

Recharge your Coaching with Supervision

*Some of this material (and more) is due to appear in **Transactional Analysis for Coaches and Mentors**, by Julie Hay, scheduled for publication by Sherwood Publishing (www.sherwoodpublishing.co.uk) during 2004. Additional material related to NLP has been added for this Conference.*

At the time of writing this, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council has just issued a guidance note I wrote for them on supervision for coach/mentors – what it is, who should provide it, etc – in order to answer questions from members about the EMCC Code of Ethics Clause below. At the same time, the EMCC Standards Group are working to define the relevant standards of a supervisor.

Clause 1.d) (The coach/mentor will:)

Maintain a relationship with a suitably-qualified supervisor, who will regularly assess their competence and support their development. The supervisor will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality referred to in this Code. What constitutes a “suitably-qualified” supervisor is defined in the EMCC’s standards document.

This new emphasis on supervision is very welcome as the value of such an arrangement has been demonstrated over many years. Within psychotherapy, supervision has long been engaged in as a matter of course. Within the transactional analysis community, where TA has extended into the organisational and educational fields of application, the potency of supervision readily became apparent to those of us in these developmental fields. The requirement, and hence opportunity, to review our professional work through a process of self, peer and supervisor analysis leads to significant increases in self-awareness, ability to analyse ‘in the moment’, understanding of the process with clients, skills at identifying more options, and all of the extra competence this leads to. Supervision is an extremely effective form of continuous professional development!

So what is supervision?

The word ‘supervision’ literally refers to super-vision, as in someone who can see more than or at a different level to that at which others see. Within industry it customarily means someone who checks your work, tells you what to do, deals with any problems you can’t sort out yourself. However, in the helping professions it has a distinctly different meaning as it refers to someone who helps you to re-view your work so that you too see things differently.

The EMCC Code refers to a supervisor assessing competence and supporting development. I think a better way of defining the nature of supervision can be based on an idea by Proctor (1986):

- **normative** – the supervisor accepts (or more accurately shares with the supervisee) responsibility for ensuring that the supervisee’s work is professional and ethical, operating within whatever codes, laws and organisational norms apply
- **formative** – the supervisor acts to provide feedback or direction that will enable the supervisee to develop the skills, theoretical knowledge, personal attributes and so on that will mean the supervisee becomes an increasingly competent practitioner

- **supportive** (Proctor calls this restorative) – the supervisor is there to listen, support, confront the supervisee when the inevitable personal issues, doubts and insecurities arise – and when client issues are ‘picked up’ by the supervisee

Supervision in Practice

It could be said that TA developed in the early years through a process of supervision – Eric Berne would meet with colleagues at weekly seminars - they would review cases and through this came much of the theoretical development of the initial ideas. Since then, the TA community has gone on to establish a specific level of accreditation for supervisors, who must first spend about 4 or more years becoming Certified Transactional Analysts, then have at least a year’s professional practice as such, before being assessed as ready by two advanced members as being sufficiently skilled at supervision to attend an Endorsement Workshop. After this, they are still only regarded as Provisional Supervising Transactional Analysts until they have completed a few more years of supervising and undertaken another set of exams at which they supervise, in front of a panel, two live cases presented to them for the first time during the exam itself. So, a fairly heavy emphasis on ensuring good TA supervision will be given!

On a day-to-day level, TA supervision is usually conducted in 20-minute slots. This ensures the supervision is focused and that the supervisee does not become overloaded with feedback. If more time is needed, it can be negotiated although often the preferred option is to raise any additional issues that arise as separate pieces of supervision. The basic supervision slot may well be followed by a process review, during which the process between supervisor and supervisee is analysed (without going back into the content). This will often increase the levels of awareness of both parties, and any observers, considerably.

