

Academic Paper

# ABCD Map: A personal construct approach to coaching supervision

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## Abstract

Coaching supervision is increasing in popularity among the coaching field but is far from the accepted standard for all coaches. A growing number of coaching supervision models are now available from a broad base of philosophies, but as yet none is based on personal construct theory (PCT). In this conceptual paper, it is argued that PCT could provide a suitable foundation for coaching supervision and a model based on this theory is proposed. It is hoped that making available a clear and accessible model might give additional choice in the field of coaching supervision practice, especially for those relatively new to supervision.

## Keywords

personal construct theory, coaching supervision, supervision model, philosophies of coaching supervision,

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## Introduction

Coaching supervision is attracting increasing interest within the coaching field but has lagged behind the relatively rapid expansion of coaching. While the majority of coaches in the UK, Europe and Australia report being in some sort of supervision (Hawkins & Turner 2016; Grant 2012) the figures from elsewhere are variable with reports of between 20-57% of coaches taking supervision globally (McAnally, Abrams, Asmus & Hildebrandt, 2019). With the rapid growth of internal coaching there is also little data on the prevalence of supervision in those groups where coaching is not their main role. Since many of this group might not be part of a professional body, any mandatory or advisory supervision requirement is unlikely to be fulfilled. Many coaches also still feel that supervision is unnecessary (Grant, 2012). Some practitioners feel the return on investment cannot be proved, while others express a view that it may stifle creativity (Bachkirova, 2011a). Coaching supervision therefore has yet to become the norm worldwide, despite the fact that both professional bodies and educational institutions agree that supervision for coaches represents best practice. Those who experience supervision generally report it to be beneficial (Sheppard 2017; McAnally et al., 2019) and to impact their job satisfaction as a coach (Müller, Kotte & Möller 2019). This broadening positive interest has led to an expansion in the models and processes advocated

as useful tools for the coaching supervisor (Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017). As more coaching supervisors enter the market, we have seen significant growth in the advocated approaches. This article aims to add a new perspective to the existing library of resources that a coaching supervisor might access to inform their practice.

This article will begin by giving a broad introduction to coaching supervision models that have become increasingly varied and complex as the field has developed. It will then summarise personal construct theory as a philosophical base for a simpler access point for coaching supervision, enabling those with less knowledge of the area an initial stepping-stone to more complex theoretical perspectives. It will detail how a personal construct approach might work in practice with a case example, and concludes by summarising some strengths and limitations of such an approach.

Coaching supervision is commonly accepted to have three functions, Developmental, Qualitative and Resourcing (Hawkins & Smith, 2013) and many models now exist to support the coaching supervision process with several drawn from the field of counselling or other helping professions. Some question whether this is an appropriate grounding as they feel we cannot automatically “transpose” such ideas into the coaching context (Butwell, 2006), so there may be scope to develop further models and frameworks emerging from coaching practice and other sources.

Existing models used by coaching supervisors originate from many philosophies and include stage and task-based models. Stage-based model such as CLEAR (Hawkins & Smith, 2013) offer the supervisor a simple sequence that can guide interventions. Contract, Listen, Explore, Action, Review gives a macro level set of steps which can provide some tangible staging posts. However, during a relatively complex discussion simply addressing key steps may be too superficial a framework to help the supervisor. Task based models such as proposed by Carroll (1996) list some generic tasks, also at quite a macro level. Listing, Relating, Teaching, Counselling, Monitoring Professional/ Ethical issues, Evaluating, Consulting and Administrating under the three functions of Educative, Supportive and Administrative.

