

# Coaching Supervision

## The Case for Supervision

Coaching is a complex process with many layers of meaning. All coaches, no matter how experienced and confident, can draw support and develop further as a coach from the opportunity to reflect on practice, to see new or alternative perspectives, to identify and understand the dynamics and processes at play within the coaching relationship.

Coaching is a demanding process and one which is sometimes difficult to maintain in isolation. Through supervision, the coaching ‘batteries’ can be recharged and new insights gained by exploring and reflecting on coaching both as a process and relationship to better understand the client, the coach’s interventions, the organisational context and, therefore, ultimately serve the client better.

No matter how skilled, coaches will periodically encounter challenging clients, may become ‘stuck’ and lose confidence so sharing and understanding these can sustain high quality coaching and avoid the coach becoming ‘stale’ or ineffective.

Coaching supervision is rightly seen as good practice by coaches, clearly recommended by coaching professional bodies and increasingly required by purchasers of coaching. It is relatively new compared to the fields such as social work or psychotherapy from which many of the models derive but supervision has clear benefits to a coach’s practice by broadening that experience through supervision.



## What is Supervision?

Supervision is a formal, professional process achieved through focused and structured conversations which offers the coach a space to reflect on their coaching practice, to discuss any ‘issues’ they might have, to explore challenges and share successes.

Supervision in essence offers time and space for the coach to reflect and develop insight into their coaching practice so that they develop as a coach. Supervision is interpersonal and can be undertaken one to one, in groups or peer groups and can be conducted face to face, by telephone or virtually through technology such as Skype.

**S**upervision 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, and an indispensable part of the coach’s on-going self-development, self-awareness and commitment to learning.’

*Hawkins and Shoet*

## What to expect from a supervision session

Supervision can be conducted one to one or peer groups and can be conducted face to face, by telephone or virtually through technology such as Skype.

Supervision, like coaching, is a process designed to serve the needs of the coach. The coach will be encouraged to identify their own objectives for each session and to use it in the way that will best serve their professional and/or personal needs at the time.

Typically, sessions will last 60-90 minutes. Frequency of sessions will be negotiated and may be a function of the extent of current coaching activity. Contact between sessions is available as required by email or telephone.

## Supervision Models

Supervision may draw on various established coaching supervision models and approaches, such as:

### The Seven Eyed Supervision Model, Hawkins and Shoet

Based on a systems understanding of the ways things connect, inter-relate and drive coaching, with each eye, we are able to look at a different facet of the coaching and supervisory relationship:

1. The client's system
2. The coach's interventions
3. The relationship between the coach and client
4. The coach's experience
5. The parallel process
6. The supervisor's reflections
7. The wider context



Typically, coaches (and supervisors) will have an 'eye preference'. Clearly, single or limited vision will lead to only partial understanding and potential for coach development from that. Supervision will encourage consideration of multiple perspectives which may flow through and between the seven modes in an order logical to the coach.

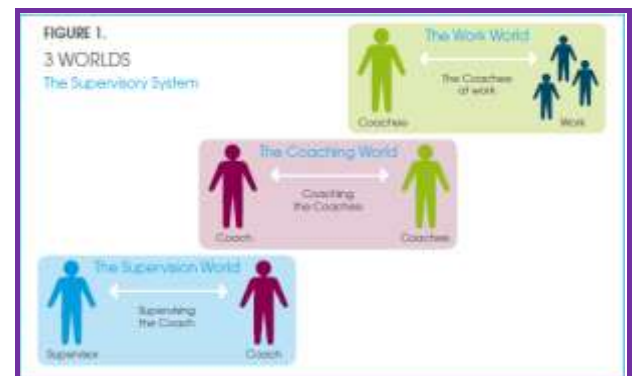
Moving out of the familiar in supervision is more likely to be replicated in adoption of more creative approaches in coaching.

## Three Worlds, 4 Territories, Newell and Munroe-Turner

To enable this process of reflecting on coaching and understanding the various systems involved it is useful to have a map of what can be reflected on, and of the systems involved which enables the supervisee to have new/more options in their coaching.

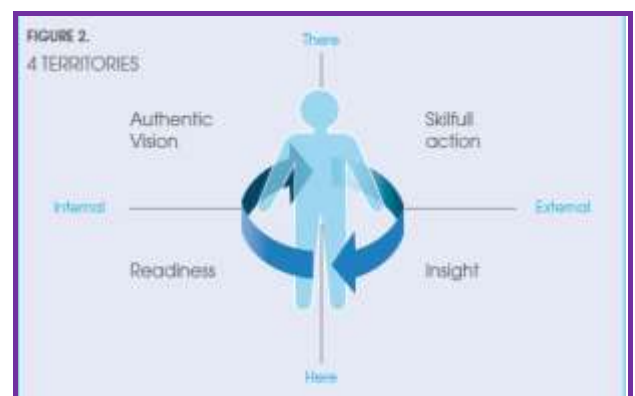
It has two main components – a high level model which identifies the main systems involved:

1. The Work World
2. The Coaching World
3. The Supervision World



and a model of the people making up these systems:

1. **Insight** – seeing what is in my world;
2. **Readiness** – attending to what constrains or enables me in my response to my world; developing my flexibility and resilience;
3. **Authentic Vision** – clarifying the difference that I want to make; my desired way of being;
4. **Skilful Action** – transforming vision into action.



## Developing the Internal Supervisor

Coaches will be supported to develop their internal supervisor, a term coined by Patrick Casement to describe perspectives and skills a mature coach acquires as they work with clients. This means developing sensitivity to all the information they pick up consciously and unconsciously through their body/mind during coaching and responding to it through intuition, body and intellect.

By encouraging the coach to pay attention to these and how they use them or might use them in their coaching, a coach has greater access to subtle aspects of their own system and of the coaching process - where the main insights and shifts often occur. Through this, coaching can be less task focussed and can become more reflective, freeing the coach to tune into the 'music behind the words' and the 'dance' between coach and client.



With coaching presence, the coach hears more than stories/goals. It also becomes diffuse, allowing the coach to listen at several levels simultaneously, to see patterns in the material presented by the client and to be both engaged in the coaching dialogue and also observing the process as it unfolds.

For more information or to discuss:

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## Contracting

As a member of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, Sally follows the EMCC Guidelines on Coaching Supervision available at: <http://www.emccouncil.org>.

The nature of the supervisory relationship will be collaborative and evolve over time. It is important that coach and supervisor negotiate a shared understanding of that relationship and its boundaries and review this periodically.

The supervisor will promote a relationship of equals in which both can learn as coaches from the process but as supervisor may challenge the coach's perspectives and assumptions.

The supervision process is entirely confidential. The supervisor will provide and encourage two-way feedback on the effectiveness of the supervision process and supervisory relationship.

Idyia's Coaching Supervisor, Sally Bernham is an experienced coach, trainer of coaches and coach supervisor. She holds a Certificate and Diploma in Coaching Supervision, values her own supervision and has a wealth of coaching experience to draw on.

