

ANSE®

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for Supervision and Coaching

Digitalization

■ Online supervision in turbulent times

Kristina Urbanc & Tatjana Vlašić

■ Real connection in virtual space

Ella Büchner

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Adrienne van Doorn

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Editorial

■ Sijtze de Roos

Threatened by corona, the world changed. Everything turned topsy turvy. All of a sudden it proved practically impossible to do even the simplest things and to perform even the most ordinary everyday tasks. Shopping, enjoying a cappuccino on a sidewalk café, picking a flic at the local cinema, visiting friends, meeting your lover (furtively or overtly), going to school, taking part in conferences or travelling to ANSE meetings; all of this and much more slipped out of our reach. All that we so easily took for granted turned out to be potentially corrupt, a source of contamination, a threat to our health.

The world changed and we had to change with it. To stay connected we - as professional supervisors and coaches - were forced to turn to online technology, distance learning, video coaching or zoom supervision. Some of us were already comfortable with - and proficient in - the virtual channeling of human connections, others less so and some not (yet) at all. But none of us ever imagined that the switch to the online world would be so comprehensive and confront us so intensively with psychological, professional and technical challenges.

And here we are, perforce finding new ways to deal with space and time and to practice our trade, exploring exciting new approaches, reinventing our social methodologies, adapting to screen-filtered human interaction. In less than two corona-ridden years we gathered and systematized heaps of experience. Behind our smart devices, screens and monitors we went through challenging and frustrating episodes, through

ambiguous and - certainly also - joyful and even exhilarating online events. Is it not fitting that we dedicate this issue to the topic of digitalization, presenting a fine array of examples of dealing with such experiences?

But before we come to that, let me first introduce our brand new Editorial Board. Up till now, Barbara Baumann, succeeded by Reijer Jan van't Hul and since beginning last year by yours truly, took care of contacts with national editors, text acquisition and the final editing phase practically on their own. But since its formal installment on January 20th of this year, we may rely on a diverse and highly competent company of editors, gathered together in a full blown Editorial Board. These are the colleagues that from this issue on carry the load of this magazine for you:



Jeanne-Elvire Adotevi (France) is leadership development CPCC-ACE coach and supervisor specialized in Reflexive Practice (EMCC). She has been active in executive positions for over 25 years, in private and public organizations and NGO's at both national and international levels. She is expert

in Adult Development Theory, Complexity Framework, Diversity and Inclusion. Elected PSF Board member & International Vice-President (2012 - 2021). Jeanne-Elvire is the EB contact for (the national editors of) France, Spain and Italy.





Barbara Baumann (Germany). Theologian, biologist, supervisor (DGSv). Since 2007 self-employed in her own practice for supervision, coaching and further education. Lecturer at the University of Cologne and the Katholische Hochschule Aachen. ANSE Board member from 2010-2018. Barbara

has Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Iceland under her wings.



Helena Ehrenbusch (Estonia). Self-employed professional supervisor, coach, psychologist-counsellor and educator. Specialist in mental health, bodywork, choreography and artistic expression, social circus, change and risk management. President of the Estonian Supervision and Coaching

Association (ESCA). Helena takes care of our connections with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia.



Eva Nemes (Hungary). Supervisor, coach, university lecturer, graduate in Medicine and self-employed as Certified Supervisor since 2003 and as a Certified Executive and Career Coach since 2005. Leader of the Postgraduate Supervision Course at Karoli Gaspar University, Budapest,

since 2010. Secretary of the Association of Hungarian

Supervisors and Supervisor-Coaches (MSZCT) 2009-2018. ANSE Board member from 2010-2018. Eva is our contact with Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.



Jan Sjøberg (Norway). Specialist in clinical psychology, integrative therapist, supervisor and musician. Mainly active as meta-supervisor in the Norwegian State Child Welfare Services. Besides that, he runs a parttime private supervision and psychotherapy praxis.

President of the Norwegian Association for Integrative therapy (NFIT). Board member of the Norwegian Supervisors' Network NOSCO (2004-2014). Jan manages contacts with Norway, Sweden and Finland.



Prof. dr. sc. Kristina Urbanc (Croatia) is social worker and holds a PhD in Social Pedagogy. She is active as licensed supervisor and meta-supervisor in psychosocial work, as systemic family therapist and integrative child therapist. Next to that she is full professor in permanent position at the

Department of Social Work, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, teaching various courses at graduate and postgraduate level. She is the author of two books and over 60 articles, published in scientific and professional journals. Kristina is EB-contact with Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And to be quite complete you will, I hope, forgive me also mentioning myself.



Sijtze de Roos (The Netherlands). Registered senior supervisor, board official, policy adviser and author. LVSC President 2006-2010, ANSE Board member and ANSE President 2010 -2018. Currently active as editor of the Dutch Coaching Magazine and Chief Editor of ANSE Journal. In this

capacity I am the EB contact with The Netherlands, Ireland, Ukraine, sister organizations, the ANSE Board and our publisher Kloosterhof BV. Next to that I oversee all contacts.

The Editorial Board meets - and talking about digitalization, here you have it: mostly by Zoom - four to max five times yearly; twice in preparation of our next issue and twice to hammer out and finetune editorial policy. Once every year we'll meet with our highly regarded national editors and (members of) the ANSE Board. You will hear and see more from us in the future. And to conclude this, may I thank the ANSE Board - especially Reijer Jan van't Hul - for their leadership and support in this matter?

Back to the content of this issue. For an overview of our topic we open with a longread by Kristina Urbanc and Tatjana Vlašić (Croatia). Covering various aspects, they offer us insight into the functioning of online supervision in these turbulent times. Ella Büchner - from Germany, yet living and working in France - moves on to show us enthusiastically how we can establish real connection in virtual space. But how to maintain and

guarantee the quality of our services? To address this question, Annette Lentze (Germany) takes us up to the institutional level. Online supervisory quality is not just a task for individual practitioners. To enhance and publicly guarantee it we need active quality control and support from our professional associations. Annette shows us how our DGSv colleagues tackle this challenge.

Sietske Jans-Kuperus (The Netherlands) wonders how she can still be a supervisor in corona times. She struggles and prevails – luctor et emergo – by, so to speak, ‘retooling and reshaping’ her supervisory practice. Her article forms a beautiful diptych with that of her compatriot Adrienne van Doorn, who admonishes us to ‘get out from behind our PC’s’ and start experimenting by picking and choosing from - and adding to - the ‘wealth of possibilities’ she so aptly describes. For a completely different approach we turn to Bogdan Cuc (Romania). He elegantly makes clear that the new, corona-driven reorganisation of time and space demands a different mindset from us. It is not so much a matter of technique, but far more of changing our emotional responses and thinking routines.

Clearly, changes of this magnitude come with anxiety, and as we all know anxiety breeds myths. In his eloquent contribution, Viktor Menovshchikov (Russia) covers ten Russian myths about distance counselling for us to learn from. The more so because these myths are, I would think, just as familiar to us as to our Russian colleagues.

All this is decorated with vignettes from five different countries, neatly placed in between the main articles, in which colleagues describe how corona restrictions affect their professional conduct and how they confront

and experience the challenges arising from it. I thank Gerian Dijkhuizen for suggesting this vignette-idea to us. And also for her usual opening column and her interview with Zilvinas Gailius from Lithuania, with which we close this issue.



Before closing off myself, I have two announcements to make; both typical of the network properties of ANSE. Firstly that former ANSE President **Louis van Kessel** was recently awarded the honorary membership of the Russian Association of Supervisors for his contribution to the development

of supervision in Russia. As you may know, Louis was actively involved in the founding of ANSE and served as its first chair.

Secondly: We normally do not publish conference announcements - that's what we have the ANSE Newsletter and our social media accounts for - but we make an exception for the LVSC 40th anniversary conference, which had to be postponed twice due to corona. It will now take place on September 23rd in Ede, The Netherlands. Please check www.lvsccongres.nl for more information.

And don't forget to also check ANSE social media and Newsletter for information on the ANSE Summer Online Special (talking about digitalization; August 19 and 20 next), ANSE Talent Talks and other events, such as interesting conferences in Iceland, Sweden, Finland and more.

Finally let me draw your attention to the topic of our

next edition: diversity and multiple identities. Should you feel like contributing, do please contact your national editor or one of us.

And now I leave you to this issue. Keep reading and enjoy it. ■

Getting to know each other in Corona times

■ Gerian Dijkhuizen

An email pops in from a new supervisee. He wonders if I have time for a series of ten sessions of supervision.

I reply that we could meet and spent time in getting to know one another.

He approves and wonders if we should meet online or in person this first time.

So....it has actually come this far. One's initial thought is to assume we are meeting digitally... these days we no longer automatically feel we will meet in person.

My office is "corona-proof"... sanitary spray at the front door, bathroom cleaned after each client and windows opened to allow for a whiff of fresh air. Enough space to easily "self-distance", and I am aware that we need to limit moving around the room to a minimum. This last requirement is a huge challenge: exercises and role-play call for movement from both parties - it just feels so natural. Often we need to move to other places in the room to enable a change of perspective.

But now I am being more careful. More than I did before, I now use cards, stones and other materials to make patterns and lay out sociograms/lineups. But in working this way one's body hardly moves with the exercise. How

I miss that dimension - it feels so awkward and uncomfortable.

I'm unsure whether to email my position to him. I'm considering what gets missed if he's reluctant to meet with me, in person. What if I miss almost all non-verbal communication: How is he seated? What is his body language when he tells me who he is and what he expects of the supervision sessions? I can't observe him arriving the first time, or shake his hand - that first handshake says so much! I won't see his reaction on entering my workspace, or note where he chooses to sit...will he feel comfortable within this office? How does he settle in space? All these opportunities are no longer there. when we meet in that other, bodiless world.

So, I send an email to let him know that my office is safe and press send. I notice myself checking my email frequently to see his reaction. He simply writes to say he'll come and we plan a day and time.

I'm relieved...he is brave enough to meet live. This raises my hope that we can continue this way if we decide to go through with the process together. Relieved, at least, for this first meeting, person to person - it certainly is not just a simple matter to arrange an appointment these days! It isn't just a matter of me inviting an open-minded person - the supervisee will also have questions and concerns: how does this supervisor live? Can I ask to work online? Would she approve with that and does she have the experience to work this way? Or am I assuming too much from this supervisee?

Ultimately, my feeling tells me that we will both have considerations and decisions to make in these strange times. It is what it is. And then another thought jumps to my mind....a thought that erases any others I might be

having...it is very brave that a supervisee, in these crazy times, wants to start a series of ten sessions to improve his work!

This will be the thought I will take to our first meeting.

To be continued..... ■

Thanks to Trudie Collishaw for the translation



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Dealing with new experiences: Online supervision in turbulent times

■ Kristina Urbanc & Tatjana Vlašić

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to encourage supervisors and supervisees to engage in self-observation in the context of online supervision by "observing themselves in online supervision" as they would normally observe others, namely from a certain meta-position the aim of which is not to choose a side and decide in favour of or against online supervision, but to contribute to the development of so-called actionable knowledge, i.e. knowledge that both the supervisor and the supervisee

gain collaboratively in the supervision process, and which they contemplate, apply and advance further. The paper presents the experience of supervisors who have, as members of the Croatian Association for Supervision and Organizational Development (CA-SOD-HDSOR), conducted supervisions in the period of crisis caused by the pandemic and earthquakes within various projects with the aim of gaining insight into their attitude towards online supervision, factors that have aided/hindered online supervision, specific features of group dynamics, the role of supervisors and ethical aspects of online supervision.

It can be concluded that online supervision is becoming a cross-cultural topic and that it is important to develop a shared meaning of it. It is primarily the topic that should be discussed, written about and researched, since different cultures and professional communities have different experiences and openness i.e. distrust towards such a manner of conducting supervision. In this perspective, working with differences and developing tolerance of uncertainty represent key competences for the supervisor, perhaps now more than ever.

Introduction

Conducting supervision in the digital environment was not frequent or customary in Croatia prior to the pandemic. It was mainly conducted as a form of "emergency" supervision, when no other options were available. Within supervision of social work students during their field practice, online supervision was sometimes used due to the distance if the students in question went abroad, however that was only in exceptional cases. If there was such a practice in the area of supervision of psychosocial work, it was certainly not in the focus, nor was it studied as a specific form of conducting supervision. It is important to state this in order to gain insight into the context and changes regarding supervision in Croatia.

In a group supervision (which is the most commonly used form of supervision in Croatia and which will therefore be in the focus of this paper), supervisees are not only the participants in supervision, but are members of the group that has its specific features, the beginning, development, the end, dynamics and content, and therefore the supervisor has to possess the competences of a skilful group leader, apart from supervisory competences. Group processes in supervision are directed to-

wards service users, and their ultimate goal is to provide them the best service possible. At the same time, they are focused on supervisees and aim to stimulate their development as reflecting practitioners (Cicak, 2015; Ajduković, 1997; Žorga, 2009; Čačinović Vogrinčić 2009; Davys and Beddoe, 2000., 2009., Kolb, 1984).

Apart from enabling quality supervision of the direct work with the users, the supervisors' task is to ensure an adequate, efficient, safe and collaborative working environment. This very task represented a great challenge to the supervisors who had not had a previous experience of online supervision (and that was the majority of them), particularly in case of groups that have never had a "live" meeting and that started their work in an exclusively online context.

Some conditions for the development of online supervision in the Croatian context

During the year of the pandemic, the HDSOR members offered supervisory support to the professionals employed in Social Welfare Centres, nursing homes, rehabilitation centres, Red Cross employees, and later to volunteers who were helping in the areas affected by earthquakes. Coordinating the work of supervisors-volunteers, HDSOR¹ organised orientation meetings, consultations and meta-supervision for the supervisors who were willing to accept online supervision as the only available manner of supervisory support. The professionals were faced with a dilemma: to adjust to specific characteristics of online supervision or to temporarily suspend supervisory work.

The most frequently asked questions were as follows: can online supervision be of the same quality or is it

only a temporary replacement for the real supervision, i.e. live supervision; can a supervisor in online environment "feel" the group as he or she should and create an adequate framework or creating group cohesion; how to deal with difficult emotions in the online group; can the needs of supervisees be as adequately met in online supervision as in live supervision; what about confidentiality, who is watching us and listening to us and how does that influence the level of self-disclosure of supervisees (and supervisors)?

Several moments provided a significant motivation for learning in online supervision and about online supervision:

- Growing needs for the support of professionals in psychosocial work practice who were faced with uncertainty of the course of the pandemic, new and restrictive working conditions, daily changes of rules, responsibility, procedures, resources and primarily with the increasing numbers of the infected persons and those who died, which led to an increased exposure to professional stress.
- Online method of teaching was introduced in schools and faculties, which contributed to making such a manner of learning commonplace.
- Apart from the crisis caused by the pandemic, on March 22, 2020 the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, was hit by a devastating earthquake which disabled or exacerbated continuation of work of many institutions, schools and faculties that had to continue with the online method of work, even when the number of infected persons dropped and the protection measures became less restrictive.
- While the damage caused by this earthquake was

yet to be repaired, on December 29, 2020 another major earthquake hit Banovina, the area at a distance of some 50 kilometres from Zagreb, after which everyday earth tremors and a series of medium and minor aftershocks have continued to date.

- In response to this exceptionally demanding needs of the communities affected by this earthquake, professionals-volunteers, among whom there were many young ones, answered the great need for help and support, so that individual or group supervisory support, largely in online form, was made available to them through different projects and initiatives.
- Launching projects and programmes focused on strengthening capacities of professionals in psychosocial work which included individual and group supervisions of all psychosocial work professionals who had a need for supervisory support².
- Intense exchange of supervisors' experiences in formal and informal environment that was held online (webinars, meetings, consultations, gatherings, educations), at which the online environment became a customary method of performing tasks and communication.

