ACT SUPERVISION

Introducing the SEED Model of how to be an effective ACT Supervisor

https://actsupervision.info

Jim Lucas & Sally Bradley

JIM LUCAS

I work as an ACT Therapist and ACBS peer-reviewed ACT Trainer working in private practice and higher education.

I Supervise ACT therapists individually and in groups through his online [ACT Practitioners Community](#).

I have authored The ACT Roadmap and co-authored SEED: An ACT Supervision Model.

I love to be outside, running and going on adventures. I seek to be patient, kind, brave and creative. And I often struggle to live consistently with my values.

SALLY BRADLEY

I work as a clinical psychologist in private practice, where half of my time is supervising other clinicians using ACT. I deliver ACT training and am co-author of SEED: An ACT Supervision Model *And* my mind still tells me I am imposter!

I am also an outdoorsy, peri-menopausal woman, living a relatively privileged life, who has roles as a wife, mother, and grieving daughter.

It is important to me to model our common humanity and acknowledge the context that I come from. I do this with the intention of enabling others to be open, to promote appreciation of the influence of our own context, and curiosity about those different to our own.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR COMMUNITY

ACBS

www.contexualscience.org

Overview

1 Context of the **SEED** Model

2 How to create a **Safe Place** to be Curious and Learn

3 **Exploring Functional Analyses** in Supervision

4 Experimenting with **Experiential Methods**

5 Building **Deliberate Practice** Routines

THE HISTORY OF SUPERVISION IN CBS

1995

2006

2009

2015

2017

2024

Behavioural Analytic Approach to Supervision (Follette & Callaghan)

Supervising trainees in ACT for PTSD (Walser & Westrup)

Four Phases of Emotional Awareness Training Model (Batten & Santanello)

Portland Model of Peer Consultation (Thompson, Luoma, Terry, LeJeune, Guinther & Robb)

SHAPE Framework to support experiential learning and psychologica l flexibility (Morris & Bilich-Eric)

SEED Model of ACT Supervision (Bradley & Lucas)

The SEED Model

4. Deliberately Practising new tasks that support the development of ACT Skills
Assess, track and modify your interventions through deliberate practices across different contexts.

1. Creating a Safe Place
Sowing seeds of effective learning by building trust and collaboration through a working alliance.

3. Experimenting with Experiential Methods
Adopting a skill-shaping approach that draws on many experimental procedures.

2. Exploring the context and functions
Exploring individual and interpersonal behavioural functions in therapy and supervision.

Creating a Safe Place to be Curious

Exploring the context and functions

Deliberately Practising new development tasks

Experimenting with Experimental Methods

To seed means to cause something to grow or develop, representing the spirit of supervision.

- **S** AFE PLACE to be curious.
- **E** XPLORING the Context and Functions.
- **E** xperimenting with EXPERIENTIAL METHODS.
- **D** ELIBERATE PRACTICE to build new skills.

HOW TO CREATE A SAFE PLACE TO BE CURIOUS AND LEARN

A word cloud diagram organized along two axes. The vertical axis is labeled "External Observable Behaviour" at the top and "Internal Inner Experiences" at the bottom. The horizontal axis is labeled "AWAY" on the left and "TOWARDS" on the right. The center is labeled "Us Noticing".

Top-left quadrant (External / Away):
interrupting, take control, giving answer, taking notes, invite sharing, knee-jerk reactions, never stop studying, focus on act words, reassure self, wait and see what happens, quote some research, acknowledge the challenge, apparent competence, refer to theory, intellectualise, listen, instruct not explore, giving my experience, referring to gurus, be present, share an anecdote, move supervision, trying to please, talk too much, reassure, not bringing up in own sv, agree, trying too hard, problem solving, talk, moving on too quickly, telling, rushing through, taking over, talk about my cases, grab a book off the shelf, overexplaining, label the good things, explaining, google it, pretend, pull out a certain method, push responsibility back, waiting to speak, reassurance, convincing, praise, use humour, just nod - no curiosity, minimise problem, leading too much, show what i know, be here now, lecturing, theorise

Top-right quadrant (External / Towards):
invite, listen, present, pausing, ask what rules in play, tune in, listening, disclosing, asking direct questions, reflecting out loud, leaving space to reflect, experiential, lean in, be present, take a risk, connect, courageous, taking a step back, quiet, sharing what i notice, making space, compassionate, wiser, ask experiential question, name it, kind, what are our rules, awareness, noticing the moment, validate emotions, show up, slow down, brave, ask for ideas, sharing fraud thoughts, share personal reaction, encourage authenticity, try ideas, playing with language, model an answer, opening up, push experimenting

