








101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Existential Chapter: Technique 44 (pages 135-138)

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Intentions and Interventions

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Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required
 <p>Individual Supervision</p>	 <p>Group Supervision</p>	 <p>Peer Supervision</p>	 <p>Independent Reflection</p>	 <p>All levels</p>

When is this used?

As we cultivate a deeper understanding of self as the 'instrument' of change, we need to welcome our blind spots and be awake to our intentions such that we make conscious choices in how we intervene with our clients.

Developed by Heron in the 1970's the Six Categories of Intervention provides a tool kit for how we intervene. It is used to enhance clarification at the level of *intentions* rather than loosely identifying *behavioural* outcomes. It sets out to establish a place of 'witness' (internal supervisor) within the awareness of the supervisee, increasing ability to self-regulate their practice, recognising the 'gap' between results and intentions. It enhances the supervisees ability to be aware of *what* they are doing, as they are *doing* it.

What is the approach?

The six categories provide a range of styles, supporting agility through switching interventions to meet the emerging context. "An 'intervention' is an identifiable piece of verbal or nonverbal behaviour that is part of the practitioner's service to the client" (Heron 1991, p.3). Within each style, the emphasis is on intention, what drivers or motivators are behind the intervention.

There are two basic styles for describing how we intervene (Authoritative and Facilitative), each sub divided further as outline in Table 2.1 below:



Table 2.1 : Heron's Six Categories of Intervention with examples

Authoritative	
taking responsibility for and on behalf of the supervisee.	
Style	Example
<u>Prescriptive</u> – directing behaviour, giving advice, taking a hierarchical stance	Your cancellation policy is not clear therefore you need to reclarify with your client
<u>Informative</u> – giving instructions through conveying knowledge, information, meaning	When you challenge in that way so soon after meeting, and with little rapport, it could be unhelpful
<u>Confronting</u> – giving constructive feedback in order to raise the supervisees awareness or blind spot	You seem to have introduced your own solutions rather than allow the client to find their own
Facilitative	
encouraging/affirming supervisee, self-awareness	
<u>Cathartic</u> – releasing tensions, recognising emotions, freeing up energy	How did it feel when your client cancelled their session for the second time?
<u>Catalytic</u> – encouraging self- discovery, self-directed learning and problem-solving	How have you dealt with this on previous occasions?
<u>Supportive</u> – valuing, affirming capability and qualities, compassionate and kindness	You really stayed present with your client as they worked through their frustrations

Step 1: In listening, notice which of the six styles are in play? Authoritative or facilitative? Hold this in your awareness.

Step 2: Ask your supervisee questions

- What was their intention by intervening?
- How might this have been received?
- How are their actions impacting the intention of the work?

Step 3: Work more consciously to understand what styles are in play.

- Did the supervisee accomplish what they set out to do?
- The supervisor might offer observational or developmental feedback



How to work with the approach...

This level of observation can be challenging. Care needs to be given in how this approach is introduced. Consideration of purpose and clarity of contract is vital.

In group supervision peers can add a 'third position' to notice any disconnects between intention and interventions. Peers may need gentle encouragement to challenge their counterparts in this way, and it is a useful parallel for how they might challenge their own clients with similar observations.

A word of caution.

Our actual intervention may be at odds with our intention. This may signal further attention needs to be given. For example, the supervisor may notice the supervisee's tendency to avoid following their instincts, perhaps fearing they might get it wrong, be rejected or lose rapport. The supervisee might need encouragement to reconnect with their good intention and to take a risk, whilst also exploring how they might mitigate or deal with the perceived risks.

What other uses are there for this approach?

Supervisors can be mindful of their own interventions. In slowing down, articulating both our intention and our behaviour, taking an educative stance role models self-awareness and vulnerability. Similarly, coaches can raise awareness with client interventions and impact on outcomes.

Reference:

Heron, J. (1991) *Helping the client: A creative practical guide*. London: Sage Publications.

Further reading:

Heron, J. (1976) Six Category Intervention Analysis, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 4 (2), pp. 143-155.

Heron, J. (2001) *Helping the Client*. 5th ed. London: Sage Publications.

Resources:

Visit John Heron's South Pacific Centre for Human Inquiry, website: <http://www.human-inquiry.com/jhcvpubl.htm> [Accessed 4 September 2019]

Oasis School of Human Relations Intervening in Human Relations [online] Available at: www.oasishumanrelations.org.uk [Accessed 5 September 2019]