

ANSE JOURNAL

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
FOR SUPERVISION AND COACHING IN EUROPE

**Beliefs that hold us in place
and Beliefs that allow us to sail**
Marika Saard

**Opera-Informed Practice and
AI-Supported Reflection**
Alina Feodorova

**Rank, awareness, and
discrimination: a deeper look at
power dynamics in superviso**
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An Ocean of Possibilities II

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Editorial

Kristina Urbanc

We have another issue of the ANSE Journal dedicated to the Summer University of Supervision, held last August in Munich under the title "An ocean of possibilities". As you may have noticed, the title of Summer University has the singular - possibility, as the saying goes. However, during the preparation of the Journal, we made a mistake and the singular became plural - possibilities, hence the difference between the title of the journal and the title of the conference. Coincidence or slip of the tongue, this mistake was made under the impression of the diversity and richness of the texts, experiences and ideas that the participants of the Summer University left us as a legacy.

By this I do not mean only the authors of the texts, but also the participants of the workshops who, with their presence, changed, added, problematized and contributed to the creative atmosphere of the entire conference and contributed to the co-creation of the knowledge. As you will see in the articles, during the workshops, and then also while writing about the workshops, many authors reflected on this very process of reciprocity.

It seemed to me that "being present" is an important testimony to the creation of new knowledge about supervision and coaching, and how I would really like all those who are in education on becoming supervisors and coaches to, at least once, have the opportunity to "be present" in such a process, because it leaves a

mark on our professional beings, as experts, supervisors, coaches and as people.

Therefore, let's leave the plural, let it work, let the ocean take it to the most remote regions and areas, to all those who conduct, participate in supervision and coaching or follow with interest the "rich life in the ocean".

Here is what readers can find in this issue of the ANSE Journal.

As you will see, the specificity of this issue is that we do not have vignettes but only articles, and the topic is introduced by our columnist, Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir from Iceland, with a column whose title is also the title of the next Summer University: "Supervision as a Voice for Equality and Peace - In Love with Supervision". As announced, the next Summer University will be held in Iceland in 2027, and in the turbulent world of change we live in, it is no coincidence that the title contains the words Equality, Peace, Love.

In section "Did you know?" besides the news from other countries, Gerian Dijkhuizen from the Netherlands gives us an inside view of the beautiful country of Iceland including some information about the Icelandic National Association of Supervisors and the inhabitants of Iceland.

Authors Edith Jakob and Patrizia Tonin from Italy present their experiences from the workshop entitled: "The Climate Fresk: Traveling from the shores of knowledge to the land of action - in supervision". Using climate change as a real-world case, the workshop investigates how individuals and systems act under uncertainty, complexity, and pressure to

transform. In their article, they present an action research-based workshop approach rooted in leadership development practice, enabling participants to examine their own impact and the art of designing feasible tasks.

In the article entitled "Rank, awareness and discrimination: a deeper look at power dynamics in supervision", author Valentyna Huriievka from Ukraine writes about a practice-informed, research-aligned perspective on rank as a multidimensional construct shaping supervisory relationships. The article describes cases, reflective tools and practical implications, introducing reflective instruments, outlines ethical risks, and discusses implications for conflict facilitation and anti-bias practice.

Marika Saard from Estonia in her article "Beliefs that hold us in place and beliefs that allow us to sail" explores the use of metaphorical cards in supervision



Eva Nemes (Hungary), Barbara Bauman (Germany) and Sijtze de Roos (the Netherlands)

within the context of supporting and limiting beliefs. The article emphasizes the value of metaphorical tools in promoting personal development, insight, and transformative learning in supervision, while beliefs act as inner compass - influencing perceptions, decisions, and personal growth, but can also hinder development if they are limiting.

In her article "Acting in roles and dealing with broken routines", Sietske Jans-Kuperus from the Netherlands writes about how to deal with broken routines, exploring the emerging and awareness of routines. The author offers insight into how people cope with suddenly broken routines and how they can support others in dealing with broken routines in professional guidance. In an unpredictable, incomprehensible world uncertain situations may disrupt our routines, leading to feelings of loss. So, it is important that supervisors and coaches are aware of these losses and are able to recognize it and to guide supervisees and coaches with their loss of routines, related to their professional identity.

Staying in the metaphor of water and ocean, in her article "Harvest time or catching the right fish" Stieneke Lucassen from the Netherlands writes about catching an artistic fish from the ocean of possibilities, focusing on how art can be an essential tool for reflection in supervision and coaching.

Sijtze de Roos from the Netherlands in his article "A Article titled "Supervision as a sounding board for sustainable development" by Jochen Spielman argues how supervision itself can become a "space for transformation", supporting individuals, teams, committees and organizations in locating the meaning of their work in the larger social context and making



Barbara Bauman (Germany) and Eva Nemes (Hungary), ANSE Board meeting in Bilbao, 2011.

power relations visible. Author explains how sustainable transformation becomes a process of collective self-efficacy.

Carsten Hening's article titled: "Doubtful Supervision - On the inherent political potential of a critical practice" discusses doubt as a working principle in supervision and explores how attending to moments of incongruence opens space for dialogical awareness, framing critical self-reflexivity as a political gesture within professional contexts.

We end the issue with a very inspiring and interesting article by Alina Feodorova from Latvia, entitled "Embodied Voice in Supervision: opera-informed practice and AI-supported reflection". This article presents an opera-informed approach to supervision, developed through an experiential workshop, integrating voi-

ce-based micro-techniques and AI-supported song creation. It explores how reflection can become experiential, relational, and memorable. Alina Feodorova invites professionals to reconsider experiencing supervision not only through dialogue, but through voice, presence, and creative expression.

In the Colophon, readers will find, as always, information about our editorial board, and there are also Editorial requirements for authors who want to send their contributions (which we welcome and support!), so please pay attention to them.

In this regard, we announce that the topic of the next issue will be Democracy in Supervision and Coaching (and here are some possible hints: Why, when, how to integrate democracy in supervision and coaching?)



Sijtze de Roos (the Netherlands) and Barbara Bauman (Germany), ANSE Board meeting in Bilbao, 2011.

Deep democracy; Socratic supervision; Responsibility and democracy; How does democracy reflect in individual supervision/team supervision/group supervision? How do organizations react when a supervisee is more democratic than the organization? Voluntary and involuntary in supervision; The world situation, democracy and supervision etc.) We invite potential authors of articles, vignettes, reviews to submit their contributions by the September the 1st, 2026.

We would like to take this opportunity to announce to our readers that after many years of dedicated and inspiring participation in the editing of ANSE Journal, two founding members are leaving the editorial board: Barbara Bauman (Germany) and Eva Nemes (Hungary). Eva Nemes and Barbara Bauman were members of the ANSE board from 2010 to 2018 and participated in the planning and design of the ANSE Journal. They have been on the editorial board of the ANSE Journal since its inception in 2017 until today. They are leaving the editorial board but not the world of supervision and coaching, where we will continue to meet them at our meetings and gatherings, hopefully. On this occasion, we say goodbye to them as members of the editorial board and thank them for their legacy, support, rich experience, good ideas and inexhaustible energy, which, led by Sijtze de Roos, has enabled this ocean to continue to abound with opportunities, and for supervision and coaching to live a full life in it.

Kristina Urbanc, *chief editor*



Kristina Urbanc is social worker, holds PhD in social pedagogy, licensed supervisor in psychosocial work, systemic family therapist and integrative child therapist. She works at the Department of social work, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb as a full professor. She also works at the Center for Children, Youth and Family in Velika Gorica, Croatia, as a child psychodrama therapist. She is the author of three books and over 70 articles published in scientific and professional revues. She works home and abroad in various supervision trainings and projects.

In Love with Supervision

Supervision as a voice for equality and peace

Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland)

It is now clear that the theme for ANSE Summer University 2027 *is Supervision as a Voice for Equality and Peace – In Love with Supervision*. Supervision creates a space where we can explore and reflect on human behavior on many different levels. We may be working in individual Supervision, in group supervision, or at an organizational or societal level.

In an unpredictable world marked by rapid change and social tension, Supervision can become more than a professional method – it can become a voice. The theme for ANSE SU 2027 invites us to understand Supervision not only as a reflective practice, but as an active force in shaping fairer and more compassionate systems. To “fall in love with supervision” is to recognize its relational depth, ethical grounding, and its power to give professionals the courage to speak with clarity and integrity.

Supervision as a Voice

Supervision offers a structured yet humane space where professionals can find and strengthen their voice. Through democratic dialogue, shared reflection, and narrative exploration, Supervision enables

individuals to articulate values, confront dilemmas, and respond constructively to complexity. A supervisory space grounded in trust and mutual respect allows stories to be told and retold. In this process, resilience is not only discovered but consciously shaped. Narrative identity becomes a tool for reclaiming meaning, strengthening professional identity, and developing the confidence to speak up—not only for oneself but also for others. Supervision thus becomes a training ground for ethical action and responsible leadership.

Equality

When Supervision is rooted in equality, every voice matters. Power is examined rather than ignored. Diverse perspectives are welcomed rather than silenced. In such spaces, professionals learn to recognize structural inequalities and reflect on their own positions within systems. Equality in Supervision means creating room for dialogue where differences are respected, and dignity is safeguarded. It nurtures critical awareness and shared responsibility, empowering practitioners to advocate for fairness in their workplaces and communities.

Peace

Peace within Supervision is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of respectful engagement. It is cultivated through attentive listening, empathy, and reflective dialogue. By transforming tension into understanding, supervision models peaceful communication and collaborative problem-solving. Hope becomes a practical force — guiding professionals to respond to adversity with resilience, care, and constructive action.

Together, these dimensions frame supervision as a transformative voice for equality and peace — where hope and love move from ideals into practice.

Reykjavík – Iceland 2027

A call for workshops will be launched soon, and further information will be published later this year. There may be a hike to the capital's mountain, Esja, which is appropriate since the event will be held at Esja within the University of Iceland, which was once Hotel Esja. The photo was taken on top of Mount Esja during an IIG meeting in August 2024.

We warmly invite the ANSE community to join us in Reykjavík for ANSE Summer University 2027. Let us gather in Iceland to communicate, strengthen our voices, and grow together. ■



Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland) is director of Social Work in a rehabilitation center, has a private practice and teaches Social Work and Supervision at the University of Iceland. She is president of The Icelandic Association of Supervision and chairs the ethics committee.





Did you know....?

Gerian Dijkhuizen (The Netherlands)

Next Summer University in 2027

Because of the next Summer University 2027 in Iceland (August 9-13-2027), we want to give you, as a reader of the ANSE Journal, an inside view of this beautiful country. For this edition of *Did you know....*, we have some information about the Icelandic National Association of Supervisors and the inhabitants of Iceland.

Thanks to Sveindis Johannsdóttir for gathering this information.

- The National Supervision Organization Handís in Iceland has 65 members. The number of new members increased in 2025.
- The Icelandic Supervision Association (Handleiðslufélag Íslands) was founded on the 23rd of June in 2000. So last year they celebrated 25 years!;
- Iceland was a supporting member of ANSE from 2010 and became a full member in 2024.
- Sveindis Johannsdóttir was co-author/editor of the book: *Supervision for Professional Empowerment: Occupational Safety, Professional Integrity, and Human Dignity*.
- The book is used for teaching at universities in Iceland, and professionals also buy it for self-improvement. There are no plans to translate the book, but if there is interest, it could be done.
- Iceland has around 389,444 inhabitants. Most people live in or around the capital, Reykjavík, while large parts of the country remain wild, open,

and beautifully uninhabited.

- According to Statistics Iceland, the population of Iceland was 389,444 on the 1st of January. In 2025, an increase of 5,718 people (1.5%) from the previous year. At that time, 199,622 men, 189,623 women, and 199 individuals registered as non-binary or other were living in the country. The population grew by 1.6% among men, 1.4% among women, and 25.2% among non-binary/other individuals;
- Iceland's age structure has also changed in recent decades. The proportion of children and young people (0-19) has decreased, while the share of older adults (65+) has increased. Over the past ten years, the percentage of young people compared to the working-age population (20-64) has fallen from 46.6% to 40.7%, while the proportion of older adults has risen from 23.3% to 26.5%, the highest level recorded so far (Hagstofa Íslands, 2025).

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Did you know...? Other news....

The Professional Supervisors Federation (PSF) in France

- has a new board.
- PSF has introduced its Vision 2030, aiming to be a dynamic, reflective, and transformative community recognized within the professional accompaniment landscape.
- This vision reinforces the development of reflexivity, critical thinking, and awareness of the social, societal, and ethical dimensions of supervision.
- PSF intends to stay rooted in local communities while strengthening its connection with Europe through ANSE.
- National organizations can benefit greatly from inspiring one another as they craft their visions.
- Our colleague from France, Franck Joseph-Maurin, has written the book: "Quand les dynamiques relationnelles transforment l'organisation – La voie du Mycelium", published on March the 5th, 2026 by AFNOR Éditions* (ISBN: 978-2-12-465952-4) with an English translation to follow:
- Rooted in the intelligence of mycelial networks, the book demonstrates how every interaction shapes the relational field where organizational

strength or fragility takes form.

- It reveals how subtle relational shifts drive transformation, how relational toxins weaken coherence, and how conflict and sustainability provide essential information about a system's health;
- For leaders, the message is clear: what is ignored relationally will eventually surface structurally.

In ANSE Journal 2025-2, Maurin published an article on the concept of Relational Mycelium.

Finnish Supervisors' Association STO

- The Finnish supervisors' association STO (Supportive member of ANSE) has 3,000 members (www.suomentyonohjaajat.fi/finnish-supervisors-association). They have recently established a new Supervision Journal in Finland.

The Latvian Association of Supervisors (LAS)

- Latvia has a celebration: The Latvian Association of Supervisors (LAS) turns 20 in 2027! Congratulations! (<http://www.supervizija.lv>);

The Netherlands Association of Supervision (LVSC)

A new book, "Supervision for Coaches – A Quality Assurance for Coaching" by Louis van Kessel and Sonja Vlaar (The Netherlands) is coming out in June 2026. Supervision has become indispensable in the coaching world – and this handbook shows why. Grounded in international practice, it maps the field, addresses its dilemmas, and offers concrete models for effective supervision. The essential reference for every coach and supervisor about quality and professional growth. More information follows in the next edition of ANSE Journal

Annual meeting of the Editorial Board of the ANSE Journal with all National Editors 2026

- On the 26th of February, the Editorial Board of the ANSE Journal held a meeting with all National Editors. These are very important colleagues for us: the first step in publishing in the ANSE Journal is to contact them in your own country.
- Ask your National Organization who the National Editor is in case you want to write an article for the ANSE Journal. In case there isn't a NE yet, contact one of the Editorial Board members. See Colofon at the end of this Journal. ■



Gerian Dijkhuizen is member of the LVSC in the Netherlands and as such internationally active, with a special focus on Ukraine. She is a senior supervisor/educator of supervisors and runs her own practice



The Climate Fresk: Travelling from the shores of knowledge to the land of action – in supervision

Edith Jakob and Patrizia Tonin (Austria)

Abstract

In this article, we address the challenge consultants face in assigning specific, experience-oriented tasks to clients and translating them into tangible group processes. We view this as a crucial supervisory skill to facilitate learning and change. Our action research - based workshop at the Summer University Munich builds on leadership development practice, inviting participants to design and test small behavioral experiments - shifts in perspective, micro-actions, or group tasks - and reflect on their effects. Using climate-impacting behaviors as a real-world case, we explore how individuals and systems act under uncertainty, complexity, and pressure to transform.

The basic idea behind our workshop is derived from our experience in leadership development. It has proven useful to give managers specific tasks to develop or carry out in a learning setting. This could

be a change of perspective in a conversation, a small behavioral exercise, or an experiment in a group. On the one hand, participants gain insights into their own impact when they set tasks; on the other hand, they learn how to design tasks to be feasible. For our workshop, we have chosen a topic that highlights how people, organizations, and systems act under uncertainty, complexity, and pressure to change, and therefore should affect the professional field of supervisors: climate change.

Our Procedure

In addressing climate change, we are trying to build a bridge between individual concern and organizational effectiveness. To do this, we used the "Climate Fresk"¹. "Information cards", also known as the climate puzzle, are a scientifically based and playful method for understanding the dynamics of climate change. Our aim was not to convey knowledge in the narrow sense, but rather to create a learning laboratory for relationship and task dynamics.

Climate Fresk – provides action-relevant information that guides task design. In small groups, participants

¹Climate Fresk is an international organization that uses a collaborative card game to educate people about climate change in an accessible, engaging way. Its goal is to raise awareness and empower individuals to take action by providing a shared understanding of the science behind climate change through a 3-hour workshop based on IPCC reports. <https://climatefresk.org/world/>

²SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, commonly used for setting goals and objectives. These criteria also provide a useful framework for placing assignments.

were asked to formulate a "SMART." The aim was to demonstrate how tasks come about and can change attitudes. The small groups should then reflect on the extent to which they would follow this assignment. In the analysis, we wanted to examine which force dynamics pull toward fulfilling the assignment and which pull away from it.

Our workshop, designed as a group dynamic learning lab, was intended to demonstrate firsthand that knowledge and good arguments alone are not enough to motivate people to take action. We wanted to explore together how clear, motivating tasks can be assigned when dealing with complex issues. The group was to use self-awareness in the here and now to deduce which forces were at work in a topic that exemplifies what also happens in organizations:

- Many people are involved, but no clear responsibility.
- Lots of knowledge, but hesitant action.
- Emotions, conflicting goals, uncertainty- and the need to make decisions anyway.

Action Research

As group dynamics experts, we choose the action research approach (Formann, Spaller, and Tippe, 2019). This refers to research that leads to action and action that is accompanied by research. Action research emerged in the 20th century, strongly influenced by social psychologist Kurt Lewin.

Action research shows that sustainable learning processes always require cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. The task in our workshop, namely, to formulate a specific assignment for another group, opens up precisely this cycle: the assignment invites participants to try something

out in the group context, then return to reflection on how effective it was, and continue the process, readjusting behavior or communication, etc.