Can online supervision be of the same quality, or is it only a temporary replacement of the real thing?

¹Apart from the volunteering engagement, HDSOR also participated in the projects conducted by the Society for Psychological Assistance that aimed to provide support to professionals and areas affected by earthquakes, within which a series of online supervisory and meta-supervisory groups was held.

²Emergency response to earthquake in Sisak-Moslavina County – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support; Supporting child protection professionals for the response in large-scale highly stressful disruptive events and disasters by the Society for Psychological Assistance and UNICEF.

- Publication of a paper on online supervision (Ajduković, 2020) which was the first text on this topic in the Croatian language and which was presented to the professional public on various meetings of supervisors. This paper was met with great expectations from the professional public because, after a long prospection and uncertainty, it opened and clarified many issues (and also triggered some new ones).
- The role of the aforementioned paper (Ajduković, 2020) was a pioneering and demystifying one in the sense of deconstructing "online supervision" as a construct, as the author offered some guidelines for planning and conducting online supervision by examining ethical and legal aspects of the protection of supervisees and their clients/users, as well as IT and practical aspects of online supervisory work. The paper also described the characteristics of helping supervision and emotional regulation in the online supervisory process (Wright and Griffiths, 2010). Cicak and Urbanc (2020) also agree with this, emphasizing that this change in the manner of conducting supervision does not change the ethical principles of supervision and the fact that supervision should remain a safe place.

All of these were important prerequisites for the sensitization of the supervisors' professional community in order to prepare grounds for a paradigmatic shift from online supervision as a "consolation prize" or "necessity" towards a more open, flexible contemplation of possible advantages and shortcomings (certainly as well as specific features) of online supervision.

Experiences of supervisors with online supervision

In communication with 12 supervisors who, as the mem-

bers of the Croatian Association for Supervision and Organizational Development (CASOD-HDSOR), conducted supervisions in the period of crisis caused by the pandemic and earthquakes, we wanted to gain insight into their attitude towards online supervision, factors that have aided/hindered online supervision, specific features of group dynamics, the role of supervisors and ethical aspects of online supervision. Experiences of supervisors who actively participated in the projects of providing online supervisory support to professionals during the pandemic and earthquakes were collected during March 2021. Statements made by the participants are not displayed or analysed here as research results, nor can they be generalised as such, but are displayed on a descriptive level and grouped according to the topics covered, and as such can serve as a basis for some future qualitative research study.

Topic: Attitude of supervisors towards online supervision

Online supervision as a necessity:

Inability to establish a direct contact with supervisees and inability to adjust to online communication led most supervisors to the resistance towards the new manner of working, but also to the acceptance of the necessity of alternative solutions which they considered to be of temporary nature, but which could not replace live supervision.

A necessary evil when people cannot have live meetings due to objective reasons, but I think it should not replace live meetings. (1)

I believed that online supervision was possible even before, but I preferred supervisory work "face to face". However, whenever it is possible, I will conduct "face to

face" supervision, because it is more natural and less strenuous. (9)

I will never adjust, I can accept it, but I still do not see more benefits from this way of work in comparison to live work. (10)

Unfortunately, I do not share the enthusiasm with the mass usage of modern technologies and I believe they should be used only when it is justified, carefully and advisedly, because we should not set aside personal contact and interaction. (1)

Change of attitude towards online supervision

With time, the attitude towards supervision changed under the influence of discovering possibilities of adjustment to the new method of work. The need of supervisors to participate in support and to include their colleagues from distant parts who would otherwise have no possibility to join the supervision played a particularly motivational role.

At first, I preferred live supervision, believing that I could not follow non-verbal signs online. After a series of supervisions conducted online (but not volunteering ones), it seems to me that quality supervision can be conducted online, and that it greatly helps the supervisees.(5)

Now I believe that group supervision is possible and efficient, but it demands increased concentration. (8)

Group supervision still manages to achieve its goal, help and support in the situations which are professionally and personally demanding, as well as an exchange of experience and group support.(8)

In the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, online supervision became the only option for conducting

supervision. It proved to be particularly useful within the UNICEF project in connecting supervisees from diverse and very distant parts of Croatia. This only confirmed my attitude that online supervision is a good alternative to "face to face" supervision. (9)

Importance of participation in support:

I participated in the supervision of employees of social welfare centres in the crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic and this was an important experience to me, because I had the opportunity to give support to my colleagues in these stressful times.(12)

Topic: advantages of online supervision

Experience of intergenerational participation of supervisees from the most diverse parts of Croatia enriched the mutual interaction between the members and it added a new quality to their exchange of experiences and to connecting people who would perhaps never meet otherwise in the customary supervision practice. Additionally, it turned out that online supervision significantly contributed to reducing expenses, time and organisation of supervision.

Advantages related to distance and expenses:

Experience has shown that online supervision is easier in terms of costs of coming and leaving of supervisees, scheduling supervision meetings, and it also proved more beneficial with regard to the experiences that resulted from different regional areas of supervisees. Specifically, in my group supervisees came from Slavonia, Dalmatia, Zagorje and Istria. (6)

My attitude has not changed in the meantime, because it is my opinion that online work helps in overcoming great distances and it enables social interaction in special circumstances, as is the time of the pandemic. (3)

Possible inclusion of people from different parts of Croatia who have not met before. (4)

Possibility of online meta-supervision:

I consider that the organisation was adequate. I like the fact that meta-supervision was made possible. (6)

Topic: What is different regarding group dynamics in online environment?

Change of work in online environment led to different changes in group dynamics: reduced possibilities of mutual interaction between members, lack of spontaneity, passivity and greater focus on the supervisor. Supervisors experience difficulties in dealing with different parallel demands: observing non-verbal communication from supervisees, greater focus on ensuring technical conditions for work and responsibility for creating and maintaining group dynamics. With time, through the relationship of trust, greater group cohesion is established in most groups, as well as greater solidarity between group members.

Hindered group observation:

I was in a dilemma whether online supervision will enable intense communication and following of the group dynamics which is very important in live work.(8)

I will miss body language in gaining an insight into emotions, state of mind and attitudes of supervisees, as well as in the creation of dynamics of relationships if I can only see the faces. I was wondering if I would be able to observe the entire group at the same time.(8)

The opportunities for direct work and observations of gestures, mimics, mood of the members are reduced. Supervisees are less involved in discussions, there are

no spontaneous reactions and no exchange of opinions, or they occur very rarely.(9)

Greater group passivity:

I notice greater passivity compared to live contact. Due to possible background noise supervisees turn the sound off while others talk, and it seems to me that this makes them less active in terms of spontaneous reaction to someone's words. (10)

Quite often as a supervisor I asked them to share their opinions which they did, but not of their own initiative. (10)

Group dynamics is different, many tools cannot be used, observing non-verbal communication is hindered, let alone the technical problems which often disrupt the process. (7)

Connection, trust, support:

Group dynamics is different, because we are actually a group in virtual space, without any personal contact. In spite of that, the members reached the feeling of common space, which they verbalised, as well as the sense of connection and the importance of getting to know one another. (7)

I have an impression in my supervision group that there is great trust. Specifically, one supervisee was not given the opportunity to have a supervisory day, i.e. she did not feel secure enough to participate in supervision during working hours. An agreement was reached with the whole group (everybody who had a day off or who could have supervision during working hours agreed) to have each supervisory meeting at 5 p.m., when we all return home, due to confidentiality and security of

that member. Otherwise this supervisee would drop from supervision. (6)

The contents of supervision in this cycle were more focused on specific features of working in the conditions of the pandemic, changes it brought and the manner in which we faced with additional professional stress. There was more support and empowerment than in previous supervisions. (7)

Topic: What is different regarding the supervisor's role in online environment?

Supervisors are upgrading their previously gained competencies and developing new ones; they are adjusting to new circumstances, exploring new manners of using the learned methods and techniques, and focusing on improving personal resources in the existing circumstances, but with the aforementioned nostalgia with regard to live supervision.

Fatigue and increasing demands from supervisors:

Fatigue occurs sooner, so I have to cope with maintaining attention and dynamics. (8)

Equal representation of all group members and ensuring sufficient space for each group member and their needs is somewhat more difficult to achieve, so that additional attention has to be paid to this. (8)

Similar level of care towards supervisees is part of work ethics, but if supervisees are excluded in online work and have to be asked to say something, this puts the supervisor in an unfavourable position, meaning that it raises the issue of taking care of all members equally in a situation when their faces or bodies, as well as their reactions to certain situations, cannot be clearly seen on the screen. (11)

It is my opinion that the responsibility of supervisees for activity/sharing/reacting is increased in online work. (10)

Restrictions in the application of creative techniques:

I use creative techniques, they are adjusted to the restrictions imposed by technology, but they are not as diverse as they used to be. (8)

I use different applications to make the work more diverse, but many methods of work that I know of cannot be used online (or I am opposed to doing them online). (11)

Personally, I have not mastered IT techniques which would enable the usage of creative techniques because I do not have the time or affinity to master IT contents (I am interested in other forms of communication). (12)

In my supervisory work I often use creative techniques, and I feared that it would not be possible in the new way of working. (8)

It is easier to work individually than in a group:

In individual supervision the focus on a person's face somehow enables a close contact and good communication. I was happy with the achievement and it was easier than it is to work in a group. (8)

Supervisor as a motivator:

As a supervisor I had a feeling that I am often a motivator of conversation. (10)

More focused work:

The new way of working is more focused, concentrated and efficient. I still notice that I miss live contact, a different and more intense experience of a person that it makes possible. (8)

As in the "face to face" supervision – monitoring emotional state and expressions of supervisees and examining their needs, checking whether their expectations have been fulfilled and whether the aims of supervision have been achieved. (9)

Topic: What facilitates online supervision?

Over time, supervisors notice changes in the adjustment to the new way of working, and what helps them most is their previous experience and the feeling of connection with the supervisees who participate in the supervision from their homes, which leads to the feeling of gratitude for sharing such ambient intimacy. Simultaneously the openness of supervisors in showing their weaknesses and vulnerabilities is felt, which contributes to a better connection between group members on the emotional level in shared difficulties, and that changes the dynamics of the relationship of power between the supervisor and the supervisees.

Previous experience:

Previous experience helps me, placing work in "here and now" moment, because although we do not share the same space with the supervisees, we share the same moment in time. (3)

Gratitude:

What I find exceptionally helpful is to thank the supervisees for letting all of us from the group into their homes. It is my impression that people mainly react to this well. I cannot point out to anything that was aggravating in the process of adjustment. (1)

Time and environment management:

It helps me to be in my safe surrounding and to be able to choose the time of supervision. (5)

What helps me in online supervision is the fact that meetings can be postponed from day to day. Flexibility in the organisation of group meetings helped me, as in live supervision a supervisee who had to travel (because of the death of a close person) could not attend (three deaths occurred within a supervision cycle) (6)

Technical support as a tool for group bonding:

It helped me to have assistance and advice regarding technical problems in joining. This inability to adjust brought us closer because it showed our human and imperfect side and taught us mutual patience, tolerance and acceptance. (8)

Topic: What hinders online supervision?

There are numerous difficulties associated with the adjustment to the new way of conducting supervision, and among the most prominent ones is the topic of uneven quality and availability of the Internet access in different parts of Croatia. Nevertheless, even in these circumstances supervisors accept uncertainties that can occur during the process and they try to overcome them together with their supervisees. The capacity of supervisors to deal with uncertainty proved to be one of the key competencies in these circumstances.

Technical difficulties:

I was a bit scared about what would it all look like and how will I handle online work, what kind of Internet support we would have. It turned out that I handled it well, but I miss live work. (1)

The thing that has not changed is that online manner of working is unpredictable; a lot of time is wasted on joining and other technical difficulties. (11)

Online supervision was a complete novelty to me. I mostly worried about technical difficulties that were present at first. (6)

I was also insecure about my skills in using new technologies. (8)

Problems occur when the connection is lost, when I do not see supervisees and their emotions clearly and well, when an urgent situation interrupts me when I am at work and in the middle of conducting supervision. Once I accidentally "clicked" the wrong button and I blocked a supervisee. (10)

Lower level of connection:

In online work connection between group members is on a much lower level. There is no informal chat before or after the supervision, there is no coffee to be had. I believe that people connect and get to know each other on a personal level much less. (10)

Focus on solution:

In online work I notice that fewer questions start with "I don't know how to cope with..."; "I feel that..."; and questions increasingly begin by "How do you in other Social Welfare Centre handle this issue." (10)

Less spontaneity:

Well, I think that group cohesion is developing more slowly, people are less spontaneous than in live meetings. In live work non-verbal communication somehow made it more visible who wanted to get involved in a discussion, here they seem to wait to be called upon individually. (2)

Restrictions in using different techniques:

I miss the possibility to use activities such as body work,

role playing and similar activities. (7)

I occasionally use associative cards in my work and I did not find a way to use them online, except for the opening questions how are they. Individual writing and/or drawing methods are easier to transfer into online work, but I wonder how to make a group drawing. (10)

Lack of physical contact when there are difficult emotions in the group:

The thing that makes the adjustment to online supervision more difficult is the physical contact with supervisees. The group needs support, the topics are very difficult and demanding (death of grandmother, death of father, death of a close friend). A supervisee needed a hug, a tissue, and I could not give it to her. In these occasions I feel powerless and to me that makes the adjustment more difficult. (7)

I consider that the distance and lack of direct contact obstruct me and make me lose focus. Although I was concentrated, I estimate that my level of involvement and concentration is much higher in live work than in online one (3)

Difficulties in work from home:

When a supervisee sits back on her couch at home and participates in supervision, I believe she lacks complete immersion in the role of the supervisee, primarily because she is at home and not on the neutral ground, because supervision is conducted online and it is not a live one, so in a way supervision can lose its form (due to its casual setting). (1)

Topic: Ethical aspects of supervision

Clarity of supervisory agreement

A clear agreement. Apart from usual contracting about

tempo, dynamics of meetings, delays and so on, I agreed with every group to use our "special places" during supervision, without being disturbed and listened to by others (family members, children, friends, colleagues at work). (3)

In the first meeting we agreed about the rules which included confidentiality, the manner of agreement, the manner of contact and so on. (7)

Confidentiality

We check if participants are alone during supervision, do they have the opportunity to separate themselves for a few hours from the rest of the team or colleagues from the office, or their household members if they are home. (1)

Recording:

It is not allowed to record other supervisees or oneself in the process by some other device, such as a mobile phone, and it is not allowed to answer phone calls. During supervision we all switch our telephones off in order not to be distracted. We do not take pictures of the screen as a memento or for the Facebook, except for our internal records, and supervisees express their consent to this by signatures. (3)

Accepting diversity:

I accept and respect every group member with all their diversities and specific characteristics; I do not tolerate communication which is insulting for any member. (7)

Although in communication with supervisors we occasionally hear reflections on "some new ethics in online supervision", it is obvious that ethical standards have not changed (Cicak and Urbanc, 2020; Ajduković, 2020.). In online environment it also remained important for the group to maintain a safe place for all its members, so it is

visible from the answers that the supervisors take care of ethical aspects of supervision as well, bearing in mind specific circumstances in which it is conducted. We can point out a kind of etiquette for online supervision as a "novelty" and it should also be included in the initial supervisory agreement and it should be supplemented if needed (for example, inappropriate casual behaviour during supervision; attendance in pyjamas, lying in bed, drinking, eating, smoking, disappearance from the screen without explanation and so on).

Conclusion

It would certainly have been interesting to observe the development of online supervision in the Croatian supervisory context without the emergence of the pandemic, since we have no idea how these processes would be carried out without the pressure caused by the COVID 19 crisis, but on the other hand, it is questionable would online supervision have been practiced, taught and analysed without the external pressure of these proportions.

