International Centre for Coaching Supervision

The Complete Guide to Becoming a Coaching Supervisor



Nick Bolton

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Dedication



To the coaches from across the world who have chosen to take the journey of becoming a coaching supervisor and supporting thousands of coaches to become better, happier and more impactful.

The work you do matters more than you know.

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The Complete Guide To Becoming a Coaching Supervisor

Introduction



So, you're thinking about training as a coaching supervisor?

Firstly, congratulations!

To have reached this stage of your coaching career, you will have gained extensive experience, working with many clients, and you will have developed excellent coaching skills.

That is no mean feat!

However, as you start considering coaching supervision as your next professional step, you are likely to have many questions.

That's where this book comes in.

I've written it to act as your practical guide, helping you answer the most common questions people have when considering this journey.

It tackles:

- What is coaching supervision and how does it differ from coaching?
- What are the skills, principles and theoretical frameworks of coaching supervision?

- Why might an experienced coach choose to become a coaching supervisor?
- What is the journey to train as a coaching supervisor?
- What willl I learn and how will it take me beyond coaching?
- What should I look for in a coaching supervision training programme?
- What does becoming a coaching supervisor mean to me professionally?
- What professional accreditations and credentials should I look for in coaching supervision?
- What are the professional pathways open to me as a coaching supervisor?
- How do I take the next step?

These, and other questions, are likely to be top of mind as you think about becoming a coaching supervisor and investing your time and money in training.

As coaching supervisor for over 15 years and the founder of the International Centre for Coaching Supervision, I am passionate about the profession.

I hope through this book I can answer your questions and help you get a little passionate about it too!

Let's get started.

Part 1:

Foundations Of Coaching Supervision



Introduction

The Background to Coaching Supervision

You've probably noticed that the field of coaching supervision has grown significantly over the past decade.

Whilst it has been practised alongside coaching almost since the start of coaching itself, it didn't gain significant traction for many years.

Coaching was typically perceived as a pragmatic, mainly *emotion-free* space that had little need for the depth of reflection that supervision offered.

> ***Over the years, however, coaching supervision has gained recognition as a vital component of professional coaching practice.***

Indeed, in one way or another, all of the professional coaching associations recognise it as an essential part of a coach's development and ethical practice.

Supervision provides a supportive and reflective space for coaches to develop their skills, maintain ethical and professional standards, and ultimately, enhance the quality of their coaching work.

It is hard to argue that this is merely a luxury, and, thankfully, supervision is increasingly seen as something all coaches should engage in.

The role of the coaching supervisor, however, differs from that of the coach. Despite the reflective space it offers, it is more than facilitated thinking.

Supervisors act as mentors, critical friends, confidants, facilitators, and even the last person standing in times of ethical challenge. They provide a space to explore coaching relationships, reflect on practice, and address any challenges or ethical dilemmas that arise.

Supervisors also contribute to the broader coaching community by fostering best practices and upholding professional standards, ultimately elevating the field as a whole. Indeed, this wider impact is often one of the unexpected highlights and *identity-shifts* for many new coaching supervisors.

Should you choose to embark on a new chapter in your coaching career by becoming a coaching supervisor, your dedication to the growth and development of others will not only enhance your own skills but also contribute significantly to the overall advancement of the coaching profession.

What is Coaching Supervision?

So, what exactly *is* coaching supervision?

There are many extremely good books on coaching supervision and so I don't intend to spend too long on the details of what coaching supervision is here.

However, I do think it's worth briefly laying out the essence of coaching supervision so that you can get a sense of whether it is of interest to you before you go further!

We'll start with a short definition and then move on to explore its differences from coaching and coach-mentoring before finally looking at the principles that underpin it and the purpose that it seeks to fulfil.

As with coaching, there are many definitions of coaching supervision, some more useful than others and each reflects the particular preferences and perspectives of the writer.

Our definition of coaching supervision is:

Coaching supervision is a reflective , collaborative process that provides a supportive space for coaches to explore their practice, develop their skills, maintain ethical and professional standards and look after their professional wellbeing.

We'll take a look at this in more detail over the coming pages but it is important to recognise that it is a distinct practice

that draws on elements of coaching and mentoring, as well as supervision from other fields, but which has its own distinct characteristics and objectives.

Differences Between Coaching And Coaching Supervision

Whilst coaching and coaching supervision are clearly related and have many core skills in common, they serve distinct purposes and employ different methodologies.

We can identify these differences in terms of:

- Purpose
- Relationship Dynamics
- Focus Area
- Skills and Techniques
- Outcome Objectives
- Ethics

Area	Coaching	Coaching Supervision
Purpose	Aims to help clients explore and achieve personal or professional goals that they identify through self-discovery, empowerment, and accountability.	Focuses on supporting, developing, and ensuring the wellbeing and effectiveness of coaches in their professional work for the benefit of the coach, their clients and the coaching system.

Area	Coaching	Coaching Supervision
Relationship Dynamics	Establishes a partnership where the coach facilitates the client's growth without providing direct advice.	Involves a collegial dynamic in which the supervisor may offer guidance, advice, and feedback to enhance the coach's practice. Unlike coaching, the supervisor's personal experience and knowledge are more evident.
Focus Area	Concentrates on the client's goals, challenges, thinking, and potential pathways to achievement.	Examines the coach's methodologies, ethical considerations, professional development, and client case management. Coaching supervision is always centred around the coach's work.
Skills and Techniques	Utilises questioning, listening, and reflective techniques to unlock the client's insight.	Employs a broader range of methods including reflective practice, mentoring, and sometimes teaching, to support the coach's professional growth.
Outcome Objectives	Surfaces outcomes identified by the client, such as improved performance, personal growth, or enhanced decision-making.	Aims to enhance the coach's effectiveness, ethical practice, and professional development for the benefit of their current and future clients.
Ethics	Requires adherence to ethical standards and ongoing learning primarily focused on improving client support. The client usually is the sole focus on a coach's concern.	Involves a three-part focus on the coach, the client and the coaching system meaning that the supervisor needs to be aware of ethical challenges throughout the system..

Understanding these differences is essential for coaches and supervisors alike to ensure that they are effectively meeting the needs of their clients or supervisees, and adhering to the highest standards of practice within the coaching supervision profession.

Afterall, if you seek out a supervisor, you want to receive supervision, not merely coaching. This is where many experienced coaches go wrong when they assume that their coaching is sufficient for to supervise other coaches..

Differences Between Mentoring And Coaching Supervision

Another area of work that gets conflated with coaching supervision is that of mentor-coaching (a specific approach within the International Coach Federation but which can also be seen within any form of mentoring.)

To identify the differences here, we can use the following areas:

- Eligibility to provide the service
- The aims and remit of the work
- Approach to the work
- Duration of the work
- The working relationship
- Duty of care

Area	Mentor Coaching	Coaching Supervision
Eligibility to provide the service	Requires specific credentials and experience with the International Coach Federation (ICF) competencies	Requires training in coaching supervision rather than specific coaching competencies.

Area	Mentor Coaching	Coaching Supervision
The aims and remit of the work	Focuses on helping a coach reach a level of competence with specific skills and behaviours.	Offers a broader exploration of the coach's professional work, including reflective practice and development.
Approach to the work	Involves identifying development needs and is often based on analysis of live or recorded coaching sessions.	Encourages a wider exploration of the coach's work, including feelings, influences, and the coaching relationship
Duration of the work	Typically fixed and short-term, aimed at achieving specific credentials.	No fixed duration, often undertaken throughout a coach's professional life.
The working relationship	The mentor is someone with more experience guiding the less experienced coach.	Considered a relationship of equals, focusing on exploration and reflection.
Duty of care	The mentor is focused almost exclusively on the competence of the coach in meeting coaching standards.	The coaching supervisor has a much wider view of ethical concerns and wellbeing with a focus on the coach, the clients and the coaching system.

Summary

In summary then, while coaching, mentoring, and coaching supervision share many similarities, they also differ in very important and specific ways that include focus, purpose, the nature of the relationship between the parties involved and the ethical duty of care.

Coaching supervision has a unique role in the coaching industry, aimed at fostering excellence and maintaining high standards of practice by supporting the ongoing development and growth of coaches and this brings key differences from the other practices.

The Three Functions Of Coaching Supervision

When it comes to the key aims of coaching supervision, it can be usefully summed up as the three functions described by *Inskipp and Proctor*.

They identified three core functions of supervision as being:

- Restorative
- Formative
- Normative

Restorative Function

The restorative function focuses on the emotional wellbeing of the coach, helping them to recover and rejuvenate from the emotional demands of their work.

It acts as an emotional cleanser, allowing coaches to release built-up feelings and come back to their work refreshed and ready to engage with their clients effectively.

Formative Function

The formative function aims at the professional development of the coach, enhancing their skills, knowledge, and practice.

This function supports the coach in becoming more effective and skilled at their work, exploring areas such as interventions, coaching approaches, and the coach-client relationship.

It encourages growth and development in the coach's ability to make an impact through their coaching.

Normative Function

The normative function is primarily cozncerned with professional standards and ethical behaviour, ensuring that coaching is conducted within the boundaries of professional norms.

This function introduces the issue of what is acceptable within the profession, focusing on maintaining high standards and ethical practices in coaching.

Another Perspective on the 3 Functions

Another way of thinking about these three functions is that they represent the coach in three different ways.

- Person as a coach
- Coach as a person
- Coach as a professional.

Formative: Person As A Coach

Through this lens, we work with the person on their skills and effectiveness as a coach - the nature of their work, their outcomes, their skills and so on.

Restorative: Coach As A Person

Through this lens we can turn the focus on how the coach is feeling as a person. How is their work affecting them, how

are they experiencing their clients emotionally, how are they managing their workload, how are they feeling about their role as a coach?

Normative: Coach As A Professional

Through this final lens, we can look at how the coach is working within recognised professional structures and expectations. Are they adhering to professional norms, how are they addressing ethical challenges in their practice, and so on.

> ***The functions are not mutually exclusive and typically overlap during the supervisory process, depending on the needs of the coach and the specific circumstances of their practice.***

They serve as lenses through which the supervisor can guide the conversation, ensuring the wellbeing of all parts of the coaching system: the coach, their clients, and the coaching profession itself.

These three distinct lenses allow us as coaching supervisors to ensure that the coach is receiving a fully-rounded exploration of their current work.

Examples of Coaching Supervision Issues

So far, we have talked in the abstract about the practice of coaching supervision.

But what does this look like at the human level?

Whereas coaching typically deals with anything the client chooses to raise (subject to the coaching contract), coaching supervision always focuses in one way or another on the supervisee's work as a coach.

Over the years, I have supervised around almost every conceivable topic you can imagine but to give you an idea of the sorts of issues that come up, here are just a few of the most common challenges coaches face and bring to supervision.

- **Emotional Burnout:** A coach feels emotionally drained and lacks the energy to engage effectively with clients.
- **Impostor Syndrome:** A coach doubts their abilities and fears being exposed as a fraud.
- **Boundary Management:** A coach struggles to maintain appropriate boundaries with clients, leading to blurred lines between professional and personal relationships.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A coach faces a situation where their personal beliefs or interests conflict with the coaching objectives or organisational policies.
- **Resistance to Feedback:** A coach is resistant to feedback from both clients and supervisors, leading to stagnation in their professional growth.
- **Client Dependency:** A coach notices that clients are becoming overly dependent on their guidance, hindering their ability to develop self-sufficiency.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** A coach struggles with understanding and respecting cultural differences, impacting the effectiveness of their coaching.