Previewing

Before bringing a case to supervision, the TA trainee will usually have listened to a recording of their work, identified an ‘interesting’ segment (whether because they feel they missed something, lacked options, or did something well), and played the same few minutes on the tape repeatedly whilst using as many TA concepts as possible to analyse it. So, they listen once for ego states, then again for strokes, then again for discounts, then possible games, and so on. By the time they have done this, they may of course have worked out for themselves what was happening and what new options they have for the future – so can take this to the supervisor to confirm their own analysis. On other occasions, they will still need supervisory challenge and support to fully understand the process they are hearing.

This previewing can of course also be done using different frameworks. NLP offers many concepts that can be applied in the same way. So the trainee might start by listening (and watching if they have video) for representational systems, and then again for sub modalities. Another focus could be on matching and mismatching. Next might be language patterns, applying the Meta model and then the Milton model (or more probably sections of them in sequence). Then listen again for meta programs. Then neurological levels. And so on.

Formats

The most common format for supervision is one-to-one working between supervisor and supervisee. If done in a group, the others remain as a silent audience and observe the process. They may also check their own responses and reactions and explore these later in a process review – this is a useful way of learning as they explore what relates to their own issues and what was potentially something generated in resonance with the supervisee and/or their client.

Supervision can also be conducted with a group of supervisees – this is particularly suitable for more experienced supervisees; the supervisee in question contracts with the group for what they want and individual members of the group accept responsibility for working within the agreed contract (or for staying silent if they have nothing to contribute).

Another option is a cascade – one person supervises the supervisee, and is then supervised on that supervision by someone else, who may then be supervised on that supervision, and so on – this is a great way of identifying any parallel processes that may be in effect.

One-to-one, group and cascade supervision may of course be undertaken with or without the presence of a qualified supervisor

Finally, TA supervision is usually given:

- by at least one ‘sponsoring’ supervisor who works with a specific supervisee over a period of time (and particularly so during the years preparing to become a certified analyst) – in this way, the supervisor is able to identify any general themes that impact on the work of the coach/mentor
- by different supervisors who may each provide individual supervision sessions – in this way, the supervisee gets the benefits of exposure to many different styles and foci of attention during their supervision

Choosing a supervisor

There are of course qualified TA supervisors with relevant experiences of working within the organisational, educational, counselling, self-development and similar contexts that apply to coach/mentoring. There are also TA psychotherapy supervisors if that suits your client base. In addition, there will be other qualified supervisors, such as those for counselling through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, plus those working with approaches other than TA (another source of information would be the UK Council for Psychotherapy).

Because supervision is still a relatively new concept outside the social services/caring professions, you may feel that you would be better working with someone who is not qualified through one of the existing routes. In that case, you may find the following criteria useful as a way of choosing a suitable person to supervise you:

- they have experience as a coach/mentor
- they have experience of being supervised
- they have experience as a supervisor (not necessarily of coach/mentors)

- they demonstrate evidence of a theoretical framework for their own practice and which the supervisee finds relevant
- they demonstrate evidence of theoretical framework(s) relating to supervision
- they have an understanding of the context of coach/mentoring (as practised by supervisee)
- they are aware of the impact of values, beliefs, assumptions (of supervisor, of coach/mentor in their own practice)
- they are respectful of diversity in its many forms and alert to its potential benefits and pitfalls
- they have the capacity for self regulation (as will need to foster this in supervisee)
- they demonstrate a commitment to CPD for themselves and others
- they are willing (or already committed) to abide by an appropriate Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (note: even if they are not a member of the organisation whose Code is adhered to)
- there will be no dual roles (i.e. the supervisor is not also the supervisee's line manager, business partner)
- for peer supervision, there will be no dual roles that might impact on the supervision process (e.g. being work colleagues or business partners rather than being students on the same course)

You will also need to decide how often to see your supervisor(s). Various professional organisations give guidelines for counsellors and therapists although you may feel that a coach/mentor needs less as you will not be working with such significant psychological/psychopathological issues. As a guide, consider whether:

- you will benefit more from regular supervision or from scheduling your supervision to match a varying workload - should you plan monthly supervision or, for instance, an hour of supervision for every 12 or so hours working with clients?
- do you need the discipline of scheduling supervision for a minimum number of times a year (say quarterly) so that you keep the habit even when your coach/mentoring workload is low

Contracting for Supervision

I have written elsewhere about contracting between coach/mentor and client. Here we will focus on how contracting for supervision might be done, using some of the same frameworks. See Appendix 1 for the following 3 frameworks.