The aim of this paper was to motivate the supervisors and supervisees, as well as ourselves, to contemplate ourselves in the context of online supervision by "observing ourselves in online supervision" as we would normally observe others, namely from a certain meta-position the aim of which is not to "choose a side" and decide whether we like and practice supervision or not. Working with diversities and developing tolerance of uncertainty represent key competences for the supervisor, perhaps now more than ever (Urbanc et al, 2016; Ajduković and Urbanc, 2010., Ajduković, 2004., Pehrson et al, 2010; Marc et al, 2014).

It seems that online supervision is becoming a cross-cultural and shared meaningful topic that should be

It seems that online supervision is becoming a cross cultural and shared, meaningful topic

discussed, written about and researched, since different cultures and professional communities have different experiences and openness i.e. distrust towards such a manner of conducting supervision (Kaiser, 1996; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Ketner and al, 2017; Thomas, 2010., Laklija et al, 2011). Therefore it would be interesting for some future research studies to examine how supervisors from different social, educational and cultural environments regard this topic, and accordingly develop programs for the education of future supervisors.

While learning about online supervision during online supervision in these specific and uncertain times that we have found ourselves in, as supervisors and professionals we have an opportunity to participate in the development of new actionable knowledge, the concept that was developed by the Israeli social work professor Jona Rosenfeld (Chaskin and Rosenfeld, 2008; Čačinović Vogrinović, 2009). By that Rosenfeld means the knowledge that can be turned into action during work. In supervision it means that in this context the supervisor has the opportunity to share and learn together with the supervisees maybe more than ever before, thus defining their position, role and co-presence in the process of supervision (it is not surprising that after such intense experiences it is more difficult to bid our groups farewell!!)

Finally, we would like to emphasise that it is important for supervisors to continuously realise their resources and limitations in the area of online supervision, and to respect their own tempo in testing new aspects of supervision, being attentive to and respecting their own worries, fears and advantages of new forms of work they recognise in the process (Riess and Fischel, 2000; Žorga 2009a; Žorga 2009b;). It is important in order to continue to develop actionable knowledge which, regardless of the context in which supervision is conducted, represents the basis for reflective practice (Schon, 1983; Rutter and Brown, 2012), and that is the mission of any supervision. ■

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The biggest challenge for me is the variety of digital tools

■ Zilvinas Gailius



Since the middle of October 2020 I am working with all my clients online only.

I provide training courses for students of the ISM (International School of Management), teaching supervisors in Lithuania and Ukraine, coaching

teams of business organisations, individual and group supervision for teachers and social workers.

All of us are going through the learning process of working remotely. All of the various modes have their plusses and minuses, and it takes time to get used to them.

At the beginning stress was much higher. Now stress decreased, because clients little by little started to feel the benefits of working at a distance.

Many sessions became more constructive and productive. Of course, the emotional part suffers. Regarding the variety of digital possibilities: different clients have different traditions (or no tradition) in using digital tools.

And here it starts. For the moment I am using Skype, Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, Slack, Zoom, WebEx, MS Teams, Google Meet, etc. And sometimes - telephone, when the internet connection fails or electricity disappears (due to snow falling on the wires). Every week I discover something new! And experience a lot of stress if something does not function well, or when I am not so good in using it. I am not perfect and have to accept my limits.

Common feature for me and my clients in remote work is tiredness. Physical tiredness of sitting all day long in front of the screen. That's painful. At the end of the day you feel pain in your head, in your ass, in your spine, in your neck, in your eyes. Physical movement and physical contact is what my body and soul are missing most. le phone, and it is not allowed to answer phone calls. *During supervision we all switch our telephones off in order not to be distracted. We do not take pictures of the screen as a memento or for the Facebook, except for our internal records, and supervisees express their consent to this by signatures. (3)* ■

Real connection in virtual space

Reflections around the ANSE's first online intervention group and other digital meetings at times of a pandemic

■ Ella Büchner

Abstract

Working online is agile, flexible, reactive, on short call and quite low-cost. Meeting on an international level is accessible for more people or different people. It promotes diversity. On the other hand many people seem to tire from it more quickly. We don't know yet what is underlying beneath that effect. It might have to do with us not being used to the setting, but also with the general effects of the pandemic, the stress level it brings, the circumstances we are in and with our individual working conditions. Yet maybe you, like me, have also been positively surprised: sometimes meeting and working online is very good, much better than expected. But how to deal with disturbances and create a safe and private space for a digital intervention group?

Avalon. That's where it began. Or let me say, it is where I set a punctuation in the stream of time and events, components of our common history. It began with the taste of ginger and bergamot, saffron and honey.

In late summer 2019 in the little town of Bolzano in South Tyrol I was having a great inspiring week participating in the ANSE summer university, the bi-yearly week-long encounter of supervisors from all over Europe.

I had heard about the ANSE's international intervention groups (IIGs) and I had listened with joy to the returns about their meetings and common work in the plenum. The organizers of the summer university had also pointed to the possibility to join existing groups or to build new groups.

The principle of the IIGs is that the members travel successively to the countries where the participants live and work to spend a couple of days together working, learning, going out and imbibing the foreign culture. Though I am fully convinced of the pertinence of this concept, it was no denial that for me in the nearer

future it couldn't be an option. The consideration of the demands and circumstances of my personal and professional life, recently having moved from Germany to France, requested a thorough management of my temporal and financial resources. And really, I consider online activity a reasonable thing to do nowadays, a gesture to make our ecological footprint a little smaller by travelling less.

So while enjoying the fantastic ice cream of Paolo Colletto - If you ever visit Bolzano, make a detour to his ice cream parlour "Avalon", it's worth it! - I was thinking of alternatives. As a consequence of my relocation, I had already been working more and more online. What had begun as a necessity due to the living circumstances was turning out to be an amazing experience: different, sure. But differently good.

I was eager to see if I could find European colleagues who would be interested in an online group to discover



this sphere of action.

Once after the initial decision had been taken, making the concept and launching the pilot project - with great technical and moral support by the ANSE board - was easy.

We created our first IIG, called DIG (but that's another story), at the end of 2019. It consisted, and still consists, of 8 members from 5 countries, 7 women, 1 man, supervisors and coaches, coming from different horizons, forming an open-minded group with pioneer spirit. We scheduled our first meeting for February 2020.

"Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans."

(J. Lennon)

At the same time, the corona virus had begun to spread, selectively first, underestimated maybe. It infected people with COVID-19 and within a few weeks, the world around us had completely changed.

Since one year we have been now dealing with a world-wide pandemic and its physical, psychological and economical effects on us. We aren't yet able to rate entirely its magnitude, dimensions, levels and extent.

But we deal with the circumstances. We adapt. We try and find ways and solutions to cope with the situation. One is to work from home, to work online, to host meetings and participate in online trainings, webinars, sports sessions or global meditation happenings. The

fact of having initiated the first online intervention group is today just an anecdotic footnote in history. Everybody is doing online work, some more, some less happily.

You have made many experiences with working online during the last months, haven't you? So what can I tell you that you don't already know? Maybe you can compare my reflections with yours. Do you live it like me? Do you see diverging aspects? Do you see something that is totally different from what I notice?

Working online is agile, flexible, reactive, on short call and quite low-cost. Meeting on an international level is accessible for more people or different people. (Writing this, I am fully aware that not everyone on this planet has the same access to the required resources. Inequality is still a fact.)

It promotes diversity. Today I work with people from India, Turkey, Mexico. I haven't done this before. Opening up to digital formats has become a necessity for millions of people world-wide. When you want to meet digitally, today you will rarely hear something like "That's not my scene." or "I am not a digital native, my compromise is having accepted my daughter's old smartphone." or "Generally I'd be interested, but I don't have the necessary equipment." or "I have downloaded Skype 15 years ago but I forgot the password." We are challenged. If we don't accept this communication potential, we can be very alone these days. And maybe you, like me, have also been positively surprised: sometimes meeting and working online is very good, much better than expected.

When we work online, we depend on technical devices. It is a nuisance when the internet connection is of poor quality, when interruptions occur, the communicati-

on is disturbed. The more we are reliant on technical apparatuses to stay connected at distance, the bigger is the impact when something does not work. A major or even global breakdown of electricity is a worst case scenario that would entail more serious problems than an interrupted online meeting.

Some learning points

The points I'd like to mention occurred in the IIG, when we exchanged on a meta-level about us working online. To identify some important aspects for this article, I also refer to individual experiences in digital coaching, systemic constellations and supervision sessions.

Working online, many people seem to tire more quickly. They state that they need more breaks and that work units should be shorter. We don't know yet what is underlying beneath that effect. It might have to do with us not being used to the setting, but also with the general effects of the pandemic, the stress level it brings, the circumstances we are in and with our individual working conditions. Single mums, for instance, working from home with children in home-schooling can be specifically challenged to organize their work and private life. Anyway the concepts of work-life-balance and of work-life-blending change under the influence of our current situation.

A supervision setting should be a protected area where the client/s can express in confidence. Usually one would try not to be disturbed, to have a room where no-one else passes by or listens to what is said. In the actual conditions this is not always the case. Have you ever counted in a bigger online meeting the number of participating cats? I did, including my own cat the actual record is 5. Even if it is not probable that clients feel disturbed by the appearance of a domestic animal,

I tell them that this can happen. If it is children who come looking for what their mum or dad is doing, I guess there is a big chance that clients understand an exceptional showing up. But how about other adults, partners, housemates? Should they not only not appear on the screen but shouldn't we assure that no-one else in our household can hear our conversation?

In my opinion this is part of the "safe space" that we can provide for our clients. The other half of this safe space is out of our reach and in the responsibility of the clients, as we share a virtual space, not the same room. So it could be good to exchange about it and find an agreement when you start working with someone.

In the IIG we identified the lack of physical contact, body work and unofficial side talks as missing and being missed. We can't replace that online. We can help ourselves by training our senses. Non-verbal communications are visible and perceivable online if we sensitize to different channels of perception. More likely, it is not the same signals we notice. A little movement of a person in the room and all the small parallel communications in a group in one room might online be less noticed or out of perception at all.

In individual online settings the perception seems to concentrate on the face and we read much in it, maybe more than before when distraction by the surrounding was more present. Then longer you look, the more you see.

It is uncommon that we see our own faces and facial expressions while we communicate with others. Maybe you felt that irritating moment before you started working online, for example when you met a friend in a café with big mirrors around you. For some professions, for

instance for dancers, it is normal and necessary to look into a mirror to control the quality of their work. But as it is new for the most of us, how do you live it? Where does your attention tend to be: on your face? On your client's face? Do you switch between the client's face and yours? I personally prefer now to suspend my own picture from the screen to approach to the communicative setting I am familiar with.

We all have learned that a good illumination is necessary when we work online. No-one wants to communicate with a phantom in the dark. We know that the camera should be on a level with our eyes. It is often recommended that you should look into the camera and not on the screen to give the other the impression that you look into each other's eyes. But nothing is true without its opposite. When I started looking into the camera to follow this advice, I was facing a double irritation. I was irritated because I was not watching the other's face but the camera. And the other got confused because he/she did not know where or what I was looking at. Since we are creatures of habit we probably have already internalized how the online setting usually is: a person who is looking with a certain angle at her/his screen is looking at us.

It is appreciated when our hands are visible. It is recommended that our background should be adapted to our working situation. Some experts for virtual workspace recommend "neutral" or virtual backgrounds. I am not a fan of the virtual ones. The "halos" that waft around the bodies, even if the smartest amongst us already use a green shield behind them to minimize these effects, irritate me more than a child's drawing at the fridge in the background of someone.

A not-neutralized background not only provides us with

implicit information, we can include it in our work! In our IIG we have opened one session by integrating the visible background in this exercise: "I see ... (describe what you see and what you notice) ... And I presume ... (utter presumptions, hypotheses, phantasies)". It's amazing what is visible beyond visibility! In our IIG we haven't yet experienced more difficult moments together. So we don't know if (very probable though) and how the online setting changes our "conflict culture". How do conflicts appear in online groups? How do they arise? How do we notice them? Do they appear later, earlier? What about the stages of group development? Do they stay valuable for this setting? Will there be other stages?



Tools Tools Tools

I reckon that we are in a period of "tool hype". I don't know if the peak is already behind us, but I am sure it will stabilize at a certain level, once we have developed our online habits and routines, once working online has become one facet of our daily work life. My own search for online tools for was partly fed by a certain insecurity. I felt I had to have a rucksack full of inspiring tools to be well equipped for the "adventure track working online". It reminds me of my first steps as a young supervisor. Back then, I guess I got a bit on the nerves of my teaching supervisor by asking for supervisory tools, analogue at that time, for sure. I guess I tried to compensate my lack of routine and experience by providing tools and techniques. I hadn't yet developed enough trust in my competence to hold the space, facilitate and guide a process just being the present and professional me, applying punctually a couple of well adapted tools that correspond to my way of systemic supervising. The systemic constellations, for example, have become a central element in my work. I facilitate organizational constellations and family constellations. They also work amazingly well online, with groups and in individual settings.

If I had written this article a few weeks earlier, it might have had a focus on the variety of online tools that exist nowadays, like maps, galleries, dashboards or animations. I guess that this would now be "carrying owls to Athens", meaning to bring you information about tools might be rather pointless. There is so much information already on all channels of social media about online tools, free ware or with costs. Webinars are proposed where you can learn how to use these tools. If you don't feel fully equipped yet with the tools you might want, one possibility is to have a look at the posts on the ANSE profiles on Facebook or Instagram. There you

find several free online tools that provide all kinds of support for your online work. In March the ANSE is hosting a workshop for members in which Georg Breiner introduces his online-constellation-board for systemic constellations. It is an excellent tool, I can highly recommend it to those who like to work with systemic constellations. And you can also contact me if you like, I can send you my list of online tools.

We can be confident!

Concerning our IIG experiences of the first year, the group members have expressed a feeling of being connected, a felt atmosphere of safety, trust, being close to each other. After one year we are able to state this, yet we are not fully able to explain why it is like this. Some group members had met already, others didn't know anyone before. We have different reassurance concerning our English language skills, we have different main spheres of action. We don't meet very often (4 to 5 times a year), we don't meet very long (first 90 minutes, now 115 minutes). As a well performing group, we create together a sort of condensed quality.

My actual hypothesis is the following: it works if we have a common goal, when we share a plan, when we engage to make it work. It is a matter of intention and connection setting up in the present moment.

The link is virtual, the connection is real

If an online meeting is productive, efficient and satisfactory to the involved parties has a lot to do with our conscious decision that we want it to work. The good intention with which we start the session matters, the atmosphere we create together matters.

How do you facilitate a good confident work atmosphere when you start a meeting? Which activities do

"After every catastrophe, there is a cultural change."

(B. Cyrulnik)

you propose? It's always and in every setting about getting into contact: connecting with one another and connecting with your inner self, being authentically and receptively in the present moment.

Qualities of contact are subtle. Sometimes something is not easy, in virtually shared rooms as well as when we are in the same room. We humans are in the need of contact. The assuredness that we are in contact cannot be installed once for all time. It has to be renewed, re-established. It needs our active bridging. There are a hundred ways to build that bridge to get into contact, there are a hundred obstacles on this way. Actually we connect a lot by internet because we have to. Will we be doing it after the pandemic because we want to?

The current situation slows us down, invites us to question ourselves, our values, our lifestyle, our philosophy, our ethics. Boris Cyrulnik, French psychiatrist, neurologist and ethologist, who is working a lot on resilience, has proposed to classify the actual pandemic as a catastrophe, not as a crisis. After a crisis the status of before can be regained, which will much likely not be the case after this time.

Supervisors are professionals of communication, in contact with people in reflective processes. I believe in our capacity to identify important questions, to invite

to change the perspective and to attend circumspectly and vigilantly periods of change.