Bottom-left quadrant (Internal / Away):
fraude, anxiety, futility, i should know this, is this a boundary, they wont like it, i should be better, feeling like a fraud, sadness, useless, quick solution, is this too personal, theyd be better off with, discomfort, i didn't do x, not good enough, give them chance, not enough doing, feeling unhelpful, uncomfortable, its uncomfortable, misleading, giving all the answers, fear, am i helping, tense, boredom, incompetent, put on the spot, shush, talking too much, not listening, not clear enough, tight, shh, i'll get this wrong, frustration, don't have answers, superficial, shame, directive, not a good supervisor, too intense, compassion, memory fail, go away, it wont work, intenal svor dissapproves, sharing my stories, hopelessness, did i remember correctly, i should know more, frustrated, i don't know, im talking too much, i'm not good enough, want to hide, questioning self, more supportive, being a teacher

Bottom-right quadrant (Internal / Towards):
safety validation, fill the hour, pass on something, empathy, nurture, nonjudgementalapproach, constructive, mirroring their uniquenes, validation, learning-teaching, warm, playful, willing, safety, acceptance, effectiveness, growing opportunities, openness, explorer, helpful, awareness, understanding, kindness, radical acceptance, interested, gentle, umph, curiosity, empowerment, present, human, valued, trust, available, encourage, 471477, curiosity, collaborate, attentive, support, supportive, clarityu, compassion, non judgmental, compassionate, reassurance, enable, authenticity, space to explore, encouraging, curiosity exploration, honesty, authentic, guide, courage, container, calm, warmth, caring, challenger, non-judgement, excellence, non judgemental, growth, safe space, containment, open, enabling, bravery, containing, brave, curious, useful, vulnerability, humble, knowledge, sharpener, enlightened, honesty

Creating a Safe Place to be Curious: Informed Consenting

Enabling supervisees to be vulnerable, admit limitations and welcome learning.

- Consider supervision agreements; practicalities & expectations

- Explore directional values and barriers to supervision

- Introduce the experiential nature of ACT consistent supervision (& not therapy)

- Consider a possible menu of supervisory behaviours

- Give specific attention to the importance of our differences and unique contexts

- On track? Seek Feedback

Establishing Collaboration

through offering a

Supervision Menu

MENU

- Experiential Methods
- Mindfulness Exercises
- Struggles, Stuck points & celebrations
- Personal Context & difficulties
- Case Conceptualisation
- Recordings
- Deliberate Practice
- Feedback

EXPLORING FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS IN SUPERVISION

WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS?

- Explores Contextual Relating Patterns (e.g. conceptualised self, fusion).

- Describes Overt Behaviours (e.g. running, fighting, hiding)

- Captures Reinforcing Consequences (i.e. unintentional outcomes such as anxiety).

- Includes relevant Learning History (i.e. the thread between then and now).

- Highlights the Current setting/life domain in which the problem occurs (e.g. relationship, work, etc.)

HOW CAN YOU USE FUNCTIONAL ANALYSES IN SUPERVISION?

- Explore the client's context.

- Explore the therapist/supervisee's context.

- Explore the interpersonal context between the client and therapist.

- Explore the supervisor's context.

- Explore the interpersonal context between the supervisee and supervisor.

Completing a Functional Analysis for the client

1. What is the client doing when you feel stuck?

2. What do you notice in your experience when this happens?

3. What did you do when you felt like this?

4. What happened next? How did the client respond?

5. What does this information add to the functional analysis?

Experimenting with Experiential Methods

Experimenting with Experiential Methods

MODELLING

Model what you want to see

EVOKING

Invite practicing the desired behaviour

REINFORCING

Give feedback and encouragement

Experiential Procedures

Real-Play / Role-Play

Demonstrations

Practicing Techniques

Playing with Metaphor Construction

Video / Audio Feedback

Taking
Committed
Action

BUILDING
DELIBERATE
PRACTICE

WHAT IS DELIBERATE PRACTICE?

Routinely seeing clients does not predict skill development, deliberate practice does.
(Goldberg et al. 2016)

- Developing **procedural skill**s rather than conceptual knowledge.

- Based on **personal learning objectives** just out of your comfort zone.

- **Practice & Rehearse** specific skills.

- Get **feedback** from a helpful **coach**.

