



101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Existential Chapter: Technique 42 (pages 129- 132)

Edited by Michelle Lucas and Published by Routledge 2020.

Deliberately Self-Centred Supervision

Written by Michelle Lucas

Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
 <p>Individual Supervision</p>	 <p>Group Supervision</p>		 <p>Independent Reflection</p>		 <p>Experienced Supervisees Only</p>

When is this used?

This is for mature supervisees who are interested in exploring themes and patterns in their work. It relies on the tenet of the self being an instrument of our coaching work (Bachkirova, 2016).

What is the approach?

Building on individual reflection, the supervisor facilitates a meta-reflection to explore how their client work is shaping their identity and vice versa.

Step 1: Appropriate contracting is necessary if the entirety of the supervision session is held in this more developmental frame.

Step 2: Prior to the session, supervisee(s) are invited to reflect on the question “What is your client work telling you, about you?”. Typically, supervisees will notice patterns and themes arising in their work, they might also notice shifts and differences in their current clients compared to what they experience as their ‘norm’.

Step 3: Only the lightest of facilitation is needed. Each group member takes a turn to use the space to share their reflections in an unhurried manner.

Step 4: In a longstanding group, once a member has voiced their reflections the other members tend to naturally respond. If needed, some useful prompts could be:

- What’s resonating for you?
- What are you noticing that you would like to share?
- How did you experience XX’s reflections?
- What dissonance or surprise did you experience?

Step 5: To help ensure there is space for all members the supervisor may interject at appropriate points, inviting the supervisee to summarise their learning. A useful question could be “So, where has that taken you?”.



Step 6: Signpost opportunities to move focus to another group member, seeking permission from the group to do so.

Step 7: At the end of the whole group session, pause to allow consideration of what implications the supervision work may have for their clients.

Step 8: Before closing prompt consideration of the group process. Some interesting questions could be:

- When did our encouragement or reassurance stray into collusion?
- Where did our empathy/resonance blind us from nuanced difference?
- When did we side-step challenge for fear of denting our relationships?
- How did we share the time today, what might that say about our group dynamic?

How to work with this approach...

This approach generates deep and personal work and so the set-up of the group and of the session needs to be considered and bespoke. Given this work is strongly connected to our authenticity, the set up cannot be scripted. Perhaps the supervisor may choose to role model vulnerability, sharing something of their current personal developmental journey as a lens for the upcoming supervision session. This is intended as a catalyst not a directive, with participants being at liberty to attend or ignore this prompt as they engage in their own reflections.

In order for the work to be unhurried, it can be helpful to contract for an emergent session, agreeing that while the time will be shared, it may not be equally divided. Mature groups tend to recognise the passing of time and self-regulate. With newer groups, the supervisor might be tempted to take more control, this is not recommended. It is better to let the session unfold in its own way, drawing attention to how time was attended to in Step 8.

What else might need attention?

The set-up of this work assumes that individuals will engage in other forms of reflective practice to understand and explore more practical client conundrums.

A word of caution.

To work at this depth, the group needs to establish a high level of rapport and trust. However, the supervisor needs to ensure that the group does not slip into collusion or group think. To ensure the work resides in the supervision rather than a 'coaching the coach' space; the supervisor needs to encourage the group to keep their ultimate clients in mind. Step 7 is therefore an essential part of the supervisor's 'due diligence'.

What other uses are there for this approach?

The question outlined in Step 2 may be used in a more traditional supervision arrangement. In these instances, spot contracting can be useful, seeking permission for the dialogue to move from a more client-focused discussion to a more introspective one.

This is not recommended for use in coaching client work.



Reference:

Bachkirova, T. (2016) The Self of the Coach: Conceptualization, Issues and Opportunities for Practitioner Development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68 (2), pp. 143-156.

Further reading:

Lucas, M. (2017) Applying the oxygen mask principle to Coaching Supervision. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching*. Special Issue October 2017, pp. 13-20.