

# ANSE<sup>®</sup>

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## With words and beyond - values and identity in an incomprehensible world

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**Did you know?**



In the midst of our ever-evolving world, characterized by perpetual change and chaotic conditions, the recent ANSE Summer University in Budapest was a resounding success. Organized by the European Association for Supervision and Coaching (ANSE), this event marked its 20th anniversary, and it was hosted by the Hungarian Association of Supervisors and Supervisor-Coaches (MSZCT), in collaboration with Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church (KRE).

The central theme of the event revolved around the profound impact of uncertainty on individuals and organizations. The keynotes and workshops over the five days delved into the role of supervision in helping individuals find their unique approach to the incomprehensible world. Participants were encouraged to explore their own identities as supervisors, reflecting on values that resonated in the face of uncertainty.

## Editorial

One striking aspect highlighted in the program was the acknowledgment that some aspects of our experiences transcend words. The “beyond words” dimension was given emphasis, suggesting a recognition of the importance of non-verbal and experiential modalities in understanding and coping with the complexities of our world. Participants were not only invited to reflect on these questions but also to engage in practical exercises that extended beyond verbal communication.

In a time when the world seemed increasingly incomprehensible, the ANSE Summer University in Budapest offered a platform for collective reflection and exploration of new approaches and values. It was a celebration of two decades of fostering understanding, authenticity, and resilience in the face of uncertainty. As we navigated the uncharted waters of our era, this event served as a reminder that, together, we could find not only our bearings but also opportunities for growth and development. Those who joined the celebration in Budapest in 2023 became part of this enriching journey.

With 150 participants from 18 different countries, the 10th ANSE Summer University in 2023 was a truly international gathering. The event featured four keynotes, 25 workshops, a festive Welcome Party showcasing Hungarian folklore dance and singing, and a memorable farewell party held on a boat on the Danube. Due to the rich programme and the density of contributions, we have decided to make 2 issues for the Summer University this time. Initially, the first part of the contributions will be printed in this issue and further contributions from the Summer University will be published in early summer 2024. In this way, we want to give as many contributors as possible the opportunity to publish their contributions.

This successful ANSE Summer University would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the Organizing Team in Budapest, especially the Hungarian Association of Supervisors and Supervisor-Coaches (MSZCT) and Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church (KRE). Their meticulous planning and execution created an environment conducive to learning, reflection, and international collaboration.

A heartfelt thank you also goes to the ANSE board for their continuous support and vision, guiding the association in its mission to advance supervision and coaching in the ever-evolving landscape of our world. Your leadership is invaluable, and your efforts contribute significantly to the success of initiatives like the Summer University. Thank you for your unwavering dedication. ■

**Agnes Turner**





# With words and beyond – Budapest 2023

– *Smile and make the world a better place* –

■ **Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir**

When I look back on my time in Budapest, my heart warms and good memories come flooding back. The entire setting was exemplary and the organizers deserve praise for everything going smoothly. In my opinion, the Summer University is part of the continuous and continuing education of supervisors and coaches. This year's theme provided many opportunities to consider one's personal development. Devoting yourself sincerely and wholeheartedly to workshops is like deep nourishment for the professional self that leads to professional development. We, who make up the ANSE family, are different in many ways, come from different countries, religions and have different political views. What characterizes the ANSE family is that there is unity, we stand together and try to do what we can to support each other. Open-mindedness, respect, curiosity, ethics, diversity and equality are the terms that come to mind to describe the ANSE family.

There is no way to cover all keynote speakers or workshops in this column, but I would like to highlight some and mention what I took with me. Sijtze de Roos mentioned in his key notes that no one knows themselves fully. He also talked about handling words with caution and care. Many people have over time emphasized exactly how we treat one another. The old poem Hávamál is a good example of communication guidelines and etiquette. Hávamál deals with both advice for everyday life and philosophical topics. Hávamál are poems from the Old Norse poems from the

second half of the 13th century. One of Iceland's most famous poets, Einar Benediktsson (1864-1940), wrote that „One smile can turn darkness into daylight“ and „Care must be taken in the presence of a soul“. Barbara De Dominicis – Ebetsberger trained us to put our hand on our heart and to carefully examine what our heart tells us, and it is best to have a balance between what reason tells us and what our heart wants. Sonja Vlaar discussed the effect of energy and resilience on social existence and how the brain can learn new things throughout life. Jurate Matikoviene pointed out that we need to leave our comfort zone, step into our fear in order to learn, and after learning zone comes growth zone. Andrea Toarniczky addressed how our „True self“ can be lost in hard work culture. Gerian Dijkhuizen was the icing on the cake with her interesting and entertaining interviews you can see on ANSE's social media.

By attending ANSE Summer University, we always learn something about ourselves and thus deepen our own self-knowledge. I definitely learned something about myself, others and the ANSE community during all the key notes, workshops, homegroups and social events that were organized during the Summer University. The world is incomprehensible, but by pondering complex questions together, looking at ourselves, our values and attitudes, we can help each other, nurture each other and contribute to a better society. Let's smile some more and make the world a better place. ■



**Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir (1969):**

Sveindís has a master's degree in Social Work and a diploma in Supervision from the University of Iceland. She is accredited specialist in Social Work with emphasis on healthcare services and is also a mediator. She is a director of Social Work in rehabilitation center, has a private practice and is a part time teacher in Social Work and Supervision in the University of Iceland. She has written many articles, some book chapters and has been on editorial board of books publications, the last book Supervision – for professional empowerment (2020). She is a board member of The Icelandic Association of Supervision and a chairman for the ethics committee. Within the Icelandic Association of Social Workers she is a spokesperson for department of rehabilitation.



# Is life and Odyssee? Or a place to dwell?

■ Sijtze de Roos

## Abstract

All our lives we seem to be caught up between being and becoming. The values we pursue in order to gain a foothold for our manifold identities may - perhaps - help us through our lives, but just as well lead us astray. Will we ever reach our destination? How should we get there?

This touches on the dual theme of the wanderer and the settler, the nomad and the dweller, the outsider and the established; a familiar trope with great appeal all over the world. To enhance the hermeneutic quality of supervision and coaching, I introduce the poems 'Ithaca' and 'Waiting for the Barbarians' by the Greek-Alexandrian poet and historian Cavafy.

## Introduction

Twenty years ago, MSZCT staged the very first ANSE Summer University in Salgotarjan. In Budapest, this year, we celebrate the tenth edition. During those twenty years, the ANSE community spun a thread from the topics of cross cultural understanding to values and identity in an incomprehensible world. Both are connected by our continuing attempts to understand the world we live and work in. Understanding is our shared motive. To bridge the gaps between us, we use words. To find out how our words influence our understanding, I think we'd serve ourselves well if we explore the unknown field beyond.

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*Is life an Odyssey or a place to dwell? Is it the journey that counts or the destination? How do we determine the right course? Didn't Carl Gustav Jung once say that 'if the path is open to you, you are likely to follow someone else's direction'?*

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## A sketch of our approach

We face a multilayered, rather complicated challenge. How to define our values, how to establish our professional and personal identity against the background - or perhaps even the foreground - of our incomprehensible world? And above all: how to get beyond words with words? We better not tackle these problems head on. It will be helpful to take our time and work indirectly and circularly, by first clearing the ground and asking ourselves preparatory, more initial and perhaps less paradoxical questions.

To begin with, it would seem to me that all our lives we're caught up between being and becoming. What are we destined for? How do we find our way? Should we try to become what we have learned to think we ought to be by moving out into the wide world around us? Or would we do better by staying where we are? If so, would it not be wise to build walls to protect us from outside interference? Either way; what values are at stake and how might our identity be effected? Or to put it metaphorically: is life like an Odyssey? Or rather like a place to dwell?

I propose to examine this more thoroughly by focusing on the archetypical theme of the wanderer and the settler, the nomad and the dweller, and to myths surrounding these symbolic figures.

Poets play with words in search of the good, the true and the beautiful. They reshuffle common language to unearth deeper meaning. Why not tap their minds and borrow their words to sense what they see? After all, poetry may help us to focus hermeneutically on the meaning of, between and beyond words. Isn't that exactly what we as supervisors and coaches try to practice in contact with our clients? Wondering where this may take us, I therefore invite you to study two poems together, both by the Greek-Alexandrian poet and historian Constantine Cavafy, 'Ithaca' and 'Waiting for the Barbarians'(1).

### With words and beyond about the world of today

Before we get there, we have to reconnoiter the field, sketch the background, clear the way and shed some light on the path before us. Let's take off with words on the world we live in.

As many do, we may characterize the world we live with the acronym 'VUCA', meaning volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. We find ourselves confronted with a multitude of intertwined crises that cloud our vision and make reality very difficult to read. It's not only the world that's incomprehensible, as part of that world we ourselves are, too. No matter how many clever words we spend on defining who we are, we fundamentally remain a mystery to ourselves; a state of being that does not fail to leave its projected mark onto the world within and around us. A world that seems to move ever faster, forcing us to speed up ourselves.

But is that wise? The German thinker Hartmut Rosa has

his doubts: "We are stuck", he writes, "in a blind acceleration cycle. Technological acceleration drives social change, which in turn increases the pace of our lives, again requiring technical acceleration for us to keep up. The unreflected pursuit of profit is the main motive" (2).

### With words and beyond about values and identity

How does this fast pace of life influence our values and our (perceived) identity? Are there words that can set us free? As professional supervisors and coaches, we are remarkably verbose about our so-called high quality standards. We profess to live and work by humane values: reliability, honesty, truthfulness, respect, patience, compassion, commitment and care. Our (ideal) identity is that of trustworthy companions, who are productive and deliver what we promise. It surely sounds very good, but do we really make ourselves understandable? Calvin and Hobbes have their doubts...

Our professed values may be nice and true, but are mainly a matter of abstract ideas, of words, and identities are social constructs, abstractions to tame reality, formulae and frames we impose on each other to find structure and to create some sense of order and predictability in the everyday humdrum of our lives and practices.

Note how we do so with labels, with words. We like each other with words, we fight each other with words, we try

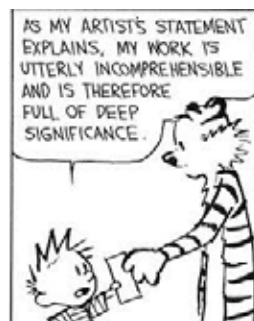


Figure 2. Fragment of a cartoon by Bill Watterson.(3)

to find truth with words, we seek to understand each other and ourselves through words. And yet we keep suffering from misunderstandings. Don't we recognize this rather mundane scene, drawn by the Dutch cartoonist Peter van Straaten? (4)

### With words and beyond about words

Words may be well meant, but wrongly used, which is why I now have to turn to the major problem of my approach and - may I say - of our shared quest for clarity: the paradox of us needing words to get beyond words, and again needing more words to report what we find beyond our former words. Ad infinitum.



Figure 3. No, I am not a fugitive, I've been your neighbor for over twenty years  
Cartoon by Peter van Straaten.

Words are multilayered, take on many colors, have multiple functions, change with time, serve a plethora of objectives and express a bewildering variety of intentions. That makes them useful, but at the same time unreliable and even dangerous. Words should, I feel, never be held for the realities they try to express, nor taken for exactly fitting descriptions of the facts and circumstances they refer to. Words are first and foremost fictional, creative and interpretative.

To bring some order into this, we can distinguish words in numerous (seemingly) contradictory pairs, like:

- **CONCEILING OR CLARIFYING WORDS** > With words we conceal our motives and deceive ourselves and others, and distort and obscure reality. But the same words can be used to express ourselves as clearly as we can, to clarify the situation we find ourselves in, or to analyze what hitherto seemed incomprehensible to us .
- **DESCRIPTIVE OR PRESCRIPTIVE and PERFORMATIVE WORDS** > With descriptive words we describe reality, with prescriptive words we order reality by instruction and command, and with performative words we change reality, like in 'I pronounce you husband and wife'.
- **IN- AND EXCLUDING WORDS** > Performative words may be arranged in an inviting and including way. At the same time, inclusion could mean that we try to tame the stranger, to encapsulate the barbarian. Excluding speech draws lines or borders, dividing 'us' from 'the other', those that are from those that still have to become, wanderers from dwellers, settlers from barbarians.
- **PROZAIC OR POETIC WORDS** > In prose we try to define and express reality, in poetry we circle around it, trying to break through the limitations of our language.

As an old saying mistakenly goes: "Sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words will never hurt me". Nothing could be further from the truth. We simplify, classify, analyze, categorize, track an trace, define, confine or even inspect and dissect ourselves, each other and our clients before we even know it. Our words may very well be faster than our understanding, certainly the performative words we employ.

I think we should be very careful when we arrange words into stories, tales, narratives; the more so because these are - mostly unknowingly - informed by convention and mythology. In the tales we live by, single words refer to each other and strengthen or on the other hand diminish each other's expressive power and meaning, while at the same time shaping the story that is narrated and the message that is delivered.

Narratives are important, for sure, but like all human endeavours they have a dual character. Through narratives we seek to make sense of our lives. Very easily, however, we selectively beautify the story of our lives, deceiving ourselves and each other, thereby inviting further scrutiny to uncover the 'hidden truths' behind our words. As supervisors and coaches, we are aware of this, of course. After all, our trade often involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of narratives that initially tend to be more concealing than clarifying, or more exclusive than inclusive. We engage in rearranging words, but the problem still remains. It is like chasing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow; you'll never get any closer.

As it is with words, so it is with us. People have always sensed this, as we may learn from ancient myths, not because they are 'true', but because through and behind these age-old tales we sense their - and our - existential struggle between being and becoming.

## With words and beyond about Nomads, Dwellers and the Hero's Journey

We are getting closer. Focussing on who we strive to be, we may draw inspiration from the theme of the wanderer and the settler, the nomad and the dweller. The trope of the hero's journey may help us here. In fact, don't we often metaphorically apply this when addressing clients' attempts to make sense of the enigma of their lives.

People may move out to wander or, on the other hand, stay at home to dwell for all kinds of reasons. There are, for instance, fugitives, victims of prosecution or terrible wars like in Ukraine, in Yemen or in Ethiopia. There are 'discarded people', as in South Africa when I lived there during the height of the Apartheid era, who, because of their skin color, were routinely shipped to distant reservations, euphemistically called 'homelands'(5). There are outsiders, refugees, outlaws, psychiatric patients and 'unwanted' strangers. There are vagrants, lone rangers, beatniks and habitual drifters. Whether they wander out of their own free will or are pushed out, what all these people have in common is that they are often feared and mistrusted, taken by dwellers for alien, uncivilized, dirty, dangerous and barbaric, and as such forced to keep on wandering. Conversely, to these nomads, dwellers may seem cold, ruthless, to be feared as barbarians.

There is more to it than all this. Since times immemorial, the trope of wanderers and settlers serves as a metaphor for the process of individuation. As such it is often used by coaches and supervisors, generally in combination with a narrative approach. In fact, cultures all over the world are permeated with this motive, as is evident from, to name but a few examples...

The original version of this myth - engraved in cuneiform on clay tablets more than four thousand years ago - is the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh. To this day, numerous



variations appear worldwide, including various academic studies of this archetypal motive, of which Campbell's "Hero with a Thousand Faces" is probably the best known (7).

Campbell analyzed many of these myths and carefully concluded that they all share the same basis structure:



Figure 4. From left to right: fragment of Gilgamesh on clay tablet, and covers of resp. 'The Lord of the Rings' by J.R.R.Tolkien, 'On the Road' by Jack Kerouac and 'Charles Mackesy's 'The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse'. Pictures taken from relevant publishers sites on Internet (6)

that of the journey of the hero through hell and high water towards enlightenment, salvation and finally: home. The journey thus serves as a symbolic metaphor of our path through time and space, either out there in the world, as wanderers do, or inside our psyche, heart and soul, as settlers may prefer. Or a mix of both.

In a more psychological sense, the Hero's Journey stands symbol for everything that we may go through in our lives. Our 'journey' through life unfolds - as we see in figure 5 - what was potentially already present within us. Our trials and tribulations show us the way to spiritual growth and ultimately to self-knowledge, so that we find

peace with our 'selves' and our destiny, and supposedly become who we truly are (8).

Campbell's structure of the Hero's Journey neatly follows this script. The first step is the call to adventure. The hero, thus challenged, usually hesitates and refuses at first. But he - or she just as well - eventually crosses the threshold. Coached, as it were, by a mentor, he takes off on his quest, meeting friends and foes, confronting all kinds of dangerous situations in which his - or again: her - resolve is tested. Challenged by ordeals, fate leads him through transformative experiences, that enable him to find the road back, towards atonement and harmony. Home at last.



Figure 5. Heroic Journey Storyboard. © 2018 Clever Prototypes LLC.



Still circling around our topic, we are slowly but surely closing in on the poetry we are looking for. We have to take one more step. A more complicated example of such heroic narratives deserves our attention: the Odyssey, inspiring - among many others - Cavafy to take up his lyre.

The Odyssey, about 800 BC written by Homer in the form of dactylic hexameters, tells how cunning Odysseus - after the conquest and destruction of Troy - set sail for Ithaca, his homeland from which he left long ago. It takes another ten years of danger and adventure before he finally returns.

On his way he meets with unspeakable horror: man-eating monsters like cyclops and harpies, angry and jealous gods like wild Poseidon or devouring sirens and not to forget countless other troubles. But he also meets companions and friends - especially female 'friends' like the nymph Calypso or princess Nausikaa - who want him to stay and settle (and so, by the way, surprisingly reversing the conventional gender roles).



Figure 6. Odysseus tied up, listening to the song of the Sirens. Detail of an Attic Stamnos. Vulci; approx. 475 B.C. Copy of the original to be seen in the British Museum (9)

## With words and beyond about Ithaca

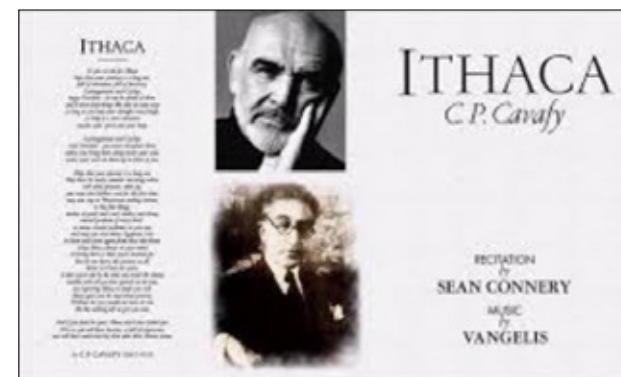
How many songs have been sung about such heroic exploits, how many wise men and women have puzzled over the 'true message' behind these tales, for instance in terms of values and identity? And here we finally are where we were heading for: the stanzas of the poet Cavafy.