Multi-party contracting

- Who else, apart from the supervisor and the supervisee, are 'stakeholders' and what is their part in the contract?
- How aware are the various stakeholders of the contract details between the other parties to that contract?

- If something were to go wrong with the contract, how might that happen and which parties might it involve?

See Table 1 in Appendix 1.

Levels of contracting

These will apply to an overall supervision arrangement and to each session or slot of supervision - see Table 2 in Appendix 1.

3 R's of Contracting

A simple checklist for making the contract for a supervisory session - see Table 3 in Appendix 1.

Process Supervision

We can combine the stakeholder considerations with elements from Hawkins & Shohet's (2000) *seven-eyed model of supervision* to produce a framework for supervision in terms of who is involved, their interactions, and the contextual factors. Each of the boxes shown in Appendix 2 might be the focus of attention during a supervision session.

C4P4A4 – Analysing the Supervision

Based on an original idea presented at a TA conference by Landy Gobes, the following is a relatively simple framework of prompts as the supervision session progresses. This has the TA distinction of being named as if based on ego states – although in this case, the PAC stand for:

- ◆ *C4 - Contact, Contract, Content, Context*
- ◆ *P4 - Professional, Psychological, Parallels, Paradigms*
- ◆ *A4 - Autonomy, Authenticity, Alternatives, Action*

We could not keep all of these in mind at once but they can be considered roughly chronologically, in the three categories:

- *C4* relates to what is happening as the supervision starts up.
- *P4* applies once the supervision has moved into 'the work'.
- *A4* is relevant as the supervision comes to a close.

A detailed checklist is included as an Appendix 3

Another, much simpler model, is a short list suggested by Clarkson (1992) and subsequently adopted as a format for assessing competence during TA supervisory exams:

- has the contract been fulfilled?
- were the key issues identified?
- has the supervision reduced the probability of harm?
- has the supervision increased the developmental direction of the supervisee?
- did the supervisor model the process for the supervisee?
- was there an equal relationship?

Notes and Sources

Parallel process was first described by H. F. Searles, who referred to it as *the reflection process*, within a paper at a symposium in 1954 and subsequently in an article entitled 'The Informational Value of the Supervisor's Emotional Experiences' in *Psychiatry*, Vol 18 (1955) pp. 135-46 (later reproduced in *Collected Papers on Schizophrenia and Related Subjects*, H. F. Searles, Karnac Books 1965)

Clarkson, Petruska (1992) *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy*, Routledge

Hawkins, Peter and Shohet, Robin (2000) *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, 2nd edition, Open University Press

Proctor, Brigid (1986) 'Supervision: A co-operative exercise in accountability' in A. Marken & M Payne (eds) *Enabling and Ensuring: Supervision in Practice* Leicester National Youth Bureau/Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work

Julie Hay has provided consultancy and training services on coach/mentoring to organisations as varied as the Department of Health, Drake and Scull (construction), Xyratex (hi tech), Hertfordshire Constabulary, the Forestry Commission and Warwick Business School. She is an internationally licensed NLP Trainer and internationally accredited Trainer and Supervisor in organisational and educational transactional analysis, with extensive experience of providing supervision in different cultures including Eastern Europe and India. Julie runs ongoing, modular TA and NLP programmes for other consultants, trainers, educators, managers – anyone with responsibilities for the development of others.

