

Supervision Techniques 16

FOUR SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

EDITED BY MICHELLE LUCAS

FEELING STUCK

RESOURCING







INNER NOTICING

3-2-1 REFLECTIVE WRITING

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: Feeling Stuck

Written by Anne Calleja

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

When is this used?

When a supervisee feels ‘stuck’ or frustrated or overwhelmed when with a particular client or they notice unhelpful patterns as they work with a number of clients.

What is the technique?

Based on the work of Dilts and Bateson who identified a hierarchy of Neuro Logical Levels. Working systematically the technique helps to identify the ‘level’ where the ‘stuckness’ is experienced, before creating alignment and next steps.

Step 1: Ask the supervisee to find a space within the room, then guide the supervisee to bring the client they feel ‘stuck with’ into that space, and to connect with how they are in this client’s presence. Suggest that the supervisee do a body scan; perhaps encourage them to notice what they notice, feel what they feel and hear what they say. The intention is to re-live the stuckness.

Step 2: Ask the supervisee to step out of the space, to share any insight and then physically ‘shake off’ the sensations.

Step 3 (a): The supervisee writes on 6 pieces of paper and then places them on the floor in ‘hierarchy’ order i.e. Environment; Behaviour; Capability; Values; Identity; Purpose. See diagram.

Step 3 (b): The supervisee steps into the space represented by each piece of paper and connects with the experience of being there. Use this specific order and the following tailored prompts, beginning each prompt with “And when with your client”

1. Environment: ...where are you? Notice what you notice, feel what you feel and hear what you hear.
2. Behaviour: ...what were you saying and doing?
3. Capability: ...what skills were you using?
4. Values: ...what were you believing or valuing?

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5. Identity: ...what role were you playing, who were you?
6. Purpose: ...what was your purpose or aim?

Pause in each space for the supervisee to process their sensations and thoughts.

Step 4: The supervisee steps off the pieces of paper and reflects on what they noticed, felt or heard.

Step 5: The supervisee now finds an 'observational space' where they can be an observer to themselves. From there ask them to re-live walking through each 'level', encouraging them to notice the place where there may have experienced the 'stuckness' or any insight.

Step 6 (a): The supervisee now finds a different space, which represents where they have been able to achieve a resolution. Identify this space as 'positive resource space'. Allow the supervisee to access that state.

Step 6 (b): Ask them to use their positive resource state, and to walk through the levels E-B-C-V-I-P again.

Step 6 (c): After a pause, maintaining their positive resource state, invite them to walk through the levels in reverse order i.e. P-I-V-C-B-E

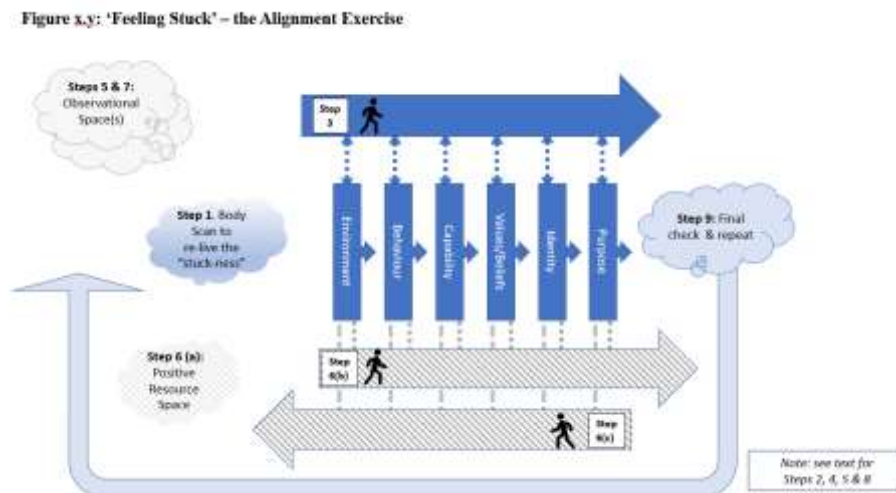
Step 7: When they are ready, the supervisee moves to an 'observational space' and reflects on their learning. The supervisor might offer prompts such as:

- "...and is there anything else?" (repeat as needed)
- "...and what do you know now?"

