



*"promoting excellence & ethics in coaching"*

## **ASSOCIATION FOR COACHING**

### **Coaching Supervision Information Sheet**

Many coaches, coaching schools and coaching organisations see Supervision as an important component of an effective coaching process. Many organisations build supervision into their work and many coaches are either encouraged or required to have supervision of their coaching work. The Association for Coaching recognises the value of supervision and the following outlines a variety of issues and methods that can be used.

#### ***What is Supervision?***

Supervision is a formal arrangement for coaches to discuss their work regularly with someone who is experienced in coaching and supervision. The task is to work together to ensure and develop the efficacy of the client work. The agenda for supervision is the coaching work together with the supervisor's reactions and comments. Thus supervision is a process to maintain adequate standards of coaching provision. It is also a supportive process. Supervision has sometimes been called "Super Vision" as a way of demonstrating that it is not restrictive or prescriptive but rather a process for increasing creativity.

In choosing a supervisor, coaches need to assess their position on a scale from newly qualified to very experienced taking into account their own training, philosophy and methods. The setting for coaching may be an important factor. Agencies and institutions may have their own criteria for supervision and provide supervisors from within the organisation. In many instances outside supervision is more appropriate as outlined later in this Information Sheet.

#### ***Why Supervision is desirable for the practising coach***

By its very nature, coaching makes considerable demands upon coaches who may become over-involved, ignore some important point or have undermining doubts about their own abilities. It is difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to be objective about one's coaching and the opportunity to discuss the coaching work in confidence with a suitable person is invaluable. Good coaching also requires the coach to relate practice to theory and theory to practice. Supervision can help the coach to evolve practice and in this sense is one aspect of continued training.

Through the supervision process, the primary concern of the supervisor is to ensure that the coach is addressing the needs of the client as well as monitoring the relationship between the coach and client to maximise the effectiveness of the relationship. In addition, Supervision is also a way of ensuring that ethical standards are adhered to throughout the coaching process. As a secondary position although Supervision is not concerned primarily with training or line management, it is legitimate for supervisors to encourage and facilitate the ongoing self-development, continued professional development and learning and self-monitoring of the coach.

The Benefits of Supervision can therefore be summed up as follows:

#### *Protection*

- Protection of the client
- Protection for the organisation purchasing services
- Protection for the coach

#### *Development*

- Opportunity to monitor client work and develop existing/new skills in a supportive environment
- Opportunity for coach's personal development

#### *Ethical Standards*

- To ensure coaching is applied ethically and effectively

### ***Choosing a Supervisor***

The less experience the coach has, the more experience the supervisor needs. Supervisors should be sufficiently experienced and qualified in coaching or in a closely related field for others to have confidence in their professional skills. The precise nature of their profession is less important than their skill in coaching and the rapport with the coach concerned. Ideally the supervisor should have some training and experience in supervision. The main focus of the coach's work should be taken into consideration.

The coach should comprehend fully the training, methods and orientation of the proposed Supervisor. Though at times a coach may prefer to get different insights and perceptions this can be confusing in supervision. As coaches work from different philosophical backgrounds, it is important at an initial interview for the coach to ascertain whether the potential supervisor is someone with whom it will be possible to work with and learn from. Since it is the responsibility of coaches to ascertain the qualifications and experience of the potential supervisor, they should enquire about this before making a formal contract.

Choosing a line manager as supervisor can lead to difficulties, since a conflict of interests may arise between the needs of the organisation (the priority of the line manager) and the needs of the coach. Many organisations will offer in-house supervision (sometimes called managerial supervision) as well as requiring coaches to engage in external supervision. If line management supervision is mandatory then ideally there should be access to other consultative support. Finally, it is essential to bear in mind that ultimately the supervisor must place responsibility for the client over and above responsibility to the coach.

### ***The Supervision contract***

It is recommended that a contract with a supervisor of the coach's choice is for a fixed period, subject to review. It may cover such practical arrangements as fees, privacy of venue, length of contact time and frequency of contact.

As a general principle, supervisors should maintain confidentiality with regard to information about the coach and clients. When the initial contract is made, however, there must be agreement about the boundaries of confidentiality with regard to the people to whom the supervisor is accountable. The lines of accountability and responsibility between coach, client, supervisor and organisation need to be very clearly defined.

Both the coach and the supervisor are also responsible for ensuring that they both adhere to whichever Code of Ethics and Practice is issued by the professional body the coach belongs to.

### ***Forms of Supervision***

#### ***One to One - Supervisor-Coach:***

A single supervisor provides supervision for one other coach. Inexperienced coaches need to choose a supervisor who has been a practising coach for a number of years.

#### ***One to One - Peer Supervision:***

Two participants provide supervision for each other by alternating the roles of supervisor and coach. Normally the time available for Supervision is divided equally between them.

