

Supervision Techniques 14

FOUR SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

EDITED BY MICHELLE LUCAS

TRANSFERRING COMPETENCE

DEVELOPING COACH MATURITY







ONE STEP TOWARDS BETTER

HEALTHY SELF-FEEDBACK

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: Transferring Competence

Written by Fredrike Bannink

| Where can this be used? | | | | Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required | |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
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When is this used?

This helps supervisees to find their existing competences, so that they can be leveraged for the current supervision topic or a future desired state. The enquiry can be used in many configurations and is most helpful when intending to create a positive atmosphere while simultaneously capturing existing competence.

What is the enquiry?

Based on the work of Lamarre and Gregoire (1999), who described the notion of *competence transference*. The idea being that when you become stuck in one domain of your life it is probable that the qualities and skills you utilise in other domains (work, family, hobbies, sports, talents) could be of use to you. They describe how a client suffering from a panic disorder learned how to relax by applying his knowledge of deep-sea diving whenever he experienced anxiety.

Facilitate a semi-structured discussion along the following lines:

Step 1: Ask permission to experiment with some tangential discussion.

Step 2: Identify with them what other areas of their life they are successful at – useful areas to explore are typically work, family, hobbies, sports or special talents.

Step 3: Engage in a positive and exploratory discussion using questions like:

- “What competences do you have?” “How do/did you use those?” “How do/did you succeed in doing that?”

- “What would those around you in those moments describe as your competences?”

Step 4: Invite the supervisee to transfer one of those competences towards the issue at hand. This can be done explicitly, “How might you use this competence to manage the topic we were talking about?” or it can be done in a more positive way, “How can you bring this competence to bear in order to reach your goal?” Or it could be done in a more subtle way, “If they could speak, what advice would your competence offer you for this issue?”.

Step 5: Ask them to notice when and where else they have been able to leverage this level of resourcefulness. Talking about previous successes can help building self-confidence and remind them that their competences are a consistent part of them.

Step 6: Encourage the supervisee to consider what small next step they might take to move themselves forward on the problem or issue at hand.

How to work with the enquiry...

Experiment rather than simply dig deeper or try harder, this in itself can liberate the energy in the discussion. If you know the supervisee well, you might invite the supervisee to think about areas of their life that you have already heard from them as success stories. Steps 4 & 5 serve to support the supervisee to transfer their competence from one domain to another.

Solution-focused interviewing (Bannink, 2010) capitalises on the idea that all individuals have competences, despite life’s struggles, that can be marshalled to improve the quality of their lives.

What else might need attention?

Sometimes supervisees feel embarrassed to talk about their strengths and successes. Or they never really have given it any thought. If the supervisee cannot – or dare not - come up with their competences, ask them what those around them would say their competences are. “Suppose we were to ask your best friend what you are good at, what would they say?” Asking questions from other perspectives, such as the perspective of their best friend, makes it easier to name their own competences.

A word of caution.

Remember context may alter what behaviour is appropriate, so ensure you check that the behaviour being transferred is appropriate to the new context. Remember also that what works with one person may not always work for the next.

What other uses are there for this enquiry?

The enquiry can be used as an energiser and builds self-confidence and self-efficacy, perhaps pair work within a group. In this case begin by inviting partners to share what areas of their life they really shine in. It would conclude by inviting the pairs to consider when these

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competences have shown up in their work and how they might use them in a personal issue at hand.

The enquiry can be similarly applied to work with individual and team coaching clients.

References:

Bannink, F.P. (2010) *1001 solution-focused questions. Handbook for solution-focused interviewing*. New York: Norton.




Lamarre, J. and Gregoire, A. (1999) Competence transfer in solution-focused therapy: Harnessing a natural resource. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 18(1), pp. 43-57.

Further reading:

Bannink, F.P. (2015) *Handbook of positive supervision*. Boston: Hogrefe Publishing.

Technique 2: Developing Coach Maturity

Written by David Clutterbuck

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

This approach is useful as part of an ongoing developmental supervisory relationship. While recognising that an individual's development will have its own pace, an awareness of our current stage of development can prompt an exploration of what might move us to the next.

What is the approach?

Developing Coach Maturity is informed by the four stage model of coach maturity articulated by Megginson and Clutterbuck (2009) – see Table 1.2 . Working over time the intention is to help the supervisee identify where most of the questions that they bring to supervision sit within this model. With permission the supervisor can pose questions which deliberately stretch the supervisee.

Table 1.2: Megginson and Clutterbuck (2009) Four stages of Coach Maturity

| Stage | Style of Working | Typical Supervision Questions |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Models Based | <i>Doing coaching to</i> the client | Why didn't 'X' work? What did I do wrong? |
| 2. Process Based | <i>Doing coaching with</i> the client | What could I do that would be most helpful for this client? |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| 3. Philosophy Based | <i>Being a coach</i> | What am I experiencing that might be of use to my client? |
| 4. System Eclectics | <i>Being part of the system</i> in which coaching occurs | What's really going on here? |

How to work with the approach...

