

Coaching Supervision – Become a Reflective Practitioner



*"Somewhere beyond right and wrong, there is a garden. I will meet you there." **Rumi***



“Change happens in the crucible of relationship.” Critchley.

What is Coaching Supervision?

*“Think of Super-vision as a process of Reflection, Insight and Support. Supervision enhances ‘seeing’- the seeing into one’s practice, the illumination of subtle processes in coaching conversations and of blind spots in oneself and in one’s thinking.” **Edna Murdoch, CSA.***

What is the difference between Coaching Supervision and Mentor Coaching?

In **Coaching Supervision**, the purpose is to engage in a reflective dialogue and collaborative learning. The focus is on “*Who you are*” and “*How you are BEING with your clients*”. The coach is invited to focus much more on what’s happening in their process and where the personal may be interfering with the professional.

In **Mentor Coaching**, the focus is on the development of the coach’s coaching skills, competency development and ethics.

If you are an ICF accredited coach, your 10 hours of Mentor Coaching (7 hrs in group) and (3 x 1:1), or simply (10 hrs of 1:1 Mentor Coaching) are part of your Accreditation for your ACC, PCC or MCC credentialing path. The focus is on ICF competencies and ethics.

How do the Leading Professional Coaching Membership Bodies define Coaching Supervision?

1. The European Mentoring Coaching Council (2020)

“A safe space for reflective dialogue with a practicing supervisor, supporting the supervisee’s practice, development and wellbeing.”

2. The Association of Coaching (2020)

“Coaching Supervision is a formal and protected time for facilitating in-depth reflection for coaches to discuss their work with someone who is experienced as a Coach. Supervision offers a confidential framework within a collaborative working relationship in which the practice, tasks, process and challenges of the coaching work can be explored. The primary functions of Coaching Supervision are to support, develop and ensure ethical and best practice of coaches in service of their coaching clients (individuals and organisations) and their professional associations. Supervision is not a ‘policing’ role, but rather a trusting and collegial professional relationship.”

3. The Association of Coaching Supervisors (2020)

“Supervision on a 121 or group basis is the formal opportunity for coaches working with clients to share, in confidence, their case load activity to gain insight, support and direction for themselves and thereby enabling them to better work in the service of their clients.”

4. The International Coaching Federation (2020)

“Coaching supervision offers coaches an opportunity to access continuous professional development through reflection and dialogue in a safe, supportive and confidential space. If we look closer at the word itself: Super-vision meaning oversight, the practice of supervision is for the Coach and their Supervisor to reflect together and have an oversight of the Coach’s practice in service of them being the very best Coach they can be”.

What is the Purpose of Coaching Supervision?

*“Supervision is a place where a living profession breathes and learns...supervision can be a very important part of taking care of oneself, staying open to new learning’ **Hawkins and Shohet.***

The purpose of supervision is a space where the supervisor celebrates the supervisee’s success and identifies their strengths and not just working on the coach’s blind spots and areas of development.

Engaging in ongoing supervision demonstrates that the coach is keeping up to date with their professional development in their coaching practice.

During a supervision session, the coach takes the time to engage in a reflective practice, in a safe, honest, open and non-judgmental learning environment with an accredited coach supervisor.

During a supervision session, the coach pauses to reflect on their coaching work, where they can get invaluable insights into what is working well and what isn’t that they need to be more aware of.

What are the Functions of Supervision?

Inskipp and Proctor (1988) highlight three main processes in supervision in the helping professions. These are the **Formative**, **Normative** and **Restorative** aspects, and apply equally to the coaching profession.

1. **The Formative (Educative)** aspect is about developing the supervisee's skills and helping the supervisee to understand and appreciate their abilities. This aspect is usually a non-directive conversation to raise the supervisee's awareness around their relationship with the coachee, their responses and interventions with the coachee and the interpersonal dynamics in the relationship, in order to explore further ways of working with the coachee to add more value.
2. **The Normative (Managerial)** aspect provides quality control, ensuring boundaries are being maintained and that the supervisee is undertaking their work to the highest ethical standards within the contract agreed with the coachee and client. This aspect is often more directive and can include feedback, advice, and direction from the supervisor.
3. **The Restorative (Supportive)** aspect allows the supervisee to pause and reflect. This then creates a space for the supervisee to become aware of and to discuss any emotional baggage they may be carrying either consciously or unconsciously from coachee/client interventions, and preventing over-identification with the coachee/client system and understand any anxiety they have absorbed from the system. Here the coach/supervisee is seeking support and simply checking in on how they're doing.

What are the Benefits of Supervision?