Figure 7. Cavafy's last Greek passport of 1932. Cavafy

Konstantinos Petros Cavafy (1863-1933) was a Greek-Alexandrian poet. He is known to have written 155 poems, inspired by his thorough knowledge of Greek classics and Mediterranean history. His homosexual orientation was just as important. The repressive climate of Alexandria in those years left him no other choice than to hide his sexual identity. This oppression is reflected in the indirectly expressed longing and the often melancholic tone of his poems. We may recognize traces of this in 'Ithaca'. Please listen to the poem first and then read it attentively.

On Youtube you may find it beautifully recited by Sean Connery and accompanied by music by Vangelis (11).



What do you sense behind these words? Why? My interpretation is surely not any better or worse than yours. Just like you, I am struggling to find out what these words have to say to me, to us, to the world. The best I can do is to share my ideas with you.

All interpretations of this poem known to me indicate that it is the journey that counts, not the destination. Your destination - this poem seems to suggest - lies in the journey itself. Through the journey you change, you prove yourself, you learn to live in the here and now of your existence. I am not at all happy with this; to me this view does not do justice to the many layers in this poem. What, for example, is the meaning of the term 'Ithaca'? Is it more than a place to dwell? Could it be your fate, could it even be that Ithaca refers to the place you were born and that it eventually also signifies your death? Are we not ignoring the possibility that what matters is not so much the journey, but the destination, that Ithaca is the essential precondition to your existence, and that the journey is merely a dream?

Secondly, what to think of the following stanza: "The Cyclopes and the Laistrygonians, angry Poseidon, you will not meet unless you carry them in your own mind, unless your mind shapes them for you".

What does this mean? Are those monsters, those barbarians, no more than figments of the imagination; projections on the screen of the world? Or maybe the barbaric aspects of your own mind? Why would you want to avoid these? Are these monstrosities - wherever they are - not worth fighting?

Next, could we equate all these “fine things, mother of pearl, amber and ebony, sensual perfumes of every kind” with the values we strive to live and work by? And how about the ‘scholars in many Egyptian cities’. Who are they? And what could we learn from them?

Furthermore, I wonder what the difference between Ithaca singular and Ithaca’s plural in the closing sentence means. Has everyone his own Ithaca? Are there multiple destinations? Could there be parallel worlds of meaning? (12)

### With words and beyond about barbarians

What is clear to me, however, is that wandering through unknown worlds is not without serious danger. You may find friends out there, and hospitable harbors, but also hostile dwellers, comfortably settled barbarians. On the other hand, you, as a wanderer, will surely be held for a barbarian by many of the dwellers you encounter. To find out how this works, let’s move on to the second poem: ‘Waiting for the Barbarians’. I invite you to first listen to the recitation by Hari Politopoulos on music by Mikis Theodorakis and slowly read the poem. You may check Youtube for a link.

Listening to this poem (14), many possible interpretations pop up in my mind. I will offer you some of these, which, again, are not any better than, but possibly differ from, yours.

Firstly: who are the barbarians? The American educator Solomon Hughes notes that “in this verse, ( ) Cavafy

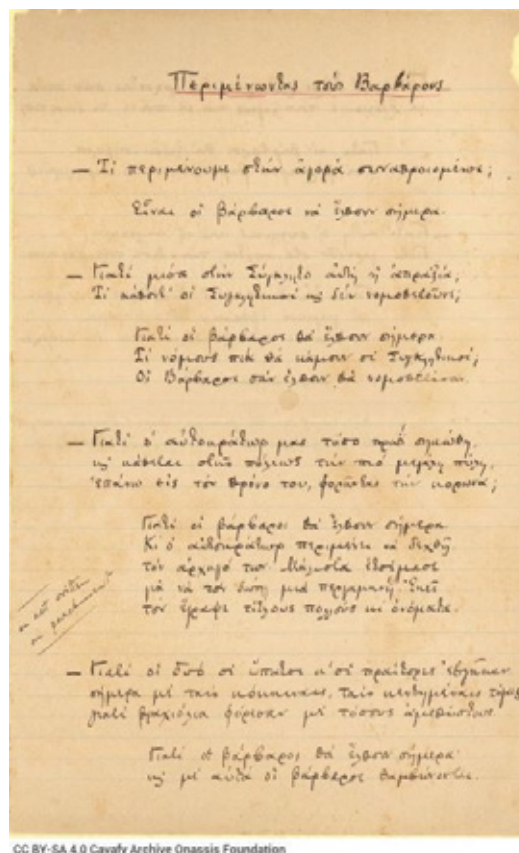


Figure 9. Original manuscript of Cavafy's 'Waiting for the Barbarians' (Fragment). Cavafy Archive Onassis Foundation (13)

describes a country where all public life focuses on its enemies. Citizens wait in the forum because ‘the barbarians are due’. The emperor and the consuls are dressed in their finest garments to impress the barbarians when they arrive. Normal laws are suspended, parliamentary debates cancelled during the present barbarian danger. But what happens if the barbarians do not come? Should we

have to invent them to validate our fears?” (15). If so, do we not need barbarians more than barbarians need us?

Secondly, are we not ourselves barbarians, evilly purifying ourselves by infecting others, trying to dispel our own barbarism by pushing strangers and nomads back into the sea? Or more fundamentally: is, as the Frankfurter philosopher Theodor Adorno once wrote “barbarism inherent to civilisation? What, moreover, should we think of Susan Sontag’s observation that “Europe has always been just as much a place of barbarism than of civilization, only nobody wants to hear this’ (16).

Thirdly, did the song ‘Sto Perigiali’? cast a different light on Cavafy’s carefully chosen words? To me, this verse does. It was written by another Greek poet, Giorgos Seferris, and performed by Maria Farantouri on music by Mikis Theodorakis, who composed the score while imprisoned by the military junta at that time. Anyone languishing in prison - and there are millions of those - is forced to stay fixed, to dwell - so to speak - against his will. Longing to break out and wander freely, he dreams of secret shores to find refuge and love. With what heart, what spirit, what desire and passion would he celebrate his love for life? If only he were free.

Wait, wait, it does not always have to be so sad. Like us, he can take the road, he can travel, if not in reality, than at least in the mind. But he can’t have a clue which path to take, because, as the Spanish man of letters, Antonio Machado, shows us, there is no such thing as a path: “Traveller, your footprints / are the only road, nothing else./ Traveller, there is no road;/ you make your own path as you walk. / As you walk, you make your own road,/ and when you look back/ you see the path / you will never travel again./ Traveller, there is no road; / only a ship’s wake on the sea” (17).

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## *In search of meaning beyond the words of this theme, I propose to interactively study two poems by Cavafy: 'Ithaca' and 'Waiting for the Barbarians'.*

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Traces are all that seem to matter. Traces of humanity, reminiscences of what we long to be. Whether we wander or settle, it is these traces, however vague, that invite us to keep on searching. It is not the path that takes us further, it is hope. Giving up hope is giving up life. Did you notice, by the way, how I keep on trying to clarify poetic words with other poetic words?

### **With words and beyond in conclusion, however temporary**

The difference between wanderers and settlers, or nomads and dwellers, may not be so great after all. Aren't wanderers, albeit circuitously, on their way to Ithaca, their abode, their home? And aren't dwellers longing to break free and wander? Don't we all at least from time to time wish we were somewhere else than where we are? Does the grass on the other side of the hill not always seem greener? Life, therefore, is both an Odyssee and a place to dwell.

To come back, finally, to the topic of this conference, to the incomprehensible world of today, to our values and identities, and to the multifaceted characteristics of words, I'd like to quote the French sociologist Paul

Virilio: "We are", he points out, "in a situation of raging stagnation" (18). We should, I feel, stop chasing after pots of gold or personal identities. According to the Dutch philosopher Eva Meijer, "your identity is not your property, it is the ongoing interaction between you and the world" (19). It's what we do that counts, not what we say we are. And to discover what should be done, we have to unwind, slow down, be aware, be present.

As for values, more specifically the values of our profession, I think that we should not spend too many self-indulgent words on those. Values have to be lived and practiced rather than advertised. That, of course, needs time and attention. Therefore: unwind, slow down, be aware, be present.

This goes for how we speak as well. To discover what may be found beyond our words, we better limit ourselves to that what is present before we open our mouths. Let us cease trying to grasp the mystery of life with words, let us live it. Let us cease to vainly verbalize our values, let us live them. Unwind, slow down, be aware, be present.

Being present is sufficiently heroic. Being present helps us to look around wonderingly, like a child, to hold our tongue and refrain from words that freeze our lives. Let's stop talking so much, let's listen. To yet another poet, Bob Dylan (20):

*I don't want to straight-face you  
Race or chase you, track or trace you  
Or disgrace you or displace you  
Or define you or confine you  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you*

*I don't want to fake you out  
Take or shake or forsake you out  
I ain't lookin' for you to feel like me  
See like me or be like me  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you*

Our calling is to be good companions. May we live and work by it. ■

### **References**

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**Sijtze de Roos** (The Netherlands) is LVSC certified teaching supervisor, policy adviser and coach. He acted as co-founder, trainer and lecturer of the Master Organizational Coaching at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. He served as LVSC president, followed by a period of four years on the ANSE board as vice president and later as president. From 2020 on till 2023 he was chief editor of ANSE Journal. He published various books and articles on social work, social policy, supervision and coaching in several languages. Currently he serves as editor of the Dutch Coaching Magazine. Email: [sijtzederoots@gmail.com](mailto:sijtzederoots@gmail.com)



#### ■ Sijtze de Roos

On August 14th, 2023, I was happy to deliver the opening keynote of the 10th ANSE Summer University in Budapest, interactively presenting two poems by Cavafy: 'Ithaca' and 'Waiting for the Barbarians'. In addition to many appreciative comments, for which I am truly grateful, my keynote also raised a number of interesting questions. I will briefly mention here three that - in between sessions and workshops - I was to some extent able to discuss with the colleagues involved. Firstly, could it be that with these words - as in many of his poems - Cavafy is carefully navigating the politically and sexually oppressive society he was part of? Is he metaphorically looking for ways to liberate himself? Could Odysseus have inspired him to set out for his own Ithaca, to freely live in full accordance with his homosexual nature? My colleague Michael Greißel and I talked about that a few minutes, and, informed by what we knew about the life and times of Cavafy, we both thought yes.

## Some comments on 'is life an Odyssey? Or a place to Dwell'?

A second and very interesting comment was, that all those hero myths, Gilgamesh, Odysseus, and so on, represent a typically masculine world in which there is hardly any room for women other than in a subordinate position.

This is certainly true, although at least some of the few women who do appear in the Odyssey are not at all subordinate. Consider, for example, a scene that is almost a complete reversal of Botticelli's birth of Venus. Now it is Odysseus, who, thrown by a storm, lies naked, exhausted and defenseless on a Phaeacian beach. Princess Nausikaa finds him there, carefully looks him over and decides to take him home to stay with her. That, however, does not alter the fact that these myths, however valuable, are indeed predominantly male stories. Time, then, for female versions. Nathalie Hayes (2022) already presented great examples. I am looking forward to more of those.

Finally, in a short and stimulating conversation, some of us problematized the very idea of the 'hero'. It may be that Odysseus managed to gain immortality with his heroic deeds, but practically all of his servants, sailors and foot soldiers have fallen nameless out of time. They don't count: no heroism, no journey, no fame, no story. And certainly no Ithaca.

Personally, I have ambivalent feelings about (male and female) heroes. They are often quite aimless. Where would they find their Ithaca? And if there were no Ithaca, what would we need heroes for? ■

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**Sijtze de Roos** (The Netherlands) served as ANSE vice president and ANSE president, and as Chief Editor of ANSE Journal. He is currently active on the editorial board of the Dutch Coaching Magazine.



# If you agree to the value, you can identify with it!

■ Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger & Gerry Aerts

## Abstract

In this article we will explain the creation of this workshop, how we performed it and what our conclusion is. The goal of the workshop was to broaden ethical insights and creating new perspectives by adding values to this new time period. For this we used diverse methods, with and beyond words. You consequently will find a description of the tetralemma method and the dilemma method for moral reasoning. We explain how you can work with a

combination of these two methods and describe the impact. We introduce how a work of art helps to rethink one's own values. To slide deeper into the dialogue about values we used a game. We reflect on our findings of the combination of these methods used. We found out that a combination of the constellation method and the dilemma method really works well. Working in small groups helped deepen the dialogue about values and renewed ethical insights. Playing the values game created freedom to come up with new ideas which boosted the value level.

## Creation of the workshop

We both experience in our work as supervisors that professionals sometimes struggle with new norms and values in this rapidly changing world. A lot of uncertainties are influencing our professional lives and sometimes it is hard to decide what is "good" or "normal". For this we use diverse methods, with and beyond words.

The goal of the workshop was to broaden ethical insights and creating new perspectives by adding values to this new time period. Since Barbara is working with constellations and Gerry is moderator of ethical dilemmas using the dilemma method, our idea was to experiment with mixing both methods in this workshop. That meant we wanted to give it time and applied for a long time workshop.

We started to think of a concept and the tetralemma-method popped up as an appropriate constellation work method. We sort of integrated this method into the dilemma method. We also wanted to include the ANSE Code of Ethics (2012) which we thought probably for most ANSE members a bit far out of their sight. We wanted to dig deeper into the values because of the theme of the SU "With Words and Beyond – Values and Identity in an Incomprehensible World". The constellation work of course is "beyond words" but the dilemma method has to use words. So, we decided to do this digging deeper in a more reflective way using a game to start the dialogue about values, related to the ANSE code.

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*Are you aware of your ethical dilemmas?*

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Participants were invited to bring a moral dilemma to the workshop they recently have experienced in their supervision practice. We started with the dilemma method for ethical reasoning. To get more background information and next steps towards handling the dilemma we worked with the constellation format of the tetralemma. We continued with the dilemma method to recognize next step towards answers. After the break art as an expression of (new) values was introduced. We used reflection, playing the value game in small groups, dialogue and reflection on the ANSE code of ethics, the professional part.

### The workshop

We were happy to welcome 13 participants in our workshop in the morning and 12 in the afternoon. We wanted to

- Broaden ethical insights and attitude
- Create and practice new perspectives
- Experience constellation work with a moral dilemma
- Experience ethical reasoning using (parts of) the dilemma method
- Create awareness about the necessity of having a multi-perspective view on a moral dilemma
- Create new values

After welcoming and introducing the theme of the workshop we also brought up the issue of confidentiality. Maybe for experienced supervisors and coaches unnecessary, still in ethics secrecy is an essential starting point. We thought it was important to create a safe learning experience and therefore to address this issue. And it turned out very well, because participants could freely speak about their personal issues. (Dilemma method step 1) After a few examples presented by Gerry every participant was invited to close their eyes and go back to an experience in their own practice. They had to think of this dilemma like in a movie: the scene in facts, behaviour and feelings. What

moment in this movie did they feel the dilemma at the most? What was their boiling point like when they really felt the dilemma? (step 2) Then they had to decide: Shall I do A or B? (step 3) This moment of decision is important because either choice has different consequences. But you have to choose because the situation requires to take action. A dilemma implicates you must make a choice, because you cannot do both. Also whatever you choose you feel will do harm. By addressing harm it becomes more clear what is at stake. For the workshop we chose to formulate consequences in a more neutral way. Instead of using words we would use constellation work in step 4. This way the representatives would not be influenced.

Stolper, Widdershoven & Molewijk (2018) introduce the Dilemma method in ten steps.

1. Introduction
2. Presentation of the case (facts, actions and feelings, formulating the dilemma "boiling point")
3. Formulating the dilemma:
  - I. Should I do A or B?
  - II. What are the consequences of A and B?
4. Displacement through clarification questions
5. Values and norms of all involved (perspective, value, norm)
6. Alternatives, free brainstorm
7. Individually argued considerations
  - I. It is morally justified that I choose (A,B, or alternative)
  - II. because of this value
  - III. that will cost that value,
  - IV. I can limit the harm of the consequences by (action),
  - V. what more do I need to act
8. Dialogue about differences and similarities
9. Formulate necessary actions (not applicable in this workshop)
10. Evaluation

After introducing this method to the participants everyone shared their moral questions in the group: Should I do A or B?

A question was raised about this boiling point, could it also be the trigger point? When you are triggered and feel this inner judgement about right or wrong. You feel your emotions heat up and this could be in many moments in a situation. The difference was explained as follows: A trigger point comes up in a situation when your moral intuition is triggered: you feel a bit awkward, not knowing what to do because it doesn't feel right. You feel your emotions come up. This always asks for clarification in moral deliberation (Van Es, 2021): Which emotions are triggered by the case, and which are part of the emotional background of the participant?

The boiling point is the point where the situation asks for action. You have to decide to actually do something, to act. These boiling points immediately indicates what is morally at stake. It tells us what our most important values are.

The Tetra-lemma constellation work we did in the plenary, because the group choose to do so.

### Tetralemma

The tetralemma in systemic structure constellation is an adaptation of a logical scheme for Indian logic developed by Insa Sparrer and Matthias Varga von Kibéd (2016). It is used in the area of systemic coaching, counselling, therapy and systemic structure constellation. The scope for decision making is to get clear-sighted in decision-making. The tetralemma offers an expanded view of possibilities.

We are accustomed to dealing with the "dilemma" and it often dominates our way of thinking to a very high degree.

Tetralemma helps in clarifying internal and external conflicts, solving dilemmas and finding creative solutions. It makes overlooked and blind aspects visible.

The starting point is two decision-making options that initially seem to be mutually exclusive.

The first step out of this dilemma is to take

1. The One: Either or level: Separation, exclusion
2. The Other: Either or level: Separation, exclusion
3. Both: It shows what could not be seen on the either or level
4. Neither of them: It can show in which context the dilemma came up.

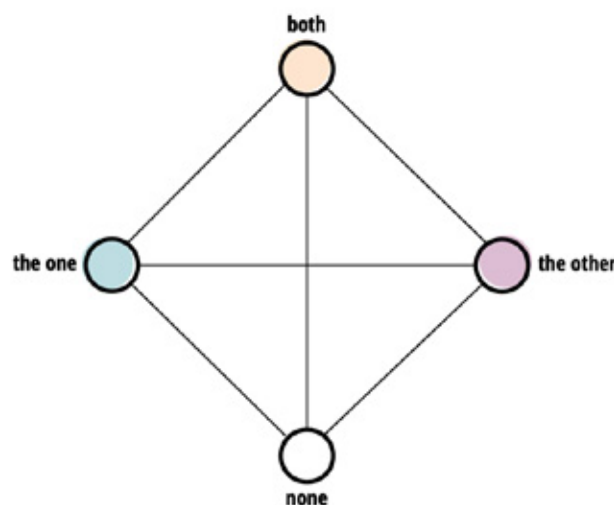


Figure 1. Four positions in the tetralemma method <https://triangility.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Tetralemma-v2.pdf>

5. Non of all this: The entire tetralemma is negated, the solution is sought on a higher level. This position can move free.