The quote "There is nothing as practical as a good theory," attributed to Kurt Lewin, illustrates this point: a "good theory" is developed from practice. This means that social processes are best understood by actively participating in them, initiating change, and at the same time systematically observing, reflecting, and learning.

In his field theory, Kurt Lewin describes the forces that drive people to take certain actions or prevent them from doing so. We have chosen task assignment as a methodological lever to investigate these field forces in the here and now of the group.

Supervision mainly involves working with reflection processes. To ensure that these do not remain purely cognitive "discussion rooms," it is useful to employ methodological steps that translate reflection into action. Assigning specific tasks acts as a transfer bridge between insight and behavior, between analysis and experience.

Action Research and Assignment Design

To clarify, here are the characteristics that define action research:

- A relevant issue from one's own experience
- On-site research and development (action and reflection in the here and now)
- Confrontation with different perspectives
- Professional community
- Ethical code
- Publication and discussion of experiences

Action research is typically characterized by a dual objective, striving simultaneously for knowledge and development. It aims to further develop both the practice under investigation and knowledge of the practice. In the workshop described here, the aim was to combine the existing conditions of supervisory activity with the manner of clarifying assignments or tasks and providing impetus for further development.

The initiative to jointly address a predefined topic (climate issues) in this workshop stems from the realization that responsible implementation must be pursued. Or rather, to address the discrepancies between knowledge and implementation in our own actions. The cycle of action and reflection does not end with the invention of new ideas, but rather with the step of undertaking implementation (truly accepting the task and reflecting on what this triggers!).

Furthermore, this workshop encouraged the embedding of individual research within a professional community, which, in this case, also brought content-related and methodological research problems to discussion. This critical yet friendly collaboration should also help establish a professional community for supervisors.

Significance for Supervisors

We believe that the ability to formulate and stage assignments is relevant not only to managers but also to consultants. For supervisors, we can identify three core competencies:

- **Structural competence:** Knowing how to set a framework that specifically guides learning processes without determining them.
- **Process competence:** Combining insight with

experience, which makes it possible to identify the key factors of resource activation and motivation.

- **Ethics of responsibility:** interventions and assignments always require careful consideration of suitability, reasonableness, and the client's resources.

Practical Transfer...

Assigning specific tasks to clients and working on them together in groups is a core didactic and methodological skill of supervisors. It combines reflection with action, creates spaces for experience, enables social and normative learning transfer, and reinforces the sustainability of supervision processes.

Supervisors who cultivate this competence act not only as facilitators of reflection, but also as architects of spaces for learning and change.

... and Our Learning Loop

Sometimes it is not the workshops that we conduct that teach us the most, but rather those that turn out quite differently from what was planned. That's what happened with our workshop. We didn't have enough participants to run the group dynamics learning lab described above. Instead, it turned into a conversation and an exchange of experiences in a small group of interested colleagues. In our follow-up review, a learning moment emerged from which we derived the following hypotheses:

- The topic of climate change is heavily associated with powerlessness, morality, or political gravity. This can create distance, especially in a learning context that prioritizes reflection over commitment.
- The bridge to supervisory practice was not

sufficiently tangible in our workshop description. Anyone who does not immediately recognize the connection between global complexity and organizational assignment clarification may not feel addressed.

- The topic of our workshop was too weighty for a summer university. Where contact and inspiration are expected, "climate change" evokes associations of crisis rather than creativity.

We see the low resonance as part of our learning process. It shows that climate change might not be a topic that is immediately relevant for the ANSE Summer University - and that sensitivity is needed to build bridges between global issues and professional

action.

For the next Summer University, we are still driven by our motto "Traveling from the shores of knowledge to the land of action in supervision" to take on the assignment to develop our approach further, to create an action research learning lab that inspires people to connect, to take action together, and to learn from each other. ■

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Rank, awareness, and discrimination: a deeper look at power dynamics in supervision

Valentyna Huriievskia (Ukraine)

Abstract

This article offers a practice-informed, research-aligned perspective on rank as a multidimensional construct that shapes supervisory relationships and builds on A. Mindell's process-oriented approach (Process work) differentiates formal and informal ranks and their social, hierarchical, psychological, and spiritual layers (Mindell, 2002). De-identified vignettes illustrate how unacknowledged power escalates tension, whereas rank awareness supports ethical presence and conflict de-escalation. The article introduces reflective instruments (the "Uncomfortable answers" box; a cumulative rank self-assessment table—neither is diagnostic), outlines ethical risks, and discusses implications for conflict facilitation and anti-bias practice.

Introduction

My interest in rank began with a personal encounter in Bali, where a local shaman described my nature as "wind": strength and speed in the voice; quiet inside. Outwardly, this can be unsettling. The image helped me recognize a blind spot in close relationships (including with my younger sister): I had not acknow-

ledged my "elder" and "voice" ranks, assuming others perceived the world as I did. Accepting this strength increased my sensitivity to others and my sense of responsibility for my influence. People frequently approach us for directions or advice—this can signal a high communicative rank that others intuitively perceive. When we do not recognize our ranks, we tend to act less consciously and less responsibly with the power we already hold.

Theoretical background: rank in the process-oriented approach

Following Arnold Mindell, rank is the sum of visible and invisible privileges and resources that shape one's influence in an interactional field (Mindell, 2002). Rank is not identical to status or title; it is the felt effect of presence—how others perceive us, what they attribute to us, and what they expect.

- formal rank: anchored in structures (position, certifications, degrees, procedures, role). It grants a mandate to lead but does not ensure relational authority.
- informal rank: grounded in inner resources (emotional maturity, charisma, life experience, cognitive flexibility, spiritual depth). In complex processes, this often determines real influence.

Rank is not always explicit and is sometimes taboo because it is linked to power. It affects group dynamics through subtle somatic cues—interception, nonverbal signals, and incongruent behavior.

Additional principles

- Rank is partly ascribed (by birth, social assignment) and partly achieved (through experience and learning).
- Rank functions as a polarity within living systems; excessive control in one domain tends to provoke disorder in another.
- Low awareness of rank increases the likelihood of rigid responses among groups that experience a lack of power.
- Awareness of rank provides leverage for reconciling polarities and moving from one-sidedness to compassion.

Types of rank

1. Social rank: race/ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, language, nationality, age, health/disability, embodiment, education, class/economy, religion. Some hierarchies have global patterns (e.g., patriarchal advantages)
2. Hierarchical rank: position in a system or organization
3. Informal hierarchical rank: “whose voice counts” even without formal roles
4. Psychological rank: inner strength developed through early and community support, adversity and recovery, self-knowledge; it enables staying resourced under pressure
5. Spiritual rank: a sensed connection to something larger; a quiet inner anchor that sustains presence when the world seems to collapse

Important: rank is contextual and cumulative—it shifts with situation, group, topic, and time.

Formal and informal ranks of the supervisor

The formal rank of the supervisor includes:

- an institutionally approved position;
- degree (MA/PhD), certifications, professional memberships;
- officially recognized experience;
- organizational roles.

This rank grants procedural mandate but is not identical to influence.

Informal rank of the supervisor includes:

- emotional maturity and self-reflection;
- capacity to hold “hot” topics, conflicts, and taboos;
- depth of life experience and intuition;
- personal authority;
- sensitivity to the field and cognitive flexibility.

In deep transformational work, informal rank is often decisive.

A practical rule of thumb: the way a supervisor enters at the outset reflects formal rank; the way a supervisor navigates conflict reveals informal rank.

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- sensitivity to the field and cognitive flexibility.

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A practical rule of thumb: the way a supervisor enters at the outset reflects formal rank; the way a supervisor navigates conflict reveals informal rank.

Sources of tension

- high formal rank, low informal rank;
- a participant’s informal rank surpasses the supervisor’s;
- The supervisor underestimates or does not acknowledge their own rank.

Antidote: continuous reflection on rank and explicit, ethical work with power.

Example of reflection and ethical work with power. At the start of the group, participants begin to agree with me too quickly and ask, “What is the right way to do it?” I notice that my formal rank is “pulling in” an authority projection, and there is a risk that the group will lose its own agency. I make the power dynamic explicit: “I hear a request for a correct answer right now. That may be an effect of my role. Let us check—what other versions do you see?” Then I redistribute influence: I invite alternative hypotheses, welcome disagreement as a resource, and clarify boundaries: “My task is to hold the frame and the safety of the process, not to be a source of truth.” If I

notice myself being drawn into the “I know best” position, I return to meta-reflection and invite feedback on how the group is experiencing my power at that moment.

Expectations, privilege, and blind spots

When others sense high rank, their expectations rise. If we do not recognize our rank, those expectations feel unfair and irritating. We also tend to over-expect from people we ascribe a high rank to—fueling micro-conflicts and microaggressions.

Mindell notes that many are keenly aware of the rank they lack, while remaining blind to the rank they hold (Mindell, 2002). High rank can act as an anesthetic to others' vulnerability: we become accustomed to privilege and resist surrendering it; loss of privilege is experienced as failure and pain. Even with multiple high ranks, certain contexts (war, illness, emergencies) can trigger regression to a low rank, especially when the process is unconscious.

What matters is not which rank you occupy, but whether you are aware of it. A common myth in supervision: “The supervisor must always be at a high rank.” Trying to stay on top constantly is like standing on one leg: hidden vulnerability accumulates tension and eventually bursts.

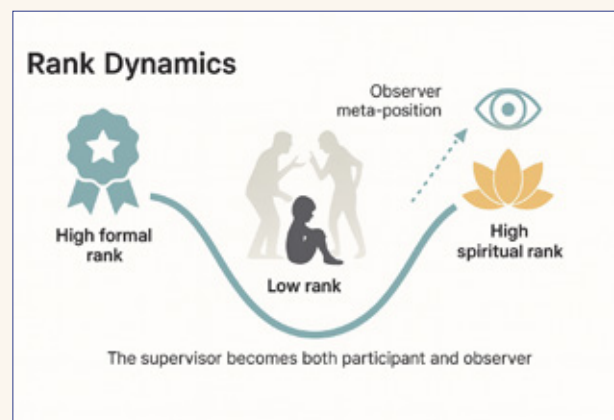
Supervisors can enter a blind zone—an altered state when the situation slips out of control (pain, fear, confusion, over-involvement). Systemic awareness and the willingness to reveal both high and low ranks restore inner balance and have a regulating effect on the group field.

Clinical notes: a practice case (“the language of war”)

Ethical disclaimer: the vignette is de-identified; selected details have been modified/combined for confidentiality.

A conflict erupts in a group: one participant, who lost her husband in the war, is triggered by the Russian language; another participant from Eastern Ukraine defends freedom of language choice. Tension rises; neither side is ready to shift position or listen.

Rank dynamics. The supervisor begins with a high formal rank (entry mandate), drops into a low rank (a felt helplessness “like a child listening to parents quarrel”), and then moves into a high spiritual rank through awareness of state. Accepting vulnerability restores footing and broadens perspective: the supervisor becomes both a participant and an observer of personal reactions and the group process.



Interventions (both for the supervisor/facilitator and as examples of possible interventions for a leader in a team conflict).

Moving into a meta-position: “I can see we have entered a polarity, and right now, each side is protecting something very important. Let us pause for a minute.”

Identifying polarities and needs: “Here, there is pain and a need for safety, and there is also a need for dignity and freedom of choice. I want both needs to be heard.”

Acknowledging the strength of both sides: “There is strength in your position—you are protecting boundaries and memory. Furthermore, there is strength in your position—you are protecting the right to a voice and identity.”

Setting the boundaries of the discussion (‘the edges’): “We are not going to persuade one another or invalidate each other’s experience. Instead, we will take turns: each person has 60 seconds to say ‘what this means for me,’ with no replies or debate.”

When roles and ranks are recognized, the struggle becomes unnecessary; mutual listening becomes possible.

Blind spots and the cultural matrix

Rank is rarely visible in the mirror—it manifests in subtle states. Membership in prestigious groups can define “normal”, with differences rendered marginal. The inner critic often amplifies cultural injunctions to be “proper,” “successful,” “rational,” “strong,” and “slim.” Psychological rank may dampen empathy: rather than expanding toward the other’s world, we look down on those who do not measure up.

Table 1. Cumulative rank self-assessment (reflective; not diagnostic)

Category	Score (1-3)	Context notes / impact
Race / ethnicity		
Sex / gender		
Sexual orientation		
Age		
Spiritual affiliation		
Health		
Economic stability		
Education		
Position in this group		
Psychological well-being		
Language competence		
Status in the country (local / migrant / refugee)		
War in your country (yes/no; impact)		
Total score (contextual)		Not a norm; interpret within the current context.

Conclusions and practical recommendations

The paradox of spiritual rank. The most powerful learning and growth often happen in episodes we would rather not repeat. It is precisely there that blind spots become visible, vulnerability is accepted, and the capacity to use rank consciously is born—without building walls between people.

Rank is multidimensional, cumulative, and contextual. Ethical presence emerges when a supervisor integrates both high and low ranks—acknowledging limitations as clearly as resources.

Blindness to one's own rank reproduces discrimination. Awareness shifts power from pressure to service of the

process: less "being right," more responsibility for the relational field.

Supervisory ethics is explicit work with power. This includes: naming ranks and asymmetries ("My formal and informal rank in this group is ..."), equalizing access to voice ("Whose voice is not being heard right now?"), Furthermore, holding polarities without forcing agreement—creating a space where different positions can be expressed without being invalidated.

Micro-dominances are early signals of ethical drift. They should be noticed and interrupted: interruptions, a "teaching tone," invisible hierarchies, invalidation of experience, or moralizing.



Spiritual and psychological ranks provide grounding in a crisis. They do not abolish social hierarchies, but they help prevent the reproduction of violence in interaction and support humanity under pressure.

The meta-position of the elder. The supervisor's task is not to dissolve into the role of "the one who knows," but to hold the field for all positions—being both participant and observer, while maintaining the frame, ethical integrity, and respect for difference.

Valentyna presented a workshop at the Summer University ANSE in Munich in August 2025 on this topic (EB).

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Beliefs that hold us in place and beliefs that allow us to sail

Metaphorical Cards in Supervision for Working with Supporting and Limiting Beliefs

Marika Saard (Estonia)

Abstract

This article explores the use of metaphorical cards in supervision, focusing on supporting and limiting beliefs. Beliefs act as an inner compass - influencing perceptions, decisions, and personal growth, yet deeply rooted limiting beliefs can hinder development. Metaphorical cards provide a safe, creative space for reflection, helping clients to visualize and articulate their experiences while the counselor guides the process with open-ended questions without imposing interpretations. The author shares insights from the workshop at ANSE Summer University, highlighting how the cards facilitated self-awareness, reflection, and meaningful group interactions. The article emphasizes the value of metaphorical tools in promoting personal development, insight, and transformative learning in supervision.

Introduction: Supervision as an Ocean

Supervision can be conceptualized as an ocean. It is a dynamic environment where we can explore various depths and perspectives. The ocean is diverse and

multifaceted, much like the people and organizations we encounter in our work. It can be unpredictable and compelling, mirroring the topics we engage with and the opportunities for meaningful intervention.

This year, the central theme of the ANSE Summer University, An Ocean of Possibilities, provided a valuable platform to introduce my self-developed, metaphor-based card technique for raising awareness of limiting and supporting beliefs. In this article, I will provide an overview of my workshop's content and personal experiences, complemented by a theoretical examination of beliefs.

Beliefs—Our Inner Compass

Core beliefs (or fundamental beliefs) are broad and deeply rooted convictions about oneself, the world, situations, the future, and so on, which a person often takes as facts. These beliefs develop over a lifetime through interactions with the environment, experiences, knowledge, and relationships. Their formation is influenced by factors such as parental attitudes, educational environment, past experiences (especially emotional), and cultural values (Purdon, 2021). Therefore, beliefs act like an inner compass—they give meaning and direction to our actions and life.

Core beliefs related to self-image and self-esteem reflect a person's internal knowledge and interpretations of themselves. They are generalized, relatively stable, and influence how a person perceives themselves within their social context. These are thoughts about oneself—whether conscious or unconscious (Mussel, 2025). Here, I would divide them into limiting and supporting beliefs.

Limiting beliefs maintain dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and hinder change - like anchors that prevent a sailing ship from moving forward. They may appear as automatic thought patterns like:

- *"I must never make mistakes."*
- *"I have to please everyone."*
- *"I am not lovable."*
- *"Nobody cares about me."*

These beliefs often stem from cognitive distortions—where a person focuses only on information that confirms their existing beliefs, while ignoring or dismissing contradictory information as irrelevant. In negative moods or anxiety, these schemas become especially active, affecting attention, memory, and judgments, and deepening negative feelings about oneself (Purdon, 2021).

Core beliefs are considered relatively stable because they are deeply rooted in personality (Mussel, 2025). Consequently, challenging these beliefs requires time, awareness, and repeated experiences that help shape a new, more supportive perspective. The desire to restore inner harmony often motivates individuals to seek ways to alter these beliefs, thereby changing their attitudes and behavior.

Supporting beliefs, on the other hand, create self-confidence and provide inner strength and energy. They support motivation, growth, and the implementation of change, acting like wind that helps the sailing ship move forward. For example:

- *"I have the right to make mistakes."*
- *"I am in charge of my life."*
- *"I know what I need."*
- *"There is a solution to every problem."*

Working with beliefs is often associated with cognitive-behavioral therapy. However, it is also important for a supervisor to have a basic understanding of how to recognize and support clients in matters related to beliefs. When a client aims to achieve a goal but feels held back by limiting beliefs, it is useful to know how to address this topic within the professional boundaries of one's competence.

This topic is important to me because I believe our beliefs shape our self-perception and the world around us. Over time, I have come to understand how deeply ingrained beliefs can influence us, particularly those that are limiting. They can quietly, and often unconsciously, direct our decisions, relationships, and self-worth. In my work with individuals, I have observed how limiting beliefs hold them back while empowering beliefs open possibilities, provide strength, and create movement. This theme is deeply meaningful to me because I believe that working with one's inner beliefs can be a powerful step towards greater self-awareness and personal transformation, whether in therapy, supervision, or everyday life.

