Four aspects of the 'A' strategy applied to supervision

Functions of the strategy for the person	Cognitions or pre-conscious mental 'rules' (normative to endangering)	Behaviours (normative to endangering)	The 'story' that accompanies the 'A' strategy (normative to endangering)
Over-regulate/control own negative emotions and **deactivate** attachment behaviours in order to…..	Be good.	Superficial/socially facile/ people-pleasing	I don't need comfort-everything was fine
increase others' acceptance, proximity and responsiveness, via…	Follow the rules	Inhibited/ withdrawn	Everything is perfect, but don't ask me for examples
compliance, care-taking or self-sufficiency	I'm responsible	Compulsive care-giving	There was a problem but nobody is to blame
Plus: Use self-representations that self is **strong** and **invulnerable,** and **defensively exclude** internal world (feelings and emotions) in order to…	Don't ask, don't challenge, don't feel. (Feelings are dangerous)	Compulsive compliance	I solve problems by looking after others or by being a good boy/girl/worker
	You can't hurt me/I don't need comfort/This is just business/Just sex	Compulsive social or sexual promiscuity (can lead to emotionally callous behaviour)	Things are difficult but I don't need others. I cope by doing it alone
avoid negative emotions that create discomfort	I don't need other people/Do as I say and don't cause me to feel uncomfortable emotions	Compulsive self-reliance (can lead to bullying/ controlling behaviour to minimise and avoid negative feelings)	There are serious problems, but I protect myself by anticipating every danger (because no-one else is there to protect me)

Four aspects of the 'C' strategy applied to supervision

Functions of the strategy for the person	Cognitions or pre-conscious mental 'rules' (normative to endangering)	Behaviours (normative to endangering)	The 'story' that accompanies the 'C' strategy (normative to endangering)
Hyper-activates attachment behaviour via…..	Feelings rule, and I am angry!	Threatening	I cannot predict other people's behaviour or control my own
exaggerating 'poor me' feelings (cry, whine etc.) or anger in order to…	It's not my fault. Things happen to me	Dismissing/sulking/ clingy/coy	Let me tell you everything I can think of. It's too complicated, so I cannot draw conclusions about responsibility
increase others' predictability, and **availability**	Pay attention to me or else I will….	Aggressive/ coercive	There is a problem and you are to blame
whilst feeling **resentful** at others' unpredictability Plus:	Look after me or I will be hurt by….	Feigned helpless	I am angry/helpless because I am still waiting for you to fix it
Anxious that attachment figure will withdraw, but **resists comfort and so…** remains in **under-regulated, emotionally aroused** state and… **cognitively** disconnects: no link between attachment figure, words and actions	How dare you….	Punitive/defiant/ oppositional	Other people can't help me, or they hurt me and must be punished (including you)
	Don't hurt me….	Seductive/bullied	Here is a pseudo-problem that I want you to struggle with (not the real problem) and that can never be solved, but I need people attentive to me. I will seduce or tantalise or scare you into not giving up on me

Treatment implications for workers using an 'A' strategy:

Worker's stance

- A core dilemma underpinning the A strategy is fear of emotional intimacy versus fear of isolation.
- More concerned with *what happened* than *how they felt about it.*
- Core concept: 'My thinking will keep me safe and help me survive.'
- Over-arching strategy: an exterior presentation that inhibits negative affect.

Supervisor's stance

- Central challenge: to hear and work with the *fearful* (desiring comfort and protection), *sad or angry person* beneath the outwardly positive, neutral or distancing exterior.
- Build trust to overcome suspicion.
- Beware of trying to find a quick fix. Be prepared to stay in 'for the long haul'.
- Honour the worker's story whilst eliciting more balanced stories, including painful or difficult emotions.

Approaches that might help

- Encourage 'I' statements.
- Don't 'attack' their idealised representation – this will usually cause the worker to defend more.
- Give 'permission' to the worker to reveal their 'shadow' emotions and impulses, without fear of reprisal.
- Unpick the worker's assumptions, errors, omissions, distortions and self-deceptions (i.e. related to thinking and feeling).
- Help worker to express true affect, e.g. fear, anger, sadness or need for comfort.
- Help worker to use active or projective methods (e.g. objects, drawing) to externalise issues like shame, guilt and remorse. The 'A' strategy often carries with it a burden of shame, and it may help the worker if they are able to 'place' the shame outside of themselves, and perhaps 'give it back' to whom it belongs.
- Encourage worker to show him or herself self-compassion.
- Help worker to accurately distribute responsibility for events in their past and present.
- Help worker to develop intimacy skills, especially skills such as asking for care or comfort, and expressing feelings.
- Help worker to develop the skills of mentalisation, self-reflection and emotional self-awareness.
- Teaching problem-solving skills.
- Help worker to develop skills of reciprocity in relationships (the goal-directed partnership).
- Help worker to identify strengths and build self-esteem.
- Help worker to appraise themselves from their own perspective, not that of others.

Treatment implications for workers using a 'C' strategy:

Worker's stance
- A core dilemma underpinning the 'C' strategy is fear of abandonment versus fear of losing autonomy.
- Less concerned with *what happened* than *how they felt about it.*
- Core concept: 'My feelings will keep me safe and help me survive.'
- Over-arching strategy: To exaggerate the display of genuinely felt fear or sadness and alternate it with the display of anger (with varying degrees of one presentation being dominant) in order to involve the other person (e.g. you or other team members) in an ongoing, unsolvable, everlasting struggle.

Supervisor's stance
- Central challenge: when the outward presentation is *fear and desire for comfort*, to hear and address the underlying *anger*. When the outward presentation is *anger,* to hear and address the *underlying fear, vulnerability and desire for comfort.*
- In both cases, to also help the person to organise their thinking about people and relationships and how they think and behave when they feel stressed or threatened in relationships.
- Build trust to overcome suspicion.
- Beware of trying to find a quick fix.
- Honour the worker's story whilst helping worker to arrive at a more coherent story from uncontained emotion and unstructured narrative. Help worker to include a balance of true cognition and affect.
- Avoid colluding with stories that blame others and / or characterise others as 'all good' or 'all bad'. This will reinforce the 'C' strategy.

Approaches that might help
- Create structures and clear boundaries.
- Unpick the worker's assumptions, omissions, errors, distortions and self-deceptions (ie. related to thinking and feeling).
- Help worker to separate their own feelings from those of other people.
- Help worker to develop accurate perspective-taking and a view of other people that balances different perspectives.
- Help worker to identify exceptions, eg. when their attachment figure behaved differently.
- Help worker to make accurate links between their feelings and the events they describe
- Help worker to accurately distribute responsibility for events in their past and present.
- Help worker to develop intimacy skills work, especially skills such as asking for care or comfort, and talking about feelings.
- Help worker to develop the skills of mentalisation, self-reflection and emotional self-regulation.
- Encourage worker to show him or herself self-compassion.
- Help worker to develop problem solving skills.