








101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Person Centred Chapter: Technique 55 (pages 180-183)

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Supervisee-led Supervision

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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?

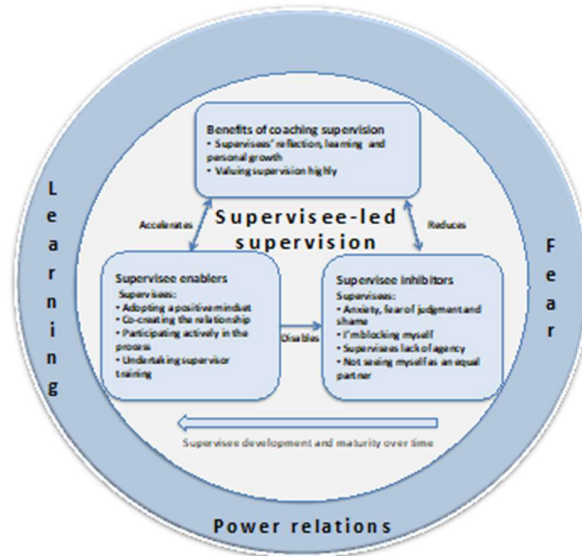
Supervisee-led supervision is a strategy that can be used throughout coaching supervision. Supervisors use supervisee-led supervision when they adapt, accommodate and attune to the supervisee's personal preferences and focus on maximising the supervisee's learning. Supervisees use it to take ownership for their supervision and engage fully with their learning.

What is the approach?

The concept of Supervisee-led supervision was introduced by Michael Carroll (2014) and developed by Sheppard (2016) who studied what supervisees do that helps and hinders them during supervision. She created a framework for how supervisees can get the most from the process (see Figure 4.1) along with guidelines for its use.

The framework is specifically designed for supervisees with an intention to become active participants in their supervision. Thus, 'supervisee-led supervision' is at the heart of the inner circle. The outer circle of the framework depicts the possible underlying mechanisms that affect coaching supervision – our natural desire for learning, power relations and fear. Inside the circle lie the benefits of coaching supervision, as well as what supervisees can do to enable or inhibit their supervision experience. The small arrows between the boxes illustrate that the benefits of supervision accelerate supervisees' desire to enable their supervision and reduce their tendency to get in their own way and inhibit their supervision. The larger arrow represents supervisee development and maturity over time.

Figure 4.1. Framework for supervisee-led supervision by Sheppard (2016)



Step 1: Both parties co-create the supervisory relationship by discussing:

- What assumptions and beliefs they are holding about their respective roles and responsibilities.
- How they can acknowledge power relations and establish an equal partnership.
- How they minimise the impact of fear in coaching supervision.
- Where the supervisee is in their development as a coach and how that might affect the work.
- How the supervisee's preparation can enable him/her to get the most from the session.
- How they will review the relationship and effectiveness of supervision.

Step 2: At the start of each session, they:

- Focus on the supervisee's needs and gather any reflections since the last session.
- Identify the focus for the session and desirable outcomes.

Step 3: During supervision, the supervisor has the opportunity to role model being open and adopting an adult to adult communication style. Both parties will:

- Create a safe space and own their anxiety and fear so that they can be vulnerable.
- Treat supervision as collaborative inquiry and be transparent about power dynamics.
- Disclose their experiences and share their reflections and learning.
- Review how they experienced the session – what was helpful and what could be done differently going forward.



Step 4: At regular intervals, they:

- Review the effectiveness of the supervision, how the supervisee's supervision needs are developing and how the sessions might change accordingly.
- Explore if the supervisee has outgrown the supervisor and/or would benefit from an alternative perspective.

How to work with the approach ...

The framework is not intended to be a complete guide to conducting a supervision session rather a checklist for adopting a supervisee-led approach. The supervisee-led supervisor will set a tone of collaboration in every aspect of the relationship – from setting appointments to navigating the work.

What else might need attention?

Using supervisee-led supervision does not prevent supervisors from fulfilling the normative part of their role and calling out ethical issues. The approach necessitates an adult-to-adult way of communicating, thereby enabling open and honest conversations about differences in perception, options and potential consequences.

A word of caution.

Using supervisee-led supervision is challenging and requires a high degree of self-awareness and courage for both parties. For example, where the supervisor is taking too much power, perhaps by being too 'expert', it is vital that the supervisee steps into their authority and points this out.

What other uses are there for this approach?

Supervisee-led supervision can be used in workshops, webinars and guidelines on how to get the most out of coaching supervision. It is also useful for supervisor training programmes as the current supervision models are often based on the supervisor perspective.

The principles of supervisee-led supervision can be applied in a coach-client context by contracting with the client about how to acknowledge and minimise the impact of anxiety and fear and power dynamics and maximise learning.

References:

Carroll, M. (2014) *Effective Supervision for the Helping Professions*. London: Sage

Sheppard, L. (2016) *How coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision: A Grounded Theory study*, PHD, Oxford Brookes University.