#### ***Group Supervision with Identified Supervisor(s):***

There are many ways of providing group supervision. At one end of the spectrum the supervisor, acting as leader, will take responsibility for apportioning the time between the coaches concentrating on the work of individuals in turn. At the other end of the range, the coaches allocate supervision time between themselves using the supervisor as a technical resource.

#### ***Peer Group Supervision:***

Three or more coaches share the responsibility for providing each other's supervision within the group context. Normally they will consider themselves to be broadly of equal status, training or experience. Experienced coaches may at times find peer group supervision sufficient. It is not, however, recommended for trainees or newly qualified coaches. Peers may be reluctant to confront each other and may lack the wider experienced perspective considered an essential ingredient of Supervision. Where a peer group does exist, it is essential there is a clear understanding of where the final responsibility for the clients' welfare rests.

#### ***Telephone Supervision***

It is not uncommon for a coach to engage in telephone supervision either as the main form of supervision or as an adjunct to a more traditional face-to-face model. Some supervisors also offer group telesupervision sessions.

#### ***Email/Postal Supervision***

For those who due to location may live in isolated areas Email Supervision with the provision of taped work could prove a useful way of working. However, it would be best if this method was combined with the Telephone Supervision option mentioned above as it is unlikely that the email/postal option would be sufficient on its own.

Some coaches use a combination of these models.

#### ***Finding a suitable supervisor***

It is recognised that supervisors may be difficult to find. Most professional bodies such as the Association for Coaching (AC), International Coaching Federation (ICF) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) are usually able to offer some assistance and may even keep a list of coaching supervisors. Each of these bodies has either a code of ethics and practice or good practice guidelines promoting supervision in one form or another.



## AC Competency Framework

The AC Competency framework is designed to be an ongoing and dynamic resource for the membership. It is informed by the processes AC members believe to be core to excellence across the many differing areas of coaching, which enable client / coachee to obtain their outcome.

<b>CORE COMPETENCY</b>	<b>POSITIVE INDICATOR</b>	<b>NEGATIVE INDICATOR</b>	<b>RATIONALE</b>
<b>Knowledge and accreditation</b>	The coach is clear about the philosophy and coaching models they use.	The coach practices in a haphazard way and is not informed about the various coaching models available.	To ensure the coach is practicing from a sound theoretical base.
	The coach is aware of his / her professional boundaries, and has contacts should they need to refer on.	The coach believes they can assist anyone and their generalist coaching model is a panacea for every type of client.	To assist the coach effectively discriminate, and develop in those areas where they lack capability.
	The coach has a coaching diploma covering at least 20 days and accreditation from an independent professional body	The coach has no qualifications, or the ones he / she does have do not meet the criteria for independent accreditation.	To ensure a basic entry level in to the coaching industry.
<b>Self Awareness</b>	The coach is sufficiently self aware so as to be able to effectively work with the client's model of the world, not their own.	The coach consistently works from their own perspective and is not aware of his / her blind spots which distort their intervention.	To assist the client become aware of the richness of their own resources, and how these can be used to obtain their outcome.
	Coach develops a reflective style and is open to improvement accordingly.	Coach continues with same style year on year.	Professional development.
	Coach takes responsibility for self development, based upon self awareness.	Coach fails to allocate time for self development.	Recognition a coach will not develop unless they factor in time for this discipline.
	The coach recognizes negative feelings and can effectively manage this.	The coach does not recognize negative feelings or does not effectively manage them.	CPD for the coach, and effective coaching for the coachee.
	Coach develops a reflective style and is open to improvement accordingly.	Coach continues with same style year on year.	Professional development.
Coach takes responsibility for self development, based upon self awareness.	Coach fails to allocate time for self development.	Recognition a coach will not develop unless they factor in time for this discipline.	

