

MY PERSONAL APPROACH TO SUPERVISION

Tina Sirois-LeBlanc

I am thrilled that you are considering working with me as your Supervisor. I have been using EFT as a therapist since 2004 and gradually worked towards my Certification as an EFT Therapist in 2011. I finally reached my goal of being an EFT Supervisor in 2018. I have a full-time Private Practice that mostly comprises of couple work and some family therapy and individual therapy. I have deeply connected with the EFT approach and I find myself having this need to keep diving deeper and spreading my love of EFT to other therapists who want to work towards perfecting their own skills.

In the next few paragraphs, I will give more details about my supervision approach and how it fits into the EFT principles.

Even though I had been doing supervision for many years, I feel I gained a much greater focus and confidence as a supervisor after I took the EFT on-line supervision course and with my own mentorship hours where I had 1-on-1 feedback. Just like EFT provided me a map as a therapist, I can easily see a similar map to use as a supervisor, focusing on building alliance and creating that experiential learning with my supervisee. Understanding that we have our own personal triggers as therapist in session and helping my supervisees unravel those blocs (without getting into counselling) made the world of difference in my approach.

As a supervisor, my end goal is to attune with my supervisee's needs, bring clarity and new awareness to them, work through some of their blocs, and create a new emotional experiential experience that makes them feel more confident in their work with EFT. The following strategies are utilized to reach this goal.

- 1) When I first meet a new supervisee, I focus on creating a strong working alliance that I pay attention to maintaining throughout our work together. I try to make them feel very proud of taking this step in their learning process and emphasize that EFT is not about being perfect. I emphasize the experiential learning that will take place both for them and for me as a supervisor (normalizing that everyone has room to grow and learn- including me). I set the stage for complete openness and I take pride in my ability to offer lots of encouragement to my supervisees; strongly paying attention to identify their strengths and unique gifts. Bottom line, I make sure to be Accessible, Responsive, and Emotionally engaged.
- 2) I make sure both the supervisee and myself are well prepared to maximize learning within the time we have together. I ask supervisees to watch their recording ahead of time and send it to me so I can also view it ahead. I ask the supervisee to explain what they were trying to accomplish in their recording segment and to clearly identify their needs for supervision. When I meet them for supervision, the first question I ask them

is how they felt the session went. This helps me get a sense of where they see their strengths and challenges and it helps me to expand from what they already realize themselves. Also, I pay special attention to keep my supervision session tailored to their supervision questions so I don't get lost in other details that I see that don't pertain to where they are at in their conceptual and experiential learning of the approach. For example, if someone was concerned about their ability to set-up enactments properly, I would focus on that even if I see other things they could improve like tracking the cycle. This is exactly what we do with clients, staying close to their experience- not venturing out too far ahead of that. This helps to keep it simple for the supervisee and not overwhelm them with too much details. At the end of the session, I finish by exploring their take-aways from the session and see if there is anything they would have liked differently.

- 3) When I work with my supervisee, I try to understand where they are when observing them in their recording. Three questions float in my mind: Do they know what to do (conceptual)? Do they know how to do it? (experiential) If they know what to do and how to do it, what stops them from doing it- blocs? (self-as therapist). Having those questions in mind really frames my approach and helps me stay close to the needs of the supervisee. This is where I often see how my focus changes with newer therapists whose conceptual understanding of EFT is still at its beginning. I find I have more a teacher role, encouraging what they do well and explaining aspects that will help them understand more why we do certain things in EFT (e.g., explaining the cycle, where to notice the attachment framework , how to set up your first sessions and individual sessions to make a proper assessment). It is also where I pull out resources that can help them conceptualize it further (EFT Workbook, videos, articles in the Newsletters, etc.) Gradually, I work to create more autonomy in the person's learning, encouraging them to come up with additional responses when reviewing a video excerpt, asking the supervisee for their conceptualization, etc.

With more experienced therapists, I find they bring less conceptualization needs, but more skill-building and self-as therapist issues. For example, a supervisee had a bloc around creating enactments. She knew the importance of enactments to bring in more withdrawer re-engagement and she knew how to do enactments, but she wasn't taking the opportunities to shape enactments with a particular couple. She would deepen the emotion but stop before the enactment. What I did was to explore her internal processing just as we do with clients in order to get to her fears of enactments, (trigger, thoughts, interpretation, feelings, and action tendencies she took with the couple). This way I didn't get into counselling with her, but simply helped her become aware of what happened for her internally and the cycle it created in session. At a very non-judgmental place, she was able to self-reflect and go in next session with more awareness and confidence at changing her own cycle of interaction with the client. Often the fear just needs to be heard and validated to take the pressure off and try a

different way (usually telling themselves a different internal message). Role-playing can also help to practice and gain confidence after exploration of a person's blocks.

- 4) Experiential learning has been the biggest improvement in my supervision approach. I now look for the opportunities to model skills to the supervisees when needed (words to use, demonstrating RISSSC, etc.) and giving them a chance to gain more confidence by role-playing. When role-playing I give them the option to play the client or the therapist so they can enter the learning experience with more comfort. I find the common micro-skills being demonstrated or role-played are around the steps of the tango, especially deepening the emotion in Step 2 of the Tango, or setting-up an enactment.

In conclusion, I feel I have a strong skill-set as a Supervisor, but I will always feel like I have room to grow; that's just part of my nature to want to keep learning and improve. I feel my biggest assets are my ability to create a very strong working alliance where supervisees can take risks and be celebrated for taking that risk! My transparency and authentic nature helps me to take risks myself and always check-in and re-attune with my supervisee whenever needed. And lastly, my ability to stay close to my supervisee's needs and focus on the right type of intervention with them goes a long way (conceptual, experiential, or self-as therapist).

I love EFT and I think my passion for the approach and my work with couples is contagious. My goal is to continue spreading the news on EFT and build a stronger EFT community in NB. Are you ready to join me?