







Supervision Techniques 4






FOUR SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES
EDITED BY MICHELLE LUCAS

OBJECTS AND METAPHOR
REHEARSE, REVIEW, REPEAT
E-MOTIVE CARDS
CAPTURING JOURNEYS

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: TRANSFORMATIVE EXPLORATIONS THROUGH OBJECTS AND METAPHOR

Written by Sue Congram

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

When is this used?

Typically this approach will help take the supervision dialogue to a transformative level, it can shift energy when the process is stuck, or going around in circles. It can provide an alternative perspective where the supervision is overly logical/rational (out of balance).

What is the experiment?

Using objects and metaphor to discover what is not yet known, through a here-and-now exploration. This is one of many creative ways of working, influenced by arts-based and transformative learning philosophies (Lahad, 2000; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009).

Step 1: Brief the group to listen to the supervisee’s case as a freshly emerging narrative, paying attention to the content, the way they describe the case, and to notice their own response to it. Small nuances are as important as the big story.

Step 2: The supervisee brings their client scenario.

Step 3: Invite the supervisee to explore elements of the scenario through metaphor. For example:

“You said that you were feeling stuck with this client, would you be interested in exploring your scenario in a different way, by using objects and metaphor?”

Step 4: Ask the supervisee to quickly choose objects in the room to represent elements for exploration. Encourage them to be instinctive, without making meaning of the objects.

Step 5: Guide the supervisee to describe one object at a time, using that same description as metaphor for what it represents. For example:

A supervisee chose a small vase to represent the client and a pebble for them self. (Other elements from the narrative may have been chosen).

Supervisor: “Tell me about what you have chosen”

Supervisee: “The vase is round, green with a swirl pattern inscribed on it. It is small, for small flowers. There are no flowers in it, it is an ornament today”.

Supervisor: “Now use the same description as metaphor for your client”

Supervisee: “My client is small, green, with a swirl pattern inscribed and has no flowers inside, they are an ornament today”

Supervisor: “What is happening for you as you describe your client in this way.”

Supervisee: “I feel hollow”.

Step 6: Invite further expansion, staying curious about the words used. Attend to the immediacy of this exploration, moments of insight and new information. The example above might lead to... “It’s as though they arrive every time as an empty vessel, an ornament, a token of leadership, they do not come with flowers inside.”

Step 7: repeat Steps 5 & 6 with the remaining object(s).

Step 8: Next, invite the supervisee to position the objects in relation to each other, sharing what they notice about how the objects are positioned. In this example the supervisee had previously noticed a ‘small flaw’ in the pebble, which now had discretely been hidden from view. Interestingly, they had positioned the objects such that the client would not be able to see the flaw. Noticing this became insightful, which fueled further exploration.

Step 9: Group members may now share something they noticed, in particular, revealing personal reactions and images from the process that might reflect alternative perspectives.

How do you work with this experiment?

With experience the spontaneity of the moment will shape the intervention. To begin with three core principles offer guidance:

- Stay present to the here-and-now process
- Become fluent and at ease with the richness of metaphor
- Allow the process to emerge without the constraints of control (or the technique).

This last point is fundamental, perhaps the supervisee will choose two or three objects to represent their client. Every choice point is open for inquiry, the number of objects and the choosing may present the most insightful exploration. Work with experiment emergently rather than prescriptively.

A word of caution.

Highly rational and logical people may not find this way of working helpful. If this was not anticipated and you are already in the flow, exploring the here-and-now process is usually rich in learning.

What other uses are there for this experiment?

Groups and teams could use this experiment to enrich their group process, by each choosing an object, describing and sharing the metaphors, and then placing all the objects in relation to each other as representative of the group. It can be used in both coaching and supervision contexts.

References:

Lahad, M. (2000) *Creative supervision: the use of expressive arts in supervision and self-supervision*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley




Mezirow, J., and Taylor, E. W. (2009) *Transformative Learning in Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Further Reading:

Congram, S. (2008) Arts-informed learning in manager-leader development. In: R. A. Jones, A. Clarkson, S. Congram and N. Stratton (Eds.). 2008. *Education and Imagination: post-Jungian perspectives*. London: Routledge. Ch.10.

TECHNIQUE 2: REHEARSE, REVIEW, REPEAT...

Written by Michelle Lucas, Tammy Turner and Carol Whitaker

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

When is this used?

Useful for experiential learners, it often appeals to those who want to try out new interventions and get valuable feedback in a safe environment. It is particularly useful where the supervisee faces a number of different options and wants real time feedback on how each option might impact upon their client.

What is the technique?

The supervisor facilitates a role play involving the supervisee and other members of the group focusing on a particular ‘moment’ in a client session.

Step 1: Invite the supervisee to give a succinct account of the client context and/or story, clarifying what particularly would be useful to rehearse and what kind of input they want to receive from the group.

Step 2: Elicit specific information about the client; including what they have noticed about how they respond when they are fully engaged and when they are more resistant.

Step 3: Ask the supervisee to set up the room to replicate how they imagine working with their client. Invite them to select who they would like to take the role of client and ensure they determine where the other group members will be positioned.