Beyond the stage and task models, much is written about adopting a systemic approach and the 7 Eyed Model (Hawkins, 2011) is often presented as a valuable framework for supervisors. It certainly widens the scope of inquiry and can identify unintended consequences or “ripple effects”. Other systemic models include “Three Worlds, four territories” that the supervisor needs to investigate (Munro Turner, 2011): the world of the coachee and their work, the world of the coach and coachee, and the world of the supervisee and supervisor. Each of these dynamics can be valuable domains for inquiry, highlighting how even small changes in one aspects of the system can cause corresponding adjustments elsewhere. While many systemic models exist (Hawkins, 2011), it could be proposed that coach development will ultimately depend on the meaning the individual makes of the system and the elements within it. Lawrence and Moore (2019) also question whether it is possible to work truly systemically if you are not engaging with the system itself and collaborating with multiple stakeholders, which is often not the case for the supervisor. The 7 Conversations model (Clutterbuck, 2011) highlights the internal and external dialogues that might happen in each of these ‘worlds’.

All such approaches add valuable perspectives but can feel complex for relatively new supervisors, especially after the recent expansion of the 7 Eyed Model (Hawkins & Turner, 2020). There may be value in a simple model that brings some structure and is easy to remember. Much of the success of GROW (Whitmore, 2017) as a coaching framework relies on the simplicity and ease of recall. While few would claim that GROW is a suitable model for every context or coach, it has been instrumental in the wider application and take up of coaching. It presents a relatively accessible tool that resonates, feels inclusive and is easy to apply. Perhaps if we can use a similar approach in coaching supervision, we can increase the understanding and uptake by giving an easy entry point that everyone can understand and that novice supervisors can apply. Ultimately the purpose of a model is to simplify complex ideas, they are representations that can aid “in defining, analyzing,

and communicating a set of concepts.” (Friedenthal, Dori & Mordecai, 2020). Systemic approaches, while useful, are in danger of becoming so complex that they confuse rather than enlighten, as they try to represent and incorporate all aspects of the system, rather than simplify and model it.

In addition to the systemic approach, other philosophical positions also inform coaching supervision with such approaches as narrative supervision (Congram, 2011), gestalt supervision (Gillie 2011) and many more (Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck 2011). Having this breadth and choice of philosophies in supervisory practice is important to allow supervisors to work “from who they are”. Jackson and Bachkirova (2019, p. 22) identify the importance of supervisors developing a “personally congruent practice” so it becomes important to offer supervisors as many alternative paradigms as possible. This can stimulate new thinking and increases the opportunities for supervisors to find a philosophy that is congruent with who they are, thus developing coherence in their practice.

One psychological approach that may have potential in coaching supervision, and has yet to be exploited, is personal construct theory. The addition of this to the available portfolio could give supervisors who have yet to find a philosophical home a new perspective to consider.

## Personal Construct Theory

Personal Construct Theory (PCT) was first advocated by Kelly (2017) as a psychological approach to how individuals make meaning and learn. He proposed that individuals make meaning of events and situations through mental constructs that drive their interpretations. In order to learn and change, individuals operate as “scientists” by proposing hypotheses that are then tested through experience. We see here links to the Kolb learning cycle using reflection and experiential feedback to modify constructs. Kelly (2017) suggests that:

*...all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration.....even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently (p3).*

He therefore positions PCT as “constructive alternativism”.

*Constructive alternativism stresses the importance of events. But it looks to man to propose what the character of their import shall be. The meaning of an event—that is to say, the meaning we ascribe to it is anchored in its antecedents and its consequents. (p5)*

Following Kelly, PCT has been adapted and elaborated (Walker & Winter, 2007) with relevance in many modern settings supporting one of its core principles that it be a “useful theory”. It has been used as an approach to therapy as well as in the organisations (Brophy 2007) and education (Pope 2003). In the development sphere, Thomas and Harri-Augstein (1985) highlight the importance of learning conversations to support self-organized learning that demonstrates a significant synergy with coaching and coaching supervision.

