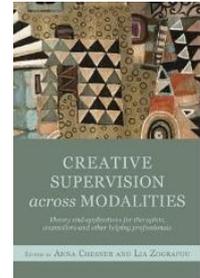


Creative Supervision across Modalities: Theory and Applications for Therapists, Counsellors and Other Helping Professionals (Anna Chesner & Lia Zografou, Editors)



Reviewed by Cornelia Bent

Title: Creative Supervision across Modalities: Theory and Applications for Therapists, Counsellors and Other Helping Professionals | **Editors:** Anna Chesner & Lia Zografou | **Publication year:** 2014 | **Publisher:** Jessica Kingsley Publishers | **Pages:** 224 | **ISBN:** 978-1-84905-316-7

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This book offers a valuable addition to the topic of supervision as it focuses on the subject of *creative supervision across modalities* and reaches a wide range of practitioners. In reviewing this book, I would like to focus mainly on the perspective of arts psychotherapies practitioners, drawing from my own experience working as a music psychotherapist, but also from talking to other arts psychotherapists about different types of supervision.

Supervision is most often offered in a verbal context: arts psychotherapies practitioners might only process their clinical work verbally and not use creative means in their clinical supervision, unlike in their clinical settings. The authors, Anna Chesner and Lia Zografou, were inspired to write this book based on a training course that they offer. They show a refreshing insight into how nonverbal and/or creative processes can enhance the experience of clinical supervision beyond the clinical settings, where arts therapies practitioners make use of creative mediums.

In their *Introduction* (Chapter 1), Chesner and Zografou provide a clear overview of the content of the book and what can be gained from it. Whilst *Part 1* focuses on the theory and approaches of creative supervision developed by the two authors, *Part 2* follows with further examples from various practitioners, who work in different settings and who use creative supervision across modalities.

Early on in *Part 1* and later in Chapter 2, Chesner and Zografou cite Moreno (1987a, 1987b), who talks about the dual values of *creativity and spontaneity*, elaborating further on subjects of *inclusivity, expansiveness and engagement* with diverse communities. This has been a particular inspiration for the authors in developing a creative approach to supervision.

The authors touch further on the subject of our daily work becoming more 'habitual' and 'automatic', and that it is the task of supervision to bring a fresh perspective into our practice. Creative supervision involves *creative thinking* as well as *facilitating creative thought and creative action*,

which can enhance our clinical work.

Chapter 2 considers further the theory behind creative supervision. Chesner and Zografou highlight the importance of identifying the supervisory question/s or focus of a piece of work. They talk about key contributions of three sources, which are specified as *eyes*, *roles* and *levels*. The exploration of the *eyes* help to understand the different *lenses* that supervision can focus on, when responding to their supervisees and their needs. Five *roles* that a supervisor can take on have been identified by the authors, in reference to Williams (1995). The term *levels* goes back to Stoltenberg and McNeill (2010), offering a useful framework for recognition and thinking about developmental levels of both therapists and supervisors and highlights three overriding foci: the self- and other awareness, motivation and autonomy. These support therapists to pitch interventions appropriately and to identify possible struggles in the supervisory relationship.

Chesner and Zografou also touch on the approach of explicitly using a supervisory focus or question. This supports the supervisee to identify the motivation for bringing a specific case to supervision and helps the supervisor to choose appropriate ways of creative exploration. Towards the end of this chapter, the authors talk about their thesis of creative supervision being most effective, when it allows the balanced co-existence of *pragmatism, imagination and reflection*. They further touch on the neurological process and impact of *creative thinking* on the right-brain activity and give examples of problem solving in this way.

Another highlight in Chapter 2 is the idea of supervision being seen as a *multidimensional process* that involves a holistic and expansive view of humans. As Williams (1995: 9-11) describes it: “ideally, supervision is less about what someone knows cognitively, but more about what one ‘is’ and the wisdom and culture that one embodies”.

Another key factor of creative supervision is the importance of the supervisor’s *fluency* in creative methods, but at the same time their capacity to be mindful about how exploration evolves. Supervisors may benefit from having had these experiences themselves, in order to draw both supervisor and supervisee into a mental space of ease and relaxation, via means of play, painting, engaging with role or movement and so on. Other different areas are also highlighted to be considered in the creative supervision process, such as a respect for boundaries, respect for supervision and a dialogue and commitment to emergent processes.

At the end of Chapter 2, the authors remind us that all this can be achieved via establishing a clear supervisory focus, which stays present throughout any of the creative supervision approaches and interventions used.

