



# Creative and reflective pathways in the LIT- intervention group

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## Abstract

The article traces the four-year journey of the Leadership-Identity-Teams (LIT) Intervention Group—a group of seven supervisors from five countries who built trust, creativity, and genuine connection entirely online. Through reflection, art, and stories, the group discovered how personal authenticity can sustain professional learning communities over time. Their workshop at the ANSE Summer University 2025 offered participants a firsthand experience of these methods: art-based reflection, symbolic mapping, and fairy-tale narratives. Together, these practices demonstrated how supervision can create spaces of safety, imagination, and shared humanity that nourish both personal growth and professional collaboration while inspiring new ways of thinking about connection and collective learning.

## From vision to practice

The Leadership-Identity-Teams (LIT) Intervention Group was created in 2021 by seven supervisors from Hungary, Norway, Lithuania, Estonia, and Croatia. Since then, we have met regularly online, building a space that is not only professional but also deeply personal—a circle where we can grow, challenge, and support one another. For four years, our group has maintained energy and trust despite never having met in person as a full team. This in itself became a question worth exploring: What makes such a group thrive over time, across countries, cultures, and screens?

When the **ANSE Summer University 2025** called for workshop proposals, we felt inspired to share our lived experience. We wanted to open a window into the “secret ingredients” of our

bond and to offer participants a taste of the creative tools that made our online supervision meaningful, alive, and sustainable.

However, as life often teaches us, reality requires adaptation. Only three of our members – Emese Karolina Németh (Hungary), Neringa Kurapkaitienė (Lithuania), and Gabriella Pach (Hungary) – were able to attend the Summer University in person. Together, we represented the entire team and introduced participants to the essence of LIT: a blend of reflection, creativity, and narrative work.

For our LIT IIG group, **reflective practice** has been essential in sustaining connection. It allowed us to bring not only professional successes but also doubts and struggles into the circle – making it a safe space where vulnerability met support, and learning was shared. We planned to introduce workshop participants to some of the reflective exercises we have done during our supervision sessions.

Therefore, we used creative tools and facilitated reflections both backward and forward. By noticing what had been learned and what remained open, participants identified new possibilities. In this way, reflection became both anchor and compass: grounding awareness while pointing toward growth.

To include the voices of those not present, four absent members – **Alice Raidma** (Estonia), **Branka Sladovic Franz** (Croatia), **Magritt Lundestad** (Norway), **Nándor Bognár** (Hungary) – prepared short videos answering four reflective questions: “Who am I?”, “Why did I join?”, “What are my most memorable moments from the past four years?”, and “Why am I still here?”. The testimonies underlined the depth of connection and the lasting value of reflection within the group.

## Art Based supervision – Creative tools in supervision and coaching

### The Role of Art in the LIT Intervention Group

When we asked ourselves what has kept our intervention group

alive and connected for more than four years, we found that art and creative tools played a major role in it. Working with images, colors, and creative methods was one component of the “glue” that held us together. Through art, we can share not only our professional reflections but also layers of ourselves that words alone cannot reach.

This did not happen by accident. At the very beginning of our journey, we devoted two or three sessions to building a framework-deciding how we wanted to work together and, most importantly, creating a safe space. These sessions were not about solving cases or experimenting with tools. They were about laying down foundations. Without these, the vulnerability that comes with showing one’s artwork would have been impossible.

An image has the power to reveal something even the creator may not yet know about themselves. To show such a picture to a group is an act of courage. But when this is met with safety and acceptance, the effect is profound: recognition, resonance, and a new depth of connection.



In preparing for our ANSE Summer University workshop, we agreed to present only those creative practices we had actually used in our group. It was tempting to expand further, bringing new ideas and brainstorming additional possibilities. But we chose restraint because our primary intention was to show what had truly sustained us. We wanted participants to experience firsthand the practices that had enabled our group to thrive across borders and years.

As part of our introduction, we brought examples of the kinds of **artworks** that had shaped our art-based sessions:

- drawings for grounding and arriving,
- images created to release emotions,
- check-in pictures to express where we were in the moment,
- visual reflections on cases.

We also shared creative methods introduced by our Norwegian colleague, Magritt Lundestad, rooted in Integrative Therapy. Among them were “Identity Columns” and “Inner Personal Sovereignty.” These approaches enriched our group’s repertoire and deepened our ability to explore complex personal and professional situations.

Over time, something interesting began to happen. Even in some sessions where we had not planned to use art, drawings, and creative reflections **started to emerge spontaneously** during case work. Once the door had been opened, art started to become a natural language of reflection. Once you begin working with images, there is really no way back.

