disability. The social educators' perspectives on how to support and enable the service users' self-determination found in the present study seem to be consistent with the idea of relational autonomy (Davy, 2019). The findings also demonstrate how the social educators perceived relationships as constitutive for their professional practice and how they underscored the importance of getting to know the users and understand their needs and desires. This accords with the perspectives of people with intellectual disability receiving services identified in earlier studies: emotional support was most highly valued, together with interpersonal skills such as listening ability, patience and respect (Pallisera et al., 2018). In relationships perceived as positive, the service users seemed open to staff support, requested needed assistance and shared sensitive information (Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; Nonnemacher & Bambara, 2011). We find this congruence between the perspectives of the social educators in our study and those of the service users in previous studies promising for the social educators' ambition of advocating for the service users' needs, raising their voices, and supporting the ideal of autonomy.

While our findings contrast those of some earlier studies, which found support staff placing less emphasis on interpersonal skills and emotional support than the users (Dodevska & Vassos, 2013; Pallisera et al., 2018), the social educators' underlining of relationships mirrors the findings of Pols et al (2017). They found that caregivers described how getting to know people, learning which approach worked best for a given client and constantly crafting relationships were their core business, and a necessary starting point for addressing problems and negotiating limits. Our findings additionally suggest that the social educators risk getting checkmated by their preoccupation with relational work, as in Ted's case: When failing to obtain the desired relationship with Tim, Ted had the experience of failing in his overall care towards him. As such, the strong emphasis on relationships might cause unexpected dilemmas for the social educators. Interestingly, this furthermore serves as an illustration of

a relational understanding of autonomy: just like the autonomy of people with intellectual disability depend upon the relationship of their carers (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Witsø & Hauger, 2020), so do the service users influence their carers (cf. Davy, 2019; Pols et al., 2017). The social educators' emphasis of relationships can further be understood in light of the precedence of relational approaches in the Nordic countries (Tøssebro, 2009) and how the social educators experienced relations as integral to their professional education and identity (Folkman et al., 2019).

The most striking finding in this study, is the presence of a range of professional dilemmas. In line with findings in previous research (e.g. Hawkins et al., 2011; McKearney, 2021; Mjøen & Kittelsaa, 2018; Pols et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2008), the social educators frequently experienced incidents where they considered the service users' choices as negative for their own well-being or challenging for the social educators' attempts to fulfil their professional responsibilities. The dilemma between support of autonomy and protection from harm was ever-present, and the examples of Maja and Eric display how the social educators tried to navigate this dilemma, attempting to persuade and lead the service users away from "worse decisions" towards better ones. The case of Maja also display how they strived towards realizing the ideal of autonomy in practice. Despite worrying for Maja's safety in her current housing, Maria accepted her right to decide for herself, and tried to secure Maja's safety by different measures. From an outsider-view, the acceptance of Maja's wish to stay at home might be perceived as laissez-faire and a failure in the protection of a vulnerable individual (cf. Mjøen & Kittelsaa, 2018). However, understood through a relational approach, Maria adapts the intervention to Maja's expressed desires, and enables her self-determination by equipping her current home as well as possible. Maria's ambition to gradually change Maja's conviction can moreover be understood through the relational understanding of autonomy: we all interfere with one another's autonomy, influence one another and try to persuade others to see things our way (Davy, 2019; Pols et al., 2017). Maria's actions also suggest a perseverance in work: she does not resign or suggest a definitive solution, but rather reflects on the continuous dilemma while simultaneously acting on the current situation.

Eric's case however opens for an alternative understanding. While Pols et al (2017) emphasize the persuasion and interdependence between clients and caregivers also in cases of tension related to overuse of alcohol or drugs, McKearney (2021) argues that persuasive care is part of an ideology that frames individuals with disabilities as incapable and lacking agency. The "misfitting" of people with intellectual disability is not because they are dependent and vulnerable, but rather the opposite: they are too in-dependent minded for the form of dependence they are repeatedly persuaded into (McKearney, 2021). Eric's continual breach of agreement can be viewed as resistance to the offered relations of care. His independence and "unruly behavior" create a "misfit" in the relationship with Eva and her colleagues. Similarly, one can view Tim's reluctance to the services offered by Ted as a resistance: Tim does not have the receptiveness for the caring attention and persuasion that is assumed by the social educators.

Turning to the ambivalence in the border between professional relationships and friendships, Maria's comparison of her relationship with the service users to that of her own children serve as clear telling of emotionally charged relationships. This finding is consistent with earlier studies (Hastings, 2010; Wilson et al., 2008) that find support staff experiencing intense emotions and perceiving the relationships as affective and meaningful. However, such emotional perceptions might evoke strong feelings concerning the limits of their professional role (Wilson et al., 2008), as in our findings, when the lack of resources worked as impediments to the relational work the social educators pursued. Moreover, our findings indicate other ethical challenges related to relationships, as in David and Sarah's reflections on the possible consequences of the continuous flow of carers entering and leaving their service users' life. Although a few recent studies (Reisæter, 2021; Witsø & Hauger, 2020) briefly touch upon the strong feelings and deep sorrow changes in staff group might evoke, the negative outcomes of manifold relationships and breakups for people with

intellectual disability have received little attention in research. The social educators' call for more knowledge on how to understand and work with such challenges therefore seems pertinent both to practice and future research.

The tension between protecting service users from harm while also supporting them to lead more independent lives lie at the heart of work with vulnerable people (Hawkins et al., 2011; Saario et al., 2018). Wilson et al (2008) show how professionals felt a pressure to find definitive solutions to ethical dilemmas in work with people with intellectual disability, even though such solutions do not exist. The findings in our study suggest that continuous ethical reflections are part and parcel of professional work with people with intellectual disability. We agree with the idea of supporting professionals in acknowledging this existential reality of such dilemmas (cf. Wilson et al., 2008), and to offer opportunities to reflect on how to further promote and support self-determination (cf. Vaucher et al., 2019).

Considering the vast experience of facing and navigating ethical dilemmas, such as those related to medical conditions and alcohol use, an unanticipated finding is how the challenges relating to service users' increasing use of social media seemed to overwhelm the social educators. Their lack of knowledge and training to support their service users in their online lives support evidence from previous studies (Chadwick et al., 2013; Chiner et al., 2017, 2021; de Groot et al., 2022; Glencross et al., 2021). Additionally, with the existing regulations leaving few opportunities to intervene in the service users' digital lives, the social educators experienced failing in navigating the tension between respecting the service users' right to autonomy and protecting them from online risks. In this context, the incidence of sexual assault resulting from online contact serve as a grave illustration of how the social educators are rendered incapable to protect vulnerable service users, even though the danger is known. In contrast to the continuous dilemmas described earlier, where they displayed perseverance in facing them, the dilemmas originating from the users' online lives seemed to be experienced as unbearable to the social educators. Further work is required to develop professional support of Internet use for people with intellectual disability. There is also a need for more research to understand the professional dilemmas that might appear from vulnerable service users' interaction in social media, as well as what strategies the professionals might apply when facing them.

Conclusion

Through a multi-method approach with a focus on recall and reflection, the study allowed for an in-depth exploration of the social educators' perceptions of their own practice, challenges, and dilemmas. The study supports previous research that emphasizes the interconnectedness between relationship building and the support of autonomy in professional practice with people with intellectual disability. Our findings of how the social educators perceived relationship as imperative to their work add to the understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependency inherent in professional practice with vulnerable service users. We support the call for more in-depth studies of the diverse and ambivalent relational aspects of the professional practice.

The study's explorative approach encouraged the participants to reflect deeply on their work. This may explain why they to a great extent focused on ethical challenges and dilemmas, which have received special attention in this paper. We hesitate to view these experienced dilemmas as ethical problems that need to be solved once and for all. Rather, the article argues in favour of understanding them as continuous dilemmas, and thus as ongoing ethical discussions vital to professional work in this field. Instead of fighting, resisting, or giving in to these dilemmas, the participating social educators navigate, act, and persevere. However, the service users' access to, and use of new technologies and social media have actualized the dilemma between self-determination and care of people with intellectual disability, at worst rendering the social

educators powerless while their service users' risk being criminalized or subjected to abuse. Future research should be undertaken to explore both how to support vulnerable people's Internet use and how to support the professionals that work with them.

Limitations

This study is limited to exploring the professionals' experiences; thus, the service users' experiences are left unexplored. In addition to our call for further research on Internet use for vulnerable people, a natural progression of this study is therefore to explore and analyse service users' experiences from similar encounters.

