

Tele-supervision

A **Covenanting or Re-covenanting:**

If tele-supervision is new to a supervisory relationship please make this an explicit part of the Supervision Covenant between you. Make sure you discuss:

- Which technology you will use (zoom is recommended).
- How the technology works and who will contact whom
- The contact details needed
- What to do if the preferred method fails
- The implications for boundaries and confidentiality when two geographical locations are involved (see below)
- The implications for preparation beforehand and processing afterwards when there is no travelling involved (see below)
- What it feels like to engage in a virtual space (see below)
- The implications for the supervisory methods that can be used (creative methods are still possible but need adapting – see below)
- How you will complete, share and sign the Agreed Record

B **Creating the Space**

Supervisor:

- Try to organise your room so that the technology you use (phone, tablet or laptop) is not on your desk but in a suitably reflective space. Think about the backdrop that your supervisee will see. What do you not want them to see? Try to send the kind of spatial signals for containing supervisory work that you would aim to create if you were sharing the space.
- Think about the nature of virtual space. Do you use electronic means for other meetings (business, keeping in touch with family). How is this similar/different? How will prayer be, like this? You may be seeing into your supervisee's home for the first time. What is that like for them? Many people assume that tele-supervision is less intimate but it can be more exposing in some ways.
- Think ahead about what you need for the whole supervisory process. Have you got your diary to hand for confirming future dates? Copies of the paperwork you need to complete? Any paper/pens for notes? It is more disconcerting to move away from the camera during tele-supervision than it is to move about the supervision room when you are face to face.

Supervisee:

- Think about your space – where can you best receive supervision? Ideally, not at your desk, as this will be full of work and not easily allow perspective on the work or deep feelings to emerge. Try to identify a space with a more reflective feel. Do you want a candle or religious symbol visible at your end?
- What device can you use? It needs a camera and a microphone. Tablets and phones are the easiest for this purpose, but a laptop or desktop can work.
- Think about the nature of virtual space. Do you use electronic means for other meetings (business, keeping in touch with family). How is this similar/different? How will prayer be, like this? You may be seeing into your supervisor's home for the first time. What will that be like? Many people assume that tele-supervision is less intimate but it can be more exposing in some ways.
- Think through the boundaries you need to put in place in order to concentrate and keep the space confidential. Family members, pets etc.. may all need clear guidance!
- The quality of space available for supervision also concerns the mental and emotional space created before and after supervision for distilling and processing what has taken place. Think about how to manage your diary before and after the 90 minutes of the supervision so you are not cramming it into such a small space that you do not have the mental and emotional room to reflect at depth.

C Using the Space Well

- **Angle of view:** It is helpful if the supervisor can see more of the supervisee than their head. It makes more intuitive communication possible if you can see hand gestures and body posture. You're your supervisee identify a suitable table or shelf they can put their device on so that they can sit back in their chair? If you are using creative methods you will need to see what your supervisee creates. If its drawing they can draw and then hold it up to the screen. If it's small world or cards they will need to angle their screen so you can see the action. It will take some experimentation to get it right but it's usually worth the trouble.
- **Keeping Track:** It can be hard for supervisors to track supervisory conversations if they are entirely verbal. Great concentration is needed in virtual communication to do this. It is likely to be important for you to keep notes. If you are a visual thinker you may need to draw what you are hearing. Sometimes sharing this with the supervisee on the screen can help them see what they are saying.
- **Creative methods** can be used effectively through a screen but they may need adapting. The most important difference is that the *supervisee* needs to have the necessary kit available rather than you. Please make sure that they at least have pens and paper ready. If you have not yet tried small world, cards or chair work with them, this may be the moment to try, so encourage them to equip themselves with a basic kit. Evoke cards can be ordered from [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk). Objects can be gathered from a toy box, tool box or kitchen draw. Cloths can be sheets, towels, even jackets, as long as they offer some choices of colour and texture. It may encourage you to try supervisory methods if you

understand better how they are most effectively used. The document: *Matching Methods to Supervisory Questions*, explains which methods work best with which questions. You should also revise the relevant section of Responsible Grace. Notes on particular methods as they are used in tele-supervision are offered here:

Tele-supervision using Cards/Small World

- Focus the question as usual
- When you have agreed how to work, ask your supervisee to angle their screen onto the surface you will use so you can see the whole scene.
- If you cannot see well, ask the supervisee to hold up each object and show you as they tell you its meaning.
- The good thing is that whilst the screen is on the objects/cards, it keeps your focus there too so that you get the bets from the method.
- When it is time to de-role, ask the supervisee to do this and then angle the screen back onto them so you can start bridging and enacting before you review and close.

Tele-supervision using Role Work

- Focus the question as usual
- When you have agreed how to work, ask your supervisee to let you see as much of the whole space as possible.
- Many supervisees will not have much space to work in or lack additional chairs to use to mark the roles/options they want to explore. In this case, ask them to choose a cloth and show you it and then stand on it as you help them experience what this role/option feels like. Alternatively they may wear the cloth/jacket and experience the role/option that way. Remember to follow the protocol and slow the action down, inviting the supervisee to say what it feels like in each space/role, what their questions are in this role/space, what the wisdom is in this space, etc..
- If the supervisee has the space to use chairs but not the technology to let you see the action you will need to get them to describe what they are doing. Again, slow down the action by asking them questions so that the supervisee feels accompanied and not left to work it out on their own.
- In either case, remember to ask them to de-role and then angle the screen back to them in order to debrief.

Tele-supervision using drawing exercises

- Focus the question as usual
- Invite the supervisee to draw/map out what they are describing.
- You might, for example, use the *Six Shape Supervision Structure* devised by Anna Chesner.
- Invite the supervisee to divide a large piece of paper into 6. In turn ask them to draw/map/write in each of the six shapes in answer to these 6 questions that you lead as a meditative exercise:
 - 1 What is the situation/problem?
 - 2 What is your aim/what do you want to achieve?
 - 3 What potential/actual obstacles are in the way of achieving this?
 - 4 How do you feel?
 - 5 Taking a step back, what else is in play in this situation that you haven't factored/represented yet?
 - 6 Where are you now? What is your question now? What are your first steps?
- Invite your supervisee to review their work and share it with you. Which spaces seem most enlightening? What do they notice/wonder/realise? What do you notice/wonder?