Let me finish this article with a couple of questions that accompany me in this time and that I would like to share with you.

Do we really want our life back like it was before? Press the reset button if that was possible? Would we re-install the world we have known? If not, what would we change? What would be our active participation in this change? How can we give it the direction we want?

Is working online a necessary evil? Or a gift? Or both at the same time?

Will the future "ideal supervision process" provide online elements?

What have we learned, what is yet to learn?
Are we able to integrate what we live at the moment instead of trying to get rid of it? We are not here to master nature, we are nature. In case we forgot, the Corona-Virus has reminded us of this.



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We do not have to change everything completely, just because the setting has changed

■ **Karlis Visa**



I like to work in the field, face-to-face with people, and before the pandemic I was even avoiding online courses and seminars. But as everybody, I had to start working online since spring 2020. I work a lot in the social field, and I do not want to offer psycho-social support

online even today. I find it not helpful with people who have personal traumas from work, crisis, burn-out, or

second traumatising issues. The best I can do online in such cases, is to offer internal reflection, meditation, strengthening the inner resources.

I do think, online supervision is possible and easy for case-work, informative or methodological supervision. There is something nice about online supervision, too. Half of my clients are from all over Latvia. Until now they had to spend some hours of driving for each supervision session, and then back. This threshold has now disappeared. People can easily work from home, and use their time better. The supervisor only needs to set appropriate rules.

There was a problem with groups, where half is online and half present. It was hard for me to work on multiple levels, but I invented new rules to make this experience possible. Online people in my groups can only observe and give feedback – and it is helpful, as we learn to listen. In case someone online has a bigger problem, I send them all into a break-out room, to work their own way out, while I work with the people in real life. Such situations need a new way of thinking - how to organise a supervision process in a changed setting.

It is also important to know your client. My generation and older in Latvia is not used to the digital world, or they cannot afford cameras, they sometimes encounter difficulties with PC's and restricted access to the applauded ZOOM App on work computers, especially in municipalities. Then they use smartphones, but it is not always the best for groups sizing up to five people, because of the picture size. I try to adjust, and I usually prepare my clients for the meeting. I send them leaflets with 5 points, telling them, what they must be ready for. For example: be ready 5 minutes before we start; think of confidentiality issues in the room, where you are working (no extra listeners); be ready for writing with a real pencil and paper to be prepared for different technical solutions, for example the use of a smartphone if your PC doesn't work.

For online work I mostly use Zoom, which is suiting for bigger groups (8-12), and I love the break-out rooms. People really have fun and enjoy them. At the same time I do not use online tools. Firstly, I think, because I have not experienced them as a supervisee. I want to use the things I have tried out myself, and feel myself comfortable with. Secondly, I think, I am too lazy – why to change, when old tools are working very well? I use PowerPoint for sharing and co-working, which is more comfortable for me than Zoom whiteboard.

It has enough features, built-in structures to make schemes, visualisations. I also share questions and scales, and maps, pre-prepared in Word or PowerPoint. Supervisees could use the ZOOM tools "Annotate" and "Stamps" and mark their feelings or positions on scales or maps. As for cards – I have made photo-collages of my own reflection cards, which I know well. For reflection I can zoom in to the chosen picture for discussions. My next wish is probably to have a camera with a wider view, so I could use my personal paper-board for visualising. ■

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Making a difference DGSv certification of online supervision/coaching as proof of quality

■ Annette Lentze

Abstract

In order to enhance and guarantee reliability and quality of online supervisory and coaching services by its members, our German colleagues from DGSv developed guidelines for such services, based on the existing

quality standards and – when and wherever necessary or useful – additional qualifications for training programs to acquire these. This article offers insight in this institutional development process.

Expert meeting and guidelines

Already in autumn 2019, experts for online supervision/coaching met at the DGSv office in Cologne, who had been found through an internal call for applications. The group of experts included Susanne Dranaz, Antje Pfab and Birgit Ramon. The goal of the experts' discussion was to explore the topic of online supervision/coaching for the association and to compile a list of requirements for offering high-quality online supervision and coaching.

Guidelines for online supervision/coaching were developed, based on the standards of the DGSv. The further development of the ability to reflect and act and the expansion of knowledge form the basis and are conceptually applied to online supervision/coaching – especially to the acquisition of media competence. Media competence refers to the knowledge and reflection of the use and handling of media and technical possibilities for supervision and coaching. This includes formats that are offered with the support of media: Telephone coaching is just as much a part of this as synchronous or asynchronous writing-based formats or coaching and supervision processes that take place via video. It is important to know the advantages and limitations of the respective formats for the corresponding consulting concerns and to gain confidence in their application. It is important to consider and test the different significance and effect of the setting, interventions and the use of working materials and methods in the face-to-face format compared to the online format.

It is recommended in the guidelines that the selection of platforms should ensure data protection in addition to technical stability and user-friendliness. Online supervision/coaching is seen as a door opener for European and non-European consulting. In the



guidelines, attention is drawn to the fact that in contact with people from other cultures, it is important to provide advice in a culturally sensitive, prejudice-conscious and power-conscious manner. Supervisors and coaches should be aware of the limits of the respective cultures and be able to address them. The perception of the differences to cultural sensitivity in the analogous counseling context is seen as relevant for reflection.

With the guidelines, the DGSv has taken up an issue that was already virulent and current in the association at the time and had experts from academia and practice discuss it with each other. The knowledge generated was processed and made available to DGSv members. The board of the DGSv at that time adopted the "Guidelines for Online Supervision/Coaching" in its meeting on 30.04.2020.

Additional qualification for online supervision/coaching

Based on the guidelines, an additional qualification offer for DGSv members was planned. In order to be able to act more quickly as an association, a corresponding pilot project was set up at short notice, which began with a public call for applications. From the 15 applications received, three providers were selected. Potential providers were provided with a list of qualification contents for a curriculum as well as roughly outlined framework conditions. These included theory transfer and practical testing, the transfer and reflection of face-to-face consulting to online formats, integrated online learning supervision/coaching units, mentoring or teaching supervision, peer group work/intervision or collegial consulting, the transfer of technical and legal knowledge, getting to know online tools, and much more.

The pilot project was launched at the beginning of December 2020 and will run for six months. Finally, the pilot project will be evaluated.

The offer of the additional qualification online supervision/coaching is aimed at DGSv members and those supervisors/coaches who have already completed a DGSv-certified qualification as a supervisor/coach. Due to the preceding qualification, the participants of an additional qualification already bring well-founded competences with them. In this way, courses can build on a common professional and consulting basis. Members of the ÖVS and BSO associations can also participate.

DGSv certification as proof of quality

At the same time, more stable and transparent structures were established. Work has been done on certification regulations for the additional qualification. This contains all the information on how to apply for certification and describes the procedure for reviewing the submitted documents.

Antje Pfab and Susanne Dranaz, both DGSv members and former participants in the expert group, were appointed as reviewers. They review the documents and argue for or against certification.

In the meantime and in addition to the pilot project, further offers of additional qualifications, which are currently going through the certification process, have been submitted to the Science and Research Division of the DGSv.

With a certification of additional qualifications for online supervision/coaching, the DGSv takes its responsibility to enable and ensure a high quality of online offers in supervision/coaching, which are increasingly in demand.

Board member Dr. Annette Mulkau (head) and Annette Lentze as responsible officer are responsible for the DGSv's Science and Research work area. ■

Link to: [DGSv guidelines for online supervision/coaching](#)

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)



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■ Sietske Jans-Kuperus

Abstract

Because of COVID-19, expectations in professional guidance suddenly broke. This caused feelings of togetherness and confusion about lost obviousness at the same time. New expectations had to be explored to regain grip and confidence in supervision.

Supervisors and supervisees together had to deal with digitalization of supervision, which was new to them. Individually we experienced all different kinds of feelings related to the loss of personal and professional routines and habits. Below the surface this caused feelings of mourning, which in the upstream showed up as resistance to video-calling. As a supervisor the author 'swung' between presenting and facilitating learning by doing. Awareness of individual needs in relation with collective values is important to constantly justify what is 'the right thing to do' for both supervisee and supervisor. The supervisor is challenged to be vulnerable and act differently.

Can I still be a qualified supervisor?

The contribution of the supervisor to online professional guidance in corona times

To guarantee quality by video-calling, the supervisor has to be aware and share his – and wherever 'he' is written, 'she' is meant as well - experiences with colleagues, to justify his different way of professional acting given the current uncertain societal context. In COVID-19 times the author developed a workshop on professional guidance by video-calling. Her motivation is to guide professionals in their 'good work', by facilitating the awareness of their professional identity.

Introduction

At the first moment COVID-19 infringed I asked myself this question: "Who am I as professional in a mainly digital communicative environment?" And the next question came right away: "How is that in my personal live and in professional organizational work?"

From the first lockdown period I asked myself what professionalism is and what is good about the work we, professional counsellors, deliver. How do we give purpose to our profession in today's context? What is meaningful and important? How can we justify our acting in a professional way and how can we take position. In my supervision practice I learned about new digitalization experiences which encouraged me to self-reflection. Rapid digitalization is inextricably linked to the current social context, an uncertain context that requires a new supervisory discourse.

In this article I try to find answers on the question how to deal with video calling in supervision, taking the impact of emotions of uncertainty and feelings of loss below the

surface into account. How can supervisors guarantee quality by video calling under today's COVID-19 conditions?

"TIM"

Sudden uncertainty

"I'm irritated! I'm glad we have supervision, because that's the only thing that goes on, but this doesn't make any sense!"

March last year: in online supervision Tim made me doubt about the quality of my supervising. I felt uncertain: could I do this, supervision in a digital way? After self-reflection I realized this situation wasn't about the quality of my guidance. It was about confusion about my routines. I felt uncertain, because expectations were lost. Probably this student felt, parallel, the same.

When I asked him, he answered calmly: "I guess I'm disappointed about my internship which stopped. I had a great time, felt good about it and now I'm suddenly at home. I just want to do something, but I can't right now and that's frustrating me..."

The meaning of lost expectations

Expectations of supervision needed to be revised, because we suddenly had to use devices to communicate. Questions arose about which program to use, in which room the session should take place, the meaning of the

use of the camera and awareness of being representative. To communicate with video calling in the right way and the non-verbal contact also asked for attention. Sensory awareness was lost. Developing alternatives and appropriate interventions were needed.

I suddenly realized that I'm a competent in professional guidance, but I felt less competent in video calling. So, I gave myself learning space to develop a new etiquette. In parallel I gave my supervisees theirs. Being present, is the most important thing to do as a supervisor (Baart, 2016).

In video calling the feeling of togetherness unfolded in the willingness to work differently. My supervisees and me as their supervisor all experienced learning space in dealing with a suddenly changed situation. Even young adult students where intrinsically motivated to tackle this change as a shared responsibility: for them supervision often was all that was left. Internships stopped and, after a short euphoric moment, most students where disappointed about that. Supervision became an anchor: they appreciated these opportunities to meet each other, to talk about their situations to experience togetherness. Even when there wasn't a case to talk about, I was motivated to make supervision educational by themes they brought up. But supervisees themselves also liked to share their digitalization experiences. As we all experienced an uncertain time, together we felt that we were all in the same boat.

At first, I focused on being present and felt much compassion, but that became my pitfall. "I never talk about my feelings and video calling is not helping with that", said one of my supervisees. Another supervisee didn't have a camera on his computer and the third one didn't think it was important to mention that her internship stopped. I noticed they stopped learning, which appealed to my res-

pensibility as a supervisor. After self-reflection, I realized that as a supervisor I had to 'dare' to confront them with their behavior (Zier, 1988). A dialogue about responsibility for learning processes followed. I also shared my thoughts and feelings about my responsibility to confront them and acting more in a guiding manner.

Dealing with lost expectations

From one moment to the other we all were urgently advised to work at home (except people with pivotal professions). This sudden change in the social context caused mixed feelings. On the one hand people felt autonomous as the now mostly at home could organize tasks in their own way. On the other hand people were longing for togetherness and felt solace realizing that we're all in the same boat. We need both – autonomy and togetherness - to feel safe, to keep a grip and to create a new sense of obviousness.

The Dutch supervision method of Siegers is my basic theoretical framework (Siegers, 2002). Due to social developments the frequency, duration and location of the supervisory sequence have for some time been subject to discussion. Now again, because of the effects of COVID-19 this discussion suddenly asked for a different discourse. Meetings were shorter sometimes, changed in frequency and took a more structured place. Together with developing a new etiquette I had to (re)contract the supervision requirements.

The substantive framework never needs to be discussed in my opinion. It even gave me a handhold in a time where obviousness was broken. Supervision is learning about thoughts and feelings and the way you act, related to your profession and the organization you're working for. It is the pandemic societal context that forces supervision to take place digitally. So it became a part of integrative

The sudden change in the social context caused mixed feelings: the experience of autonomy as well as lack of togetherness

learning. Besides that, learning with, in and from the group got a special place because of the shared responsibility for how to act in digital communication. It is important to realize that video calling is a remedy and not a goal in itself. The supervisor can bring up his own experiences with video calling: he can bring up the supervision situation as a source of learning material by connecting the experiences and casuistry of supervisees with his own experiences as a supervisor (Siegers, 2002). Supervision requirements are also about exploring new routines.

I asked supervisees about their expectations: what do you need to feel safe in this digital supervision group, which qualities do you yourself bring forward, what are your challenges and what do you need from the supervisor?

Awareness of lost obviousness: broken routines and habits

"I think I'm going to be crazy sitting here in my student room! One time I'm the student, the next time I'm the trainee, then I'm just a friend... It all alternates by video calling in my room. Sometimes I don't even know who I am anymore and what I'm doing."

When supervisees all of a sudden are forced to stay at home, convicted to their room and the 'square display' of their electronic devices. their work or internship stopped. Yet they still have school assignments to do. They may be confused and sometimes experience uncertainty. For example: a supervisee doesn't immediately realize that a supervision conversation isn't private when a roommate is at that time in the same room. Alternating leisure with business moreover may fade away clarity about roles, tasks and positions.

On the other hand, when supervisees have to work harder, because of professionally nursing COVID-19 patients, they can have similar feelings and questions about boundaries in working time and tasks. Besides all that, the need to explore new expectations, the loss of obviousness in several contexts, has to be attended to in supervision. Below surfaced feelings and emotions related to the loss of obviousness in different roles at several places and to confusion about taking position (Nanninga, 2021).

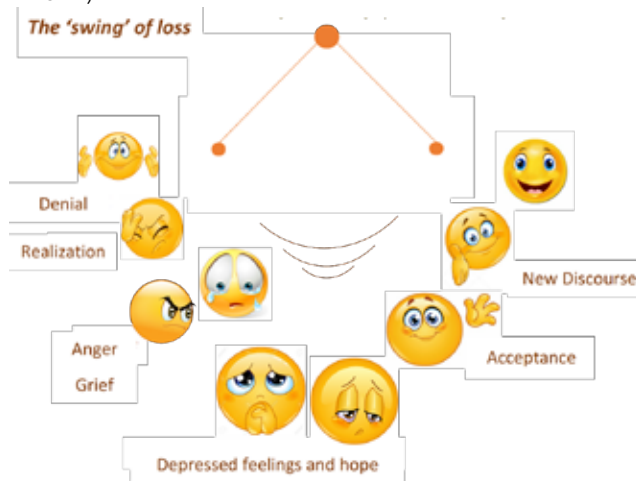


Figure 1. Inspired by the Coping model of Dr. Margaretha van Eeden (2012)

Confusion can be even more intense if you don't have a separate place to work. Sudden change causes a culture shock, relating to questions about one's professional identity. Any culture shock always accompanied by the (unwitting) search for grip, new trust and safety (Kramer, 2020). People experience varying feelings of grief. Their mourning is about what isn't there anymore, or what can't be done right now. The action can be: wanting to do something, creating new possibilities. This is the 'swing of loss'.

