

Inspiring Creative Supervision

Introduction

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We met by chance at a supervisor's refreshment day and realized that we worked in similar ways. We started running workshops together, and in preparing for these we challenged each other to become more facilitative and less prescriptive, more creative and less bound by theory. We supervised each other, developing new techniques and sometimes dissolving into fits of laughter as we pushed our own boundaries and those of supervision itself. Over the many years that we have used creative supervision, we have watched numerous supervisees make great leaps in understanding and felt humbled by the process. The most minimal of interventions can produce the maximum result. We hope that in reading this book, you can share our enthusiasm and inspiration as you travel your own creative path.

Inspiring Creative Supervision provides you with a journey of exploration, using many different techniques and materials as well as the rich experience of the imagination and the senses. It encourages you to go beyond the formal demands of your role, and feel inspired by creativity, spontaneity and experiential work. At the same time, it is a practical reference book that can be used by you as a resource whether you are a teacher, supervisor, health care worker, therapist, mentors, coach or work in human resources.

We have worked as teachers, supervisors and facilitators of workshops, both together and individually, and it is our experience that creative methods of facilitation enhance learning. Over the years we have collected together a portfolio of techniques and resources that we have found consistently effective. Some of these originated in different fields; others we have extended and developed, and a few we have designed from the beginning. We have tried and tested all of them within a supervisory or teaching framework.

Much has been written, mainly in psychotherapeutic literature about the role of the supervisor. The definitions all stress different aspects of supervision. Some look at the alliance, some focus on educational goals while others talk of the welfare of the client or the professional development of the supervisee. Most concentrate on the tasks of the session. Many authors agree that what happens is that through the process of working together new perspectives are opened up for the supervisee.

We see supervision as a collaboration in which two professionals agree to work together, focusing on the personal and professional development of one of them. The supervisory process is in itself a creative process as it involves a deep and multi-faceted reflective engagement by the supervisee that is triggered by apt and timely questioning by the supervisor.

In *Inspiring Creative Supervision* we offer you the possibility of further enhancing the supervisory experience by extending creativity beyond the bounds of everyday language. We have found that creativity has the same beneficial effect on adults as play has for children, helping them to develop and learn.

There are two aspects of creative supervision; the first one is the techniques used by the supervisor, and the second is the resources or materials that can be utilised. Examples of resources are puppets, toys, bricks, paper, coloured pens, stones, toy money and pictures. The skills and techniques include self reflection, contracting, awareness of non-verbal communication, managing groups, facilitating a visualization, use of narrative skills and

ritual. These two aspects are balanced between the structure necessary for safety and confidentiality and the freedom and enthusiasm that creativity and play can bring.

Inspiring Creative Supervision can either be read from cover to cover or can be used as a reference book. We interweave chapters on skills and techniques with practical information on resources and how to use them. Because of the broad readership of this book we have had to make choices in the language that we use. In order to have some consistency we have generally used the terms 'supervisor' or 'facilitator' to describe the teacher, supervisor, facilitator, mentor or coach and 'supervisee' or 'storyteller' to describe the student, supervisee or group participant. Generally we use the word 'story' to describe the individual issue, problem or dilemma that the supervisee wishes to work on. We decided on this terminology in order to emphasize the ever changing and developing nature of any issue.

As we have worked with different groups and individuals over the years, we have developed and changed our techniques. Creativity would be lost if everything remained static and fixed. We have been fascinated by the endless possibilities of creative supervision and encourage you to use this book as a springboard for your own creativity and to take the ideas further.