Figure 1 shows the constellation of the four positions. A fifth position should also lead beyond the fourth position and correspond to a self-negating form, a „reflexive pattern interruption“. So it becomes possible to leave the four previous positions and the original dilemmatic question no longer requires an answer, but dissolves.

### Practical Constellation

The participants were asked to look for a dilemma which is currently on their mind and which they want to clarify. They brought it to the plenum and we selected an example from a participant which had a strong emotional resonance to the dilemma. That was already noticeable in the presentation of her dilemma, as she switched to her mother tongue.

We started the constellation with three representatives: The One, The Other and the Focus.

The case bringer was asked to exactly describe the two possibilities and then to name them. So that it became clear that the position The One represented one action and The Other represented the other action. The Focus is the representative for the case bringer.

After having chosen the representatives the case bringer put the representatives into the picture. She was instructed to follow the rules of the tetralemma: The position of One and the Other is always a fixed position. They had to be placed facing each other.

As a next step the representative of the Focus was guided into the picture. Then we worked through the constellation process by repeatedly querying the individual positions.

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*Did you ever had an open dialogue about values and norms with your colleagues?*

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The Focus made its way, trying out in different places the position until she found the suitable position.

The Focus was guided to find the best place. The Focus experienced different places, feeling the resonance and connection to the position of The One and The Other. The Focus described her perceptions, feelings and sensations on the respective positions (step 5). Also The One and The Other were asked to bring in their perceptions depending on the change of the place of the focus. After the Focus had found the best place for itself, the case bringer was invited to go to this place and take it in. She took time to experience this position and made some more small movements. She found her best place almost exactly in the middle between The One and The Other. She described her sensations and perceptions, how she felt and received information from The One and The Other. At this point the case bringer was satisfied. She had positively sensed „both“. On demand and different offers to test further positions (step 6) she confirmed, that for the moment she had made enough experiences and gained sufficient insights. Reflecting on these insights she will be able to make a decision when she is ready (step 7).

Afterwards we had an interesting discussion in the plenum about some theoretical questions (step 8) before we ended the session (step 10).

After the break we started with a reflection upon the art of value. Participants were asked to look at the picture of this



Figure 2. Marble structure of an enslaved man. Picture by Dineke van Gulik, 2023.



Figure 3. Close up with the golden Rolex. Picture by Dineke van Gulik (2023)

marble statue (Figure 2) and think of the values it represented according to them. After that the meaning of “The art of value” was clarified.

“We see a marble structure of an enslaved man who, like the mythological Atlas, carries on his shoulders a heavy burden, in the form of sacks of Surinamese rice. He is a replica of one of the four supporting pillars of a huge grave monument erected in 1669 to Giovanni Pesaro, the Doge of Venice at Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. The black marble figure is a slave both of capitalism and the church’s architecture, typifying the perverse alliance between mythology and colonialism.

This Atlas doesn’t hold up the earth, or the tomb of a dead Doge, but a huge pile of real sacks containing the most basic food of the common people – rice. He carries on his shoulders the economy of colonial relations, in which forms of slavery persist to this day. He also bears the burden of a vulgar contemporary replica, with an original gold Rolex on his wrist (Figure 2). The man thus features in an uncomfortable narrative, which highlights sensitive issues rather than shrouding them, as commonly happens. Different “values” thus collide uneasily.

The values of food for the common people and the decadence of marble, rice and gold, fake and genuine, original and replica, extreme poverty and extreme wealth, slavery and freedom, political correctness and colonial history. The Art of Value is an “historical addition”: insinuations which in hindsight intervene in history, infecting it, forcing us to take a moral standpoint that allows us to reconcile the many ethical issues underlying this tale.

Hans van Houwelingen (1957) makes art that says something about society. His interventions which often include existing images and materials, pointedly draw attention to

certain issues. His work is largely conceptual, and always combines art with ideology and politics.”<sup>1</sup>

After this explanation the ANSE Code of Ethics (2012) Vienna was presented. This is shown in figure 4. We decided to focus on the part of the professional for this workshop because we have to always act according to moral requirements arising from the nature of supervision.

1. Supervisors are to be fully aware of the basic values of their profession, as set forth in the statutes and code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of, and in the ANSE Code of Ethics.
2. Supervisors are bound by the code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of.
3. Supervisors will always serve the interests and protect the integrity of their clients and constituents to the best of their ability.
4. Supervisors are to exercise their profession autonomously, impartially, and confidentially.
5. Supervisors will develop and maintain their competencies to the best of their ability.
6. Supervisors will hold themselves accountable to clients, constituents and colleagues for the means and methods they apply and for the quality of praxis and professionalism thereof.

Figure 4. Basic Ethics on the individual level of everyday practice. ANSE (2012)

<sup>1</sup>Description about “Art of Value” (2023) Museum de Fundatie in Kasteel Het Nijenhuis near Heino, Netherlands



Participants were asked to form small groups and play the values game<sup>2</sup>. We choose to use this game to engage participants in the topic. Playing together motivates and helps to stay focused. It stimulates critical thinking and creativity. They had to consider the values on the cards of the game and choose six values that were important to them, related to the ANSE code of ethics.

Then a dialogue followed about the values. Were there any values related? Or were there values that could clash? They had to reach consensus as a group, about values they considered to be important and write them down on a flip chart. After that they were asked to write down their personal ethical code in maybe one statement or keyword. And again, relate it to the ANSE code of ethics. Values noted in these colours on the flipchart by the tree different small groups of participants

**Solidarity Quality Competence Tolerance Compassion**  
**Commitment Reliability**  
**Love Respect Acknowledgement & Appreciation**  
**Authenticity**  
**Openness Confidence Sustainability**

## Conclusion

In the field of supervision and coaching ethical dilemmas arise from the nature of the work. It helps to clarify different perspectives with colleagues to understand the dilemma better. Also, to develop one's own ethical reasoning and clarifying the case. Most important is the dialogue and open mind to investigate other values without judgement. We found out that a combination of the constellation method and the dilemma method really worked well.

The constellation work is an additional tool to solve a dilemma. It can be a complementary or continuing work that brings new perspectives to the supervisees or coachees. The format of the tetralemma supports them to get more

clear-sighted in decision-making and to let emerge new steps that they have never thought of before.

As one of the participants said: I really felt the solution.

The value game and the work in small groups helped to slide into a dialogue about values that helped to renew ethical insights. Playing this game created freedom to come up with new ideas which boosted the value level. Thanks to all participants to step into our experiment. ■

## Resources

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**Dr. Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger** (left) Dr. Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger has worked for years as supervisor, coach, psychologist and psychotherapist in Italy and abroad. After completing educations and trainings in systemic-structure-constellation, autopoietic-constellation and other different constellation formats she expanded her field of activity. Today she supports coaches, leaders, teams and organizations as an experienced systemic- structure facilitator, coach and supervisor, to bring up their full potential. In her work she combines theoretical knowledge and inner wisdom to empower aspects of self-awareness in the persons and creating new ways for enterprises to follow self-organizing principles. <https://www.ebetsberger.it/>

**Gerry Aerts MSc.** (right) Gerry is an experienced (meta) supervisor and lecturer. She has been working in a Supervision Training program in the Netherlands for almost 20 years. Nowadays she works as an educational and training system designer, (meta)supervisor and leadership coach on intercultural competences. She is co-developer and trainer of the ANSE module "Dealing with Diversity & Multiculturality as a Supervisor ". She is a member of the ANSE Quality Expert Group and national editor of the ANSE journal in the Netherlands. <https://www.geosupervisie.nl>

<sup>2</sup>The Values game. Available [www.kwaliteitenspel.nl/en](http://www.kwaliteitenspel.nl/en)

# Welcome to the Circus of Chaos!

## Constructive and playful detours in Supervision and Coaching

■ Sabine Pankofer and Marion van Oijen

*"Music from outside was pulling me in. Without introduction I am handed a card with a role. Sabine and Marion are wearing their 'role cards' – 'director' it says. What is going on here? What is happening? Shall I stay or shall I leave? Do I like this? I feel uncomfortable, yet curious. As I look around, I see other roles, some are lions, clowns, acrobats, magicians and there's an impatient audience looking at me.*

*On the back of my role card is written who I am, or rather, who I should be. Luckily there is another participant with the same role, I might have found a companion and I am feeling a bit supported. I wish I could sit beside my alter ego. But maybe it is not my partner? Perhaps we are in a competition? Maybe there is another behavior instruction on the back of their card? What am I supposed to do???*

*The music stops and the director is telling us that, although the circus was very successful this year, one act has to be cut out of the circus. She describes the research she did to come to this conclusion. She was measuring the loudness of the applause after each act and she went to a fortune teller. She already somehow knows who she wants to kick out. Still she wants us to come to a decision in a democratic way.*

*After this speech the turmoil starts. It is confusing, I am feeling unheard, but willing to give in to the directors' ideas.... I feel a pressure to perform and show my special capacities. The audience makes me nervous, too, with their attitude of high expectations. But look! The lions even propose to eat the ringmaster! But what will happen then? What is going on now?"*



These are some impressions participants had, taking part in the experimental improvisation of our 'circus of chaos'. By taking on the role they were given, some felt inspired by an unusual role, some even felt pushed in a situation against their will, and others simply felt curious.

Within the setting of a circus of chaos we created a shared experience of incomprehensibilities by a complex, dynamic and somehow disturbing situation. For us a circus in general is representing many situations that we might recognise from 'real life'. Isn't a circus a purely physical space offering an outlet for emotions, feelings, worries, joys and incomprehensibilities? And isn't life as slippery, slidey and of a wobbly nature similar to trying to keep something with no structure in place -like a circus? Therefore, we choose the situation of a crazy circus to experience, to experiment and to feel aspects which are beyond words and that challenge values and identity.

### Being an artist and connecting with art

After the improvisational part, we invited all participants to reflect in silence about their role and their experience. We asked them to pick out an image of art that spoke to them, functioning as a nonverbal invitation to connect the images with their experience. Participants wrote on post-its beside the image and told us the following:

*"I am feeling confused... what has just happened to me? Why did I like /didn't like the role or how I interpreted it? What force came over me and the group? Whatever will happen, I will stay in this group. I am a bit embarrassed that I immediately was looking for support with my fellow rolemember. And why did I stick to the role that was given to me, even if I didn't like the role? How quickly did we all agree that the ringmaster or some other artists have to be thrown out? I am judging or being judged."*

Art offers an approach besides words, it is another form to express and communicate through. It expands the variety in which we can express ourselves and it touches us on another level than words do. We know from art research that reflecting on art is a more emotional approach and often beyond words, so it helps us to reflect our feelings. Based on this exploration, in a next step, we shared our impressions and associations, connecting them more and more to our professional life, for example being a member of a more or less chaotic organization, being a supervisor and coach coming into a more or less chaotic organization with all its open and hidden dynamics, being involved in this dynamic and still look at it from the outside.

We as the workshop leaders saw very clearly how different this experience was for the various participants: they experienced a lot – from strong identification and playful experiences to very uncomfortable feelings, being reminded of some professional experiences, as a member of an organization as well as a supervisor/coach. Being torn between contractionary and inconsistent aspects is well known by everybody and this is one powerful aspect of incomprehensibility.

We as workshop leaders went through a similar experience. The excitement of not knowing what will happen, sticking to a role that feels uncomfortable and comfortable at the same time. We wanted to experiment but also desired to keep control.

### With a little help from a scientific friend: How can we learn to deal better with incomprehensibility?

Dealing with incomprehensibility is one of the basic challenges not just, but especially for supervisors and coaches. So it makes sense to look at the field of psychology for advice. Therefore, we introduced a theoretical approach that can be interesting and helpful.

### Tolerance of Ambiguity by Lothar Krappmann

Ambiguity tolerance describes the competence to recognize ambiguity and contradiction and to tolerate the uncertainty that may result. This concept is based in the tradition of the Symbolic Interactionism of George Herbert Mead (\*1863 - † 1931) and was further developed by the German sociologist Lothar Krappmann (\*1936).

For him, in all encounters with new situations repeatedly arise that contradict one's own expectations. These incongruencies can be a strong burden for the communication partners. Role distance and empathy can help to perceive and express these situations (cf. Krappmann 1973, 150; 2016).

The interactants must first „adjust to each other in mutual expectations“ (ibid. 1973, 151; 2016) and negotiate new conditions for the interaction. Consequently, the needs of the interactants can no longer be fully satisfied. In this process, „all interaction partners [...] try to maintain and present an identity in every situation that holds on to their particularity“ (ibid. 1973, 151; 2016).

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*Making sense of non-sense through playful experiments based on scientific research. Sending in the clowns, the jugglers, the lions discover ambiguity tolerance in an incomprehensible situation.*

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A prerequisite for participation in interactions is that the identity of the individuals be maintained while expressing the divergence of expectations. Fundamentally, in interaction with others lies the satisfaction of emotional needs. To satisfy at least some of these needs, people enter into interactions. They must accept the resulting divergences and incompatibilities, since they are part of any interactional relationship. It becomes very clear that „the individual [...] cannot escape ambivalence“ (ibid. 1973, 152; 2016).

According to Krappmann, ambiguity tolerance is the important ability to tolerate contradictory role involvements and motivational structures equally in oneself and in one's interaction partners (cf. ibid. 1973, 155). Thus, tolerance of ambiguity opens up a possibility of interaction for the individual. At the same time, it reduces anxiety by making it clear to the individual that he or she can maintain a balance between the various norms and motives even in „very contradictory situations“ (ibid. 1973, 155; 2016). Consequently, tolerance of ambiguity is not only an important competence in each encounter, but also important for an individual's identity formation. In the development of his personal identity, the individual is repeatedly forced to „synthesize conflicting identifications“ (ibid. 1973, 167; 2016). For without „it [the tolerance of ambiguity] no ego identity is conceivable, since it must articulate itself balancing between aspired expectations and within the framework of a common symbol system“ (ibid. 1973, 167; 2016).

Every person must come to terms with the fact that expectations and needs do not always coincide and that gaps exist between personal experiences and generally valid value systems. If an individual denies or represses these ambiguities, they cannot develop an identity and thus cannot represent his particular point of view in interactions (cf. ibid. 1973, 167; 2016).



### Why is this concept so interesting for supervisors/coaches?

Dealing with ambiguities and contradictions is one of the core duties of supervisors and coaches, as well for their clients. It can be very helpful to use this concept as a continuous reminder during complex interactions and processes. Very often we only feel the ambiguity and we feel torn between feelings and perspectives. To know that we cannot solve them is something that isn't easy to accept. In some ways the tolerance of ambiguity needs to be trained like an important psychological muscle. Life and supervision are the gym to train this crucial capacity. And, as going to the gym is much easier if you find a little joy in doing so, we recommend to start enjoying the fact

that ambiguity exists and that we can approach it with some fun and lightness every now and then. The feedback of our colleagues showed us that for many of them a playful approach and taking some detours gave them an relevant experience outside of the role of a supervisor and coach. ■

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#### **Marion van Oijen**

Marion van Oijen is a coach and trainer with a diverse background in the arts and personal development. Her educational journey began at the renowned Art Academy Rietveld, where she studied as an artist and honed her creative talents. Later on, she expanded her skillset by obtaining qualifications in executive (team)coaching and supervision, which led her to a successful career as a coach and trainer in management development programs since 2000. For the last five years, Marion has focused her expertise on working with young professionals aged between 20 and 30, providing them with the guidance and support they need to navigate the challenges of early adulthood and to build fulfilling careers. With her extensive knowledge and experience, Marion is dedicated to helping her clients achieve their full potential and reach their goals.

[marionvanoijen@gmail.com](mailto:marionvanoijen@gmail.com)



#### **Sabine Pankofer**

Sabine Pankofer is a Professor of Psychology in Social Work and the director of the formation in supervision and coaching at the Katholische Stiftungshochschule München. Besides this she works for about 23 years as a supervisor and coach, mainly in the social field. Furthermore she is the vice chairwoman of the supervisory board of the German Association for Supervision and Coaching (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Supervision und Coaching). Her recent research interest is in power in social work and supervision (see Sagebiel/Pankofer (2022): Soziale Arbeit und Machttheorien. Reflexionen und Handlungsansätze).

Contact: [sabine.pankofer@ksh-m.de](mailto:sabine.pankofer@ksh-m.de)



# 'Beyond words.....' Using images, symbols, and metaphors in supervision

■ Ellen Budde

## Abstract

In this article the power of expression through visual means in supervision, is explored. It can help the supervisee to tell her or his story and to more deeply explore a subject. Communication through visual works adds value to a topic. When you use visual intervention together with your supervisee (and the group) you can: start to explore, then discuss alternatives and possible changes and finally discuss the transfer from the supervision context to the

practice of the supervisee. There are various options you can apply in your own practice. For example: the use of metaphors to show system dynamics, symbols to display a subject, a small drawing for a subject or work issue or a sequence of images to display a process. In this article you will find theory, examples of visual interventions and tips and tools.

## Prologue of the SU 2023

In the run-up to this Summer University, we as the workshop providers and members of the Dutch association placed a call in May and in July in the LVSC newsletter. We posed the question: *"Why would you want to attend the Summer University 2023 in Budapest? What is there to do and why would you want or need to attend?"*

The answer was: *"International conferences such as the ANSE Summer University 2023 always guarantee special encounters, surprising workshops and inspiring conversations."*

It was the first time that I was attending the SU and also had the opportunity to give a workshop. Now I can say that it was so much more than I thought and what we wrote in the newsletters prior to the conference. That newsletter by the way, may have contributed to the fact that the Dutch LVSC was best represented from all countries present with 20 participants. But that's beside the point.

## The Summer University: The event

In the newsletter we wrote about inspiration, meeting colleagues, encounters, making friends, learning from each other and getting acquainted with other ideas and methods. It certainly was, but much more than that. As I wrote to my friends in the app:

*'It is a fascinating, interesting and cheerful Summer University. It started with the congregational singing after the opening keynote 'Is life an Odyssey? Or a place to dwell?' by Sijtze de Roos. And during the welcome party, after the dinner buffet, there was Hungarian dancing. And of course we couldn't sit still."*

*So far so good for the start. And yet the workshops still had to start the next day.*





Figure 1. Supervisee; "What is my style of leadership?" TwynstraGudde (2003) Inspiration cards

### My workshop: 'Beyond words..'

After the start in the morning on the second day with the keynote speaker Barbara De Dominicis-Ebetsberger: 'Brain-heart coherence creates fluid identities', the first workshops could start. Including mine.

The organization was particularly attentive and helpful. Everything was arranged, the desired arrangement of

the furniture, the connections for laptop and screen. The requested materials were ready. And in addition, there was a volunteer before and during the workshop to assist the workshop provider.

In my workshop 'Beyond words.....', in which images, metaphors and symbols play an important role, was fully booked before the start of the Summer University.

