







101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Gestalt Chapter: Technique 49 (pages 157-159)

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Supervision and Sensing

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Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
					
Individual Supervision	Group Supervision		Independent Reflection	All levels	

When is this used?

Useful when a supervisee is curious about working beyond talking and thinking and wishes to explore and experience sensing, tapping into their inner wisdom that often gets overlooked, dismissed or drowned out. It might also serve a supervisee that is stuck, enabling them to ground themselves and access a different perspective.

What is the technique?

It is a form of meditative self-enquiry, guided by the supervisor. It is influenced by the wisdom tradition, yoga nidra.

Step 1: Establish the area the supervisee wants to enquire into and agree a timeframe in which you will work. Explain that time can get distorted and you will be the guardian of the process. This enables the supervisee to drop deeper into the experience.

Step 2: If working individually set up two chairs opposite each other, when working in a group, a circle of chairs with you as part of the circle. Adjust as appropriate if working remotely.

Step 3: Ask the supervisee(s) to make any final adjustments in how they are sitting to settle into the space, with their eyes open or closed. For example, some people like to take their shoes off to feel their feet connected with the floor.

Step 4: Using your own words, guide participants into the practice for example:

“Get comfortable in your seat, allowing the body and mind to settle, feeling your feet against the floor, your back against the chair, clothes against the skin...”

You might then turn the supervisees attention to their breath, to release any residue of tension in the body, grounding them into the now and surrendering to the core of being. Take the time to do this step fully, typically between five and 15 minutes.



Step 5: Guide the supervisee(s) to bring into their awareness the focus of their enquiry. Invite them to welcome in what emerges, letting go of judgement or assumptions and suspend themselves in enquiry. Offer some of the following:

- a) *“Notice any sensations surfacing in the body.....”*
- b) *“Where in the body are you experiencing sensation.....?”*
- c) *“Are there any emotions co-arising with the sensation/s.....”*
- d) *“If yes, what’s the opposite of that emotion.....and does that opposite emotion reveal sensation in the body.....”*
- e) *“Can you sense between these two emotions, moving from one to the other.....?”*
- f) *“Can you experience both emotions simultaneously in the body.....?”*

Step 6: Close out the exercise, for example:

“When you are ready, come back to the breath, come back into the room, slowly opening your eyes, move or stretch in a way that feels natural as you reorient”.

Step 7: Invite supervisee(s) to capture their immediate reflections in silence.

Step 8: Once the individual or group are ready, pose questions such as:

- How was your experience?
- How has it informed your dilemma/question/issue/relationship?
- What might you continue to enquire into?
- What action/s does it feel important to take?
- Are you aware of any patterns or themes that it’s important to acknowledge for future sessions?

How to work with the technique...

As supervisor, it’s important you are able to ground yourself to hold the space, the silence, use intuitive pausing and pacing, tone of voice and utilise any emerging sounds to maintain the flow.

It is helpful to work with authenticity, avoid reading from a script and create your own ‘live’ narrative, based on the context you are experiencing. Additionally, sharing your somatic responses from the exercise (Step 8) may generate insight for individual and group process.

Initially supervisees might hesitate to close their eyes, closing yours might help to ease them in.

If working in a group, at Step 7 observe people’s behaviour and energy, and hold the silence until everyone is ready to move on.

A word of caution.

If supervisees are not familiar with mindfulness or meditation they may experience frustration with the process, your voice etc. On the premise that their experience is their experience just as it is, encourage them to explore this in their reflections.



What other uses are there for this technique?

Steps 1 – 4 can be used to ground a supervisee or client at the start or end of a session.

Further reading:

Kline, J. (1984) *The Ease of Being*. Durham, North California: The Acorn Press

Miller, R. (2010) *Yoga Nidra: A Meditative Practice for Deep Relaxation and Healing*. 2nd ed. Sounds True Inc.