

BOOK REVIEWS

Solution Focused Coaching Supervision: An Essential Guide for Individual, Group, Peer and Team Coaching Supervision by Kirsten Dierolf, Debbie Hogan, Jane Tuomola and Svea Van Der Hoorn (Editors)



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The book promises the opportunity for an understanding and practice of coaching supervision which, rather than merely copying supervision practices from other complex helping professions, is based on a clear and consistent theory of change which is ‘isomorphic with and responsive to professional coaching’. The writing is accessible and engaging, making complex concepts easy to understand. The content is well-organised, featuring clear headings and summaries that aid navigation and comprehension, and reflective exercises are offered for more personalised learning. Valuable references at the end of each chapter further stimulate the interested reader. [Read the review in German.](#)

Solution Focused Coaching Supervision: An Essential Guide for Individual, Group, Peer and Team Coaching Supervision by Kirsten Dierolf, Debbie Hogan, Jane Tuomola and Svea van der Hoorn (editors)
Routledge, 2024, 264 pages, ISBN 9781032487380, £34.99 paperback (eBook editions available)

This book was published at a time when the largest professional coaching association (International Coaching Federation) took a step in the direction of coaching supervision by making it obligatory as part of team coaching certification — and a professional development choice for coaches in general. This and other developments not only make coaching supervision a “hot topic” in coaching circles, they also generate the need for its professionalisation. The book promises the opportunity for an understanding and practice of coaching supervision which, rather than merely copying supervision practices from other complex helping professions, is based on a clear and consistent theory of change which is “isomorphic with and responsive to professional coaching”.

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By describing coaching supervision as a family resemblance phenomenon, the authors manage to remain non-judgmental towards those outside their own philosophical framework, which is a social constructionist, collaborative, Solution Focused approach. In line with this understanding of coaching (supervision), it is a logical step to write an explicit book on the authors' chosen approach — offering a detailed guide for practice, a clear description of the philosophy, and even articulating wishes for future developments.

While the book's obvious target audience includes aspiring or practicing coaching supervisors, the authors also mention as intended readers coaches — who surely will gain many ideas on how to reflect usefully and consistently on their practice. Moreover, this book may help them become aware of whether they are — being coaches in a Solution Focused paradigm — irritated by their coaching supervisor employing a different theory of change!

The history of supervision is explored, tracing its roots to educational and welfare systems in the U.S. and Europe, each with different initial goals. The book contrasts this with psychoanalytic supervision, which seeks to foster self-awareness among supervisors to avoid them projecting their issues onto clients.

Through an analysis of definitions of coaching supervision from previous literature, the authors emphasise the importance of viewing Solution Focused coaching supervision as a conversation that pays attention to the supervision client's growth and resources. "Solution Focused coaching supervision works with the [supervisor and client] as the relevant system." An updated definition is presented — after discussing what the authors term a Synopsis of Competence Frameworks — in the Reflective Exercise section titled, "What is your definition of coaching supervision?" (p. 25), and which encourages readers to determine their own stance as practitioners.

Before detailing possible processes and applications, a theoretical foundation for the Solution Focused approach is provided, based on [The Galveston Declaration](#) (Gosnell et al., 2017). For example, by valuing "Every Interaction as Mutual Influence", the authors highlight the caring relationship, and the coaching supervisor's aim to do their best to collaborate usefully with the client and their preferred ways to "learn, develop, and experience restoration from potentially difficult situations" (p. 34). The book enables a detailed understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the Solution Focused approach, making it relevant for those interested in the theory of change upon which this work is based.

When discussing different Solution Focused coaching supervision settings, the authors choose to follow the Art Gallery metaphor (BRIEF and McKergow) while describing a possible process for Solution Focused coaching and supervision. They consistently refer to the "moves" of the supervisor, preferring metaphors of dance over technical language when describing conversations.

The descriptions of the moves (such as the good intentions of the supervision client or miracle question) are organised around three main functions of coaching supervision:

- restorative
- professional/personal development
- quality assurance and ethical guidance

Thus, there is much to ponder for both novice and experienced Solution Focused practitioners.

One of the book's key strengths is its emphasis on *practical* application. It offers numerous case studies and illustrative examples that demonstrate how Solution Focused supervision conversations can be applied in various contexts. The authors effectively outline the distinct aspects of individual, group, peer and team supervision, providing a clear framework for readers to understand and implement these approaches. Transcripts of sessions make the book especially useful and engaging.

The writing is accessible and engaging, making complex concepts easy to understand. The content is well-organised, featuring clear headings and summaries that aid navigation and comprehension, and reflective exercises are offered for more personalised learning. Valuable references at the end of each chapter further stimulate the interested reader.

Overall, Solution Focused supervision is described as valuing simplicity and progress by focusing on what works and what clients desire, rather than analysing problems or deficits. The authors have launched this book in a changing environment and are aware of it. They close with their own detailed "best hopes" for coaching supervision. I read this as a call to maintain deliberate, ethical practice through a multiplicity of approaches to support the development of practitioners.

Read the German translation of this review at <https://www.nla-schweiz.ch/buchbesprechung-loesungsfokussierte-coaching-supervision-k-dierolf-e-a/>.

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