*In the LVSC Newsletter I wrote about my workshop:*

*Do you know the feeling of being in a museum and actually seeing a painting? That it affects you? Or a piece of music that moves you? A film that makes you feel emotional? That is the power of non-verbal communication. Do you ever use photos, images or metaphors in your professional guidance? In the workshop, participants are introduced to various visual methods that you can apply in supervision or coaching. Non-verbal techniques help to deepen and broaden themes and issues of the supervisee and coachee. Images have added value and sometimes show more than words can say.*

My workshop focused on simple exercises, tips and tools for working with images, objects, figures, photos, maps, small drawings and symbols, metaphors and processes. Even small objects can create a beautiful story. Interventions in supervision or coaching using these objects give the opportunity to deeply explore submitted cases. (Budde, 2005)

Examples include a box with small objects as shown in figure 2 to set up a team. Who in the group is the elastic or the flexible colleague, who is the wise owl and who is the dice who can make decisions?

And what can be said about a team setup in which there is only a lot of elastic. Is there enough focus there? Are decisions being made? What would this team need to do its job well?





Figure 2. Small objects to set up a team

*Every picture or every object can tell a story. It brings out what the supervisee or coach already knows subconsciously.*

It produces interesting questions and conversations. Also with those present in the workshop at the summer University. For example:

*"I use figures for a set-up, and then I tape off a square as a playing field for the setup."* That is interesting, because then a figure can also come in from outside or be placed outside the playing field!

*"Can you use Tarot cards in supervision?"* Yes, if you are very explicit that it is purely about the image and the metaphors therein and not about predictions.

*"My supervisees will never want to draw, they find it childish..."* To which another participant said that *"In some cultures it is not desirable to just make a drawing, children are not allowed to just draw anything, let alone on the sidewalk or a wall"*. Don't force it. If the supervisee does

not want to use visual materials, it is fine. The use of material and objects is a tool, and never a goal in itself.

There was also surprise at the simplicity and effectiveness of some exercises, such as the boxes with objects and figures.

But also the square, circle and triangle, introduced in figure 3, was surprising to many in its simplicity. Why these three figures? Because they are recognizable and universal, abstract and each with a distinct shape. The supervisee or coachee chooses three shapes. These have been cut in advance by the supervisor from different colored paper. The participant has the freedom to choose or add a few shapes. Then determines what each part stands for. It can for example be a task, a person, a conflict or workload.

A question for this exercise could be: "Using a circle, square and/or triangle, explain how you experience this issue in your work" or "Using a circle, square and/or triangle, explain how you experience the relationship with your manager."



Figure 3. Circle Square and triangle: Shapes and movement

The simplicity of the exercise made one participant of the workshop comment that she was surprised and *"Couldn't imagine that I couldn't have thought of it herself before!!"*

## Tips and tools

In addition to the various examples, there were many tips and tools,

### 1. How do you discuss an object or photo chosen by the supervisee?

Where do you start? What do you pay attention to during the discussion. There are similarities between conversations in supervision, use your expertise and prior experiences.

#### 1.1 Explore

Explore the image and use your fantasy and your inner wisdom!!

Ask the supervisee as a start, to describe the object that is chosen, made or drawn

Explore together the details. For example:

- Color and form
- Symbols and metaphors
- Meaning of objects
- Feelings it evokes

### 1.2 What do you want? How could you change the situation?

Than start to fantasize, what you might change

*"What happens when you move parts?"*

*"What would you like to change??"*

### 1.3 What can you do to make it work?

What could you do in your workplace to make the first step to change the situation.

## 2. How can you apply all those items and objects?

- As a start, introduction of people or a topic
- Exploring an issue or topic
- Looking back at and reflecting on the meeting
- Reflection of group members on a topic or theme
- Reflection report or part of evaluation report

## 3. What visual materials can you use?

- Paper and pencils.
- Set of little dolls
- Deck of Inspiration cards by TwynstraGudde (2003).
- A selection of photos
- A box with objects: shells, pebbles, a ball, a silk flower, a bow tie, ribbon, some small objects, dolls, a cork

Figure 4 and 5 are an example how to use visuals in this case the inspiration cards (2003, TwynstraGudde) with this question Supervisee: "How can I make a change from one situation to the other?"

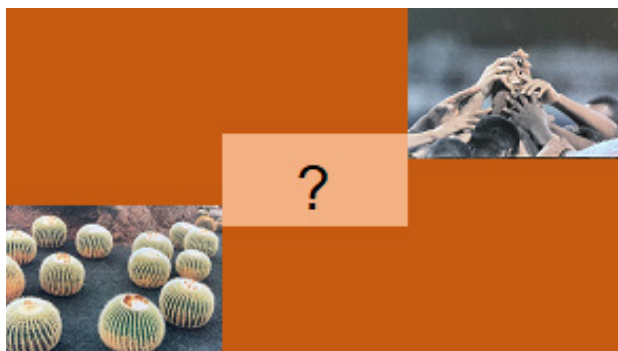


Figure 4. Current and desired situation by supervisee

## Theory and background

In international cooperation and communication, language can be very helpful. But language and words can also be misunderstood, by meaning, interpretation or cultural background. In communication we see more and more the use of icons. Think of the emoticons on internet and mobile. There is a great power in expressing and communication through drawing and metaphors and symbols.

## From words to images

When you use visual language, you enter a new world of colors, shapes and texture. What has already been said in words now becomes visible and touchable in images. Images appeal to thinking, attitude, feeling and acting at the same time. Budde (2015) By imagining the topic in supervision and comparing it to the real situation in practice, by changing, adding, moving or omitting images, possibilities and conditions can be sought to achieve the desired situation.

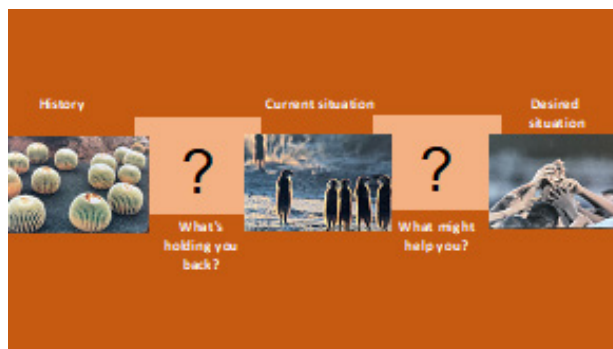


Figure 5. Steps towards desired situation by supervisee

## From cognition to intuition

First of all, imagining requires moving from words to shapes. A different experience arises, namely from cognitive and verbal to literal feeling, action, acting and visualizing. Depiction also offers other possibilities of expression for the subject, namely texture, shape and color.

## From linear to systemic

Another important element is that a linear story about relationships, actions and reactions becomes visible in a total picture, in a system. Considering systems has an apologetic effect and in the systemic approach there is no longer an identifiable person or group that is the cause of the situation, but a system in which everyone is part of that situation. Spanjersbergen (2011) And perhaps the solution starts by making this visible.

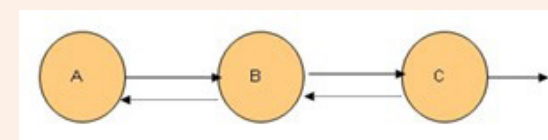


Figure 6. Linear relationships

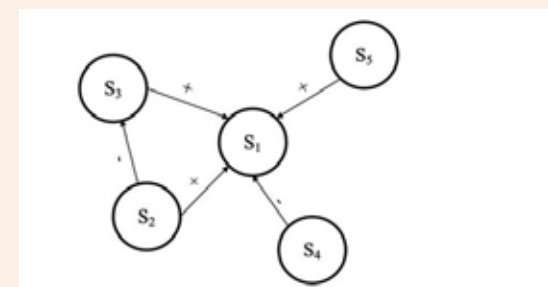


Figure 7. Systemic relationships

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*In supervision and coaching pictures, images and objects can be used to explore and deepen a topic or subject. The visuals can not only support the communication but also speak for themselves. And last but not least bring to the surface and retrieving what the supervisee or coachee unconsciously already knows. Every picture or object can tell a story.*

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#### **From upper current to undercurrent**

The upper current and undercurrent assume that what you hear and see (the upper current) is not always the only thing that is going on (the undercurrent). The upper current is the visible and audible: language, words, feelings that are visible or expressed, facial expressions and movement. The undercurrent is the unexpressed feelings and thoughts, expectations, values and opinions. Images, symbols, metaphors and visual resources

can help activate the undercurrent and bring it to the surface.

#### **Both hemispheres of the brain work together**

The right hemisphere is responsible for our intuition, feelings, sensations and impressions. The left hemisphere allows us to think rationally. Words and cognition activate the left hemisphere of the brain, while images, grasping and feeling activate the right hemisphere. The 'information' that emerges about the submitted supervision issue affects both hemispheres of the brain and thus a more complex and complete part (of the brain) of the supervisee. An added value.

#### **Summer University: The event and more.....**

There were a variety of workshops and there was plenty of time for me to attend them during the week. Various topics and creative working methods in supervision were offered, such as dance, theater, music, neuroplasticity, group dynamics, the use of clay, different types of cards and objects and of course Identity, the main subject of the Summer University 2023.

Impressive workshops, often focused on the inner voice. What answers are already present within your supervisee or coachee and how can you bring them to the surface?

#### **Home groups**

And how about the home groups! What fun and how interesting to be in a small permanent group of participants from different countries, at the end of every day. To talk about topics of the day, to discuss themes, about the keynote and to hear what everyone had attended and experienced. It indeed felt like home and making new friends. Familiar and open.

#### **Budapest**

Finally Budapest. A beautiful city. Pest on one side of the Danube and Buda on the other. Buda is located on a mountain that towers high above the city and has the most beautiful buildings on the flanks. But also in Pest are many impressive churches, monumental buildings, palaces and monuments.

What do you think of Budapest by night!!!! The final dinner on the last evening on a boat moored on the quay opposite the presidential palace. And all that contributes to the celebration that the Summer University is!!

And on top of that, not only did the Athletics World Championships start that same week, but Hungary's independence day was also celebrated. Which was done on a grand scale, with various stages, pop, jazz, opera and folklore. With a clear accent on Hungary itself. You feel how proud people are of their own culture. It was a party.

#### **Epilogue of the Summer University**

It was great, inspiring, a party. The SU raises questions, new ideas, new input and new colleagues and friends. But most of all it strengthens ourselves, our profession as supervisor and coach, our national associations and the international cooperation thanks to ANSE!! ■

*Hope to see you in Munich 2025!!!*

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Figure 9. Group picture Summer University Budapest 2023, András Szombathy



#### Ellen Budde

Ellen Budde has over 40 years of experience working with different communities as an art therapist, as a teacher in higher education and as senior project manager at the Amsterdam University of Applied Science. Ellen also runs a business that provides supervision, coaching, teachings and workshops for individuals and companies in profit and non-profit sector. She has been leading several international workshops and is author of many publications and books on creative intervention in supervision and coaching. You can find more information on her website and LinkedIn. Ellen is member of the Dutch LVSC (1994) and registered in the Professional Register of the LVSC (2009). <https://www.lvsc.eu/users/ellen-budde>





Figure 1. Workshop by László Kőrösi

### Abstract

The supervision profession sets very high standards for its practitioners. We need to acquire qualified education and develop a lifelong learning mindset, create a meaningful and beneficial reflective practice, integrate general knowledge of the world with professional and personal beliefs, navigate between rationality and sensitivity, and for sure maintain a very good physical and mental health, which in my mind, is all basis for professional identity. I also believe that one of the most important tasks of the supervisor is to support their clients in building (and becoming aware of) professional identities, which is at the same time a continuous, and ongoing process inside our own practice. In this article, I shall introduce three different viewpoints on how to develop or interpret professional identity just for inspiration, without connecting them to any meaningful concepts.

# Creating Space to Develop Professional Identity

■ Helena Ehrenbusch

Professional identity in my definition is a personally created reflection of one's intellectual and emotional skills, professional knowledge and experience, mindfulness and bodyfulness. It is a concept, a self-created image, which defines us as professionals, and generally includes personal values, talents, experiences, and knowledge. Professional identity is not something, most people know about or work with it consciously, though awareness of it is supporting professional development.

Professional identity is a versatile topic, which involves a continuous process of identity constructions and deconstructions. Our professional handwriting and even our basic professional philosophy may change through our working years and experience. Understanding more about who we are and what we do can give us a deeper appreciation of the profession, help to realise our personal potential and limitations, focus on learning and efforts, and learn through experiences and contributions. At the same time, this process helps us to align our work life with personal values, motives, competencies/ talents and abilities. (Backhouse, 2022)

The need to work consciously with professional identity should be written into the normal work hygiene of some professions, like doctors, psychologists, nurses, supervisors, and teachers, basically, all professions that influence other people through their actions. Yet the freshly graduated often find themselves in work overload, trying to fit their knowledge from their studies into

practical work, dealing with demands and expectations, collegial and client relations instead of reflecting on their way of being and working in this special environment. From my clients, I have examples of freshly starting specialists, like teachers or therapists, who work very hard for the first two to three years after finishing school, and then find themselves confused, and burned out. Somehow, they have also lost the love for their work, or in worst cases, the understanding, of what exactly is the main goal of their work, as the demands, workload, relations, and lack of reflection time are filling up their time, mind and ... bodies.

As a dancer and body-oriented psychologist, I believe, that mind and body are interconnected - the condition of one affects the other. When we are overwhelmed with thoughts or worries, our bodies reflect and respond by creating tension. An overstressed, tired, poorly maintained body in turn affects our emotional state and reveals confusion in the mind.

Our bodies are connected to space, operating in space, and relating to space, both physically and mentally. To declutter our thoughts we need silence and space that allows us to start noticing our thoughts. As soon as we see our thoughts again, we begin to breathe more easily, whilst our body relaxes with the mind. Safe physical space gives us the possibility to research the landscape of our thoughts to foster meaning and awareness.

"Creating space" is a method of opening up your time and energy to do things you need or enjoy doing. Safe physical space is a precondition for any purposeful mind work. We create safety and inspiration in our physical space by organising objects, shapes, colours, and lines into a meaningful pattern for us while hoping (unconsciously) that it works also for our clients. A room without people inside seems to be empty, but when we open the door, it somehow already fills itself with unspoken expectations, wishes, hopes, worries, and feelings. The room we shall enter to start working is not more just a room, but a manifested physical reality, full of potential to focus on cognitive, mental and motoric experience.

Creating mental space can mean, among other things, attracting or removing people or activities in your life. We all have limits, so the question is, how many objects, things and emotions we can have inside or around us to continue living or working in a satisfactory way? When our inner or outer space is full, nothing new can arise or develop, also learning and satisfaction have no place. Some viewpoints on personal development suggest that

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*"A definite movement with a definite trace form is always connected with inner happening such as feelings, reflections, determinations of the will and other emotional impulses."*

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Rudolf Laban

decluttering should be an integral part of our life routines. As supervisors, we can name it as a method of inventory, mapping, self-evaluation or a step in creating a professional identity.

### **CREATING SPACE, a philosophical viewpoint**

Space (and I do not mean the cosmos) is never direct and given. It is created through linguistics, interpretation, transference and change. Our visual and movement organs are organised in front of us. Our eyes look to the front, and

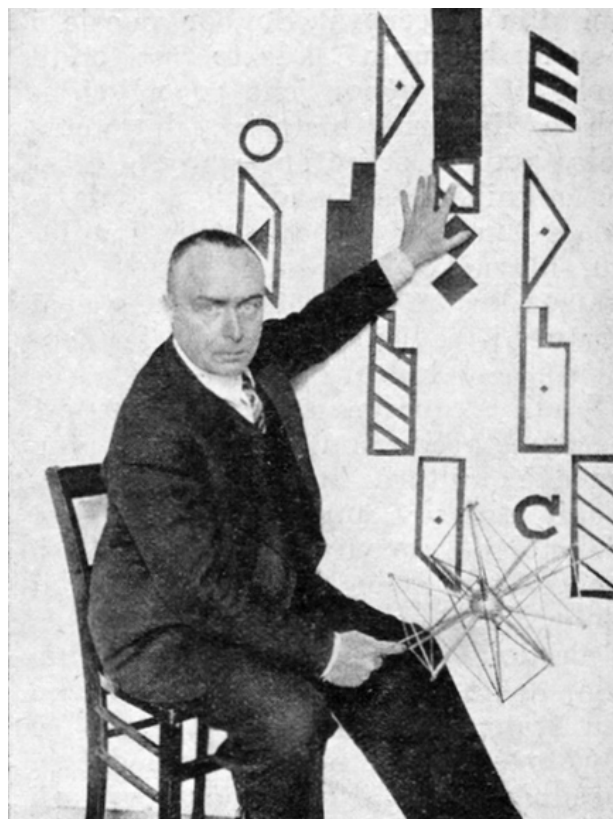


Figure 2. Laban showing direction signs,

we "prefer" the front, which seems especially important mentally - "We are moving forward with this case! We are making progress!". Our legs move the best if they can be placed in front of each other. Somehow right and left are also not equal. For some reason, the "right" is more proper or accepted in Western societies (legal rights, human rights) than the left, which in the Estonian language, for example, could be in some cases interpreted as an evil side (kurakätt) or indicating stupidity. We mainly have agreed that "upstairs" is heaven and "downstairs" is hell, which from the Christian viewpoint is equalised with good and evil. We do have sometimes elevated mood, and sometimes we feel totally down. Transferred to bodily experience, when we are happy, our bodies tend to stand more upright, which is accompanied by a "flying" feeling, while when we are sick or depressed, we want to lay down and surrender to gravity. Space is between the objects and objects are situated in the space. The directions and locations of objects are directly related to our needs of action and they change accordingly. Directions - front, back, right and left - are always transferring their meaning according to the viewer, so we constantly reshape the space. (Ott, 2019)

Embodied space is not only physical but also the source of our thinking and cognition processes. To be competent in space, we need good analyses, synthesis and association skills. Just to move from your bed to the toilet in the morning actually needs a series of unconscious decisions, from how to where to move, which we make unconsciously. The urge to move is directed by our needs - in the given example case, the need to pee. (Ibid)

Space is also always emotionally loaded - it is full of objects, but our brain selects for us out those, that have an emotional connection to us, that are interesting or relevant, and "deletes" all the rest. Perhaps the reader

remembers the psychological experimental videos, where we are asked to focus on counting the number of basketball hits, and while doing so we miss the big gorilla passing the camera. We say, "I am "touched" when we encounter something or someone, and we do not mean physical touches - something has moved us from inside. All the colours, forms, and lines in the world shape our senses and well-being. Our mind "moves", and gets an "e-motion", emotional movement. (Ibid)

### **CREATING SPACE, a psychological viewpoint**

Creating space in psychological meaning can start with the concept of taking space. The phrase "taking space" usually means that we occupy a physical (or psychological) territory. We fill the space with our bodies, our presence is felt and seen. For performers, it is an essential skill, but for some, it is a mission impossible. If the latter believe, they are not worthy of the space, they try to minimize their presence and to become invisible, in the space.