- Observe how you are doing and how you can do it better and **refine**!

HOW CAN YOU USE DELIBERATE PRACTICE IN SUPERVISION?

(and in supervision of supervision…..)

- Discuss and identify a skill to target for deliberate practice.
- Practice assessing, tracking and modifying skills with the supervisee.
- Encourage supervisees to practice the skill in different contexts (i.e. with a client, personally and in supervision).
- Invite supervisees to record their practice on a worksheet and share with you what they learn.

THE ACT SUPERVISOR'S BULLS-EYE

A way of using Deliberate Practice to improve your supervisory skills.

Experiential Exercise

I am consistently aware of and attending to this area in supervision.

DELIBERATELY Practising specific skills

Creating a SAFE Place to be curious

I am very inconsistent in attending to this area in supervision.

Experimenting with EXPERIENTIAL Methods

EXPLORING the Context and Functions

What area of supervision do you want to build today?

What small, specific step will you take to improve?
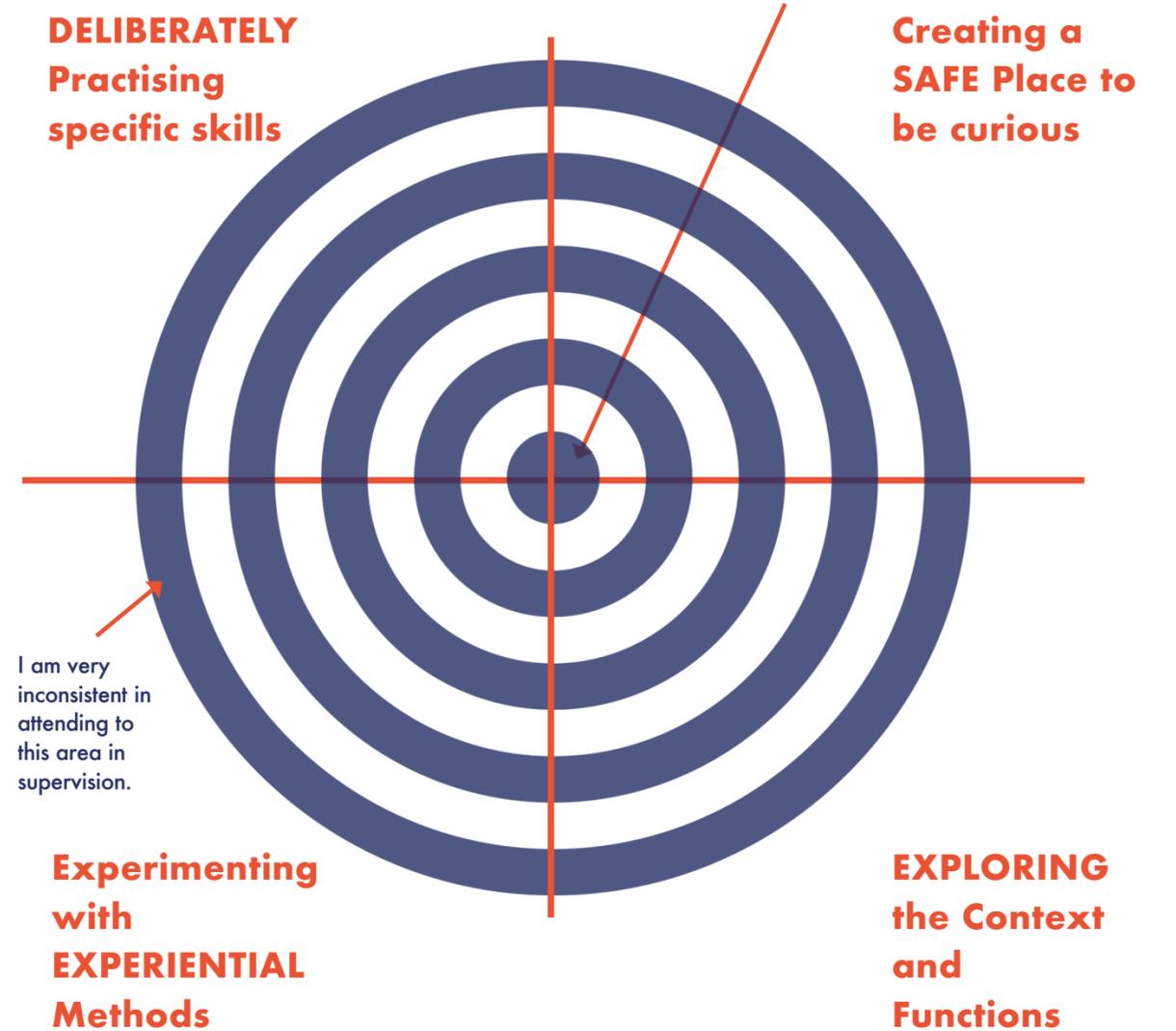
Mark an X on the board to see how focused you were in supervision today.