ORCID iD

Mari Husabø 🔟 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9551-448X

Note

1. The extensive restrictions and closedowns that hit services and institutions during the pandemic did not happen without controversy. Local Norwegian authorities were criticized for sidelining a large group of inhabitants, infringing their autonomy and right of self-determination. For more on this discussion, see for example https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/86w9r2/besoeks-forbudet and https://fontene.no/debatt/kommuners-besoksstans-under-pandemien-viser-at-personer-med-utviklingshemming-forstas-som-ting-ikke-som-mennesker-6.47.732598.af5732da9d

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III

Possibilities and Pitfalls: exploring social welfare professionals' experiences with Interpersonal Process Recall followed by focus group discussions

Authors:

Mari Husabø: Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen, Norway / Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway, ORCID 0000-0002-9551-448X

> *Email address: Mari.Husabo@hvl.no (Corresponding author)*

Magne Mæhle: Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway

> *Email address: Magne.Mehle@hvl.no*

Målfrid Råheim: Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen, Norway, ORCID 0000-0002-0458-9495

> *Email address: Malfrid.Raheim@uib.no*

Aud Marie Øien: Department of Welfare and Participation, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway, ORCID 0000-0003-3085-4640

> *Email address: Aud.Marie.Oien@hvl.no*

Abstract

Interpersonal process recall (IPR) is a qualitative research method employing video-assisted interviews, originating from training in psychotherapy skills. This method strongly emphasises recall and reflexivity, aiming to explore the interaction experience, primarily between clients and caregivers. It is used to study professions emphasising reflexive practice, such as psychotherapy and counselling but has been absent from research on social work professions. This article explores the experiences and reflections of five social workers and five social educators who participated in research applying a combination of IPR and focus

group methods. Overall, the findings suggest that the participants, possessing critical and reflective practice skills, found their involvement advantageous. Their capacity for reflection and reflexivity not only benefited the participants themselves but also facilitated the researchers in gaining new insights into professional experiences in professional and service user interaction.

Keywords

Social work, interpersonal process recall, reflexivity, professional practice, qualitative research

Introduction

Studies are increasingly exploring interaction in diverse social welfare frontline practices (e.g., Juhila et al., 2021; Pallisera et al., 2018; Solheim et al., 2020; Saario et al., 2018) However, gaining access to in-the-moment experiences and interactions has proven challenging for researchers (Larsen et al., 2008). As researchers and educators in the health and social sciences, we aim to contribute to developing professional practice. Therefore, we seek to explore and expand the understanding of research approaches that can facilitate such advancement.

This study is part of a larger research project investigating on-the-spot application of professional knowledge in encounters with vulnerable service users. The project's findings have been presented in two separate studies (Husabø et al., 2022, 2023). This article focuses on the experiences of participating social welfare professionals concerning the use of interpersonal process recall (IPR) and focus groups. This multi-method approach is previously

unprobed in studies on social welfare professionals. Our primary aim is to explore the opportunities these combined methods offer social welfare professionals, enabling them to gain fresh insights into their practices. Additionally, we address conceivable challenges and limitations inherent in this research approach.

Critical reflection, reflexivity and IPR

Fostering the ideals of reflectiveness and criticality in practice holds significant importance within social work. Equipping students with the ability to develop skills in reflection, critical thinking, and reflexivity is a central focus not only in education but also throughout professional practice (Lay & McGuire, 2010; Ruch, 2005, 2012; Theobald et al., 2017; Yip, 2006). However, the concepts of reflective practice, reflexivity and critical have diverse meanings and can be somewhat conflated in the literature (Askeland & Fook, 2009; D'Cruz et al., 2007; Watts, 2019). In a comprehensive discussion, D'Cruz et al. (2007) differentiate between critical reflection and reflexivity based on timing: Critical reflection involves looking back on and learning from past critical incidents, while reflexivity is an ongoing process where practitioners constantly question their own knowledge claims, demonstrating self-awareness, role awareness, and awareness of assumptions underlying their practice (cf. Ferguson, 2018; Herland, 2022; Sheppard, 2000). This learning is momentary, comparable to Schön's (2011) concept of "reflection-in-action". Despite diverse meanings, there are significant similarities in the emancipatory and ameliorative aims of reflexivity, critical reflection, and reflectivity for both social work practitioners and service users (D'Cruz et al., 2007).

Macaskie et al. (2015) highlight that IPR combines reflective and reflexive principles. IPR, described as 'talking about talking' (Macaskie et al., 2015, p. 229), fosters reflection, shared

exploration and pays attention to the interplay between researcher and participant dynamics. Initially developed as a skills training in therapy and counselling (Kagan et al., 1969), IPR is a qualitative interview method to access participants' in-the-moment experiences in professional settings (Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Larsen et al., 2008). A video-recorded encounter is reviewed with the participant shortly after, ideally within 48 hours, allowing for commentary and exploration of specific sequences and interactions (Elliott, 1986; Larsen et al., 2008; Macaskie et al., 2015). The participant is asked to remember and describe immediate experiences associated with occurrences in the conversation. This dialogue enables exploration of in-session interactions, potentially revealing previously inaccessible subconscious experiences, like emotional and cognitive aspects, aiding a deeper understanding (Janusz and Peräkylä, 2021).

While IPR is most commonly used in the counselling and psychotherapy profession (e.g., Elliott & Shapiro, 1988; Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Lloyd-Hazlett & Foster, 2014; Macaskie et al., 2015; Meekums et al., 2016; Solberg Kleiven et al., 2022; West & Clark, 2004), it has also been used in studies of professional practice in education, medicine and sport (e.g., Moskal & Wass, 2019; Natvik et al., 2022; Schwenk, 2019).

Within the social welfare field, various studies have employed video recordings of interactions in actual client situations (e.g., Dowling et al., 2019; Juhila et al., 2021). However, despite their potential, video data remain under-utilised in qualitative social work research (Miller Scarnato, 2019). As far as we know, IPR had not been employed to study professional practice in social work before our research. The project also pioneers a multi-method approach, combining IPR and focus groups for the first time.

Design, material and methods

This article draws from two studies employing IPR and focus group interviews. The current study aims to explore and discuss the use of this multi-method approach in investigating professional practice within two different social welfare services.

In the first study, five participants (*SW1 - SW5*) were female social workers employed at the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav). These social workers were part of work and activation programs, and the conversations with vulnerable young service users who were not in work, education or training were held at Nav's offices (Husabø et al., 2022). The second study included five social educators (*SE1 – SE5*)[1] employed by municipal services for people with intellectual disabilities. Among them, three were female (*SE1, SE2, SE5*), and two were male (*SE3, SE5*). These participants interacted with service users at home or at a day-care centre (Husabø et al., 2023). In both studies, the inclusion criteria were a bachelor's degree in social work and social education, respectively, and at least five years of experience in professional practice.

Each of the ten participating professionals recruited a service user with whom they were actively working to participate in the IPR recording. All participants endeavoured to recruit service users who were capable of providing consent, handling videorecording comfortably and refusing participation if they felt uncomfortable.

The intersubjective and reflexive lens offered by IPR enables a researcher to elicit a participant's experience of a research conversation and discover assumptions that might skew the researcher's understanding (Macaskie et al., 2015). The method emphasises critical reflection on intersubjective and relational phenomena, aiming to collaboratively explore, analyse, and interpret research data with participants (Macaskie et al., 2015; Meekums et al., 2016). The ten individual IPR interviews were each based on a video-recorded encounter and

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[1] The Norwegian title 'social educator' is sometimes translated into English as 'learning disability nurse'

conducted by the first author. While the interviews were mostly related to happenings in the video recording, professionals were also acquainted with a brief interview guide at the start. This guide addressed fixed topics like work experience, expectations prior to the recorded encounter, service user participation, the professional-user relationship, and experiences of being recorded and interviewed. To enhance the depth of reflections on IPR sessions, a focus group was organised for professionals in each study, moderated by the first author with the fourth author as co-moderator. The focus group's interview guide covered reflections on IPR sessions, regulatory framework influences, sources, and characteristics of professional knowledge.

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved both studies and identifiable data were anonymised. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement and withdrawal option (for more details on ethical considerations in the two studies, please refer to Husabø et al., 2022, 2023). However, research involving vulnerable people requires heightened ethical sensitivity. In studies involving those with intellectual disability, diminished cognitive abilities could intensify power imbalances (cf. Cudré-Mauroux et al., 2020; van der Weele & Bredewold, 2021). Yet, as service users did not directly engage with researchers, some concerns were mitigated. Additionally, using video cameras for studying interaction is often less intrusive for vulnerable people than an observer's presence (Danby, 2021). The professionals primed their users for video recording and verbally reiterated information. All participants provided their written consent.

Analysis

The data consists of transcripts from ten IPR interviews and two focus groups. These twelve transcripts include sequences exploring professionals' experiences of being video recorded and their reflections on the research project participation. Extracted from previous studies, we

analysed these sequences collectively. Employing Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (2021), we focused on reflexivity and collaboration. Our analysis centred on professionals' thoughts about video recordings, their IPR experiences and reflections, and the research project's potential impact on their professional practice.