Space can be psychological, which is the place where we express our thoughts and feelings. Taking space psychologically can mean an effort to stand for good mental health and protect personal boundaries. Relational space involves communication with other people for whom we want to be visible, and draw attention to, like in the role of a teacher, workshop leader, or supervisor. According to many body-oriented researchers, our body posture has a lot to do with our ways of taking space. The simplest or healthiest way to take the space is to make yourself visible by stretching your spine, and shoulders, looking straight and up, and being clear and hearable. We sometimes are not able to take our space, as we are worried about the other's perception of us, which makes us feel uncomfortable. To realise that other people's perception is uncontrollable and always linked to their

personal self-image or inner problems, could release us of a huge burden. Taking space is essential if we need to be successful in life, but to take is not always enough. Sometimes we need to create our space – through words, actions, and presence. (Inspired by Lo, 2023)

### **CREATING SPACE, a dance movement viewpoint**

In the dance art world, there can be described a certain tension between the human need to move and choreographed dance – the first one demands opening up the senses, pulling with a raw impulse, and offers freedom, while the other provides defined structures, visions, pathways. (Butté, 2022) The meeting point of a dancer and choreographer creates a meaningful balance of the two worlds, beneficial for themselves and others.

The body, which wants and invites us to move freely, could be defined as bodyfull. The word is derived from the concept of mindfulness (The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something; attention. OED), and is more than embodiment. Embodiment could be defined as awareness of and attentive participation in the body's states and actions. Bodyfulness begins when the embodied self is held in a conscious, contemplative environment, coupled with a non-judgmental engagement with bodily processes, an acceptance and appreciation of one's bodily nature, and an ethical and aesthetic orientation towards taking right actions so that a lessening of suffering and an increase in human potential may emerge. (Caldwell, 2014)

For other people, the predetermined clear structures offer more inspiration and safety. Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958), an architect, dancer, choreographer and movement scientist, created a theory of space harmony, through which he explored the relationship between people and

their surroundings. His observations and research of movement structures were based on geometry and crystalline forms in nature. (Longstaff, 2003)

The crystalline structure in nature was seen by Laban as a basis for growth. He saw the human body moving as a 'unified whole', with total physical, mental and spiritual involvement, moving harmoniously in space and harmoniously with nature. Intentional movement is our means of achieving communication, and the movement in space can create opportunities to work towards resolving conflicts and disharmonies. (Guthrie, 2011-2021)

### **PRACTICAL EXERCISE, an exploration of the professional identity in space**

I hope the previously described viewpoints can give some inspirational ideas for starting to research professional identity. These are just examples from my personal interest, they do not stand for an absolute truth but are meant to provide a warm-up to developing a professional identity, thinking about what surrounds it, or are included in the topic.

My practical exercise is modified from FERN (Framework of the Embodied Reflective Narrative) model. FERN is used at Dance Movement Therapy supervision sessions, at the heart of it, when the theme has already been identified. (Butté, 2022)

The theme of this practical exercise is **the exploration of the professional identity**.

**Step one.** Building the space, preferably with all the participants. The task is to choose music, that supports contemplation or looking inside our minds; and objects that help to divide the room into multiple sections for keywords. The number of sections depends on the amount of keywords.

**Step two.** Identifying the keywords, that are essential for exploring the professional identity. I would suggest following the theory that associates the best with your basic work philosophy. For me, the important keywords are: "Me" – the professional or the explorer; "Observer" – the metalevel reflector; "Relationship" – to someone or something; "Bigger Picture" is where the profession is situated; and "Unknown", which is always with us although we cannot word it. Keywords can be grouped together on similarities or contrasted, e.g. me - values, observer - metalevel, relationship - clients, etc. My suggestion would be to use a maximum of 4-6 keywords, but feel free to follow your needs. Single keywords are written to separate A4 papers and placed in separate sections in the prepared space.

**Step three.** Research and movement. Participants are invited to move around in the space, and do not talk, just sense and observe without any evaluation. Time frame: 15-30 min. Helpful questions. Where does your body, your feeling, and your mind direct you? Do you need to interact or be lonely alone? Do you need to be active or passive, move or be still, fly or lay?

**Step four.** Taking time for personal reflection. Helpful questions. What feelings did you notice - physical, emotional, psychological? Did you have expectations fulfilled or unexpected visions and feelings popping up? Highlights? Surprises? Boring results? New visions? Are some keywords somehow more appealing or bringing really different thoughts than you expected? For reflection and translation of the bodily messages, participants are invited to use their favourite medium – be it a poem, drawing, movements, mathematical formulas or just plain words.

**Step five.** Meta reflection. In case there is more than one participant, I suggest group reflection, discussion and feedback. In case of a personal experience, I suggest any type of metalevel reflection to follow the experience.

Space is such a deep and touching topic for research, and gives endless possibilities for developing new ideas and directions. It is amazing, how much research in the real space can alter our thinking patterns and feeling musters. Not to talk about the body, which remains more in the taboo category, especially in the intellectual fields. Our thoughts create possibilities and our bodies project the wishes into the space before we fill it with real steps, words, and visions. Why not put such a phenomenon to work for our benefit - while entering our workspace we have the time, possibility, space, and reason to speak to our bodies, which would help to develop also our professional identity. ■

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**Helena Ehrenbusch, MSc, MA**

Professional supervisor, psychologist-counsellor, educator, choreograph and coach. Specialist in mental health, bodywork, choreography and artistic expression, social circus, and professional development. Ex-president of the Estonian Supervision and Coaching Association (ESCA). E-mail: [helena@ehrenbusch.ee](mailto:helena@ehrenbusch.ee)





# Beyond Words With Group Dynamics

■ Claus Faber and Patrizia Tonin

## Abstract

In this article we describe a group dynamic approach we used at our workshop at the 2023 ANSE Summer University in Budapest. We allowed for the “Group Dynamic Space” to be experienced in its three dimensions: Belonging, intimacy and power. This theory is a diagnostic framework which enables us to see beyond words into the unspoken “container” of a group, enabling supervisors to support groups in their internal autonomous development.

Groups are daily work for most supervisors. Whether we supervise or train teams, whether we facilitate group events or work in teams, we always encounter group phenomena. Therefore, working in and with groups can rarely be called unknown territory. We all have practice, and we all have at least implicit theories about groups. Nevertheless, we notice that group dynamic theories are not common ground, even among supervision experts. We believe that an understanding of some essential group dynamic theories can provide an important contribution to supervisors in their work with groups and teams.

## The Unknown and Unsaid in a Group

We often tend to develop theories along a relatively static concept or a process – both suggest stability and suggest that something “is”. This is – in short – a myth: Nothing is stable, nothing behaves as predicted, especially in groups. Theories are helpful in understanding social phenomena. However, in their application to living systems, we risk reducing the complexity of human interactions too much and thus we trivialize them. That narrows and misleads our perception: Once we “know” what is happening, our brain goes into something like a “power sleep mode”, reducing our perception to fit what we already know. We lock ourselves into a wrong interpretation of reality.

What is helpful to counteract this “lock in” phenomenon? In order to access this complex dynamic, we have to move beyond words and connect to our intuition and “gut feelings” – the surface of our subconscious inner self.

## Pandora’s Box

Where can we find this subconsciousness in a group? Wilfred Bion (2021) developed the theory that a group has many thoughts and feelings it can’t talk about in a specific moment, like fear, joy or curiosity. Bion says: We store that in a container, and we keep it there, and that means: We feel it, but we don’t talk about it. It stays unresolved, like a taboo, but temporary. We don’t keep it there forever (that would make it a true taboo no one ever is allowed to name). The trick our mind performs is this: While talking about something else, we build the ability to touch the unspeakable. Bion called this content of the container “thoughts, waiting for a thinker”.

In an early group process, we can observe this process most clearly: Imagine a situation when a new group process starts. A handful of strangers in a room, sitting in a circle, peeking at each other or looking down their nose,

reluctant to speak (or eager to speak up because silence is unbearable). What thoughts are around? They could be like “will these people be nice to me?”, or: “all these people seem so competent, only I am insecure” (and the irony is: many, if not all people feel that), or: “whom could I team up with to be comforted?”, and many more. To ask these questions aloud, or to express the anxiety associated with them, would be a taboo. If someone speaks it out, people might look away, no-one might answer, or a game of compliments and comforting might arise. It is a taboo because no one can resolve it at that point. So we keep quiet and keep it in the container.

As supervisors, it is extremely helpful to peek into this container: In developing ideas, to get at what is in there, we can focus our interventions in a way to support the group’s own ability so that the group itself develops the capacity to talk about what is contained. This is what we call “theory based intervention”.

We might call this container “Pandora’s Box”, and this image is very significant, because it shows our fear of touching this container. Greek mythological Pandora, a God-like beauty, receives a box from Zeus, containing all the evil and all the hopes of the world. On his orders, she gives the box to humanity with the instruction never to open it, and we know the outcome: humans do open it and unleash disaster. As practitioners in group dynamics, we tend to think of the container as something more friendly, rather something unfinished, growing, but very fragile, which needs time to mature – more like an embryo, waiting to be born.

### A Space With Three Dimensions

The idea of a group dynamic space dates back to the most prominent of all founders of group dynamics, Kurt Lewin. In his Field Theory, he describes how the complex

social interactions in a group create a dynamic field which influences our behaviour in a way that a particular action is more likely than others (Stützle-Hebel & Antons, 2015). That idea found fertile ground: William D. Schutz (1966) developed the idea of three dimensions within this “field”: Belonging, intimacy and power. As a two-dimensional “field” would not fit logically, the term “group dynamic space” emerged and was further developed by more recent scholars (Antons et al., 2004). What do these three dimensions mean?

#### • Belonging

“Belonging” distinguishes between inside and outside. This distinction is the very basis of a group: it establishes the space in which the group acts and develops, and the boundary to the outside, where it doesn’t. Lewin called this boundary “skin”, thinking of it as a semipermeable membrane: It lets something through, but still: there is inside and outside, and it is possible to tell the one from the other.

At the personal level, this boundary serves as protection: you might be a neglected or discriminated member of the group, but still a member – allowed to be there. The position along or “in” this skin is very delicate: affectively charged, endangered, sometimes also powerful as a gatekeeper to the outside world. Since the historic Jews used to blame a goat for all their sins and sent it out into the desert to die, exclusion is a terrible threat.

At the group level, this distinction between inside and outside stabilizes the group. Without this “skin”, the group will disintegrate at the first sign of trouble: No contact can persist, because every move could be the reason for chaos or dissolution. Protected by this skin, dissent is possible. Irritation can be seen and transformed and the group can develop.

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*A glimpse into how Group Dynamics can support Supervision: The „Group Dynamic Space“ enables us to diagnose, how groups organize themselves and perform. With this theory, we are able to set more effective group interventions, so that clients can cooperate more successfully with each other.*

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#### • Intimacy

“Intimacy” establishes individual contact and enables us to share the feeling of being close to each other. Let’s remember that being in groups is a state which can be inherently frightening too: We are unable to predict with certainty all others’ feelings and reactions towards us. Our subconsciousness reacts to this anxiety and searches for a remedy, and that is: it looks for allies. Symptoms of intimacy can be of a very transparent matter, like coming and leaving together, spending breaks together, being physically close, or openly referring to a “we” in front of others. It also has very subtle forms, like whom do we pay attention to, who supports whom or seeks eye contact.

At the personal level, it also allows us to differentiate from the group, without being all alone. It is the axis of like and

dislike and the space for sharing more intimate thoughts and feelings. If a group does not allow intimacy, fear will be high. Rarely anyone would expose anything from the unprotected inner self. Many might feel lonely.

At the group level, intimacy is an important key to its dynamic potential. Group members can regulate their fears and joy. This creates an environment in which a group is able to make contact, to differentiate, to disagree, to explore, to consolidate. In short: it enables the group to evolve and to perform.

#### • Power

We have to be careful with this concept, as it is understood in many different, contradictory ways, often emotionally charged. We see power as a social process which emerges when people interact - a definition we owe to the philosopher Hannah Arendt (1970). It reduces complexity and creates "order" by establishing hierarchy. It is not a property or role someone possesses, like when we say with fear or admiration: "This is a really powerful person". Hannah Arendt describes "following" as the autonomous and wilful act to subjugate one's own will to that of another. It is a property of a social relationship: Leading comes from following, thus power comes from people voluntarily doing and supporting what others do and say. It is a social habit deeply rooted in our human nature: In order to act in an interdependent way, we have a social process that lets us listen to some people more than to others.

At the individual level, power frees us from complexity. We don't have to think it all through by ourselves, because frankly, we can't. It also offers protection from the uncertainty of whether an enterprise will succeed or fail, because it is easier to think "we failed" than "I failed". In a group, we dare more and achieve more. It also enables us to feel the strength of having more than one pair of

hands, being able to achieve so much more than alone. It also enables us to experience the combination of trust and responsibility: Those who sign away their personal wishes and beliefs trust in others. Those who adopt and accept people following, assume responsibility for not only their own actions, but also those of their followers.

At a group level, power enables groups to move forward: The group can take decisions and develop coordinated actions that last. It can implement strategies that reach beyond first signs of things going wrong or failing. Groups which are unable to establish power relationships, and where the first one to call for action is denounced or ignored or otherwise punished, will not be able to achieve anything.

#### How The Dimensions Shape The Space

The theory says these three dimensions relate to each other in a permanent meta process: The group wanders dynamically in its focus between the dimensions. Just as humans have the tendency to make sense of a situation, groups do too.

We understand this process as being very dynamic: Focus can shift quickly, or it can stay for hours like the infamous "elephant in the room": Unresolved dimensions tend to come back over and over again.

We can also understand the space between the three axes as the space which is accessible to the group in a given moment: Which span and which dynamics of (for example) power can be sustained? The larger the space which the group "allows", the better the ability of the group to regulate itself.

We have to bear in mind that this is a mostly implicit process: Only on rare occasions is the group aware of its

wandering between the dimensions. People mostly follow their affections and instincts. They work hard to make sense of a situation, in order to reduce the emotional pressure and feel more at ease. This feeds Lewin's interdependent "field", making the group move. Some dimensions might be more dominant in typical phases like the beginning or the end of a group process, although the theory of the group dynamic space is not a phase theory: It does not describe a specific process, but a space for a process which develops individually in every group. This is what makes every group unique.

Let's move on from theory to practice. How can we make the unconscious and unspoken visible? We did this through a process of action and reflection at the ANSE Summer University by using the T-Group format.

#### The Training Group

Training groups (in short: T-groups) were developed accidentally: In 1946, Kurt Lewin conducted workshops against inter-racial prejudices between the Black and the Jewish community in the USA – the later famous "Connecticut Experiments". In a session break, the staff was reflecting on the group process, when participants first came to listen and then to join in. So, the staff decided to continue this joint reflection in session – the T-group was born, as "a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action" (Lewin 1946, p.35).

This research and practice were continued in the US-based National Training Laboratories (NTL), mainly focusing on leadership issues. Other scholars in the 1960's imported group dynamic practice into Germany as a means to re-democratise postwar Germany (König, 2007). In Lewin's tradition, pioneers in psychology, sociology, education, anthropology, psychiatry, and philosophy explored the

development of small groups with the goal of enhancing democratic values and implementing techniques for self-examination and feedback. The insights gained in the process have found their way far beyond the academic sphere, namely in organisational development programmes (Adelman, 1993). This multiple development was possible, because Lewin always saw this work from three perspectives: research, democratisation and learning.

In a T-Group, participants come together for a delimited time for experience-based learning. As a rule, a T-group consists of 8 to 14 people for the duration of several days up to one week. The T-Group does not have an explicit agenda or goal. As a consequence, the group members struggle to deal with this lack of structure and their behaviour becomes the focus of the T-group. The trainers' task is to support the participants in the exploration of the different parts of themselves and their effect on their fellow participants. The trainer holds back to the extent that he or she does not prescribe topics, but only intervenes to encourage the group members to share their emotional reactions that arise in the face of their fellow participants' statements and actions, and to reflect their role and contribution to the movement and development of the group.

### The T-Group In A Nutshell

The aim of our workshop in Budapest was to experience the group dynamic space. For that purpose we set up a T-Group format to allow the participants to explore themselves in "the here and now" of this specific group.

Classical T-groups need time to form and to evolve – time we did not have. So we applied an experimental form of the classic T-group, both in terms of time and number of participants – a "T-Group in a nutshell". We facilitated two T-groups with 9 and 10 participants each and

a duration of 15 minutes. Such short T-groups are anything but usual and in fact not suitable for the experience of real group development and profound self-examination. They are, however, quite useful for self-awareness, as we could determine from our own experience in a training session with Gilmore Crosby, an US-American group dynamics trainer, who learned his craft from his father Robert, a later student and collaborator of Kurt Lewin. Crosby proved to us that ultra-short T-Group sequences – some of which lasted only a few minutes – were very insightful. However, this experiment was embedded in a multi-day group dynamic training with experts in that field.

The use of these mini-T-groups in our workshop context was also a field of experimentation for us, where we trusted that supervisors would engage in this unusual setting with curiosity and an open mind.

### The Budapest Experiment

We first asked the participants to choose a mutual sparring partner in a non-verbal process. This in itself is an important intervention, as it directly affects the dynamics of the subsequent T-Group. We asked the participants to stand up, recommended them to move around to sense the space, and to observe what happens in the selection of their partners. We recommended that they take their time to re-adjust their selection until they felt at ease. Already this is the moment where all the mixed feelings of group formation stand out unspoken. One wonders: "Who do I want to join? Do I choose my sparring partner, or do I wait for someone to ask me? How can I get in contact with the others? How can I connect in the here and now?"

From our perspective, this process was completed very fast. This may be interpreted as an indication that the

group participants were still very cautious in this forming phase. They hold back and do not openly differentiate. They might still pretend that one can get along with everyone equally well.

Then we asked the couples to choose who would be participants in the T-group first. Next, we invited them to sit in two concentric circles: participants inside, observers outside. After the participants were seated, the T-group started. For this first round we offered a guiding question:

*"How can I get in contact with the others? How do I connect in the here and now?"*

We also defined the criteria for the observers:

- *Mindfully observe verbal and non-verbal communication of your sparring-partner. How does she or he contribute to the group?*
- *Consider and perceive your own thoughts, impulses, body sensations and emotions.*
- *Don't intervene in the T-group.*

And as for us as trainers, we chose to hold back and sat down in the outer circle. We made it clear that we were responsible for the time and spatial framework of the T-group and that we wouldn't intervene from the outside and would solely observe the process.