This figure symbolizes 'the swing of loss': which gives the supervisor ideas how to vary interventions. On the one hand by being present when there are emotions like anger and grief, reflecting on depressed feelings and expressing hope. On the other hand in guiding towards new possibilities for learning and developing in other ways.

Dealing with feelings of mourning in digital supervision

Whenever there was resistance to digitalization, anger or grief, I listened. When I asked questions, supervisees explored their feelings of resistance which most of the time transferred into feelings of confusion and insecurity. Depressed feelings and hope are part of a liminal phase. It evoked feelings of compassion. But I was also present by questions about giving meaning to professional work. The exploration of individual thoughts, feelings and experiences opened learning space for thinking out-of-the-box and to 'dare' to experiment differently. Feelings of togetherness added parallel learning space, while practicing supervision differently during this constantly changing societal context.

Awareness of change in rolls and tasks

"I worked more shifts. I'm tired, but I just can't say 'no'

right now. I realize that now COVID-19 is there, I cross my limits faster. I consciously choose for that," said a nurse in supervision.

The sudden loss of obviousness touches the (professional) identity. It needs a reorientation on who you are as a person in relation to your private life, but also on who you are as a professional, related to your colleagues at work. All supervisees had to deal with a broken structure and broken routines, the professionals in crucial professions just as well. New roles and routines need a different discourse. On the basis of personal experiences, questions were raised about the quality of the profession.

In supervision we spoke about the obviousness of several roles and tasks and the relation to the workplace supervisees used to go to or in some 'crucial cases' still go to: at university you're the student, at work you're the employee and so on. Because of the sudden loss of what seemed so obvious, we had to explore our roles and tasks anew.

Two examples to create awareness:

1. Drawing

To explore the difference in roles and tasks influences by COVID-19, I made supervisees draw two circles with slices. They divided the slices according to how their private and professional roles or tasks took place after COVID-19 and how they would like to take position. They sent a photo of their drawings to each other in the WhatsApp group. After that we talked in supervision about the awareness of their needs.

2. Value cards

When you know what you're doing, and what you feel and think in a specific situation, you can justify in a professional way what you're doing differently from the usual

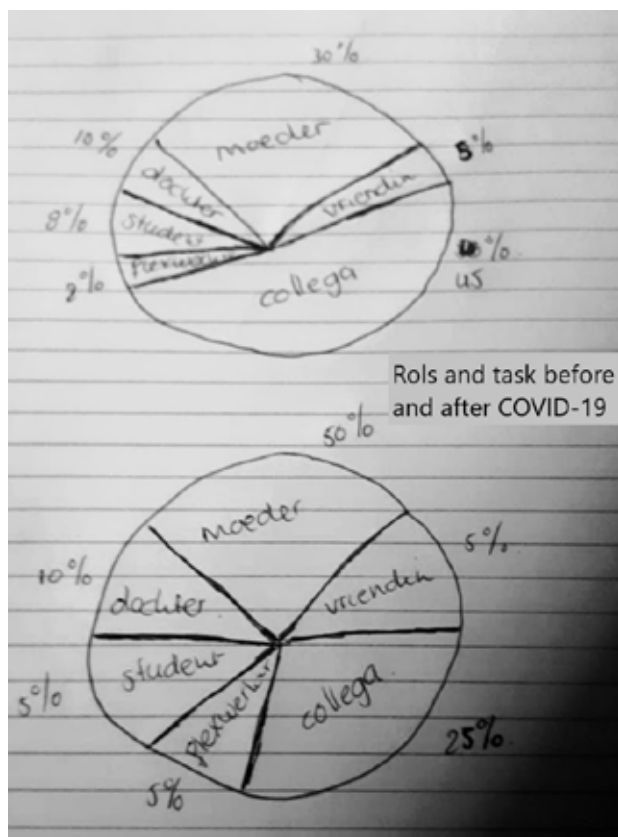


Figure 2. A drawing of circles in slices showing the relative size of the roles or tasks of a supervisee. Drawn by a nurse, who experienced her role and tasks as a nurse took too much space at that particular moment.

routine and why. Developing your professional identity is related to both your individual and collective values. The choices you make in relation to your values show 'what gives you color', what makes you a unique professional (Ruijters, 2015). In supervision I often use value-cards. A dialogue about individual and collective values makes supervisees realize (again) what they think is important in



Figure 3. A picture of value-cards experiences as you sit around the table

their personal lives and in their professional work. This is especially important in these current times. With a shared picture of value-cards in the video-calling program, they can pick-up their own value as if they were sitting around the table.

The supervisor adapts to the new situation

Today we are all invited to give new meaning to the supervisory profession (Ruijters & van Luin, 2020) and in parallel being an example for (trainee) social profes-

sionals in order to help them to giving new meaning to their profession. Is it in these times always useful to reach goals and formulate actions with supervisees? Or do I 'dare' to just listen and address the supervisee's focus? The same questions I ask my supervisees: what do you have to with your client do as a professional, and what do you want ? All (prospective) professionals have to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. That's part of integrative learning.

"TIM"

Integrative learning

"We should learn about our reflections and cases, but honestly I believe that this open conversation taught me much more today," said Tim at a given moment.

I thanked him and used it to have a dialogue with the group on the meaning of quality in guidance during this current time of COVID-19. In the sessions that followed, we used different methods to explore the sense of roles and tasks in connection with personal and professional values.

The supervisor has to facilitate a safe learning environment so there is confidence to learn and to create new opportunities. Learning in video calling is all about mastering something experimental and new after reflecting on it. Awareness is the basis for 'daring' to make other professional choices and to discover who you want to be as a professional (Zier, 1988).

I agree with Siegers where he states that learning in supervision is always related to the experiences of ones workload (Siegers, 2002). We cannot miss using an actual internship or a specific working situation as learning material. As a supervisor I can't in any way influence the caseload supervisees bring forward. But I can think out-of-the-box and create learning situations by talking about themes using, for example, several digital working methods; the more so when supervisees experience supervision as an anchor in these uncertain times. I am aware of using myself as a role model, trying to show how professionals can support their clients in an enterprising, professional way. Even in this uncertain period. The purpose of supervision remains unchanged in the di-

gital version of this format of professional guidance. The difference in video calling, however, is that I explore more what I think, see and hear and what I feel and experience. I ask more confirmation, so I can develop my sensibility in another way. It also affects the obviousness of what I think, see and hear in that it won't be just an interpretation.

Disturbances and interferences always have to be dealt with first: in the COVID-19 period such interferences often occurred: sudden changes in work situations or complex experiences with COVID-19 patients. In video calling digital communication sometimes failed itself. It is what it is. If I can change all of that into a learning situation for the supervisees and as long as I can explain it from my professional identity, the quality of my guidance is always guaranteed (Ruijters, 2015).

As a supervisor I have to take more perspectives to finally do the right thing: to ultimately deal well with the wealth of differentiation in individual characteristics and contextual factors (Boomen van den, Hoonhout, & Merckies, 2015). I 'dare' to organize supervision in another way then by the normal framework. I use my creativity to facilitate in serious and pleasurable sessions at the same time. In my opinion digital supervision in the context of today is a hard time to experience, but also an opportunity to be aware and learn for both the supervisee and the supervisor.

Conclusion and recommendations

In my opinion we have to open up for supervision guidance in a digital way. After all the societal context and the rapidly moving world influences the way of individually professional acting for supervisees, but also for supervisors.

At first it is important to revise expectations in digital supervision. Besides that, we collectively have to be aware of the choices in professional acting as innovating professionals – innovating supervisors - and must have the dialogue about how video calling can take place. Parallel to supervision guidance, supervisors need to discuss personal and collective values of supervision, differences respected. Recognition in what you feel, think and where you're good at, contributes to confidence. From that, supervisors together are capable to find collective answers for their professional identity, in a digital way, related to today's societal context.

Supervisors are individually responsible for self-reflection on thoughts, feelings and acting. You have to search (again) what you find important as a professional and what you are good at. Experience who you want to be as a professional in today's societal context. Besides the awareness of mourning feelings below the surface of supervisees, be aware of your own lost habits and mourning feelings. Sometimes it may look like you have less choices, or you don't know how to use your freedom of choices to act differently. But self-reflection in a professional way gives insight in how to relate to your professional role and the dilemmas about quality in your profession. It asks to take your place again, increasing your space and autonomy (Ruijters & van Luin, 2020).

Awareness of our needs and importance, gives us meaning of our own acting and the professional justification of it. This contributes to quality of our professional guidance in supervision in the societal context of today where digitalization takes place. ■

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Online supervision is a balance between technical and professional work

■ **Darchieva Panfilova Natalia Alexandrovna**



I conduct online supervision in different formats: individual and group. My first online supervisions were individual - from 2016-2017. Since 2018, I have also started to conduct online group supervision. I think that supervisors quickly learn to work in the online space, and

online supervision can be carried out at a high professional level. For me in online supervision, it is still difficult

to depend on the quality of the network connection and the ability of the supervisees to find the suitable physical space to join the online supervision. Because of this, some participants might experience less group feeling, which is an extra burden to the supervisor.

Individual work can also be difficult due to frequent network connection problems. The supervisor has to be alert to manage quickly to fix the phrase on which the connection was cut off, and help the supervisee to return to work. If the connection was cut during the group work, then the mental alertness must increase in proportion to the number of participants.

I like the clarity in preparing for work. I make sure to check the connection with each new member, give clear instructions on how to behave if the connection is broken. I support and help those who suddenly have technical problems. I try to separate clearly the technical and professional difficulties in the process of work. I teach these skills to new supervisors too.

We have to ask more clarifying questions so as not to miss important details that may not be clearly visible to everyone, including the supervisor. However, I like it. This way I feel the dynamics of work even better.

I would advise supervisors, who work online, first of all, to pay special attention to their comfort in the workplace in the online space: is Your space should be organized: how is the lighting on the face, is the distance from the screen and keyboard comfortable? You should remember that sitting in front of a screen for a long time can be difficult, so the workplace and clothing can significantly affect your personal comfort. These might seem random details, but actually, they are really crucial, supporting the focus to professional moments in work. And besides, the participants see and learn from your example, how to take care of themselves in a professional online space. ■

Darchieva Panfilova Natalia Alexandrovna, Russia
Executive Director of the National Association of Supervisors



“Get out from behind that PC”

How forced online-working opened up a wealth of possibilities

■ **Adrianne van Doorn**

Abstract

In this article, Adrianne van Doorn outlines her findings from the past COVID months and shares experiences in the hope of inspiring and motivating her European colleagues to also create diverse and varied meetings in the online learning environment and so shape new and exciting possibilities to learn.

Introduction

March 2020: the first lockdown... as much as possible everyone must work from home. I check my diary. It is completely filled with appointments for the coming week. At least: I have commitments for the mornings... that same agenda is completely empty in the afternoon. My first thought:.....HELP! Then:.....I'm

self-employed!

And, immediately: doctors, nurses are hundred percent ready and working hard. What is my job and responsibility in this situation? What can I provide? Colleagues asked me: what should I do, all my work is gone?

My strategy in such a situation is to act.

So I went to LinkedIn and put out a call: I want to help you start working online, connect.....what do you need? I soon heard from three groups of colleagues and helped them continue supervising and coaching online. And I was working with colleagues online for three mornings. And we all learned...

I noticed that the colleague supervisors were surprised: hey, that's possible! A pleasant discovery as I have always thought this way....that is to say: since 2000, because then it was possible for me to make the switch to digital.

It was not that I came to this new format totally confident... it was a forced choice that “accidentally” taught me what was possible. So perhaps I was ahead of the curve at the time.... I didn't really appreciate it then. Ten years ago I was speaking at a conference with a unique topic: Safe guidance online by supervisors. As many participants passed right by me, one single colleague stopped, saying: 'I will never do this. It doesn't suit us supervisors. It's no part in the identity of our profession'. I felt I was crying alone in the desert. Behold! Ten years later it is all the hype and everyone wants to invent the wheel. But how? I feel very much at home with the many questions because I already work online a lot. Below I outline my experiences towards helping other colleagues become fully-fledged online supervisors. I explain the importance of moving and doing active guidance exercises in this increasingly familiar virtual world.

Movement as a challenge

So what do I do, where is the strength in online supervision for me and my colleagues? Especially the 'movement' was a challenge. I thought dynamics had to be created, something had to happen. In the online world you get closer than ever. The 'I' in the story, the input, comes closer too. One is not 'protected' by a big organization or a sterile work environment. People are in living rooms, at their kitchen table. There is a 'strange', sometimes more intimate, context added — let's explore this. My starting point in a session is: describe where you are and how that feels. And: what more do you need to be there all the way. When participants "come in", we first have a chat ... When everyone is there, I start with this statement: "close your eyes, and explore in yourself what it takes to be completely here, to sink into two hours of supervision together as a group.... What do you need? How can you take care of yourself, what do you expect from others." I then explain that I will sit quietly while they use several minutes to switch off and on. Sometimes I let people do this in their head, sometimes on paper by writing down keywords. After three or four minutes, I invite everyone to open their eyes, put their pens away and I invite them to share a few sentences about this activity. The effect of the exercise is that everyone is completely present. The energy changes and people are "on", able to reflect in the stillness and tranquility.

The bridge from there to here has been made. In addition, participants can share a challenge they are facing... What is currently in the foreground? A sick daughter, a partner in the house who has an exciting exam? In this way all participants know what is going on in the relevant context and are better able to recognize or interpret non-verbal signals.

If the supervisee's eyes keep wandering to the room of her sick daughter, you can subtitle what you see and ask if anything is needed for her. As it turns out, she is restless because she hears rumbling in the bathroom. She can go and have a look, everyone gets a coffee and then participants can be completely there again. We are dealing with a lot of contexts. The task is to relate to each other here. You may also do this as a supervisor when you meet with someone in person. In the online environment, this requires just a little more attention. My supervisees literally click away from one meeting and click on another. They seem to have completely forgotten to catch their breath in the space between meetings. This should be discussed more explicitly in the online environment. At the end of a meeting we need to revisit this process to see whether it has been helpful and in what way. I recently heard a supervisee say: "This works so well for me, I schedule five extra minutes for each meeting just to tune in." During the course of the session I regularly invite people to literally step outside, to create movement. For example, by means of a ten-minute walk with a reflection question. Or I ask if they would like to take a photo on the road that they can use to make their input even more concrete:

"We have said and heard a lot about the input and the themes that are attached to it for the other person as well as for yourself. Could you take a walk and set out with the question: what essential issue is my concern in this?

If you go out with this thought, take a look around you. Can you find clues in nature, the environment, the people you see that symbolically point out the direction in your problem? Maybe you want to take a picture of it so that when we see each other online again, we can continue with the reflection you have made for yourself."

Nurse G. sets off for a walk within the supervision session. The theme is "stress management". Nurses are overburdened these days and are looking for ways to deal with their fatigue. G. came back with a photo of a feather from a bird that had been blown on her. Back in the supervision she described her interpretation: "That I have the prospect of being able to work a little lighter in the future, what may 'float' keeps me going for the moment". It turned out to be a strong emotional experience, one that was shared and discussed by the other nurses in the group. They then shared their own experiences in considering what the feather might suggest to them. G. placed the photo of the feather on her mobile screen as an anchor to remind herself that she can look for the lightness.