In the initial phase, the first author familiarised herself with the content by reading and re-reading the material. Subsequently, discussions were held with the fourth author to form an overall impression. In the second phase, the first author conducted coding. Following this, the first and fourth authors engaged in discussions during the third phase and developed potential themes, which were:

1. *reflections on being recorded while working*

2. *reflections on sample/service user participants*

3. *participants' self-critical reflections*

4. *reflections on IPR*

5. *reflections on future practice*

The initial themes were discussed in the fourth phase relative to the coded extracts and the entire dataset. Subsequently, the themes were refined and reduced from five to two. Themes 1 and 4 were combined, as were 3 and 5, and theme 2 was omitted as an independent theme. The first author selected extract examples to illustrate themes and analytical points. All authors participated in defining, refining and naming the themes, before the final write-up in the sixth phase.

The two main themes developed in the analysis are *reflections on the method in use: awakening or checkmating,* and *reflections on present and future practice.*

Researcher position

7

We adhere to the understanding of IPR as an intersubjective approach in which both interviewer and interviewee are integral partners in a conversational process, focusing on opportunities for shared exploration and reflection (Macaskie et al., 2015). This enables a reflexive co-analysis of the recorded encounter. Self-reflexivity and self-awareness within the researcher position are essential to IPR, and we will revisit this topic in the discussion.

Qualitative research interviews share similarities with therapeutic encounters (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Nelson et al., 2015). Various studies (e.g., Larsen et al., 2008) emphasise the need for professionally trained interviewers to differentiate between IPR as a research interview and an avenue for counselling or guidance. This concern was less pronounced given the first author's educational background in anthropology and lack of professional experience in social work practice. Nonetheless, the IPR interviews still required heightened sensitivity, as professionals occasionally sought advice on addressing communication challenges or navigating complex scenarios. On such occasions, the first author had to ensure the interview's impartiality and prevent unintentional guidance.

While dual roles can challenge boundary-setting within the researcher's position, possessing expertise in client issues and adept questioning, listening, and responding skills can be advantageous for conducting in-depth interviews on professional practice (cf. Larsen et al., 2008). The first author undertook thorough preparation to address the lack of professional expertise. This entailed generating rough transcriptions of the video recordings to become acquainted with conversation dynamics and interactions and being present in three of the video-recorded sessions to gain context insight. Additionally, the first author reviewed the initial two IPR recordings with co-authors who held extensive clinical experience.

Findings

Reflections on the method in use: awakening or checkmating?

    1. Being video-recorded

The ten professionals had diverse responses to being recorded, initially expressing discomfort while closely scrutinising their appearance and expressions, as expressed by one social worker (*SW5*): '*Initially, looking at myself, it was horrible. But, beyond discomfort, you discover how you appear in a conversation. It's enlightening, actually*'. The professionals showed keen interest in interpreting their embodied messages, like noting open or dismissive attitudes and their impact on service users. Sensitivity to service users' cues was emphasised, and three participants in particular (*SW1, SW2, SW5*) valued the review of their expressions to refine their practice, such as minimising writing while the service user speaks or adopting a more relaxed posture. All participants had used video recordings during their education and considered them valuable resources for refining their approaches alongside peer guidance and service user feedback.

During recall, two social educators (*SE1, SE4)* mentioned nearly forgetting the camera during recorded sessions. As these two knew their service users very well, these instances reveal a distinct pattern in the data material: close professional-service user relationships seemed to correlate with less discomfort during video recording. In the recruitment process, nine of ten professionals chose service users with whom they were well-acquainted and on friendly terms. Social educators, who mostly met service users at home, generally felt less discomfort than social workers, who met the service users through sporadic office meetings. However, one of the social workers (*SW2*) noted that the camera heightened her attentiveness, leading to a more focused interaction with the service user.

In contrast to the experience of forgetting or becoming more alert due to the camera, some participants were significantly adversely impacted. One social worker (*SW3*) experienced stress, feeling internally pressured to ask insightful questions and bothered by the unstructured conversation. Similarly, one social educator (*SE3*) felt caught off guard, experiencing nervousness, restlessness, and an inability to listen or wait for the service user's lead. This was compounded by limited familiarity with the service user. Camera awareness also prompted two social workers (*SW1, SW4*) to provide more extensive explanations than usual. They attributed this to a desire for clarity, but looking back, they recognised that the camera negatively affected their sensitivity and feared that this could have distressed the service users.

2. *Participation in IPR and focus groups: inspiring and awakening*

Collectively, professionals acknowledged the project's benefits for their development. They valued the IPR interview approach, especially the possibility of pausing the recording to delve into specific events, countering the inclination to fall into routine during service user meetings. Addressing the risk of 'auto-piloting', recognised as intensifying by years of practice, professionals highlighted the project's awakening, motivational, and awareness-enhancing impact. Moreover, seasoned professionals believed that their extensive experience aided self-observation in recordings, fostering heightened confidence compared to newly educated professionals. In general consensus, professionals agreed that IPR yielded more comprehensive insights and reflections on practice than would projects solely based on interviews or video observations.

One social educator (*SE5*) was notably enthusiastic and appreciated especially the researcher's focus on aspects she had missed: '*the conversation we had in the aftermath was incredibly*

interesting when you had observed different elements than I did. Reflecting on oneself this way is kind of ... [laughs]. But it's an intense learning experience.'

In both focus groups, participants discussed the benefits of integrating reflective approaches in practice, agreeing that incorporating such methods at their workplace could have elevated their professional practice. The participants found that the project provided a desired opportunity to reflect on and discuss challenges, specific cases, and established routines. Peer guidance was supposed to aid this process but was frequently disrupted due to resource constraints.

Research participation also elicited emotional responses from some professionals, as expressed by one social worker (*SW5*) in the focus group: '*It feels good to be asked about how difficult conversations affect us. Because no one ever asks – it's always about the service user – but it's crucial to articulate that service user meetings can be challenging for us'.* The social workers emphasised the scarcity of chances to address and navigate the impact on themselves, their expectations, and their professional practice. Working with vulnerable service users in stagnant processes within a system (Nav) that emphasised change and development, they found value in exploring their reactions to complex situations and conversations with service users.

The social educators found the focus group both interesting and inspiring. They used this occasion to share experiences and reflections from various parts of the municipal services. The focus groups also served as platforms for the participants to voice their frustrations experienced in daily practice. Moreover, the focus groups effectively illuminated diverse experiences from participating in the research project, as the professionals explicitly discussed their feelings about being video-recorded and diving deeply into their practices.

3. *Potential risks of excessive self-awareness*

Despite the overall positive participation experience, challenges and issues emerged. The professionals, accustomed to working in stages and focusing on long-term change, found the in-depth, moment-by-moment focus in IPR demanding. In their typical practice, they would consider events within a broader context and long-term change perspectives. Thus, some experienced difficulties during recall, struggling to separate the video-recorded session from the larger relationship context. Additionally, in anticipation of the upcoming IPR interview, one participant (*SW2*) felt compelled to explore the service user's responses and opinions more deeply, aiming to offer richer insights to the researcher. Similarly, another participant (*SW3*), preoccupied with the upcoming interview and recall, felt pressure to formulate 'adequate' questions.

Professionals generally believed service users were not unduly impacted by the camera and had positive experiences from the video-recorded sessions. This influenced how professionals perceived the sessions as more or less 'typical conversations'. Yet, four of the five social educators, whose video-recorded sessions were at service users' homes, voiced challenges with adjusting to the camera setup, causing reduced activity compared to the typical setting. During recorded meetings, participants and service users were seated, a contrast to the usual encounters, which would include, for example, household activities. As such, the setting was somewhat artificial, which affected the conversation. This points towards the most significant concern shared by all ten professionals: despite their experience of participation as awakening, the camera's presence made them concerned about what they were saying and how. Retrospectively, they worried about possible adverse effects on vulnerable service users. Consequently, the research method might have introduced artificial elements to the actual sessions and relationships, differing from their 'normal' encounters.

Reflections on present and future practice

As previously mentioned, participants expressed a keen interest in assessing their appearances in the video-recorded sessions and evaluating their potential impact on service users. Many explicitly expressed a desire for self-critical examination of their practice. Throughout the IPR interviews, participants provided numerous critical assessments of their actions and remarks. They analysed how they directed conversations with service users, the content and style of their communication, and the quality of their dialogue. Among the social workers, self-critique centred on their ability to delve deeply into service users' perspectives, challenge stagnation, ensure comfort, and use accessible language. A recurring theme was handling silence. Allowing quiet moments was considered important, offering service users time to speak and respond. Participants also believed that silent intervals could provide service users with valuable training in conversational participation.

The heightened awareness professionals gained from reviewing the recordings included details such as recognising how unnecessary writing or paper shuffling could disrupt conversations or divert attention. Several of the professionals contemplated whether service users might perceive such distractions as disinterest or inattention, potentially leading to reduced engagement or heightened nervousness.