Metaphorical Cards as a Tool for Exploring Beliefs

In counseling, a range of creative and analytical methods is employed to assist clients in identifying contradictions in their beliefs, expanding their understanding, and recognizing that not every thought necessarily represents the truth. This process becomes truly effective when the client independently reaches these insights. This personal discovery strengthens their self-confidence and supports the development of future independent coping mechanisms (Purdon, 2021).

One such creative tool is metaphor cards, which help clients explore their inner world through images and symbols. They facilitate the expression of feelings and thoughts that can be difficult to articulate while also creating space for new meanings and perspectives to emerge. Visual design often serves as a mirror of a person's inner experiences, enabling them to examine beliefs and internal conflicts in a safe, indirect manner.

Metaphorical cards are specifically designed for use in counseling and therapy processes. They depict life situations and symbols but do not provide a fixed or single meaning (Ayalon & Siso-Ayalon, 2012; Popova & Miloradova, 2014). Some cards include a verbal element, such as a keyword, phrase, or question, enabling work with images, text, or a combination of the two. Metaphor cards create a safe space for individuals to express their experiences when words are insufficient. The multiple possible interpretations of the cards reveal connections that might otherwise be overlooked, acting as mirrors of a person's inner world. Metaphor cards are effective in both individual and group settings with clients of all ages.

As I have previously written (Saard, 2024), metaphorical cards can be applied to a wide range of topics, including relationships, identity, values, change, the future, loss, goals, and beliefs. Working with beliefs is not straightforward because they are deeply rooted in personal identity. Awareness of beliefs is often a prerequisite for change in supervision. When a client identifies an internal belief that is holding them back, the first step is to make that belief visible. Metaphorical cards help achieve this creatively and in deeper layers without the pressure to find the 'right words'. This flexibility and multilayered nature make cards an effective tool.

Working with a person's deeply held beliefs is a complex and emotionally sensitive process that requires the client's conscious readiness and demands attentiveness, empathy, and careful action from the counselor (Purdon, 2021). Conversely, if the client is willing to engage with their beliefs, it can lead to positive change. As a supervisor, it is important to assess whether we have sufficient knowledge and skills to act competently in these processes.

In supervision, metaphorical cards can be integrated into various stages.

- **Goal setting:** Exploring the beliefs related to the desired change and the intended goal.
- **Mapping obstacles:** Identifying factors that are hindering the client's progress.
- **Opening resources:** Highlighting supportive beliefs or inner strengths.
- **Visualizing change:** Creating an image of the future that represents the desired change.

Cards support reflection and facilitate a deeper exploration of self-experience. They also enable the cre-



ation of meaning and the safe exploration of complex or painful topics, creating a distance between the situation and the personal experience. Metaphor cards help to make beliefs visible. The choice of cards is typically guided by personal intuition, often based on initial impressions, feelings, or a sense of recognition. This approach allows the exploration of beliefs without judgment.

The thoughtful use of metaphorical cards in supervision helps to:

- Become aware of and articulate one's limiting and supportive beliefs;

- Explore the role of a belief in relation to the problem: identifying which belief is maintaining the problem and which is the client's.
- See and verbalize one's belief(s);
- Enable a critical and flexible view of one's thoughts;
- Use the image to explore the possible origins of the belief.
- Critically review one's internal convictions, broaden perspective, and shape more realistic beliefs;
- Find more creative and flexible ways of thinking that support change.

All steps should be undertaken calmly and at the client's pace. If the counselor attempts to direct or persuade the client to change their viewpoint too quickly, it typically does not lead to the desired outcome. It is more important to create a space where the client's inner world can be explored, understandings expanded, and different perspectives and interpretations courageously experimented with (Purdon, 2021).

Metaphor cards function simultaneously as a mirror - helping to look inward - and as a bridge - supporting the movement from limitations to possibilities. While they may not provide immediate answers, they create space and a language through which beliefs can become visible and workable. In supervision, where the goal is often personal development and increased awareness, metaphor cards can be a valuable tool. It is important to emphasize, however, that metaphor cards do not do the work on their own. A trusting and safe relationship, as well as basic counseling skills, including the ability to ask relevant questions, are essential. Examples of questions to use when combining beliefs and metaphor cards are presented in Table 1. These questions were also part of my workshop at the ANSE Summer School.

The counselor's role is to listen to the client openly and without judgment, striving to understand their experience as broadly as possible. Together with the client, various interpretations are explored and compared not only with their immediate thoughts but also with other relevant information. The aim is to help the client gain a broader and deeper understanding of their situation. The counselor can pose questions and support the thinking process, but final decisions, including any potential changes in thought patterns, remain the client's responsibility.

Table 1. Optional questions for exploring the limiting and supporting beliefs (compiled by the author).

Limiting Beliefs hold us in place	Supporting Beliefs allow us to sail
• Where do these beliefs come from? Who in your life has expressed or supported these beliefs? • What benefits have these beliefs brought you? • What harm or damage do these beliefs bring you? • What kind of life would you live if these beliefs were replaced with more supportive and helpful ones? What steps would you take tomorrow if this belief no longer held you back?	• How do these beliefs influence your professional or/ and/or personal life? • How do these beliefs support you in challenging situations? Give examples • Have these beliefs changed or evolved over time? If so, how? • What actions do you take when these beliefs are guiding you? Give examples • What have you achieved thanks to these beliefs? • Which strengths and competencies are highlighted or activated in you by these beliefs? • Illustrate your answer with examples from various life contexts • How do you consciously support or strengthen these beliefs within yourself?

This approach relies on trust in the client's inner wisdom and decision-making ability (Purdon, 2021). In a professional supervision process, changes arise from the client's own insights rather than the supervisor's judgments.

Workshop Experience: Beliefs as Anchors
I have developed a series of cards called 'Contemplation,' designed as tools for supervisors, coaches, psychologists, and therapists. At present, there are six different card packs. In recent years, I have shared my knowledge and practical experience of metapho-

rical cards within various courses and workshops in Estonia and abroad.

As a supervisor and psychologist, I have often experienced a lack of practical tools for working with beliefs. This need inspired the creation of 'The Power of Beliefs' card set. The deck includes 75 metaphor cards, 48 belief-completion cards, and a leaflet of options for their use.
My workshop, titled Beliefs That Hold Us in Place and Beliefs That Allow Us to Sail, aimed to explore and understand which beliefs limit us and which support

us. It sought to identify those that keep participants on the 'shore of thought' and those that enable them to 'cross the ocean and reach the shore of action'. As a tool, I used a new card set and pre-prepared worksheets to help participants analyze their beliefs, strengths, and competencies. At the end of practical exercises, participants had the opportunity to share their thoughts and receive feedback from their colleagues. Feedback confirmed that the workshop

structure and metaphorical cards facilitated a safe and creative approach to deeply personal and sensitive topics. The worksheets thoughtfully supported self-analysis and reflection.

Leading this workshop was a personal and enriching experience. I was particularly impressed by the participants' responses to the personal insights that emerged through the cards and metaphors. A single

meaningful image or phrase can sometimes unlock deeper issues. One participant shared that they had held a particular belief for years, but only now realized how it had held them back and its origins. This reminded me of the powerful potential of language through symbols and images when a person finds personal meaning in them.

The workshop reinforced my belief that working with beliefs does not always require large, complex methods. The most important aspect is to create a safe space where individuals can express their thoughts, explore them safely, and, if necessary, reinterpret them. Metaphorical cards and a clear structure facilitated the creation of this environment, and the guiding questions in working with beliefs supported the development of greater awareness of personal beliefs and enabled participants to create new meanings for them. The group served as a professional mirror for my work, and I am sincerely grateful for everyone's contribution to this process. ■



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Acting in roles and dealing with broken routines

Sietse Jans-Kuperus (the Netherlands)

Abstract

In the article, Sietse Jans-Kuperus writes about how to deal with broken routines. Exploring your daily routines helps you become aware of the importance of the various roles you play in life. Roles are related to values, beliefs, and expectations. That is why you behave in a certain way in a specific role, and these are emerging routines. When a routine breaks, the obviousness is gone. Feelings of grief accompany this. Supervisors and coaches should be aware of these mourning feelings to guide supervisees and coachees through the loss of routines related to their professional identity.

Introduction

Are you aware of your roles and routines in daily life? We all rely on routines to structure our activities, relationships, and overall way of living. These routines often feel obvious. That is no coincidence; it is how our brain works.

We also engage in routines because people like predictability. Knowing what to expect provides a sense of confidence and control. However, we live in an age of permanent change. The future is unpredictable and incomprehensible. In uncertain situations, our

routines may be disrupted, leading to feelings of loss. Recognizing that broken routines can evoke grief can help get a grip again.

This article first explores how routines emerge and how you become aware of them. It then examines how you cope with (suddenly) broken routines. Finally, it offers insights into how you, as a supervisor or coach, can support others in dealing with broken routines in professional guidance.

The emergence of routines

We all have routines, though we are mostly unaware of them. Routines are a set of actions or behaviors that you repeat regularly, often in a specific order. It is like your brain's autopilot for daily life, helping you move through tasks without having to rethink every step. Most of the things we do are obvious: how you get out of bed, how you have breakfast, how you go to work, how you start work, etc. That obviousness is related to your expectations, beliefs, and values. Furthermore, that is how acting like routines emerge.

Kahneman (2018) describes how the brain operates through systems: System One and System Two. He explains that in everyday life, we mostly act with our lazy, creative brain (System One), guided by intuition. From our own frame of reference, our personal experience, and our perception of the world, we interpret

situations and imagine what we think we should do. Furthermore, that is a good thing, too: imagine you were aware of everything you are doing during the day. It is not even possible.

Routines are related to the several roles you have in daily life and the tasks you describe for those roles. How you act in a specific role is dependent on your expectations, beliefs, and values.

In my role as a mother, I had a routine of making a cup of tea with my son when he came home from work. I expected that he needed me to tell his story about what he experienced that day. I believed he needed my listening ear. This was related to my value 'the willingness to help'. So whenever he had a morning shift, and I was at home, I was there, at four in the afternoon, waiting for him with a cup of tea

Values also seem to be obvious, but when you explore them, you will discover that everyone interprets a value differently. It concerns your personal experience, character, and life-course development (Jans-Kuperus, 2022). The personal meaning of values includes certain beliefs and expectations.

We are so adept at living our lives that we no longer need to think about many things we take for granted. Furthermore, if we do the same thing over and over again without thinking about it at all, it becomes a routine.

The awareness of routines

Routines are ingrained. Being able to rely on your

intuition is fine. It helps you perform activities that require 'System Two' engagement: a new, unfamiliar situation demands that your brain concentrate and that you pay full attention to your actions (Kahneman, 2018).

Because routines seem so obvious, it can be helpful to explore them to become more aware of them. Take a moment to reflect on how you are doing the basics in life. Think back to the moment you woke up this morning: What did you do, step by step? Furthermore, how did you do it? These actions may seem automatic, but by consciously examining them, you begin to recognize the routines that shape your day, routines that usually go unnoticed.

You can become more aware of your routines by exploring your roles and tasks in daily life. When you reflect on the emotional energy you invest in each role, you begin to understand how you navigate these roles on a personal level. By then focusing on how you want to perform your roles, you become aware of the difference between your current and ideal situation. This reflection may uncover why certain roles demand more of your time and attention than others: it might give you insight into your beliefs and expectations related to that role.

Sometimes, this awareness is just an observation. Nevertheless, it can also confront you with deeper feelings, such as longing, loss, or the context that shapes your actions. In any case, it may evoke feelings of mourning at different phases.

How to deal with (suddenly) broken routines

When something unexpected happens, our brain switches from the obvious and routine, 'System One',

to 'System Two': the situation is unfamiliar, does not match our expectations, and requires us to think about what to do (Jans-Kuperus, 2023).

When a routine is suddenly broken, it is no longer obvious. This can trigger feelings of unsafety and, in the first place, a fight, flight, or freeze reaction. Depending on the urgency of the broken routine, you have to adapt to a new situation in the second place. Feelings of grief accompany this. Losses often occur unexpectedly and can range from minor setbacks to major disruptions. Their impact may be abrupt or reflect a transition that is appropriate to a specific stage of life or social role.

Mourning feelings surface when situations differ from what was expected. Figure 1 illustrates my personal experience: I was sad (grief) and felt like I was no longer important (some depressed feelings). However, after a little while, I said to myself: look what a wonderful girlfriend he has, it is time to let things go in upbringing (acceptance). I found out that I have more me time now, for example, reading a book or magazine (New Discourse). Maybe this is not an extreme example of broken routines, but it shows how expectations, beliefs, and values are related to feelings of grief and the meaning I give to my role as a mother.

My son got a girlfriend. Moreover, from that moment, he was more often going to her place after work, sharing his stories with her. A routine broke: my expectation (that he would have a cup of tea with me after work) and my belief (that he needs me to tell his story) were suddenly interrupted. I had mixed feelings: 'He does not need me anymore, what can I do now to make

sense...' Of course, I was also glad for him, he met this lovely girl – I really love her – but it also caused feelings of grief a little bit: from that moment, he did not share everything with me anymore, but shared his stories with his girlfriend. Meanwhile, I have other routines, reading a book or magazine while I have my cup of tea at the kitchen table at four in the afternoon. Moreover, when he is there with his girlfriend, I enjoy those moments.

Mourning feelings surface when situations differ from what was expected. Figure 1 illustrates my personal experience: I was sad (grief) and felt like I was no longer important (some depressed feelings). However, after a little while, I said to myself: look what a wonderful girlfriend he has, it is time to let things go in upbringing (acceptance). I found out that I have more me time now, for example, reading a book or magazine (New Discourse). Maybe this is not an extreme example of broken routines, but it shows how expectations, beliefs, and values are related to feelings of grief and the meaning I give to my role as a mother.

Another example (from a societal context) from the recent past that we can all still recall is the disruption of routines during the COVID-19 pandemic. In our private, but also professional role – as a nurse, social worker, teacher, supervisor, or coach – we all had to do something differently than in our 'normal' daily working time. A sudden change caused culture shock, related to questions about professional identity. Culture shock always involves the (unwitting) search for grip, a new sense of trust and safety (Kramer, 2020).

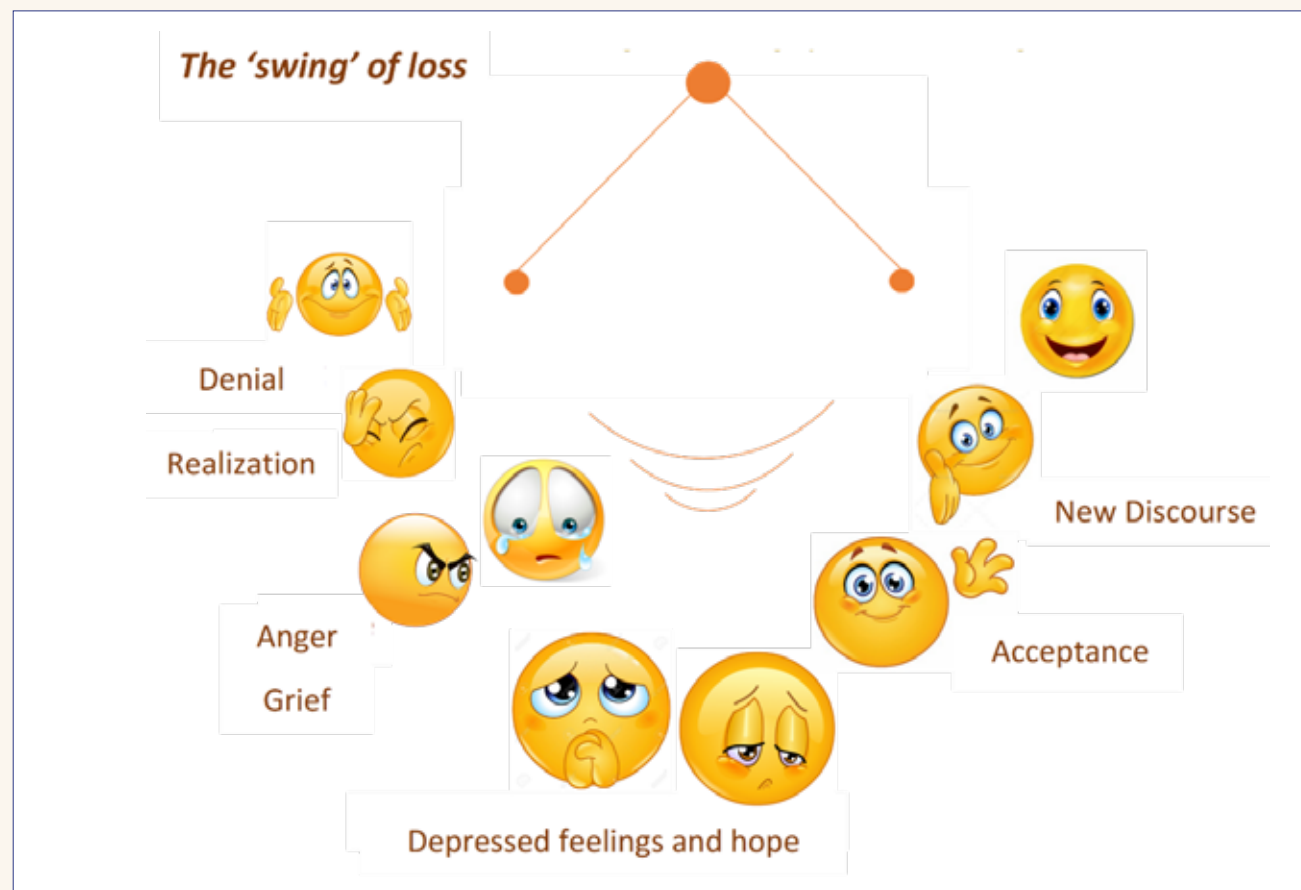


Figure 1. Inspired by the Coping model of Dr. Margaretha van Eeden. (Eeden van, 2012)

People experienced varying feelings of mourning at that time. The grief was about what was no longer or what could not be done, and the action could have been: wanting to do something or creating new possibilities (Jans-Kuperus, 2021). In a complex world, freedom and autonomy are increasingly threatened. There are several situations where you cannot influence a change, which might cause latency. Some

people withdraw, and others take action. In the next little experiment, you can also practice what happens when your routines suddenly break: imagine you go to work by car and start the motor every day around half past eight. You suddenly become aware of this routine when, on a certain morning, the motor will not start. In a flash, several feelings and thoughts are passing by: "No, this cannot be

happening, why now, I will try again". You could feel anger, or maybe shout, or something like that, and then... You could also have a little moment of 'depressed feelings': not knowing what to do and just sitting there, staring at the steering wheel... at last, you get out of your car and act in a solution-oriented way: probably you call a repair service to help, or something similar.