PCT has already been proposed as a suitable approach on which to base coaching. Stojnov and Pavlovic (2010) give a very comprehensive evaluation of how PCT can be applied to coaching because of six principles that they feel align well with a coaching approach (Stojnov & Pavlovic 2010, p.131). The six principles are:

1. Future Orientated
2. Relational
3. Developmental

4. Respectful
5. Dialogic
6. Action Orientated

Building on this, it could be argued that PCT can also offer a useful philosophical foundation for coaching supervision. Walker and Winter (2007) highlight that individuals can be seen as “adventurers.....as they experiment with alternative interpretations” (p454) who are invited to imagine alternative constructions. These principles align well with a view of supervision where partnership and joint meaning making allow for mutual growth through broadening the meaning making of situations. Supervisor and supervisee together voluntarily explore alternative constructions.

For a full and detailed account of all the core principles of PCT, refer to Kelly (2017), however a few key points are of note in relation to coaching supervision. Firstly, the importance of individual meaning making in the construction of events. When the coach comes to supervision, the supervisor only has access to the coaches meaning making of events. Even in reporting experience, events in the system or actions of the client, the coach will never be an objective reporter of facts. Rather their personal constructs will colour everything they see and how they choose to represent it to the supervisor. As Kelly observes of PCT:

*In our present undertaking the psychological initiative always remains a property of the person—never the property of anything else. What is more, neither past nor future events are themselves ever regarded as basic determinants of the course of human action—not even the events of childhood. But one’s way of anticipating them, whether in the short range or in the long view—this is the basic theme in the human process of living. (p10)*

The supervisees account may be affected by issues such as shame or self-deception (Bachkirova, 2011b) but may equally be simply a function of what they construed from the situation. While some supervisors may ask for recordings to gain a more objective perspective, the coach has choice over what gets recorded and submitted. Ultimately the supervisor can only work with what the coach brings, unless they are part of the organisation or system under review.

Secondly, the supervisor is usually only working with the coach as an individual and it is the ‘construction of their experience’ that is the focus of the work, not their ‘construction of the event’ itself. The coach and their experience lie at the heart of supervision. Supervisee development is achieved though exposing and uncovering often hidden relationships as a result of coaching practice. Kelly asserts that “in constructive alternativism, events are crucial” (2017, p.5) and act as “springboards for inquiry” (p6) which supports the Developmental role of supervision. The role of the supervisor should also include Qualitative and Resourcing (Hawkins & Smith, 2013) functions and uncovering constructs can also help with both these aims. Imagine an internal coach concerned about on-going relationship management, after completion of a coaching assignment. The supervisor might highlight the potential issues that could arise and the qualitative implications in relation to ethical practice. The result of the interaction could be an adapted ‘construct’ about the dual relationship (Clarkson, 2000) and how the coach might manage an on-going future relationship with an ex coachee still operating in the same department or organisation.

The resourcing function could also be supported through exploration of the constructs, perhaps linked to language and terminology. PCT leads us to look for hints about constructions in the language used and this has implications for the supervisory stance. Walker and Winter (2007) highlight how much can be gleaned from language, inviting the supervisee to “imagine that this is but one possibility, thus fostering the adventurousness that Kelly advocates for scientific thinking and everyday living” (p.456).

The supervisor working from a PCT perspective therefore holds inquiry and curiosity at the heart of their practice; accepting and exploring alternative meaning making with the supervisee. In addressing resourcing for example, when coaches bring feelings of inadequacy into supervision, a discussion around their construct of 'the coaches' responsibility' might reveal that their construct is currently unrealistic and needs adaptation. In such examples, the supervisor is working with the construction of their current experience but ultimately also examining how they make alternative meaning of those experiences in order to build confidence or self-belief. Hopefully a future event would be construed through a different frame of reference regarding the 'the coaches responsibility', effectively completing the experiential cycle as described by Kelly.

