







# Supervision Techniques 3

FOUR SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES  
EDITED BY MICHELLE LUCAS





MENTOR COACHING  
AT MY BEST  
FREE MOVEMENT  
VISION BOARDS

This resource is an extract from the book  
*101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches,  
Enquiries and Experiments* by Michelle Lucas  
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Where can this be used?				Typical level of supervisee experience required	
					
Professional one-to-one supervision	Professional group supervision	Peer group supervision	Individual reflection	Most levels	Experienced supervisees only

## TECHNIQUE 1: MENTOR COACHING

Written by Clare Norman

Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
					

### When is this used?

Mentor Coaching is useful when you want to re-sharpen your coaching edge or step up to use more advanced coaching skills.

It is a mandatory part of the International Coach Federation credentialing process.

### What is the approach?

Mentor Coaching is a form of supervision where a mentor coach observes a supervisee at work and gives feedback. This can either be live or a recording. It works best when the feedback is benchmarked against a competency framework (see further reading), providing structure to identify strengths and development areas.

**Step 1:** The supervisee coaches someone in the (virtual or physical) room while the mentor coach observes. Alternatively, they record a session to review later. The live session would likely be 25 minutes; a recording could be longer.

**Step 2:** The supervisee highlights one competency that they used well and one competency that they could improve. The mentor coach works with the supervisee to be specific about the exact behaviours and language displayed.

**Step 3:** When in a group, each group member offers an observation about one competency they saw the supervisee using well, and one competency they might improve upon.

**Step 4:** The mentor coach gives feedback; once more focusing on one thing the supervisee did well in service of the client, and one thing they could do differently.

Take care to precisely reference the competency framework and role model giving good feedback.

**Step 5:** The mentor coach asks the supervisee to summarise what he/she is taking away, and what he/she will work on in future coaching sessions.

**Step 6:** When in a group, the mentor coach asks what each person has learned from this session that they are going to apply to their own coaching practice

**Step 7:** The coach(es) practices what they committed to in between mentor coaching sessions

**Step 8:** The process is repeated so that new habits are built over time

### **How to work with the approach...**

When using a recording, stop and start throughout the session to reflect together in the moment. You can also fast-forward to sections that the supervisee would like to reflect most on. Ideally listen to both the contract and the ending as these are such vital parts of the session.

With a live session, the client may also provide feedback. Typically they will need some time to process this, as the supervisee's performance was not their focus of their attention. Additionally, you could call a 'time out', so that the supervisee can adjust their approach there and then. The mentor coach might ask the supervisee, "What is happening right now?" and then elicit ideas for how to switch gear to meet the needs of the client. Clearly this must be contracted for at the start as part of the learning process.

When working in a group, practitioners who are new to this approach may offer generic feedback. Encourage people to give supportive *and* challenging feedback; succinct and useful. You may need to manage the feedback offered towards the supervisee's requested competency focus.

### **What else might need attention?**

Mentor coaching can be behaviourally oriented, offering feedback which links directly to competency frameworks. It can be interesting to consider *why* a particular competency is under-developed. For example, what might be contributing to a lack of challenge? How come there is a reluctance to contract more clearly? These are the kind of explorations that could then inform a more traditional supervision exploration.

### **A word of caution.**

Individuals could self-assess using recordings of their coaching. This is not always as beneficial as they often have blind spots, but the more practiced they become, the more they can see.

Occasionally ethical issues arise. This might require a switch into formal supervision, so it is useful if the mentor coach is also a trained supervisor.

### **What other uses are there for this approach?**

Whilst this is mandatory for those going for an ICF credential, mentor coaching offers high impact, individualised continuous professional development and can be used at any time to sharpen your edge. Individuals can benchmark themselves against any set of competencies from their chosen professional body.

If they are competent at competency-based feedback, coaches can also do this with peers in a triad for example.

This could also be used for clients – especially where organisations work to competency frameworks and there is opportunity to observe the client at work.

### **Resources:**






International Coach Federation competencies: Available at: <https://coachfederation.org/core-competencies> [Accessed 19 July 2019].