Step 8: Enquire "Is this a good place to stop now?" responding appropriately in order to identify any actions and to close out the work.

Step 9: Repeat the previous steps as necessary until a sense of alignment is achieved.

Figure 1.4: 'Feeling Stuck' the Alignment Exercise



How to work with the technique...

The technique has a strong structure, so facilitate the process lightly. Guide the supervisee to process what they need to process without any cognitive intervention or sharing of experience from you. As the work unfolds, observe quietly and at a distance. Gently match the supervisee's posture. Take note of your own sensations, offer these only when the supervisee is in the observer space.

By walking through the levels systematically and repeatedly the supervisee gets a sense of what is out of 'sync' (and is causing the sense of stuckness) and therefore begins to understand what needs to be done to feel aligned and congruent. This repetition is helpful. It will allow them to consolidate the process and connect more fully to their experience.

What else might need attention?

If the sense of stuckness does not resolve, then it may be helpful to consider whether transference or a parallel process is occurring.

A word of caution.






If you are not NLP trained or familiar with Clean Language and Clean Space, or gestalt body work you may find it helpful to do some further reading.

What other uses are there for this technique?

With deeper understanding of Dilt's logical levels, coaches could facilitate something similar with their clients.

Technique 2: Resourcing

Written by Maren Donata Urschel

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

When is this used?

Mapping resources is useful for situations in which supervisors or supervisees feel a need to but struggle to identify and access resources to support them. Resources support and strengthen supervisors and supervisees in serving a relationship system in the most useful way. Resources can be people, concepts (e.g. systemic coaching), concretes (e.g. money) or abstracts (e.g. insight).

What is the practice?

Accessing resources through mapping enables supervisors and supervisees to get out of their heads into a three-dimensional representation of how they can resource themselves in a particular situation.

The supervisor could introduce a resource mapping exercise to the supervisee as follows:

“Think of a particularly challenging situation with one of your clients where you feel under-resourced. We are going to experiment with a different way of accessing and identifying resources that support you in your client relationship. Rather than thinking or talking about them, we are going to put them on a three-dimensional map representing yourself, your client and the most important resource(s).”

The supervisor talks the supervisee(s) through the exercise as follows:

Step 1: Find a clean, free space with a clear boundary, for example, a sheet of paper on a table-top.

Step 2: Identify three objects representing 1) yourself, 2) your client and 3) a resource (you may or may not know who or what the resource is at this stage).

Note: Make sure the objects have a really clear sense of direction. There are representative objects specifically designed for this purpose as well as arrow-shaped post-its. If you don't have either, you could simply use coffee cups where the handle represents the direction of attention.

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Step 3: Tap into your intuition and somatic sense of the situation as it is right now, and place the objects representing 1) yourself and 2) your client within the bounded space. Pay attention to the distance between them and the direction they are facing.

Step 4: Articulate in as few words as possible what you notice about the map you created.

Step 5: Without worrying about what the resource is and trusting your intuition and your body's sense of where it would be best placed, add the object representing the resource 3) to the map created.

Step 6: Notice whether any words come up you would want to 'say' to the resource to acknowledge it. For example, 'now I can see you,' 'I had forgotten about you,' 'thank you for showing up,' etc. Adjust the position of the resource, if it feels appropriate.

Step 7: Add one further object, (*if needed*), representing one additional resource. *Repeat Step 6.*

Step 8: Work with what emerges, supervise as appropriate.

Step 9: Find a way of internalising the map, e.g. by taking a photo.

Step 10: Respectfully dismantle the map.

How to work with the practice...

This exercise enables supervisees to discover previously unseen or unknown resources in the systems in which they belong or have belonged. Therefore, it is possible that the supervisee does not know what exactly the resource is. It is important to focus on the embodied experience of being resourced rather than thinking about what the resource is. Often the name of the resource emerges naturally – during or after the exercise.