*At the end of an experiential cycle one not only has a revised construction of the events he originally sought to anticipate, but he has also a construction of the process by which he reached his new conclusions about them. In launching his next venture, whatever its concern might be, he will have reason to take account of the effectiveness of the experiential procedures he employed in his last. (Kelly, 2017, p.18)*

This would appear to have resonance with the role of the coaching supervisor where we often focus on events and the experience of those events, while seeking to elucidate the coaches thinking process. Not unlike double-loop learning (Schön, 1983) where we examine the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions that guide the meaning making process. It could be said that the role of the supervisor is uncovering the thinking processes that are driving feelings, decisions and behaviours. This allows the coach to examine their current meaning making, building knowledge and understanding of themselves and their situations. Kelly proposes that personal constructs are the frames through which we make meaning of the world, where those very frames of reference are examined rather than a traditional cognitive approach where the aim is often to change thinking patterns and beliefs in order to affect feelings. PCT rejects our ability to separate thoughts and feelings, instead using constructions and meaning making to explain emotions.

PCT therefore has a number of elements that lend themselves to the activities of supervision. The experience of events is a key focus in order to uncover and learn about the processes by which we make meaning, and the individual is seen as the essential conduit for that meaning making. Add to this the principles of a dialogic, respectful developmental relationship and there are clearly benefits to using this philosophy to underpin supervisory practice that many may identify with, creating resonance with their personal approach to practice.

## PCT Informed Supervision

Working within a PCT philosophy as a coaching supervisor is likely therefore to be based on a dialogic relationship, where learning conversations based on experience are the focus of the work. There would be an invitational stance to mutual exploration of constructs and meaning making. The supervisee and their use of language to convey their constructions are at the heart of the discussions. In imagining the supervisee as "scientist" the supervisor gives them agency to learn and move forward with their practice, building on previous learning. The aim would be to develop awareness of the constructs in operation rather than promote action. We might characterise learning as 'take-aways' from the interaction to potentially experiment with, rather than actions or outcomes. Discoveries then inform the future and are iterative developmental steps.

The invitational stance conveyed by PCT means the working relationship between supervisor and supervisee is a critical component of the work. The relationship is often highlighted as critical to coaching success (de Haan, 2008) and we might suggest that the supervisor/supervisee relationship is equally so. Yet I would argue that working with an informed peer brings a slightly different dynamic from that between coach and client. In coaching, the coach manages the process, while the client brings the content, responsibility is shared for the successful outcomes of

the partnership. Using a PCT perspective brings a far more integrated relationship in generating constructions as a joint endeavour as both operate as “companions” (Bachkirova, 2011a). The supervision space is a co-created space that cannot exist in isolation. We might explain the difference with a sporting metaphor. The coach/client relationship is much like a tennis doubles pairing, both have a role and need each other to achieve success. But both make individual decisions and take independent action that is linked but separate. The coach/supervisor relationship that emerges from a PCT approach is much closer to an ice dance pairing. Neither can easily operate without the other and the shapes or moves created are a function of the two operating in tandem synchronisation, sculpting new constructions. This is important because it determines the responsibilities each have in the supervisory relationship. Initial investigations suggest at least 10 tasks where supervisor and supervisee need to share responsibility in order to create the shared learning space. These are offered for consideration in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Tasks and Responsibilities**

	<b>Task List</b>	<b>Supervisor responsibility</b>	<b>Supervisee responsibility</b>	<b>Together, the aim is to:</b>
1	Examples/ Cases	To contribute and ask for examples	To bring examples for discussion	Promote understanding
2	Experience	To offer descriptions of own experience when required	To reflect on experiences	Encourage growth
3	Exploration	Ask questions to explore meaning/constructions and be critical friend	To be open to exploration and experiment to raise self-awareness	Make meaning
4	Encouragement	Support through focus without judgement	To appreciate successes and promote acceptance	Build confidence in way forward
5	Education	Share knowledge or information when required & possible	To be open to education in new areas	Increase knowledge
6	Explanation	To question and reveal deeper explanations or present hypotheses	To expose themselves to deeper enquiry	Enhance understand
7	Engagement	To identify and manage potential risks to the relationship	To engage honestly with the relationship and the role	Build a working partnership that can survive risks
8	Evaluation	To offer interpretations or patterns in the work being done	To evaluate their own position within the work being done	Identify areas of focus and growth
9	Expansion	To widen the perspectives held by the supervisee to include the systems	To be courageous in considering their role within the systems	Expand thinking beyond comfort zones
10	Ethics	To direct attention to potential ethical issues and voice any concerns	To critically reflect on ethical issues	Protect all stakeholders