<b>Self Awareness (cont/d)</b>	The coach is aware of the many <b>personal</b> skills, abilities and amount of knowledge he / she can bring to the coaching intervention.	The coach has little flexibility and if one approach is not providing benefit to the coachee, can not make use of the other resources they possess.	To ensure the coachee obtains the appropriate coaching, based upon their personal needs.
	The coach is aware of the many <b>coaching</b> skills, abilities and amount of knowledge he / she can bring to the coaching intervention.	The coach has little flexibility and if one approach is not providing benefit to the coachee, can not make use of the other coaching skills they possess.	To ensure the coachee obtains the appropriate coaching, based upon their personal needs.
<b>CPD and Supervision.</b>	The coach engages in CPD which is supported by a log.	The coach does not have a log to support his / her CPD.	To ensure continual development, and to role model what coaching is about.
	The coach has supervision arrangements.	The coach has no supervision arrangements.	Professional accountability.
	The coach is enthusiastic and positive about the concept of CPD and supervision.	The coach provides the evidence for CPD and supervision, but only does so because of professional constraints.	When hitting personal "glass ceilings" It is essential a coach models the appropriate emotional response.
	As a result of CPD and Supervision the coach demonstrates effective change. Examples are log book, testimonials, certification.	Despite a CPD and supervision process the coach does not show any evidence of professional development.	Walking the Talk.
<b>Fostering independence in coachee</b>	The coach encourages the coachee to believe in their own efficacy.	The coach fosters a dependency in the coaching relationship.	Ethical practice.
	The coach monitors improvement in the coachee and feeds this back as evidence of development.	The coach is unaware of any change occurring in the coachee and does not encourage evidence of development.	Provision of feedback and development of self belief.
	The coach from the outset sees the coachee's potential and capability.	The coach from the outset sees the coachee as damaged goods.	Pygmalion effect and self fulfilling prophesy.
<b>Rapport</b>	The coach can communicate at an unconscious level as well as a conscious level.	The coach is blind to many of the unconscious cues being provided by the client.	Acuity.

<b>Rapport (cont/d)</b>	The coach has the ability to experience the problem from the client's perspective and coach from that point.	The coach has difficulty in experiencing the world from his / her coachee's perspective, and interventions are thus irrelevant to the client.	Developing an understanding of the client's model of the world, and to work from that perspective.
	The coach shows they accept the validity of the coachee's experience.	The coach shows no appreciation of the coachee's experience.	Setting the frame for effective reframes.
<b>Effective communication</b>	The coach demonstrates good listening skills.	The coach does not allow the coachee to speak freely and interrupts frequently.	Allows the coach to develop a rich picture of the coachee's world.
	The coach has good questioning skills.	The coach cannot move the intervention forward by asking relevant questions.	Good questioning skills assist the coachee recognize areas for development.
	The coach is aware of the nature of unconscious communication and makes use of it.	The coach only behaves on the basis of overt conscious communication, and misses the unconscious context.	Awareness of unconscious communication alerts coach to deeper patterning with in their coachee.
	Ensures notes are accurate, and makes them as soon after session to facilitate accurate recall.	Does not take notes on coaching sessions, and relies on memory.	Accurate matching of client's world
	Discretion. Sharing of client's issues strictly with their permission only.	Revealing their clients issues indiscriminately, or reveal details of their clients, in order to talk up their own practice	Professional Practice and confidentiality.
<b>Contracting</b>	The coach contracts with the coachee what will happen.	The coach dives into the intervention without any contracting.	Contracting provides structure and clarity for both parties.
	The coach is aware of 3 <sup>rd</sup> party stakeholders and contracts accordingly.	The coach only contracts with coachee and is oblivious to stakeholders.	Contracting with stakeholders makes the coaching intervention that much more comprehensive.
	Provides coachee with the opportunity to work with another coach.	Does not provide the coachee with the opportunity to work with another coach.	Ensures a good fit between coach and coachee and increases coachee's motivation.
<b>Legal</b>	Coach is aware of such legislation that would affect coaching, e.g. Disability Discrimination Act, Health & Safety at work act, insurance, Data protection.	Coach is aware of such legislation but does not conform to the requirement, or the coach is not aware.	Professional Practice.

<b>Legal (cont/d)</b>	Coach continually revises coaching practice in the light of new legislation.	Coach is not aware of new legislation affecting the coaching industry.	Professional Practice.
	Coach is aware of differing legal frameworks in differing countries and acts where appropriate.	Coach is not aware of such differences, or if they are does not act accordingly.	Professional Practice. Cultural awareness.
<b>Professional Citizenship</b>	Contributes actively towards the movement to a fully fledged profession.	Does not contribute to the growth of coaching in any way.	Growth, and collaboration.
	Role models at all times the benefits of coaching	Does not role model the benefits of coaching at all times, with life not reflecting that of a successful person.	Marketing. Walking the talk.
<b>Facilitation and Learning</b>	The coach is aware of enabling and hindering factors when facilitating the coaching relationship.	The coach is unaware of disabling factors such as being authoritative and controlling the coaching relationship	A facilitative coach will be sensitive to a range of diverse learning styles and needs of coachees.
	The coach is aware of and promotes in the facilitative relationship the notion of the coachee as an adult learner.	The coach is unable to recognise the need for the coachee to work towards becoming an independent and autonomous learner.	Facilitative coaching relationships are based on respecting the coachee as having needs but within the context of also being an adult and responsible learner.
	The coach offers him/herself as a resource to the coachee in a relationship that is intent on working with the coachee.	The coach is unable to view his/her self as a co-learner in the facilitation process retaining instead the role of 'expert'.	A facilitative coach recognises the strengths of working in a learning co-alliance with the coachee.