As you can see in Figure 1, a little morning process is underway and passes by quickly. It is a small example, with probably feelings of grief, but you can imagine that such processes pass by every time a routine breaks.

How to deal with broken routines as a supervisor or coach in professional guidance

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).

As a professional, you also develop routines. Based on your professional values and expertise (your role) and the organization you work for (your context), you know what needs to be done and what is expected of you. Your workplace facilitates material routines—such as your computer and desk in an office (or open-plan workspace). In addition, you have developed personal routines that contribute to your professional identity: the development that gives your practice its unique character (Ruijters, 2015).

In collaborating with others, you have developed social routines: chatting with a colleague about the weekend, brainstorming with another colleague about a problem. As you gain experience, your pro-

fessional actions become more naturally informed by that experience. Acting intuitively is automatic, making it easy to make mistakes that the brain may not notice. If something unexpected happens, your brain can adapt by focusing and giving its full attention to the task. However, if you were to do this for every action, you would become exhausted. Moreover, it is inefficient (Kahneman, 2018).

Therefore, it is essential for professionals to continuously reflect on their thoughts, emotions, and actions in order to remain aware of the routines they have internalized. By learning to recognize situations in which errors are more likely to occur, and by striving to prevent mistakes when the stakes are high (Kahneman, 2018), professionals can develop alternative forms of behavior—new routines—that enable them to act in alignment with what is ethically and professionally appropriate (Jans-Kuperus, 2023).

Another thing about professional routines is the sudden loss of obviousities: it touches the (professional) identity. It needs a reorientation on who you are as a person, related to your private life, but also on who you are as a professional, related to your colleagues at work. During the COVID pandemic, for example, professionals had to deal with a broken structure and broken routines, even in crucial professions. New roles and routines call for a different discourse, which is shaped by mourning feelings. Questions raised about the quality of the profession, related to personal experiences (Jans-Kuperus, 2021). The disruption of familiar routines and assumptions touches upon one's professional identity: who are you when you no longer have your own workspace, when you are at home due to illness, or

When your trusted team suddenly disappears?

A supervisee was very angry when we started the supervision session. She had argued with a colleague, who told her she had forgotten to give a patient his medication (that was actually correct). She focused on the colleague and disagreed with how she had behaved and with the way she had given her feedback. Then, other supervisees asked her what kind of colleague she was, whether the colleague reminded her of someone in her private life, and what that colleague should have done differently. The supervisee had no idea why she was so angry, because the feedback she gave was correct. The dialogue then shifted to expectations and beliefs. The question, "What do you think you had to do in your role?" made her sad and aware of her disappointment. She shared that she had applied for the job her colleague was hired for. She then realized that her anger stemmed from her expectations for that role. During a period when other colleagues were ill, she had naturally taken over the coordinating tasks. Nevertheless, when her colleague got the job, she had to let go of the responsibilities she had taken on so naturally.

As a professional coach or supervisor, I am 'the Swing' above the mourning process (figure 1). When supervisees, coachees, or clients experience feelings of loss, I listen, ask deeper questions, and connect with those feelings. Guidance for supervisees and coachees gains a deeper dimension when the loss of familiar structures affects their sense of professional

identity. Supervisees and coachees may feel uncertain about the consequences of unexpected external events. When such events break established routines, they can evoke a sense of lost autonomy.

On the other hand, I guide supervisees, coachees, or clients with finding a new discourse when they are in that phrase: I hold up a mirror to the supervisee or coachee, pose critical questions, and challenge them to experiment with different forms of action. I guide them in discovering what they find personally meaningful and help them place it in the context of what is professionally required and what the organization expects of them.

In my role as a professional guide, I consider it essential to acknowledge this loss first. Paying attention to disruptions in routines—especially when circumstances change suddenly—is important, as it allows professionals to feel recognized in their experience of loss. Subsequently, I find it valuable to explore with supervisees and coachees what lies within their sphere of influence and what they wish to change or are able to change in developing new routines (Jans-Kuperus, 2023).

Finally, we live in an age of permanent change. The future is unpredictable and incomprehensible. In other words, the world is in transition: we know we cannot return to the predictable, obvious past, but we do not know what lies in the unpredictable future. Some routines must be left behind because they no longer serve us, while new ways of acting are still unclear. In this liminal phase, it is important to stay connected and make conscious choices (Kramer, 2024).

As a supervisor or coach, your most important new discourse is to help create awareness of feelings of mourning triggered by sudden changes in routines. That needs a dialogue that allows space for expressing emotions, and a non-judgmental environment that encourages creative ideas and new ways of acting. ■

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Harvest time or catching the right fish

Stieneke Lucassen (The Netherlands)

Introduction

Since 2011, I have attended the ANSE Summer University (SU) several times, and one of the things that struck me more than once is the volatility of the impact. To me, SU has always been a safe space where I could explore my questions about supervision and coaching. But afterward came the everyday reality. That reality was often so demanding that translating insights into a new approach did not succeed. The overall topic of the 2025 Summer University in Munich was "An ocean of possibilities". This time, I had the pleasure of providing a workshop. My goal for this workshop was for participants to leave with a summary of the insights gained. Not only diving into the ocean of possibilities, but also or even mainly catching a wonderful fish.

The question, of course, was how the offering could be made?

Due to my personal experiences with visual art, I am convinced that art creates a deep connection between experiencing and processing. This belief is supported by the theory of art-based learning (See Box 1 below for further explanation). An additional assumption is that our personal values resonate in our professional approach (See Box 2 below). This conviction and this assumption formed the basis of the workshop, in which participants could reduce volatility in experiencing all aspects of the SU by

processing the experiences that form the strongest connections with their personal values. Therefore, the workshop needed to be scheduled at the end of SU25.

Abstract

This article zooms in on the possibilities of art-based-learning. The workshop method offered a way to connect someone's key values with the content of the ANSE Summer University program in Munich. It describes how the given assignments lead up to a deeply felt connection between these values and a personal question concerning professional issues. Besides that a brief look at the theory that supports this. It also refers to other ways of using art as a way of reflecting.

Box 1

Art as a means to reflect and to observe

In my research to provide this workshop with a more theoretical background, I found two points of view.

One is based on the assumption that art is a starting point from which people can broa-

den and deepen their observational skills. The other focuses on the idea that art can deepen reflections.

Both approaches stress that art makes a meaningful contribution to learning and coping. The first one, among others, is developed by the founders of Visual Thinking Strategies (<https://vtshome.org>). The general idea is that by observing works of art in small groups and discussing their findings with one another (without judgment), participants come to a more profound understanding of the work of art in particular and the world around us in general. It is used in all kinds of educational settings (from primary school to university).

Box 2

Bateson & Dilts

As a tool to embed values and an approach in participants' day-to-day practice, I briefly introduced the 6 logical levels as described by Bateson & Dilts (retrieved on 29-9-2025 from <https://mindsetexplained.com/the-6-logical-levels-by-bateson-dilts-explained/>). These levels are incorporated into neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Although NLP is not recognized as a scientific approach, Bateson & Dilts offer a model that can help identify the level at which someone wants to change, whether it is in the environment, in doing, improving skills, and so on

The three conditions underlying the workshop were that it be a safe space, that there be sufficient reflection time, and that the number of participants be limited. The workshop itself had the shape of a three-stage rocket. Firstly, the participants were invited to identify their key values. Secondly, they were invited to reflect on the connection between their personal values and the SU25 program. Lastly, they were invited to link a personal question concerning their profession with these reflections. During these three stages, art served as the connecting factor, as described below.

The workshop lasted 90 minutes twice. The first two stages took place before the break. The third stage after the break.

Preparations: I collected a large number of images of works of art that were free to use by participants. Also, large sheets of paper, glue, crayons, adhesive tapes, scissors, and so on—anything to stimulate artistic use.

Before the break, Stage One

Firstly, I stressed that the participants were the main characters in this workshop and that nothing was to be criticized by someone else, since the outcome reflected personal insights. Secondly, I handed over an assignment on visualizing personal values. Then I invited them to reflect on the values that mattered to them. For that, they received an overview of values to pick from, with added questions like "What if someone accuses you of acting oppositely to an important value? What kind of remark (about the way you act professionally) resonates and makes you blush and happy in the same moment?"

Of course, everybody was free to add their own words to describe their values. Simultaneously, I handed out a large piece of paper. Once participants had set their list of values, they started making a mind map with the key value in the center. And then the works of art that were already displayed came into play. Everybody chooses works of art that reflect general values and key values in particular. The mind-maps took shape. Some participants used soft crayons, others markers, some connected the different items with lines, others made drawings. After a while, everyone received an overview of the conference program, along with an invitation to connect their values with the program's content and the works of art. Before the break, the participants spent a quarter of an hour in pairs exchanging their mind maps, thoughts, and findings so far. Since the values and connections to the program were so personal, there was no need at that time to share the thoughts with the group as a whole.

After the break, Stage Two

The next step in the workshop was an assignment to reflect on the work done before the break and to think about a topic or question that might come up. The 6 logical levels of Bateson & Dilts (2025, further explained in Box 2) were introduced as an aid to focus on a more specific area. I urged them to take their time. So, after 10 minutes or more, I invited them to go back to the works of art and pick the one picture that appealed to them and answered their question. Once they had done so, they were asked to describe this work of art as precisely and as detailed as possible. This means they had to take a closer look and try to mention everything that could be mentioned. Not only the obvious in the foreground, but also the peculiarities and details in the background, and other aspects like brightness, atmosphere, etc. Once again,

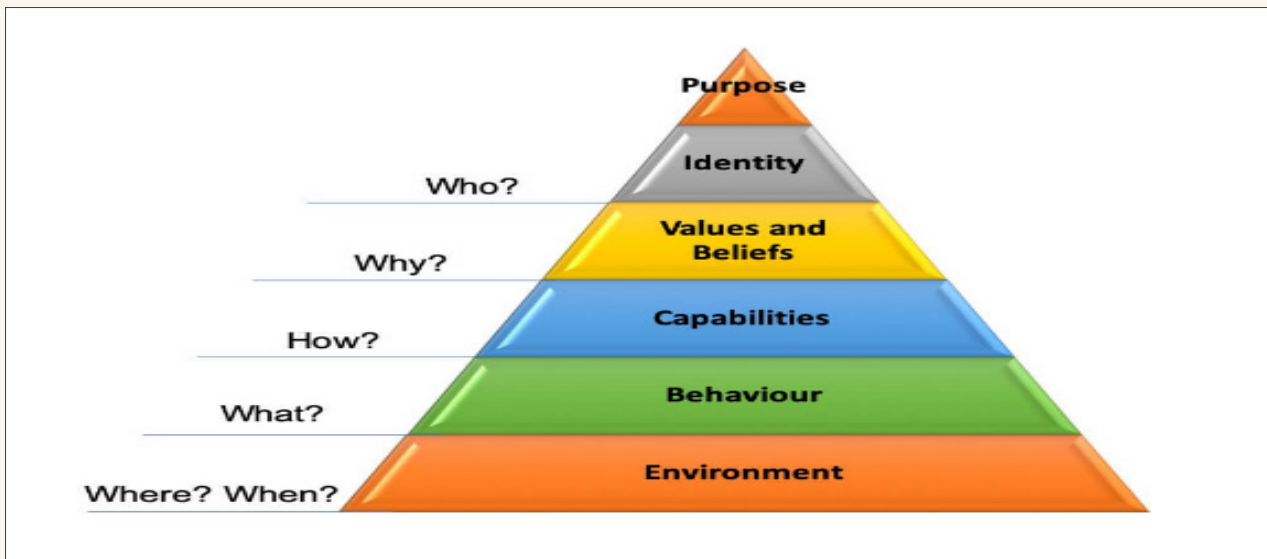


Figure 1. The 6 logical levels of Bateson & Dilts (<https://mindsetexplained.com/the-6-logical-levels-by-bateson-dilts-explained>)

they were urged to take their time. Some took the word 'describe' literally and mentioned everything on the mind map. Others made drawings.

And the last step, Stage Three

This was an invitation to let the work of art speak to them. This may sound floaty, new-agey, but this is how I, and many others with me, experienced it. All these actions were done in silence. I, being a facilitator, had to be silent too. This was challenging, as I wanted everyone to benefit from the space I offered and for the workshop to meet their expectations. What happened was that some participants were diligently working on their mind maps with crayons and pencils, while others sat in complete silence. One hour after the start, I invited the group to gather and to exchange what had happened during the session. But not after I stressed that there was no need to

exchange and that everybody was free to speak up. This is to keep up the safety I promised to guard.

Outcome at the end of the workshop and later that year

All participants stressed that they were happy they had participated, as the workshop had given them new insights. A few examples of what was said: "My question after the break was whether I should live according to my age, which looks like a colorless world, or whether I should live my life to the full". The answer she found was that, although she felt she needed more recovery time, she chose a colorful life.

Someone else explained that she picked a bright picture, a picture that really appealed to her. A picture she would normally never, never have chosen.



Figure 2. Example of the mind map (photo by Stienneke Lucassen)

It depicted a man dressed in a bright white shirt on a red background. It told her it was time to become more colorful and to take a stand. Maybe even fully engaging in discussions. Till now, she has strived for harmony in very different ways, as well in the choice of materials and colors in her clothes as in working as a team member. Never before had she considered this possibility. The participant's work has been photographed with permission.

The week after the conference ended, one participant let me know that she tried this approach with a group of German managers and that it worked well. Another mentioned that the mind-map was lying on the table and that she looked at it frequently. It was a rich harvest, she said, and a perfect ending of the week.

Later that year

In November 2025, I reached out to the workshop participants again by email. The idea behind this workshop was sustainable development. I was inte-

rested to know what happened after the workshop. How memorable was the whole experience? I asked them how their participation in the workshop has left its mark after three months. Five out of twelve participants replied. Two actually incorporated art into their work as coaches and supervisors. Most of them still had their mind maps in sight. One of them told about an outcome in her personal life: where she normally avoided confrontations, she now took her stand, and that felt good.

Conclusion

It was a privilege to offer this workshop to colleagues. For me personally, it strengthened my work as a trainer, counselor, and supervisor. As well in the actual work as in my accountability to my clients and colleagues. Since I value sustainability in the broadest sense, this art-based learning approach also helps sustain and strengthen people in their professional and personal lives. ■



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Against Routine

Towards an ethics of care

Sijtze de Roos (The Netherlands)

Abstract

Due to societal and organizational pressures, social workers are at risk of losing their ability to build supportive relationships with their clients and falling back on bureaucratic routines. In this article, the author argues for an ethics of care that may prevent such a relapse, provided it applies not only to social workers but also to the institutional, supportive, and management levels of social policy. This article is based on a lecture delivered at the annual Conference of Social Work in Riga, Latvia, on 27 March 2025.

Introduction

This article is an adaptation of the keynote 'Ethics of Care - Against Routine' I delivered on 27 March 2025 in Riga during the Annual Conference of Social Work 2025, dedicated to Ethics of Social Work: Relationships between People. A translated and further adapted version appears in the December 2025 issue of the Dutch Coaching Magazine.

In this article, dedicated to the ethics of social work, I aim to focus on what I consider the essence of an effective and humane social ethos: careful, sustainable relationships between people. The more complex society becomes and the more we are confronted with

disturbing social, political, and economic developments, the more human relations come under pressure, and the more social workers must increasingly focus on how to (better) interact with clients, especially those who are not easy to approach. And above all: how to help restore or rebuild social networks around all those who turn to them for support, help, and care. Not only is this relevant to social workers, but also to their trainers and supervisors. Next to those indirect functionaries, I also address social policy makers and social work management.

Given the existential threat of climatic collapse on the one hand, and the dangerously unstable geopolitical situation on the other, finding a just course of action is more essential than ever to sustain our societies. As such, it is of crucial importance to social workers, whose task essentially consists of supporting clients in repairing their broken relations with society. Pure pragmatism and instrumentalism have proven inadequate when addressing social problems. Social workers should not decide what is best for others; determining the best possible approach in any specific social situation is, by definition, a matter of relationships. What do they need to forge such relations?

We are seeking an ethics of care that supports and morally sustains individual social workers and social work at the institutional level. But before I can go into

that, I need to acknowledge the difficult, internally contradictory nature of social work.

Social work: tightrope walking without a safety net

Social work is a highly complex profession. Our (Western) economies are driven by the pursuit of infinite growth, rapid profits, output efficiency, and cost-effectiveness; drivers that severely affect social work. Relationships with clients, often difficult to establish on their own, are frequently compromised by limited finances and organizational efficiency demands.

In the Netherlands, social workers are regularly overburdened by excessive caseloads and constrained by ever-limited budgets. Time seems systemically scarce. Moreover, they can be partly influenced by medical, more specifically psychiatric, cultural characteristics, particularly in diagnostics. In forensic social work, certainly, patients are classified and diagnosed by psychiatrists or clinical psychologists and referred to social workers, who often have no choice but to adhere to the expert guidelines thus set out, usually without much input from the clients. This is bound to undermine the very essence of social work and force professionals to fall back on standardized treatment programs, prescribed methods, and bureaucratic routines. Such is the inherently precarious position of the social worker.

Be that as it may, there is a more fundamental reason behind the relapse into routines and unhelpful quick fixes no one really wants.