Association for Coaching Competencies: Available at: [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.associationforcoaching.com/resource/resmgr/Accreditation/ACCred\\_General/Coaching\\_Competency\\_Framework.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.associationforcoaching.com/resource/resmgr/Accreditation/ACCred_General/Coaching_Competency_Framework.pdf) > [Accessed 19 July 2019].

European Mentoring and Coaching Council competencies: Available at: <https://emcc1.app.box.com/s/4aj8x6tmbt75ndn13sg3dauk8n6wxfxq> > [Accessed 19 July 2019].

## TECHNIQUE 2: USING METAPHOR TO EXPLORE ‘AT MY BEST’

Written by Angela Dunbar

Where can this be used?					Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
						

### When is this used?

To focus on strengths and to build supervisee’s understanding of what they do well and how that happens. Especially useful for building confidence and helping to form the supervision relationship.

### What is the technique?

Metaphors are more than just figures of speech, we construct our thoughts using metaphors and exploring these metaphors taps into a powerful, raw experience. By using Clean Language questions, we both consolidate and deepen the supervisee’s understanding of themselves at their best. This anchors the experience making it more readily accessible in the future. The questions used are ‘clean’ as they are non-directive and stripped of the supervisor’s own assumptions, bias and metaphors.

**Step 1:** Invite reflection on the question “*When you are coaching at your best, that’s like what?*” This could be part of their preparation, encouraging them to bring anything that could represent their answer (e.g. Written or drawn, bring an object, photograph, etc).

**Step 2:** Encourage deeper reflection by repeating back the supervisee’s own words and descriptions exactly as they said them. This holds them in their inner experience rather than inviting a more typical two- way dialogue.

**Step 3:** Continue to explore by asking a series of clean language questions that build on and include the supervisee’s own words – insert the at XXX:

- What kind of xxx is that xxx?
- Is there anything else about xxx?
- Whereabouts is that xxx?
- And does that xxx have a shape or a size?
- And that xxx is like what?”
- And what do you know about xxx?

**Step 3:** Focus attention on the metaphors using the same questions given above, and then, deepen the exploration of any sensory and/or symbolic language. For example:

- Supervisee: “When at my best it’s like I am in flow”:
- Supervisor: “And what kind of flow is that flow?”
- Supervisee: “Like a meandering river.”
- Supervisor: “It’s like a meandering river. Is there anything else about that meandering river?”

**Step 4:** Continue to use the same set of questions, in a fluid way. Follow the supervisee’s emerging understanding by questioning in an iterative fashion, taking the output of one line of enquiry as the input for the next line of enquiry. As each new element of the metaphor emerges explore with the Clean Language questions above.

**Step 5:** At this point you could wrap up learnings with further Clean Language questions, such as:

- “And now you know it’s like this when you are coaching at your best, what difference does knowing that make?”

Or, when Step 4 feels done you could move into another supervision approach, such as a real life exploration of when the supervisee last coached at their best.

### **How to work with the technique...**

Questions need to be asked exactly as shown, without changing the word sequence. For instance, “That’s like what?” invites a metaphor whereas “What’s that like?” is a very different question and invites a description. Even when positioned clearly some people respond without using a metaphor. Remember to remain client centred, this may not have been the response you anticipated, but your questions will still encourage deeper reflection. Also, remember metaphors come in many forms, so a response may be overtly metaphorical, e.g. “Light at the end of the tunnel” or it may be more subtle e.g. “Things are looking up”.

### **A word of caution.**

This exercise works best when focusing on resourceful and positive experiences. For those not trained in Clean Language, avoid asking questions of the less positive aspects. For example, with the response “When I am coaching at my best, I feel no fear”, do not ask “What kind of fear?” A more positive follow up would be “What kind of feeling is that, when you feel no fear?”

### **What other uses are there for this technique?**

Asking “That’s like what?” will invite a metaphor of any positive experience or resource. For example, if the supervisee says “I know I need to trust more” you could explore ‘trust’ in metaphor using Clean Language questions: “And when you trust more, that ‘trust more’ is like what?” (etc).