Julie also writes extensively on coach/mentoring, TA, NLP, and assessment and development centres. Her books include *Transformational Mentoring: Creating Developmental Alliances for Changing Organizational Cultures* McGraw-Hill 1995, Sherwood 1999 and *Action Mentoring – Creating your own Developmental Alliance* Sherwood 1997. She co-ordinated a network of HR professionals who met quarterly for 12 years (1992-2003) to discuss coach/mentoring and is now a Founding Member and the current Company Secretary of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Possible Contract Stakeholders

organisation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who pays for the coach/mentoring? • who 'represents' the organisation(s) and what are their expectations of the coach/mentoring? of the supervision? • is there more than one organisation involved e.g. where the client works, where the coach/mentor works, where the supervisor works?
client(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is/are the client(s)? • what responsibility towards client care does the supervisor have? • has the client given permission for the coach/mentor to present their work with them for supervision? • has the client agreed that the sessions with them may be taped for later analysis?
professional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under the auspices of what professional body (bodies) is the coach/mentoring being conducted? what are the implications of this? • under the auspices of what professional body (bodies) is the supervision being conducted? what are the implications of this?

Table 2: Levels of contracting

Level	Overall contract	Sessional contract
Procedural	administrative aspects such as how often, when and where; what payment; what notes will be kept	how long for this session; will it be recorded (taped); who is involved (i.e. one-to-one, group)
Professional	nature of the respective roles; responsibilities (e.g. to professional bodies or employers); overall purpose and boundaries of supervisory relationship	purpose and boundaries for this session; any specific professional considerations that apply; how this session fits within any overall contract
Psychological	what <u>might</u> go wrong; raising awareness of potential dependency/ transference/ counter-transference issues	checking aspects such as the supervisee taking responsibility for themselves; avoiding Rescuing

Table 3: 3 R's of Contracting

Results	what does the supervisee want to achieve; how will they know when they have achieved it; is achievement realistic in the time available; does the supervisor have the requisite competence
Relationship	how will we work together e.g. supervisee will play tape, describe situation etc – supervisor will ask questions, prompt, challenge etc
Responsibility	remind ourselves that the supervisee will be responsible for whatever they decide to do after the supervision; supervisor is responsible for providing 'good enough' supervision

Appendix 2 : Process Supervision

Client context: how any professional association(s), organisation(s) they work with or within, employee or independent status of client, etc have an impact on the client

Coach/mentor context: how any professional association(s), organisation(s) responsible for coach/mentoring arrangements, employee or independent status of coach/mentor, etc have an impact on the coach/mentor

Supervisor Context: how any professional association(s), organisation(s) responsible for supervision arrangements, employee or independent status of supervisor, etc, have an impact on the supervisor

Client system: who is the client in contact with, what are their roles, behaviours, attitudes etc (albeit probably only as perceived and reported on by the client)

Client: analysis of the client e.g. what are they like, what issues might they have that might be relevant to the coach/mentoring, what do they present to work on in the sessions, how do they behave during coach/mentoring sessions

Coach/mentor: analysis of the coach/mentor, what are they like, what issues might they have that might impact on their professional performance, how do they behave during coach/mentoring and supervision sessions

Supervisor: analysis of the supervisor, what are they like, what issues might they have that might impact on their professional performance, how do they behave during supervision sessions

Client – contact interactions: what are the interactions and relationships like between client and their contacts, what typically happens, what repeating patterns, etc

Client – Coach/mentor interactions: what interactions occur during the coach/mentoring sessions, what is relationship like between coach/mentor and client, what transference/ counter-transference

Coach/mentor – Supervisor interactions: what interactions occur during the coach/mentoring sessions, what is relationship like between coach/mentor and supervisor, what transference/ counter-transference

Overall context: how the general context, cultural or other differences; economic pressures, social expectations, legal constraints, etc impact on supervisor, coach/mentor, client, client contacts – and how these impacts may vary