Within this agreed framework, the T-group got into action quite quickly. The only male participant took the floor first and emphasised that he did so contrary to his nature. As is typical for the first group phase, participants turned to us trainers and asked us for support and guidance to check if they understood the leading question correctly and to clarify who would supervise the time. We pointed out that these were exactly the issues that the group would have to negotiate. That led to a short discussion



about who would set the time. Someone pointed out that the trainers would remind the group anyway. As such, no-one committed to a specific role such as timekeeper. Then one participant shared how she felt about the process. Another participant said it would be helpful for her to make contact by doing a round of introductions with everyone's name and origin. Here the T-group was divided into people who wanted to take up this suggestion and others who thought that it would be more interesting to discuss how they experience this group in the here and now, to share about self-perception and perception by others. So it went back and forth. This is where the first episode of the power dimension emerged – who prevails and how? After this first round the participants and their observers had ten minutes to reflect on the process and give feedback.

After the lunch break, we started the second part of the workshop with an entry round to share the main findings from the first T-group. The participants were eager to get into action and start the second T-Group in opposite roles – the observers from round one were to participate in the T-Group, while the others were to observe them.

We did not specify any questions for the second T-Group. Naturally, this one was characterised by the observations from the first round. One person expressed his excitement and that it was unusual for him to express his emotions in a group. One participant suggested standing up and holding hands. All group participants except one stood up, some more reluctantly than others. One participant unsuccessfully tried to motivate the person who remained seated to join in. The group gave in and sat down again – an episode of successful resistance. The discussion switched from perceptions from the “here and now” to individual past experiences non-related to the group. This is a strategy to relieve the tension. One person remained silent

during the whole T-group phase. Afterwards, the sparring partners had again ten minutes to share their observations and experiences.

Then we asked the participants to form small groups to reflect on how they contributed to shaping the group dynamic space. We assume that we all have competencies to regulate the group dynamic space – we have to explore and discover them in order to develop them further. These are the competencies the participants collected:

*Courage, empathy, initiation, presence, observing, listening to silence and working on silence, good listener, confidence, acceptance, assertiveness, flexibility, patience, keeper of structure, bringing in “the elephant in the room”.*

In the final plenary session, we discussed the main insights and the transfer for our supervision practice. The participants shared even more experiences that they did not express in the T-group. In the reflection, it was possible to discuss which impulses for action were given and which were not, for example, how one person in the group kept silent and felt bored by what was happening. This might be an example of alienation, not feeling fully belonging, or an example of resistance against power. Two sparring partners revealed that they explicitly chose to sit next to each other, which gave them a sense of security. Here, intimacy and closeness were experienced directly, even if it was initially unspoken in the group. And of course, the question of power also became visible, namely who sets the topic of the T-Group, who follows, who opposes. All three dimensions of the group dynamic space could thus be experienced.

### Application in Supervision

“There is nothing as practical as a good theory” – a quote attributed to Kurt Lewin. A theory is helpful – not as

guidance to act, but guidance to see: Theories help us to interpret the chaos our five senses pick up. We all have theories about group dynamics – if we cannot name them, they are implicit and unknown. Nevertheless, they guide our perception and interventions.

The group dynamic space is not a method. It is a diagnostic instrument to peek into the complex social interactions and how they relate to well-being and performance. We are able to develop hypotheses on the inner functioning of a group in a given situation. We are not different from group members in this aspect: Everyone in the group thinks about the group. As supervisors are trained for it and less concentrated on what the group does, we can have more focus on how. It is then a question of supporting the group in its internal abilities to develop and perform. Here, we supervisors are at a crossroads:

- Following a systemic mindset, we could confront the group with the unspoken in an attempt to evoke discussion about it.
- Following the group dynamic mindset, we would not necessarily share our observations. We might call out a taboo in the container, which is not yet ready to be seen, and risk unnecessary resistance. We would rather intervene in a way that the group can work on it by itself – acting, not telling.

Imagine a group which consciously or unconsciously avoids the dimension of power. We might think this, because few people propose anything, and those who do, meet resistance or silence. Such a group is unable to decide anything. Supporting the group in establishing a differentiated view on trust, leading, following and accountability might enable them to explore the benefit of power, make decisions and move on.

And finally, how can we do that? Many people blame group dynamics for not providing readymade tools. There is a lot of truth in that. Working with groups is less “having a tool”, but rather “being a tool”. Most group dynamic skills are rooted in practice and attitude, formed through the combination of theory, training and reflection. Any time is the right time to start and practise this capacity building process, even a 15 minute “T-group in a nutshell”. ■

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- We owe a special thanks to Oliver König for his know



### Claus Faber

Claus Faber is Group Dynamics Expert and Organisational Developer (DGGO, osb-i and others), Supervisor (ÖVS), economist (University of Economics, Vienna) and journalist (ORF). He teaches OD at the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg. He works as consultant, supervisor, coach, trainer and organisational developer in Vienna, Austria. In 2019 he founded <https://coachesforfuture.org>, a network of professionals to support the climate movement. More infos: <https://clausfaber.net>

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### Patrizia Tonin

Patrizia Tonin has studied communication sciences and is a graduate supervisor (SuCo University of Vienna) and group dynamic expert (ÖAGG - Austrian Association for Group Dynamics and Dynamic Group Therapy). She works as organisational consultant, supervisor, coach and trainer, in international settings. Her main areas of work are leadership and team development, supervision, coaching and training and facilitation of intercultural groups. She is also the President of the Austrian Association for Supervision and Coaching (ÖVS). More infos: <https://tonincommunications.com>

# From Artistic Exploration to Verbal Expression – Through Music

## Live- music as a reflection tool in Supervision and Coaching

■ Angela Büche and Jan Sjøberg

### Abstract

We gave this workshop about using live music as a method for reflection, at the Summer University in Budapest 2023. In this method, Music is used on one hand to activate the entire brain of participants, so that the whole self, including mind soul and body, is integrated into the reflection process. On the other hand, music is used as a projection tool to gain new insights about the topic, as well as offering the possibility of delving deeper into personal issues. This unlocks solutions and perspectives that are recognised and supported by the participants due to their holistic nature. The way we used live music as professional musicians, seems to be offering a completely new approach to Supervision.

In the interview below, we describe the motivation behind developing this method, the added value it can bring to a reflection process, and some of the scientific

concepts upon which it is based.

We also discuss the possibilities of using recorded music instead of live music.

In this specific Workshop Angela performed on the cello, while Jan played the piano.

### An interview with the workshop leaders, focusing on their background and motivation for developing this method

**Movida:** Angela, what motivates you to connect your initial profession as a cellist with your current roles as a coach, supervisor, mediator, and trainer?

**Angela:** As a classically trained cellist, I have long pondered the question of how music could be integrated as a tool, into the more person-centred/coaching aspects of my work.

Like many of my colleagues, I've used various creative tools from the world of visual and body-oriented arts and theatre, together with cognitive and narrative approaches. I knew already how beneficial these were, supported as they are by insights deriving from neuropsychology.

I asked myself, how can I make fruitful the skills I developed during my time as a cello teacher so they could be of benefit to my clients in supervision? Were they transferable? Could there be an enhanced experience for the client through the additional value of music?

I taught cello for over 30 years and valued the uplifting and empowering effects of music.

Having guided my students through all the different mental, emotional, social and physical-technical learning processes for the music's sake, I now wanted to reverse the process and integrate music as an elementary reflection tool in supervision to help activate the potential of greater





self-awareness in the client.

Furthermore, with the help of music, my intention is to give my clients a degree of independence, so that subsequently, with their new self-management tool, they might coach themselves on forthcoming challenges and issues.

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*When I started to integrate music as a tool, I found that it brings forth new mental, emotional and social insights to the presenting issue. The method reveals its completely holistic nature as it also re-energizes the client physically.*

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I'd like to thank my colleague, Jan, for his exceptionally constructive collaboration. Reflecting on the questions that arose throughout the development process with a fellow expert was very helpful and encouraging.

**Movida:** Jan, what motivates you to connect your initial professions as a teacher and musician with your current roles as a psychologist and meta-supervisor?

**Jan:** Since I was a teenager, I have been curious about the relationship between music and emotions, moods, and atmosphere. As a musician and through my education in integrative therapy and supervision, I had the opportunity to delve deeper into this theme, often in

combination with other creative media. For the past two years, Angela and I have been part of an intervention group with the working title 'Music and Art in Supervision.'

This led us to explore the question: What is the difference between using sound and music as a creative tool and using music as an art form in supervision? This, of course, relates to how we define music as art. As a starting point, Angela and I defined it as a combination of the quality of the music itself and the depth of the connections the musician forms with the music, the instrument, themselves, the audience, and the surroundings. Through our education in classical music, we aimed to delve further into the quality of live classical music performance and how it can be used in supervision.

I met Angela during an online workshop at the ANSE Summer University in 2021 and was fascinated by how she incorporated music, musical analogies, and her experiences as a professional cellist into her supervisory approach. She inspired me to bridge two significant aspects of my life: the world of music, especially classical music, and the field of supervision. This marked the beginning of our creative collaboration and the development of this workshop.

**Movida:** How did you approach the development of this tool, and what professional background knowledge did you draw upon?

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*Description, discussion, reflection and the scientific foundation of the workshop.*

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**Jan:** For me, the integrative approach from Petzold (e.g., Petzold, 2007) has made a great impact of my supervisory work. This approach integrates body-awareness and embodied understanding of psychological processes – in combination with the use of creative media in therapy and supervision. Body- and creative work are used in warming up exercises, i.e., to stimulate body- and sense-awareness as preparation, as in conflux processes in team building (Petzold, 2007) or in group supervision (Sjøberg, 2022). Furthermore, this connects to the understanding of top-down- (from mind to muscles and the senses), bottom-up- (from the body and senses to mind), and synchronization-processes (Petzold, 2004). In the workshop using music as a reflection tool, all these processes were included. Also, my classical-educational background has been important in creating the workshop, related to the art-aspect of music, and learning how audiences are moved through music.

The Feedback from the participants of the workshops was in accordance with our intention around the processes mentioned above.

1. Music as a **warming up** tool: 'How music helps to go inside: Powerful', 'Music talks directly to the body', 'Very quickly brought me to my senses, 'Goes directly to the body - relax - communication - there is more than words'.
2. Feedback connected to the **bottom-up** approach: 'Music influenced the feelings – and afterwards also the thoughts', 'Inspiring. Beautiful. Sounds without words to words' and 'Real topics coming up', 'The music touches deep feelings', and 'Connect beyond the real'.
3. Feedback connected to the **top-down** approach: 'Bringing new perspectives', 'Brain – heart coherence'. 'The problem melted away, it got smaller', 'Effectful', 'The music solved the inner problem', 'Effective method to create inner pictures that help to solve problems'



**Angela:** As I have been working with various approaches from solution-focused and resource-oriented methods, I explored which scientific model would be most suitable as an underlying concept for the method 'music as a reflecting tool'.

I decided to take the Zurich Resource Model ZRM®, which I have been working with for 12 years. It is an integrative psychoeducational method based on neuropsychological insights.

The scientific background of this training and what I learnt from my many years in music teaching inspired me to create this new music-tool.

**Movida:** What is the added value when music is used as a tool for reflection, and how is it achieved?

**Angela:** I would like to present a few more core thoughts. When music is used as a tool for reflection, supervisees engage their entire mental, emotional, and physical selves to find solutions to their issues. How does this work? The answers to this phenomenon can be found in the latest neuropsychological research, which has yielded significant insights into the processing of music in the human brain. Throughout the entire process of reflection, we utilize the so-called priming effect for a reflection process. Priming means that desired neural networks are activated and are influencing perception or further behaviour.

Music requires the activation of the entire brain to be perceived at all! Research shows that we need a multitude of different brain areas to construct and perceive music from the few sound waves picked up by the ear (Altenmüller, 2018). Each ear has only about 3,500 hair cells to capture sound waves from the environment and to transmit them further to the brain. In comparison, the eye has over 100 million photoreceptor cells that provide us with information about the outside world. Due to the limited information received through the sound waves from the external en-

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*When music is integrated into the supervision process, it allows for the activation of the entire brain, which, as described above, influences how solutions can be found through the priming effect.*

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vironment, the entire brain is required to process and create a meaningful musical experience.

Processing music requires both short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memory is activated by relating tones and harmonies to each other on the timeline, enabling the perception of melodies. Long-term memory is activated to compare what one is hearing now with all the auditory experiences one has had in the past. In this way listening to music activates the whole person with their individual biography and experience.

Music naturally and effectively triggers emotions in most people. These emotions are helpful in an effective counselling process, as they provide energy and serve as guides. It's important to note that everyone processes and perceives music based on their individual biography and listening experience. Additionally, it requires the supervisor to provide mindful guidance so that the client can fully engage in the reflective process.

**Jan:** To add something around our perspectives on emotions and connectedness in music: Our understanding draws upon a broad view of what lies behind musical experience: it's created both from the musician (and composer) and



the audience, i.e., created both from outside (that means, the music) and inside (the listener) – with an emphasis on communication and contact (Frohne-Hagemann, 1991) as well as the emotional experiences and atmosphere in the room. Julsin in his BRECVEMA model gives an interesting overview of aspects relevant to understand emotional reactions from listening to music: biological (brain stem reflexes), musicological (rhythmic entrainment, expectancies), psychological (biography of the

listener, conditionings, emotional contagion), visual imagery and aesthetic value and judgement (Julsin, 2016, p. 207).

**Movida:** Based on this foundation, could you describe the reflection process you have developed?

**Angela:** Using music as a tool for reflection encompasses the following:

1. Choosing the issue.
2. Listening to the music to activate neural networks.
3. Connecting the musically activated brain with the topic.
4. The reflection process itself.
5. Preparation for the transfer of the reflection process to everyday life.

**Movida:** Do you have any recommendations regarding limitations or possibilities in your approach presented in the workshop?

For example: Is it important what kind of music to play, such as composed or improvised music or what instruments to use?

Are there any possibilities for a supervisor who is not a musician to do something like what you did?

**Jan:** Yes, it is possible to improvise music within this approach, depending on the experience and quality of the improvisation, as well as the ability to adapt to the atmosphere of the participants. This leads to the question: How to choose the music, and how important is it to find the 'right' music for the participants? Does the sound from different instruments have a different impact?

What are your thoughts on this, Angela?

**Angela:** In general, different kinds of music and different instruments have varying impacts on people. There are cultural factors and it's crucial to be aware of individual differences based on their musical experiences and personal

biography.

And yes, different instruments can indeed have different impacts. As one participant mentioned: 'The cello is a very touching instrument - the vibration is beautiful and can be a bodily experience'. The results with different instruments may differ but their various qualities can be potentially equally effective.

But more important than the choice of instruments is the mindful relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee together with their attentive listening.

Instead of us choosing the music, it's also possible to let the participants choose, depending on factors such as the timeframe, whether it's group or individual supervision, and other considerations.

**Movida:** Is it also possible to use recorded music?

Jan: There are some significant differences between live and recorded music. A high-quality hi-fi stereo system can reproduce the sound closely to live performance. However, there are other crucial factors that can make a substantial difference: The musicians are physically present in the room with their bodies and emotions, and, as I mentioned earlier, they connect and go in resonance on various levels. This means a much richer spectrum of contact and connection, where mirror neurons play a vital role. Of course, recorded music can trigger connections for the participants. However, they won't receive the stimulation from the supervisor playing the music which activate different senses, body movements, emotional expressions etc.

**Movida:** Does it make a difference if you use music as random background noise or as a specific reflection tool as you do?

**Angela:** Randomly heard music can also be helpful. However, it can trigger emotions that subsequently lead to thoughts and behaviours that are not conducive to desired

goal achievement and problem-solving.

Through mindful, guided listening, music will trigger the emotions. However, these emotions can be channelled in a direction that is in line with the achievement of the desired goal.

**Movida:** As you mentioned, music can activate strong feelings. Is there anything to consider?

**Jan:** One thing to be aware of is that music can activate feelings connected to current or past life experiences. Creating a welcoming space and a caring, accepting atmosphere may provide room for the expression of these feelings. At the same time, one must assess whether the supervisory setting and the limited timeframe are suitable for opening to such feelings. In our workshop, some participants expressed vulnerable emotions, which subsequently led to emotional contagion within the group. Feedback from the participants describes some of these reactions: 'The music touches deep feelings,' 'Experienced a lot of strong emotions,' 'Very touching', and 'Intimate and fragile'.

**Movida:** What experience have you got from 'music as a reflecting tool,' and how do you plan to further develop and integrate it into your work?

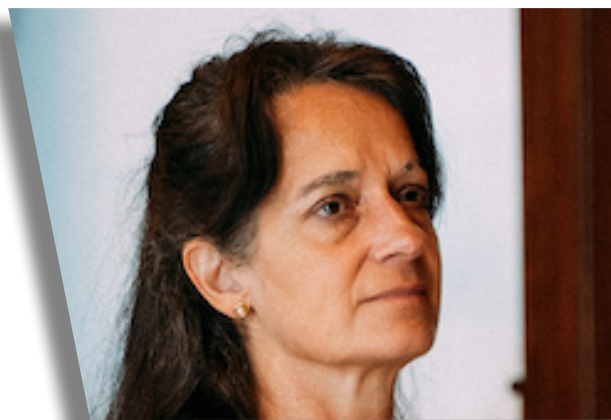
Jan: First, I got inspiration from the workshop, because the use of music in supervision turned out to have a greater impact on the participants, than expected. This, in turn, opens for potential use that Angela and I want to explore further. I also want to investigate the philosophy and aesthetics of music and of music psychology, as well as research connected to our topic – to be able to go even more into the theme of art and supervision processes. On the more concrete level, I will use even more of both music and creative media in my daily supervision work in Norway.

**Angela:** Over the past year, I have used this tool in various settings, such as in coaching, team supervision, mediation, and different training contexts. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This encourages me to develop this tool furthermore and to integrate it into my daily work. ■

\* As we have developed this tool for different counselling contexts, we will not distinguish between coaches, supervisors, and clients in the text.

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#### Angela Büche

Angela Büche MSc. is an academic coach, supervisor, mediator, lecturer, and organizational consultant. She has offices in Salzburg and Vienna. Before starting her career as a coach, Angela had worked for 35 years as a professional musician (Cello). She gives individual coaching and workshops with professional Musicians, Orchestras, Conductors. She also teaches at various universities in Austria. She works with government civil servants in Vienna as well as in the business sector. Mindful self-management, motivation, Positive Leadership and team development are amongst her favourite subjects. She is a member of the ÖVS (Österreichische Vereinigung für Supervision und Coaching) and Boardmember of the ÖGFMM (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Musik und Medizin). She is President of the WSE, (Motivations- und Vernetzungsplattform für Kunst- und Kulturschaffende). E-mail: [Info@stimmig-leben.com](mailto:Info@stimmig-leben.com)



#### Jan Sjøberg

Jan Sjøberg is Specialist in clinical psychology and educated in Integrative therapy and Integrative supervision. He has studied piano at Musical conservatory. He has also a master degree in psychology and in 'organization and leadership'. His main work is meta-supervising in the Child Welfare Services (Bufetat), Norway. He has a small supervision and psychotherapy private practice in Oslo, and he is a guest lecturer and workshopholder at universities and colleges, for Supervisors' networks, and at international conferences. He is teacher therapist for Integrative therapy education in Norway. He has been president of Norwegian association for Integrative therapy (NFIT), and boardmember of Supervisors' network NOSCO (2004 – 2014). E-mail: [jan@kreativdialog.no](mailto:jan@kreativdialog.no)



# Brain-heart-coherence creates fluid identities

■ Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger

## Abstract

Have you ever asked yourself: What could happen if you lived without identities?

