



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

SUSAN ROOKE

BCYC (University of Victoria, 2015)

**“How do Child Welfare Supervisors Approach Ethical Dilemmas in
their Practice?”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

1:00 P.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Marie Hoskins, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Mandeep Kaur Mucina, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Gerard Bellefeuille, Department of Child and Youth Care, MacEwan University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Mihai Sima, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Although there is extensive literature on supervision in the human services, there is limited research specific to the stories from supervisors in child welfare, in particular in Canada. This inquiry sought to understand how child welfare supervisors navigated through ethical dilemmas in their practice and how their approach influenced decision making. In addition, specific attention was paid on whether these practitioners used critical reflection in their approach to decision making. Findings indicated that these child welfare supervisors relied primarily on their personal moral framework. They encountered frequent dilemmas in highly complex work environments. Further, they endured ethical tensions as a result of not being able to enact their ethics amid work place barriers. These ongoing tensions often resulted in leaving these supervisors depleted emotionally and physically. Critical reflection in action was used in some cases when examining the context of the family in the process of ethical decision making. As with recent studies, this inquiry found that child welfare supervisors often stepped away from reflection in action for self-preservation and relied more heavily on reflection on action. Implications for future studies and recommendations for child welfare practice are discussed.