- **Ethical Dilemmas:** A coach encounters situations where ethical boundaries are challenged, requiring careful navigation and decision-making.
- **Lack of Motivation:** A coach experiences a dip in motivation and enthusiasm for their work, affecting their performance and engagement with clients.
- **Ineffective Contracting:** A coach fails to establish clear and effective contracts with clients, leading to misunderstandings and issues as the coaching relationship progresses.
- **Lack of Client Follow Through:** A coach deals with clients who don't make progress and do not follow through with agreed actions.
- **Inconsistent Coaching Approach:** A coach lacks a consistent approach or methodology, leading to unpredictable outcomes and client confusion.
- **Professional Isolation:** A coach feels isolated and lacks a supportive professional network, affecting their ability to seek advice and share experiences.
- **Handling Negative Emotions:** A coach finds it challenging to manage and address negative emotions expressed by clients, impacting the coaching process.
- **Goal Alignment:** A coach struggles to align coaching goals with the client's personal or organisational objectives, leading to conflicts and dissatisfaction.
- **Career Stagnation:** A coach feels stuck in their career and unsure of how to progress or develop further.
- **Financial Pressures:** A coach faces financial stress, which affects their focus and commitment to coaching.

- **Adaptability to Change:** A coach struggles to adapt to changes in the industry, such as new technologies or methodologies, impacting their relevance and effectiveness.
- **Work-Life Balance:** A coach finds it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance, leading to stress and burnout.
- **Client Confidentiality:** A coach faces challenges in maintaining client confidentiality, especially in situations where information needs to be shared within an organisation.

Of course, this is just a small selection of issues and, even more importantly, each challenge is experienced through the coach's own values and beliefs, sense of self, personal and professional assumptions, and more, making each issue unique within the supervisory relationship.

> ***There is no cookie-cutter approach to supervision!***

There are, however, core principles so let's look at these next.

Core Principles Of Coaching Supervision

The core principles of coaching supervision serve as a foundation for effective practice, guiding the supervisor and coach throughout the supervision process and acting as a framework for best practice for the supervision profession.

Of course, there are many principles shared in common with coaching itself such as respect, unconditional positive regard,

belief in the potential of others, the efficacy of dialogue and so on.

As we go through the principles here, then, they are not intended as a comprehensive list of *all* the principles that underpin coaching supervision but rather the specific principles that add to the supervisory lens.

Trust And Confidentiality

A strong supervisory relationship is built on trust and confidentiality, perhaps even more so than coaching, given the potential for a real or perceived power imbalance in coaching supervision.

Supervisors must create a safe and supportive space where coaches can openly discuss their practice, challenges, and concerns without fear of judgement.

However, in some contexts this confidentiality may be limited - supervision that also involves assessment and evaluation or touches on safeguarding issues can necessitate reporting and disclosure adding another layer of complexity to the nature of the supervisory relationship.

Whilst this is certainly less common in coaching supervision than clinical supervision, the growth of internal coaching seems likely to bring elements of this into these practices.

Confidentiality is crucial for fostering honest and open communication, as well as protecting the privacy of both the coach and their clients and it is the open, honest and agreed nature of that confidentiality that enables the coach and supervisor to work together with trust and integrity.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is at the heart of coaching supervision, encouraging coaches to engage in deep self-examination and exploration of their coaching work.

Reflective practice is a term often used in coaching but perhaps not so frequently undertaken. There is certainly something enjoyable about learning *new* things and there is no doubt that fresh learning through CPD is an invigorating and revitalising experience in one's coaching career.

However, supervision is less about learning *new* information and more about deliberate, focused time for thinking about what the coach is *already* doing.

That is the essence of reflective practice.

Collaborative Learning

Coaching supervision is a collaborative learning process in which both the supervisor and the coach share responsibility for the coach's development.

Whilst coaching is also collaborative, the role of the coach is primarily that of asking questions and sharing what they are perceiving.

In supervision, the knowledge, wisdom and experience of the coaching supervisor is recognised as an important part of the supervision and can play a more significant role than in coaching..

> ***Collaborative learning in supervision allows for both the coach** and **the supervisor to share their knowledge and experience.***

This collaborative approach fosters a sense of partnership and shared growth, enhancing the effectiveness of the supervision process.

Ethical And Professional Standards

Supervisors have a responsibility to uphold and promote ethical and professional standards in the coaching industry.

This includes addressing any ethical concerns that may arise during supervision, ensuring that coaches adhere to professional guidelines and best practices, and modelling ethical behaviour in their own practice.

We have already seen how this leads to a wider duty of care in which the supervisor is acutely aware of not only the coach, but also the needs and outcomes of the clients, the coaching sponsor and even the profession itself.

Empowerment and Autonomy

Supervisors guide coaches in identifying their strengths, areas for growth, and learning goals, while also providing the necessary tools, resources, and support to help coaches achieve these goals.

We have already seen that the supervisor's own knowledge and experience is a valuable part of coaching supervision,

but this in no way leads to a diminishing of the coach's own sense-making, ideas and decisions.

> ***Coaching supervision aims to empower coaches and support their autonomy by encouraging self-directed learning and professional development.***

Coaching supervision aims to help develop what is often termed the coach's *internal supervisor* so that they become ever more effective at self-supervising both during and after their coaching - *in action* and *on action* as Donald Schön called it.

Holistic

Effective coaching supervision takes an holistic approach, considering the coach as a whole person and addressing all aspects of their professional and personal development.

This includes exploring the coach's beliefs, values, emotions, and physical well-being, as well as the impact of these factors on their coaching practice.

We can see the holistic approach reflected in the three functions of supervision discussed earlier in terms of:

- Formative = Person as a Coach
- Restorative = Coach as a Person
- Normative = Coach as a Professional

This simplified way of looking at it allows us to see the coach as inhabiting three spaces - doing, being and belonging.

Cultural Competence And Inclusivity

Coaching supervisors must be able to demonstrate cultural competence and a commitment to inclusivity, recognising and valuing the diversity of their supervisees and the clients they serve.

This involves fostering an inclusive and respectful supervision environment, addressing issues of power and privilege, and continuously seeking to enhance their own cultural competence and awareness.

Even more so than coaching, supervision can carry with it cultural assumptions and we often found that supervisors need to have conversations with coaches around the nature of authority and seniority that the coach perceives to be part and parcel of coaching supervision.

Conclusion

> ***By adhering to these core principles, coaching supervisors can create a nurturing, supportive, and effective supervision environment that fosters the growth, development, and professional excellence of the coaches they work with.***

As mentioned at the start, this is not an exhaustive list of the principles and many core humanistic principles apply to supervision as much as they do to coaching, but these highlighted principles offer a sense of what makes coaching supervision different.

Of course, as well as being underpinned by principles, coaching supervision is equally underpinned by theoretical assumptions and it is to these that we will turn next.

Theoretical Frameworks That Underpin Coaching Supervision

A robust understanding of the theoretical frameworks that underpin coaching supervision enables supervisors to effectively support and facilitate the growth of the coaches they work with.

In this section, we will explore four key theoretical frameworks that inform coaching supervision practice.

- Systems Theory
- Adult Learning Theory
- Reflective Practice
- Psychological Theories

Systems Theory

Put concisely, systems theory is a framework that examines the interconnectedness and interdependence of all elements within a system.

In the context of coaching supervision, this involves considering the coach, client, supervisor, and other stakeholders as part of a larger system that influences, and is influenced *by*, each other.

Supervision utilises a systems perspective to take into account the various relationships, contexts, and dynamics at play in the coaching process, helping coaches to explore the impact of these factors on their practice and develop strategies to navigate complex systems effectively.

We will see this demonstrated clearly in the 7-Eyed Model later in this book.

Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory, also known as andragogy, is grounded in the understanding that adults learn differently from children and require a distinct approach to facilitate their learning.

Key principles of adult learning theory, such as self-directed learning, drawing on prior experiences, and the relevance and practicality of learning, are relevant to coaching supervision.

> ***Supervisors incorporate adult learning principles into their practice to create an environment that fosters self-directed growth, encourages the exploration of previous experiences, and focuses on the application of learning to real-world coaching situations.***

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is a process of critical self-examination that enables individuals to learn from their experiences, deepen their self-awareness, and enhance their professional practice.

It is a fundamental aspect of coaching supervision, as it encourages coaches to explore their thoughts, emotions, and actions in relation to their coaching work, identify areas for growth, and develop strategies for improvement.

Psychological Theories

Various psychological theories can inform coaching supervision practice, providing insights into human behaviour, motivation, and learning.

Some of the key psychological theories that may be relevant to coaching supervision include:

- Attachment theory, which explores the impact of early relationships on an individual's patterns of relating to others and can inform the understanding of the dynamics within the coaching relationship.
- Cognitive-behavioural theories, which examine the interplay between thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, and can help coaches to develop strategies for managing their own cognitive and emotional processes as well as supporting clients in doing the same.
- Humanistic theories, which emphasise the importance of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence in facilitating personal growth and can inform the development of a supportive and nurturing supervision environment.
- Transactional analysis (TA) which provides valuable insights into the patterns of communication and relational dynamics within the coaching relationship,

helping both coaches and supervisors understand and navigate potential challenges and barriers.

- Psychodynamic concepts which offer ways of understanding the unconscious and deeply-rooted processes that are at work within the coach, the client and even the wider system, including the coaching supervisor.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks into their practice, coaching supervisors can deepen their understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the coaching relationship and enhance their ability to support the professional growth and development of the coaches they work with.

Critical Supervision Skills

One of the questions coaches have when they consider becoming a coaching supervisor is what skills they will develop *beyond* their existing coaching skills.

Many coaches wrongly assume that coaching supervision is simply coaching deployed in a context of another coach's professional practice - what we might term "coaching the coach".

> ***Whilst it is clearly the case that coaching skills remain essential to coaching supervision, they are not sufficient by themselves.***

Skills such as effective listening, catalytic questions, holding space, sitting with silence, bracketing one's assumptions and so on are the *price of admission* to become a coaching supervisor.

But they are not enough.

Indeed, one of the biggest challenges we see with new coaching supervisors is their over-reliance on coaching skills to the detriment of other important supervisory skills.

The *new* coaching supervisor remains in "coaching mode" by:

- only asking questions rather than engaging in dialogue.
- avoiding giving their opinion, suggestions or advice.
- focusing only on the needs and wants of the person in front of them, the client, without reference to the client or the wider system.
- allowing the coach to dictate the conversation even to the exclusion of obvious issues that need to be addressed.
- focusing on the formative lens of coach development and avoiding the normative lens of ethics due to the fear that they are judging.

For a coaching supervisor to be truly effective, however, they must *spread their wings* and move beyond coaching skills to encompass the whole set of supervisory skills.

Skills Specific To Coaching Supervision

Whilst the following list may not be exhaustive, some of the most important skills and areas of knowledge are:

- Systems Thinking
- Ethical Maturity

- Authoritative Stance
- Wider Awareness of Coaching Approaches
- Advanced Reflective Practice
- Feedback and Evaluation

Systems Thinking

We have already looked at this issue, but it cannot be overemphasised as it is such a significant change from coaching.