Explore and experience

Does it require some technical knowledge to later share the photo in the online group? No, because you can just hold your mobile in front of the camera and then talk about it. Therefore, technical knowledge does not have to be a barrier. In fact, I advise people in my "online coaching" lessons to practice the possibilities with each other within the online medium, outside of supervision with others. Ordinary curiosity about the possibilities is very useful. When I, as a teacher, design a learning environment with others, then research from and with each other is central. That is the essence of development science - I make the most beautiful discoveries in workshops with others - trying out what one can do and how it works. In one workshop the lack of constellations came to the fore. In another our focus was an exercise, sitting on different chairs, to express the perspectives of other positions in your head. Together we started to

experiment: instead of switching chairs, one can write a position on a large sheet and place it on the floor. What happens if you invite the other person to stand on that sheet, to investigate which attitude goes with it. And how the other person would stand and then ask for words to be given to it. We were particularly surprised by the intensity with which feeling and experience simply splashed through the screen. So here again the invitation to investigate: What do you use yourself and how can you design it online? Everyone has been searching and experimenting for the past few months. It appears that we are getting more space to try things out, precisely because we are searching together.

Development-oriented work: my method, my style

But even for me, as a supervisor or teacher, it takes some getting used to. Imagine: you have spent the past years creating a method to guide development and goal-oriented reflection based on ownership¹. We developed a board game, with a purpose — a 'tool' that lies both literally and figuratively 'in the middle'. Sitting around the board game together creates the atmosphere of intimacy and togetherness. It has been difficult in my own head to convert this into a workable online version. My first thought was: I'll leave it in the closet until we're out of this situation. It is not meant to be. In this, many colleagues have helped to open my eyes and to investigate what is possible in a different way. Initially, a colleague taped the game board to the background of her wall so that the video camera showed her face and the phases within the board game. Subsequently, the game became a pdf with the "map" of the board game and we sent the choice cards around via WhatsApp.

Later on, a colleague installed her phone on a stand aimed at the board game. She also called in with this telephone, so her face was visible, along with the board game and the puppets on it. This created more real movement. Then I asked a software developer to create digital cards that participants could turn over on their phones: the board game at the table would be evaluated according to an online tool..... where we could see each other on the PC, the steps question cards would appear on your mobile and the puppets would move on the screen.

The tools, the cross-media thinking, takes refuge and changes the world at a rapid pace. More and more is possible and our profession can adapt accordingly. Learning from and with each other in asynchronous reciprocity ensures that we develop together. This also broadens the opportunities and possibilities that I see myself.

Summarizing and concluding

Working online may offer us a magnifying glass to look at things that are actually not going so well. We can focus on what we are really doing or want to do. Observations from live sessions are subject to change. We can be shaken up precisely because we are getting so close. It remains important: the movement or exercise you initiate is the means, it should never be the end in itself.

I hope that this article and the examples have stimulated the reader to look more closely at their own routine and personal practice.

That we take a closer look at our own actions as counsellors, create practice spaces, with colleagues, to try together to become more skilled, more confident and

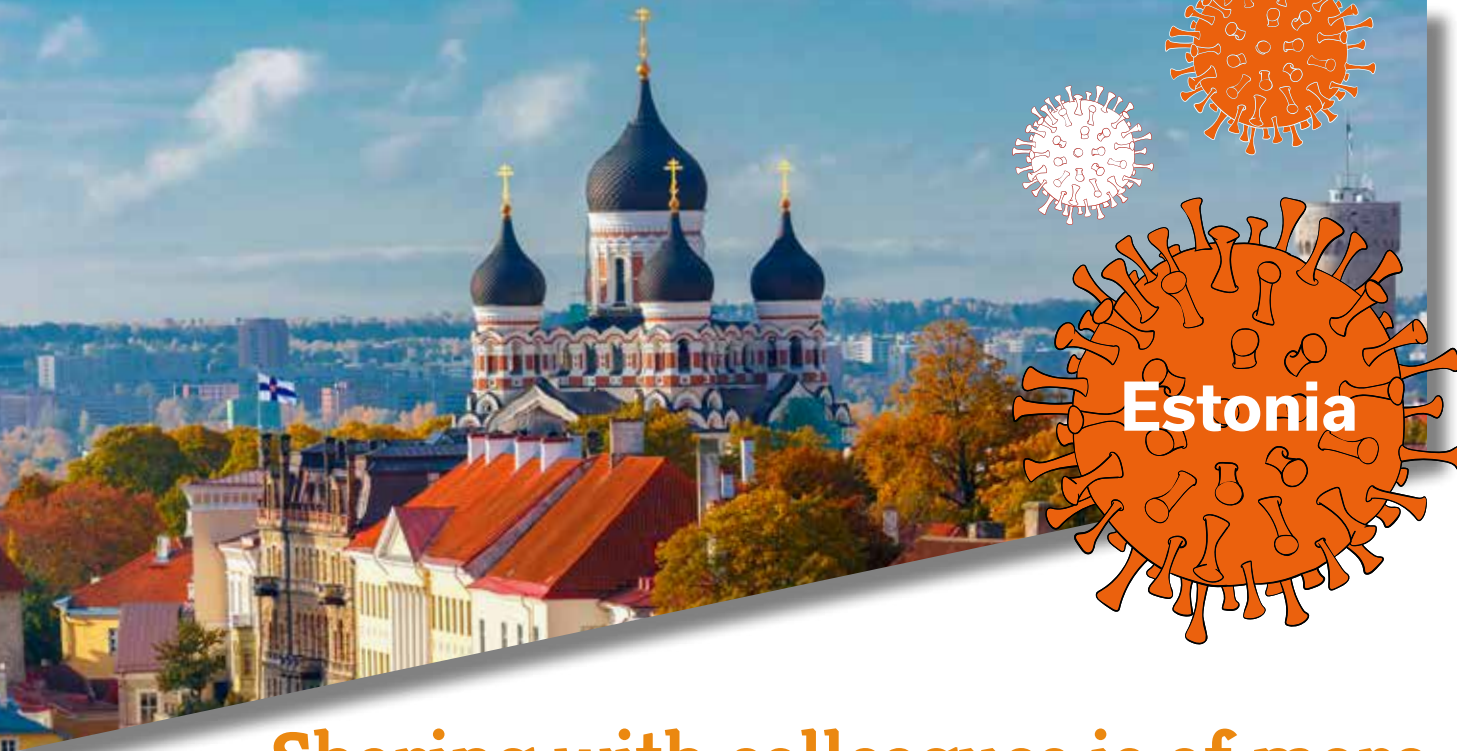
using that knowledge for the bigger picture. I think it would be nice to connect on LinkedIn and hear what colleagues have come up with and developed. Let's do it together, especially at a time when the distance has actually become minimal. We are further away than ever and so very close.



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¹See 'The Playful Supervisor. The use of a visual work form in supervision and coaching', by Ineke Riezebos. ANSE Journal Vol.4, Issue 2, December 2020



Sharing with colleagues is of more value now than ever before

■ Helena Ehrenbusch, Estonia



Estonia is advertising itself as an e-country, and it mainly means communication with the state. E-communication is compact, standardised, comfortable, quick, user-friendly in most cases. I can vote, check the validity of my documents and renew them, view my medical history,

apply for money, register my buildings, etc. People have preferred to conduct workrelated meetings in real

life, though international and business companies have used online connection for a longer time. Work with people – teaching, counselling, various services – has not really been offered online massively, only in specific cases.

My personal online experience is relevantly long, starting from 1999, when my IT-educated friends organised us common chats, playgroups, social events over internet. Since then it has been quite common to make informal connections via internet. The first months of pandemic left me and many of my colleagues out of work. As a reaction and as a support intervention, I

initiated an online co-vision group for our national supervision association members, to cope with the new madness.

In this group, which was meeting regularly for 8 weeks (until the end of the first wave, but it has continued now twice a year for a certain time-period), we shared worries and experiences, and step-by-step most of us restored our practice, now online. I guess the biggest help was really the commonly experienced success online, that encouraged us to translate it to our work practice. We discovered the need for new rules, totally new hygiene for online practice. We shared new tools, changes in our perception, changed needs of the clients – this was helpful, to build up a new, online identity. I shall bring out here some of my more important learning effects

Confidentiality has additional meaning online – besides informational, it is also visual and technical. I can create trust and safety, when I can see and understand, that we do share common space only between us, the participants. The easiest way is to use the headset – which is a visual guarantee for the security, and explain, that you are alone in your space.

Service provider. I need to know well, and trust the online platform. Until now my experience shows, that ZOOM is regularly working with technical and security improvement. It has more clear picture, better sound quality, and somehow it is more compatible with different internet connections. Safe platform adds value to the technical confidentiality.

Background. We do get a lot of different information from what people wear, how they move and talk, what gestures they prefer, which is really cut off by the

screen. I have discovered, that a lot of information I get actually from my partners background on the screen. I do believe, that your intention as a supervisor or educator is as much dependant on your online background, as the right clothes, accessors, interventions and methods of work.

Online hygiene is my favourite new thinking area.

Hygiene for me includes the rules for the group and for me to make our work productive, inspiring and safe. It guarantees me the optimum usage of time – giving turns for talking or letting people take the word, proportion of time usage in-real-life versus online. It includes the clarity of work for the participants - what is going to happen when, how to use the technical environment the most optimal way, including the training of how to close and open the mike, video, talking straight or over the chat.

I find it enriching that I can be in an intervention group with foreign colleagues online, or it is a dream come true to have a personal supervisor from Austria – some thousands kilometres away. I do think that very many formal meetings really work better online. And still, if I can, I do prefer meeting people in real life. This is my personal need – to see, feel, smell, touch, hear, and be. ■



The space of the “NO-Space”

■ Bogdan Sebastian Cuc

Abstract

Once the pandemic became a cruel reality, there was a need to make changes in our lives, in our work. Among those changes there was an important change in setting. The new setting, before it was to become a working instrument defined in terms of space and time, has to become a new mind-set, for each of us. But how do we do this? How are we going to recreate the experience of reflection for us and for others in this new (virtual) space of reflection? It is possible? What are the references? With what kind of reality do we have to deal in

these new circumstances? It is the space dedicated for the regular activity that changed, ... but what about the time? Has there been a change in the way we perceive time dedicated to professional activities, as a result of changes in the space dedicated to the professional activities? If the “work-space” has become the same as the “home-space”, what has become of the “work-time” and how does it relate to the “home-time”?

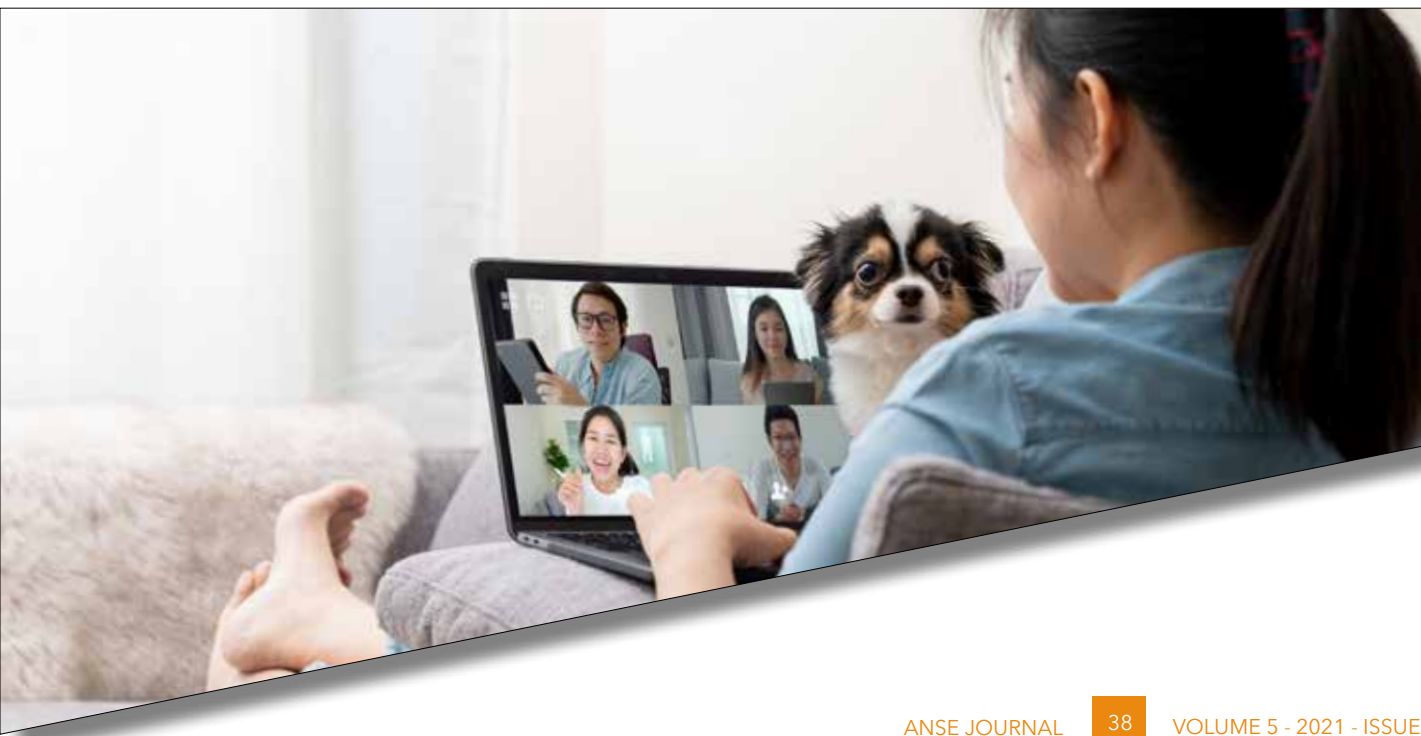
Here we are a year after the explosion of the news announcing that a terrible threat to our lives is getting closer and closer to us, more and more infiltrating in what until then represented, for each of us, familiarity, intimacy. At first some news announced far away..., precisely in China, the existence of a virus that is wreaking havoc..., then close, very close, Italy falls victim to this virus. The news was contradictory, the information, but especially the comments in the press, or in social

media, were more and more confusing, more and more disturbing. Apocalyptic scenarios and conspiracy theories appeared, fear and aggression increased considerably. Thermometers, masks, social distance, isolation appear. What used to be commonplace becomes exceptional: a trip to the nearby store becomes a special event, organized separately with special documents, with disinfectants, being careful not to come into contact with other people....

And in this climate, just two months before the first measures to prevent the spread of the new virus were taken in Romania, a new training program for candidates for supervision began. The first sessions had already taken place in January and February. It was March and we had to reorganize everything through a remote communication teaching & training platform. Together with my colleagues from Concordia Academy, we managed to organize ourselves relatively quickly, but we faced a great challenge: beyond quickly learning how to use the new tools, there was the issue of the physical presence, direct communication, with the colleagues, with the fellow student, with the neighbor ..., but “the neighbor” was no longer allowed, we were forced to keep distance. The same problem occurred with individual, group or team supervisions, which we had to reorganize in a new setting.

The new setting, before it was to become a working instrument defined in terms of space and time, has to become a new mind-set, for each of us: trainees, trainers, students, teachers, supervisees or supervisors.

How should we do this? How are we going to recreate the experience of reflection for us and for others in this new (virtual) space of reflection? It is possible? What are the references? With what kind of reality do



Why all these discussions? Why should we embrace communication through devices? The consequences need nuanced and experiential exploration

we have to deal in these new circumstances? It is the space dedicated for the regular activity it was changed, yes, but what about the time? Has there been a change in the way we perceive time dedicated to professional activities, as a result of changes in the space? If "work-space" has become identical "home-space", what has become of "work-time" and how does it relate to "home-time"?

All these questions, and more, were present in our minds and were shared between us. As the pandemic became one of the most important problems in our lives, as the reflection was lost in the face of action and mainly in the face of reaction, we could see that the space was shrinking in size. What used to be a journey through different spaces, from home to work, in the train, in the bus, walking, cycling, driving, disappeared to be replaced and reorganized in a space that "is changing" in time, according to which activity we are involved in. We were used to different spaces dedicated to different activities: desk work, meeting rooms, interview rooms, small or bigger rooms, spaces for coffee or for eating, training rooms, etc. Suddenly, all these spaces had to be

crammed into one room, where sometimes we had to make room for other family members.

