Coach Supervision Guide

We are committed to sustaining and advancing good coaching practice. We aim to encourage all coaches to undertake supervision as a continuous process once they have trained as a coach. Supervision is essential for all applicants seeking to achieve and maintain our Coach Accreditation.

What is Coach Supervision?

Coach supervision is a formal and protected time for facilitating a coach’s in-depth reflection on their practice with a Coach Supervisor. Supervision offers a confidential framework within a collaborative working relationship in which you and your supervisor can explore your practice, tasks, process and any challenges of the coaching work. Supervision aims to enable the coach to gain ethical competency, confidence, and creativity to make sure the coaching client receives the best possible service. Supervision is not a ‘policing’ role but a trusting and collegial professional relationship.

Why Coach Supervision is Essential for the Practising Coach

‘Having supervision is a fundamental aspect of continuing personal development for coaches, mentors, organizational consultants and supervisors, providing a protected and disciplined space in which we can reflect on particular client situations and relationships, the reactivity and patterns they evoke in us and by transforming these live, in supervision, profoundly benefit our clients,’

Hawkins & Smith (2006), Coaching, Mentoring and Organizational Consultancy, Supervision and Development.

Regular reflection on and reviewing one’s work is essential to maintain and sustain good practice. Supervision recognizes the ‘human element’ and subsequent demands of the coaching work on the coach, ensuring your:

- Clients' best interests are being upheld – both for the coachee and any organization buying your services.
• Relationships with clients are non-exploitative.
• Limitations are understood and worked within.
• Development needs can be surfaced and worked upon.

It also provides a space to expand your emotional intelligence, gain support, relate practice to theory, develop new learning, and evolve coaching practice.

Overall, coaching supervision is essential to develop your professional skills as a coach and maintain excellent coaching standards.

The Benefits of Coach Supervision

The primary purpose of coach supervision is to make sure that you effectively address your clients’ needs, whilst the supervision dialogue enables you to improve continuously. Supervision encourages the exploration of the relationship between the coach and client and ensures that ethical standards are adhered to throughout the coaching process. The AC adopts the following descriptors for the functions of coach supervision: support, development and professional assurance.

Support: where the supervisor of the coach takes an encouraging perspective helping to restore the coach. This may include offering support to the coach to deal with any “unfinished business”, personal and emotional reactions to client work and to ensure self-care, in order that they have energy for future client work.

This function is also referred to as Restorative (Proctor 1986) or Supportive (Hawkins & Shohet 1989, Kadushin 1992, Hay 2007) or Resourcing (Hawkins & Smith 2006)

Development: where the supervisor takes a facilitative approach to the coach’s development, which may include reflecting on the coach’s work, and offering new perspectives.

This function is also referred to as Formative (Proctor 1986) or Educative (Hawkins & Shohet 1989) or Developmental (Kadushin 1992, Hawkins & Smith 2006)

Professional Assurance: the exploration of how the coach practises, taking into account:
• the coach’s own coaching approach
• what is commonly accepted as best practice,
• adherence to the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors

This function is also referred to as Normative (Proctor 1986) or Managerial (Hawkins & Shohet 1989) or Administrative (Kadushin 1992) or Qualitative (Hawkins and Smith 2006).

Forms of Coaching Supervision

There are several forms of supervision:

• One-to-one Coach Supervisor to Coach
• One-to-one peer coach supervision
• Group coach supervision
• Peer group coach supervision

The above may occur either face-to-face, via telephone or video conference, such as Skype.

Choosing and Finding a Supervisor

You should make sure your Coach Supervisor:

• **Meets** our requirements by checking the current **Applicant Guide**, stating the relevant criteria.
• **Agrees** to complete a **Coach Supervision Reference** for our Coach Accreditation.
• **Works** within our **Coaching Competency Framework**.
• **Subscribes** to our **Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors & Supervisors**.

Not all supervisors have a coaching background, although it is essential they have some coach training. You may wish to find a supervisor whose particular skills and experience will enhance the knowledge and skills you seek. You may also choose to work with more than one supervisor to allow you to explore and develop the full range of your work.

Our directory lists members who undertake coach supervision. It also indicates members who have successfully achieved success on our Coach Supervisor Accreditation Scheme.
Agreeing How to Work Together

Coaching works to an agreed contract between the coach and the client. The same applies to good supervision, which means all parties’ expectations are explicit. These will include agreeing on the frequency, duration and location of meetings, ethical frameworks, confidentiality, how notes or electronic data are stored, charges and billing arrangements and cancellations or postponement.

Should you seek our Coach Accreditation, make sure your Coach Supervisor meets the following criteria:

- **Meets** our requirements by checking the current [Applicant Guide](http://www.associationforcoaching.com), stating the relevant criteria.
- **Agrees** to complete a [Coach Supervision Reference](http://www.associationforcoaching.com) for our Coach Accreditation.
- **Works** within our [Coaching Competency Framework](http://www.associationforcoaching.com).
- **Subscribes** to our [Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors](http://www.associationforcoaching.com).

Please refer to our Accredited Coach and Executive Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide available on our website.