Step 4: Once everyone is in place, check with the supervisee precisely what they want to practice. Help them refine this until they feel ready to start.

Step 5: Brief the group to observe in detail language, non-verbal responses, energy and intent how the supervisee intervenes and how the role play client responds. If appropriate to the outcome (Step 1) the group might suggest alternative interventions.

Step 6: Invite the supervisee and role play client to start rehearsal.

Step 7: Intervene and stop the role play at an appropriate point – which could be pre-agreed or which could rely on the supervisor making a judgement call about how the learning is unfolding.

Step 8: Invite the supervisee to reflect on what ‘felt good’ and what ‘felt clunky’ and then seek similar feedback from the role play client.

Step 9: Co-create what happens next, perhaps another rehearsal of the same thing, or perhaps try a different approach. After each rehearsal repeat Step 8.

Step 10: By way of conclusion, invite feedback from each of the group members, ensuring their observations focus on the noticeable impact on the role play client, rather than commenting on what worked well (or not) for them personally.

Step 11: Before closing the supervision help both the supervisee and the group member role playing the client to de-role, for example, move chairs, or shake off the role play persona.

Step 12: Allow some time for everyone in the room to reflect on what they will apply to their own practice.

How to work with the technique...

This tends to be most impactful when the rehearsal focuses on a specific moment in a session. For example practicing – how do I share my frustration with a client who keeps cancelling? What do I do when I ask a question and they look at me blankly? There are many different ways of rehearsing and it is best to co-create this with the supervisee. Trying things out with their peers takes courage and designing what happens gives them greater sense of control. Depending on the size of the group and the time available, Step 10 could be integrated more fully by consulting with the group after each rehearsal.

A word of caution.

Although similar to teaching techniques, it is not intended that the supervisor correct how the supervisee works. The supervisor only offers observations on cause and effect as outlined in Step 10.

What other uses are there for this technique?

Where the supervisee wants to practice a particular technique, or they want to see how something unfolds in a more extended dialogue, it can be helpful to use ‘stop – start’. When the supervisee gets stuck, they ‘stop’ and invite group members (including the supervisor) to

suggest specific alternatives. Once satisfied, the supervisee ‘starts’ the role play with this new perspective.

This is easily adapted to use with clients, although probably best on an individual basis, in which case the practitioner needs to be both facilitator and role player.






Further reading:

Turner, T. Lucas, M. and Whitaker, C. (2018) *Peer Supervision in Coaching and Mentoring: A versatile Guide for Reflective Practice*. Maidenhead: Routledge. pp. 103-104.

Whitaker, C. and Calleja, A. (2018) *Group Supervision Approaches for Coaching Supervision*. [pdf] Available at: < <http://www.whitaker-consulting.co.uk/resources-and-papers>> [Accessed 2 August 2019].

TECHNIQUE 3: E-MOTIVE CARDS

Written by Peter Duffell

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

When is this used?

An understanding of emotion is a key element of building personal resources in positive psychology. Research (Duffell and Lawton-Smith, 2017) has shown that supervisors frequently encounter emotions with supervisees and strongly believe that emotion should be explored to facilitate coaches personal and professional development. For some this emotional exploration can be difficult, the eMotive cards have been developed to enable a more tangible and objective discussion.

They help raise awareness of the potential source and impact of emotions on both the coach and their clients. They are particularly useful where the supervisee:

- is finding it difficult to describe their emotions;
- relies upon metaphor to convey a sense of their emotional situation; or
- is able to externalise or objectify their emotions and wants to enrich the supervision discussion.

What is the technique?

The technique relies on getting the supervisee to choose those word cards that describe either their current emotional state, or an event evoking an emotional response that they wish to explore in supervision.

Step 1: Selection.

Invite the supervisee to select all relevant words, by either:

- Spreading the cards out with the large words facing upwards; or
- Handing the cards to the supervisee and invite them to look through them.

The supervisee chooses a number of emotion descriptors, in our experience, it can be helpful to pause at five cards.

The cards have a large word on one side and four similar words on the other. If none capture the feeling, supervisees can write their own words in the blank box (dry-wipe

pens enable the plastic coated cards to be reused). Extra blank cards are also included offering a lot of flexibility in how emotions can be named.

Step 2: Drilling down.

Explore the personal meaning of the chosen emotion. Typically, this helps them to clarify or uncover how they personally experience this emotion and also prevents the supervisor making assumptions. In some ways this is similar to values elicitation where a supervisee and supervisor may share the same value but have completely different views of what this means to them personally. Use questions like:

- How would you describe this emotion for you?
- How did it manifest in this situation?

Step 3: Emotional impact and management.

Once the emotion is understood the supervisor can explore the impact of that emotional state and discuss management strategies. For example, a supervisee 'anxious' about their client work could be asked to quantify this on a 1-10 scale. The supervisor can then explore how the supervisee might reduce their anxiety score. Alternatively, there could be an exploration of what might have given rise to that emotional reaction so that preventative strategies could be put in place.

- How might that emotion affect your coaching?
- When did you first notice the emotion?
- What steps might help you prevent/manage/reduce this emotional impact?

How to work with the technique...

