

Supervision for Coaches



Julie Hay

When I began my professional training in transactional analysis (TA), I had already been an organisational trainer for some years. I had been trained in various approaches to people skills, leadership, teambuilding and so on, but had never experienced the type of supervision that was, and still is, routinely practised within the TA community.

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. Because TA began life as a psychotherapy approach, supervision was engaged in as a matter of course. As TA extended into other fields of application, the potency of supervision readily became apparent to those of us in the 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!

Part of my training role involved coaching – working one-to-one with participants, often unofficially as they approached me during breaks to 'talk about a problem'.

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 accredited Trainer and Supervisor in organisational and educational transactional analysis, with extensive experience of providing supervision in different cultures including Eastern Europe and India, and is the inaugural Chairperson of the Institute of Developmental TA (www.instdta.org). Julie is also a Licensed NLP Trainer. She writes extensively on coach/mentoring, including *Transformational Mentoring. Creating Developmental Alliances for Changing Organizational Cultures* McGraw-Hill 1995, Sherwood 1999.

Telephone Julie direct on 07000 juliehay (585434), email to julie@adinternational.com or see www.adinternational.com

Nowadays, this form of coaching is far more likely to be included as a formal part of the training, as employers have realised how much more impact there can be when some one-to-one sessions are provided. However, supervision of this coaching role is not always so well catered for,

As a founding director of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC), I am aware that coach/mentoring (so called by EMCC because so often the terms are used interchangeably) has become somewhat of a growth industry, with coaches being drawn not only from organisational trainers but also from a range of other occupations, including: retired managers and businesspeople, occupational psychologists, and therapists and counsellors. The latter may well have experience of supervision but with a therapeutic bias, and the former may believe that supervision is what junior managers do when they oversee the work of their subordinates.

Choosing a supervisor

In response to requests from members for advice on how to meet the EMCC Code of Ethics requirement to engage in regular supervision, I recently drafted an interim guidance statement that contains some criteria to help members evaluate potential supervisors. (see www.emccouncil.org). Whilst we recognised at EMCC that qualified supervisors are available in various fields (such as TA, where there is an international qualification), we were also aware that there was a lack of supervisors who had been trained and accredited within a specific professional framework of coaching.

The guidelines we gave for choosing a supervisor reflect the fact that many qualified supervisors will have little experience of coaching, albeit they are experienced therapists. Supervisees need to consider how much they need their supervisor to understand the nature of coaching, and how competent the supervisor is at 'converting' the supervisor's contribution across to a different setting.

The suggested criteria, therefore, which can be applied as the coach thinks fit, are that the supervisor:

- has experience as a coach/mentor
- has experience of being supervised
- has experience as a supervisor (not necessarily of coach/mentors)
- works with a theoretical framework for their own practice that is also relevant to the coach's own work
- works with a theoretical framework(s) relating to supervision
- has an understanding of the context of coach/mentoring (as practised by supervisee)
- is aware of the impact of values, beliefs, assumptions (of supervisor, of coach/mentor in their own practice)

- is respectful of diversity in its many forms and alert to its potential benefits and pitfalls
- demonstrates a capacity for self regulation (as will need to foster this in supervisee)
- shows commitment to CPD for themselves and others
- agrees to abide by an appropriate Code of Ethics (e.g. the same as applies to the coach) even if they are not a member of a body that requires this
- there will be no dual roles (i.e. supervisor is not also line manager, business partner) - n.b. peer supervision is acceptable e.g. between colleagues, students

Contracting for supervision

Contracting is a key principle of TA – if there is no contract then TA is not being practised (even though TA concepts may be being applied). The contract may or may not be written but in many respects it resembles a formal legal contract – the parties must have entered into it of their own free will, it must be for a lawful outcome, it should specify clearly the rights and responsibilities of the parties and when these will cease to apply, and ideally there should be a clause about how the contract itself can be changed.