The supervisory relationship is a dynamic co-created space and it is therefore hard to define the supervisory function in terms of tasks alone, as these will prove ineffective unless the supervisee is taking responsibility for their part of the relationship. It has been shown that the supervisee has a significant role to play in effective supervision (Sheppard, 2017), but beyond this, is also a shared space that is constructed and co-created. For example, one of the ten tasks is Exploration. The supervisory role is to ask questions that allow exploration, but the supervisee needs to be open to this exploration in being the “scientist”. Ultimately the aim is to make meaning from this exploration, and that is a task which can only be achieved together. This fits well with the purpose of establishing the “joint endeavour.....on what the work requires” (Hawkins, 2019, p.68). These ten tasks could form the basis of a discussion during contracting with a supervisee for anyone interested in experimenting with this approach.

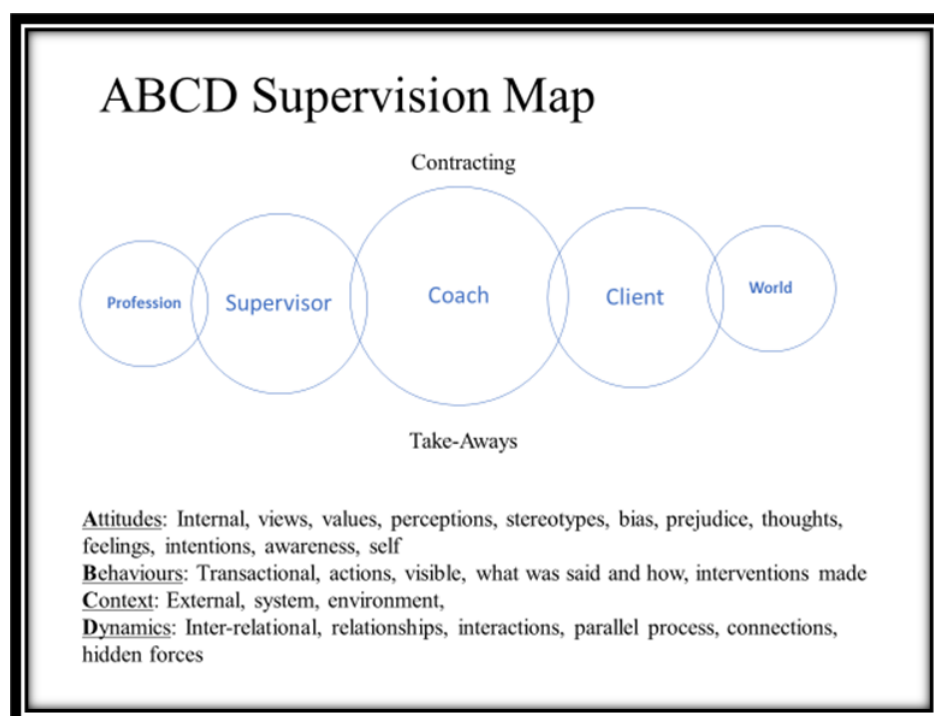
If we are to make supervision accessible and understandable we need to have simple explicit ways to explain what is being done and what is required as part of the contracting process. A PCT Supervisor might also investigate with a supervisee what their current construct of ‘successful supervision’ entails as part of this contracting. This is not to pander to their every whim, but to establish their own personal constructs, identifying how to engage them in the process and build an effective working relationship. This may mean meeting them where they are initially, in order to accompany them on their development journey. If the supervisor fails to address their needs in the early stages of an engagement, it is less likely the supervisee will remain committed to the process of supervision. Therefore, an explicit discussion of needs and expectations can help judge how to

start the relationship to maximise engagement, accepting that the supervisory role may need to evolve with the relationship in order to meet the needs of the supervisee. Therefore, regulating the input to match their needs in the early stages may be a necessary bridge to broader personal development. This is an example where the shared co-created space is relevant. It is no good trying to get your dance partner to do complex lifts if they are not yet ready to do so. This would only risk the relationship and is unlikely to lead to a successful outcome.