Step 1: Build the supervision relationship and contract for developmental work.

Step 2: Find a mechanism for capturing what is brought to supervision and for reflecting on that data either independently or jointly.

Step 3: Dedicate time to evaluating the content of both sessions and reflections to hypothesize on which stage captures the supervisee's typical enquiry. For example, is their focus on whether they are doing it 'right' or on understanding the situational dynamics?

Explore how ready the supervisee is to be stretched. Remember that it can be helpful to actively consolidate our understanding of operating at one level of maturity before rushing to achieve the next.

Step 4: At the end of a session, consider what evidence would corroborate both parties sense of the supervisee's stage of development. Where different perspectives are held, consider what might have caused the supervisee to have worked more or less maturely on this occasion.

Step 5: Once both supervisor and supervisee have established a way of working that allows developmental exploration, the supervisor might experiment in the moment with questions aimed at prompting exploration towards the next level of maturity.

How to work with the approach...

The model is intended for reference over time such that both supervisor and supervisee have a sense of their centre of developmental gravity. Once this is understood any variations from this centre offers data for another level of enquiry (see Step 4) It is important to remember that our professional maturity is not a constant. In certain contexts, with particular clients, or even on a specific day, even the most experienced practitioner can be catapulted back to a place where they feel like a novice and start to question "How am I doing?".

What else might need attention?

Where it emerges that a particular set of conditions routinely push the supervisee to an earlier stage of development this could hint at the need for some personal work.

A word of caution.

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We occasionally find that ego-driven supervisees attempt to ‘act up’, taking on the mantle of a maturity stage they have not yet reached. It has been described as ‘like a five-year-old putting on lipstick’. It can be challenging for the supervisor to work with such lack of self-awareness. A helpful analogy, achieving mastery in a sport, could be shared. At key periods the sportsperson is taken right back to basics, because it is at this level that the foundations for fine adjustments typically lie.

What other uses are there for this approach?

Typically, it is easier to take this approach in individual supervision. It may also be possible in groups with experienced supervisors already masterful at managing group dynamics and who can therefore manage this developmental exploration in parallel.

Once a supervisee experiences and understands how to work with this model, they could equally apply it with their own clients.

References:

Meggison, D. and Clutterbuck, D. (2009) *Further techniques for coaching and mentoring*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Further reading:






Bachkirova, T. & Cox, E. (2007) A cognitive-developmental approach for coach development. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A guide for practitioners*. East Sussex: Routledge

Clutterbuck, D. (2010) Coaching reflection: the liberated coach. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 3(1), pp.73-81.

Hawkins, P. and Smith, N. (2006) *Coaching, Mentoring and Organisational Consultancy: Supervision and Development*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill. pp. 136-159.

Technique 3: One Step Towards Better

Written by Maren Donata Urschel

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

Following on from ‘Mapping what is’ (see pages 279 - 281) supervisors might invite supervisees to take one step towards ‘better.’ ‘Better’ in systemic work is not an evaluation or a judgement but rather a movement that sets off an inner shift and releases some of the tension or stuck-ness in the system.

What is the practice?

Taking a step towards ‘better’ enables supervisees to experiment with a possible next step and understand what the system requires of *them* to release some of the difficulty.

Once the supervisee has created a map of ‘what is’ and articulated some words of acknowledgment about their map (see Step 1 to Step 6 in ‘mapping what is’), the supervisor talks the supervisee(s) through the exercise as follows:

Step 1 to Step 6: See ‘Mapping what is.’ on pages 279-281.

Step 7(a): “Move the representative object/post-it of yourself one small step towards ‘better.’ ‘Better’ in the sense of releasing some of the tension or difficulty in the system. You can only move your own representative object. Tap into your gut feel or intuition about where that place might be. Take your time. Pay attention to distance and direction.

Step 7(b): Notice if any words come up that accompany this movement towards ‘better.’ If so, express them succinctly, for example, ‘now I can see you,’ or ‘I am taking a step back’

Step 8: Articulate what the system requires of you to make a move towards better. For example, “I need to be closer to my team so that I can really see them,” or “I need to leave the system to serve it best,”

Step 9: Supervisor and supervisee work with what emerges using ‘systemically-oriented questions’ (see page 287 - 289)

Step 10: Find a way of internalising the map, e.g. take a photo.

Step 11: Respectfully dismantle the map.

How to work with the practice...

Sometimes supervisees are tempted to move all representative objects a ‘step towards better’ in a desire to resolve the issue. Inviting the supervisee to move only the representative object for themselves allows them to embody the inner shift *they* are capable of making to ease some of the difficulty in the system. This connects the supervisee with their inner capacity to effect change in one part of the system. Moving one part of the system, has an effect on all others, just like in a child’s mobile.

Occasionally supervisees struggle to come up with words that accompany the movement towards ‘better.’ It can be useful to invite them to make physical contact with their representative object by lightly touching it with their fingers, while tuning into what information emerges from that part of the system. This process can be replicated with all other representative objects. It naturally supports supervisees in accessing information from different parts of the system. That said, it is also information in itself if the supervisee does not come up with any words.