To clarify what I am aiming at, I refer to the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. He analytically distinguishes society into three interconnected spheres (1981). According to him, there is what he calls the 'life-

world', consisting of primary relationships, family life (or the lack thereof), and daily private life. In addition, there is the 'system world': the state, the economy, institutions, public and private organizations, laws, and labor regulations. In between lies the 'interference zone', where both worlds interact and influence each other. In this in-between zone, social work takes place, exhibiting characteristics of both the system and the lifeworld and forcing social workers into an uneasy balance. And all too often, there's no one to help them maintain this balance. In other words, social work is like walking a tightrope without a safety net.

Because social workers serve two masters, they mediate between these two very different worlds that uneasily converge - or even collide - around them, eroding even their self-image and professional identity. Their uneasy and contradictory social position forces the social worker to navigate the inescapable realities of limited resources, distributive justice, and systemic complexity. To quote the Dutch philosopher Andries Baart (In: De Roos, 2022): "Caught between the biting dog and the scratching cat, and systemically governed by organizational rules, routines, and prescribed methodologies, the social worker runs the risk of serving the system rather than the client, treating the problem and forgetting the person."

Given the sheer size of their caseload and the pull of bureaucratic demands, standard procedures and prescribed methodologies, it is not surprising that social workers, however reluctantly, too often have to rely on routine at the expense of their connections with clients. This situation harms the core of their work: the quality of their client relationships. 'Real people' are at risk of disappearing behind easily applicable labels, becoming categorizable 'cases' and being (mis)treated with mandatory quick fixes.

Clearly, this will not do. Again: what we seek is an ethics of care that can inform, strengthen, and support social workers.

Against Routine: Towards an Ethic of Care

We need an ethos that sustains and improves the quality of our relationships with clients, the client system, and each other. There is no ethics outside of relationships; it is within relationships that ethics are expressed. This is particularly important for social workers, as the quality of the relationship determines the quality of their services. And since these services depend on 'caring' for those who turn to them for support, it seems appropriate to speak of an ethic of care. Care is ethically the heart of social work.

What exactly do we mean by the term 'care'? Originally, care means sadness, grief, and fear. Extending this original meaning, care today denotes a mental state of active concern for others. There is some affinity with charity or even compassion, but that has a 'top-down' approach, thus reinforcing the basic asymmetry of all helping relations.

We must dig deeper. That's why I turn to the Canadian philosopher Joan Tronto. In her book *Moral Boundaries* (1993), she argues that care encompasses everything we do to maintain, continue, and restore our living environment, including that of our clients, so that we can all live as well as possible. Care embraces our entire being - body and soul - and our complete, sustained, and benevolent attention to all that lives on this earth. Politically, it requires us to help transform the current 'economy of wealth' into an 'economy of health'. Or, even more to the point: into an economy of care (see Jackson, 2009 & 2025)

This asks for more than simply dealing with the client's problems in an instrumental, methodical, and routine manner. Routine may have its rightful place in daily social work, but without a caring attitude, clients are existentially shortchanged. Care is not simply an act; it is a fundamental way of being that demands our full presence. An ethics of care implies an awareness of our common humanity, our shared vulnerability, and our existential equality. It also requires a keen awareness of the fundamental needs of all of us, including the client. We don't necessarily have to accept challenging behavior. But without acceptance of the 'other' as a person - however strange, disturbed, or influenced by circumstances he may be - there can be no supportive relationship.

A caring attitude is therefore inherently relational, based first and foremost on the understanding that clients are much more than a position in an asymmetrical relationship; they are our fellow human beings. And second, that we all need to be seen, accepted, and acknowledged to flourish, or even survive. We all deserve to be carried and held by one another, to be 'cared for'. This means being taken seriously, having an open relationship with one another, being listened to, and being supported when needed. No matter how different or strange in faith, skin color, gender, or behavior, when we see the 'other' as someone who is essentially like us, we see our own humanity in their eyes. This contributes to our human potential and, thus, to the quality of social work.

In conclusion: multilevel consequences

An ethic of care cannot apply solely to social workers. It would be utterly unfair - if not unethical - to burden them with such demanding morals while systemic pressures keep working against them. Ethics of care

have consequences at all relevant policy, institutional, and organizational levels. Policymakers, administrators, managers, teachers, and supervisors should realize that social workers also need and fully deserve to be carried and 'cared for', meaning they are taken seriously, carefully listened to, and fully supported. This requires caring, serving, and responsive management, as well as caring, serving, and responsive social policy.

Social work is a highly complex profession and will continue to walk a tightrope between conflicting demands and expectations. Yet, we must offer social workers a solid safety net, just as they, in turn, will offer their clients. This requires rather drastic changes in social policymaking and the management of social work. Social policy can no longer be formulated in isolation from daily practice and imposed from above. Clients—or client organizations—will have to be asked what they really need, and social workers must be consulted about the content, direction, and implementation of their daily practice. Managers in social work should learn to support rather than simply direct. This requires a fundamental shift in the basic attitude of all involved; a shift, to be sure, from regulating to relating. And that is exactly where supervisors and coaches can be of valuable assistance. Provided, of course, they themselves fully understand the relational mission of the ethics of care. ■

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A City of Possibilities

Objects in public space as metaphors in supervision

Ellen Budde (The Netherlands)

Abstract

Public spaces offer a wealth of possibilities for supervision. A specific environment or object can serve as a metaphor to explore and deepen the supervisee's issues. This article presents a theory of metaphor's functions, examples, and experiences from the SU workshop. There are several categories of metaphors, from accessible and general (e.g., a river or a park) to very specific (e.g., a statue or an artwork).

An environment or object must meet certain requirements. The choice of location or object, and who makes it, is a conscious intervention by the supervisor. This article explores all these possibilities and their impact on the supervisee and the process.

Introduction

Since I started as a supervisor in the 1990s, I have always used creative working methods. My workshop 'A City of Possibilities' at the Summer University Munich 2025 focused on using the public space in supervision.

I am pleased to contribute to this ANSE Journal about the workshop and my experiences at the ANSE SU 2025. It was a joy to be there again. How interesting it was to hear all the similarities and differences. To feel the sense of community and the joy in being a supervisor, and to discover the differences in working methods. I will come back to that later.

In the remainder of this article, I will use the terms supervisor and supervisee to also refer to coach and coachee.

Let us have a look at some examples from the workshop.

One workshop participant chose a cemetery as the location. For her, it served as both an outdoor setting and a metaphor for working through her personal issue. Together with two participants serving as supervisors, the supervisee took a walk through the cemetery near the conference venue. The cemetery's surroundings inspired reflection, contemplation, grief, and processing—an intense experience that led to deepening conversations between the supervisee and the supervisors.

For two other participants in the same workshop, a deeply rooted tree with branches, foliage, and ivy proved to be a meaningful metaphor, with variable starting points for exploring the topic of professional development. When I asked her if I could use the photo for this article, she replied positively and added, "Thanks again for the experience gained in your workshop; it was very important to me. I am trying to implement it in my practice."

By another pair, a statue of a bear was used as a metaphor. Here too, one took the role of supervisee and the other the supervisor. She explained: "The bear has been a symbol of what happened to me all week." These striking examples require further explanation.

The workshop 'A City of Possibilities'

The workshop spanned a whole day. The core of the workshop was to use a location or object outside the usual practice space, literally outdoors or inside a building, for the issue of the supervisee. The first part consisted of theory and exercises. In the afternoon, participants went outside in pairs to work out a question posed by the person who had taken on the role of supervisee, while the other took the role of supervisor.

The theory

But first....

This method is only suitable if the privacy of a practice space is not a prerequisite for the session with the

client. Only then does a carefully chosen environment offer the opportunity to explore and deepen a question in outdoor supervision.

The function of metaphors in the supervision process.

A metaphor is a form of imagery in which an image or word is used to represent a specific concept. For example, a journey, a path, or climbing a mountain. Metaphors can be used in supervision in various ways, such as through language, images, or settings. They can also be used to create a 'landscape' with symbolic objects. (Seto & Geithner, 2018).

The function of using metaphors in supervision is to reframe the supervisee's problem. This can provide new perspectives on the topic.

- *From abstract to concrete*
First, the issue is translated into a concrete image. Experiences and emotions become visible and understandable.
- *Creates space, distance, and safety*
While looking at an object or environment, space and distance offer the opportunity, as well as safety, to explore an issue indirectly.
- *Reframing*
A problem can be seen differently and reinterpreted through a metaphor, thereby creating a new meaning structure (Thompson, 2021).
- *Activates emotional and implicit knowledge*
Through exploration, supervisees often know more than they can initially formulate. New insights and perspectives can emerge (Passmore, 2022).

The city is rich in metaphors.

In every village or town, but also in nature, you can



Figure 1. Photos by the participants

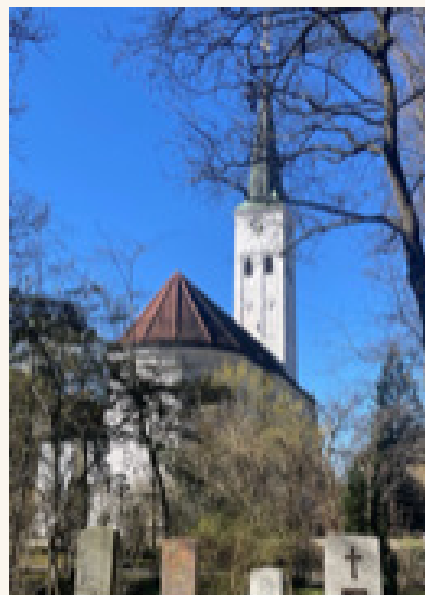


Figure 2. The church near the venue/
E.Budde

find places that are suitable as metaphors. Bridges, buildings, the varied surroundings of a park, a river, a gate, a statue, or a monument. Alternatively, indoors (if it rains): a monumental staircase, a museum, or a public library. You name it. I will highlight a few.

- *Global*

An accessible environment can be found in and around nature. It could be a park, a riverside, a meadow, or a forest. This environment is very suitable for starting or initiating a conversation. While walking or sitting on a bench, you might also notice specific objects and metaphors there, such as a narrow path, a tree, or an open space. Other global and accessible environments are, for instance, a harbor, an alley, or a large square.

- *Specific*

More specifically, it can be a building, a statue, or an artwork. A bridge can be a metaphor for connection or for a choice between two options. It can also be used during the closing supervision session. While reflecting on the completed process, the farewell comes at the end of the last session. Then everyone literally and figuratively goes in a different direction. Another example is a statue, which can be a good metaphor for an issue about professional identity or a personification of a specific person or subject. (Budde, 2025)

- *Outdoors*

Not all locations are suitable. I once went with the supervisee to a sculpture she had chosen as a metaphor for her self-image as a worker. It turned out to be on one of Amsterdam's busiest shopping streets.

We were sitting on a bench among shoppers

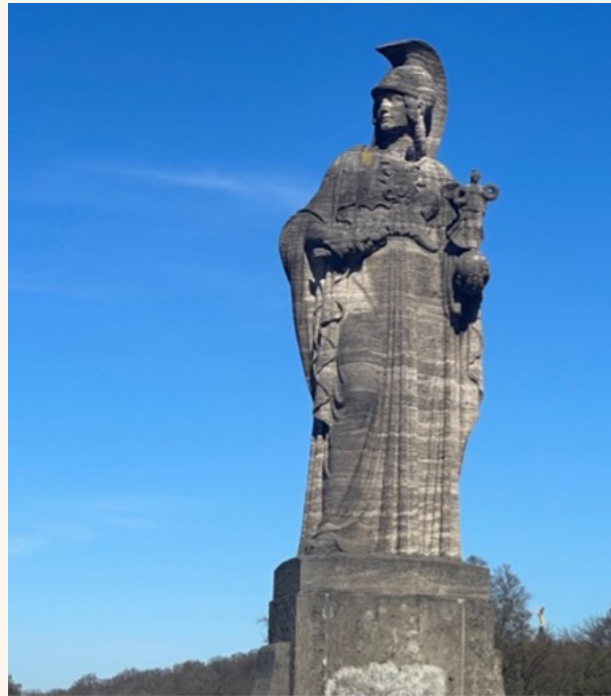


Figure 3. The statue of Pallas Athene at the river Isar/E.Budde

when a man approached us to sell us a newspaper subscription. Not a suitable spot. (Although this choice, in a busy area with many spectators, could also become a topic of discussion during supervision.) After some searching, we found a suitable spot with a view of the sculpture where we could still have the conversation about her issue.

- *Indoors*

A staircase in a hallway can be a wonderful metaphor for a process or a goal the supervisee wants to explore. Each section of the staircase can evoke a different feeling and reflection. The bottom of the stairs represents a different asso-

ciation than the middle or the very top. What is the supervisee experiencing? What obstacles are there, and what helps in the process? Furthermore, what happens at the very top, looking back on the journey taken?

The implementation

What should you keep in mind when taking your supervisee out into the world?

I have listed them for you: the choice and introduction of this working method, the do's and don'ts, and suitable and unsuitable locations.

Start and Introduction

Preparation by the supervisor

Ask the supervisee in advance what topic he or she wants to work on in the upcoming session. What will be the topic of the session?

The choice of an environment or object and who determines that choice is a conscious intervention by the supervisor in the process.

Is it the supervisor who chooses, or the supervisee? Who chooses the scenery (park, square, building, museum, and statue)? Who chooses the specific object? Alternatively, can you provide more options to choose from? Meet there or walk together to the object?

As is customary in our profession, this is a well-considered choice that fits into the process.

In the example of the statue in the busy street, I chose the statue as the subject, and the supervisee chose the specific sculpture. We met at the sculpture itself.

The supervisor does not always know in advance what the work issue will be, or it may have changed. In that case, you will have to make the choices at the beginning of the session.



Figure 4. Bridge over the river Isar in Munich/E.Budde

Preparation by the supervisee

Preparation is already a step in the process. Thinking about the item in supervision in advance is a good start.

If the supervisee chooses an environment or object, it requires intensive preparation. 'What statues are there in my city?' 'Which statue connects to my issue?' Pre-processing is important as a prelude to the session.

During the supervision walk

Supervision begins by going to the location itself. Take the time to look at the environment and the object. Feel the object's impact and talk about it in general. What do you see in form, character, and material? Name what you see and what stands out, and go from large to small in the conversation. From the environment to a specific object. What associations does it evoke? Where do you feel comfortable? Where do you feel tension?

Then connect with the supervising issue. What could

this spot or object mean? How does this relate to your supervision issue? What could it mean in your process?

Reflection

The last part of a session is for reflection. Step away from the spot, find a bench or a quiet place, and take time to reflect on what happened during the walk and being at the spot itself. How does it connect with the question and the situation at work? Furthermore, what does this mean for the follow-up of the work process?

Back to the workshop in Munich

In the afternoon, the pairs returned to the conference location after their outdoor supervising session and shared their experiences. Moreover, what a wonderful variety of stories and conversations that was! For example, two participants who started with a walk through the city considered using a traffic light as a metaphor but found it unsuitable. Ultimately, they developed the issue through a river metaphor and had a deepening conversation.

The do's and don'ts,

A public space or object should be...

- *Metaphorical.*
Many objects can serve as metaphors; even seemingly small or unassuming objects are useful. For example, a gate you have to go through. It can represent the transition to a new area, a transformation, or a new challenge. Is the gate open or closed? Does it open easily? What do you find on the other side?
- *Quiet.*
Places with lots of people are distracting and not really suitable.

- *Attractive.*
The appeal lies mainly in the choice and suitability of the location. If it aligns with the topic of the supervision, an object gains that appeal.
- *Accessible.*
When you have to put in too much effort to get somewhere, you lose momentum. (Unless that becomes the topic of the supervision!)
- *Ad random?*
Just start walking; it might be an opportunity, but it can distract from the conversation. Finding a random object is only recommended if, for example, 'searching' or 'making choices' is or will be the topic of the session.

Individually or in a group?

Going out with the supervisee is primarily focused on an individual process. However, it is also possible to



Figure 5. Gate of the event venue KSH Munich/E.Budde

carry out multiple assignments in groups.

This works well with a shared theme, such as 'What is my topic for supervision?', 'saying goodbye,' or 'letting go'. Supervisees go out individually or in pairs to find an environment or object that serves as a suitable metaphor, and discuss its meaning for the supervisee's issue. Upon returning, each person shares what happened outside.

Nevertheless, for various individual issues in the group, a deepening discussion can also take place outside.

Here, too, choosing a topic and a metaphor beforehand can bolster the process.

The museum

There are several suitable working methods for outdoor group supervision. I want to highlight one in particular. This method is based on art-based learning and takes place in a museum. Budde, E. (2024). This could be a contemporary art museum, but another museum is also suitable. The choice is up to the supervisor. This method has three rounds.

- *Formulating the question*

In the museum hall, the supervisees are asked to formulate an individual supervision issue. What is my challenge? How can I take the next step? What prevents me from...? How can I deal with...?' With this specific question in mind, everyone walks through the exhibition room or rooms. This round takes around 15 minutes. The supervisor remains in the hall, so a supervisee can return at any time if necessary. After 15 minutes, everyone returns to the starting point and shares which artwork resonated most with them.

- *Explore and deepen the question.*

In the next 15-minute round, the supervisor asks everyone to return to that specific artwork and engage in a dialogue with it. Just begin the conversation about the issue and the artwork, as it were, talks back to you. What does the artwork tell the supervisee? How does the conversation proceed?

- *Reflection on the process*

In the third and final round, the supervisor and supervisees walk together as a group to each artwork, and each supervisee discusses their choice of artwork and what happened during the dialogue. These are often emotional moments. In the ensuing discussion, the supervisees and the supervisor explore the meaning of this artwork together. How does this relate to the supervisee's theme and work questions, and how can they move forward? Then the group moves on to the next artwork.

And now for the differences

In my workshop, I based my work on Dutch supervision practice. In that practice, supervisees usually write a reflective report after their supervision session, in which they also indicate what they want to discuss in the next supervision session. This report is sent to the supervisor (and, in group supervision, also to the co-supervisees) before the next meeting. The supervisor takes this reflection into the preparation. This allows her or him to think in advance about a setting or object as a metaphor for the upcoming supervision session.

In my workshop, I also assumed that, in practice, the work issue was known in advance. However, none

of the participants, other than my fellow compatriots, were familiar with the use of reflective reports and issues for the next meeting. There was surprise, but also agreement with this Dutch approach. Two participants noted that they would very much like to implement this in their program, but that their university of applied sciences would certainly not agree...