> ***A coach's primary focus is the client. A coaching supervisor, by contrast, must develop the ability to think in terms of systems, recognising the broader organisational, social, and cultural systems within which coaching takes place.***

This skill helps supervisors support coaches in understanding the systemic influences on their clients and on the coaching relationship itself, leading to more effective and contextually-aware coaching interventions.

It also ensures that the supervisor is able to hold in mind the duty of care they have not only to the coach in supervision, but also to their clients, to the coaching sponsor, to other stakeholders and to the profession as whole.

Ethical Maturity

Supervisors help coaches consider the various ethical dimensions of their work, including confidentiality issues,

boundary management, and the dual relationships that can sometimes arise in coaching contexts.

> ***More importantly though, supervisors are often called upon to help coaches navigate complex ethical dilemmas that are not black and white issues.***

These ethical dilemmas are often either ignored by the coach or are not even in their awareness.

The supervisor may sense that there is an issue that is not being addressed and will bring this out into the open.

This can be uncomfortable and challenging but it is a key part of coaching supervision..

This calls for what *Michael Carroll* calls *ethical maturity*.

This is the ability and skill to:

1. Notice potential ethical dilemmas
2. Articulate the dilemma
3. Plan how to deal with the dilemma
4. Implement the plan of action
5. Reach peace of mind with your best effort

As coaches, we are *taught* not to *know* and not to *assume* we are right. This remains the case here too - supervisors are not claiming a moral high-ground, but they do need to give voice to issues they feel are not being addressed appropriately, or at all.

Authoritative Stance

The authoritative stance, to borrow the language of *John Heron* in his *Helping the Client*, is often a significant leap for coaching supervisors to make.

> ***Whilst coaching supervision is not predicated on hierarchy, supervisors nonetheless inhabit a role in which authority may have a role, depending on the level of experience between the practitioners.***

In Heron's book mentioned above, he describes six kinds of intervention that fall under either the authoritative or the facilitative categories.

Authoritative

- Prescriptive
- Informative
- Confronting

Facilitative

- Catalytic
- Cathartic
- Supportive

We don't have the space to unpack all of these here of course, but it is worth noting that coaches spend the majority of their time in the *facilitative* mode with a particular emphasis on the *catalytic* - ie. interventions that create new thinking and awareness in the client.

Supervisors by contrast will typically use *all* of these modes, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the supervisory relationship.

Thus a coaching supervisor working with a much less experienced coach might *prescribe* a solution to what they perceive as a serious issue, or they may *inform/teach* the coach a new skill or concept.

My own experience of this when training coaching supervisors is that the step from *facilitative* to *authoritative* is, initially, one of the most difficult for coaches to take, but it is also one that they grow to respect and enjoy.

Wider Awareness Of Coaching Approaches

Coaches use a wide array of theoretical frameworks and methodologies, each with its own set of principles, techniques, and desired outcomes.

Most coaches will have touched on different approaches to coaching over the course of their learning but at some point they will settle on a style.

Coaching supervisors, however, will continually come up against a wide range of coaching styles and theoretical stances as they work with different coaches.

A supervisor well-versed in different coaching approaches can provide more nuanced and informed supervision.

> ***For instance, the introspective depth sought in psychodynamic coaching or the search for meaning in***

> ***existential coaching requires a different supervisory lens than the goal-oriented focus of performance coaching.***

Understanding these differences allows supervisors to tailor their support in a way that respects and enhances the specific methodological orientation of the coaches they work with.

This is not to say that a coaching supervisor will become a walking repository for every coaching style. What it does mean, though, is that not only will a coaching supervisor develop a wider understanding over time, but they will also be more clearly aware of the distinctions and be able to draw these out of the coach without making assumptions about what someone's coaching *should* look like.

Advanced Reflective Practice

While reflective practice is important in coaching, in supervision, it takes on a more critical role.

Supervisors need to facilitate deeper levels of reflection, helping coaches to not only reflect on what happened in their sessions but also to explore the underlying patterns, beliefs, and systemic influences on their practice.

This involves guiding coaches through a process of critical thinking about their own coaching identity, ethics, and the impact of their personal history and biases on their coaching.

Feedback And Evaluation

Whilst supervision, unlike say mentor coaching, is not focused on competencies *per se*, there may be times when a coaching supervisor is required to offer feedback.

Perhaps the coaching supervisor is running a group session in which peer coaching takes place in order to develop skills.

The ability to offer genuinely constructive feedback in a way that can be heard is a vital skill in coaching supervision.

All too often, people will avoid upsetting someone else and only offer positive feedback. Whilst there is clearly benefit in hearing positive feedback, most coaches really want to know what they can do to improve.

This is where the coaching supervisor must step in to offer feedback that strengthens the coach's confidence whilst surfacing areas for real growth and improvement.

Beyond offering feedback, supervisors may be called upon to evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching provided by their supervisees.

This requires the ability to assess coaching interventions critically, provide constructive and balanced feedback, and support coaches in developing their self-assessment capabilities.

> ***Supervisors must navigate the delicate balance between challenging coaches to grow and providing the support needed to encourage that growth.***

Summary

Again, this is not an exhaustive list of all the skills a coaching supervisor needs to develop but it does highlight the key skills that a supervisor needs in order to move beyond merely coaching the coach.

Now let's take a address what a coaching supervision session may explore by looking at one of the core models of supervision - the Seven-Eyed Model of Supervision.

Seven-Eyed Model Of Supervision

There are various models and approaches within coaching supervision, each offering a unique perspective and structure for the supervision process.

Whilst supervisors do not *need* to use models, they can offer useful frameworks to guide effective practice.

In this section, we'll explore one such model to help you get clearer on what coaching supervision concerns itself with and how a supervision session might unfold.

One of the best known models in coaching supervision is the Seven-Eyed Model of Supervision.

Developed by *Peter Hawkins* and *Robin Shohet*, the Seven-Eyed Model of Supervision is a widely used approach to coaching supervision that focuses on seven different dimensions or "eyes" through which the coaching work can be explored.

The seven eyes are:

Eye 1 - The Client

Eye 1 focuses on the coaching client, highlighting the importance of understanding the client's world within the coaching process.

This lens invites the supervisor and the coach to delve into the client's experiences, issues, goals, and the context within which they are seeking coaching.

It is all too easy for the client to get lost in a supervision session given the centrality of the coach in that conversation. Bringing Eye 1 into the session ensures that the client's needs, perspectives and experience are clearly taken into account.

Eye 2 - The Coach's Interventions and Strategies

Here, the focus is on the specific techniques, tools, and approaches used by the coach during the coaching sessions.

The supervisor helps the coach to reflect on their choice of interventions, their effectiveness, and how they may be adapted or refined to better serve the client's needs.

The use of Eye 2 might enable a coach to see that they rely on particular techniques habitually rather than because they are appropriate, or that they might improve how effective they are with those techniques.

Alternatively, it might help the coach explore what they can do differently, if the coaching is feeling stuck and a change in approach is needed.

Eye 3 - The Client-Coach Relationship

This lens examines the dynamics, communication patterns, and rapport between the coach and the client.

Supervisors help coaches explore the *nature* and *quality* of the relationship, any challenges that may arise, and how these can be addressed to enhance the coaching process.

The use of Eye 3 can often draw out differences of outcomes based not on technique or approach but rather in the unspoken dynamics between the coach and client whether that be one of collusion, attraction, tension or something else.

Eye 4 - The Coach's Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection

This dimension emphasises the importance of the coach's self-awareness, including their thoughts, feelings, and reactions during the coaching process.

The supervisor supports the coach to reflect on their own experiences, biases, and blind spots, and how these may impact the coaching relationship.

Eye 4 is a natural starting point for many coaching supervisors as it builds most naturally on the one-to-one nature of coaching relationships. However, it is important that coaching

supervisors learn to move away from focusing exclusively on Eye 4.

Eye 5 - The Relationship Between the Coach and Supervisor

This lens allows the supervisor and coach to explore what is happening between them and what this might point to in other parts of the system.

Eye 5 surfaces and explores the dynamics between the supervisor and coach to see what might be happening elsewhere in the system. This concept, called parallel process, can provide uncanny access to otherwise unseen forces.

For instance, if the coach loses patience with the supervisor as they are not making progress, this may be a reflection of a loss of patience elsewhere in the system - from the client to the coach, or from an organisation to the client.

Supervisors help coaches to identify and address any such dynamics, using these insights to inform and enhance their coaching practice.

Eye 6 - The Supervisor's Reactions and Reflections

Eye 6 focuses on the supervisor's own thoughts, feelings, and reactions during the supervision process.

This can often lead to an exploration of Eye 5 as the supervisor first tunes in to how they are feeling and then opens this up for discussion around the supervisory relationship.

By engaging in self-reflection and sharing their insights, the supervisor can model the process of self-awareness and self-exploration for the coach, fostering a collaborative and growth-oriented supervision environment.

Eye 7 - The Wider Context and System

Eye 7 considers the broader organisational, cultural, and societal factors that may influence the coaching relationship and process.

Very often, the challenges faced by the coach and brought to supervision are a result of wider systemic forces and recognising this can start a valuable change process within the coaching.

Supervisors support coaches in recognising and navigating these contextual factors, and how they may impact the client's goals, needs, and overall coaching experience.

Summary

By looking at a coach's supervisory question or challenge through these lenses, the Seven-Eyed Model allows the supervisor and coach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the coaching relationship, the coach's practice, and the impact of various factors on the coaching process.

The supervision session does not necessarily work through these lenses methodically. Rather the model acts as a useful map that the supervisor can use to ensure they are gaining a full picture of what the coach has brought to supervision.

This map-like approach can also act as an excellent way for supervisors to check in on their supervisory work and detect if they have strong preferences.

For instance, I've already mentioned that it is extremely common for new supervisors to focus on Eye 4 (the coach) and Eye 2 (the interventions) because they are used to working with the issues that a person in front of them brings to coaching. A critical journey for new supervisors to expand their awareness of what is being looked at and the Seven-Eyed Models helps with this.

Group Supervision vs Individual Coaching Supervision

In the final section of Part 1, we will briefly explore the benefits and challenges of group supervision versus one-to-one supervision.

Nowadays, for both its cost-effectiveness and its impact, many supervisors offer group supervision.

We'll take a brief look at this practice and explore how it compares to individual supervision.

Group Supervision

> ***Group supervision involves a supervisor working with multiple coaches at the same time, typically encouraging the sharing of experiences, challenges, and insights among participants and fostering a collaborative learning environment.***

Benefits:

Diverse Perspectives: Coaches benefit from the diverse perspectives of their peers, allowing them to see their own coaching practices through different lenses.

Peer Learning: The collective wisdom of the group provides a rich learning experience, with coaches learning from each other's successes and challenges.

Community Building: It fosters a sense of community and support among coaches, reducing the isolation that coaches can sometimes experience.

Cost-Effectiveness: Group supervision can be more accessible financially, as the cost is shared among participants.

Challenges:

Less Personalisation: With the focus divided among several coaches, individual coaches might receive less personalised attention compared to individual supervision.

Group Dynamics: The effectiveness of group supervision can be influenced by group dynamics, and some coaches may feel less comfortable sharing in a group setting.

Confidentiality Concerns: Coaches may be more cautious about what they share due to confidentiality concerns, especially if discussing clients' details.