Furthermore, some participants used the IPR interview to shape their future approaches directly. Responding to questions about their decisions, reasoning, and reflections on concrete meetings prompted considerations for addressing distinct challenges. One social educator valued insights into facilitating dialogue around sensitive topics, like food habits and loneliness, as well as the effectiveness of one-on-one conversation: '*I learned the value of sitting down with him and planning our conversation. Often, he avoids these topics. But this time, since we planned it, he seemed more at ease discussing it. I gained valuable insights*

from that session.', he remarked. Another social educator (SE1) shared a similar experience during the focus group: '*Just talking things through seemed beneficial for him. So, actually, we've introduced more one-on-one conversations. It appears to be beneficial for him.*' A social worker (*SW4*) highlighted that exploring the recorded session with the researcher provided concrete ideas for collaborating with child welfare services. In summary, the professionals affirmed that the IPR method fostered reflection on current practices and offered inspiration for enhancing future endeavours.

Discussion

Overall, the participating professionals reported positive experiences with the IPR method, highlighting its capacity to observe, explore, and reflect on their practice. The focus groups additionally provided a platform for collective reflection, discussions, and sharing research participation experiences. However, intriguing insights emerged regarding their diverse perceptions of the camera's presence, immersion in concrete practice, and implications for future practice.

Consequently, our discussion unfolds in two parts. Initially, we discuss the potential presented by this unique multi-method approach. Subsequently, we address potential pitfalls linked to utilising this method for studying social work professions. The discussion concludes with considerations of the researcher's role.

Possibilities

The participants perceived the IPR sessions as a unique opportunity to review and delve into their practice in in-situ encounters, encompassing bodily expressions, communication skills, dialogic leadership, and impacts on service users. They believed participating in the study

gave them valuable knowledge for their future practice. This included heightened awareness of their conduct in meetings, steering conversations, effective dialogue leadership, and a clearer understanding of service users' challenges in concrete situations. It also sparked direct inspiration, exemplified by the social worker (*SW5*) aiming to enhance collaboration with child welfare services, and the social educator (*SE4*) gaining new strategies for addressing sensitive topics in service user meetings.

The participants pronounced wish to assess, evaluate and learn from the video-recorded sessions aligns with the essence of critical reflection. This involves employing reflective abilities to retrospectively analyse and learn from past experiences (cf. D'Cruz et al., 2007; Ferguson, 2018; Sheppard, 2000). Coupled with their focus on how both their own practice and the camera impacted service users, their approach corresponds to reflective practice's characteristics - processes involving self-recall and self-articulation and the capability to use these in professional contexts (cf. Ruch, 2005; Watts, 2019; Yip, 2006). Given these skills' emphasis in education and practice, our findings suggest that the social workers and social educators' reflective capacity facilitated their engagement with IPR's emphasis on exploration, recall and reflection (cf. Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021; Macaskie et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the facilitation of the IPR recording seemed to give rise to new ideas for interaction with service users. For instance, social educators (*SE1, SE4)* found one-on-one conversation very beneficial, something they had not used in-depth before. Thus, akin to other studies (e.g., Larsen et al., 2008), our study afforded professionals new insights into their practice, with IPR serving as a productive tool.

The professional further perceived that the multi-method approach not only had the potential to enhance their own practice but also could yield rich data for researchers. This perspective gains support in the findings of Miller Scarnato (2019), who argues that video recordings'

capacity to capture both verbal and non-verbal communication gives it an advantage over non-visual qualitative research methods.

The varying impact of the camera on the professionals' experiences could be attributed to their relationships with the service users. The professionals' emphasis on recruiting service users with whom they were on friendly terms underscores the interdependence between them and the service users. While it was important for the professionals to develop good relationships with vulnerable service users (Husabø et al., 2022, 2023), they also required a sense of security in the recording setting.

As prior studies highlight (e.g., Ferguson, 2018; 2022; Ruch, 2005), practitioners often lack time and space for personal reflection and analysis. The professionals in our study embraced the reflective time provided by IPR. Moreover, the social workers indicated that, while it was a one-time occurrence, the focus group partially replaced peer guidance and professional supervision they had previously received. Participants valued the opportunities for shared experience, supportive discussions, and collective reflection within these focus groups.

The professionals used their participation to improve their practice and take advantage of a unique opportunity for shared reflection, indicating that the multi-method approach had a broader impact than just 'research itself'. Their proactive engagement resonates with the principles of participatory action research, echoing an action-focused and change-oriented approach to social problems (cf. Miller Scarnato, 2019). This also reflects their reflexive capacities, which involve ongoing self-questioning about their knowledge claims, demonstrating self-awareness and an awareness of their roles (cf. D'Cruz et al., 2007; Ferguson, 2018; Sheppard, 2000). This implies that the application of IPR in research involving social workers and educators, aimed at exploring, analysing, and interpreting aspects of research data, aligns with findings from prior studies on other professions (such as

Janusz and Peräkylä, 2021; Macaskie et al., 2015) that underscores the inherent reflective and reflexive potential of the method.

In essence, IPR invites reflection and shared exploration, and the professionals in our studies embraced this opportunity to get the most out of their involvement. Regarding the outcome for the researchers, the combination of IPR and focus group methods facilitated reflective discussions and joint exploration, providing researchers insights into dimensions of the professional experience that would have remained elusive through standalone interviews, video observations, or focus groups.

Despite initial feelings of nervousness and embarrassment, the participating professionals mostly forgot about the camera and believed that the service users did the same, aligning with the findings of previous IPR studies (Larsen et al., 2008). The experience of one participant (*SW2*), who felt heightened awareness due to the camera's presence, also corresponds with earlier studies indicating the positive impact of cameras in clinical settings (Hutchby et al., 2012). Furthermore, the professionals in our studies perceived a link between their years of work experience and their ability to effectively engage in and benefit from a project that incorporated video recordings and interview sessions focused on exploration and reflection. Given that our studies involved only participants with more than five years of experience, we lack data to determine whether those with less experience would benefit less. However, in line with the emphasis placed on reflective practice (cf. Ruch, 2005; Yip, 2006) and practice knowledge within the social work domain (e.g., Trevithick, 2008), it is plausible that seasoned practitioners are better positioned than their less experienced colleagues to partake in such projects.

An intriguing finding is that the professionals not only welcomed the reflective and reflexive method in general but also perceived it as a valuable resource for experienced practitioners.

Thus, substantial experience was considered beneficial both for applying the methodology and achieving positive results.

Pitfalls

As argued, having a good and trusting relationship with the service user appeared to contribute to a positive experience of the recorded session. This was highlighted notably by one participant (*SE3*), who lacked familiarity with the service user. This and other minor disturbances experienced by the professionals, along with the question of whether they might create inconvenience for the service users, were of immediate concern to the professionals. While we have argued that the professionals' adeptness in employing reflection and reflexivity rendered them well-prepared and suited for research participation, it is crucial to acknowledge that having critical approaches to one's own practice can also yield adverse outcomes. Yip (2006) emphasises that self-reflection – given appropriate conditions such as sufficient time, a supportive organisational context, and personal resources – can help social workers improve their personal and professional development.

Conversely, under unfavourable conditions like heavy workloads and time constraints, social workers' individualistic approach to self-reflection can be detrimental to their professional and personal growth (Yip, 2006). The participating professionals in our project explicitly expressed that they wanted to have a critical approach towards their practice, with a specific focus on recognising areas for improvement. Notably, two participants (*SE3, SW2*) appeared particularly engaged in consistently addressing their own weaknesses and limitations.

As we have seen, IPR's focus on a specific interaction moment coupled with current reflections on the recording is regarded as a strength of this approach (Janusz and Peräkylä, 2021). Larsen et al. (2008) argue that video recording participants in a single session and

subsequently interviewing them about it is less intrusive to the therapeutic process and is thus more ethically responsible than conducting multiple sessions throughout therapy. However, our findings suggest potential disadvantages to the one-session approach. Although participants demonstrated the capacity for both reflection on their immediate practice and more general reflection, social work practice can – akin to reflexivity – be understood as processes of interactions (D'Cruz et al., 2007; Payne, 2014). The challenge voiced by participating professionals regarding differentiating between the single session and their overall relationship with service users illustrates the difficulty of isolating one encounter from a series of events, essentially isolating it from the broader 'social work process'. Similarly, the professionals found it demanding to concentrate solely on experiences from a single session during the focus groups, as their discussions often encompassed their overarching experience within their comprehensive practice.