Finally

This example demonstrates once again how important it is for professionals to engage in and maintain (international) dialogue with each other. We learn so much from discussing these differences! That is also the power of an international conference: besides inspiring and interesting workshops and lectures, the conviviality and sense of community, and, last but not least, the fun.

So I look forward to seeing you at ANSE SU 2027 in Iceland!

I hope this article inspires you to use the public space in supervision or coaching.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this or other topics further, please feel free to contact me. I would be happy to speak with you.

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Supervision as a sounding board for sustainable development and coaching

What new questions do we want to ask in order to work on sustainability? How can we use the concept of 'Theme-centered interaction', TCI and findings from transformation research for our supervision?

Jochen Spielmann (Germany)

Abstract

Thesis: As supervisors, we can effectively support transformation processes by asking different questions or asking questions in a different way.

As supervisors, we are both affected by the transformation and co-creators of it. In my view, we need to both understand the complexity of the comprehensive changes and reduce them for our work in order to be able to deal with them. Building on the findings of transformation research, we can ask new questions in our supervision processes. These new questions can be asked in a structured way using the concept of 'Theme-centered interaction' (TCI).

"VUCA" and "BANI" can be used to describe current social developments

For several years now, various attempts have been made to use acronyms to gain a better understanding of current political, economic, ecological, and socioeconomic developments. In the 1990s, the term VUCA first appeared in the US Army before being adopted by companies and universities. "VUCA" is an acronym that stands for "volatility," "uncertainty," "complexity," and "ambiguity." In his article "Facing the Age of Chaos," published in 2020, Jamais Cascio introduced the acronym "BANI", which has since partially replaced the use of "VUCA." 'BANI' stands for "brittle," "anxious," "non-linear," and "incomprehensible." Although both acronyms are inherently simplistic, they are suitable for use in supervision to identify current phenomena. (What has become fragile/brittle? What no longer works? What no longer functions? Which developments make us anxious? What do we experience as no longer linear? What is incomprehensible to us?)

What is meant by 'Sustainable Development' and by 'Transformation'?

Die The United Nations describes: „Sustainable development is how we must live today if we want a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs. The survival of our societies and our shared planet depends on a more sustainable world.

It's a bit of a juggling act. Three different balls must be kept in the air at once: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. If one or two fall to the ground, the act is over. An economy might grow rapidly, for instance – but only for so long if most people remain poor and all the natural resources are used up.

Where development is sustainable, everyone has access to decent work, quality health care and education. Natural resource use avoids pollution and permanent losses to the environment. Public policy choices ensure that no one is left behind due to disadvantages or discrimination" <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2023/08/what-is-sustainable-development/>

The trinity of economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection now forms the basis for transformation processes in many countries.

Transformations can be understood as fundamental and long-term changes affecting society as a whole. These changes involve cultural, social, technological, economic, infrastructural, and production- and consumption-related changes in various sectors and systems of society (including climate, energy, mobility, IT, AI, nutrition, migration, and education).

Sustainability or sustainable development means that we must not consume more resources here and now than can be regenerated or newly created. Transformation must now be conceived and implemented even more radically: we must give back more than we take.

Every transformation is a long-term learning and searching process that lasts many years and involves a great deal of uncertainty. According to philosopher Eva von Redecker (2023), social transformations do not primarily become reality through the abolition of social orders, but also and above all through the exchange of social practices. She understands transformation less as a break and more as a change that creates the new through and from the interstices of the old. Repair can begin in these fragile spaces within the existing order through 'processes of successive exchange' of practices that are no longer functional.

In recent years transformation research has produced a number of important findings. Kora Kristof (2020) has developed "patterns of successful change processes" from this, some of which are listed here:

1. Visions and goals as orientation
2. "Visions, mission statements, and narratives of a positive future are an important source of energy for change agents and an attractive anchor for the target group." (Kristof, p. 29, 2020)
3. Recognizing trends and triggers
4. "Sometimes change is based purely on chance. Often, however, problems, suffering, crises, coercion, tipping points, or even attractive alternatives and visions are the triggers for change." (Kristof, p. 31, 2020)
5. Combining different time logics
6. Ecological challenges require rapid change, while social change takes a long time. The challenge is to find a balance. (Kristof p. 32, 2020)
7. Start small: niches, experimental spaces, and pilot projects
8. Test initial steps in manageable contexts, gather experience, and build acceptance. (Kristof p. 37, 2020)
9. Combine innovation with exnovation / phase-in and phase-out
10. Introduce new systems and solutions (innovation) while dismantling old, unsustainable structures (exnovation). (Kristof p. 38, 2020)
11. Take resistance seriously and use it to your advantage
12. Don't see resistance as an obstacle, but as an opportunity for reflection, adaptation, and improvement of processes. (Kristof p. 40, 2020)
13. Manage complexity, uncertainty, and dynamics
14. Since change processes usually take place in complex, interactive systems, it is important to deal with non-linearity, path dependencies, time delays, and unpredictability. (Kristof p. 48, 2020)
15. Respond to uncertainty and unpredictability
16. Building trust is an essential response to dealing with uncertainty. This also includes networks and networks that provide guidance and support. (Kristof p. 54, 2020)
17. Use patterns, design and navigation approaches
18. Absorb implicit knowledge and experience from other processes; recognize systematic patterns; develop navigation strategies to steer through change (e.g., iterative approach). (Kristof p. 57, 2020)

What is „Theme-Centred Interaction“, TCI?

Theme - Centred Interaction, TCI is a theory and practice for shaping social situations in such a way that

- each individual, with their different skills, needs, and desires
- in interaction with others
- can work on a task or goal

- taking into account the framework conditions and the globe, in such a way that
- sustainable results can be achieved in a humanistic process. (Figure 1)

With TZI, it is possible to

- analyze, conceptualize, plan, implement, and reflect on specific aspects of the world

- (= social situations)
- in order to achieve results at the micro, meso, and macro levels that are both person- and issue-related as well as cooperation-oriented and globally relevant,
- by dynamically balancing influencing factors, setting topics, designing structures,
- controlling the process, and promoting trust,
- in order to shape our world in such a way that both present and future living beings can shape and further develop life.

TZI works with five factors/perspectives

- Personal, individual perspective - I's personal development - HR
- Factual, technical perspective (tasks, content) - It project development
- Contextual perspective - globe organizational development
- Social, interactive perspective - We team development
- Management and leadership perspective - Leadership development

The TZI concept can be used to support both search processes and change processes. TZI can be used to link issues of personal development, team development, project development and organizational development. In my view, transformation processes can only be shaped by linking these development projects.

TZI can also be used to scale social situations from micro to meso to macro and vice versa: situations involving individuals, small groups, large groups, committees, organizations, etc.

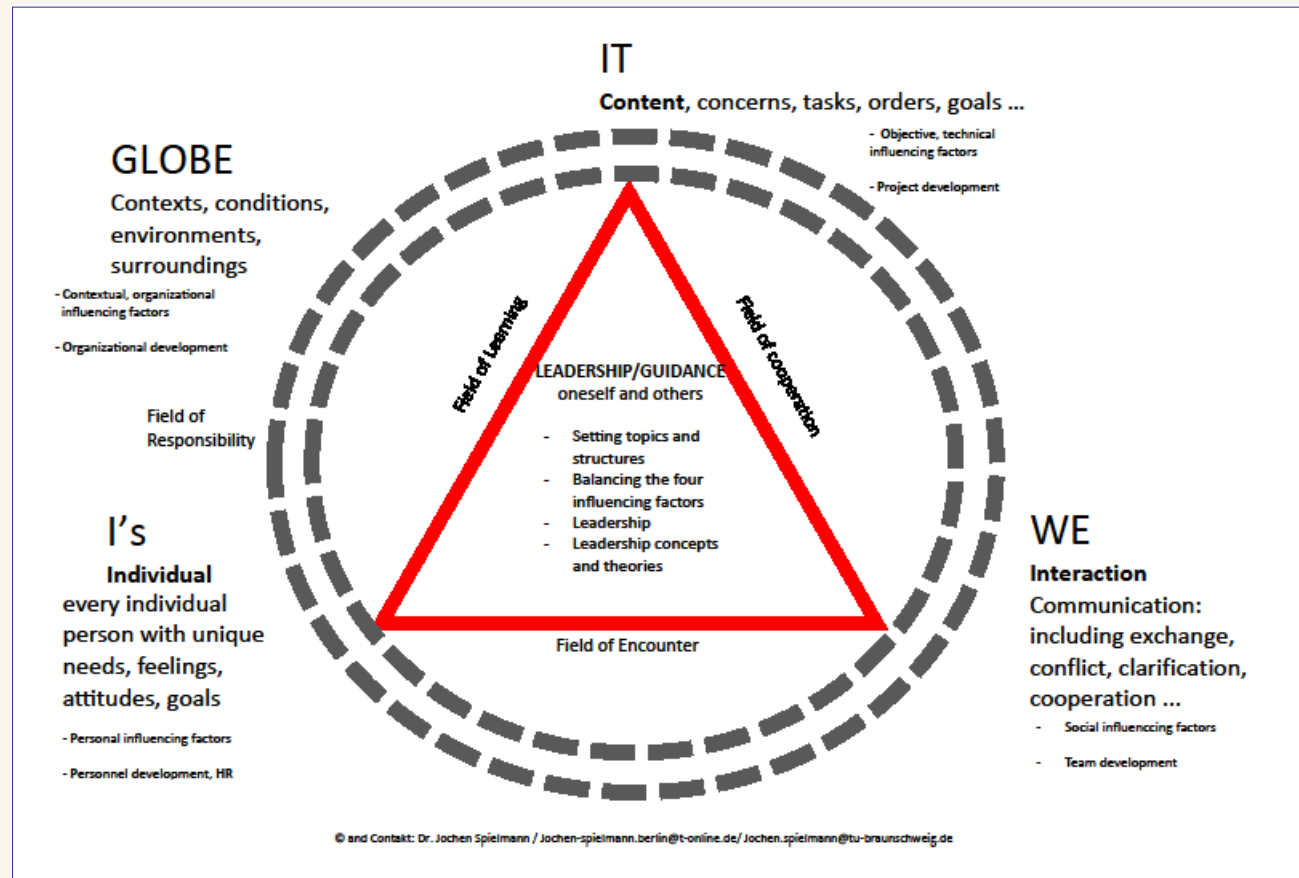


Figure 1. Theme-Centered Interaction (Spielman, 2025)

The TZI concept can be used on several levels For:

- analyzing the current situation (perception, interpretation, diagnosis)
- developing ideas and courses of action for the here and now (target situation)
- conceptualizing ideas that promote confidence (utopias, visions)

In my supervision processes, I use the descriptions behind the acronym "BANI" and the findings of transformation research to accompany individuals as well as groups, teams, and committees on their path to sustainable development. I base my structure on the concept of TCI. Therefore I use the five Perspectives: "Personal, individual perspective - I's"; "Social, interactive perspective - We"; "Contextual perspective - globe"; "Factual, technical perspective (tasks, content) - It" and the "Management and leadership perspective - Leadership". Below, I have formulated a few questions that can be used and developed further.

Questions supervisors can ask to promote sustainability through transformation

Personal, individual perspective - I's

The following questions deal with influencing factors that determine the perceptions and actions of individuals.

What is the current situation? / Perception and analysis of the current state

- Where do you experience disruptions or unpredictability (brittleness) in your work?
- How do you deal with uncertainty or anxiety in your work?
- What values and attitudes do you hold when external structures become unstable or incom-

prehensible?

- What do you repair in order to use it longer?
- What are you currently giving up in order to contribute to sustainability?

What can you do? / Developing goals and measures

- What specific changes would you like to make in your everyday work to act more sustainably—socially, economically, or ecologically?
- How can you strengthen your own resilience? (e.g., emotional regulation, analytical skills, self-efficacy, responsibility, network orientation, solution orientation, future orientation)
- How can you encourage other individuals to start their own search processes here and now?
- What might utopias and visions that guide action look like?
- What kind of future do you want – for yourself, for your work, for the world you live in?
- If you imagine a sustainable, just society, what role would you like to play in it?
- How would your work feel if it were in harmony with social, economic, and ecological sustainability?

Social, interactive perspective - We

The following questions deal with social influencing factors, opportunities, and formats for interaction and communication.

What is the current situation? / Perception and analysis of the current state

- How do you create spaces where fear, ignorance, and doubt are also allowed?
- How do you support each other in order to remain capable of acting?
- What formats of exchange, cooperation, and col-

laboration do you currently use?

- What changes have you or your team successfully mastered in the past? Which formats helped?
- How do you design search processes together with others?
- How do you currently promote an open culture of error and shared learning?
- What search movements do you perceive? (Individual, collective, organizational)

What can you do? / Developing goals and measures

- What could joint search processes look like?
- How can you recruit allies for your cause? (Agenda setting)
- Where can you start to make your routines, communication channels, or decision-making processes more sustainable?
- What shelters of protection and hope (spaces for growth) would you like to build together with others? (whether mentally or with real materials)
- What processes of gradual exchange can be designed together? (in five, ten, ... years)
- What can be repaired together in the future? (jointly, organizationally)
- How can learning be designed?
- What can you try out (formats, processes, methods, tools, etc.) to act more sustainably—even if you don't yet know whether it will succeed?
- What formats do we perceive that promote the idea of "Homo Cooperativus"?

What might utopias and visions that guide action look like?

- What visionary formats do you want to be talking about in five years?
- How do you want your sustainability agenda to

- be perceived? (Agenda setting)
- What spectacular event do you want to be known for?
- How have you communicated the symbols, images, or metaphors that express the future vision of your team, committee, or organization?

Contextual perspective – Globe

The following questions deal with perceiving and changing influencing factors, contexts, and organizational relationships.

What is the current situation? / Perception and analysis of the current state

- What has become fragile/brittle in your environment? (Which practices, procedures, processes are no longer helpful?)
- Which events/decisions are no longer comprehensible to you?
- What different time logics and path dependencies do you experience in your organization?

What can you do? / Development of goals and measures

- How can you sensitize your organization and your environment to the fact that sustainability is part of your professional responsibility?
- How can you contribute to building or developing a culture of trust?
- How can you reflect what you learn back into your larger systems (institutions, municipalities, professional networks)?
- What steps will help to change practices, procedures, and processes here and now? – What might a pilot project look like? (with neighbors, among friends, at work)

- Which partners or networks can support you on the path to greater sustainability?

What might utopias and visions that guide action look like?

- How do you imagine a society that is truly sustainable—socially just, ecologically responsible, and economically viable?
- What role do organizations such as the one you work for play in this?
- What partnerships, networks, or political frameworks would be a given in this future?
- What would a world look like in which your work might no longer have to “repair” things, but instead enable preventive good?

Factual, technical perspective (tasks, content) – It

The following questions deal with influencing factors, assignments, tasks, and content in such a way that they enable transformation.

What is the current situation? / Perception and analysis of the current state

- Where do you feel that your work systems (e.g., financing, bureaucracy, organization) no longer meet current challenges?
- How do social, economic, and ecological changes specifically affect your clients or target groups?
- What sustainable goals does the organization you work for want to achieve?
- For which tasks, practices, and procedures are you currently designing a gradual exchange? (Nutrition, mobility, etc.)
- What new ideas do you perceive (e.g., well-being instead of prosperity)?

What can you do? / Development of goals and measures

- How can you work with others to develop alternative scenarios and solutions?
- How can you design your work in such a way that it combines social justice, ecological responsibility, and economic viability?
- Which ideas, approaches, examples, concepts, models, etc. of transformation appeal to you so much that you want to implement them here and now? (e.g. develop and share narratives and examples of success)
- What trends / developments / changes are emerging?

What might utopias and visions that guide action look like?

- What might your work look like if it were consistently geared toward sustainability—social, economic, and ecological?
- Which needs of people or communities would you then be particularly well placed to meet?
- What would a “sustainable success story” look like in concrete terms in your field of work?

Management and leadership perspective – Leadership (balancing the various influencing factors)

The following questions deal with influencing factors and how managers can continually rebalance the factors mentioned above.

What is the current situation? / Perception and analysis of the current situation

- How do you involve stakeholders? (different actors)
- How do you currently reconcile all these influencing factors?

- How do you manage to maintain a productive balance between stability and change?
- What do you need as a manager to act autonomously and at the same time connected?

What can you do? / Development of goals and measures

- How do you currently reconcile all these influencing factors?
- How can you promote, support, and accompany the resilience of others?
- How can you encourage others to look for examples of success?
- How can you control, guide, and accompany processes?

What might utopias and visions that guide action look like?

- What images of a livable future do you use to inspire your employees and colleagues?
- What examples of successful transformation do you share? (Examples can be found at <https://sdgs.un.org/>)

Conclusion

Transformation means a fundamental change in values, worldviews, and practices. Supervision can create spaces in which individuals, teams, committees, and organizations can reflect on and further develop their own values, attitudes, and questions of meaning. Supervisors help people deal with uncertainty, ambiguity, and ignorance. Supervision can help people tolerate paradoxes instead of resolving them. Supervision promotes a culture that accepts ambivalence as part of the process. New practices emerge where experimental, protected spaces ("real-world laboratories," "living labs") are created. Supervision

itself can become such a "space for transformation." It can support individuals, teams, committees, and organizations in locating the meaning of their work in the larger social context and making power relations visible. Sustainable transformation is a process of collective self-efficacy. Supervision promotes the ability to envision alternative futures and contributes to the perception of self-efficacy.

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Doubtful Supervision

On the inherent political potential of a critical practice

Carsten Henning (Germany)

Abstract

Supervision unfolds in doubt. As a practice propagating critical self-reflexivity, it aims to question the very conditions in which it is embedded. While the potentially resulting paradox can be seen as one of the defining traits of supervision, it remains paradoxical in and by itself: every attempt to resolve tensions inevitably generates new ones. This paper argues the potential resourcefulness of this phenomenon and how to access it as a supervisor via modeling critical self-reflexivity through cultivating doubt. Examples for choices of methods (e.g. The Hero's Journey), concepts (e.g. Team Phases or Theme-Centered Interaction), or settings (supervision in dyads or groups) are presented to illustrate the potentially constructive doubtfulness of our decisions as supervisors. Any intervention positions itself within fields of tensions that point back to the conditions they represent and are shaped by. Thus, supervision cultivating critical self-reflexivity is inherently a political practice. From that vantage point, the struggles over ethics of supervision and its status as a profession may be in need to be readdressed on their paradoxical ground.