These experiences confirmed that art-based supervision is not about artistic skill. Nobody needs to know how to draw or master techniques. What matters is expression and resonance. The simplest lines or colours can open meaning, if approached with openness and respect.

#### **Artworks as a Door to Reflection**

After our introduction, we invited participants to experience this

for themselves. We could not replicate everything our group had tried over the years, so we made choices. Time was limited, and we wanted to focus on simple yet versatile methods-tools that can be used in various settings, with diverse clients, and for multiple purposes.

We have chosen artworks that can:

- help clients settle into a session, shifting from daily busyness into a reflective state;
- open conversation about what matters to them most in the moment;
- reveal hidden aspects of a situation that are not yet conscious;
- provide a way to release emotions;
- summarize insights or takeaways in a visual form;
- and, of course, surprise us with new possibilities of uses discovered along the way.

Before beginning, we laid down cards with four words and discussed their meanings to create a common understanding that had guided our own group: Trust, Respect, Presence, Responsibility. They became not only reminders but also a symbolic framework grounding our shared space before the first line was drawn.

The physical setting of the room was carefully arranged. Oil pastels were placed directly on the tables where participants sat, allowing them to begin without hesitation. On separate tables stood magazines in different languages, scissors, glue, and larger sheets of paper. The arrangement itself carried a message: materials are within reach, choices are free, and no prior skill is required. We emphasized this explicitly: “Come as you are and let your hands work. Whatever emerges is perfect as it is.” The relief of hearing these words is often visible immediately—shoulders drop, people smile, and the inner critic takes a step back.

Our first exercise was a grounding spiral. Participants chose one colour of pastel and began to draw an inward-moving spiral. Eyes open, then eyes closed; movements slow, then fast; repea-

ting as long as it felt comfortable. This simple activity, rhythmic and meditative, allowed people to arrive fully in the space and into themselves.

Next came an exercise with magazines. Each participant chose one picture and one word, spontaneously and instinctively. These fragments were then placed onto paper, becoming the seed of a personal artwork. The invitation was simple: look at what has emerged and ask: “What message does this hold for me?” What does it reflect about my current life or work situation?”

The act of sharing these reflections was moving. What seemed like a random image often turned out to be a mirror of something important – a challenge, a longing, a resource? Participants were surprised by the depth that such a seemingly light process could open.

We concluded with a collective creation. On a large sheet of paper, each person added colours, shapes, or images of their choice while gentle music played in the background. This became a shared artwork – a visual map of what participants had taken from the session. It was not about making a perfect picture but about weaving together many voices into one expression.

### **Closing Reflections**

What we witnessed at the workshop of the ANSE Summer University mirrored what we had experienced in our own intervision group: art-based methods open doors that words alone cannot unlock. An image can bypass defenses and reach places in ourselves that surprise us. A shared artwork can strengthen the sense of belonging within a group. A simple color or form can carry meaning that unfolds only when reflected upon together

For many participants, the session brought **insights and emotions** they had not expected. For us, it was a confirmation of what we had long felt in the LIT group: that creativity and reflection are not separate but deeply connected. Together, they sustain learning, connection, and growth.

As supervisors and coaches, we often search for methods that **can hold both complexity and simplicity**, that can touch both the personal and the professional. Art-based tools offer exactly that. They remind us that reflection is not only about thinking but also about seeing, feeling, and creating.

And perhaps most importantly, they remind us that vulnerability and trust are at the heart of our work. To show an artwork is to show oneself. To receive it with respect is to strengthen the trust and connection.

In this way, the workshop was not only a demonstration of tools but also a lived experience of what keeps groups alive: curiosity, creativity, and courage. Once you start reflecting through art, there truly is no way back – only forward, into deeper layers of understanding.

### **Entering the land of fairy tales - Working with the map op tales**

Participants had just completed reflective exercises on belonging to a professional community, using artwork as a medium for reflection. As they returned from the lunch break, they found the following words on the workshop room door, signalling a transition in our approach:

**“This door is not a door but the entrance to the fairy tale land.”**

With these magical words, we invited them to **cross a symbolic threshold**: to step into a space where identity could be explored through the stories, symbols, and images of fairy tales. Although this one-hour session was an integral part of the three-hour workshop of the LIT Intersession Group at the ANSE Summer University, it also marked a clear shift — a new theme came into focus and a new approach to reflective work was introduced.