Hence, we advocate for caution. As highlighted by Larsen et al. (2006), researchers must debrief with participants at the end of IPR interviews to ensure they do not experience excessive distress due to their participation. However, we contend that when a research design focuses solely on one session, researchers lack the chance to ensure appropriate conditions for the participating professionals to engage in self-reflection. The professionals' call for supervision, coupled with the time constraints in practice (Herland, 2022; Husabø et al., 2022), indicates the possibility of inadequate conditions for some participants. To mitigate the risk of participants excessively analysing and evaluating their shortcomings (cf. Yip, 2006), potentially leading to adverse effects rather than professional growth, we recommend that forthcoming IPR research designs incorporate multiple meeting points. Ideally, these would occur both before and after the IPR session. In our studies, we organised an information meeting before data development and assured participants they could contact us at any point during the research process. Moreover, while the focus groups proved valuable in enabling the

professionals to reflect on their research participation, they did not provide an opportunity for individual debriefing.

Role of the researcher

Ideally, reflection, reflexivity, and critical thinking are integral to practice (Askeland & Fook, 2009; Yip, 2006). Similarly, reflexivity is a valuable tool for researchers to engage in critical self-awareness throughout the research process (Probst, 2015; Råheim et al., 2016). Without venturing into an extensive discussion of reflexivity's multiplex nature (cf. Field et al., 2022; Finlay & Gough, 2003; Probst, 2015), we concur that reflexivity is vital in documenting how research knowledge is generated.

The fact that the participants did not view the research project as intended to test skills or knowledge may relate to the first author's lack of professional experience. Besides reducing the risk of blurring the boundary between research interviews and counselling sessions, this lack of professional experience also led to a dual asymmetry in the interviews wherein the researcher had a 'superior' position in terms of planning and leading the project, while the professionals had a 'superior' position in terms of professional knowledge (cf. Råheim et al., 2016). This element of 'studying-up', whereby the participants had expert knowledge about their professional practice, may have reduced the potential threat from an expert outsider. This may add to our understanding of why the professionals did not seem especially worried about their own participation.

Recent IPR approaches have helped create a mutually constructed experience (Macaskie et al., 2015). This intersubjective element may also contribute to the asymmetry and shift the power dynamics between researcher and participants towards greater equality. As video recordings enables researchers to tease out with the participants how they experience the

research conversation (Macaskie et al., 2015), it can challenge the researchers' perceptions and interpretations. The dynamic interplay between researcher and participant in the research interview requires mutual respect, recognition, and trust (Larsen et al., 2008; Macaskie et al., 2015). This resembles the interdependence observed between professionals and service users in our studies, as good and trusting relationships with service users appeared to positively affect professionals' stress levels and coping ability during their video-recorded sessions. As in the IPR interviews, the shifts in the knowing and not-knowing positions between the researchers and the professionals (cf. Råheim et al., 2016) added to the interactive dynamics of the focus groups, increasing the focus groups' inherent opportunities to shift the balance of power towards greater equality (Wilkinson, 1999).

Concluding remarks

The present study aimed to investigate how ten social workers and social educators perceived participation in studies that combined IPR and focus group research methods. IPR's emphasis on extensive recall, reflection, and collaborative exploration aligned with the professionals' wishes and capacities for in-depth exploration and reflection on their own practice. They appreciated the opportunity to observe, explore and reflect during IPR sessions, as well as to engage in more profound discussion within the focus groups. These findings support previous research emphasising IPR's value in capturing nuanced aspects of professional experience during interactions between professionals and clients.

Furthermore, a key aim of this article was to explore an underutilised multi-method within the realm of social welfare professions. We believe that with further refinement, IPR holds the potential to provide new understandings in this research domain. Additionally, the method can contribute to increased utilisation of video data in qualitative social work research.

The study, however, does identify certain challenges associated with IPR. Unlike previous IPR studies within the counselling and psychotherapy professions, our findings indicate that the prevalent one-session approach in IPR can pose difficulties for professionals who conceptualise their work as ongoing processes of change. For these professionals, reflecting upon isolated moments from a single session might curtail their learning potential. Another concern relates to the possibility that research participation could initiate intense reflective processes without researchers having the opportunity to ensure conducive conditions for self-reflection, such as adequate time and resources for professional supervision. At worst, this may disrupt participants' professional development and growth. In our multi-method design, the subsequent focus group partially mitigated this concern. Alongside sharing experiences and reflections from search participation, the focus groups provided a platform for discussing and reflecting on practice in general. Taken together, we recommend that future studies offer participants more opportunities for debriefing and guidance.

Moreover, we take seriously the professionals' concerns about recruiting service users capable of comprehending the implications of participating in IPR recordings. We also emphasise the importance of ensuring that participation does not lead to adverse consequences for the service users. Although our study's findings indicate the usefulness of this methodology for social welfare professions, we urge caution regarding the inclusion of vulnerable service users. Our research involving social educators working with individuals with intellectual disabilities underscores the necessity of taking particular care planning for the context and framing of recordings, prioritising the safety of participants, and adhering to ethical and responsible research principles.

While the existing literature on using IPR significantly enriches our understanding of in-depth interviewing and reflexive approaches, it primarily involves researchers who are also professionally trained counsellors or therapists. While we acknowledge the advantages of

adept professional insiders participating in qualitative, in-depth research closely tied to practice, we also welcome further explorations into the possibilities, benefits, and challenges of utilising the IPR methodology from an outsider perspective.

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IV

NSD

Mari Husabø

6851 SOGNDAL

Tilrådning fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 7-27

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 22.03.2018 for prosjektet:

60031	*Professional knowledge. Use of knowledge in professional conversations among social welfare officers, child welfare and social educators*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskulen på Vestlandet, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Mari Husabø*

Vurdering
Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er unntatt konsesjonsplikt og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling
Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:
• opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
• vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
• eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet
Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke endringer du må melde, samt endringsskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet
Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i Meldingsarkivet.

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt
Ved prosjektslutt 31.12.2021 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Vennlig hilsen

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Pernille Ekornrud Grøndal

Kontaktperson: Pernille Ekornrud Grøndal tlf: 55 58 36 41 / pernille.grondal@nsd.no
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

VEILEDER FRA ANNEN INSTITUSJON

Du har opplyst i meldeskjema at Målfrid Råheim fra Universitetet i Bergen vil være veileder på doktorgradsprosjektet, og ha tilgang til datamateriale med personopplysninger. Høgskulen på Vestlandet er behandlingsansvarlige institusjon. Personvernombudet forutsetter at ansvaret for behandlingen er avklart med eksterne ansatte, og anbefaler at dere inngår en avtale som omfatter ansvarsfordeling, hvem som initierer prosjektet, bruk av data, eventuelt eierskap.

FORMÅL

Formålet med prosjektet er å utforske hvordan kunnskap blir referert til, reflektert om og oppleves å bli brukt blant profesjonsutøvere innen sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie.

UTVALG

Utvalget vil bestå av 15 - 18 profesjonsutøvere, som vil være fokuset i analysene. Disse vil være jevnt fordelt mellom profesjonene sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie. Utvalget vil også bestå av 15 - 18 pasienter/brukere som inngår i behandlingsituasjonen med profesjonsutøverne som er deltakere i prosjektet. Anvendelsen av denne videoen vil medføre at bruker/pasients reaksjoner også vil bli vurdert (ref. intervjuguide punkt 4, og særlig 5).

En del av utvalget består av personer over 18 år som fremdeles er under barnevernstiltak og eller hjelpetiltak. Personene skal selv samtykke til deltakelse.

DATAINNSAMLING

Datamaterialet skal i hovedsak bestå av personlige intervjuer med profesjonsutøvere, og i disse skal metoden interpersonal process recall (IRP) anvendes. Dette innebærer at en behandlingssituasjon mellom profesjonsutøver og bruker/pasient på forhånd blir filmet, og så vises videoopptaket i intervjuet med profesjonsutøveren. Han/hun kan da kommentere og reflektere over sin egen praksis. Du har per epost 15.05.18 skissert opp tre situasjoner som vil filmes:
1. Samtale mellom sosionom og brukar/klient. Du har oppgitt at målet er å rekruttere sosionomer som f.eks. jobber innen NAV, og at målet er en samtale med en bruker som er på vei inn i arbeid el.l.
2. Samtale mellom barnevernspedagog og ungdom over 18 år som er under, eller på vei ut av, barnevernet sin omsorg
3. Samtale mellom vernepleier og bruker (med utviklingshemming) som er på vei til å flytte inn i egen bolig eller lignende overgangsfase.

Datamaterialet i sin helhet vil derfor bestå av lydopptak av kvalitative intervjuer med profesjonsutøver, videoopptak der profesjonsutøver og en bruker/pasient inngår, og fokusgruppeintervjuer med profesjonsutøvere.

INFORMASJON OG SAMTYKKE

Du har opplyst i meldeskjema at utvalget, herunder pårørende/verger, vil motta skriftlig og muntlig informasjon om prosjektet, og samtykke skriftlig til å delta. Vår vurdering er at informasjonsskrivet til utvalget er godt utformet. Ved intervju av ikke-samtykkekompetente personer skal prosjektleder sørge for å gi individuelt tilpasset informasjon, selv om pårørende/verger samtykker på deres vegne, se avsnittet nedenfor.