Individual Coaching Supervision

> ***Individual coaching supervision is a one-on-one format where a supervisor works directly with a coach. This format allows for deep, personalised focus on the coach's specific needs, challenges, and development goals.***

Benefits:

Tailored Support: Supervisors can tailor their support and feedback to the specific needs of the coach, offering a highly personalised supervision experience.

Deep Reflection: The one-on-one setting allows for in-depth exploration of the coach's practice, including sensitive or complex issues that might not be suitable for group discussion.

Flexibility: Scheduling and session focus can be more flexible, easily adjusted to meet the immediate needs of the coach.

Safe Space: Provides a confidential and safe space for coaches to explore their vulnerabilities and challenges without the presence of peers.

Challenges:

Cost: Individual supervision can be more expensive than group supervision, as the coach bears the entire cost of the supervisor's time.

Limited Perspectives: Coaches receive feedback and insights from only one supervisor, potentially limiting the breadth of perspectives compared to the group format.

Isolation: Without the peer interaction of group supervision, coaches might miss out on the communal learning experiences and shared reflections.

Providing Both Formats of Coaching Supervision

Neither group supervision nor one-to-one supervision is *better*.

They each have pros and cons.

I would encourage coaching supervisors to develop the ability to offer both one-to-one and group supervision.

Developing proficiency in both one-to-one and group supervision can significantly enhance a supervisor's business offering, attracting a broader range of coaches, and diversifying their work.

> ***By mastering both formats, supervisors can offer a balanced portfolio of services, catering to the varied preferences and needs of coaches.***

This flexibility allows them to accommodate individual coaches seeking deep, personalised support, as well as those who prefer the collaborative and communal learning environment of group supervision.

This versatility can increase a supervisor's appeal and marketability, leading to a more stable and varied client base.

Attracting Different Coaches

As mentioned, different coaches have different supervision needs at various stages of their careers.

New coaches might seek the communal learning and networking opportunities of group sessions, while more experienced coaches might prefer the focused, tailored approach of one-to-one supervision.

By offering both formats, supervisors can attract a wider range of coaches, from novices seeking growth and connection to seasoned practitioners looking for nuanced, individualised feedback.

This diversity can enrich the supervisor's practice, offering them insights into a broader spectrum of coaching challenges and experiences.

Diversifying Supervision Work

Engaging with different supervision formats can prevent work from becoming monotonous, offering varied challenges and learning opportunities. This diversity can keep supervisors intellectually stimulated and emotionally engaged, enhancing their satisfaction and longevity in the field.

> ***Mastering both group and one-to-one supervision not only diversifies a supervisor's client base but also their day-to-day work, making their professional life more dynamic and engaging.***

Offering both formats allows supervisors to design their business model in a way that aligns with their personal preferences and lifestyle.

For instance, they might choose to conduct group sessions for part of the month and dedicate the rest to one-to-one sessions, balancing their workload and income streams.

Summary

In summary, mastering both one-to-one and group supervision enables coaching supervisors to offer a more comprehensive service portfolio, meet the diverse needs of a broader range of coaches, and enrich their professional practice.

This strategic approach not only benefits their business but also contributes to their personal growth and satisfaction as a supervisor, fostering a vibrant and sustainable practice.

Reflections from ICCS Alumni - Why Did You Become a Coaching Supervisor?

Having felt the value and impact of coaching supervision for myself, I wanted to ensure the organisation's Internal Certified Coaches were given the same opportunity. I don't think supervision is simply a 'nice to have'.

Claire Walker, UK
www.acoachingconversation.co.uk

I chose to become a coaching supervisor because helping others realise their full potential is a passion of mine. My own experiences with the transformative power of coaching inspired me to want to shape the skills and techniques of other coaches, ensuring they can offer top-notch coaching to their clients.

Anett Kakonyi, Hungary
https://www.linkedin.com/in/anettkakonyi/

My fascination with the intricate dynamics between individuals and their environments, coupled with a deep belief in the potential for growth, led me to become a coaching supervisor. It is an opportunity to support transformative change within both people and their professional contexts.

Heng Wah Seok, Singapore

As a client, and then as a coach, I realised early on that the best tool for a successful coaching process is the person herself. Like any tool, it has to be calibrated from time to time. We all have many talents derived from experience and biography, as well as filters, traumas, etc. Supervision helps to do this: to calibrate ourselves to be of maximum use to the client and to empower ourselves as persons and professionals. Deciding to become a supervisor gave me the joy of learning from each other on a deeper level by reflecting in multiperspectivity and supporting in a tangible way the coaching profession and all parties involved.

Corina Wyler, Switzerland
www.crccoaching.ch

From my own experience of being a supervisee, I believe in the power of supervision to help a coach grow, flourish and enjoy their practice whilst ensuring the quality and integrity of their work for their clients, the systems in which they operate and the coaching profession as a whole.

Toni Smerdon, UK
uk.linkedin.com/in/tonismerdon

I chose to become a coaching supervisor because I recognized the significant need for coaching supervision to enhance my effectiveness in supporting other coaches. While I had extensive experience in coaching and mentoring, I lacked specific skills and tools focused on coaching supervision. By becoming a coaching supervisor, I aimed to bridge this gap and equip myself with the right tools and processes to provide comprehensive support to coaches. My core values of contribution, growth, and learning drive me to empower leaders and coaches to unleash their best versions. The

supervision journey allowed me to further develop my skills, enabling me to offer more structured and effective support to the coaches I mentor, thus amplifying their impact on their clients and organizations.

Paras Goyal, India
https://www.linkedin.com/in/parasgoyal/

My heart desires to walk alongside coaches in their professional journey and help them provide high-quality coaching to their clients. Since becoming a certified coach in 2014, I have realized that this profession can be a solitary one. Many coaches work independently and are bound by strict confidentiality guidelines, which means they often cannot discuss specific client cases or challenges with others. As a result, qualified coaches, especially those starting to establish their practice, may feel lost without a supportive supervisor or mentor to provide guidance, feedback, and professional accountability.

Lily Koh, Singapore
https://sg.linkedin.com/in/lilykoh

The positive experience with a coach supervisor during a team coach programme sparked my “curiosity” about how coaching supervision can support coaches in their effectiveness, sustainability, and a coach’s professional development and standards.

Danny Toh, Singapore
https://sg.linkedin.com/in/danny-toh-ma-pcc-icf-executive-leadership-and-team-coach-0491352

PART 2:

THE COACHING SUPERVISION PROFESSION



Accreditation of Coaching Supervision

In the first section of Part 2, we will examine the current accreditation framework for coaching supervision and help you navigate the maze of titles, acronyms and awards.

We will look at:

- What each professional body offers in terms of accreditation of coaching supervision training as well as individual coaching supervisor credentials.
- Which professional bodies are most credible and influential within supervision accreditation.
- The differences between these professional bodies in terms of coaching supervision accreditation.
- What to look for in terms of accreditation when choosing a course.

- The criteria for attaining the credentials as a coaching supervisor once you are qualified.

The good news is that, for the most part, you will probably be familiar with the organisations involved in the accreditation of coaching supervision given that you are already a coach.

Key Bodies In The Accreditation of Coaching Supervision

So let's start with identifying the key bodies in the accreditation of coaching supervision.

These can be divided into two main categories:

1. International Professional Coaching Bodies
2. Qualification Awarding Bodies

The professional coaching bodies are self-regulating organisations that aim to set standards of training, development, practice and ethics in their respective fields.

They have been created by coaches to promote, support and enhance the standing of coaching and can be seen, in a sense, as the guardians of the profession.

Regulated awarding bodies, by contrast, are institutions with a focus on standardisation, qualification management and programme development. In this category are universities, and, in the UK, institutes such as the Institute of Leadership & Management and CIPD.

In this book, we will only look at the professional coaching bodies since they are international in scope and there are too many variables to consider for every country's university and awarding body structures.

In addition, the three professional bodies have come to dominate the coaching landscape.

So let's look at which bodies offer what, and which are most influential and credible in terms of the accreditation of coaching supervision.

Professional Coaching Bodies and the Accreditation of Coaching Supervision

The dominant professional coaching bodies are:

- International Coach Federation (ICF)
- European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)
- Association for Coaching (AC)

If you're at the stage of thinking about becoming a coaching supervisor, then these bodies will be familiar to you and you won't need me to describe them in detail.

However, what is likely to be less familiar to you is whether and how they are involved with the accreditation of coaching supervision training and of individual supervisors.

Let's take a look at the three largest professional bodies to understand what they offer around the accreditation of coaching supervision.

In each case I have looked at:

- How they treat coaching supervision as part of a coach's own credentialing.
- Whether, and how, they offer accreditation of coaching supervision training.
- Whether, and how, they accredit individual coaching supervisors.

European Mentoring And Coaching Council (EMCC)

The EMCC has been the most significant and influential of the professional bodies in the accreditation of coaching supervision for many years.

Supervision is seen as intrinsic to the ongoing development and competence of coaches and, as such, the EMCC has a fully-developed framework for the accreditation of training in coaching supervision as well as for the credentialing of individual coaching supervisors.

They have developed a detailed competency framework which acts as the bedrock of their quality assurance alongside their code of conduct.

In addition, the EMCC hosts regular international conferences on coaching supervision, and these have seen it become a major influence in the field.

EMCC – Role of Coaching Supervision in Coaching Credentials

The EMCC is a huge proponent of supervision and encourages it through all their work.

When it comes to individual coach credentialing, the EMCC requires a minimum amount of coaching supervision be received.

The amount varies according to the individual coaching credential sought and varies from one hour per quarter for Foundation level to one hour of supervision per 35 hours of coaching at Master Practitioner level.

What's clear is that the EMCC values supervision and treats it as a core part of a coach's necessary developmental process.

EMCC – Accreditation of Coaching Supervision Training

> ***The EMCC provides the gold standard in accreditation of coaching supervision training.***

Their European Supervision Quality Award (ESQA) is recognised for its rigour and adult-centric approach and is perhaps the most credible accreditation of coaching supervision.

The ESQA is awarded to training providers whose course successfully meets the rigorous application and quality assurance process of the EMCC, including the input and

output standards, the quality of the faculty, adherence to the supervision competencies and ethical frameworks and more.

Unusually, the accreditation process focuses not just on the course itself but also the operating standards of the training provider including their financial robustness, student support, faculty and complaints procedures. This, for me, is a great indication of how the EMCC is trying to ensure quality throughout the profession.

EMCC – Accreditation Of Individual Coaching Supervisors

Alongside the rigorous training accreditation, the EMCC provides an equally robust and credible individual supervisor accreditation scheme.

> ***The European Supervision Individual Award (ESIA) provides the framework for becoming credentialed as a coaching supervisor once coaching supervision training has been completed.***

As with most accreditation schemes, the individual credentialing process takes place separately from the initial training and indeed, most coaching supervisors will not apply for individual credentials until they have been actively supervising for 3 years after their initial training.

In other words, this is a two-step process in which the training school qualifies you as a coaching supervisor through an accredited course and then you spend time building your experience before applying for professional recognition as a supervisor with the EMCC.

If you have already been credentialed with one of the coaching bodies then this process of training, qualification, experience and professional credential will be familiar to you.

EMCC – Summary

The EMCC is a true leader in coaching supervision. Not only do they take it seriously as a requirement for ongoing coaching credentials but they have the most fully built-out system to conceptualise, measure, and quality assure the accreditation of coaching supervision and its practice by individuals.

