

Advanced supervision

The CLEAR Model

Contract

Listen

Explore

Action

Review

Contracting

Intent precedes content.

- Working alliance. Mutual expectations. Hopes and fears. Ask the supervisee: 'what works for you when others help you? What is about your supervision that you would want me for? What would success in your supervision look like?'
- Practicalities and meeting arrangements: 'What would we need to achieve that success?' Where? Who pays? Arrangement for missed sessions? What type of supervision (tutorial, training, managerial, developmental)?
- Boundaries: supervision and therapy: a supervision session should start and finish with work, i.e. it should be a work issue, which may bring up *relevant* personal issues, but the end point should be 'what will you do with your client in the next session?'. Always discuss confidentiality and its limits. How much is confidential? What is not confidential?
- Session format: one case or several? Bring case notes or not? Every client discussed?
- Organisational and professional context: discuss organisational expectations and expectations of professional bodies. Are there codes of practice you need to apply?
- Taking notes: be clear what sort of notes you will take, where you will keep them, what will happen to them, level of detail. Notes are very helpful to review points of action and to create reconnections, but may be subject to organisational and statutory controls.

Short form contracting

Short form contracting is similar to agenda setting. 'How do you want to use your time? What do you need to achieve in this session? How could I be most valuable to you today? What do you want to focus on? What would success look like for you today? What do you want to have achieved before leaving here?'

Can you contract for pace or challenge?

Mode 1: bring the client into the room

'What did he/she say/do?' Encourage the supervisee to be precise about the language.

'How did they move? How did they speak?'

Gesture, look, language, metaphor can all be useful described as accurately as possible.

'Don't tell me, show me.'

Replay the first two minutes of the session for me. 'What happened before the session really got started?'

Avoid premature judgement, diagnosis, interpretation, attribution of meaning or solution finding. All these are useful skills, but only after the client has 'fully entered the room'.

Mode 2: Interventions

Think about interventions (e.g. OARS), structures and strategies.

Look for the 'either-ors' the supervisee brings ('I could do this...or I could do that'). Integrate them or break the frame of the dilemma: try out different types of interventions in the spirit of brainstorming.

Role play and rehearse different interventions.

The MITI is a sophisticated tool for Mode 2 supervision.

Mode 3: relationship between supervisee and client

'How did you meet this client?'

'How and why did this client choose you?'

'What were your first impressions of him/her?'

'What is the history of the relationship?'

'What did you first notice about your relationship with this client?'

'Tell me the story of the history of your relationship?'

'Can you think of an image or metaphor to represent your relationship?'

'Imagine what sort of relationship you would have had with this client had you met under other circumstances'.

'If you were to go to a fancy dress party together, what would you both wear?'

'Become a fly on the wall of the last session: what do you notice about the relationship?'

Mode 4: supervise feelings

Ask about feelings towards the client, remembering these are likely to be at least in part unconscious.

‘Have you had feelings like this with clients before?’ As a supervisor be agnostic but curious about what the feelings might mean. ‘This is what it brings up for me, I wonder what it means for you?’

If a transference reaction has been identified in 3, how does the supervisee respond to this? Paying a corresponding part or a parallel part, resisting or accepting the transference? (Aim to create a space to respond to rather than react to the client).

Be aware of the ‘ideological editor’: the supervisee doesn’t express things because of their own values (‘if I owned up to that feeling it would mean I was racist/sexist/prejudiced’).

A technique from John Heron:

Stage 1: who does this person remind you of? (a real person, a historical figure or fictional character).

Stage 2: how is your client like this person?

Stage 3: What would you like to say to the person you discovered in stage 1?

Stage 4: In what ways is your client different from this person?

Stage 5: What would you like to say to your client?

Mode 5: the supervisory relationship

Notice your feelings and feed them back to the supervisee in a non-judgemental way.

‘I am experiencing the way you are telling me about this client as strangely incoherent, and I’m wondering if that is how you felt with the client’.

“I’m getting this feeling, I wonder what it means’.

Mode 5 supervision can alert you to parallel processes in supervision: something is happening between you and the supervisee that parallels a process between the supervisee and client. There are two sorts of parallel process to look for, the primary parallel process and the secondary censoring response.