Vi bemerker at personvernombudet har foretatt en vurdering på bakgrunn av dagens lovverk. I løpet av august 2018 vil imidlertid nye personvernregler gjelde. Blant annet stilles det mer omfattende krav til informasjon og samtykke, og behandlingsansvarlig institusjon må løpende vurdere om informasjonen som er gitt er tilstrekkelig etter det nye regelverket. Vi anbefaler derfor at du benytter vår nye mal for informasjonsskriv, som er lagt ut på våre nettsider: http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/hjelp/informasjon_samtykke/index.html Oppdatert skriv sendes til personvernombudet@nsd.no, slik at vi kan foreta en rask vurdering av skrivet før utvalget kontaktes. For mer informasjon om det nye regelverket, og en veileder om samtykke, viser vi til Datatilsynets hjemmesider: https://www.datatilsynet.no/samfunnsomrader/overordnet-om-rettigheter-og-plikter/samtykke/

REDUSERT SAMTYKKEKOMPETANSE

Brukerne som inngår i videoopptak med vernepleierne kan ha redusert samtykkekompetanse på grunn av utviklingshemning. Deltagelse i prosjektet vil komme denne brukergruppen tilgode, da den vil gi innspill til hvordan vernepleiere og andre profesjonsutøvere bedre kan utføre jobben sin i møte med personer med utviklingshemning. Samtykkekompetansen vil bli vurdert av profesjonsutøveren som inngår i prosjektet. Det opplyses om at personer med redusert samtykkekompetanse vil bli gitt tilpasset informasjon, samt at hjelpeverge/nærmeste pårørende informeres om prosjektet, og eventuelt gir en uttalelse om hvorvidt opplysninger om vedkommende kan anvendes i studien. Det vurderes at den valgte fremgangsmåten for inklusjon av personer uten samtykkekompetanse bidrar i betydelig grad til å redusere personvernulempen ved deltakelse. På bakgrunn av dette finner personvernombudet at samfunnsinteressen i at behandlingen finner sted, overstiger ulempen den medfører for den enkelte registrerte.

INFORMASJONSSIKKERHET

Personvernombudet forutsetter at du behandler alle data i tråd med Høgskulen på Vestlandet sine retningslinjer for datahåndtering og informasjonssikkerhet.

PROSJEKTSLUTT OG ANONYMISERING

Prosjektslutt er oppgitt til 31.12.2021. Det fremgår av meldeskjema at du vil anonymisere datamaterialet ved prosjektslutt.

Anonymisering innebærer vanligvis å:

- slette direkte identifiserbare opplysninger som navn, fødselsnummer, koblingsnøkkel
- slette eller omskrive/gruppere indirekte identifiserbare opplysninger som bosted/arbeidssted, alder, kjønn
- slette lydopptak
- slette eller sladde videoopptak

For en utdypende beskrivelse av anonymisering av personopplysninger, se Datatilsynets veileder:

https://www.datatilsynet.no/globalassets/global/regelverk-skjema/veiledere/anonymisering-veileder-041115.pdf

Intervjuguide for intervju med den einskilde profesjonsutøvar og for samla fokusgruppeintervju i kvar delstudie

Spørsmål 1 til 8 skal ta utgangspunkt i videoopptak av ein profesjonell samtale/møte mellom profesjonsutøvar (sosionom/barnevernspedagog/vernepleiar) og brukar/klient/pasient, og vil gå føre seg mellom den einskilde profesjonsutøvar og forskar/stipendiat. Spørsmål 9 - 13 er av meir generell kunnskapsmessig karakter, og vil vera utgangspunkt for fokusgruppeintervjua som skal gå føre seg i kvar delstudie (eitt fokusgruppeintervju for sosialt arbeid, eitt for barnevernspedagogar og eitt for vernepleiarar).

Intervjuguiden er utforma som framlegg til tema heller enn som direkte spørsmål, sidan dei einskilde intervjua tek utgangspunkt i videoopptak av ein profesjonell samtale. Fokuset vil vera på å utforska og konkretisera hendingar, handlingar, opplevingar og uttrykk ut frå videoopptaka. Intervjuguiden vil bli tilpassa kvar av dei tre delstudiane.

<u>Individuelle intervju</u>

1. Om arbeidstilhøvet:
    - *Lengd i noverande arbeid*
    - *Tidlegare arbeidserfaring*
    - *Eventuell tilleggsutdanning/anna kompetanseheving*
    - *Rettleiing: gjev eller får rettleiing*
2. Skildring av forventingar til og målet med samtalen/møtet
3. Innhald i møtet:
    - *tema/fokus*
    - *delte du di faglege forståing med brukar/klient/pasient?*
    - *semje/usemje*
4. Brukar/klient/pasient sin medverknad, eventuelt ikkje-medverknad
5. Oppleving av relasjonen brukar – profesjonell i møtet
    - *Dine reaksjonar*
    - *Brukar/klient/pasient sine reaksjonar*

6. Vurdering av særlege hendingar undervegs i samtalen – døme på spørsmål:

    - *Kva var grunnen til at du stilte [dette/denne typen/x] spørsmål?*
    - *Kva førte til at det vart eit temaskifte i samtalen [her]?*

7. Om sjølve intervjusituasjonen: korleis erfarte du det at samtalen/møtet vart filma?
8. Er det andre tema du ynskjer å ta opp?

Fokusgruppeintervju

9. Om sjølve intervjusituasjonen: korleis erfarte de det at samtalen/møtet vart filma?
10. På kva måte styrer rammevilkåra (lover/forskrifter, økonomiske rammer, tidsressursar, organisering med meir) den profesjonelle samtalen?
11. Kjelder til kunnskap i den profesjonelle samtalen.
12. Kva kjenneteiknar den profesjonelle kunnskapen i dykkar profesjon (sosialt arbeid/barnevern/vernepleie)?
13. Andre tema de ynskjer å ta opp?

FORESPØRSEL OM DELTAKELSE I FORSKNINGSPROSJEKTET

PROFESJONSKUNNSKAP. BRUK AV KUNNSKAP I PROFESJONELLE SAMTALAR I SOSIALT ARBEID, BARNEVERN OG VERNEPLEIE

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et doktorgradsprosjekt som skal undersøke hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere bruker kunnskap i yrkesutøvelsen sin. Forskingsprosjektet retter seg mot profesjonsutøvere innen de ovennevnte profesjonene, og består av tre enkeltstående delstudium.

Det er Høgskulen på Vestlandet som er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

HVA INNEBÆRER PROSJEKTET?

Målet med prosjektet er å utvikle kunnskapen om hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere (profesjonsutøvere) opplever, reflekterer rundt og refererer til kunnskap i arbeidet sitt. Prosjektet vil filme profesjonsutøvere i samtale med en bruker/klient/pasient. Videoopptaket vil bli gjort under et vanlig møte mellom profesjonsutøver og bruker/klient, og vil vare maksimalt en time. Deltakelsen i prosjektet skal ikke føre til avvik fra den vanlige oppfølgingen av brukeren. Videoopptaket vil deretter bli brukt som bakgrunn for et intervju mellom forsker/stipendiat og profesjonsutøveren, der målet er å utforske og reflektere om praksis og yrkesutøving.

For hver delstudie/profesjon vil det bli gjennomført et fokusgruppeintervju for alle deltakerne (5-6 deltakere per delstuidum).

Prosjektet vil ikke registrere opplysninger om bruker/klient/pasient ut over det som framkommer på videoopptaket. Videoopptaket skal være et grunnlag for intervjuet mellom deg som profesjonsutøver og stipendiat/forsker, og personidentifiserende opplysninger om bruker/klient/pasient vil ikke bli nedtegnet. Å diskutere/reflektere rundt bruker sine reaksjoner slik de fremkommer på videoopptaket kan imidlertid bli aktuelt.

Du som deltaker vil bli spurt om å foreslå brukere som kan være aktuelle for den profesjonelle samtalen. De aktuelle brukerne skal får informasjon både gjennom informasjonsskriv om prosjektet og muntlig fra deg somsaksbehandler.

De opplysningene som vil bli registret om deg som deltaker er alder, kjønn og arbeidssted. Alle data vil bli anonymisert og oppbevart på sikker forskingsserver ved HVL – se informasjon under.

MULIGE FORDELER OG ULEMPER

Deltakelsen i prosjektet er frivillig, og skal ikke medføre noen ulemper for deg i jobbsammenheng. Vi vil klarere deltakelsen i prosjektet med din nærmeste leder. Deltakelsen skal heller ikke føre til avvik fra oppfølging for bruker. Bruk av videoopptak kan likevel oppleves som ubehagelig, særlig i starten. Erfaring fra tidligere bruk av videoopptak av profesjonsutøving viser at denne opplevelsen avtar etter hvert. Du kan når som helst underveis i samtalen be om at opptaket stoppes dersom du eller bruker opplever det som ubehagelig.