Appendix 3 – Analysing the Supervision Process

Contact
How well are we making contact with each other? Is the supervisor <i>calibrating</i> accurately? Are we connecting across all <i>representational systems (VAK)</i> ? Are there signs of <i>rapport</i> being established? Do we feel that we are truly connecting? What <i>resource states</i> are we in? What is the supervisor's role here in providing the supervisee with <i>structure, strokes</i> and <i>stimulation</i> ?
Contract
How clear is the contracting? Does the contract cover the <i>procedural, professional and psychological</i> levels? Does it address the <i>results</i> intended (as <i>well-formed outcomes</i>), the allocation of <i>responsibilities</i> , and the <i>relationships</i> that will apply? What contracts exist/should exist with other parties? What <i>presuppositions</i> are in effect? How are <i>direction and reason meta programs</i> affecting the contract?
Content
What is the supervision about? Is this an appropriate topic? Did the supervisee determine the content? Should the supervisor direct the supervisee to specific content? As the supervision progresses, are we staying with the content and not going off on tangents? How are the <i>primary interest and chunk size meta programs</i> affecting the content?
Context
What is the context for the supervision? Are there <i>situational anchors</i> in effect? What is the context for the work being supervised? Are there any links? Are the boundaries clear? Does the supervisee have adequate access to good <i>structure, strokes</i> and <i>stimulation</i> outside the supervision? What <i>neurological levels</i> are being taken into account?
Professional
Is there an appropriate level of professional expertise, knowledge, experience? Is the supervisor respecting the professional competence of the supervisee (and vice versa)? What professional ethics and practices apply? Are we using appropriate <i>modelling processes</i> ?
Psychological
How 'straight' are the interactions? What <i>language patterns</i> are apparent (<i>Meta Model and Milton Model</i>)? Are there <i>ulterior transactions, discounting, game playing</i> ? How are we handling the stages of <i>dependence, counter-dependence, independence and interdependence</i> ? What about <i>transference and counter-transference</i> ? How might we appropriately bring to the surface anything occurring at the psychological level?

<i>Parallels</i>
Are there <i>parallel processes</i> in effect, where difficulties between coach/mentor and client are replayed between supervisor and supervisee? Are processes within the supervision a mirror of relationships the coach/mentor (or supervisor) has in their personal or professional life? Should we be <i>matching or mismatching</i> ? Do we need <i>pattern interrupts</i> ?
<i>Paradigms</i>
Are there significant differences in the paradigms, or models of the world, of supervisor and supervisee? What is being done to understand and respect the supervisee's paradigms, especially when they have a different cultural background to the supervisor? Is <i>clean language and/or reflective questioning</i> needed? Are we utilising <i>perceptual positions (meta, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, witness)</i> to gain different perspectives? What is the impact of the <i>emotional state meta program (associated or dissociated)</i> ?
<i>Autonomy</i>
Are we behaving in autonomous, script-free ways? Are we aware and in the here-and-now? Are <i>everyday metaphors</i> affecting the process? What life positions, or <i>windows on the world</i> , are in evidence? Is the supervision leading to increased autonomy for the supervisee (and supervisor)? How is the <i>frame of reference meta program</i> affecting the process? Are we working with or stimulating change at the <i>neurological levels of beliefs, identity, community</i> ?
<i>Authenticity</i>
Are we using our 'real selves' in the supervision? Are <i>everyday trances</i> affecting the process? Are we accessing our emotions and reactions as sources of information within the supervisory process? Are we owning our vulnerability and willing to share openly so that we can check what belongs to the supervision process and what does not? Where are we on our <i>timelines</i> ?
<i>Alternatives</i>
Is a range of options considered before decisions are made? Is there discounting occurring - of the <i>situation, its significance, the possible solutions, the skills</i> available, the <i>strategies</i> for implementation, or the ultimate <i>success</i> factors? What <i>language patterns</i> are being used? Is <i>reframing</i> occurring appropriately? Are we being <i>sensory-specific</i> about options? Are we exploring the impact of changing <i>sub-modalities</i> ? Is <i>timeline resourcing</i> being applied usefully?
<i>Action</i>
Is the supervisee being enabled to identify potential actions that will increase their competence with the client? And with clients in general? Are clear action plans being developed where appropriate, with <i>measurable, manageable and motivational</i> objectives? Is the sequence one of <i>decision, direction, destination</i> ? Has the supervisee checked all <i>neurological levels</i> ? Has the supervisee <i>ecology checked</i> and <i>future paced</i> ?