### **Why fairy tales?**

Fairy tales are not merely children’s stories; they are symbolic narratives that carry the archetypal wisdom of humanity. As Hungarian fairy tale researcher and therapist Ildikó Boldizsár, creator of the *Metamorphosis fairy tale therapy method*, emphasizes, tales work through images and metaphors that speak directly to the unconscious. They allow us to give form to what feels chaotic, inexpressible, or unspeakable (Boldizsár, 2010). In the language of tales, **even the most overwhelming experience can be externalized**, placed into a landscape, and gradually transformed.

### **The Map of Tales**

In this session, we worked with the Map of Tales, created by Hungarian fairy tale therapist and artist Vanda Tátrai. This tangible tool is a **visual representation of the fairy tale world**: the underworld, middle world, and upper world, each filled with archetypal locations such as forests, mountains, seas, and castles. It provides a reflective space where participants can locate their own journeys within symbolic geography. The Map can be used on its own, or — as in this workshop — in combination with other approaches, such as Boldizsár’s methods of therapeutic storytelling.

### **The workshop process**

This one-hour session was designed as a personal journey, allowing participants to **explore aspects of their professional identity**. Each person worked with their own theme, using the Map of Tales accompanied by a guided reflective process. The Map functioned both as a mirror and a guide, and the process unfolded in the following steps:

1. **The Hero.** Each person first named the “hero” of their tale – a part of their professional identity that would set out on this journey. This naming, together with the chosen object representing it, has already created a symbolic distance: the professional self has become a character, open to exploration.
2. **The Here and Now.** Participants placed the symbol of their

hero on the Map, choosing the location that best represented their current professional situation. They described not only the place itself but also the atmosphere, environment, and companions surrounding their hero.

3. **The Then and There.** Fairy tales do not always follow strict chronology, so we invited participants to leap forward: “Where does your hero long to go?”, “Which place on the Map calls you as the desired destination?”. After making their decisions, a guided imagination followed, where participants explored these places with all their senses – what it looked like, sounded like, even smelled or felt like.
4. **The Journey.** Next, we asked participants to trace a path on the Map from their here-and-now to their desired destination. As the Map offered several possibilities, they first chose the route their hero would take. Then we explored potential landscapes and obstacles they might encounter on the way, followed by imagining helpers – human or magical – who could appear during the journey.
5. **Resources.** Returning to the here-and-now, participants were invited to view their current place on the Map again, this time with fresh eyes. They reflected on the resources already present in their here-and-now. Just as a fairy tale hero never sets out empty-handed, they, too, carried provisions: skills, allies, and experiences that could support their journey.
6. **Closing Tale.** At the end, a story was shared with the message: “Your heart is already at the desired place; only your body needs to follow.” This tale offered encouragement, anchoring the symbolic work in hope and movement.

Throughout the process, participants reflected individually, in pairs, and in the larger group, sharing glimpses of their heroes’ journeys. The Map enabled them to see their challenges from a new perspective, to speak through images rather than direct self-disclosure, and to explore possibilities in a creative and playful way.

### **The way fairy tales work**

What makes this approach powerful is the way tales provide both **distance and a sense of safety**. Speaking of a forest, a sea, or a helper — or even an enemy — feels less threatening than naming one’s fear or failure directly. The symbol carries the weight of experience, allowing exploration without defensiveness.

At the same time, fairy tales are a **shared cultural language**. When someone speaks of “slaying a dragon” or “crossing the glass mountain,” everyone understands – even across cultures and professional contexts.

Fairy tales also open **creative possibilities**. In their world, anything can happen – enemies may become allies, the devil can be outwitted, curses may be broken and hidden treasures may be found. This imaginative freedom inspires supervisees to see new solutions and recognize resources they might otherwise have overlooked.

### **From chaos to order**

Each time working with fairy tales or the Map of Tales, a similar transformation happens. What begins as inner chaos – confusion, unspoken tension, the difficulty of naming what is wrong – gradually **takes shape in symbols and images**. By placing the experience onto the fairy tale landscape, order emerges. And as the external order takes form, an inner re-ordering begins as well.

This is the “magic” of tales: even when we remain at the symbolic level, without explicitly translating images into everyday life, the psyche begins to reorganize itself. Chaos finds form, and the supervisee can sense a new coherence.

### **Closing reflection**

This session was both imaginative and deeply reflective. It showed that professional identity can also be explored through

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*Supervision can be more than structured reflection — it can be a creative encounter. In this article, three supervisors from the LIT Intervision Group invite us into a space where learning becomes alive and deeply human through creativity and storytelling. Their experience at the ANSE Summer University 2025 shows how art-based reflection and fairy-tale metaphors can deepen awareness, spark courage, and transform professional dialogue into shared discovery.*

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stories. Working with the Map of Tales always brings the same realization: that **fairy tales make visible what is hidden**, and transform inner confusion into symbolic order.