Målet med prosjektet er å utvikle kunnskap om hvordan kunnskap blir refert til, reflektert om og brukt i faktisk yrkesutøving. Gjennom deltakelse i dette prosjektet kan du sammen med andre deltakere bidra til utvikling av denne kunnskapen, både i utdanningen av fremtidige profesjonsutøvere og dessuten til direkte bruk i feltet.

FRIVILLIG DELTAKELSE OG MULIGHET FOR Å TREKKE SITT SAMTYKKE

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Dersom du ønsker å delta, undertegner du samtykkeerklæringen på siste side. Du kan når som helst og uten å oppgi noen grunn trekke ditt samtykke. Dersom du trekker deg fra prosjektet, kan du kreve å få slettet eksisterende lyd- og videoopptak.

Dersom du senere har spørsmål til prosjektet, kan du kontakte Mari Husabø (Mari.Husabo@hvl.no, tlf: +4757677689/41511238).

HVA SKJER MED INFORMASJONEN OM DEG?

Informasjonen som registreres om deg skal kun brukes slik som beskrevet i hensikten med studien. Du har rett til innsyn i hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg og rett til å få korrigert eventuelle feil i de opplysningene som er registrert.

Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn og fødselsnummer eller andre direkte gjenkjennende opplysninger. En kode knytter deg til dine opplysninger gjennom en navneliste.

Prosjektleder har ansvar for den daglige driften av forskningsprosjektet og at opplysninger om deg blir behandlet på en sikker måte. Informasjon om deg vil bli anonymisert eller slettet senest fem år etter prosjektslutt. Forventet dato for prosjektslutt er 31.12.2021.

De transkriberte og anonymiserte intervjuene kan bli brukt til en sammenlignende studie av de tre delstudiene etter avslutting av doktorgradsprosjektet. Ingen andre enn phd-stipendiat og veiledere vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet.

GODKJENNING

Prosjektet er godkjent av NSD 27.6.2018, prosjektnummer 60031

SAMTYKKE TIL DELTAKELSE I PROSJEKTET

JEG ER VILLIG TIL Å DELTA I PROSJEKTET

Sted og dato   Deltakers signatur

Deltakers navn med trykte bokstaver

Høgskulen på Vestlandet

PROFESJONSKUNNSKAP. BRUK AV KUNNSKAP I PROFESJONELLE SAMTALAR I SOSIALT ARBEID, BARNEVERN OG VERNEPLEIE

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et doktorgradsprosjekt som skal undersøke hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere bruker kunnskap i yrkesutøvelsen sin. Forskingsprosjektet retter seg mot profesjonsutøverene, men vil ta utgangspunkt i videoopptak av en samtale mellom bruker/klient og profesjonsutøveren.

Siden din saksbehandler er deltaker i denne studien, vil vi spørre deg om vi kan få tillatelse til å ta videoopptak mellom deg og din saksbehandler. Det er din saksbehandler som har foreslått deg. Det er Høgskulen på Vestlandet som er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

HVA INNEBÆRER PROSJEKTET?

Målet med prosjektet er å utvikle kunnskapen om hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere (profesjonsutøvere) opplever, reflekterer rundt og refererer til kunnskap i arbeidet sitt. Prosjektet vil derfor filme profesjonsutøvere i samtale med en bruker/klient. Videoopptaket vil deretter bli brukt som bakgrunn for et intervju mellom forsker/stipendiat og profesjonsutøveren.

Vi vil ikke innhente eller registrere andre type opplysninger om deg enn det som fremkommer på videoopptaket. Opplysninger som navn og adresse vil ikke bli registrert. Videoopptaket vil bare bli brukt som bakgrunn for samtalen mellom profesjonsutøveren og stipendiat, og personidentifiserende opplysninger vil ikke bli registrert for videre bruk i prosjektet. Samtalen mellom saksbehandler og stipendiat vil ta utgangspunkt i reaksjoner og situasjoner som fremkommer i videoopptaket. Opptaket vil bli gjort under et vanlig møte mellom deg og din saksbehandler, og vil vare maksimalt en time. Deltakelsen i prosjektet skal ikke føre til avvik fra den vanlige oppfølgingen din.

MULIGE FORDELER OG ULEMPER

Selv om deltakelsen i prosjektet – videoopptaket – ikke skal føre til avvik fra din vanlige oppfølging, er det noen som syns det er ubehagelig å bli filmet. Som oftest avtar denne følelsen etter hvert som man kommer i gang. Du kan når som helst underveis i samtalen be om at opptaket stoppes dersom du opplever det som ubehagelig.

FRIVILLIG DELTAKELSE OG MULIGHET FOR Å TREKKE SITT SAMTYKKE

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Dersom du ønsker å delta, undertegner du samtykkeerklæringen på siste side. Du kan når som helst og uten å oppgi noen grunn trekke ditt samtykke. Dette vil ikke få konsekvenser for din videre oppfølging. Dersom du trekker deg fra prosjektet, kan du kreve å få slettet eksisterende videoopptak.

Dersom du senere har spørsmål til prosjektet, kan du kontakte Mari Husabø (Mari.Husabo@hvl.no, tlf: +4757677689).

HVA SKJER MED INFORMASJONEN OM DEG?

Videoopptaket skal bare brukes som grunnlag for intervjuet med profesjonsutøveren. Du har rett til innsyn i hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg og rett til å få korrigert eventuelle feil i de opplysningene som er registrert.

Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn og fødselsnummer eller andre direkte gjenkjennende opplysninger.

Prosjektleder har ansvar for den daglige driften av forskningsprosjektet og at opplysninger om deg blir behandlet på en sikker måte. Informasjon om deg vil bli anonymisert eller slettet senest fem år etter prosjektslutt. Forventet dato for prosjektslutt er 31.12.2021.

GODKJENNING

Prosjektet er godkjent av NSD Personvernombudet for forskning 27.6.2018, prosjektnummer 60031

SAMTYKKE TIL DELTAKELSE I PROSJEKTET

JEG ER VILLIG TIL Å DELTA I PROSJEKTET

Sted og dato   Deltakers signatur

Deltakers navn med trykte bokstaver

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Profesjonelle samtaler i sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie»?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et doktorgradsprosjekt som skal undersøke hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere bruker kunnskap i yrkesutøvelsen sin. Forskingsprosjektet retter seg mot profesjonsutøvere innen de ovennevnte profesjonene, og består av tre enkeltstående delstudium.

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål
Målet med prosjektet er å utvikle kunnskapen om hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere (profesjonsutøvere) opplever, reflekterer rundt og refererer til kunnskap i arbeidet sitt. Vi ønsker å utvikle kunnskap om hvordan kunnskap blir referert til, reflektert rundt og brukt i faktisk yrkesutøvelse. Gjennom deltakelse i dette prosjektet kan du sammen med andre deltakere bidra til utvikling av denne kunnskapen, både i utdanningen av fremtidige profesjonsutøvere og dessuten til direkte bruk i feltet.

Prosjektet er del av en doktorgradsstudie.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Det er Høgskulen på Vestlandet som er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Doktorgradsstipendiaten er også knyttet til Universitetet i Bergen gjennom opptak på doktorgradsprogrammet

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget til studien i vernepleie er profesjonsutøvere med vernepleierutdanning og mer enn fem års praksiserfaring etter fullført grunnutdanning. Prosjektet skal til sammen ha 5-7 deltagende vernepleiere, og du er valgt ut etter samtale og avtale med din leder.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Prosjektet vil filme profesjonsutøvere i samtale med en bruker/klient/pasient. Videoopptaket vil bli gjort under et vanlig møte mellom profesjonsutøver og bruker/klient, og vil vare maksimalt en time. Deltakelsen i prosjektet skal ikke føre til avvik fra den vanlige oppfølgingen av brukeren.

Videoopptaket vil deretter bli brukt som bakgrunn for et intervju mellom forsker/stipendiat og profesjonsutøveren, der målet er å utforske og reflektere om praksis og yrkesutøving. Dette intervjuet har en tidsramme på ca. en time, men kan bli utvidet dersom det er ønskelig både for deltager og forsker.

Det vil også bli gjennomført et fokusgruppeintervju for alle deltakerne, med en varighet på ca. 2 timer.

Prosjektet vil ikke registrere opplysninger om bruker/klient/pasient ut over det som framkommer på videoopptaket. Videoopptaket skal være et grunnlag for intervjuet mellom deg som profesjonsutøver og stipendiat/forsker, og personidentifiserende opplysninger om bruker/klient/pasient vil ikke bli nedtegnet. Å diskutere/reflektere rundt bruker sine reaksjoner slik de fremkommer på videoopptaket kan imidlertid bli aktuelt.