## ABCD Map

We have established that PCT Supervision would put the coach at the heart of the interaction, and focus on the experience, yet would need to maintain an interest in both the client, the context and the coaching profession. The supervisor would aim to establish clear contracting as to the supervisee construction of successful supervision and may work towards ‘take-aways’ rather than action points. This framework is shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: ABCD Supervision Map**



The individual coach (supervisee) is shown as the largest circle to denote the prominence of the individual. Each individual coach brings different capabilities to their coaching, some more helpful than others, but every coach needs to develop a personal style and approach that they can comfortably inhabit. Jackson and Bachkirova (2019, p.21) refer to this as “to build an approach to practice that is congruent with who they are”. The supervisory role is then to ensure that the coaching persona they use is within the boundaries of acceptable coaching practices, develops to be as good as it can be, and that they as individuals are supported in giving the most appropriate service to clients. The supervisee should feel enabled by the supervisory relationship, working together at both the internal and external level. Internally helping the supervisee examine their own personal constructs and drawing attention to transferable knowledge and skills to support their coaching persona. Externally providing knowledge, information or alternative perspectives on their activities. A PCT Supervisor aims to raise the supervisee’s awareness of the personal constructs that drive their practice and to help them develop their coaching persona. This could be done by investigating attitudes, behaviours, dynamics and the context in which the supervisee is working.

The ABCD Map represents a simple framework to guide interactions with supervisees based on the PCT principles outlined so far. The model is presented as a sequence of interlocking circles to denote the 5 domains and their interrelationships. It is important that they are linear as this represents the reality of what a supervisor will see. Information about the client will clearly be filtered by the personal constructs held by the coach. Similarly, what the client tells the coach about their world, is moderated by their own personal constructs. The Coach is central to the process, but the supervisor also has a link to the profession and aims to explain and represent the profession when interacting with the coach. However, while representing the needs of the profession, the supervisor has no direct contact with the client or their world, so will always have limited impact in these domains and can only influence the system through the Coach.

Within each domain it is valuable to explore four lenses, Attitudes, Behaviours, Context and Dynamics summarised as ABCD that serve as an aide memoire. These may not be addressed in any particular sequence, but serve to remind the supervisor of the areas that may be relevant to investigate and can highlight omissions. Let us take an example of a case that a supervisee might bring to supervision.

The A, Attitude lens of inquiry will be about the internal meaning making of the situation. What views or personal constructs are informing the coach in their interpretation of the events? Why have they brought this particular case, what makes it important? What attitudes the client might have of their situation? What thoughts the supervisor may bring? Each of the five domains (profession, supervisor, coach, client, context) reveals perceptions, views, values and personal constructs that can be unpacked and understood in relation to the case.

The B lens, is about the Behaviours that are being demonstrated as external outputs. What behaviours the client is seen to exhibit, what the coach did or said in a particular situation. How is the supervisor behaving in relation to the supervisee? How is the organisation or sponsor interacting with the client or the coach?

The C lens, seeks to understand the Context. What is happening for the client in their world? What pressure might the coach be under in this piece of work? How might the supervisor be affected by professional bodies or the organisation?

Lastly, the D lens tries to understand potential Dynamics that could be at play. Aspects of parallel process, transference or countertransference. What interactions or 'games' might be relevant?