With practice a supervisee could use this approach with their own coaching clients.

### **Further reading:**

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Dunbar, A. (2018) *Using metaphors in coaching* [pdf] Available at:  
<https://cleancoaching.com/files/2018/04/Using%20Metaphors%20with%20Coaching%20April%20'11.pdf> [Accessed 1 September 2019]




Wilson, C. (2004) *Metaphor and Symbolic Modelling for Coaches* [pdf] Available at:  
<https://cleancoaching.com/files/2018/04/Metaphor-Symbolic-Modelling.pdf> [Accessed 1 September 2019]

Smith, K. (2012) *A Clean Corner of Coaching Supervision*. [online] Available at:  
<https://www.cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/318/1/A-Clean-Corner-of-Coaching-Supervision/Page1.html> [Accessed 1 September 2019]



## TECHNIQUE 3: USING FREE MOVEMENT

Written by Damion Wonfor

Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
					

### When is this used?

Useful to understand the relationship dynamic in a client system more fully. Perhaps stakeholders seem stuck in unhelpful patterns or there is a sense of using divided loyalties, mixed messages or confusing political undercurrents.

### What is the approach?

Based on systemic mapping principles, the supervisor engages group members in a process that may give insights into a new equilibrium in the system. Additionally, the group's somatic experience may hold information about relational dynamics.

**Step 1:** Begin the enquiry individually with the supervisee to articulate their supervision question.

**Step 2:** Once articulated, check with the supervisee what kind of energy they have, while also noticing yours, then question, challenge or affirm accordingly.

**Step 3:** Set up the map by inviting them to identify the stakeholders involved.

**Step 4:** The supervisee chooses a representative for each stakeholder, including someone to represent themselves. Where there are more stakeholders than group members, use pieces of paper. The supervisee moves each group member to a place that feels true, guiding them by gently putting their hands on their shoulder blades. They will map the representatives out considering the *distance between* their relationships and the *direction of travel* (if using pieces of paper, add an arrow to indicate the sense of direction as well as the representative name).

**Step 5:** Brief group members to settle into what they are representing, to immerse themselves in their somatic experience, quietening their cognitive understanding. Encourage them to trust that whatever is emerging (or not), is information.

**Step 6:** With the supervisee observing, visit each group member and ask a question to tap into their perception for example: “What are you noticing as you stand here?” or “How are you in relationship with the other representatives?”.

**Step 7:** Check back with the supervisee to understand what meaning is emerging for them.

**Step 8:** With the original supervision question in mind, invite the representatives to engage in ‘free movement’ i.e. to find a space that feels true for them. Remind them to move slowly and to listen to their somatic sense. Repeat step 6 and 7 to see what new information is emerging.

**Step 9:** Return to the supervisee and enquire if the new map offers them any new insight. On occasion, they might find it useful to stand in the place occupied by the representative for themselves, tapping into their own somatic experience in that space.

**Step 10-14:** Close out the exercise as outlined.

### **How to work with the approach...**

The steps outlined above are a simplification of the work. The pace, structure and enquiry is crafted by the supervisor each time creating a bespoke supervision experience. As with the approach ‘Working with the Supervisee’s Dilemma’ the exercise can be done ‘blind’ i.e. without knowing which group member is representing which stakeholder; the supervisor might also voice some narrative as they work with each representative.

Often when group members engage in the free movement, they rush to find their new place. Remind representatives to slow down, to try some experimental moves and truly experience their own sense of ‘rightness’ about the space they have chosen. Sometimes when moving away from a chosen space and then back again it can help clarify what is most true for them.

Typically, representatives find their space at different paces, and when one element moves it triggers a desire to move in other elements. A kind of dance then emerges as each representative attempts to find the space that feels true for what they are representing and which also feels true in relation to all the other representatives. Gradually the dance will slow down and the representatives will settle at a place which creates a new sense of equilibrium. Facilitating this requires careful observation, allow additional time even when it appears that a new order has been found.