International Coach Federation (ICF)

The ICF lives up to its name by being the most truly international in influence and prestige as a professional body.

However, surprisingly, it has yet to take a significant role in the development of coaching supervision.

That said, they are showing signs of embracing it and coaching supervision plays an intrinsic role in the credentialing of team coaches through the ICF.

ICF – Role of Coaching Supervision In Coaching Credentials

In 2018, the ICF officially recognised supervision as a form of CCE (Continuing Coach Education) and allows up to 10 hours of coaching supervision per year to be counted as CCE by coaches renewing their professional coaching credentials.

This was a positive step from the ICF which has more typically focused on mentor coaching as their preferred approach to a coach's ongoing development.

However, unlike the other professional coaching bodies, supervision is not seen as a necessary part of maintaining professional credentials.

That said, they have now made receiving supervision one of the criteria to be accredited as a team coach.

It seems to me that this will surely become part of individual coaching credentials at some point in the future.

ICF – Accreditation Of Coaching Supervision Training

Despite the ICF's recent recognition of supervision, it has not developed any kind of accreditation framework for coaching supervision training.

From an international perspective, this is somewhat disappointing since the ICF certainly still has the largest influence on the profession globally.

The lack of a framework seems to suggest that either the ICF does not see coaching supervision as a discipline in its own right or that, if it does, that it doesn't need to receive the same level of rigorous quality assurance and consideration as coach training.

Thankfully, however, the ICF does enable coaching supervision training to be recognised as CCE and to be mapped

to their core competencies and resource development. The ICCS, along with other coaching supervision schools, have successfully achieved ICF recognition of coaching supervision courses in this way.

This means that, if you're credentialed with the ICF, gaining CCEs through your coaching supervision training will be a useful bonus that will ensure that you can use the course towards the renewal of your credentials.

ICF – Accreditation Of Individual Coaching Supervisors

Unsurprisingly, given the above position, the ICF has not developed any kind of accreditation of coaching supervisors and instead continues to focus on mentor coaches.

This seems to be a blind spot in an organisation that otherwise is the leader in coaching worldwide and I hope that in time they will begin to address this.

ICF – Summary

The signs are good that the ICF is taking accreditation of coaching supervision seriously now, with the inclusion of supervision as a criteria for team coach credentialing suggesting a new attitude from this body.

Association For Coaching (AC)

The Association for Coaching is a UK-based organisation with an international membership.

Like the EMCC, the AC has developed its own approach to the accreditation of coaching supervision and takes the practice of supervision very seriously.

AC – Role Of Coaching Supervision In Coaching Credentials

Like the EMCC, supervision is a requirement for any coach seeking to gain professional coaching credentials with the Association for Coaching.

The amount of supervision required is dependent on the level of coaching credential being sought ranging from 3 months of supervision at Foundation level to 12 months of supervision at Master level.

Their commitment to supervision can also be seen in their frequent group supervision experience sessions.

AC – Accreditation Of Coaching Supervision Training

The AC offers an Accredited Diploma in Coaching Supervisor Training.

The AC have applied their usual rigour to the criteria for gaining this accreditation, including such things as a minimum number of supervision hours, a robust assessment process by the training school, minimum supervision of supervision and much more besides.

I have always valued the Association of Coaching as a broad church organisation that reflects the interests and needs

of all coaches and so, along with the EMCC and ICF, we enthusiastically pursued accreditation of our ICCS Diploma in Coaching Supervision with them and secured it in May 2021.

AC – Accreditation Of Individual Coaching Supervisors

When it comes to the accreditation of individual coaching supervisors, the AC has a very robust and credible scheme which has been running for several years now.

Any coaching supervisor seeking individual accreditation by the AC must have at least 250 hours of coaching and at least 60 hours of supervision under their belt.

Like the EMCC, accreditation as a coaching supervisor has one level of accreditation only.

AC – Summary

The Association for Coaching is an excellent organisation which is progressive, thought-provoking and inclusive and clearly values coaching supervision both as a service and as a profession.

Summary

If you're looking for a practical, credible, quality course that's going to help you become competent and confident then look for the EMCC ESQA. You really can't go wrong with that. Each course has been through a robust accreditation process to ensure it meets the demands of the EMCC.

If you're an ICF credentialed coach then try to find a coaching supervision course that also has the ICF's CCE approval. It makes sense to kill two birds with one stone!

But ICF CCE alone is not enough. You will need to ensure you have EMCC ESQA or another accreditation if you want to become a fully recognised coaching supervisor.

Professional Pathways for Coaching Supervisors

The role of a coaching supervisor, like a coach, offers several career pathways depending on your preferences, skills, and the contexts in which you wish to operate.

We can identify three broad professional pathways:

- Independent coaching supervisor
- Internal coaching supervisor
- Integrated supervisor

Independent Coaching Supervisor

Independent coaching supervisors work as self-employed professionals, offering supervision services to coaches from various backgrounds and specialisations.

This path offers maximum flexibility and autonomy, allowing supervisors to tailor their practice to their strengths, interests, and the market's needs.

Opportunities:

Diverse Clientele: Independent supervisors can work with a wide range of clients, from individual coaches to coaching organisations, expanding their impact across the coaching industry.

Business Ownership: Independent supervisors have the freedom to build and grow their own supervision practice, setting their schedules, fees, and work parameters.

Professional Networking: Operating independently encourages building a broad professional network, opening doors to collaborations, referrals, and community engagement.

Challenges:

Business Development: Independent supervisors must actively market their services, manage finances, and sustain their business, which requires entrepreneurial skills beyond coaching supervision.

Isolation: Working independently can sometimes feel isolating, necessitating proactive engagement with professional communities for support and development.

Internal Coaching Supervisor

Internal supervisors are employed within an organisation to provide supervision to in-house coaches.

This role is integral to organisations that value and invest in coaching as part of their leadership development, employee support, and organisational growth strategies.

Opportunities:

Organisational Impact: Internal supervisors have the opportunity to shape the coaching culture within an organisation, influencing its approach to leadership and development.

Steady Engagement: Being part of an organisation provides a steady stream of work and the chance to develop long-term relationships with coaches.

Team Integration: They can integrate closely with HR and L&D teams, contributing to broader organisational development initiatives.

Challenges:

Limited Diversity: Working within a single organisation may limit the range of coaching styles and challenges encountered.

Organisational Dynamics: Navigating the complexities of organisational politics and maintaining impartiality can be challenging.

Integrated Supervisor

Integrated supervisors leverage their supervision skills within another role or combine supervision with other

professions such as consulting, therapy, training, and facilitation.

This path allows for the application of supervision principles in various contexts, enhancing the value brought to different professional engagements.

Opportunities:

Versatility: Blended supervisors can offer a rich mix of services, appealing to a broader client base and opening up diverse revenue streams.

Cross-disciplinary Growth: Engaging in related professions allows for continuous learning and the application of supervision skills in innovative ways, fostering cross-disciplinary growth.

Broader Impact: By integrating supervision into other professional roles, supervisors can influence a wider array of individuals and organisations, extending the benefits of reflective practice beyond traditional coaching contexts.

Challenges:

Skill Diversification: Maintaining expertise across multiple disciplines requires ongoing learning and adaptation, which can be both time-consuming and intellectually demanding.

Market Positioning: Clearly communicating the value of a blended skill set to potential clients can be challenging, requiring nuanced marketing and positioning strategies.

Summary

In summary, the career path a coaching supervisor chooses can significantly influence their professional journey, offering different sets of opportunities and challenges.

Whether opting for the independence of a freelance career, the stability and impact of an internal role, or the diversity and innovation of a blended career, supervisors have the potential to make a profound difference in the coaching profession and beyond.

Supervision In Different Coaching Contexts

Coaching supervision can be applied in various contexts and each presents unique challenges and opportunities.

Let's take a look at how the context impacts how you might work as a coaching supervisor.

Internal Coaching Supervision

Internal coaching supervision refers to supervision provided within an organisation by an employed supervisor to an internal coaching team.

Some key considerations for internal coaching supervision include:

- Navigating the dynamics of organisational culture, politics, and hierarchy

- Balancing the dual roles of supervisor and employee, while maintaining clear professional boundaries
- Ensuring confidentiality and trust within the context of the organisation
- Supporting coaches in addressing organisational challenges, such as limited resources or competing priorities

External Coaching Supervision

External coaching supervision is provided by an independent supervisor who is not employed by an organisation where the coach works.

This form of supervision offers several advantages, such as:

- Offering an objective, outside perspective largely-free from the influence of organisational dynamics
- Providing a safe and confidential space for coaches to openly discuss challenges and concerns
- Access to a diverse range of experiences, expertise, and approaches from the external supervisor

However, external supervisors also need to be aware of and adapt to the specific context, culture, and needs of the organisation in which the coach works.

Supervision For Specific Coaching Niches

Different coaching niches require tailored supervision approaches to address the unique challenges, contexts, and competencies associated with each area of practice.

Executive Coaching Supervision

Executive coaching supervision focuses on supporting coaches who work with leaders, managers, and executives within organisations.

Key considerations for executive coaching supervision include:

- Understanding the complexities of leadership and organisational dynamics
- Addressing the challenges of power, hierarchy, and influence in the coaching relationship
- Supporting coaches in navigating ethical dilemmas and confidentiality issues related to their work with executives

This is certainly an exciting and challenging space to work in and it allows for the supervisor to maintain their interest and experiences of the executive coaching environment.

Life Coaching Supervision

Life coaching supervision addresses the diverse range of personal and professional issues that coaches encounter when working with individuals seeking to improve their overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Supervision in this context should consider:

- The wide range of topics, goals, and challenges faced by clients in life coaching which are often much broader than executive coaching.

- Supporting coaches in maintaining appropriate boundaries and managing their own emotional well-being
- Ensuring that coaches are equipped with the skills, tools, and resources to effectively support their clients' personal growth and development

Given the breadth of issues that life coaching covers, supervisors working in this space benefit from being grounded in multiple psychological frameworks that can be brought to bear on the coaching dynamics.

Team and Group Coaching Supervision

Supervision for group and team coaching focuses on the unique dynamics and collective goals inherent in working with multiple individuals.

Key considerations include:

- Helping coaches navigate the complex interactions within teams, ensuring effective communication and conflict resolution.
- Supporting coaches to align the team's collective objectives with individual members' goals, ensuring both are addressed in the coaching process.
- Enhancing a coach's ability to lead group discussions and activities efficiently, keeping sessions productive and inclusive.
- Dealing with conflict, projection, collusion and psychodynamic aspects of group work.

This is a relatively new area of work, but with team coaching growing it offers a vibrant space for coaching supervisors to work in and a range of issues and challenges that differ from one-to-one coaching.

Coach Therapist Supervision

Supervision of coach-therapists addresses the unique blend of coaching and therapeutic practices.

Key considerations include:

- Ensuring clear boundaries between coaching and therapy roles, helping coach-therapists navigate dual relationships with clients.
- Guidance on effectively integrating coaching and therapeutic skills in a way that respects the distinct nature and ethics of each practice.
- Fostering deep self-awareness in coach-therapists to prevent role confusion and maintain professional integrity in their dual practice.
- Emphasising adherence to both coaching and therapeutic ethical codes, supporting coach-therapists in upholding the highest standards of practice.
- For the supervisors with experience of therapeutic work, this space can present a fascinating opportunity to deepen and expand their work both theoretically and practically.