There will obviously be overlaps between the four lenses, for example a coach who feels under pressure to keep a client may reveal that their context is of financial insecurity, this will affect their behaviour and can result in a particular dynamic. However, using these four lenses for inquiry might reveal patterns and interrelationships that can support greater clarity in relation to the case under discussion. A supervisee may give a case description focusing on behaviours and context and may not be considering the internal aspects for themselves or the client. The map raises awareness of the bias in the focus, allowing the supervisor to investigate the omitted areas. A deeper discussion to focus on the areas of Attitudes and Dynamics and away from Behaviours and Context, might give the coach greater insight into the coaching relationship and the client.

In Appendix 1 are exemplar questions that might be asked as part of each lens and a representation of the possible overlaps. There are clear links and interrelationships between them which are fluid, not discrete elements. For example, one supervisee discussed a case where the client twice commented 'unless I'm stupid'. This was a behaviour that was visible but might warrant investigation in terms of the attitudes that could underpin it. The supervisor might also propose a potential warning that the comment might be 'bait' to be disagreed with that moves to the left discussing Dynamics in the Professional domain.

Because the map is simply a fluid awareness tool that acts like a compass, it gives a location allowing a choice of where to go next. It does not prescribe a destination but maintains the primary focus on the coach. It simply answers the following questions:

#### *5 Domains (Profession, Supervisor, Coach, Client, Context)*

- Where are we now?
- Which circles are being omitted?
- Where do we need to go?

#### *4 Lenses (Attitudes, Behaviours, Context, Dynamics)*

- Which of the four lenses are relevant here?
- Which have we yet to investigate?
- Where is the current focus?

Below is one example of how the model might work even in quite a complex case. It is written in the first person based on a real case to clarify how the model might inform practice.

## Case Example

I started the session with some contracting points and asked how the supervisee would judge supervision to be effective. Her main aim was to gain distance from the work and to evaluate other perspectives of her situation.

The supervisee (SE) outlined a very complex case of working within an organisation with multiple coachees. The main discussion centred around the three senior shareholders and their inability to make changes after one had an extended period of sick leave. The discussion started very much in the Context domain with a great deal about the clients and their world. I felt a strong sense of confusion and fragmentation and reflected this Attitude in myself (SV circle) back to the SE which seemed to resonate. There was a great deal said about the lack of clear roles and responsibilities and I felt we needed to get the SE to reflect on their own position, so I asked about what she felt her role was in the organisation. This was to uncover her own Attitudes in the Coach circle. I was using the map simply to site my work and locate imbalance. We had spent a lot of time to the far right and I wanted to move us to the central area.

Through the discussion there seemed to emerge a number metaphors and parallel process indicators that I reflected back to the SE which highlighted particular Dynamics in operation. In particular, the individual who had been on sick leave appeared to be the main issue. We spent some time discussing his actions and Behaviours in the Context and in relation to other stakeholders including the coach. As part of this I offered potential personal constructs that he may bring to his return to work. Here the work was located in the Client circle asking questions about his possible perspective (Attitudes). This was one of the aspects the SE later reflected as having been the most useful, while she and other stakeholders painted him as Persecutor, there was a potential Victim mode that had not been considered.

At one point the SE considered personal disclosure to build empathy with the client, that made me uneasy, as a supervisor. I was aware of stepping to the left (on the map) to review how professional ethical practice would view this possible action. Because the client was presented to me through the constructs of the SE I could only offer potential consequences of that action and asked her to evaluate the risks and appropriateness of that action for her own protection. In this respect I believe I was fulfilling the Qualitative function. She later reflected that the session had been Developmental in helping her feel more 'robust' in the conversations she needed to have and that she now saw the

other perspectives. She also commented that she felt Supported because I affirmed that it was a very complex situation.

## Strengths and Limitations

The PCT informed approach suggested here presents a simplified model that might be easier to access than many alternatives for those relatively inexperienced in the concept of coaching supervision. It provides a fluid framework that will focus heavily on experience and puts the supervisee at the heart of the discussion, while appreciating the interrelationships at play. It therefore highlights the perceptual filters that operate at each intersection but hold the supervisee accountable for their own development within the supervisory space. The key strengths it offers are simplicity, flexibility and a focus on the individual supervisee who ultimately is the recipient of the work.