Supervision is not limited to reflection on specific client cases. It can be a forum in which the supervisee:

- Increases self-awareness.
- Increases confidence.
- Increases resourcefulness.
- Discusses ethical dilemmas.
- Reflects on personal strengths and development areas within their range of professional competences.
- Supports the supervisee to maintain well-being and psychological health.
- Addresses more general themes in relation to the development of their competence, capacity and professional identity.
- Maintains a sense of perspective, viewing their practice as if '*from the balcony*'.
- Explores the direction in which they wish to develop their role and professional practice.
- Develop skills as a reflective practitioner.

How much Supervision do I need?

1. **EMCC:** Min of one hour of supervision per 35 hours of practice, a min of four hours a year.
2. **Association of Coaching:** at least one hour of supervision for every 15 hours of Coaching.
3. **ICF:** ICF Credential-holders may submit up to ten hours of Coaching Supervision (*delivering or receiving*) as core competency Continuing Coach Education (CCE) units toward their credential renewal.

What kinds of Supervision are there?

1. **One to One:** a practising accredited coach supervisor meets the supervisee on a 1:1 basis.
2. **Group Supervision:** when there is more than one supervisee in the session led by an accredited coach supervisor. Here, the supervisees benefit from each other's' input as well as from the supervisor's. Here the coach supervisor engages with the collective intelligence of the group.
3. **Peer Supervision:** Here the group supervises themselves without a coaching supervisor, as both supervisors are accredited and trained coach supervisors. It is about engaging in as a pair when each supervisor provides and receives supervision.



*“A pause gives YOU
breathing space
So, listen to the
whispers
Of the real YOU
Waiting to happen.”
Tara Estacaan.*

How should I select a supervisor?

Based on global best practices, you should apply the following criteria in selecting a supervisor:

- They have a recognised qualification in coaching supervision and can prove it.
- They can explain theoretical frameworks related to supervision.
- They are in touch with developments the field of coaching and supervision.
- They have knowledge of corporate life and organizational systems.
- They have significant level of psychological understanding.
- They have sensitivity to the learner's situation and to different learning styles.
- They have ability to work with different coaching styles.
- They demonstrate highest ethical and professional standards.
- They abide by Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors with a leading coaching supervision accreditation body.
- They demonstrate that their work has been professionally supervised over a number of years.
- They have experience of being supervised and are themselves currently supervised by an accredited supervisor.
- They show commitment to Continuous Professional Development for themselves and their supervisees.

What can I bring to my Coaching Supervision session?

Below are some of the themes that you can bring to your supervision session be it 1:1 or a group supervision session. This is not an exhaustive list though:

1. Discussing ethical dilemmas and making ethical decisions.
2. Maintaining a sense of perspective, as if you're viewing your practice "from a balcony".
3. Bringing emotions into executive coaching.
4. Structure in executive coaching - pre and post coaching sessions, sending emails with agenda, follow up emails etc
5. Boundaries in coaching, advising and mentoring vs. expected tangible results / client getting something.
6. Creativity in coaching: play and have fun vs. cognitive coaching.
7. Managing expectations: Who am I doing this for? For me to for the coachee?
8. Refresher on practices: journaling self-reflective practice.
9. Flow in coaching, start with self; give myself permission to play and have fun with my clients.
10. Maintaining your wellbeing and psychological health.

How can Supervision help me in my Coach Development?

The updated ICF Core Competencies specify as part of the Coaching Mindset that coaches “*engage in ongoing learning and development as a coach; develop an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching; and remain aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others.*”

Part of your coach development journey, embarking on coaching supervision will provide you with a supportive process that deepens your coaching mindset as a practitioner and will expand your ability to work effectively in a complex, diverse and ever-changing environments.

The Growth of the Business Case for Coaching Supervision



“Supervision is no longer a luxury but a necessity and an ethical duty for people who work with people to bring their BEST selves in service of their work.”
Elaine Patterson.

There has been a growth in the requirement for coaching supervision by organisational buyers.

See below some notable quotes from some organisational heads of coaching:

"I would expect coaches to have supervision as part of their continuous professional development and I would not employ a coach who didn't have supervision."

Shaun Lincoln, Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

"To open one's work to scrutiny is important best practice in any helping activity. If you are going to invest in coaches in the workplace, this is an essential part of it- it isn't an optional exercise."

Barbara Picheta, Head of Coaching, PwC UK.



"Don't wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect. Do what YOU can, with what YOU have, where YOU are."
Theodore Roosevelt.

Are you ready to take your coaching practice to the next level for you, your clients and their organisation?

"The inner self is revealed in the unconscious language and symbolic landscape of the supervisor and their supervisee." **Jackie Arnold.**