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EXERCISE: Reflecting on a recent supervision session – immerse yourself for a moment and then consider...

- What did you do (have you done) to create a safe (brave) space? E.g. exploration of values, checking in exercise. Is this typical of what you might do in a session? Is there anything you noticed then, or whilst on playback now that if you tune into you might respond to differently e.g. invite a getting present exercise or addressing possible 'chit chat' that's avoiding difficult topics. How would you rate your Safe place skills on the bullseye?

- As you watch the playback, were you able to embrace the opportunities to explore the function of behaviour for the client, How do you see that? Were you able to embrace the opportunities to explore the function of behaviour for the clinician? Were you able to explore the function of behaviour in supervision? E.g. reassurance seeking, hooked into being 'useful' and being directive or talking about ACT rather than DOING ACT? Is this session typical of your supervisions? If you could stage direct your next supervision what would take you closer to the bullseye? E.g. use a tool, inviting self reflection or experiential perspective taking... Based on this how would you rate your Exploring FA skills on the bullseye?

- During the supervision were you able to bring in experiential elements? Did you model or evoke actively contacting internal experiences to better understand and address the supervision question? Were there opportunities taken, or on reflection missed for role play, demonstration or skills practice? How could you have brought in more experiential elements into supervision? What is your rating of your Experiential methods in supervision on the bullseye?

- In your recent supervision were there elements of deliberate practice? How were any learning points and action plans developed? How were skills maybe modelled and practiced? What was your experience of giving feedback? If this idea is new, how might including this impact on your supervision? How would this align with your values as a supervisor, or those of your supervisees as they come into supervision? How would you rate your deliberate practice skills on the bullseye?

- How do you normally reflect on your supervision sessions? What is it like reflecting on your Supervision skills in this way?

THE ACT SUPERVISOR'S DEVELOPMENTAL BULLS-EYE

SAFE PLACE TO BE CURIOUS

Setting up a Supervisory Agreement.

Exploring Values and Barriers to Supervision.

Seeking informed consent to use experiential methods.

Offering a Supervision Menu.

Exploring Cultural Differences.

EXPLORING CONTEXT & FUNCTIONS

Using a tool or tools to illustrate a functional analysis.

Exploring context / functions of supervisee's responses in therapy.

Functionally explore interplay between the supervisee's and client's actions.

Functionally explore interplay between supervisor and supervisee in supervision sessions.

THE ACT SUPERVISOR'S DEVELOPMENTAL BULLS-EYE

EXPERIENTIAL METHODS

Modelling ACT consistent skills.

Evoking ACT consistent skills.

Reinforcing ACT consistent skills.

Facilitating role-plays / real-plays.

Demonstrating interventions.

Inviting supervisees to practice techniques.

Playing with metaphor construction.

Using Video / Audio Feedback

DELIBERATELY PRACTISING SKILLS

Identify and agree on learning objectives with the supervisee.

Coaching the supervisee to improve consistency and skill.

Giving feedback compassionately and constructively.

Identifying small and specific ways of improving interventions.

Using a deliberate practice plan worksheet.

Your ACT Supervision Deliberate Practice Plan

➢ How was the experience of rating your ACT supervision skills?

➢ What SEED would you like to focus on developing?

➢ What task will you do to develop that skill?

➢ What support do you need

   ➢ e.g. who/when will you do that?

➢ What resources do you need?

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BECOME AN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISOR IN ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

Download our Guide to get started offering ACT Supervision

DOWNLOAD HERE

SEED:
AN ACT SUPERVISION MODEL

A Guide for developing your skills in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Supervision

By
Sally Bradley & Jim Lucas

Have you ever wanted to become an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Supervisor but don't know where to begin?

THANK YOU

We hope you have felt our passion for developing ACT consistent supervision skills and that you take away and plant the **SEED**!

If you would like to contact us directly about supervision, training or writing opportunities, please visit our websites www.openforwards.com and www.aheadpsychology.co.uk