Given the exploration is of the supervisee's emotion experience, it can be helpful to facilitate this lightly. Allow the supervisee to control the exploration, there is no need to enforce rules about 'how many' cards or whether words are grammatically correct. Indeed, some of the most impactful explorations occur when the supervisee creates their own language for their emotions.

A word of caution.

Ensure the supervisee is allowed to name their emotions without contamination from the supervisor. The value of the tool is in helping the supervisees to understand their emotions in their own words (Duffell and Lawton-Smith, 2015).

What other uses are there for this technique?

Supervisors are encouraged to develop their own way of using the cards, most often used in individual supervision they can also be used in group settings. For example, peers could listen to the scenario brought and listen out for the feelings that they noticed being expressed or unexpressed. The cards could be used as the vehicle for offering feedback. The alternative words on the reverse of the card can make it easier to accept feedback as they have the ability to tailor what has been offered, the supervisee may also find them useful to use with their own clients. They are particularly helpful to open up a discussion about emotion in a more concrete way.

References:

Duffell, P. and Lawton-Smith, C. (2017) Once more with feeling, *Coaching at Work*, 12(3), pp.6-40.





Duffell, P. & Lawton-Smith, C. (2015) The challenges of working with emotion in coaching, *The Coaching Psychologist*, 11(1), pp. 32-39.

Resources:

Cards available from www.westwoodcoaching.co.uk [Accessed 7 September 2019].

TECHNIQUE 4: CAPTURING JOURNEYS ON A BIG SCALE

Written by Michelle Lucas and Andy King

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

When is this used?

The technique can be at the end of a programme of supervision to capture the learning gained along the way.

What is the technique?

Working on a large scale, the creativity and physicality of this approach helps to embed the learning more fully than story telling alone.

Step 1: Pre-prepare the paper drawing out an undulating path or river – see Figure 1.2. Ensure the supervisee has some post it notes and a pen.

Figure 1.2. The start of a journey map



The start of a map – where are we now, what is our goal? Obstacles and resources etc. to be added

Step 2: Invite the supervisee to find a place near the start of the drawing that feels like a representation of them at their beginning.

Step 3: Ask “What did you learn here?” plus follow up questions like “What else do you remember about being here?” and “What do you notice now about being here?”; you can move to deeper exploration through metaphor for example “And when you were XXXX that was like what?”.

Step 4: Ask “What would you like to capture about this part of your journey?” answers are put on post it notes and placed onto the paper.

Step 5: Encourage the supervisee to move forward on the path to a place where additional learning occurred. Repeat Steps 3 and 4.

Step 6: Continue the process until the supervisee has reached a point which represents where they are today.

Step 7: By way of close, pose a meta question like “What have you learned today about how you learn best?”

Step 8: Take a photo of the completed journey.

How to work with the technique...

The exercise works because of its large scale, which necessitates access to a large space and a long enough stretch of paper (joining together flip chart paper works equally well). Preparing the paper saves time, however, it can be more powerful to invite the supervisee(s) to create their own picture. There are many metaphors that can be used; rivers, paths, stepping stones, roads ... allow the creativity of the individuals to shine. To encourage creativity the supervisor might inject some playful challenge – for example inviting supervisees to consider any moments where they ‘fell off the path’ or ‘went backwards rather than forwards’ or ‘wished they were on a different path’. Additionally, encourage supervisees to respond with drawings rather than words – it can help to have magazines available so that people can cut out images to accompany their own words and pictures.

This could be done as a group exercise, travelling down the path together. Participants can either put their post it notes on the paper (themes could be explored as a follow-on activity) or simply put them in their own journals.

What else might need attention?

As with any group work there may be differences in engagement amongst the supervisees. Depending on the maturity of the group and the supervisor’s facilitation skills this could be covered off in a group process review, or may need separate individual discussions.

A word of caution.

Occasionally supervisees struggle to answer directly the questions about their learning. If so, then in Step 4, simply invite them to move forward in time on their journey map. Then ask some more exploratory questions like “What do you remember about being here?” and “What

might have been different about you, or your work then, compared to now?” and then finally, “What learning is occurring to you now?”.

If a sense of competition emerges during the exercise, you could invite supervisees to respond silently and to keep their notes private.

What other uses are there for this technique?

Used at the start of a programme of supervision, this would help supervisees define their goals and ambitions for their learning. The places along the way might consider how they will gather evidence for progress, or the different ingredients that are necessary for goal attainment, or it could include the obstacles that they anticipate they will need to overcome. The approach could equally be applied to individual coaching clients. This technique stemmed from work with teams helping them plan or problem solve or to reconnect with their past successes when facing an apparent impasse. Whatever the content, this approach can help to create a STAR moment I.e. Something They will Always Remember.

Further reading:

Sibbet, D. (2010) *Visual Meetings*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Sibbet, D. (2011) *Visual Teams*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Resources:

Purchase the roll of paper here. Available at: https://www.plot-it.co.uk/p/canon_group_ocr_ijn123_matt_premium_coated_130g_m_42_1067mm_x_30m_inkjet_plotter_paper_roll [Accessed 6 September 2019]