If the supervisee gets distracted by identifying the resource, it can be useful to point out that both - knowing what the resource is and not knowing what the resource is - is information in itself. The supervisor might suggest to the supervisee to say something to the representative for the resource along the lines of "thank you for showing up. I don't know who or what you are yet. Please give me time to find out." This acknowledges the resource's existence and gives it a place.

What else might need attention?

Accessing new or long-forgotten resources might generate an emotional response in supervisees. It is most useful to treat any (emotional) response as information, acknowledge it and encourage the supervisee to let the resourcing map settle so that it can integrate and unfold.

A word of caution.

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

What other uses are there for this practice?

Once supervisees have experienced the exercise in supervision and tried it out in self-supervision they can use the exercise with their clients to resource them for a particular situation.

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 3: Inner Noticing

Written by Julie Allan and Alison Whybrow

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

When is this used?

This approach is used to expand the parameters of enquiry, bringing to awareness information that the body is offering. It can be adapted for many supervision questions, such as: “Why am I so challenged by this client?” or, “What will make for a good client contract in this particular situation?”. Perhaps most obviously suited to the initial phase of the gestalt cycle, it can serve throughout.

What is the experiment?

The approach pays attention to sensation, physiology and (optionally) emotions. It includes the ‘felt sense’ that is central to Gendlin’s Focusing (1978).

First, ensure that the supervisee is sitting or standing comfortably, using your preferred approach for becoming centred. From this starting point, the process, to be lightly facilitated, is along these lines:

Step 1: Inviting.

- Bring to mind the situation you want to give attention to. Let your mind’s eye wander around it, see it from different places. Perhaps you hear conversational snippets.
- As you are doing this, become curious about what you experience and notice.
- Notice any sensations in your body, with curiosity and enquiry. Some people find themselves associating with scents or tastes. This may take some time, and it may also be that things are a bit foggy; that is also information.
- What draws your attention? Do you find yourself using any emotional labels?
- In a relaxed way, notice all these elements and sit with them. What seems clear? What seems less so?

Step 2: Receiving.

- Imagine there are two or three important messages for you in that inner world gathering. These things will be useful to have noticed in relation to the situation you are exploring. Allow yourself to sense what these are. Some may seem very clear, others less so.
- If it helps you to say out loud what is coming forward for you, do so. Explore rather than judge. If there isn't a word for it then you can make an expression with your face, or a sound. You can even ask out loud, "Is this/are these what it will help to have noticed?" or "Is there anything else?"

Step 3: Acknowledging.

- When you feel settled that your attention has been drawn to the foremost aspects to work with today, even if a bit puzzling, take a moment to notice what you have noticed and to say a thank you to everything that showed up. Also invite the gathering to disperse.
- Come back to the outer world with your new awareness.

You then work with the information gained from the inner noticing in whatever way seems appropriate. This may simply be quiet reflection. Note that in Step 2, people might say things such as: "There is something here I am associating with fear; for some reason I am aware that my neck is sore; I am also noticing three people involved in this that I hadn't thought about before".

How to work with this experiment...

The work of the noticing is to pay attention in a more full way than people often do when puzzling about an issue, and to stay close to sensation, although encompassing any arising emotion. Ensure distinctions are made between, for example, sensation and emotion, or either of these and judgements. The invitations of the supervisor to 'notice' is best done in an easeful and relaxed manner. Different individuals will have different pacing, so acute attention is required to a supervisee's readiness to move on. Be guided by the supervisee rather than the clock.

A word of caution.

Work to a depth that is appropriate to the question and suits the capabilities and capacities of the supervisor and the supervisee.

Check that the 'felt sense' arising from the enquiry is not hanging around in an unhelpful way to promote rumination or worry. This is the reason for asking the metaphorical gathering to disperse, having expressed appreciation.

What other uses are there for this experiment?

There are many uses for a similar format as the intention is always to tap in to our wider ways of knowing/understanding, to notice in a phenomenological way, and to make a conversational space for our own embodied process of making sense. When we experience ourselves noticing and learning, we

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also start to explore our own filters, translations and co-evolution of our contexts, and this is usually helpful. Coaching clients benefit similarly.

Reference:

Gendlin, E. T. (1978) *Focusing*. Everest House.