How would you feel?

What would you do?

The current times are turning many previous values and identities upside down, they really shake them up.

This feels like an invitation to let go of old patterns and behaviours, to go above certain limits and to create something new. We no longer can refer to experiences, methods and strategies that we used so far.

Now the question is: how to cope with the transition

between the old and the new. Which resources can we generate to go through this process? Sometimes we can't even describe the state of mind, nor find words to name it. In this article you can read how we can open up brain-heart coherence and use it as a tool to go beyond previously known experiences. It enables us to get access to our inner voice. Listening to it a field of unlimited possibilities will show up, that lead us to new creative acts in our daily life. By implementing them and bringing them to life, new identities and values will emerge.

## Introduction

Why have I chosen this topic?

I have been an experienced supervisor and coach for decades, using the tool of brain-heart-coherence. I thought it could be worthful for my colleagues to present this tool at the summer university. I was also inspired by the title of the summer university: Going Beyond Words – Values and Identities in an incomprehensible World.

In these very shaky times it is important for us as professionals to provide tools that may go beyond previous or hitherto used ones, to be able to accompany our coachees to create solutions, ideas and concepts which follow the actual new needs.

As I have a lot of good experiences using this tool for companies, leadership, in counselling and supervision I would like to introduce you to this tool in the following article.

At the beginning I am going to give you a short overview of reflections about the designation – Going Beyond:

## 1. Going beyond words – Step into intuition

Language is a very important tool for us professionals.

The spoken word is a means to express ourselves, to explain situations, to discuss problems, to figure out our solutions etc. Our coachees use words to describe their questions, concerns and problems. It is our job to encourage them to tell us the issues in details, accurately in the right words.

Going beyond words, brain-heart-coherence offers a step into intuition. We extend the function of spoken words by using heart intelligence. It is like adding a further voice, the inner voice which allows us to hear what intuition is telling you. This is always truthful, powerful informati-



on. It opens up a broader spectrum of possibilities than just the words. The answer is coming out of our whole potential, full of possibilities and creativity you might not have experienced before. Our supervisees might feel strange or unfamiliar with this tool. So your work as a coach is to explain how this tool works and to support them in integrating these extended outcomes into their daily business.

## **2. Going beyond old thought patterns – step into silence**

How can we recognize new values and identities if we always think in old thought patterns? Our thoughts are often stuck, we refer to old experiences. In order to create new things we need an open space..

Creating something new out of old patterns cannot function. If we listen exactly to the clattering of our mind we notice that many old beliefs are hidden in them. This may colour and influence our new plans and ideas. It seems like describing a white sheet of paper by not noticing that there are already many old sentences and we just write over it. Or filling a half empty glass of water and believing it to be completely fresh. Stepping into silence allows us to become aware of the clattering and try to become quiet. This is an important prerequisite to feel connection to our heart and open up space to receive answers and information out of the brain-heart-coherence.

## **3. Go beyond previous behavior and strategies – step into creativity**

Previous used patterns and behaviors should be recognized and reviewed. Which of them are really still helpful? Are they still functioning in times where so much new is emerging? We must be brave to discard what does not serve anymore, open up the brain-heart-coherence to let emerge new creative solutions.

## **4. Earlier professional identities - step into new professional being and acting**

Our professional identity used to be and still is very important. We are identified with the formation, with the training, with our colleagues and the orders we received. It might be disconcerting to go beyond hitherto used tools. New ideas and strategies might come out of fit. Brain-heart-coherence invites us to sense exactly, if previous acting still fits us. We are called to ask ourselves: Do we dare to act in a new, adapted way for us? Or are we afraid of being judged by others?

## **5. Former knowledge – step into your full wisdom**

We use our previous knowledge and experiences, wherever it is useful. In addition we open up brain-heart-coherence to draw from our entire potential by opening up the full wisdom.

### **Brain-heart-coherence**

I would like to anticipate, that this tool basically is very simple and anyone everybody can apply or use it.

Coherence is when your brain works with your heart and body. It is a state of unity between your mind and body. This state of harmony allows you to be more present and aware. When you are in a state of coherence, your body can heal itself and function at its optimal level.

Brain-heart-coherence is a very powerful tool to create an open space out of which answers and ideas to our questions will arise. They will be much more energetic than if we only use the mind.

Do you ever feel like your head and heart aren't on the same page? Your thoughts tell you one thing, but your feelings tell you another? We are all experiencing this gap between thinking and acting. On the other hand,

you probably also know what it feels like to be entirely at peace in your heart, mind, and state of "flow or harmony." We are highly trained to use our mind as a source of information and problem solving. We are not experienced to use the heart intelligence. Our attitudes are mostly learned in our childhood, influenced by the way we have been brought up, carved in as of "All the forms of dos and don'ts, of one does and one must". We were literally made to act according to what was meant to be right. Even if our gut-feeling told us the opposite.

Science is now confirming that the brain and the heart each have a type of "intelligence" and that we can create a state of harmony with practice.

This harmony is called "coherence." When your thoughts, emotions, and intentions are unified, you will experience tremendous unity and peace with yourself and a deeper connection to those around you. Research shows that when we shift into a coherent state, the heart and brain operate synergetically, like two systems that mesh.

When the mind and heart are out of balance, it leads to stress, anxiety, and depression. But when the mind and heart are balanced, it increases clarity, focus, and peace. When we are in a state of heart and brain coherence, we are honest with ourselves, we accept the facts and our feelings in response to the facts wholeheartedly, and we take aligned action from the bottom of our hearts.

Coherence is when your brain works with your heart and body. It is a state of unity between your mind and body. This state of harmony allows you to be more present and aware. There are many benefits to being in a state of the wisdom of our heart. Heart is connected to intuition, inspiration and feeling good.

## Practical experience

This short practical experience can give you a first experience and idea of how you can open and train brain-heart-coherence.

Take a deep breath, if you want close your eyes, put one hand on your heart, take another deep breath. Feel how you sit, notice your body, how does it feel, notice thoughts that may arise, don't judge them. Bring your attention to the present moment, to your heart, focus inside. Ask yourself a question, a real topical one, to which you want an answer. Listen to your inner voice, open up the space to welcome whatever may arise. Probably it may not be the one you would expect. Maybe it's not convenient, or at the first moment you don't understand, just listen, take another deep breath, be aware of the feelings coming up, just observe. Take another deep breath, try to remember the answer, slowly come back to the present situation. Now take some minutes to share or write it down for you.

This was a first step to experience this state, both for you personally, as well as coach and supervisor. We should get trained in this tool to offer it to our coachees. You open up the connection to your inner voice, you listen inside, receive, perceive. You do not judge, don't criticize. Normally we are used to talking, to describing, to finding proper words. This is the energy of mind. Opening up brain-heart-coherence allows you to gain access to your full potential and create something out of it. Experiencing what a power this tool offers is worth experiencing.

## Fluid identities

Brain-heart-coherence has a great impact on identity. It might shake our previous feel identities and we are called to verify them and to become more fluid. Our social identity is built by the persons and roles we

adopt. Most people have a rich structure of social identities. People gravitate towards expressions, convictions and experiences that resonate with them.

Both, identity and experience affect how individuals perceive their world, their beliefs and values. It is important to know, that an individual's fluid identity can help the individual understand who they are. The need for individuals today to develop previously unknown and unused competencies and sensitivities is becoming more and more necessary.

By opening up brain-heart-coherence you naturally are in the present moment. You can feel what and whom you identify. You will not feel any more a must – to belong to a certain group of people, to belong to your working team. You feel free to go and stand for what you feel connected with.

Identity is no longer fixed and bound to beliefs and hitherto valid values, it is work in progress. Fluid identity can be described as an identity that is constantly changing and evolving. What rises to the surface is always in a state of change. We check whether our inner values also correspond to the new outer situation. We analyse if we feel good, if our heart resonates in harmony to what we choose, what we do and the people we are surrounded by.

Going into the new, implementing the new and being creative presupposes fluid identities. Without letting loose old beliefs and thought patterns we will remain stuck in old identities and we cannot create and apply strategies which are driving new creations forward.

## Suggestions for cultivating brain-heart-coherence

- **Practice pausing regularly, do nothing but focus your attention on the moment**  
If you have a minute to spare, put down your phone and just breathe. Be in the moment and experience

the present: what is around you? What can you feel? Examine these feelings and moments and simply just be still for a minute. Bring your attention to the present moment. Brain-heart-coherence will open up and you will receive answers and information out of your full potential, out of a big field of infinite possibilities – more diverse and extensive than if you listened to the mind.

- **Make sure that unstructured time and idle time becomes a natural part of your daily life.**  
You will notice that your mind is constantly quaking, babbling and chatting. Imagine your brain like a big muscle, which was trained all over the years. Now you start to train your heart muscle. Going beyond words supports you to quieten your mind, you become free to listen to your inner voice and new ideas and information will arise.
- **Cultivate mindfulness and inner connection**  
Mindfulness is the present. It's about being there in the moment and feeling the thoughts, senses, and feelings that are all around you. We go through many emotions every single day. From sadness to happiness, anger to confusion, we are humans that feel. Next time you're reacting to an event or trigger, ask yourself why you're feeling these emotions. What is making you react in this way? Is there a different way than you could process this?  
Once we realize that we don't need to be as reactive as we think we do, we understand that our emotions do not define us. They are just simply reflective of what we are currently going through.
- **Explore what it means to do a job you really identify with**  
Do you feel good in your job? Can you stand by the

values? Do you look forward to it most of the time when getting up? Is there anything you are doing only about status and pseudo belonging? Are you ready to allow yourself to let go of old values and beliefs? Make a check and be really honest with yourself, your inner voice will tell you what's right for you.

### Profit for our coachees

#### Outcome for our coachees and supervisees

So what can this tool offer to our coachees?

It not only has powerful effects on our mental and emotional health, stability and resilience but also on our physical health. It can affect heart rate, immune system, sleep quality, and overall energy levels

**Increased creativity** – creativity is mainly connected to intuition, flow, gut-feeling, wellbeing. These sensations are located in our heart. Using this power of brain-heart-coherence allows us to think bigger, to go beyond previous designs and ideas. Offering this open space, you will notice that your coachees start to bring up something never thought of before. Be aware, often in a first moment they devalue or discard these ideas because they immediately put them under the mind's magnifying glass. They will bring up arguments why it could not function, why it is not possible etc. You can mirror them, that they fall back into old patterns, and support them to cope with the new. Encourage them to describe these new ideas and concepts and to continue their thoughts. Keep them going to put themselves into future situations. Ask them: How does it feel, who is there with you, how could the reaction of your employees be etc? It seems like you are putting yourself in the situation as if it was already there, as if it had already happened. This causes the body and the thoughts to already be aligned with the new possibili-

ties. Take time to extend this perception and be curious what shows up.

**Improved decision-making** – Brain-heart-coherence makes decision making easier – remember being balanced, asking both sides, heart and mind. By opening up this space you will perceive which decision is feeling right. You give your coachees time to adjust to the upcoming decision. You can lead them to a discussion about advantages, or disadvantages. You can offer a discussion about their inner values, and identities and guide them in this process, which can be very challenging. Be prepared. You yourself as coach, should stay tuned into this tool, continue practicing, otherwise you as a professional are in danger falling into back to old thinking and acting patterns. Remain open and vigilant.

**Greater clarity of thought** – of course there will be a big impact on thinking. It is not any more the mind alone which is producing thought, by thought. It seems like sending the thought to your heart intelligence, to your inner voice, and expect the answer with interest and curiosity. You will learn to focus your thoughts on outcomes you really want and no longer remain unconsciously focused in hamster wheel thoughts. In turn you will notice that feels good, it feels right, fresh in accordance with your heart vibration.

The effect also will be an **improved emotional stability** and **increased physical energy**. Your coachees will **reduce their stress levels** and therefore have a **better sleep quality**.

### Conclusions

According to my experiences I encourage supervisors and coaches to use this tool. Integrating brain-heart-coherence takes you a big step further towards personal deve-

lopment for professionals and a more extensive outcome for our coachees. Offering the possibility of an inner open space the outcome of our counselling will bring new insights and outcomes for our supervisees. Specially in these shaky times of uncertainties and not-knowing it is a stable tool. It enables us to guide our coachees to let new creative solutions emerge. Besides, they will feel more inner stability, more secure and less stressed. ■



#### Dr. Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger

Dr. Barbara De Dominicis Ebetsberger has worked for years as supervisor, coach, psychologist and psychotherapist in Italy and abroad. After completing educations and trainings in systemic-structure-constellation, auto-poietic-constellation and other different constellation formats she expanded her field of activity. Today she supports coaches, leaders, teams and organizations as an experienced systemic-structure facilitator, coach and supervisor, to bring up their full potential. In her work she combines theoretical knowledge and inner wisdom to empower aspects of self-awareness in the persons and creating new ways for enterprises to follow self-organizing principles.



# Metaphor cards as an effective projective tool in the process of supervision and coaching

■ Marika Saard

## Abstract

This article is inspired by the workshop “Values that sustain and support” and the purpose of is to provide a brief overview of the use of illustrated metaphorical cards as a projective technique to enrich the supervision and coaching process. To this end, the general meaning of metaphors and the factors influencing their use in the counselling process are first highlighted. Thereafter, the article will outline the benefits of using metaphorical cards for both the supervisor and coach and the client, and the challenges and some important observations for working with metaphorical cards. At the end the author shares her own experiences with the use of metaphor cards.

## Introduction – metaphors in counselling

Metaphor is from the Greek word *metaphora* meaning a transfer. Individually, *meta* means along with, beyond, while *phore* means thing or part bearing (Merriam-Webster dictionary). The metaphor is about treating one thing as something else, and its primary task is to facilitate understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 2011: 69). The essential value of metaphor for therapy lies in the transfer of meaning, the capacity to bridge concepts and the capacity to extend the imagination into recognizing new possibilities (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001). In the counselling context can be thought of as referring to, “a certain kind of product – a perspective or frame, a way of looking

at things – and to a certain kind of process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence” (Schön, 1979: 254, based on Legowski & Brownlee, 2001).

Metaphor gives the externalized concept an image a role about which the client can then converse. Thus, metaphor easily affords itself to the telling of the person’s story. The influence of the problem can be traced through the storyline. By using the metaphor created by the client, the therapist elicits the client’s story of the problem. Descriptions, actions, and communications the metaphor may have, are drawn from the client by questions asked by the therapist (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001). Metaphors are also fundamental building blocks of imagination. They provide vivid descriptors that activate mental imagery and support the representational nature of fantasy and projection. (Haen, 2020)

We use metaphors in our speech daily, and most of us do not realize the fact that these expressions are metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson, 2011: 62). According to Haen (2020) metaphors are ubiquitously embedded in language and have both individual and universal properties and that metaphors are defined as components of speech in which one thing is used to represent another. Lakoff and Johnson (2011: 12, 58) add that metaphors are not just figures of speech, but also fundamental forms of embodied cognition in which abstract concepts in thinking are rooted in states of the body. They argue that metaphor has the capacity not just to express these bodily states but also to influence them, a process intimately intertwined with the experience of emotion.

There is evidence to suggest that co-created metaphors, those developed by therapist and client together, contribute to positive outcomes in treatment; as does the use of a central metaphor or theme to describe a problem



the patient is working on that is developed over time and elaborated through additional related metaphors (Törneke, 2017, based on Haen 2020). This shared language can offer understanding, reassurance, and hope while strengthening the bond within the counselling relationship.

**A projective method – metaphorical cards**

Projective techniques date back to the beginning of the 20th century, and, above all, they aimed to study personality disorders and what are the factors that prevent a person from ‘moving forward’ (Cohen *et al*, 2015). A valued projective method that has become accepted in recent years in psychotherapy is the use of metaphorical techniques (Kopp 2015), such as metaphorical cards. Metaphorical cards (*also used: therapeutic, associative, projective, metaphor cards*) – consist of illustrated images depicting situations and events from different walks of life in which there are no fixed/ specific interpretations and/ or values (Ayalon & Siso-Ayalon, 2012; Popova & Miloradova, 2014) and provoking the use of metaphors in conversation. The goal of these cards is to recreate a story using a person’s imagination (Cohen *et al*, 2015).

Metaphorical cards are a choice/ordering technique (in which an item is chosen from a selected group of pictures or words) that allows the participant to make a choice based on the correctness, relevance, attractiveness, or repugnance of the item chosen (Levin-Rozalis, 2006; Lindzey, 1959). The cards work as a consulting tool precisely because patterns of the personality’s functioning associated with the experience of its surrounding reality and, above all, its relations with the social environment, become obvious in the process of counselling (Popova & Miloradova, 2014). Ayalon’s (2007) argues that metaphorical cards stimulate the imagination as they symbolize previous (traumatic) events.

**Benefits of using metaphorical cards**

Pictures and images tell us more than ideas put into words because for communicating in the visual language and understanding it, people already have developmental benefits. While looking at the pictures, we can quickly contact our emotions. An image may contain a huge number of elements that speak to people in different ways.

Using metaphorical cards:

- might lead to insights, awareness of repressed information, changing of emotional states, and reassessment of goals (Ayalon, 2003; Popova & Miloradova, 2014).
- allows internal representations of the world through creativity, imagination, and flexibility (Popova & Miloradova, 2014).
- enables access to deeper levels of emotion (Ayalon, 2003).
- can also help trigger processes of trust, bonding, and safe communication between the therapist and client. This is achieved by reinforcing the idea and practice in which the client is the one who provides the interpretation of the metaphorical element (Ayalon & Siso-Ayalon, 2012).

Metaphorical cards can be considered as one of the effective intervention tools for the supervision and coaching process. They provide an excellent opportunity to address a variety of topics and intensify work with clients, at the individual and team, as well as organizational levels.

Metaphorical cards are not only useful for the supervisors and coaches but for the client as well. Table 1 provides some examples.

The use of metaphors, stories, images, and similar expressive media, whether in the therapeutic or the supervision process, assumes that a story or image can represent the objective or subjective perception of internal or external reality. Relating to the representative image is likely to change internal reality or can bring about a change in perceiving the external reality, but it does not aspire to achieve change in the objective reality itself. (Lahad, 2000: 15)

According to Ayalon and Siso-Ayalon (2012) the metaphorical cards help create a “safe space”, in which a client feels free to move safely from areas of pain to areas of

Table 1. Benefits of metaphorical cards for the supervisor, coach, and client (Karnieli-Miller *et al*, 2017; Cirillo & Crider, 1995; Lyddon, Clay & Sparks, 2001).