Normally, in my work as a supervisor or as a trainer, I use creative activities, as a prerequisite for triggering creative processes and opportunities to reflect on the possibilities of transformation that we can access in situations of a deadlock. Normally, I work on different types of expression, sounds, movements, images, words, but in these new situations there was no room for them. So I have to change...

But the reality from which I had to start was that of a virtual reality, the one in which the other, the space and time dedicated to the other, acquired a digitalized expression ... And yes, that brought back in question, in a violent and non-negotiable shape, the issue of digitalization, and how that could be applied in supervision. Now, we do live already for some time in the age of digitalization: we communicate remotely, we pay our bills from home, we access libraries and databases without moving from the comfort or the intimacy of our workspace, etc. All those changes brought comfort into our lives, no doubt about that, and also helped us to have access, in a "user-friendly" way to information and to communication, improving in that way the possibility to learn, to change, to develop, to grow. But talking about growing and changing, about learning and developing, we could say that the supervision process is all about that too, isn't it?

Yet if so, where is the conflict? Why all those discussions? Could we say that some of us are resistant to change? Are we so defensive towards technology?

To be honest, I don't have answers to those questions, nor to other that might appear, and mostly I don't have

these because I don't believe it is possible to answer those questions. As a professional working over 20 years with individuals or groups in processes of transformation, of change, of becoming, I have found that each question may have different answers, depending on the people involved (who asks whom?), the place where the question is asked, or the time chosen to ask it. For me it is possible to even raise the question of the validity of the truth... There are questions about what is real and what not, about what could be the truth and what not. But during transformation processes, the most important question is what is suitable for a certain person in a certain situation, and mostly why that is so, and what the consequences could be...

And the last questions are the those that need a closer look and reflection: why? Why should we embrace communication through devices and what are the changes and the consequences of this choice? In order to explore the nuances and the depth of the possible answers to the above questions I will use the experiences in supervision and in teaching and training over the last period of time, a time that changed everything for all of us.

During this period I observe certain ideas and reactions from different persons in different situations. Different people, supervisees and trainees, complained about the lack of physical space and the lack of the perceived concrete presence of the other. Exploring the need for the physical presence of the other, I noticed that some forms of approaching this exploration were repeated, despite the fact that those who followed those paths did not know each other.

There was the violence of the "no-touch", the lack of spontaneous exchanges, the lack of surprising effects of natural sharing, the lack of space for the "après coup", for reflection in the presence of the other, the

lack of the “dis-symmetry” in the supervision relation. Instead of all that which they (we?) are missing out on, there was a forced symmetry, there was more action and less reflection, there was the action as an expression of the need to release an emotional tension.

But what about the violence of the “no-touch”? How did that idea pop-up in a supervision or in a training in supervision? ...

Let's take, for instance, this team of different professionals working in the field of child protection. At the end of a session via Zoom, they all said that they perceive the impossibility to hug each other as a violence.

Almost the same words were used by some trainees at the end of a training weekend. I thought a lot about those words. How is it possible to perceive the absence of physical proximity as a violent experience?

And then I remembered the two forms, or the two poles of experiences with traumatic potential, or what we consider to be traumas. Either the distance is too short and we feel invaded, abused, or the distance is too large and we feel ignored, abandoned. In both situations, the “too close” or the “too far”, distance is the issue, and the way one could manage the distance to and from the other. In the last situation, the abandonment, where the space it is too large, or the distance it is too big, there is a compulsive need to fill this space, to cover this distance, a need that wouldn't be the same if there was a different situation. For instance, in both situations, the supervisees and the trainees, wouldn't usually hug each other on regular basis when they could meet in person. But in this case, I believe the most difficult thing to deal with was the lack of possibility to have a choice, to choose between real options.

Another issue that was brought up by supervisees or

trainees was the “dis-symmetry” in the supervision relation. That was something that surprised me, as it is very often a subject of discussion when there is a symmetric relation between supervisor and supervisee (like in the democratic model), or in case of a dis-symmetry, like in the relation between the specialist (the one that knows) and the potential beneficiary of that knowledge. Whenever I participated in discussions like this, I noticed that, at the end, there was room for personal choices - mostly by the supervisors, but in few occasions also by the supervisees. But, as it was in the “too big distance” situation, apparently what was the most frustrating was the lack of possibility to choose.

I believe that the loss of the possibility (the right) to choose, which in our time is considered one of the most important values, one of the most important rights, should today be considered as the core of the issue of the digitalization of the supervision. The lack of the possibility to choose for “non-digitalization”, for the negative, the shadow of the choice for digitality, in the end leads to the shrinking of the space for reflection, and puts us in the situation of the negative of reflection pushes us into action.

As a conclusion, I do believe that the main question we should ask ourselves in the matter of digitalization of supervision, is what our choices are, and how we can integrate the benefits of technology in the core of a profession where professionals have as a main goal to create and to develop spaces for reflection.... ■



Bogdan Sebastian Cuc is President of the Romanian Association of Supervisors. My professional development has two directions: clinical work and organisational work. As clinician, with almost 20 years of clinical experience, I am psychoanalyst - Phd in psychopathology and psychoanalysis at the University Paris 13, Sorbonne Paris Cité - and full member of the Romanian Society of Psychoanalysis. I also am trained as art-psychotherapist by Training Institute in Psychotherapy L'Atelier, in Geneva.



Digitalization in the Slovakian supervision scene

■ **Zuzana Aly, Slovakia, ASSP**



situations in the workplace, on fostering communication and cooperation among colleagues, clients and

Since 2001, our Association of Supervisors and Social Counselors is the first organization in Slovakia providing accredited training in supervision for the helping professions. Our training course is focused on identifying the problems of the supervisee, processing non-standard

superiors and so to advance positive changes to the benefit of clients.

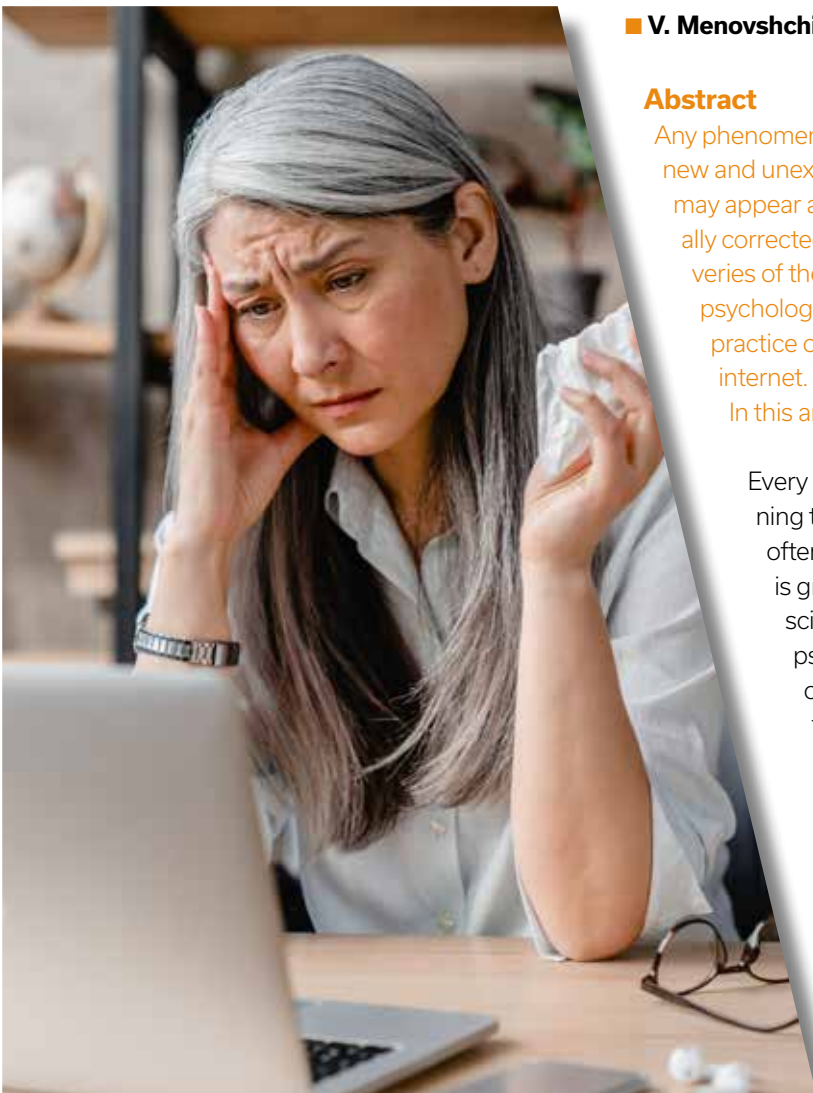
Covid 19 forced all of us to adapt to the online world. Our usual full-time supervision training course focuses on group dynamics. Mutual interaction stands out as important learning material. Yet exactly these dynamics are very difficult to catch and reshape online. However, online means that many aspiring supervisors will not make this course because they lose out on the essential interactive part. Moreover, because of COVID 19, a fulltime version is impossible.

On the supply side, too, our association had to adapt to

the corona situation. Our supervision network currently includes 337 accredited supervisors. We started online supervision to the benefit of many institutions, but not all supervisors decided to work online. It depends on the ability and the personality of the supervisor.

Personally I look at this situation from the point of view of the supervisee. At present, I am still not qualified as a supervisor due to the fact that - thanks to Covid19 - our education program had to be cancelled. As social worker I follow online supervision every month. If I have crisis situation in the family I work with, I need supervision. In such instances online supervision will do, although - to tell the truth - this does not suit me very well; certainly the special group supervision does not. Yet we all learned to adapt to this. But not every supervisor is sufficiently skilled at this. I therefore think that online supervision techniques should be part of the training of supervisors. Our biggest challenge is how to adapt to situations like this and yet still guarantee the quality of our services. But I keep saying that not every kind of supervision can be managed properly online, especially not group supervision, for which we need the interaction between participants. ■

Russian myths about distance counselling¹



■ V. Menovshchikov

Abstract

Any phenomenon that is just beginning to develop, and is completely new and unexplored, can cause many interpretations, doubts, and may appear as an object of criticism and scepticism, which is gradually corrected and dispelled. So it was with many scientific discoveries of the 20th century, so it was with psychoanalysis and with psychological help over the phone. The same is true today with the practice of psychotherapy, counselling and supervision over the internet. What is a myth about this practice, and what is its reality? In this article I pose answers to that question.

Every new and unexplored phenomenon that is only beginning to develop evokes a lot of interpretations and doubts. It often becomes a subject of criticism and scepticism, which is gradually corrected and dispelled. This concerns many scientific discoveries of the XX century; it was so with psychoanalysis and with telephone counselling as a type of psychological help. The same attitude applies today to the practice of counselling and psychotherapy via the Internet. For Russia it is especially true, while abroad these doubts have lost their topicality and intensity 30 years ago. This was facilitated by numerous scientific studies and the consistent practice of using counselling and psychotherapy online².

These *myths* imply certain stereotype ideas concerning psychological help rendered online. Even among mental health professionals who use traditional counselling / psychotherapy approaches different opinions are expressed regarding Internet mental health services.

Hearing criticism from a wide variety of people participating in numerous discussions on the possibility and effectiveness of online counselling, we formulated 9 additional myths regarding online psychological help. Since they arose in discussions of the Russian-speaking audiences and concerned, in addition to the Internet, also telephone counselling, we called them "Russian myths about distant counselling"³.

We shall successively discuss each of the myths presented. We should note that in some cases their falsity is obvious, while in other ones the myth remains the subject of scientific research and the final conclusions are premature.

Myth 1: Online clients are tricksters who prank naive counsellors.

It is true that everything can happen on the net. A counselling psychologist can encounter a deceiver, a joker, or a manipulator. However, most clients who seek psychological help on the Internet are real, "true" clients, who have genuine psychological problems.

Let us analyse some categories of the clients' problems, to resolve which they seek various forms of counselling. We took these categories from the Internet sites enga-

¹An early version of this article was first published in Russian in 'Psychological Consulting Online', 3-2010, and in revised and expanded form in Psychological Newspaper 2020. (<https://psy.su/feed/8655/>)

²The author expresses gratitude to all those who participated in the discussions in the group "Psychological counseling (online)" on the Professionals.ru site, which gave impetus and rich material for writing this article.

³Naturally, we do not exclude that similar myths are also present among foreign psychologists, psychotherapists and representatives of other social groups.

ged in online psychological help. They were compared with the data from Perm and Moscow psychological centres that provide telephone and face-to-face help. The table shows the most typical clients' problems. The plus sign indicates the presence of these problems in different types of psychological help.

As we can see, Internet counselling doesn't differ from other types of counselling in any specific problems discussed. The problems in fact are universal: love, death, divorce, difficulties of interpersonal relations, etc.⁴. It would, of course, be interesting to compare the specific content of communication concerning the listed types of problems in different methods of counselling, but unfortunately we do not have enough data for this yet.

However, the collected research data show that the

discourse of messages sent to a psychologist and the discourse of ordinary messages sent via the Internet are fundamentally different discourses, concerning such characteristics as the expression of crisis, suicidality, pathology, etc. (Menovshchikov, 2010 a). This is a completely different genre and style!

In addition, even if the client presents a false, far-fetched story to the Internet counsellor, the very fact of contacting a counsellor often indicates the possible presence of psychological problems in the client: personality accentuation or even mental illness, loneliness, rejection by the usual environment, inadequate self-esteem, etc. The message may be written as an attempt to find out: "Who is there? How do they provide psychological help? Can I trust them? Will I have at least some benefit?"

The mistake of such "testers" consists in the fact, that one usually cannot learn much by using a made-up story; the potential client will not really understand how the psychologist works and what method he or she uses. Moreover, a professional often easily feels deception in the content of a false Internet message, not to mention the utterances on the phone.

Myth 2: Psychologists, who counsel their clients using the phone or the Internet are beginners, have insufficient qualification; they work temporarily in order to gain experience and switch over to face-to-face counselling.

In part, this myth is true – among those who begin to work as a psychologist, there are quite a number of professionals who offer their services on the Internet or provide psychological help on the telephone.

At the same time, among the people working on the Internet there are many experienced professional psychologists who had good professional training. Online psychological services carry out special selection of those who are allowed to work with them. For example, on the PsyOnline website, in addition to non-professional helpers, there are psychologists and psychotherapists, including candidates of sciences, psychologists and psychotherapists of the highest category, etc.

The Federation of Psychologists-Counsellors Online (Russia) identifies two groups of counsellors:

1. The beginners – volunteers working for free. As a rule, these are senior students of well-known state universities, yesterday's graduates of the same universities, sometimes people who do not have a special psychological education, who had only a short training course in

	Category	Face-to-face counselling	Telephone counselling	Online counselling
1	Depression	+	+	+
2	Death of an important person	+	+	+
3	Somatic disease	+	+	+
4	Dependence (alcohol, drugs, smoking, etc.)	+	+	+
5	Self-doubt	+	+	+
6	Anxiety, fear	+	+	+
7	Sexual relations	+	+	+
8	Unrequited love	+	+	+
9	Unwanted pregnancy	+	+	+
10	Interpersonal relationships	+	+	+
11	Loneliness	+	+	+
12	Divorce, parting with a partner	+	+	+
13	Violence	+	+	+

⁴The American Association for Distance Counselling (AADC) defines distance counselling as the practice of seeking and receiving help online. The official site of the AADC states that the American Counselling Association, the International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO), the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and other organizations have developed best ethical guidelines for distance counselling practices. Distance counsellors have been providing assistance in matters relating to relationships, suicide prevention, depression, divorce, anxiety, employment and education for more than ten years. This work was appreciated both by the users and the counsellors (American Distance Counselling Association (ADCA) <http://www.adca-online.org/>)

Internet counselling under the professionals' guidance. This is a conscious policy of the Federation. On the one hand, it really allows novice psychologists to gain experience, and on the other hand, it facilitates access to new services for the clients who are still in doubt and are not yet ready to pay for the psychological help, or to insufficiently wealthy people who can't pay for psychological services.