Summary

By understanding and adapting to the specific needs and challenges of various coaching contexts and niches, coaching supervisors can provide more effective support to coaches, fostering their professional growth and enhancing the quality of their coaching practice.

Using Coaching Supervision Outside Of Coaching

Finally, the skills honed through coaching supervision extend far beyond the coaching profession, offering valuable insights and methodologies that can enhance practices in related fields such as training, facilitation, and leadership.

The reflective practice central to supervision encourages a deeper level of self-awareness and critical thinking, qualities that are indispensable for trainers and facilitators tasked with creating engaging, effective learning environments.

The ability to listen actively, provide constructive feedback, and foster an atmosphere of trust and openness are skills that improve the quality of training sessions and workshops, ensuring that they are not only informative but transformative.

For leaders and executives, the nuanced communication skills, ethical reasoning, and capacity for facilitating growth and development that are cultivated through supervision can significantly enhance their leadership approach.

The reflective practices of supervision equip leaders with the tools to encourage a culture of continuous learning and improvement within their teams.

The emphasis on ethical practice and boundary management in supervision serves as a guide for navigating the complex interpersonal and organisational dynamics that leaders often face.

In essence, the competencies developed through coaching supervision are not confined to the coaching domain but are transferable, enriching a wide array of professions by fostering more mindful, effective, and ethically grounded practices.

Reflection from the ICCS Alumni: What do you love most about your supervision work?

I love seeing coaches get 'aha' moments about their coaching and freeing themselves from the boundaries of their coach training where some are stuck in the "do's and don'ts" and models they have been taught. It's great to see them strip back their coaching and recognise where their strengths and stretches are.

Claire Walker, UK
www.acoachingconversation.co.uk

What I enjoy most about providing supervision is watching other coaches grow and develop. It's incredibly fulfilling to see them cultivate their unique styles and overcome challenges, knowing that my supervision has played a role in their progress. Each interaction with them also enriches my own understanding and approach to coaching.

Anett Kakonyi, Hungary
https://www.linkedin.com/in/anettkakonyi/

I enjoy creating a reflective space where coaches can deepen their self-awareness and enhance their coaching practice. The collaborative and transformative nature of supervision, where I witness the profound growth of individuals, is truly fulfilling.

Heng Wah Seok
Singapore

I love creating a safe space for coaches to experience supervision as an enjoyable, informative and regular reflection on their coaching. I enjoy the process of creating a place to talk about their coaching, in confidence, and to feel good about how they are working, providing the right amount of support and challenge to continue their development all with the intention to help them to become a better coach.

Toni Smerdon, UK
uk.linkedin.com/in/tonismerdon

I enjoy the profound impact that supervision can have on coaches, helping them reflect on their practices, gain new insights, and develop their skills further. Providing supervision allows me to support coaches in seeing their coaching practice from a distance, objectively, and from multiple perspectives. This reflective process can be incredibly empowering and transformative for coaches. I also relish the collaborative and trusting relationships that develop during supervision. It is rewarding to witness coaches' growth as they become more aware of their emotions, improve their client relationships, and enhance their overall effectiveness. Additionally, the opportunity to continuously learn and apply new theories and models in real-world scenarios keeps the supervision process dynamic and intellectually stimulating.

Paras Goyal
https://www.linkedin.com/in/parasgoyal/

Coaching supervision, to me, is akin to the concept of coming home. It offers coaches a safe and supportive space to be vulnerable, just as individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves freely at home. In this environment, coaches can share their thoughts, concerns, and challenges without fear of judgement. This sense of safety allows for deeper exploration and growth. I enjoy partnering with them by offering a space for coaches to be restored, recharged, and replenished.

Lily Koh, Singapore
https://sg.linkedin.com/in/lilykoh

What I truly enjoy about providing supervision is... "my freedom". I have my freedom to utilize all six categories from the Heron 6 Categories of Intervention Model. While as a coach, I cannot have that level of freedom.

Atip Muangsuwan
https://thebest-coach-international.com

As a Thought Partner, I enjoyed engaging coaches through deep conversations reflecting on their coach practice - their struggles, challenges, well being, and their developmental areas, in a safe and trusted space.

Danny Toh, Singapore
https://sg.linkedin.com/in/danny-toh-ma-pcc-icf-executive-leadership-and-team-coach-0491352

Part 3:

Training To Be A Coaching Supervisor



Why Become A Coaching Supervisor?

For seasoned coaches thinking about making this transition, it's well worth being aware of the many benefits that come with the role of a coaching supervisor.

> ***The journey from being a coach to a coaching supervisor is not just a step up the professional ladder; it's a step into a realm of broader influence, deeper understanding, and greater fulfilment.***

This section delves into the key advantages of taking on this role, highlighting how it can significantly expand your professional horizons and positively impact your career as a coach.

Whilst each individual will know what's important to themselves about becoming a coaching supervisor, here are some of the common benefits and outcomes that I have seen new supervisors experience.

Professional Growth And Development

This supervision role stretches you beyond the traditional constraints of coaching, challenging you to refine your skills and deepen your understanding of the coaching process.

For many new supervisors, the journey to become a coaching supervisor is far more challenging than they initially expected as it demands new ways of being and new skills beyond the facilitative approach of coaching.

Expanded Skill Set

Building on the last point, transitioning to a supervisory role necessitates you to acquire a new set of skills.

You will develop capabilities in systemic thinking, mentorship, multiple psychological concepts, assessment, and advanced coaching techniques.

These skills are not just applicable in the realm of supervision but are transferable to other areas of professional and personal life, making you a more versatile and competent leader.

Enhanced Understanding Of Coaching Dynamics

Coaching supervisors gain a profound insight into the intricacies of coaching.

I once heard this described by one of our supervisors-in-training as “rocket fuel for my coaching”.

Becoming a coaching supervisor encourages you to explore various coaching methodologies and understand the dynamics of different coach-client relationships. This deeper understanding not only allows for supervision practice but also enhances your ability to *coach* at a deeper level.

Broader Impact On The Coaching Industry

Stepping into supervision positions you as a leader and influencer within the coaching community.

It offers a platform to contribute to shaping the coaching industry, imparting your knowledge and experience to other coaches.

Through supervision, you play a vital part in elevating coaching standards and practices, thus contributing to the profession's overall growth and integrity.

Networking And Collaboration Opportunities

Supervisory roles open doors to extensive networking and collaboration with other professionals and organisations within the coaching field.

These interactions not only broaden your professional network but also provide opportunities for learning and growth.

With your enhanced reputation, you will be perceived at another level within the profession.

Increased Enjoyment And Satisfaction

The diverse challenges and responsibilities of a supervisor can create a more rewarding mix of work in your coaching practice which in turn can make your whole experience more enjoyable and satisfying.

> ***Engaging in the development of other coaches and having a broader impact on the profession can reignite your passion for coaching and bring a renewed sense of purpose to your work.***

I remember one of our coaching supervisors exclaiming that this was the "missing piece of her jigsaw" that brought everything together.

Contribution To Coach Development

Of course, one of the most fulfilling aspects of being a supervisor is the opportunity to contribute significantly to the development and success of other coaches.

> ***Watching coaches grow and succeed under your guidance is immensely rewarding.***

And the best part is that no coach is ever the same so your work is always changing.

Adaptability And Diverse Work Environments

Supervision is a dynamic role that varies across different coaching contexts such as life coaching, executive coaching, and more.

This diversity offers an adaptable and stimulating work environment, keeping your career both challenging and exciting.

Summary

Embracing the role of a coaching supervisor is an enriching journey, filled with opportunities for growth, enjoyment, challenge, and a deeper engagement with the coaching profession.

The transition to supervision not only expands your professional horizon but also offers a chance to make a lasting impact on the field and its practitioners.

Readiness To Become A Coaching Supervisor

One of the questions we are often asked by someone looking to train with us is:

> ***"Am I ready to become a coaching supervisor?"***

Of course, we can't answer this definitively for you because so much depends on you but to help you figure it out, you can use the following questions. I've always found them to be helpful whenever I was talking with someone about the journey.

Are You A Qualified Coach?

The first one is pretty self-explanatory but actually, it's surprising how many people who are curious about becoming a supervisor aren't yet even qualified as coaches.

So to state the obvious, this is a must!

> ***To be a coaching supervisor, you will have qualified as a coach on a recognised coach training programme.***

The first thing any coach would expect of a supervisor is that they are qualified and have excellent knowledge and skills in coaching.

They would expect you to understand the dilemmas of coaching, to have experience working with different issues, to know theory and practice and to be able to advise, guide and ask the right questions.

Do You Have The Right Level Of Coaching Experience?

So you're qualified as a coach but do you have the requisite level of experience?

This is a much trickier question than it might first appear.

> ***We suggest that a coach should have around 500 hours of experience before looking to become a coaching supervisor.***

But it's not always so clear-cut.

For example, an experienced psychotherapist who later trains as a coach might be ready to become a coaching supervisor sooner based on the many hours of related work in their original field. Indeed, there are many such talking

professions that would shortcut a supervisor's need for coach-specific experience.

As a supervision school, we treat this question on a case-by-case basis with the underlying assumption that around 500 hours is a good guideline.

The more important question is whether you feel you have the experience to be both credible and skilled as a coaching supervisor.

Do You Have A Context To Do Coaching Supervision?

The next question concerns where and with whom you'll do the coaching supervision.

We find that those who get the most from our coaching supervision training have a context to do the work.

Perhaps you are part of an organisation with a coaching function, or you know coaches who you tend to support in different ways.

Of course, just as when you trained to become a coach you had to find clients to work with, so you may find coaches to supervise using all the same kinds of approaches to getting clients that worked for you then: referrals, directories, networking and so on.

The key though is knowing how you're going to apply the skills so that you can build your confidence through application and experience.

Do You Have The Time To Study And To Do The Supervision Practice?

The next question is whether you have time to become a coaching supervisor.

> ***Just like becoming a coach, training as a coaching supervisor takes study, practice, reading and reflection.***

To be ready to become a coaching supervisor you must have time to dedicate to it.

As an example, if you were to train as a coaching supervisor with ICCS, you would embark on a course that lasts around 8 months, and you'd commit time to complete 25 hours of supervision work outside of the training.

We estimate a minimum of 200 hours of study and practice over the 8 months and, of course, in reality, you'll almost certainly want to do more as you fall in love with it!

Do You Love Coaching?

Becoming a coaching supervisor is not something you do because you have to – you do it because you *want* to.

And it only makes sense to choose to do what you enjoy.

Supervision is not just the next step on a rung. It's a reflection of someone's love of coaching.

> ***To become a coaching supervisor, you have to love coaching and to want to support coaches, the coaching profession, and the clients and organisations that engage with coaching.***

And to become a coaching supervisor is to love continuous learning and mastery of coaching, to become fascinated by what coaches struggle with and aspire to, to connect to the aims and ethics of the profession, and to truly embrace the journey of becoming a coaching role model.

Are You Open To New Ways Of Working?

A fascinating part of the journey, should you become a coaching supervisor, is in loosening up your attachment to certain coaching principles and practices.

Whilst coaching supervision is *about* coaching and whilst it is extremely similar in its relational approach, it is also different.

Coaches typically find the wider scope of behaviours and interventions in coaching supervision liberating and joyful. They often feel free to be more expressive.