Over the years, I have developed a framework that helps supervisor and supervisee to set up a psychologically healthy contract, both for their overall relationship and for each supervisory session. Being a fan of *donkey bridges* (those gimmicky ways we help people remember things by using alliteration or similar techniques), I call it The 3 R's of supervision:

The 3 R's	overall contract	sessional contract
Results	examples might be: to develop the supervisee as a professional coach; to develop specific areas of the supervisee's skills; to prepare the supervisee for professional exams	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 we will work together as equals whilst reflecting our differing levels of experience; how we will avoid a dependency relationship	how will we work together this time e.g. supervisee will play tape, describe situation etc – supervisor will ask questions, prompt, challenge etc
Responsibility	the requirements of our respective roles; whether the supervisor is responsible for management of the supervisee; who is responsible for clients, for ethical behaviour by the supervisee	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

Levels of Contracting

We can further clarify the contracting between supervisor and supervisee by considering the levels at which the contract operates, this time using the donkey bridge of PPP:

Level	Overall contract	Sessional contract
Procedural	administrative aspects such as how often, when and where the supervision will take place; what financial arrangements; what notes will be kept and by whom	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 might go wrong; raising awareness of potential dependency/ transference/ counter-transference issues	checking aspects such as the supervisee taking responsibility for themself; avoiding rescuing

Multi-party contracts

One of the key differences between coaching and counselling or therapy is the number of parties involved in the process. The counsellor typically works directly with the client (or the client and partner or family) whereas coaching is often done within an organisational context, and may even be paid for by the organisation. This adds to the complexity of the contract, both for the coaching and for the supervision.

In addition to supervisor and supervisee, therefore, it may be important to take into account:

the 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?
the 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?
the 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?

In addition to considering who else, apart from the supervisor and the supervisee, are 'stakeholders', the supervisor and supervisee need to consider:

- How aware are the various stakeholders of the contract details between the other parties to that contract? The greater the awareness, the less likely are there to be misunderstandings.
- If something were to go wrong with the contract, how might that happen and which parties might it involve? Considering this beforehand allows action to forestall potential problems.

C4P4A4 – Analysing the Supervision

Supervision is a shared process so, whether you are reading this as a coach or as an existing or potential supervisor, it is helpful to have a model for analysing the supervision process itself. This allows both parties to engage in ongoing professional development – of their skills of supervision or of being supervised.

Based on an original idea presented at a TA conference by TA trainer Yolande Gobes, the following is a relatively simple framework of prompts as the supervision session progresses. This has the TA distinction of having its donkey bridge named as if based on ego states – although in this case, instead of Parent, Adult, Child, the PAC order is changed and stands 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.

Contact

How well are we making contact with each other? At an overt level, are there signs of rapport being established? Do we feel that we are truly connecting? What is the supervisor's role here in providing the supervisee with structure, strokes and stimulation?

Contract

How clear is the contracting? Does the contract cover the procedural, professional and psychological levels? Does it address the results intended, the allocation of

responsibilities, and the relationships that will apply? ? What contracts exist/ should exist with other parties/stakeholders?

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?

Context

What is the context for the supervision? 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 structure, strokes and stimulation outside the supervision?

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?

Psychological

How 'straight' are the interactions? Are there ulterior transactions, discounting, psychological game playing? How are we handling the stages of dependence, counter-dependence, independence and interdependence? What about transference and counter-transference? How might we appropriately bring to the surface anything occurring at the psychological level?

Parallels

Are there 'parallel processes' 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?

Paradigms

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?

Autonomy

Are we behaving in autonomous, script-free ways? Are we aware and in the here-and-now? What life positions, or windows on the world, are in evidence? Is

the supervision leading to increased autonomy for the supervisee (and supervisor)?

Authenticity

Are we using our 'real selves' in the supervision? 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?

Alternatives

Is a range of options considered before decisions are made? Is there discounting occurring - are we 'overlooking' some aspects of the situation, its significance, the possible solutions, the skills available, the strategies for implementation, or the ultimate success factors?

Action

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 measurable, manageable and motivational objectives? Is the sequence one of decision, direction, destination?

Further Reading

Some of the material in this article (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) later in 2004.

In the meantime, those interested in TA concepts such as stroking, psychological games, discounting, life positions, script will find them described in **Transactional Analysis for Trainers**, Julie Hay Sherwood Publishing 1996 (previously published McGraw-Hill 1992).

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)