2. Professionals – experienced psychologists and psychotherapists, who had enough practice in both face-to-face counselling and distance counselling via various types of contact (email, chat, IP-telephony, and video conferencing via Skype). Such people are ready to work with the most difficult cases; they can combine online counselling with face-to-face work with individual clients and groups. Payment to such professionals is absolutely justified. There is no need to test and monitor them. They have proved their qualification by many years of professional psychological practice, training, specialization, and supervision.

In the Moscow Psychological Help Service for the Population where we conduct supervision, there is a multi-stage system of the specialists' selection. Among those who applied for work as telephone counsellors, 90% were screened out at various stages of selection, primarily on the grounds of assessing the applicant's professionalism. By the way, the age of those who seek the position of telephone counsellors should be at least 25 years, which in itself implies the presence of higher education, special additional training and experience in the field of psychological counselling.

Myth 3: A network counsellor is a closed introvert who simply cannot work face-to-face.

Perhaps we can speak of certain tendencies and preferences in the counsellors. However, it is quite clear that they can't be divided into introverts who work distantly and extroverts who work face-to-face! For example, in our training groups that study Internet counselling, the distribution of introverts and extroverts is practically the same as in training groups for face-to-face counselling.

True, it can be assumed that the choice of the method and mode of therapy or counselling is associated with the therapist's (counsellor's) personal characteristics. For example, among the trainees in the psychodrama groups, in our opinion, there are much more vivid extroverts than among those who are trained for telephone psychological help.

Moreover, perhaps, among those who work distantly there is a certain preference for "one's favourite" modality – some prefer video conferencing, some choose telephone contact, and some like emailing most. However, these are only hypotheses. In general, the "myth" is still waiting for its researcher!

Myth 4: Counselling by phone and on the Internet is possible, but not psychotherapy!

The question is intricate, because in the very definition of what is psychotherapy and what is counselling there are so many pitfalls and contradictions that it is impossible to give an unambiguous answer about their differences today!

In our opinion, counselling is a more palliative and short-term version of psychological help, which does not go too deep and or change the global layers of the client's

personality. Psychotherapy, respectively, has the converse characteristics.

In this meaning, perhaps we should agree with the "myth" – distant psychotherapy is impossible. However, this does not apply to all cases.

There are short-term options for psychotherapy. In this case a deep influence can be exerted instantly. True, we are unable to apply classic hypnosis over the phone. More precisely, we shall not use it due to the risk of contact interruption. However, Erickson's method of inducing a superficial trance and correcting the client's pathogenic attitudes works quite well. When providing supervision of telephone counselling, I repeatedly witnessed this.

Although here, in Russia, we don't have a formed tradition of providing psychotherapeutic help at a distance, such traditions exist in the West. Studies show that the Internet has a variety of options for psychotherapy (from psychoanalysis to existentially-humanistic approaches)⁵.

The course of work and its effect depends, firstly, on the method used by the professional working at a distance, and secondly, on the format of relations chosen by him and the client. Short-term distance psychological counselling, of course, is different from long-term psychological counselling on the phone or on the Internet. For example, in our practice, the number of phone or Internet sessions can reach 15 or more. This is more therapy than short-term counselling. Moreover, in some cases, by agreement with the client, we started with counselling, and then went deeper into psychotherapy without changing the mode of contact, i.e. without switching from online Internet correspondence to face-to-face sessions.

⁵See: Suler J. Psychotherapy in Cyberspace for details. URL: <http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/psycyber/therapy.html> Barak A. Psychological applications on the Internet: A discipline on the threshold of a new millennium. // Applied & Preventive Psychology. 1999. V. 8 P. 231-245. A Comprehensive Review and a Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Internet-Based Psychotherapeutic Interventions. Azy Barak. Liat Hen, Meyran Boniel-Nissim, Na'ama Shapira // Journal of Technology in Human Services, Vol. 26 (2/4) 2008. Available online at <http://jths.haworthpress.com>

We used this approach, first of all, because the client was in another city, many kilometres from us. The effectiveness of such work, in some cases, was not lower than the continuation of full-time psychotherapy.

Myth 5: Psychologists work on the Internet only for self-promotion purposes.

True, the Internet is a great resource for advertising. However, many psychologists work on the Internet without trying to entice a client to face-to-face counselling. The Internet itself suits them more as an environment for work.

A lot has been written about the convenience of working at a distance. There is no need to rent a room, no need to waste your and your client's time on driving around a megalopolis, etc⁶.

The Internet is a convenient tool for the client; in addition to purely pragmatic considerations, many people prefer indirect and anonymous contact. This fact is convincingly shown in the article by V. Campus⁷, published in the same issue of our journal. Thus, interaction via the Internet is really beneficial for both clients and counsellors.

Myth 6: Internet counselling is unethical; it rather harms the clients than helps them.

This "myth" was devised by orthodox psychologists who obviously did not try this mode of counselling themselves.

I will quote, in this connection, the statement of a psychologist practicing on the Web, V. Ilyin: "Scepticism is a natural thing. But the cited 'arguments' of the sceptics are not arguments at all. They are generalizations and projections in the raw. 'I don't believe' most often means

'I have not tried it'; 'there is no psychotherapy on the network' implies 'I don't know how to do it online'". It is appropriate to ask the question: which methods of therapy and counselling are suitable for online work, which are unsuitable, and which are impossible online?

From my professional experience in face-to-face and online practice I gradually became fully aware of the benefits of counselling as a genre of help. When you know how to make profound changes in your clients by psychotherapy, you can be fascinated by this "magic" for some time, while finding the genre of counselling rather poor.

However, this particular genre is just right for those clients, who are not ready for great openness, who want advice, whereas the "magic passes" of a psychological experiment and the intricacies of dialogue scare them.

In-depth work can be impressive, but even after an explanation, the client can still feel perplexity: "What has occurred and why?"

Counselling is a genre that in a sense is more careful and sparing regarding the client's boundaries. In addition, it can be carried out by correspondence, as well as via video call (Ilyin, 2009).

I'll add from myself, that foreign authors have already proved the effectiveness of providing most diverse methods of psychological help via the Internet (Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim, Shapira, 2008).

On the other hand, in our opinion, there is some truth in the myth in question, owing to the largescale unprofessionalism present among the Internet counsellors

(Menovshchikov, 2010 b). Many people for some reason have decided that they can work on the Internet without having sufficient experience of face-to-face counselling, or special training in Internet counselling. There are more similarities than differences in the work of a psychologist at a distance and face-to-face with a client. However, sometimes these differences are very important. As a result, their misunderstanding really leads to the fact that the Internet psychologist does more harm than good (for example, by causing iatrogenic effect on the client).

This only means that an Internet psychologist needs both general and special training, as well as both general and special supervision! The development of ethical principles for the work of an Internet psychologist in Russia is an extremely urgent task (Menovshchikov, 2010 c).

Myth 7: It is dangerous to be a client on the Internet (there are no guarantees of confidentiality; most likely the counsellors are deceivers).

In reality, it is no more dangerous than with face-to-face contact. We are sure that today, more clients fall prey to clairvoyants, sorcerers and other scammers in face-to-face rather than Internet communication. Unfortunately, all types of swindlers have already begun to penetrate the Internet; this is natural, for Internet is a business area. However, some of these people are unable to use the Internet fully simply because of their deep ignorance. Worse luck, this is partly true for clients too. They simply are unable to resort to certain types of help at a distance due to the lack of education and skills of work with technical devices, as well as ordinary poverty, which prevents them from buying a computer, connecting to the Internet, etc.

Guarantees of confidentiality and expert help on the

⁶ For more details see, for example, V. Menovshchikov. Counseling and psychotherapy on the Internet: "For" and "Against" // Psychological journal. 2010. No. 3. [Меновщиков В.Ю. Консультирование и психотерапия в сети Интернет: «За» и «Против» // Психологический журнал. 2010. № 3.]

⁷ V. Campus. Telepsychology and Telehealth: Technology Counseling // Psychological Counseling Online. 2010. No3.

Internet can be provided. The work of the Federation of Counselling Psychologists, in particular, is aimed at this. We have already started to work on the creation of the Commission on Ethics and Standards of psychological work on the Internet. Our foreign colleagues have already developed a number of methods for confirming the qualification of a counsellor working on the Internet.

Myth 8: Only cognitive and directive methods are effective on the Internet.

This statement is clearly erroneous. Our practice of work on the Internet and the results of our research demonstrate great effectiveness of the humanistic approach in Internet counselling⁸. Although directive methods, and even more so, cognitive ones are also applicable, they do not have any prerogative to "reign" in distance counselling. On the contrary, the distance counselling environment is more fragile and sensitive to the nuances of contact, to building relationships. Here one cannot cope without humanistic approaches or, at least, attitudes.

Myth 9: Distance counselling is only the initial stage of counselling or psychotherapy, the main purpose of which is to invite a client to a face-to-face meeting (he will receive real help only there!).

Unfortunately, this misconception today has penetrated into quite respectable and well-written textbooks on psychological counselling⁹. Practice shows that a client who seeks help at a distance, as a rule, does not later go to a psychologist for face-to-face counselling. In our opinion, this occurs mostly because he has chosen this mode of interaction with a psychologist deliberately, it absolutely suits him owing to its confidentiality and anonymity; the client may not be quite ready to open up to the counsellor or change something in his personality.

According to the statistics from the Perm Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Help to the Population (in 2002) 18,000 clients sought help by telephone and correspondence via regular mail, and only 1,500 came to the Centre for face-to-face sessions. Similar data are available from the Moscow Psychological Help Service for the Population (2005-2010). The readers should agree that the difference is colossal. It turns out that if it were impossible to get quick distance help, which in addition doesn't strain the clients by necessity of self-disclosure, a huge mass of people would simply be deprived of it!¹⁰

Our foreign colleague, Marsha Ainsworth, answering such questions, wrote in her time: "E-therapy is not psychotherapy. It should not be compared with psychotherapy. This is not a substitute for traditional psychotherapy. Working with a therapist personally remains the best way. But many people cannot or do not want to see the therapist personally. E-therapy is a form of counselling that, although reminiscent of 'not fully fledged psychotherapy,' is a very effective source of care "(Ainsworth). ■

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⁸For more details, see V. Menovshchikov. The competence of a consultant in online consulting // University Herald (State University of Management) - М.: ГУУ. 2011. No. 5. [Меновщиков В.Ю. Компетентность консультанта в интернет-консультировании // Вестник университета (Государственный университет управления) - М.: ГУУ. 2011. № 5.]

⁹See for example, E. Sapogova Advisory Psychology. М., 2008. [Е. Е. Сапогова Консультативная психология. М., 2008.]

Interview with Zilvinas Gailius from Lithuania¹

■ Gerian Dijkhuizen

Zilvinas is trainer and supervisor, partner at consulting company "Kitokie projektai". He is Master of Education Science, Member of the Association of Supervisors in Lithuania (2010 – 2012 chair of the Association), and expert in non-formal and adult education. His areas of expertise: training of trainers, training of supervisors, leadership, communication and co-operation, team work, experiential learning, intercultural learning. He currently supervises teams and managers of business companies, provides group supervision for school teachers and social workers, and is consulted by non-governmental organizations. Zilvinas has 20 years of experience in international training projects in over 25 countries. He is author of practical handbooks on working with youth groups.

He loves dogs, women, children, friends and life. Zilvinas is interested in dog behaviour, child rearing, Russian rock, transactional analysis, gender relation issues. He assumes that "the best male chiefs are men, and the best female chiefs – women."

How long have you been working as a supervisor/coach?

I've studied supervision in 2005-2007. Since 2007 I work as supervisor and coach.

What was/is meaningful to you in your education as a supervisor/coach?

All supervision study programs were meaningful to me. And they still are. Working with my supervisees/coachees, I often remember the words of my supervision tutor. I am glad to still use these attitudes and values, such as respectful relations with the client, or saying that "all living creatures need love, warmth and recognition". The most meaningful to me was the practical part of the studies – supervision practice, peer supervision and learning supervisions (individual and in a group). It helped me to get experience, to reflect on it and to integrate theory and practice.

During the final part of the supervision studies we asked our tutor (Bernd Jansen) "what now?", "how shall we develop ourselves further?", "are we supervisors already?"

He smiled, and his answer was "look at the title of your study program, read books, watch movies, observe people wherever you go, be interested in human relations, be interested in life; never stop doing it". But now, 11 years later, I open my notes of the supervision study, and I see that the title of program is "*On becoming a supervisor*". To me it means a never ending process, such as "*On becoming a person*".



What is your theoretical frame of reference from which you work as a supervisor/coach?

Our lecturer was a supporter of the psychoanalytical school. But I myself use the integrated approach, combining the Systemic approach, Psychodynamics, Gestalt and Humanistic Existential Psychology. My background is youth work and youth non-formal education. I worked in the youth field as a trainer and educator since 1996 and from 1998 I started long-term training programmes for youth workers and for organisers of international youth exchanges. From 2000 onwards I started to coach teams of youth initiatives and then turned to team coaching of NGOs, public and business organisations.

In the mean time I've passed many courses and seminars, became well versed in Group Dynamics, Outdoor

¹This interview appeared before in '22 Perspectives on Supervision & Coaching in Europe' – an International Magazine by LVSC (The Netherlands, December 2020), which will be made available free of charge to all participants of the LVSC 40th anniversary congress 'Skills and Scenery – Professional Guidance in the 21st Century', 23 September 2021 as well as free of charge to all participants of the ANSE Summer University of 2022 in Riga.

Experiential Learning, Forum Theatre and Intercultural Learning.

If you are familiar with the ECvision glossary and matrix: how does it influence or enhance your work as a supervisor/coach?

I am using the ECvision Glossary and European Competence Framework of Supervision and Coaching in many cases. Checking competences for my own personal and professional development, arguing and discussing minimum standards in the Lithuanian Association of Supervisors (I am an active member involved in different task groups), working on the recognition of supervision as a profession and on the promotion of supervision as a service in social and educational fields and on training supervisors in Lithuania and Ukraine. For me it is the best document to refer to whenever I talk about the professional standards and competences of supervisors.

Can you mention three criteria of which you believe an EU-supervisor/coach should comply?

1. Transparency. We (supervisors) are introducing the culture of transparency into organisations. supervision to me means always a clearer and more transparent vision.
2. Empowering attitude. The purpose of supervision for me is that it supports equality, enhances justice and raises dignity.
3. Continuous development of the personal self as well as professional development. Never stop doing it!

How would you like to see supervision/coaching to develop in Europe?

I think ANSE is a very good platform for the recognition and promotion of supervision/coaching in Europe.

ANSE opens a lot of possibilities for international cooperation, sharing of experiences, mutual understanding and a conceptual framework. It is a very good platform for people to meet and to get in contact. I am strong believer in international cooperation. I am promoting, and I will continue to promote international intervention groups. Among other benefits, the members of such groups start to trust each other more and continue professional relations. Meaningful projects can start from such professional "friendships", such as, for example, the training of supervisors in Ukraine (2017-2018) in which Latvian and Lithuanian colleagues were involved. This project will continue in 2019.

Smaller initiatives: In August 2018 the Latvian association of supervisors organised the Baltic Summer Supervision Quality Day. The idea was to meet colleagues from Baltic countries and to encourage the regional cooperation. The event was open for guests from other countries as well.

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