However, occasionally, we come across a coach who is so firmly wedded to the specific practices of coaching that they struggle to fully step into the role of coaching supervisor.

One example of this is the wider systemic view the supervisor has across the whole coaching field. Whilst a coach's main concern is their client, a coaching supervisor is interested in, and concerned for, the coach, the client, the system sponsoring the coaching and the coaching profession as a whole.

This might necessitate them to be more challenging of a coach who is demonstrating potentially unethical practices

(whether knowingly or not) or to raise concerns about the outcomes of a coaching engagement.

This can feel different from the more classically person-centred approach that is coaching and can be challenging at first.

Are You Ready To Assume A Level Of Authority And Presence?

Finally, and related to the last point, are authority and presence.

Perhaps more than most disciplines, coaching has taken a path of an egalitarian, collaborative relationship in which the coach's "stuff" is set aside and their personality somewhat subdued.

> ***As a coaching supervisor, however, authority and presence are vital ingredients. A coach in supervision wants to feel held and supported, though not instructed or diminished.***

We've found that this step can feel like a quantum leap for some coaches when they become a supervisor as many have been accustomed to reducing or suppressing their presence and authority in order that the client takes on more of both.

We know this is a journey and whilst some coaches seamlessly move towards this position of authority and presence, others can take several months (even years) to truly trust themselves as a supervisor who can inhabit this space with these twin qualities.

Summary

There may be other questions that you have around your readiness to become a coaching supervisor, but for us at the ICCS, we've found that these seven are the most vital points to check in on for yourself.

Some are simple and straightforward – such as whether you are a qualified coach. Others are more complex, subjective and intuitive.

> ***The starting point, though, is you. How do you feel about your readiness?***

Choosing A Coaching Supervision School

If you're looking to become a coaching supervisor, you'll need to choose a good training course.

Just as you did when you first trained as a coach, you will want to ensure that it not only delivers the skills and knowledge you need, but also gives you the right accreditation, support and community.

Entering a new profession, however, even if closely associated with your existing, can be daunting.

The accreditations are different, the core building blocks of knowledge and skills are new, and,most probably, the methods of delivery have changed since your early coach training.

In this section, I will lay out the key elements that you need to look out for, clarifying the coaching supervision training field so that you can make an informed decision about where to train.

We will cover:

- Accreditation
- Curriculum and content
- Client work
- In-Person or virtual learning
- Faculty
- Entry requirements
- Peer group and networking opportunities
- Duration
- Cost

In each case, I will also briefly describe the ICCS details of the element under discussion..

Accreditation

Just as with coaching, it is essential to select an accredited programme to ensure that the training meets the profession's high standards and that your certification will be recognised by clients and coaching bodies.

I covered accreditation and credentialing in greater detail in the previous chapter, but for the purposes of this section, we'll cover it briefly here too.

Whilst coaching accreditation is dominated by the International Coaching Federation, the ICF is currently far less influential in the field of coaching supervision. Indeed, they have yet to recognise supervision training as a distinct discipline and only provide *Continuing Coach Education* related to coaching skills and credentials.

The main accrediting body in the coaching supervision field is the European Mentoring and Coaching Council which provides accreditation of training in the form of the European Supervision Quality Award (ESQA).

> ***It would be fair to say that the ESQA is the gold standard for coaching supervision accreditation and we would recommend that whatever course you choose, you ensure that it has this stamp of quality.***

That said, in recent years, the Association of Coaching has also launched its own accreditation scheme for coaching supervision training.

Accreditation of the ICCS coaching supervision course

We chose to have our course accredited by all three of the accrediting associations and we are one of only two to have done so.

Our course holds both the EMCC ESQA and AC ADCST.

In addition, recognising that many experienced coaches who choose to become coaching supervisors are also ICF credentialed, our course is accredited for the maximum number of CCE hours that any single course can obtain from the ICF.

Curriculum And Content

It is beyond the scope of an article like this to go into the minutiae of what a course should cover, but we can lay out the key elements that we believe must be covered.

These would be:

- The 3 core functions of coaching supervision (normative, formative, restorative)
- Intervention styles (for instance Heron's 6 Categories)
- The 7 Eyed Model of Supervision
- Ethics and ethical maturity
- Psychodynamic aspects of supervision and coaching
- Psychological and theoretical perspectives on coaching to work with coaches from multiple stances
- Group supervision – theoretical and practical
- Contracting and the supervisory relationship
- Navigating difference and cross-cultural supervision

There may, of course, be many other areas beyond this, but we believe these are the critical cornerstones that will allow

a coach to stretch beyond merely coaching the coach to supervising the coach.

Review the programme's curriculum to ensure it covers key components of effective coaching supervision, including ethical considerations, reflective practice, and skill development.

The best programmes offer a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing opportunities to practise coaching supervision skills through role-plays, real world practice, and supervised practice sessions.

The ICCS Curriculum

It would take too long to cover the ICCS curriculum here but suffice to say it covers all these areas and more. You can find the full course breakdown on our Accredited Diploma in Coaching Supervision page on website at http://iccs.co

Client Work

A critical component of becoming a coaching supervisor is gaining real-life experience.

Unlike some fields of knowledge, supervision is not something that can be learned and mastered from a book or simply by listening to a trainer.

It must be practised.

Be sure that any course you choose requires a certain amount of real-life (that is to say: not in the training room) supervision practice with clients.

The ICCS Practice Requirements

Recognising that supervision is something that happens less frequently than coaching, and thus can be slower to build experience in, we ask our participants to complete 25 hours of coaching supervision experience.

This averages out as about 3 hours per month over 8 months which is more than realistic to accomplish yet provides enough real-life experience to gain the necessary skills.

In-Person Or Virtual

It is likely that most coaches, with the level of experience needed to become a coaching supervisor, will have undertaken their coach training in person.

Times have changed, of course, and now it is more likely that any training you do will be online.

This is even more so the case with coaching supervision given its international appeal and the fact that its rarefied level of experience means schools like ICCS attract highly-experienced coaches from across the world.

A critical first question to answer for yourself is whether you wish to train in person or online.

In-person courses are less common now and the state of online learning through Zoom and similar platforms is so good that participants enjoy a fully immersive experience without having to travel long distances and stay in expensive hotels. This is even more important for international participants, the majority of whom never had access to supervision training in their own country.

Of course, in-person has certain interpersonal advantages – the chats over coffee, the more visceral human experience during a practice session, and so on – but many schools now find ways to create similar atmospheres in their online courses.

Ultimately, of course, this is a matter of preference, and availability, for you.

The ICCS Virtual Approach

Although our course originally started as an in-person course in 2016, we had the advantage of rebuilding the course from scratch in 2020 since we'd taken a two year hiatus from 2018.

This meant that instead of simply taking an existing structure online we designed it to be native to the virtual environment with shorter sessions to avoid screen burnout and to allow for more focused learning on specific themes.

Our course involves 20 sessions of 3.5 hours, Reflective Practice Groups, Group Supervision and Supervision-Mentoring, all delivered virtually.

We have found the timing and frequency works well to maintain momentum in shorter bursts rather.

Faculty

The next thing to look for in the course is the quality of the faculty.

Thankfully, the coaching supervision field is not one in which you can fake it!

Whilst, in the early days of coaching, often inexperienced coaches (qualified or not) would set up their own training course, this does not work in coaching supervision where proven experience and high-level accreditation is a critical component.

The distinction one might look for in a faculty teaching supervision is more around current practical experience versus legacy experience.

We believe that it is important that those training coaching supervision are still active in the field.

Our approach is to bring in active supervisors who are facing the reality of coaching and supervision work as it is today, with all the changes our professions are going through.

Of course, they must be qualified as coaches and coaching supervisors but, quite frankly, this really goes without saying!

The ICCS Faculty

Each of our faculty is active and supervising and coaching multiple clients personally, within organisation or both.

We enjoy of a mix of corporate and executive coaches, personal coaches and therapist coaches, each of whom bring their unique experience to the learning.

Entry Requirements

An interesting area to explore when choosing a coaching supervision course is the level of experience required to join the programme.

Highly-experienced coaches often ask us about the experience level of the other participants.

This is understandable. With the best will in the world, a coach with 1000+ hours of experience wants to be learning with coaches of a similar experience not due to judgement or prejudice but simply because of the quality and depth of the discussions that are likely to ensue.

Some renowned coaching supervision schools only require 100 hours of coaching experience which is barely enough to become ACC with the ICF.

As much as we believe in inclusivity, we do believe that the supervision profession must be served by us as a training school. We act, for good or bad, as gatekeepers to

the profession and we believe that the entry requirement should see that a coach has sufficient experience to work in a supervisory capacity.

Other aspects to consider in terms of criteria are whether you will need to be part of a professional association, the nature of the coaching qualification you undertook and any specifications for CPD you have taken.

It is essential to evaluate these criteria and determine if the programme aligns with your current qualifications and experience.

The ICCS Entry Requirement

When it comes to the experience level to become a coaching supervisor, we recognise that any number is always going to be arbitrary.

That said, it is vital the school has a criteria.

For us that number is 500 hours.

Some may argue that it should be higher, some may say lower.

Indeed, we are flexible on this to a degree, especially when the coach has prior related experience.

We deal with applicants on a case-by-case basis when it comes to their coach training, recognising that some coaches started their coaching before full courses were even developed!

We do not require coaches to be members of professional associations though we think it's a positive thing to be an active part of an association.

Peer Group And Networking Opportunities

An often forgotten aspect of joining a course is the extent to which you will engage with and connect to your peers in that community.

We believe this is a vital part of any learning and, indeed, this seems to be born out by evidence given the poor completion rate of online learning undertaken by an individual in their own time and by themselves.

Of course, any live training programme will likely involve you learning with a group.

However, beyond the formal training, we would recommend you choose a programme that offers peer networking opportunities to help stay motivated and connected to your choice to become a coaching supervisor.

This may include a community of practice, additional learning opportunities, post-qualification supervision and so on.

The ICCS Community Network

Community has always been a part of how we run our training and it is no different with the Diploma in Coaching Supervision.

After joining our programme, you will immediately join our ICCS Community where we offer additional free workshops and lifelong supervision as well as a forum to get to know one another.

Duration

Most coaching supervision courses will last somewhere between 6 to 12 months and we believe this is a reasonable time frame to learn and develop the skills you need to a level of competence that can be certified.

We have heard of courses that are a day or two long but these do not lead to accreditation or any kind of certification beyond, perhaps, CPD status.

Whatever you do, be sure that the course you join is long enough to embed the skills at depth. Supervision is a practical, relational skill rather than merely a theoretical one that can be learned quickly.

The ICCS Duration

We have designed our course across 8 months with a qualification time frame of one year. This allows plenty of time to gain the necessary skills and experience without leaving it open-ended with the consequent drift and never-ending nature of the qualification that can result from this.

Course Cost

This is an easy one – well, in theory, at least!

What does the course cost, can you afford it and does it offer you the value you require for that fee.

If the course is virtual then the costs will be the course plus and reading material.

If the course is in-person, you might need to factor in additional expenses, such as travel, accommodation, and even time off work.

In the end, this is down to you and what feels OK for you. A high-price course is not necessarily better but a low price course is less likely to be good!

Weigh up the benefits looking at all the factors above.

The ICCS Cost

You can find the course fee on our Accredited Diploma in Coaching Supervision on our website at https//iccs.co

Researching Your Course

Here are a few steps you can take when researching your course option.