Framing doubt

While holding the reflective space of supervision, sensations of incongruence (Antonovsky 1997) mark phenomenological entry points into the inquiry of one's own supervisory practice. Subtly but decisively, they signal disturbances in the alignment between what we expect and what we encounter, between what we believe we know and what presents itself in practice. These lived incongruences manifest as hesitations in perception, judgment, or action, prompting the supervisor into working with the self (Bachkirova 2022) to model self-reflexivity by cultivating the potential of doubt. This must therefore be considered a primary resource in supervision, since its accompanying ambivalence signals possible alternative perspectives.

Supervisors giving in to the seductive power of self-congruent certainties limit the resourcefulness that comes from remaining with doubt. Experiencing of doubt can be differentiated in several forms. It may appear as ambiguity, when meaning remains open; as dilemma, when decisions demand sacrifice; as contradiction, when claims exclude each other; as paradox, when opposites prove simultaneously valid; or as double bind, when no available move preserves coherence. Each of these forms is rooted in the same

phenomenological marker: the felt incongruence of what we think we know with what emerges in relational practice.

To engage doubt in supervision, then, is to recognize that professional learning and development might be furthered by the deliberate cultivation of such incongruencies (Koller 2023). In this view, self-doubt represents an opening to alternate views. Through it, supervision initiates interactional processes of dialogically appreciating multiple perspectives, weighing their relational viabilities, and inquiring into their implications. That way, supervision unfolds as a co-constructive political and ethical practice. By modeling such critical self-reflexivity, supervisors acknowledge the lack of an Archimedean point of ultimate security for any of our professional perspectives and decisions. Even carefully chosen methods carry structural implications, stabilizing some patterns while marginalizing others. Preferred concepts frame dynamics in particular ways, making certain meanings visible while obscuring alternatives. Any selected setting, however fitting it appears, excludes developmental potentials by virtue of its boundaries and institutional embedment.

This paradoxical stance resonates with theoretical traditions relevant for supervision: Systems theory (Luhmann 1997) reveals the paradox of self-reference, risking collapse into formal closure. Radical constructivism (von Glasersfeld 1997) insists on impossibility of truth, thereby inviting epistemological relativism. Existentialist psychotherapy (2010) grounds reflection in lived finitude, struggling with limits of justification. Negative dialectics (Adorno 2000) calls attention to the non-identical, sustaining critique by refusing reconciliation for the price of permanent tension.

From a meta-perspective, synergetics (Schiepek & Haken 2010) offer a way of holding these differences together without erasing them. They do so by tracing how dynamics of order and disorder, stability and imbalance, emerge and transform across contexts, describing the oscillating fields of tension between attractors and their framings.

Seen in this light, supervision is a performative practice that constantly reproduces and reshapes its own conditions through its methods, concepts, theories, and settings. What we think we know, and the decisions we make on that basis, are already the outcome of choices that could have been otherwise. Supervisors working with doubt (i.e. paradox and its siblings) keep open this generative potential of imbalance. Congruence offers orientation, stability, and relief, easily concealing the tensions and exclusions through which it is achieved. Supervision, therefore, is called to hold this balance: to value moments of coherence without allowing them to close off the incongruence that makes reflection possible. In this way, imbalance is cultivated as the very medium in which supervision realizes its professional, ethical, and political significance.

Doubtful methods

Methods in supervision facilitate reflection while shaping the ways challenges are framed, responsibilities are distributed, and developmental processes are narrated. For example, the Hero's Journey (Campbell, a popular narrative model of transformation, structures development as an individualized quest. Applied in supervision, such narrative framing can have immediate benefits: it provides a familiar storyline, gives coherence to experiences of struggle, and motivates supervisees to recognize potential for personal

growth. Yet paradoxically, by casting transformation in the figure of an individual hero, it shifts responsibility away from collective and contextual dimensions. The hero relieves a group, an organization, or the wider system or society of engaging with their own entanglements. Development appears as the task of a single person, while the conditions that necessitate such transformation both remain unexamined and become formative for the elevated status of hero and mentor (i.e. supervisor).

What results is a performative paradox: supervision (re)generates mechanisms it seeks to interrogate. Via method it enacts the very delegation and systemic relief it could make visible and problematize. In this sense, a hero's journey only enables partial reflection since it simultaneously narrows the horizon of what can be reflected upon. Recognizing this paradox invites the potential of critical self-reflexivity. On this basis supervisors may cultivate readiness to doubt their methods' seeming congruences and motivational clarities. Then, questioning their incongruences turns the paradoxical dilemma into a resource. Critical doubt makes the double nature of methods productive.

Doubtful concepts

Concepts of group processes suggest manageability for supervision. Yet such concepts, e.g. Tuckman's team phases (Tuckman 1965; 2001) or Cohn's Theme Centered Interaction (TCI) (Cohn 2000), carry implicit assumptions, structural blind spots, and normative orientations which risk obscuring the paradoxes they aim to illuminate. Doubting such concepts means remaining open to dealing with the challenges they tend to conceal.

Tuckman's concept of group development directs group dynamics into a process towards functional maturity. The appeal lies in its simplicity and its reassuring orientation for progress. With origins in military research, its underlying logic conceives conflict as a transitional disruption that must be overcome so a group can achieve effective performance to reach set goals that externally have been set as desirable. This reduces conflict as the constitutive dimension of group processes to a temporary obstacle in need of directional overcoming: reflection is aimed at adjustment while structural or power-related issues are rendered invisible. Thus, without doubt, Tuckman's phases provide orientation, but they do so by suppressing the generative potential of ambivalence.

Cohn's TCI conceptualizes group processes as balancing tensions within a frame. Their core logic is relational equilibrium maintained by integrating disturbances. While this resources dialogically the potential of conflict, it cannot escape the need for pragmatic handling. The facilitator thus wields considerable discretionary power in deciding which disturbances to address, when, and how. Their authority to decide when and how to enforce the norm to give which disturbances precedence over others can easily reinscribe subjective biases, veil structural paradoxes, or even reinforce hidden agendas. The normative assumption that addressing disturbances is inherently constructive risks masking the questions of authority embedded in dealing with them. Thus, while TCI emphasizes balance and openness, it needs to cultivate doubt regarding obscured facilitator authority and power.

These models demonstrate how group concepts reproduce paradoxical dilemmas. Awareness of them

opens resourceful paths for self-reflection. Supervisors who doubt the congruence of the concepts they employ remain attentive to what those concepts conceal. Working with paradox allows supervision to unfold in the space between illumination and obscurity.

Doubtful settings

Both individual and group settings open specific possibilities for reflexivity to unfold during supervision. Simultaneously, they obscure or constrain others, e.g. individual supervision protects via isolation, while group supervision exposes via encounter.

The security of the dyadic exclusiveness in individual supervision allows differentiated attention on a single person's experiences to dialogically foster their critical self-reflection. It provides space to explore uncertainties, vulnerabilities, and professional blind spots. Yet this closeness paradoxically risks individualizing systemic contradictions, reframing structural pressures as personal issues. Dyadic proximity invites trust, but it narrows focus and can even create dependence. What feels empowering may become adjustment to existing structures, thereby stabilizing them.

Group supervision expands the horizon of critical self-reflexivity. Its participants recognize shared challenges and can engage with a multiplicity of perspectives that reveal blind spots which might remain invisible in the dyad. Group supervision is thus equipped to generate resonance, solidarity, or mirroring effects, and since diverging experiences and positions cannot easily be harmonized, it will invite the potential of doubt. The corresponding tensions result from perceived social risks: supervisees may



feel pressure to perform, conform, or withhold contributions out of fear of judgment. Group processes can foster solidarity, but they may just as easily produce silence or exclusion. Moreover, the structures that give orientation to group supervision can become ritualized, offering predictable routines but losing critical edge. As a result, group supervision cultivates polyphony but risks reproducing dynamics of dominance, conformity, or marginalization.

In a sense, the dyad and the group exemplify complementary supervisory dynamics. Supervisors who approach each setting with reflexive awareness cultivate doubt about their apparent congruences and work with the imbalances they may conceal. In this

way, the setting itself becomes part of the reflective field: a medium through which supervision reveals both its possibilities and its limits.

Doubtful Contexts

Team supervision takes place within the very organizational context in which the participants collaborate daily. This overlap makes it a particularly challenging setting. Conflicts that are voiced in supervision may immediately affect everyday cooperation, trust, and role clarity. The presence of hierarchies adds further weight: (potentially future) managers and subordinates may find themselves in the same room, which structures every contribution and might limit what can be said openly. Supervisees are bound by organizational loyalty and may hesitate to disclose critique for fear of being perceived as disloyal or undermining the unit. Since what is spoken in team supervision can have direct consequences for organizational life, costs of candor can be existentially high.

Supervisors are deeply entangled in these dynamics (Oevermann 2010). Commissioned and paid by the organization, they are expected to invite critical self-reflexivity for employees while simultaneously being aligned with organizational expectations. Their role oscillates between serving the group's needs and fulfilling the interests of the commissioning structure. This dual loyalty can blur boundaries and limit their willingness to openly doubt, since they themselves are subject to organizational constraints. Thus, while organizations send their teams to supervision to sustain professionalization, this very organizational embeddedness of both participants and supervisor structurally restricts the required openness by magnifying role conflicts.

Supervision in training contexts is equally marked by structural restraints, albeit of a different kind. Here, supervision serves not only as a reflective practice but also as an educational instrument. Participants are always aware that their engagement is embedded in processes of assessment and certification, so the space can never be fully experienced as safe. The supervisor embodies a modeling paradox: every intervention is taken both as support for reflexivity and as an implicit instruction in how supervision should be practiced. At the same time, learners are in the fragile process of professional identity formation. Their uncertainty about who they are becoming as professionals often leads them to engage in impression management and self-protection rather than in authentic self-disclosure. Where training supervision takes place in group form, peer comparison and competition add further restrictions, as participants monitor each other and fear negative judgment.

In this setting, too, the supervisor occupies a conflicted position. As mentor, assessor, and institutional representative, they carry pedagogical and evaluative authority that participants, even though as customers they wield the economic power of the consumer, cannot easily set aside. The supervisor's interventions are interpreted on several levels at once: as facilitation of reflection, as implicit assessment of performance, as modeling of the profession itself, and as an appropriate service catering to expectations. This magnification of ambivalent authority makes relational dynamics fragile and constrains the openness the setting seeks to cultivate. The paradox of training supervision is therefore that while it aims to cultivate openness and reflexivity, its structural context incentivizes strategic self-presentation, conformity, and opportunism.

Doubtful positions

Supervision (Kühl 2008) is deeply entangled in the relational, institutional, and economic conditions of its contexts. Precisely because the corresponding restraints can restrict the openness of supervision as a space for critical self-reflexivity, they mark the potential of supervisory doubt. The appreciation of the generative potential of doubt for supervision also is an invitation to keep open perspectives on the positioning of supervision as a profession and on the ethical questions that come with it. It has been demonstrated that constructive use of doubt cannot be separated from pragmatic action. In terms of professional ethics this means looking at the value applied to the economic paradigm of efficiency.

The question of whether supervision should be recognized as a restricted profession is related to its economic positioning in the wider field of professional services. Historically, supervision has been closely tied to the field of social work and its welfare institutions. While the governmental responsibilities regarding these institutions are strong for a variety of reasons, their respective resources tend to be rather limited. While a profession of supervision might therefore be exposed to a higher degree of bureaucratization, more prominently it may risk being condemned to the lower-profit margins of welfare contexts. While these contexts have given supervision its critical legitimacy, they also tend to restrict its economic viability.

In contrast, formats "related" to supervision, like coaching or organizational consulting, have successfully moved into more lucrative arenas. Here, they have established themselves as attractive

services for businesses, with higher fees and greater prestige. A formal recognition as a profession could put supervision at risk of losing ground to adjacent practices, while efforts of alignment or expansion risk de-professionalizing supervision no matter what its status. While there may be some common ground with coaching, the most striking difference in relation to organizational consulting is the position of the individual. Unlike supervision, which places the person at the center, organizational consulting defines the organization itself as the client.



What may be considered success in organizational consulting, e.g. optimizing structures, ensuring efficiency, securing competitive advantage, etc., might come at the cost of individuals. Here, the potential for doubt is obvious. Pressure on supervision to either defend its space or move closer to organizational consulting is therefore immense. The case for or against supervision as a restricted profession may be understood as an attempt to secure a professional and ethical territory: a legally protected space in which reflection on working conditions, power, and human well-being is preserved against economic pressures, while at the same time the call to align supervision with organizational consulting can be heard as the attempt of associations to ensure some kind of surplus value to their training institutes selling certificates to future members.

Admittedly this somewhat polarizing perspective may risk provocation. However, while there may well have been everything said and written about what supervision is or not is (Griewatz 2025), the necessities of the real existing pragmatism seem to have a way to keep doubt viable: The case of organizational consulting as a supervisory practice might demand a revision of the question what exactly might or might not be considered harmful. For while the ethical imperative of avoiding harm might represent a minimal consensus, a repositioning of supervision might leave its meaning far from clear. What counts as harm, and to whom is it referred? Is it the supervisee who must be protected from destabilization, or their clients whose well-being depends on professional practice? Is it the organization that should not be weakened, or the profession that must be safeguarded against misuse? What appears harmful in the short term may be precisely

what enables growth in the long term. Conversely, what feels supportive and relieving in the moment may turn out to stabilize problematic structures and thus cause harm indirectly, i.e. to avoid harm in one sense may be to cause it in another. A critical practice of supervision that cultivates doubt to serve the inherent political potential of self-reflexivity engages this incongruence. Working with the inner sensation of imbalance of the constructive doubt about whether “no harm” is what supervision actually is doing.

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Embodied Voice in Supervision

Opera-informed practice and AI-supported reflection

Alina Feodorova (Latvia)

Abstract

This article explores how embodied voice and creative practice can expand Supervision beyond traditional reflective dialogue. Drawing on a workshop presented at the ANSE Summer University 2025 in Munich, it introduces an opera-informed approach integrating breath, posture, resonance, diction, and dynamics as micro-techniques for developing supervisory presence. The article highlights how embodied practices support awareness, relational attunement, and in-action reflection. It also examines the use of AI-supported collective song creation (via SUNO, an AI-based music generation platform that enables the transformation of textual input into musical compositions, SUNO AI, 2024) as a tool for integrating experience through shared artistic expression. By bridging arts-based methods, supervision theory, and digital innovation, the article proposes new pathways for reflective practice in complex professional environments.

Introduction

My professional path has developed at the intersection of opera, art therapy with a specialization in music therapy, and Supervision. While these fields are often

seen as distinct, my experience suggests they share a common foundation: voice as a relational, embodied, and expressive instrument.

In opera, the voice carries emotion, structure, and presence without amplification, requiring the singer to remain grounded while navigating complex material in real time. Similarly, in Supervision, professionals hold reflective space, regulate relational dynamics, and respond with clarity and sensitivity. In both contexts, communication depends not only on what is said, but on how it is embodied.

This perspective informed the workshop "Voices in Harmony: Opera-Inspired Song Creation for Reflective Supervision with AI", presented at the ANSE Summer University. Participants were invited to explore voice not as performance, but as a medium for reflection, presence, and connection.

Supervision as reflective practice can be understood through Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner, particularly the interplay between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. However, such reflection is not purely cognitive; it is shaped by bodily awareness, emotional regulation, and relational attunement (Shapiro, 2019).

By integrating operatic techniques with supervision methodology and AI-supported creative processes, the workshop sought to expand access to reflection — moving beyond verbal analysis toward embodied and collective meaning-making.

Voice as embodied expression, Embodied cognition, and Supervision

In professional practice, voice extends beyond sound; it is an embodied expression shaped by physiological regulation, emotional state, and relational context (Austin, 2008; Porges, 2011). It reflects the ongoing interaction of body, mind, and environment in real time (Shapiro, 2019).

From an embodied cognition perspective, experience emerges through body-mind integration rather than cognition alone (Shapiro, 2019). In Supervision, reflection is therefore not purely cognitive but grounded in bodily processes such as breath, posture, and tension, which influence presence, perception, and responsiveness within relational dynamics (Porges, 2011; Hawkins & Shohet, 2020).

Supervision can be understood as a relational practice requiring awareness of both internal experience and interactional processes (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020). These unfold moment to moment through tone, rhythm, silence, and pacing — all of which are embodied aspects of communication (Porges, 2011; Schön, 1983).

Within music therapy and vocal-based approaches, voice is also a carrier of identity and meaning, holding both conscious and implicit material (Austin, 2008; Ruud, 2010). Engaging the voice, therefore, enables access to emotional and relational dimensions of experience that may remain outside verbal reflection

(Leavy, 2022; McNiff, 2008).

Integrating voice into supervision shifts reflection from cognitive analysis toward embodied awareness, where experience is not only articulated but also felt, heard, and shared (Schön, 1983; Leavy, 2022).

Opera and supervision: theoretical bridge

Opera and Supervision may appear as distinct fields — one rooted in performance, the other in reflection. However, when viewed through the lens of embodied voice and relational practice, clear parallels emerge.

Opera is a discipline of presence under pressure, requiring the integration of breath, posture, emotion, and technique in real time. This dynamic mirrors supervision, where practitioners navigate complex relational systems while remaining grounded, responsive, and aware of both internal and external processes.

From this perspective, operatic voice training can be understood as preparation for relational presence. Breath, for example, supports vocal stability; in Supervision, it underpins regulation and responsiveness. Without such grounding, interventions may become reactive or withdrawn.