However, in trying to produce a simplified representation there is a danger that individuals might accept the five circles as linear and discrete. While the overlap is shown there are obviously more complex interrelationships to consider that might be overlooked by some. Some may feel that the focus on the individual and their personal constructs does not allow for a wide enough appreciation of the case and the complex systems at play. Complex systemic relationships are inevitably relevant, the question is whether addressing that complexity early in the supervisees developmental journey is helpful. In most educational setting concepts are presented in an over-simplified form, with complexity added later. For example, in learning a language, not all tenses are introduced at the start, but are added as knowledge can be built on.

Using this approach would require a very open supervisory relationship with the supervisee willing and able to examine their own personal constructs. This could be problematic for some coaches and their supervisors if this is not appropriate or suitable for them. Much as in coaching, constructs may emerge from historical issues that are unresolved and that might leave a supervisor in a difficult position. Other supervisees may simply be reluctant to examine their personal constructs in relation to their work for reasons that may range from self-deception (Bachkirova 2011b) to boundary concerns (Maxwell, 2009). The focus on the individual and their personal constructs does bring potential risks to be considered.

## Future Research

This article presents a conceptual model that could be used in coaching supervision. It has had little empirical evaluation and would benefit from being used in practice to establish the potential value, and any alterations required. In particular, we might seek feedback from supervisors as to the relevance and resonance of this approach as a philosophical basis for their practice. It would be helpful to understand whether the addition of such a paradigm provides a congruent home for any specific individuals who find it more apposite than their current models. It would also be useful to gather views from supervisors about the face validity of such an approach. It would be especially valuable to understand if newer coaches are able to engage with such a framework and whether the simplicity confers any benefits over established models and approaches.

Coaching supervision more generally is still an area requiring further research, primarily to understand how the uptake of supervision might be increased and the value communicated. This is especially relevant when internal coaching is on the rise and there can be limited understanding of the need for supervision, or it is seen as too costly, for internal coaches who may have other primary responsibilities.

## Conclusions

This article proposes that increasing engagement in coaching supervision might be facilitated through the use of simple and explicit communications. This includes detailing what is actually happening in supervision as part of the contracting process and using a model that is easy to explain and apply. One such model based on personal construct theory is proposed. This puts the coach and their experience at the centre of the supervision process and cites development as residing primarily within the individual.

The application of Personal Construct Theory to the supervisory space also gives additional choice to supervisors who have yet to identify a philosophical home for their practice that effectively aligns with their personal approach. By offering supervisors additional paradigms for practice we are more likely to be able to support congruent supervisory practice with a greater chance of alignment with the self of the practitioner.

The model proposed is named the ABCD Map that suggests four lenses for exploration of Attitudes, Behaviours, Context and Dynamics. These four lenses can be investigated in the five domains of the Coach, the Supervisor, the Client, the client Context and the coaching Profession. The supervision process is viewed as a shared co-created space where ten primary tasks are the focus of the work.

One of the key benefits of the model proposed is the simplicity that may make it more accessible for those new to supervision. By providing a clear and explicit framework it is hoped that a wider population can engage with supervision to the greater benefit of all stakeholders.

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## Appendix 1

Domain	Potential Questions
Attitudes	What are you/I feeling? What values might be at play here? What is unspoken here? What were you thinking? What was your intent?
Behaviours	What did you/they do? How did you approach the issue? What did you see/observe/hear? What were stated aims for the engagement? What patterns do you notice?
Context	What is happening in the wider context for you/your client? How does this case compare with others? How might your circumstances be affecting this? What else do you know about the environment?
Dynamics	How would you describe the relationship? How might they see you? If you and the coachee were cast off on a desert island, what would happen? What might be influencing the reactions? What shift is needed? What parallel process might be at play?

