



## Case Study: Supervisee Self-Care

The case study below – from Hawkins and McMahon (2020, p. 144) – shows how a supervisor needs to make a collaborative assessment of risk both to the supervisee and the client, should a supervisee become unwell.

*John had been diagnosed with fibromyalgia, and was experiencing intense pain and fatigue. He was continuing to work as normal, even though this was clearly challenging and John looked visibly tired. Aisling expressed concern about both his clients' welfare and his own, and advised him to consider taking a break in his practice until his symptoms eased.*

*John was quick to reassure Aisling that he planned to organise his schedule so that he could take rest breaks between clients. Aisling felt caught in a dilemma. Was John able to judge himself if his work was impaired by his poor health? Was he further compromising his health by continuing to work?*

*She was particularly concerned at his quick dismissal of the possibility of a break. On exploring this with him, it became clear that there were a few issues underlying John's wish to keep working: financial pressure due to increased medical bills; not wanting to terminate his clients' therapy prematurely; and enjoying his work as a source of satisfaction and personal meaning during this challenging time of poor health.*

*While Aisling remained concerned, she had no evidence that John's health problems were affecting his practice – she also believed in his intention to practice ethically and with due self-care. John continued to practice with reduced hours and scheduled rest breaks, and both he and Aisling monitored this regularly in supervision, both in terms of how well his clients were progressing and how he himself was taking care of his health while working.*

Notice how Aisling (the supervisor):

- worked collaboratively with John to assess the impact of his illness on him and his clients
- used the formative and restorative areas of the supervision triangle.

## **Reference**

Hawkins P and McMahon A (2020) *Supervision in the Helping Professions 5e*, McGraw-Hill Education. Kindle Edition