What else might need attention?

See ‘Mapping what is’ pages 279 - 281.

A word of caution.

‘Mapping what is’ is an intervention in itself and it can often be enough. Therefore, it is important to let the supervisee decide whether to add ‘a step towards better.’ A simple question could be “have you got enough (information)?”. Once the supervisee has set up and internalised their map of ‘what is’ (and throughout any systemic work) empower the supervisee to integrate systemic information at their own pace.

Systemic work is embodied work, it takes time to integrate and requires an inner shift in the supervisee. There is no shortcut - swiftly moving to solutions in a desire to ‘fix’ an issue, often deprives the supervisee and the system of the possibility to experience and move through the sometimes subtle, yet important, stages of inner shift/change. Therefore, systemic

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supervisors encourage supervisees to take and acknowledge one small step towards 'better' at a time.

What other uses are there for this practice?

See 'Mapping what is' on pages 279 - 281.

Further reading:


Whittington, J. (2020): Systemic Coaching and Constellations. 3rd ed. London: Kogan Page.

Resources:

Available at: www.coachingconstellations.com [Accessed 2 October 2019]

Technique 4: Healthy Self-Feedback (For Group Supervisors)

Written by Helen Reuben

| Where can this be used? | | | | Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
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When is this used?

The supervisor is likely to use this approach immediately after a group session has ended, it offers an additional perspective to more traditional verbal or written feedback.

What is the technique?

This is a method of 'Mindful' self-feedback and can be used to encourage supervisors to tap into their intuitions, 'Spiritual Intelligence', learning and awareness.

Step 1:

- The supervisor calms their mind by placing feet flat on the floor and breathing in – through the nose focusing on calm, presence and self-compassion. Self-doubt and judgement can be released by breathing out – through the mouth and tensions, concerns and limitations

Step 2:

- The supervisor recalls an image of the group and identifies each member and where they were seated; including themselves
- In the moment – almost as a 'fly on the wall' - a distanced perspective helps supervisor notice feelings and sensations as they focus on the group. What comes to mind? What images can represent the experience as a whole? What physical sensations emerge?

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- The supervisor can focus on each group member in turn – almost experiencing the session as that supervisee. What is noticed? How do they feel? What learning is enhanced / needed? What blocks may be there for that person?
- How is this individual responding to the supervisor, to other group members? How well supported do they feel? What is happening for them in terms of their insights?

Step 3:

- The supervisor may sit in the seat that was occupied by a specific group member and imagine what the experience may have been for that supervisee. When seated - eye closure is recommended to block out any distractions and help to focus the mind. Eventually, when ready supervisor moves to the next seat to focus on the next individual.
- Supervisor can make notes before moving to the next chair. They may receive images or colours, symbols or sounds; these may have deeper meaning if the supervisor can trust their instincts and intuitions. Remember, the meaning may not reveal itself immediately to supervisor may and emerge given time.

How to work with the technique...

At a practical level it may be helpful for supervisor to create a simple diagram of where each supervisee is seated before starting the self-reflection.

Mindfulness is a state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting feelings, thoughts, and sensations. It is moment-by-moment awareness through a nurturing lens, paying attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them. It is essential that supervisor allows self-compassion to support any and all self-feedback and not allow their 'Inner Critic' to dominate. Balanced self-feedback without judgement supports the self-esteem and accessing supervisor's inner wisdom will ensure a positive self-dialogue to maintain healthy self-belief.

Interesting this slowing down of the earlier experience often helps the supervisor notice something that did not hold their attention in the moment of the session.

What else might need attention?

This technique may supplement that which was not said more overtly by the supervisees, perhaps paradoxically therefore the supervisor therefore needs to be careful about whether and how they share their new insight with the group. Perhaps individual supervisees lack awareness or are not ready to voice and process what the supervisor is able to access through using this technique. Differentiate between what insight is useful for the supervisor's development and what might be useful to inform the group's understanding of their dynamics.

A word of caution.

The supervisor needs to be practiced and competent in becoming mindful more generally before engaging in this as a feedback review activity.

What other uses are there for this technique?

With permission the supervisor may bring their own noticing that occurred following a session as part of the content for a subsequent session. Like many other techniques by logging what they notice over time, themes and patterns may emerge that hold interesting developmental information – for both supervisees and supervisors alike.

This technique can also be adapted used when coaching – either individual group or team coaching.

Further Reading:

Wigglesworth, C. (2014) *SQ21: The 21 skills of Spiritual Intelligence*. Select Books.

Williams, J. (2009) Breath of life: Calm power through natural breathing. [online] 15 December. Available at: < <https://visionarybeing.wordpress.com/2009/12/15/breath-of-life-calm-power-through-natural-breathing/> > [Accessed 7 September 2019]

Resources:

For more information on Mindfulness visit the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. Available at: <http://oxfordmindfulness.org/> [Accessed 7 September 2019].