Du som deltaker vil bli spurt om å foreslå brukere som kan være aktuelle for den profesjonelle samtalen. De aktuelle brukerne skal får informasjon både gjennom informasjonsskriv om prosjektet og muntlig fra deg som saksbehandler.

De opplysningene som vil bli registret om deg som deltaker er alder, kjønn og arbeidssted. Alle data vil bli anonymisert og oppbevart på sikker forskingsserver ved Høgskulen på Vestlandet – se mer om personvern og håndtering av opplysninger under.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Dersom du trekker deg fra prosjektet, kan du kreve å få slettet eksisterende lyd- og videoopptak.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger
Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Informasjonen som registreres om deg skal kun brukes slik som beskrevet i hensikten med studien. Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn og fødselsnummer eller andre direkte gjenkjennende opplysninger. En kode knytter deg til dine opplysninger gjennom en navneliste, som er adskilt fra øvrige data.
Prosjektleder har ansvar for den daglige driften av forskningsprosjektet og at opplysninger om deg blir behandlet på en sikker måte.

Resultatene fra studiet vil bli publisert i fagtidsskrift, men deltagere vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonene.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?
Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.12.2021
Informasjon om deg vil bli anonymisert eller slettet senest fem år etter prosjektslutt.

De transkriberte og anonymiserte intervjuene kan bli brukt til en sammenlignende studie av de tre delstudiene etter avslutting av doktorgradsprosjektet. Ingen andre enn phd-stipendiat og veiledere vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet.

Dine rettigheter
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og

- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskulen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?
Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Høgskulen på Vestlandet ved Mari Husabø, på e-post (mari.husabo@hvl.no) eller telefon: 57 67 76 89/41 51 12 38
- Vårt personvernombud: Trine Anikken Larsen, på e-post (personvernombod@hvl.no) eller telefon: 55 58 76 82
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
(Forsker/stipendiat)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *«Profesjonelle samtaler i sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie»*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i videoopptak av samtale og påfølgende intervju
- ☐ å delta i fokusgruppeintervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 31.12.2022

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Profesjonelle samtaler i sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie»?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et doktorgradsprosjekt som skal undersøke hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere bruker kunnskap i yrkesutøvelsen sin. Forskingsprosjektet retter seg mot profesjonsutøverne, men vil ta utgangspunkt i videoopptak av en samtale mellom bruker/klient og profesjonsutøveren.

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål
Målet med prosjektet er å utvikle kunnskapen om hvordan sosialarbeidere, barnevernspedagoger og vernepleiere (profesjonsutøvere) opplever, reflekterer rundt og refererer til kunnskap i arbeidet sitt. Vi ønsker å utvikle kunnskap om hvordan kunnskap blir referert til, reflektert rundt og brukt i faktisk yrkesutøvelse. Gjennom deltakelse i dette prosjektet kan du sammen med andre bidra til utvikling av denne kunnskapen.

Prosjektet er del av en doktorgradsstudie.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Det er Høgskulen på Vestlandet som er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Doktorgradsstipendiaten er også knyttet til Universitetet i Bergen gjennom opptak på doktorgradsprogrammet

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Siden din saksbehandler er deltaker i denne studien, vil vi spørre deg om vi kan få tillatelse til å ta videoopptak mellom deg og din saksbehandler. Det er din saksbehandler som har foreslått deg.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Dersom du sier ja til å delta i prosjektet, vil du bli filmet i et møte eller en samtale med din saksbehandler/miljøterapeut/primærkontakt. Videoopptaket vil bli gjort under et planlagt/vanlig møte mellom dere, og vil vare maksimalt en time. Deltakelsen i prosjektet skal ikke føre til avvik fra den vanlige oppfølgingen din.

Videoopptaket vil deretter bli brukt som bakgrunn for et intervju mellom forsker/stipendiat og din saksbehandler/miljøterapeut/primærkontakt.

Vi vil ikke innhente eller registrere andre type opplysninger om deg enn det som fremkommer på videoopptaket. Opplysninger som navn og adresse vil ikke bli registrert. Videoopptaket vil bare bli brukt som bakgrunn for samtalen mellom profesjonsutøveren og stipendiat, og personidentifiserende

opplysninger vil ikke bli registrert for videre bruk i prosjektet. Samtalen mellom saksbehandler og stipendiat vil ta utgangspunkt i reaksjoner og situasjoner som fremkommer i videoopptaket.

Selv om deltakelsen i prosjektet – videoopptaket – ikke skal føre til avvik fra din vanlige oppfølging, er det noen som syns det er ubehagelig å bli filmet. Som oftest avtar denne følelsen etter hvert som man kommer i gang. Du kan når som helst underveis i samtalen be om at opptaket stoppes dersom du opplever det som ubehagelig.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til din saksbehandler/miljøterapeut/primærkontakt hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Dersom du trekker deg fra prosjektet, kan du kreve å få slettet eksisterende lyd- og videoopptak.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Videoopptaket skal bare brukes som grunnlag for intervjuet med profesjonsutøveren, og vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Informasjonen som registreres om deg skal kun brukes slik som beskrevet i hensikten med studien. Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn. Vi registrerer ikke fødselsnummeret ditt i dette prosjektet.
Prosjektleder har ansvar for den daglige driften av forskningsprosjektet og at opplysninger om deg blir behandlet på en sikker måte.

Resultatene fra studiet vil bli publisert i fagtidsskrift, men brukerne vil ikke bli omtalt i publikasjonene. Det vil heller ikke være mulig å gjenkjenne de deltakende vernepleierne.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.12.2021
Informasjon om deg vil bli anonymisert eller slettet senest fem år etter prosjektslutt.

De transkriberte og anonymiserte intervjuene kan bli brukt til en sammenlignende studie av de tre delstudiene etter avslutting av doktorgradsprosjektet. Ingen andre enn phd-stipendiat og veiledere vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskulen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?
Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Høgskulen på Vestlandet ved Mari Husabø, på e-post (mari.husabo@hvl.no) eller telefon: 57 67 76 89/41 51 12 38
- Vårt personvernombud: Trine Anikken Larsen, på e-post (personvernombod@hvl.no) eller telefon: 55 58 76 82
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
(Forsker/stipendiat)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *«Profesjonelle samtaler i sosialt arbeid, barnevern og vernepleie»*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ å delta i videoopptak av samtale

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 31.12.22

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Errata for
Reflecting on encounters with vulnerable users

An Interpersonal Process Recall and focus group study of social work professionals

Mari Husabø

Thesis for the degree philosophiae doctor (PhD)
at the University of Bergen

07.12.23 *Mari Husabø*

(date and sign. of candidate)

11.12.23

(date and sign. of faculty)

Errata

Page 6 Updated references:

"The findings of this research have been reported in three studies. The first two were published in Nordic Social Work Research and Journal of Intellectual Disabilities. At the time of submission of this thesis, the third study was in its second round of review in European Journal of Social Work." – corrected to "The findings of this research have been reported in three studies. [2] ([2] The included versions of studies 1 and 2 are reprints of published papers, while study 3 is a prepublication version)."

Page 9 Updated references, (Norwegian abstract):

«Funna frå forskingsprosjektet er publisert i to studiar, i tidsskrifta Nordic Social Work Research og Journal of Intellectual Disabilities. Ved innlevering av avhandlinga var den tredje studien i sin andre revisjonsrunde i European Journal of Social Work». – corrected to «Funna frå forskingsprosjektet er publisert i tre studiar. [3] ([3] Dei vedlagde versjonane av dei to første studiane er tidsskriftspublikasjonar, medan studie 3 er ein førehandspublikasjon.)»

Page 12 Updated references:

Husabø, M., Mæhle, M. Råheim, M., & Øien AM. (In review): Possibilities and pitfalls: exploring social welfare professionals' experiences with Interpersonal Process Recall followed by focus group discussions

Under review in *European Journal of Social Work* – corrected to

Husabø, M., Mæhle, M. Råheim, M., & Øien AM. (2023): Possibilities and pitfalls: exploring social welfare professionals' experiences with interpersonal process recall followed by focus group discussions

European Journal of Social Work, DOI: 10.1080/13691457.2023.2266589

Page 13 Misspelling: "*vernepleier*" – corrected to "*vernepleiar*"

Page 24 Correction of chapter outline: "The three studies, two published and one in review, are the second part of the thesis." – corrected to "The three studies are the second part of the thesis."

Pages 24, 49, 51 Misspelling: "Chapter" – corrected to "chapter"

Page 52 Misspelling: "covid-19" – corrected to "Covid-19"

Page 59 Missing italics: "participants' *self-critical reflections*" - corrected to "*participants' self-critical reflections*"

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