Sometimes due to systemic dynamics the representatives may not be able to find their place. The supervisor will require a depth of systemic training to work with these forces.

**A word of caution.**

See 'Working with the Supervisee's Dilemma'.

**What other uses are there for this approach?**

In individual supervision the supervisee could create the map with paper and then stand on each representative piece of paper in turn. With experience and systemic training, the approach could be used with coaching clients.






**Further reading:**

Stam, J, J. (2016) *Fields of Connection*. Uitgeverij Het Noorderlicht.

Whittington, J. (2016) *Systemic Coaching & Constellations: The principles, practices and application for individuals, teams and groups*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Kogan Page: London.

## TECHNIQUE 4: USING VISION BOARDS

Written by Liz Ford

Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
					

### When is this used?

Vision boarding is particularly relevant to the developmental purpose of supervision (Hawkins and Smith, 2006.) It can help the supervisee gain motivation towards a goal or vision such as completing accreditation, starting a coaching business or planning their coaching development. The technique can also be used for a more resourcing purpose to explore boundaries, work-life balance and wellbeing.

### What is the technique?

Vision boarding involves creating a visual representation of a goal, desire or place / state you want to get to. When this is placed in a space where you can look at it regularly, you are essentially doing short visualisation exercises throughout the day. It helps to focus the mind and can create incredible energy and motivation.

**Step 1:** Help the supervisee decide what the vision board is for, identify its purpose.

**Step 2:** Discuss what size of vision board is wanted and what the base will be (cork board, scrap book, art canvas, flipchart paper...)

**Step 3:** Assist the supervisee to collect pictures, quotes, symbols, mementos and photos which capture the essence of what they want to achieve, how they want to feel and the steps they need to take.

**Step 4:** Encourage the supervisee to assemble the resources collected into a collage.

**Step 5:** As the supervisee creates their board, the supervisor can help by exploring their choices with questions such as:

- What would you like to achieve?
- How would you feel if you achieved that?
- What symbolises that for you?
- What would that look like?
- How do these link?
- What amount of space would you like this to take up in your work/life

**Step 6:** When finished, encourage the supervisee to display the vision board in a place where they will see it often.

### **How to work with the technique...**

It can be useful to have vision board examples and a variety of crafty resources available in a supervision session to assist the supervisee to get started. If working remotely, then talking through examples you can share on screen is helpful. It's worth encouraging the supervisee to be as creative as they wish, adding anything relevant that means something to them. It's important that they feel drawn to the creation so content, colour and layout are all important. For example, a supervisee who likes clean lines and order, could mirror this on their vision board using defined areas for each business quarter. Conversely those who want more fun and spontaneity in their practice or life, might set their board out quite differently. If a supervisee wants more space in their diary, or their coaching sessions its important that their board reflects this and isn't rammed full of words, sayings or pictures.

Creating a vision board is usually started in a supervision session and continued at home afterwards. Often the supervisees will send the supervisor a picture of how it is developing so that it can be referred to in future sessions.

Although it is possible to use online tools such as Pinterest to create a collage, the tactile process of choosing pictures and symbolic references and sticking them in place can be more powerful. Plus having the vision board in plain sight can have a bigger impact.

### **A word of caution.**

The purpose of a vision board is to help the supervisee move towards something. Just having it displayed won't make this happen, actions will also be needed. Supervision discussions can help the supervisee really understand what they want to achieve and why, as well as the steps they need to make to get there. The board will then not only represent the destination, but also the journey.

### **What other uses are there for this technique?**

This technique can also be used for individual and team coaching.

### **Reference:**

Hawkins, P. and Smith N. (2006) *Coaching, Mentoring and Organisational Consultancy Supervision and Development*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

**Further reading:**

Ford, L. and Matthews, K. (2019) Using Vision Boards in Supervision. *Coaching Perspectives*. July 2019. Issue 22, pp. 44-45.

Schuck, C. and Wood, J. (2011) *Inspiring Creative Supervision*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.