Mode 6: supervisor focussing on their own process

Offer your own feelings as ‘data for the session’ without ascribing a meaning to them: ‘I’m feeling a bit angry by this description and wonder if that has any resonances for you’.

Who am I for the supervisee?

Mode 6 is the gateway to mode 5.

Cultivate your own intuitions. 'I'm feeling rather bored as I'm listening to your account. I've noticed this often happens to me when I'm listening to the wrong thing. Is there something else about this client you want to tell me about?'

Note any shifts in bodily sensations: fist tightening, heart racing, feeling sleepy.

Mode 7 the wider context

Each of the previous six modes can be considered in the wider context: the client (e.g. the client's background and culture), the supervisee's intentions (the context of their profession and organisation), the supervisee-client relationship (e.g. how are such relationships viewed in their culture), the supervisee (e.g. their stage of professional development), the supervisory relationship (e.g. previous experience of giving and receiving supervision) and the supervisor's own context.

The 'servant of two masters' dilemma

This is one ethical dilemma that is common in supervision and coaching, and for which a mode 7 view can be helpful. You are hired as a supervisor by an agency who have specific aims for the supervision you are to provide. Your supervisee brings you an issue that is outwith this contract or possibly even in conflict with it.

The techniques: (1) *Bring the organisation into the room*. What are the organisation's legitimate goals? What ethical principles underly these goals? Discuss the ethical dilemma using the language of ethics. (2) *Recontract*. Explicitly return to the original contract to re-examine its premises and re-negotiate it.

The principle: ethical subsidiarity ('sleepless nights transfer'). Your dilemma as a supervisor should become a dilemma for the supervisee.

Further reading

The content of this workshop is drawn from the work of Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet: their book is strongly recommended. European MINTies may also be interested in the courses they run in Bath and London: details at <http://www.cstd.co.uk/>.

Peter and Shohet, Robin (2006) *Supervision in the Helping Professions* (3rd Edition). McGraw Hill.

Appendix: Exercises

Exercise 1

Discuss contracting with particular focus on confidentiality (for what issues would you break confidentiality from real plays today?) and notes (what will you keep notes on? What will you do with your notes?).

Exercise 2: supervising using mode 3/4

Get into threes. Get with people you think will challenge you and keep you out of your comfort zone and into your leaning zone. Allocate roles: supervisor, supervisee, observer.

Supervisee: use real clinical material from a client you are working with or have worked with in the past.

Supervisor: contract - one minute.

Mode 1 for 10 minutes using OARS

Mode 3/4 for 5 minutes. TIP: you don't need to hear the whole story. Work with uncertainty and rely on being interpersonally connected. Use the contract: 'how does x relate to what you wanted to talk about?'. Intervention without understanding is a useful route to co-created meaning, which is one thing you want out of the session.

Time out: observer feed back on metaphors and non verbals for five minutes. What metaphors did you hear the supervisee using? Note the supervisee's non verbals in a careful, non judgemental way. If the supervisee's non-verbals were verbalised to the supervisor what would they be saying?

Time back in focussing on mode 3/4 for nine minutes. This nine minutes to incorporate an action plan.

Feedback/debrief in groups: ten mins.

Supervisor: one thing I did well; one thing I did less well; one thing I want feedback from you to on is...

Supervisee: one thing I found helpful; one thing to develop.

Observer: one thing you did well. One thing to explore.

Exercise 3: supervising using modes 5 and 6

In the same threes: swap roles.

Supervisee: use real clinical material from a client you are working with or have worked with in the past.

Supervisor: contract - one minute.

Mode 1 for 10 minutes using OARS

Mode 5/6 for 5 minutes.

Time out: observer feed back on what they notice in the supervisor (body language, tone of voice etc) in a careful, non judgemental way. If the supervisor's non-verbals were supervising the supervisee what would they be saying? Can you help the supervisor relate this to the content the supervisee has brought?

Time back in focussing on mode 3/4 for nine minutes. This nine minutes to incorporate an action plan.

Feedback/debrief in groups: ten mins.

Supervisor: one thing I did well; one thing I did less well; one thing I want feedback from you to on is...

Supervisee: one thing I found helpful; one thing to develop.

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Exercise 4: the servant of two masters dilemma

Discuss instances of the dilemma and approaches used.