Further reading:

Stelter, R. (2000) The transformation of body experience into language, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 31(1), pp. 63-77.

Varela, F.J., Thompson, E., and Rosch, E. (1993) *The Embodied Mind*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.

Resources:

Gendlin's Focusing:

International Focusing Institute. Available at: <http://www.focusing.org/sixsteps.html>; [Accessed 8 October 2019]



Gendlin film clip; *Focusing with Eugene T. Gendlin. PhD*. Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bjhf_qUklSc; [Accessed on 8 October 2019]

And any basic sources on phenomenology according to Husserl and to Merleau-Ponty.

Technique 4: 3-2-1: A reflective writing technique

Written by Liz Ford

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

When is this used?

This short, timed reflective writing exercise can be used at several points of the supervision cycle and can be a particularly pragmatic way of introducing reflective writing. Before a session it can help the supervisee prepare their thoughts and decide what to bring. During a session it can enable a supervisee to explore their feelings and thoughts around a particular client, challenge or success. After supervision it can assist the supervisee to gather their learning and identify any actions they want to take as a result of their supervision time.

What is the technique?

This technique encourages freeform reflection for a short, timed period in order to uncover thoughts and feelings surrounding a particular topic or situation.

Step 1: Choose somewhere comfortable to write and gather paper, pens and a timer.

Step 2: Decide what you want to reflect on. This might be a client, a conversation, a feeling or something else about your practice that you'd like to explore.

Step 3: Set a timer for *three* minutes (you could use your phone).

Step 4: Start writing, remember:

- Write quickly.
- Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- Keep your hand moving.
- Write whatever comes into your head.
- Don't censor what goes on the paper.
- Stop when the timer sounds.

Step 5: Briefly read back through your writing, then write for a further *two* minutes using one of the stems below:

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- As I read this:
 - I notice...
 - I am aware of...
 - I am curious about...
 - I feel...
 - I am surprised by...

Step 6: Stop writing when the timer sounds.

Step 7: Finally set the timer for *one* minute and write a list of:

- Items you want to discuss in supervision, or
- Learning you have identified, or
- Actions you want to take, or
- Interventions you could use with that client...

How to work with the technique...

Using a short, timed method can introduce reflection in a very practical way to coaches who find reflection difficult or assume it takes up too much time. This technique only needs ten minutes and works particularly well for the first time when incorporated into a supervision session so that the supervisee experiences the power and ease of using it. They are then more likely to adapt and use the technique in their own time.

When used within a session, it is helpful for the supervisor to time the three writing sections and give instructions for each phase. For example: “Take three minutes to write about whatever comes to mind when you think of that situation”. Then “As you read what you’ve written, take two minutes to write what you notice” and finally “Now take one minute to list all the interventions you could potentially use with that client”.

Some supervisees like to use different coloured pens for each of the three writing sections and keep their reflections together in a journal or folder so they can look back on them and reflect further if wished.

Once the technique is understood, supervisees can adapt it to their own needs, doubling or tripling the timings of the writing stages for more in-depth reflection and choosing topics, stem statements and lists that are pertinent to their practice.

A word of caution.

The power in this technique relies on completing all three writing stages. Supervisees who err towards spending time on free writing at the expense of stages two and three can sometimes find themselves continuing to feel stuck and lacking any additional insight.

What other uses are there for this technique?

Although an individual reflection technique, this can be used successfully within groups, either to plan the supervision agenda or to personally reflect on learning gained.

It is also an intervention that coaches can use with their clients. It can help clients identify what they’d like to work on in a session or assist them to see what they’ve gained or learned. It has also been

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particularly beneficial for clients who feel overwhelmed because of its ability to get thoughts down on paper, explore feelings and identify actions or strategies within a short space of time.

Further reading:

Adams, K. (2011) The Journal Ladder: A developmental continuum of Journal Therapy.[pdf]
Available at: https://journaltherapy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/CJT_Journal_Ladder-FINAL.pdf [Accessed: 4 September 2019]

Hay, J. (2007) *Reflective Practice and Supervision for Coaches*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.

Holder, J. (2014) Notes To Self. *Coaching At Work*, 9 (2), pp.38-41.