



My 'Niche'

Five times in a few weeks, I was asked the same question. And each time, it left me with the same uncomfortable pause.

Last week, someone asked me again: "So, what is your niche?" I think I hesitantly replied, "I don't have a niche, *yet*." By adding the word *yet*, I unintentionally planted the idea that I probably should have one.

Over these weeks, I spent a lot of time thinking about that answer. Not just *why* I responded with doubt, but whether I actually need a niche at all. Is there an expectation within the social work profession that we must have, find, or develop a specialised area of practice? I wasn't sure, so I turned inward to reflect and see what I could uncover about my own 'niche'.

Many social workers do find (or land in) a specific area of practice and become specialised - Mental Health, AOD, DFSV, Disability, Aged Care, Child Safety, Families, and so on. The AASW also offers specialist areas of practice where it is also encouraged to obtain recognition and become the 'expert' in that area. But when I looked at these areas of practice, I realised my work doesn't neatly align with any single one. It aligns with *all* of them. And I don't want to choose just one.

My mind went back to why I chose social work in the first place: the grey area. Social work is about operating within complexity, ambiguity, and the parts of life that don't fit into neat categories. I love the grey areas because every area of practice sits within a broader human lifecycle, constantly intersecting with others. Most of us, if not all, are shaped by experiences across multiple, overlapping areas of practice. No area exists in isolation. It's the grey area, the messiness.

That's where my practice comes alive. I feel at home in those intersections. My practice embraces all social work practitioners, across all areas of practice, who are working with people from all walks of life. My work is about supporting practitioners as they navigate these intersections and the messiness that comes with them.

I think I've found my niche. My niche is social work itself. It's the grey area. The messiness.

My niche is about creating safe, supported spaces to explore this complexity. Being present for all practitioners. Reflecting deeply. Asking the hard questions. Exploring value clashes.



Insight Practice Coaching and Consulting

Unpacking ethical dilemmas. Holding risk. Seeking approaches that align with practitioners' values and ways of being. This is how my practice comes alive.

Do I feel a little envy towards those with a clear, specialised area of practice? Yes - maybe a little. It would make responding to "What's your niche?" much easier.

How will I answer next time? I'm not entirely sure, but I'm leaning toward responding with a curious, reflective question of my own—perhaps exploring *why* they think I should have one.

This reflection has also led me to another area I'm still exploring — the tension between specialisation and staying connected to the broader areas of practice.

If you've ever wrestled with the idea of having a 'niche', I'm curious what you discovered about yourself along the way.