Resonance offers a parallel to attunement — the capacity to connect while maintaining one's center (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020). Diction reflects clarity in communication, shaped not only cognitively but also by embodied states. Dynamics involve the modulation of relational intensity, in which silence itself becomes an active intervention.

These parallels suggest that opera provides more than metaphor; it offers a practical framework for developing supervisory presence. Both fields involve

a form of performative awareness — being in action while observing oneself — aligning with Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action.

Importantly, this does not frame Supervision as performance, but as embodied responsiveness to relational dynamics. Translating operatic principles into Supervision brings embodied knowledge into practice, positioning voice as a tool for regulation, reflection, and connection.

This theoretical bridge underpins the workshop methodology presented in this article, where operatic techniques are applied as practical supervisory tools.

THE WORKSHOP PROCESS

From Voice to Reflection

The workshop *"Voices in Harmony: Opera-Inspired Song Creation for Reflective Supervision with AI"* was designed as an experiential learning space engaging participants through voice, reflection, and collective creation (Feodorova, 2025).

From the outset, the structure prioritized accessibility and psychological safety. Participants were invited to engage without performance expectations; no vocal experience was required, and the emphasis was placed on presence rather than skill. The session began with grounding practices — orienting attention, establishing physical awareness, and engaging in simple breathing exercises — creating a shared embodied starting point.

This opening reflects a core principle of both Supervision and embodied practice: reflection emerges most effectively within a context of safety and regulation (Porges, 2011).

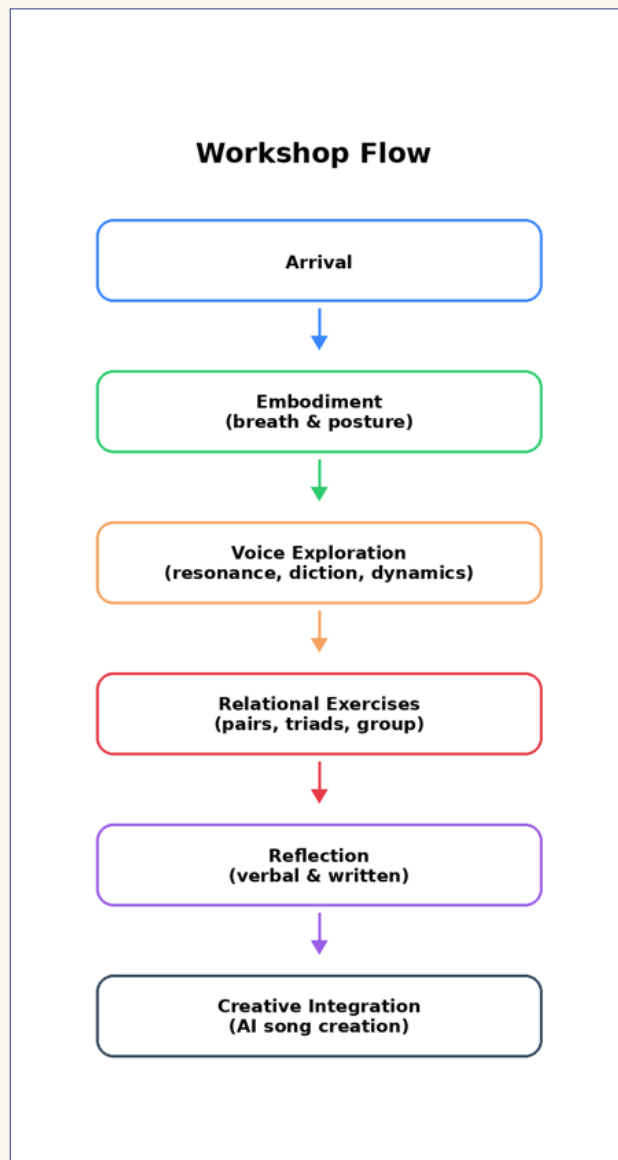


Figure 1. Structure of the workshop process from embodied voice to collective reflection. Created by the author (Feodorova, 2025)

Translating Opera into Practice

A central element of the workshop involved translating operatic principles into supervisory tools. Participants were introduced to key vocal dimensions — breath, posture, resonance, diction, and dynamics — and explored their relevance through direct experience rather than abstract explanation.

They engaged in structured exercises focusing on breath regulation, postural alignment, vocal resonance, articulation, and dynamic modulation, linking voice and body to presence, communication, and relational boundaries.

These practices shifted attention from conceptual understanding to lived experience, aligning with arts-based and experiential learning approaches where insight emerges through action (Leavy, 2022; McNiff, 2008).

The workshop also included relational exercises in a triadic structure — speaker, conductor, and observer — fostering simultaneous awareness of self, other, and interaction. This multi-layered attention reflects core

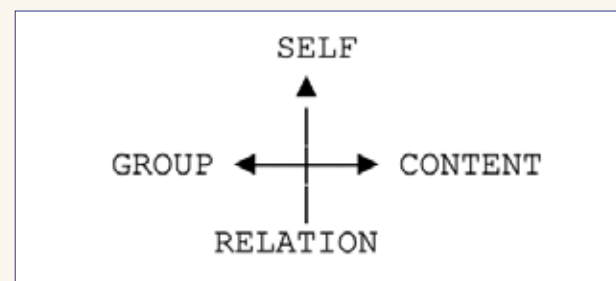


Figure 2. Multi-layered awareness in Supervision: balancing self, group, and content. Created by the author (Feodorova, 2025)

supervisory competence and aligns with Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action.

As the workshop progressed, the focus shifted from individual expression to collective experience. Through simple canon-based vocal structures, participants experienced how individual voices can form a coherent whole.

The emphasis was not on musical accuracy but on listening, timing, and relational alignment — reflecting supervision processes in which cohesion emerges through attunement rather than control (Ruud, 2010).

In the final phase, participants articulated their reflections in brief, action-oriented statements (e.g., presence, boundaries, courage, repair, play). These were shared, grouped, and shaped into a collective text, marking a transition from individual reflection to shared language and collective meaning-making.

Using AI-based music generation (SUNO), the collective text was transformed into a song. Participants contributed to decisions about mood, tempo, and style, actively shaping the outcome. Key ethical principles, including participant consent, transparency, and minimal data use, guided the process.

Rather than replacing human creativity, AI served as a facilitator, supporting the translation of reflection into an audible, experientially grounded form.

The workshop concluded with collective listening and reflection, supporting integration of the experience. Its structure mirrored both operatic form and supervision processes — moving through phases of preparation, exploration, intensification, and integration.

In this way, Supervision was not only discussed but experienced through voice, body, and shared creative practice.

FIVE OPERA-INSPIRED MICRO-TECHNIQUES

Embodied tools for reflective Supervision

At the core of this approach are five opera-inspired micro-techniques that translate key elements of vocal practice into supervisory competencies. Rather than fixed interventions, they serve as embodied orientations that support supervisors in navigating relational complexity with awareness and flexibility. Together, they represent a shift from purely cognitive reflection to embodied and relational practice, in

which attention to breath, body, voice, and interaction becomes central to professional presence.

1. Breath as Reflection

Regulation, pacing, and reflective space

In vocal practice, breath supports tone, stability, and expression. In Supervision, it functions as a mechanism of self-regulation and reflective pacing.

Polyvagal theory highlights how breathing patterns influence autonomic regulation and social engagement (Porges, 2011). When breath is regulated, individuals are more likely to remain present and responsive.

In Supervision, this supports the capacity to pause, tolerate silence, and respond rather than react. Breath thus becomes both a physiological process and a reflective tool.

2. Posture as Presence

Grounding, containment, and professional authority

In vocal training, posture supports breath and resonance, shaping both sound and presence. From an embodied cognition perspective, bodily states influence perception, cognition, and interaction (Shapiro, 2019).

In Supervision, posture contributes directly to relational space. Grounded and open alignment can convey stability and attentiveness, while tension or collapse may signal withdrawal.

Posture, therefore, becomes a key component of professional presence, particularly in situations of emotional intensity or ambiguity.

3. Resonance as Shared Space

Attunement, connection, and group cohesion

In vocal practice, resonance amplifies sound through alignment rather than effort. In Supervision, it can be understood as relational attunement – the capacity to connect while maintaining one's center.

This aligns with relational supervision models emphasizing co-constructed meaning and connection (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020). From a music therapy perspective, shared sound supports connection and expression (Ruud, 2010).

Resonance thus describes how supervisors and supervisees co-create reflective space.

4. Diction as Clarity

Communication, contracting, and precision

In opera, diction ensures clarity of meaning. In Supervision, clear communication is essential for contracting, feedback, and interpretation (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020).

However, clarity is not only linguistic; it is shaped by timing, tone, and embodied state. Vocal psychotherapy research suggests that voice conveys both cognitive and affective information (Austin, 2008).

Diction can therefore be understood as an embodied dimension of communication in Supervision.

5. Dynamics as Boundaries

Modulation, intensity, and containment

In music, dynamics shape emotional intensity. In Supervision, they relate to the modulation of relational space – when to deepen, soften, or pause.

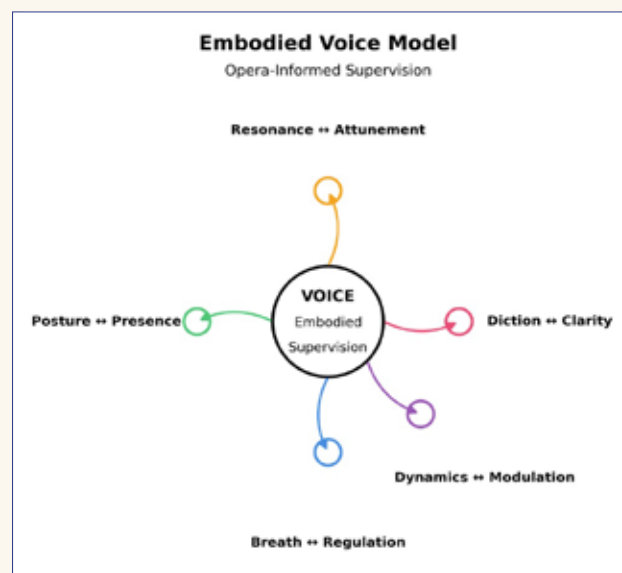


Figure 3. Collective voice exploration during the workshop, illustrating embodied reflection and group cohesion. Created by the author (Feodorova, 2025)

Schön (1983) describes professional practice as a form of artistry that requires responsiveness to unfolding situations. The ability to modulate intensity is central to this process.

Silence, in this context, becomes an active intervention, supporting reflection and meaning-making. Dynamics thus represent the supervisor's capacity to hold and shape the process.

Integrating the Five Dimensions

Together, these five dimensions — breath, posture, resonance, diction, and dynamics — form an integrated framework for understanding Supervision as an embodied and relational practice.

They highlight that Supervision is shaped not only by analysis, but by how the supervisor:

- regulates themselves
- engages relationally
- shapes the quality of interaction

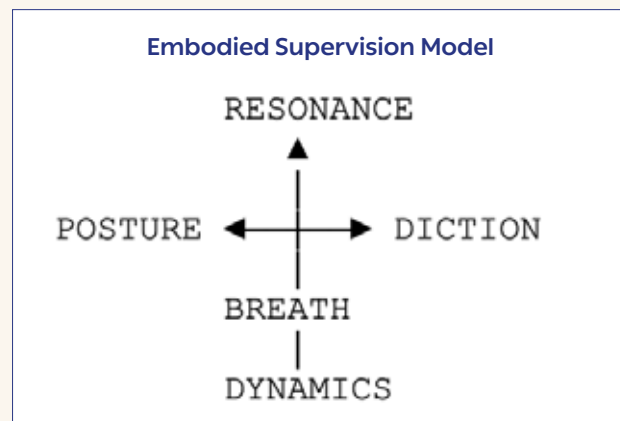


Figure 4. Interconnected dimensions of embodied supervision practice. Created by the author (Feodorova, 2025)

AI and Collective Song Creation

Technology as a facilitator of reflective and embodied meaning-making

The final phase of the workshop shifted from embodied exploration to creative integration, in which participants transformed individual reflections into a shared, expressive form through collective song creation.

Each participant formulated a short, action-oriented statement (e.g., presence, boundaries, courage), which was then shared, grouped, and shaped into a collective text — moving from individual reflection to relational meaning-making.

From an arts-based perspective, this process extends reflection beyond verbal analysis, enabling access to emotional and relational dimensions of experience (Leavy, 2022; McNiff, 2008). The resulting song served as a container for shared experience, bringing multiple perspectives into a coherent, memorable form.

AI as a Creative Partner: The Role of SUNO

To translate the collective text into sound, the workshop utilized SUNO, an AI-based music generation platform (Suno (Version 1.0) <https://suno.ai>). Participants shaped the musical outcome by selecting mood, tempo, and style, ensuring the process remained participatory and human-led.

AI was positioned not as a replacement for creativity, but as a facilitator — transforming human-generated reflection into an embodied and audible form. The content remained entirely human, while technology provided structure, speed, and accessibility.

Embodied Voice, Memory, and Meaning

Transforming reflection into song altered how participants related to their insights. While spoken reflection may remain transient and written reflection structured, music renders experience embodied and memorable.

Music engages cognitive, emotional, and physiological processes simultaneously and supports connection and expression (Ruud, 2010). Participants reported that they could “feel” their reflections, suggesting that creative integration can deepen reflective impact.

Ethical Considerations in AI Use

Key principles guided the use of AI:

- informed consent
- transparency
- minimal and non-sensitive data use

Maintaining a clear boundary between human content and technological processing ensured the integrity of the reflective process.

From Reflection to Collective Experience

Collective song creation reflects a shift from individual analysis to shared meaning-making, aligning with relational and constructivist perspectives in Supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020).

The song becomes a relational artifact — a shared expression of the group's reflective process.

Integrating AI and creative methods opens new possibilities for Supervision. However, their value lies not in the technology itself, but in its ethical and relational use.

In this context, AI-supported song creation complements rather than replaces traditional Supervision, offering an additional pathway for accessing and integrating experience.

Reflections from Practice/Participants

The experiential design of the workshop enabled participants to engage with Supervision beyond cognitive reflection, through embodied and relational awareness. Insights emerged through participation rather than predefined outcomes.

A recurring theme was the shift from hesitation to openness. Working with voice often evoked vulnerability, which gradually transformed into curiosity and engagement. Simple vocal practices (breath, humming, resonance) supported presence and awareness, highlighting how embodied processes access experience beyond verbal reflection (Shapiro, 2019).

Initial discomfort with using the voice in a group shifted from "performing correctly" to "being present." Voice became a medium for authenticity and relational engagement rather than a measure of skill.

Group vocal exercises fostered cohesion and moments of shared connection through sound. These experiences reflect relational attunement, where individuals respond to each other's rhythms and expressions (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020), forming an integrated relational field.

Participants reported that insights often emerged during the exercises, supporting Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action. The collective song created using SUNO served as a moment of integration, deepening

connection to the material and functioning as a shared relational artifact.

Facilitation required balancing structure and openness while adapting to group dynamics. Core elements included pacing, attunement, clarity, and sensitivity to participants' boundaries, ensuring a safe space for exploration.

Emerging Insights included:

- embodied practices deepen reflection
- voice bridges internal and relational experience
- Group cohesion can emerge through non-verbal processes
- Creative methods support integration and memory
- AI can enhance engagement when used ethically

Discussion and Conclusion

Towards embodied and creative forms of Supervision

This article suggests that Supervision can be meaningfully expanded by integrating embodied and creative methodologies alongside traditional reflective dialogue. While Supervision is often grounded in verbal analysis, the workshop highlights how reflection is shaped by physiological regulation, relational attunement, and embodied presence.

Following Schön (1983), professional knowledge emerges not only retrospectively but also in action. Voice-based practices offer direct access to this in-action knowing. Through breath, posture, and vocal expression, supervisors and supervisees become aware of internal states and relational responses as they unfold. Reflection thus shifts from something spoken about to something experienced. The findings emphasize supervisory presence as an



embodied competence. Tone, pacing, posture, and silence shape the relational field. The five opera-inspired micro-techniques — breath, posture, resonance, diction, and dynamics — provide a flexible framework for developing this awareness. They support regulation, attunement, and modulation, aligning with relational models of Supervision where meaning is co-constructed (Hawkins & Shohet, 2020).

While the approach may resemble a training or experiential learning method, its relevance to Supervision lies in its ability to develop core supervisory competencies. These include the capacity for self-regulation, relational attunement, awareness of implicit communication, and the ability to respond in real time. Voice-based practices make these processes directly observable and experiential. Rather than only discussing presence, boundaries, or attunement, partici-

pants experience them through the body and voice. In this sense, the method functions not as an alternative to Supervision, but rather to deepen supervisors' awareness of how Supervision is enacted moment to moment.

Creative processes, particularly collective song creation, further extend reflective practice. Arts-based approaches access emotional and relational dimensions that may remain implicit in verbal dialogue (Leavy, 2022; McNiff, 2008). In this context, the song functioned as a shared artifact, enabling participants to embody and retain their insights.

The integration of AI (SUNO) introduced an additional layer. Rather than replacing human creativity, it facilitated the embodiment of reflection. This suggests that digital tools, when used ethically, can enhance reflective practice by expanding modes of expression. However, their use must remain grounded in consent, transparency, and confidentiality.

This work is based on a single workshop context and reflects a specific group experience. Further research is needed to explore applicability across different settings and populations. Engagement with voice and creative methods may vary, requiring sensitivity to individual boundaries.

Despite these limitations, the approach contributes to a broader rethinking of Supervision — from a primarily cognitive process toward an embodied, relational, and creative practice. By integrating operatic principles, embodied cognition, and digital tools, it opens new pathways for reflective work. Ultimately, the voice becomes more than a medium of communication — it becomes a tool for awareness,

connection, and transformation. When Supervision attends not only to words, but also to breath, tone, rhythm, and silence, reflection changes.

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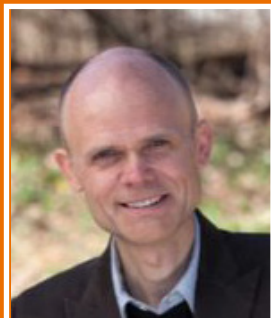
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