Chapters 3 and 4 consider the theory presented in chapter 2 and go into a more in-depth exploration of this subject.

In Chapter 3, *The Morenian Role Theory* is highlighted by Chesner, as this is the theoretical frame that she has found most useful and accessible in her own work and development as therapist, supervisor, trainer and person. It highlights the role in general as a core concept in creative supervision, and Chesner talks about Moreno’s distinction of three broad categories of ‘Role’: *somatic, social and psychodramatic roles*, and the *role* in definition as a ‘way of being’. This helps us to understand the client presenting in each of these roles and to support the supervisee in their reflections on client material, but also to bring to surface their own roles in therapeutic relationships with their clients. She gives examples of supervision sessions where specific roles do get played out, either in the therapeutic relationship with clients and/or within teams. One useful psychodramatic technique that gets used is *role reversal in supervision*, as this method brings the practitioner back into personal engagement with client material, as opposed to hiding behind the professional mask. This last technique has personally helped me in my development as therapist as well as supervisor, and gets used in my own practice a lot.

In contrast to Chapter 3, Chapter 4 focuses on the topic of *Creative Group Supervision*, which is informed by the author’s background in theatre and Gestalt theory. This chapter describes the value of working with creative methods, and the examples reinforce the author’s level of experience and background of working in various settings. I have found the technique of using the *Four Elements*, outlined by Zografou in quite a lot of detail in this chapter very inspiring and a useful tool for my work as practitioner and supervisor. It provides an appropriate container when a lot of various group concerns are present.

Part 1 closes with Chapter 5, in which Chesner further expands on creative one-to-one supervision using the medium of art.

Part 2 opens with Chapter 6, starting off with Hannah Sherbersky who focuses on *Family Therapy Supervision*, and she links the authors’ initial introduction of Moreno’s belief (that an

individual can respond creatively via spontaneity) back into more practical applications within a systemic setting. She raises the question about how to remain collaborative and supportive, whilst maintaining the expertise as supervisors and to help supervisees to feel both challenged and held. As a systemic supervisor, an understanding of the clinical context of work as well as the organisational culture of a workplace is key, as all these factors have an influence on how supervision is delivered.

Whilst Chapter 7 focuses on *Creative Arts Supervision and Therapeutic Work with Children*, Chapter 8 gives attention to *Embodiment and Movement in Supervision*. At the beginning of Chapter 8, the authors highlight the role of nonverbal communication and the fact that movement as communication is often overlooked. Céline Butté and Fiona Hoo also talk about the requirement of the supervisor to be sensitive to any personal experiences raised by the supervisee that might impact on their clinical practice, but without supervision turning into therapy. Again, the importance of understanding the supervisory tasks by giving attention to roles in supervision as well as the *Seven-Eyed Supervision Model* (Hawkins & Shohet 2012) are raised by the authors, before they discuss creative supervision and the use of embodiment and movement in greater depth.

The authors give three examples of using movement and the body in creative supervision with a range of supervisees, who come from different professional backgrounds that range from therapist in training to teacher to support worker. All three examples describe different stages of the supervisory tasks and inform the reader of the value of using body and movement in supervision. The authors raise awareness of different creative techniques, such as *sculpting* and use of *role*, in combination with body-oriented techniques used. The authors manage very well to link the theory to practical applications in all the examples given, which enhances the reader's understanding.

Chapters 9 and 10 provided a very interesting read on a personal note for me, but Chapters 11 and 12 were again more relevant to my current clinical practice.

In her chapter on *Psychodrama in Supervision*, Eleni Ioannidou describes very well her journey of becoming a practising psychodrama supervisor and talks specifically about the demands on the supervisor, development of supervisees and personal growth as supervisor. This chapter resonates with my own journey as a practising music psychotherapist, as well as my role as

placement supervisor in my current clinical setting.

The last chapter, *The Evil Castle*, invites the reader to experience the flair of using creative supervision and art psychotherapy for a supervisee who works in an inpatient setting, in a male young offenders unit. Amanda Strevett-Smith describes her work with her supervisee Charlie, and at the beginning of the chapter how Charlie talks about her "escape from prison" when attending her supervision in a different location. Processing the work creatively in supervision appeared to have helped Charlie to understand her work better as well as where her feelings and strong responses to this setting came from.

Overall, this book provides both a great insight into theoretical understanding, but also practical appliances of creative supervision. I recommend this book to anyone who works in a field where supervision is key to excellent clinical practice and/or who wants to be inspired by various ways of how supervision can be used creatively in all different types of settings.

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