



101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Transpersonal Chapter: Technique 98 (pages 338-341)

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What's my environmental footprint?

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

When is this used?

If there has been some conversation 'in the margins' about the state of the planet, climate change, plastics, wildlife or similar environmental issues, then the group may be interested to look at their individual and collective 'footprint' and explore what, if anything, they want to do to change it.

What is the enquiry?

Step 1: Before the session, invite the supervisee(s) to self-assess their 'environmental footprint' and bring their results to the session. So the results are comparable, everyone should use the same tool. For example:

WWF's environmental footprint quiz <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

or the eco footprint calculator <https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>

or the Berkley Cool Climate calculator. <https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator>.

Step 2: Ask supervisees to line up in order of their results, from smallest / lowest to biggest / highest. Anyone who wasn't able to get a result can observe the line and join the conversation.

Optional – create a visual representation of the collective results. For example, an 'instant bar chart'.

Step 3: Debrief the results: What do people see in the line-up? What do they feel about the results? What do they think it means?

Step 4: Explore what they would they like to do as a result. It can be useful to divide this into:



1. Personal life.
2. Professional life (including non-coaching work, how they run their business)
3. As a coach (including whether they see opportunities for working on these issues with clients)

Step 5: For those who would like to take action point them to the resources in Further reading. Invite people to share the sources they have found helpful.

How to work with the enquiry?

Some skilled facilitation can be required to manage not just the content of the discussion, but supervisees' emotional responses to their results. Here are some typical reactions and how you might manage them:

- Critiquing the tool – acknowledge the indicative nature of these tools, giving space for some criticism before exploring their results.
- Get defensive – recognise that our wider society and the economy may have shaped our choices, so point to success stories to illustrate what might still be possible.
- Get despondent – especially likely when most of the group has footprints bigger than the 'one planet' sustainable level. Point them to the further reading which suggests some positive actions.
- Blame others – acknowledge the size of the challenge whilst encouraging supervisees to become part of the global movement which is creating change everywhere.
- Argue for a particular solution – affirm the particular passions of those present whilst also embracing a diversity of views. Remind supervisees that, just as in coaching, people need to discover their own solutions for them to stick.
- Get very angry or sad – bring your restorative skills to help supervisees face their emotions without being overwhelmed by them.

You will need to help the group move beyond these responses which may otherwise get in the way of looking at their impact, how they feel about it, what it means and what they want to do.

What else might need attention?

It is a good idea to do some background reading on the tool you are using to understand what it shows. Ideally complete the questionnaire yourself so that you can facilitate from an informed position.

Remember, effective action to reduce emissions and tackle environmental issues includes being an active citizen who engages in political activity and campaigning, as well as directly changing the way we live our lives. People can also support or lead change in their organisations. People may need help reflecting on and researching where they can have the biggest impact.

A word of caution.

This enquiry may prompt supervisees to consider working with clients to help them reduce their environmental impact. Indeed, there are coaches who specialise in this and clients who ask for this help. Before raising an issue like climate change with a client, remind yourself of the coaching



contract. Is this your stuff or theirs? An open question like “What are the consequences of that choice?” may lead them to consider environmental impact, but equally it may not. If a coach discovers that their values or views are too far at odds with those of their client, then this may be a reason to discontinue the relationship.

What other uses are there for this enquiry?

This exercise can be adapted for individual use, missing Step 2.

Further reading:

Walker, P. (2007) Being the Change for Climate Change Leadership, *Organisations and People*, 14(4), pp. 9-14.

Whybrow, A., Cohen, Z. and Aspey, L. (2019) Call for multi-pronged coaching response to the global climate crisis. *Coaching at Work*. 14(5), pp. 12-13.

Resources:

Cool Climate Network (2019) *Start with a quick carbon footprint estimate*. [online] Available at: <<https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator>. > [Accessed 7 September 2019].

Global Footprint Network (2019) *What is your ecological footprint?* [online] Available at: <<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>> [Accessed 7 September 2019].

Ortiz, D. A. (2018) Ten simple ways to act on climate change. *BBC Future* [blog] 5 November. Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20181102-what-can-i-do-about-climate-change>> [Accessed 7 September 2019].

Project Drawdown (2019) Project Drawdown: The worlds leading resource for climate solutions. [online] Available at: <<https://www.drawdown.org/>> [Accessed 7 September 2019].

Walker, P. (2018) *Instant barcharts: a safe snapshot of opinion*. [blog] 12 September. Available at: <<https://www.penny-walker.co.uk/blog/2018/7/18/a-safe-snapshot-of-opinion>> [Accessed 7 September 2019].

WWF (2019) *How big is your environmental footprint?* [online] Available at: <<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>> [Accessed 7 September 2019].