It helps the supervisor, the coach...	It helps the client...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• promote a deeper experience and contact.</li><li>• collect information about the client’s values, experiences, and interpretations.</li><li>• ask supplementary (metaphorical) questions.</li><li>• process more information and get to the “core” faster.</li><li>• approach the meeting creatively, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• express feelings, beliefs, and values.</li><li>• move to deeper levels of experience.</li><li>• recall repressed experiences.</li><li>• release blocked feelings.</li><li>• in verbal self-expression.</li><li>• talk about sensitive topics in a safe way.</li><li>• bring out different perspectives.</li><li>• get more clarity about his/her experience and story.</li><li>• facilitate sharing of his/her story, etc.</li></ul>

healing in a relatively short period. This space can be a concrete or an imaginary one. It can be located indoors (in a castle or a cave) or outdoors (in a jungle, forest, or sunflower field). Clients may choose to be themselves or play one of many varied roles, such as realistic roles, desired roles, imaginary roles, etc. With the right use, it is possible to identify coping strategies and develop new ones (Ayalon, 2003).

The metaphor, as the right hemisphere's language, can shatter vicious circles of negative thought and behaviour and create a beneficial change. The metaphoric language



ge created when working with cards enables people to "jump over" their defence mechanisms, which are based on routine, social conventions, etc. When participants are invited to pick a card and use it to introduce themselves, they can "reinvent themselves" using imaging, lines, colour, or shape. The cards invite them to turn to latent resources of imagination to mobilize visual, sensual, and intuitive modes of thinking. (Ayalon & Siso-Ayalon, 2012)

### Challenges of using metaphorical cards

As with any technique, the use of metaphorical cards can present several hazards and challenges, especially in the case of incompetence and ignorance. Here are some examples (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2017; Kearney, 2004):

- the use of metaphorical cards can include interference with the train of thought, allowing associated and mystical speech and thinking, and talking in slogans.
- the use of metaphorical cards might not influence the client's ability to share information and hence seems unhelpful, as writing.
- in case of incompetence the cards might fly themselves to broad interpretations, leading clients to discuss issues not relevant to the counselling topic.
- metaphorical cards might activate associations in participants' minds (e.g., with traumatic experiences), which might negatively affect their well-being.
- metaphorical cards might lead to extra burden for both parties: clients might feel burdened by the need to choose and explain a picture, and the supervisor or/ and the coach might feel burdened because of additional time requirements and workload derived from the need.

**Thus, the use of metaphorical cards, like any other technique or approach, is not self-evident. Certain basic facts are important, and they serve to prevent harming the client.**

One important observation in the work with metaphorical cards is that the supervisor and/ or coach does not create nor interpret the images, but merely asks questions to develop the metaphor and the story. If the supervisor interprets the images or suggests images, the meaning of the metaphor may be misconstrued since a metaphor can have a multiplicity of meanings (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001).

By creating their own metaphors, clients are using their own resources in storying, reframing, and solving their problems. This is an empowering process since it depends on the clients' weaving of their own images from the past, present and into the future. Since the interpretations of metaphors featured in the cards are completely in the eye of the beholder, the same card can trigger different reactions in different participants (Ayalon & Siso-Ayalon, 2012). Popova and Miloradova (2014) add that due to the selectivity of perception, apperception, and projection effects, the client sees in the picture of the card exactly what fits his experiences, related to current life situations and outlooks on life, past experience, and personal injury.

In addition, it should not **be forgotten that metaphorical cards alone do not do the job. The fundamentals of counselling and the ability to use metaphorical cards purposefully and with great expertise and caution are still important.**

Furthermore, this method of generating metaphors depends on the client's willingness and ability to use imagination. Not all people want to participate. It is important to be sensitive to this position and careful to follow the lead of the client by inviting them into the process. This is especially evident in cases of a person seeking therapy who has an intractable mental illness or a physiological condition. Naturally, the person would like to be rid of

the problem, but it is probably unlikely. The creation of a metaphor affords the possibility of a metaphorical dialogue between the person and the problem, an arena in which negotiations could take place, so to speak. (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001)

### Experience of the author of the article

To this day, I've had ten years of experience in using metaphorical cards, and every year I notice how powerful this tool is. In 2015, I developed my first deck of metaphorical cards, Contemplation "Emotional and Situational Cards". However, it grew into a series of metaphorical cards. There are currently five different decks of cards and a sixth is being developed. Contemplation series are international and therefore perceived by representatives of different cultures. They are suitable for working with clients of different sexes, ages, and social statuses – the cards are spread around the world in different countries and cultures.

As mentioned before, metaphorical cards encourage the use of metaphors. It can be a key that opens many doors that the client may not be aware of and entering through the door can lead to a "real theme", gradually and carefully (did you notice the metaphors here?). However, most counselling (including supervision and coaching) is limited to working on icebreaking and feelings – in fact, the potential of using metaphorical cards is much more than that.

Metaphorical cards are not necessarily for dealing with the so-called serious topics (such as deep feelings, traumas, crises, etc.). They can be used, for example, in work with relationships, goals, roles and values, etc. At this year's ANSE Summer University in Budapest, I conducted a workshop "Values that sustain and support", where I used both metaphorical and value verbal cards from the

Contemplation series and combined them with drawing (see pictures). The majority of the work was individual, and part of the group already touched a deeper level. This is just one small example of how different metaphorical cards can be used.

Often what I have encountered in my practice is that many clients jokingly ask if we are going to predict. This is because they lack information about metaphorical cards. As with any other approach, in the work with metaphorical cards, it is important to clarify the purpose of its use and, if necessary, the difference between prediction and metaphorical cards. In addition, **when working with metaphorical cards, there is no clearly defined sequence of actions**, questions to ask, etc. Moreover, there is no correlation between a particular problem and a metaphorical card.

My main tool as a supervisor and coach (combined, of course, with other techniques and consulting approaches) is metaphorical cards. In recent years, I have been sharing my knowledge and practical experience with psychologists, supervisors, coaches, and other professionals who work with people. I always mentioned that **the selection of metaphorical cards in the world is wide. One possible approach can be developed further, and new components can be added – all based on the clients, their stories, cooperation, and their own creativity, etc.** The most important is that the counsellors themselves "like" them and find them suitable for work. Metaphorical cards have a wide range of uses.

In conclusion, **metaphorical cards can be used on any topic and combined with different methods – there are endless possibilities here, and that is why it is such a powerful tool!** ■



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### Marika Saard

Supervisor and Coach, Author, and Artist of Contemplation Metaphor Cards

Marika is a social work organizer by education and has a master's degree in service design. She has trained in psychology, art and crisis therapy, coaching and supervision. She has worked in the social field for over ten years. Now for six and a half years, she has worked as a supervisor, coach and trainer, and is currently studying psychology. She has developed a series of metaphorical cards called „Contemplation“ as an additional tool for supervisors, coaches, psychologists, therapists and other professionals working in the field. E-mail: [marika.saard@gmail.com](mailto:marika.saard@gmail.com)





# Impressions from ANSE Summer University in Budapest 2023

■ **Veronika Raffay**

It was glad to learn that this year the ANSE Summer university would be held in Budapest, my hometown. As a graduate supervisor student, I felt that I could gain unmissable experience for my work and for shaping my identity as a supervisor. The title also struck me: With words and beyond, values and identity in today's unpredictable world. We should find new attitudes, modalities! My goal was to increase the widest possible perspective and information

through international relations and cultural exchanges.

Singing together at the opening of the SU was a unique and unconventional experience, a social identity enhancer. I thought the home group initiative was also good, it was a basic for building relationships. My team could not be united, but we managed to get to know each other better with some of the members. The breaks between the programs and the closing sessions also provided a good opportunity to get to know more people. I had the possibility to tour some colleagues around the city centre, showing them a few local sights.

The workshops I participated were all interesting and inspiring, especially those where we could work in a small group. It was touching how I could connect to the life of a person living thousands of kilometres away, through a technique. Most of all, these occasions made the deepest impression on me.

The workshops introduced me creative techniques that promote reflection in the meta-level.

My own experience is that in today's fast-paced world we are too much in our heads, and in order to understand it, we need to perceive what beyond words are. Only then can we transform it into words, becoming aware and reflecting on what inherent in us or in the supervisee. For this focusing process, we need different ways of sensing. Going out of our comfort zone. Hearing, sight, touch, movement. Activate the whole brain. Listening to our body signs. To invent or reinvent our identity. The Universal human values and symbols can be a handhold to create brain-heart coherence.

Global social witnessing was an interesting new systemic concept for me. I think indifference is learned helplessness

as a defensive state against pain. To be less depressed we should wake up our and the communities' responsibility.

The SU is also a form of quality assurance. Learning from each other. To be again a student is very important, to experience again what it is like to be supervised, to follow innovations, to renew. I am excited about interdisciplinary collaborations, which can be a continuous refreshment. Thank you for the painstaking work of the organizers and to everyone for the fact that no matter the age, gender or title, everyone turned to me openly, kindly, and acceptingly. Is this already or maybe a collective supervisory attitude? ■



**Veronika Raffay**

Student at the Post Graduate Supervisor Education, Karoli Gaspar University, Budapest and a child protection specialist in the child and family care system.



# Impressions from ANSE Summer University in Budapest 2023

■ Kaupo Saue

This was my sixth summer university. Tallinn 2007 was the first one, just a year after I graduated from the supervision training program in Estonia, which was provided by Achim Fritzsche.

When conditions are right, then in time everything and everybody gets better, ripens and grows. I would say the same about summer universities and our international community of supervisors and coaches. Just one observation: we all have grown and continue growing, no shame in expressing it. There is much more active involvement and experiential/ experimental action learning in workshops today. The quality of keynotes and workshops is certainly high.

I am deeply touched by and grateful to the Hungarian Association for their thorough planning, preparation and seemingly effortless, sweat-less work. That is a sign of High Art. Thank you, your kindness and helpfulness made me feel at home.

The word “Beyond” in the headline is very close to my heart in many ways. It evoked a kind of spiritual expectation which didn’t get fulfilled completely, at least in those workshops I attended. True, they were professional, experiential and fun. Therefore, looking towards the future of summer universities — maybe the spiritual dimension is something to pay more attention to. Another thing I missed a bit is a participant’s name and e-mail list, to make contacting easier.

We often encourage our Institute students to take part in summer universities to get inspiration and strengthen their developing identities and some of them have done it. But my heart has been filled with joy and pride, seeing our graduates not only participating, but also leading experiential learning workshops and getting appreciated in these international gatherings. What could be better for a gardener than to see the flowers opening their buds? ■



**Kaupo Saue, Estonia**

Leading teacher of the International Supervision and Coaching Institute, supervisor and coach.





# Impressions of an International Intervision Group (IIG) “Young Professionals in Supervision” (YPiS)

■ Dorothea Reihs, Emils Veide, Zsuzsanna Narducci, Enikő Kapsza, Bastienne de Rooij,

## Abstract

Last summer, the ANSE Summer University 2023 for supervisors took place in Budapest. The theme of the Summer University was “With Words and Beyond – Values and Identity in an Incomprehensible World.” In addition to experienced supervisors, there were also junior supervisors present who formed the International Intervision Group (IIG) Young Professionals in Supervision (YPiS). This article shares the experiences of these members of this IIG and highlights the benefits of participating in the Summer University.

## ANSE Summer University 2023 – is it an odyssey or a place to dwell?

This summer, the ANSE Summer University 2023 took place from August 14th to August 18th in Budapest. A diverse program for European supervisors was offered, featuring keynote speakers, workshops, explanations of ANSE activities, the opportunity to share experiences in a Homegroup and social activities. Also opportunities to discuss about different topics, learn from each other and network in an international way were created.

As junior supervisors, recently graduated or still studying, the ANSE Summer University became very special for us. We all participate in more or less different topics around supervision in our national supervision organizations. To discuss issues and explore supervision practice in different countries moved us to a next level of reflection and understanding of our own professional identity and values. In preparation for the Summer University we asked ourselves questions like: Would supervision be interpreted differently in other countries than in our home countries? What are the similarities and differences? Are there international activities to participate in? Will there be experiences in which we enrich others or get enriched ourselves? The invitation to the ANSE Summer University got us really excited to run this adventure. But not only our expectations of international networking, also the program and the topic caught us. “With words and beyond” – this gave the impression to offer lots of self-experience and new methods of reflection. And it also seemed to discuss one of the most popular phenomena: incomprehensibility in a world full of non-predictable happenings, which result in uncertainty, suspiciousness and fear. All in all, meeting new people, discussing supervision, and building a new network appealed to us. All of us had a feeling of going there was the only option and so the choice was quickly made, and we booked our trips. Most of us didn’t know anybody in the Summer University. So, for all of us this meant in order to participate, was to be open to new experiences and people.

To get in contact was very easy, because all participants seemed to be united in supervision – without borders of nationality, gender, age or other diversities. All of us really felt connected and like being in the totally right place very soon. This feeling of being home was increased by the homegroups.

In our homegroups, which were created randomly at the beginning of the week, we shared our experiences from the workshops we had attended. But we also took care of each other, helping those who didn't feel well and those who felt overwhelmed. Through these conversations we made valuable connections. The homegroups made the whole week more personal.

Keynote speakers kicked off the days with profound insights on various topics and stayed with us the whole day. Lively discussions emerged during the breaks, and soon the conversations became even more profound. The theme "With Words and Beyond - Values and Identity in an Incomprehensible World" was central in the keynotes and workshops, exploring 'experience' in various ways and between the lines.

The workshops were diverse in content, and this variety was inspiring. All the workshops were kind of self-experience, because they dealt with different ways of perceiving inner emotions and reflect these against the background of this incomprehensible world.

The workshop leaders used all sorts of methods – some were more theoretical, others were focused on movements, music or role play and some were really well structured by question cards or guidelines in working papers. But what they all had in common is that the experience led to new insights and engaging conversations. Some of us even discovered values that were hidden somewhere deep down, waiting to be named – e.g. courage and adventure. During the workshops we could always work on our difficulties, problems or challenges. But we didn't have to share them all - only the reflections. Thus everyone had the opportunity to use the help of other supervisors in a very safe way. We usually reflected in small groups, which made it

easier for new participants to speak up. As we look back on the ANSE Summer University, we realize that we gained more from it than initially expected. We are certain that we will attend again next time, in 2025 in Munich. All of us have achieved a lot of fresh inspiration, knowledge and experience to apply in our supervision practice. The Summer University offered the opportunity to deepen our personal development and to reflect on our role as a supervisor, even in the future. Our expectation was to form networks on a national and international level. We did not expect it to be such a powerful start: Together we established the "Young Professionals in Supervision" (YPiS) intervention group, with the aim of supporting each other in the development of our profession. We look forward to our following online meetings and the topics we will discuss. Just after the first online meeting following Summer University, we are sure that it's definitely worth it. We already supported each other and learned a lot from our conversations. We recognized that we often guide our supervisees in similar ways when it comes to reflection. We'd like to share with you "The Reflection Line" of YPiS, a refreshing and stimulating reflection tool with eight different reflection methods tailored to a younger audience. The strength of #TheReflection-Line lies in its ability to demonstrate development in reflection, while also offering the flexibility to use each method individually.

All in all, we highly recommend the Summer University to all supervisors, but especially to the young professionals, because it really presents an easy way to enter the international supervision world and international next-level discussions. Furthermore, we have met countless new people, which build a strong network of national and international supervisors who are easily accessible. All of us are really excited to continue our next

intervention group meeting and join the next Summer University in Munich in 2025. ■

See you all there!



The International Intervention Group "Young Professionals in Supervision" (YPiS) who have contributed to the article consists of the following participants:

- Dorothea Reihs, Supervisor DGsv, Germany
- Emils Veide, Supervisor in the making, Latvia
- Zsuzsanna Narducci, Supervisor ÖVS, Austria
- Enikő Kapsza, Supervisor, MSZCT, Hungary
- Bastienne de Rooij, Supervisor LVSC, The Netherlands



# Did you know?

## DID YOU KNOW...?

- In Budapest was the birth of the International Intervention Group (IGG) Young Professionals in Supervision (YPIS). As a novice supervisor you are often searching. But by joining forces, we experience the power of sharing what concerns us. So we can place ourselves in a bigger perspective. Colleagues from the following countries joined his group: Latvia, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. They have had one intervention session until now (online)
- The next Summer University will be in Germany: from 14-18 August 2025 in München.
- The ÖVS (Austrian Association for Supervision and Coaching) has proclaimed 21 November as the European Day for Supervision and Coaching in order to create more awareness for the profession of supervision/coaching and to communicate to the public the importance of supervision and coaching in the modern, working world. The ÖVS will accompany this day in Austria every year with different activities.
- You can find a lot of ANSE news on [www.anse.eu](http://www.anse.eu)
- The Association of Latvian Supervisors on November 2023 published the book **"Supervision. Association of Latvian Supervisors. Experience stories of supervisors."** The book was compiled by supervisor Ilze Dreifelde.

The book is a collection of seventeen professional experience stories of supervisors which are shared by the supervisors of the National Association. In these stories supervisors tell why and how they chose to study supervision, who were the most important teachers, inspirers, how they started their professional careers, how the path of professional realization was formed.

All of these supervisors have done a significant work in the development of the association and the whole supervisors community. The book also highlights the creation of the association **"Association of Latvian Supervisors"** and the story of its development since its foundation in 2006 until 2023.

Please send your short news that can inspire other National Organisations to [geriandijkhuizen@gmail.com](mailto:geriandijkhuizen@gmail.com)

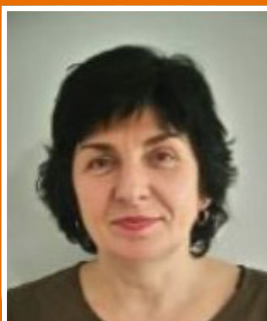
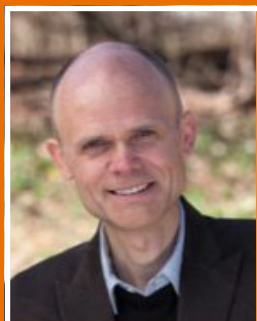
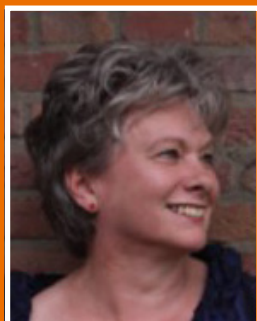
We will publish it in the next ANSE Journal. ■

Gerian Dijkhuizen



# Colophon

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With the journal and with the active involvement of its members - the national organisations for supervision and coaching, ANSE offers a platform to strengthen the European community of supervisors/coaches, to boost networking, to present specific topics and enhance the theory – practice dialogue. In this way the ANSE community promotes our trade on the European level and presents the expertise with which it is carried out.

*Top row from left to right: Jeanne-Elvire Adotevi Bilies, Barbara Baumann, Gerian Dijkhuizen, Helena Ehrenbusch  
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