Within the larger arc of our workshop, this process complemented the earlier reflections on community and belonging, adding

a narrative dimension to the learning. And within the wider life of our LIT group, it mirrored what sustains us: the interplay of reflection, creativity, and story that continues to connect us across borders and years.

### Takeways and impact

#### **What did this mean for the workshop participants?**

Creative work – art in the workshop and the land of fairy tales – **connects the unconscious with conscious** understanding of ourselves and others. The personal path toward oneself and the outside world in a group creates a curve of self-awareness and self-disclosure. On such a journey, there is a need to summarize and understand: “What has happened here with myself and with us?”.

At the end of the workshop, participants revisited the collages they had created at the beginning. They reflected on their personal and professional processes by expanding or transforming their collages into new artworks. Sharing even very small changes – or admitting no change at all – opened up possibilities for genuine connection and allowed the group process to close in a meaningful way.

Reflection at the end also brought surprises: by “crossing the threshold,” participants shared experiences they had not voiced earlier. This openness seemed to emerge as a result of the safety and trust established during the workshop. Our interpretation is that this openness is a token of gratitude, a gift to each other for the shared experience: gratitude for the chance to be oneself while being part of the group and gratitude for a space where everyone feels welcome and is given enough room. The gifts of openness shared during the closing reflection were intended not for investment but for rejoicing in the shared experience.

#### **What did this mean for our LIT intervision group?**

The decision to create a workshop led us to reflect on our own group process. First, we had to agree on what we wanted to of-

fer participants at the Summer University. Initially, we **planned for all members to participate** — some in person, some online. However, we realized this would create an imbalance in involvement. To include those not physically present, we decided to introduce them through short videos. Therefore, we agreed on the four questions: “Who am I?”, “Why did I join?”, “What are my most memorable moments from the past four years?”, “Why am I still here?”. The three of us leading the workshop did not prepare a video, since we could explain in person. What surprised us was how powerful these recordings turned out to be. They became one of the most important parts of the workshop. Why? Because in talking about the intervision group, we were also giving feedback to each other—acknowledging what we had gone through together over the past four years. We discovered that the most significant experiences were shared ones: overcoming illness, becoming a parent, and supporting each other through family struggles. While case discussions took most of our time, it was the courage to bring personal experiences into the circle that most deeply united us.

This raised a central question: “What is the glue that holds our group together?” The answer became clear—our personal and authentic selves.

The workshop also prompted an unexpected question from the ANSE Board: “Are you closing your intervision group?” Leading an activity at the Summer University can sometimes mark the closure of a group. We had not considered ending it, but the question stayed with us. At first, we dismissed it, then we grew curious: “Why did it arise?” “What does it mean for us?”

As a result, we began asking ourselves whether we agreed to hold 2-3 evaluation meetings to reflect on our experience, including how we perceived ourselves in the group, the roles we took or avoided, what we learned, and how we experienced one another. Only after this evaluation will we decide whether we want to continue, and if so, how. The group may remain the

same, be open to new members, or take on a new purpose and spirit. Whatever the outcome, the group will be different—and that is good.

### **In Conclusion**

The art-based methods and creative interventions in our group created space for openness and genuine personal connection. Creativity gave us the **courage to speak not only about professional issues** but also about personal experiences and difficulties. Repeated reflection and sincerity bound us together with strong ties, deepening both professional and personal involvement. Opening the door to personal life within the intervision group fostered greater acceptance, understanding, and compassion.

Sharing our experiences at the ANSE Summer University 2025 reflected a similar dynamic: in the workshop group, too, openness, personal disclosure, and compassion emerged. This suggests that what we have experienced in intervision groups — or in any workshop or professional gathering — can inform the way we **design supervision processes**, enabling us to create spaces that mirror these qualities.

Preparing for the Summer University prompted us to pause and reflect on ourselves as a group. Looking back on the past four years naturally led to self-assessment and **new questions**: “What have we experienced and achieved?”, “How have we grown together?” And most importantly, should we continue the group, and if so, how? ■

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Gabi has over 20 years of leadership and HR experience, including 16 years in executive roles at multinational companies. As a consultant, she helps leaders achieve both success and happiness in their profession. Her S.H.A.P.E.™ Program empowers women leaders to build self-awareness and confidence.

As a coach, facilitator, and supervisor, Gabi is passionate about transforming mind-sets by rewriting limiting beliefs. She helps clients navigate uncertainty and stagnation through creative, associative tools. Her latest passions the "Map of Tales" and "Metamorphoses Fairy Tale Therapy", guide individuals through their inner narratives, opening up new perspectives and solutions.



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