1. Research multiple programmes to ensure that you have a comprehensive understanding of the available options.

2. Gather information from various sources, such as online resources, reviews, and recommendations from your professional network.
3. Attend information sessions and webinars to learn more about the programme's offerings and ask any questions you may have.
4. Have a conversation with a course consultant, or equivalent, from each school and see who resonates with you.
5. Reach out to programme alumni to gather feedback on their experiences and the overall effectiveness of the training.
6. Make your choice and commit to your journey!

Conclusion

By considering the factors discussed in this article, you can make an informed choice that will lead to a rewarding and fulfilling career in coaching supervision.

> ***Selecting the right coaching supervision training course is a critical decision that can significantly impact your professional growth and success.***

Keep in mind that investing in a quality coaching supervision training programme can yield long-term benefits and help you become a more effective and well-rounded supervisor.

With the right training, you will be well-equipped to support other coaches in their development and contribute to the overall advancement of the coaching profession.

Reflections from ICCS Alumni: What did you enjoy most about the ICCS coaching supervision training?

I loved working with like-minded people on the course who supported each other as we grew together into our coaching supervisor roles, backed up by the excellent facilitation, guidance and mentoring from the ICCS faculty.

Claire Walker, UK
www.acoachingconversation.co.uk

The most rewarding part of my training journey was the incredible sense of community and the program's structured approach. The teachers were not only knowledgeable but genuinely invested in our success, fostering an environment that was both challenging and supportive. The combination of pre-reading, interactive classes, and extensive practical sessions provided a deep and thorough understanding of the material. Additionally, the mentorship component and the opportunity to engage openly with peers about our questions and experiences significantly enriched my learning experience. This holistic approach not only prepared me for the practical aspects of supervision but also connected me deeply with a network of passionate professionals. All in all, this learning not only enhanced my own skills but also allowed me to significantly impact the professional growth of the coaches I supervise.

Anett Kakonyi, Hungary
https://www.linkedin.com/in/anettkakonyi/

There were several aspects of the training that were rewarding: learning from qualified and *humanly* aware teachers, learning together with other professionals from different countries, understanding oneself and the biases that can arise in the coaching and supervision process, but most of all discovering week by week, what makes me ultimately a supervisor and what my style of supervision might be.

Corina Wyler, Switzerland
www.crccoaching.ch

The training journey has been a profound stretch of my boundaries, allowing me to reflect, challenge myself, and integrate diverse methodologies into a holistic supervisory practice. The most rewarding aspect has been the deepening of my understanding of the complex dynamics coaches navigate.

Heng Wah Seok
Singapore

I found one of the most rewarding aspects of my supervision training journey was exploring the similarities and differences between coaching and supervising, in particular that supervision is a collaborative and reflective conversation; and developing my 'helicopter ability' (Hawkins & Smith) to switch my focus between coach's clients, the coach, our relationship; the supervision process and the wider organisational context.

Toni Smerdon, UK
uk.linkedin.com/in/tonismerdon

The most rewarding aspect of the training journey was the deep dive into various supervision models and intervention styles, particularly the exploration of Heron's six intervention styles and the 7-eye model. Understanding and practicing these styles, especially those outside my comfort zone, like the prescriptive and authoritative approaches, was both challenging and enlightening. The application of psychodynamic theory in a coaching context was also fascinating, providing new dimensions to understanding and addressing the emotional landscapes of coaches. Additionally, the structured program with regular practice sessions and 1:1 supervision mentoring was immensely helpful. It provided a supportive environment for reflection, learning, and practical application, which greatly enhanced my supervisory skills and confidence.

Paras Goyal
https://www.linkedin.com/in/parasgoyal/

PART 4:

TAKING THE LEAP TO BECOME A COACHING SUPERVISOR



Addressing Common Doubts And Questions

Stepping up to the role of a coaching supervisor can represent a significant professional advancement for an experienced coach.

However, as well as feelings of excitement and possibility, it can also trigger a range of questions and doubts.

Having spoken to many coaches who have explored this step, I've noticed how many of these questions are less about the supervision training, and more about the coach themselves.

Self-doubt and anxiety over readiness to be a supervisor is common, as is the fear of whether the training will be "worth it", and whether they will have time to do it justice.

These types of concerns are personal and subjective, and so there are no clear answers.

However, in a bid to help you head these questions off at the pass, I've summarised some of the most common concerns I hear, sharing my own perspective on them as I go.

Ultimately, of course, you will need to come to your own resolution but I hope these thoughts will help you to make that decision.

In no particular order, I have identified 10 common topics.

Let's take a look at them.

Who Am I To Be A Coaching Supervisor?

The question, "Who am I to be a coaching supervisor?" is a common concern reflecting a certain level of "impostor syndrome".

It may originate from doubting one's worthiness and abilities, and it can often feel as if you're not ready.

You may worry about how you'll supervise others when you're still learning yourself.

You might feel as though you're faking it.

> ***Caught between the awareness of your undeniable expertise and a self-doubting voice that questions your right to be in a position of authority, you can't work out whether you're really ready to become a coaching supervisor.***

Perhaps rather than asking, “Who am I to be a coaching supervisor?”, you could reframe the question to, “Why shouldn’t I be a coaching supervisor?”.

Consider your journey, the expertise you’ve gained, and the unique perspectives you bring to the table.

Understand that everyone, no matter their position, is continually learning and growing. Remember, it’s not about being the ‘ultimate’ expert but about facilitating a process of discovery and learning for others.

You could also ask, “Who am I *not* to be a coaching supervisor?”.

Reflect on the value you can offer from your experiences and knowledge. Think of the positive impact you could have on your supervisees.

You have earned your place through hard work, dedication, and an ongoing commitment to your profession.

Your transition to a coaching supervisor is a testament to your growth and a step towards sharing your wisdom and insights with others more widely.

Am I Good Enough?

Related to impostor syndrome, but perhaps more focused on perceptions of competence and skills is the question, “Am I good enough?

This, it seems to me, often arises from a fear of not matching the perceived high standards of the supervisory role.

> ***As a coach, you may have created an image of the ideal supervisor as someone with absolute expertise and no room for error or lack of learning.***

This image can make you underestimate your capabilities and overestimate the requirements of the role, leaving you doubting your competence.

You may forget that even the most seasoned supervisors started from the same place you are at now, uncertain yet eager to grow.

Firstly, it's essential to address the misconception about the 'perfect' supervisor.

> ***Supervision, like coaching, is a journey rather than a destination.***

Instead of asking "Am I good enough?", ask "Am I willing to grow?".

Supervision involves a continuous learning process where every experience, success, or setback is an opportunity to evolve your approach and broaden your perspective.

Secondly, acknowledge that every supervisor brings something unique to their role through their distinct experiences and insights.

Consider the question, "What unique skills, experience and perspectives do I bring to this role?".

Celebrate your individuality and remember that being a great supervisor doesn't mean knowing it all but facilitating an environment of shared learning, growth, and mutual respect.

How Will My Peers Or Colleagues React?

If you work in a context with other coaches, you might wonder "How will my peers or colleagues react?"

The potential for perceived hierarchy or power imbalance may cause some concern, and you may fear being alienated or judged by your colleagues.

Firstly, recognise that these fears stem from your imagination. People are primarily focused on their own professional journey.

So, instead of worrying about, "How will my colleagues respond?", ask yourself, "Why am I allowing the potential reactions of others to impact my career decisions?".

Your transition to supervision should be based on your personal and professional growth aspirations, not the potential reactions of others.

Secondly, it's important to communicate your motivations for moving into supervision to your colleagues.

You can demystify the role and explain that supervision is not about exerting power or authority, but a different set of skills focused on enhancing the quality of coaching.

This might not only clear up any misconceptions but also offer them a different perspective on the role of a supervisor.

Lastly, instead of anticipating a negative response, consider, "How might my transition inspire my colleagues?"

Your move into supervision might inspire others to explore their potential and consider paths they hadn't thought of.

Your courage to step up could be the nudge others need to push their boundaries.

Will I Be Able To Get Clients For Supervision?

Another common concern is "Will I be able to get clients for supervision?".

This worry often comes from the uncertainty of stepping into a new area and the fear of starting from scratch.

You might fear that your coaching clients will not translate into supervision clients, or that your skill-set may not attract the clientele you need. And indeed, it is quite true that you will probably be "targeting" a different client group unless you already work with coaches.

Here you could ask yourself, "How did I attract my coaching clients?".

The process of acquiring clients for supervision will share many similarities with that for coaching. It's about identifying the needs of potential clients, demonstrating the value you

bring to their journey, and building a relationship based on trust and respect.

Remember, you have successfully done this before.

Secondly, you might explore the question, “How can my existing network support my transition?”.

Perhaps some of your current coaching clients or colleagues could be interested in or benefit from supervision. Use your existing network as a springboard to introduce your new services. Even if they don’t need supervision themselves, they might know coaches who do.

Lastly, for those transitioning to internal supervision roles within an organisation, client acquisition is not a concern.

Instead, consider “How can I demonstrate my value as a supervisor within my organisation?”.

Focus on enhancing your skills and delivering the best possible service to solidify your position and reputation within your workplace.

How Will I Be Different From Every Other Supervisor?

Another question that can create doubt in the mind of someone considering becoming a coaching supervisor, is, “How will I be different from every other supervisor?”.

This query reveals a desire to stand out and make a unique contribution in your new role, and a fear of being 'just another' supervisor.

There is certainly nothing wrong with wanting to be different in some way but not if it becomes a barrier to taking any action at all.

Begin by asking yourself, "What unique qualities do I bring to my practice?".

Every individual brings a unique set of experiences, perspectives, and skills to their work, creating a personal approach that differentiates them from others. Embrace these qualities, as they provide a unique flavour to your supervision style.

The reality is that you *are* different. You just have to figure out which part of your difference is relevant to how you stand out.

Is it your manner, your experience, your psychological background, your area of focus, your career, your expertise? Is it a combination?

Second, consider, "How can I speak about who I am as a coaching supervisor in my own way?.

Many new supervisors naturally adopt the language of the profession and use it as a shorthand for the ideas that matter to them. But how might you create your own language, your own message, your own descriptions and definitions?

Lastly, it's essential to remember that your role as a supervisor isn't about being different for the sake of being different, but about offering the best support and guidance you can.

So rather than focusing solely on what makes you different, ask, "How can I continually improve the value I provide as a supervisor?". It is by focusing on this value that you will naturally distinguish yourself.

What If I'm No Good At Supervision?

As with any new undertaking, the fear of inadequacy is common.

You may find yourself questioning, "What if I'm no good at supervision?"

This is a legitimate concern, given the commitment required to train and the potential impact on your professional trajectory. You might worry that your skills in coaching may not translate effectively into a supervisory role.

> ***Firstly, remember that coaching and supervision, whilst distinct, are fundamentally built upon the same skills.***

Reframe the question as, "How can my coaching skills be leveraged in a supervisory context?".

Reflect on the strengths you have demonstrated as a coach. Active listening, empathetic understanding, insightful

questioning, and feedback provision are all skills that serve both roles.

Secondly, consider your initial journey into coaching.

At the outset, you likely felt unskilled and uncertain – a phase termed conscious incompetence in the model of learning stages.

However, with time, practice, and commitment, you moved into conscious competence and possibly eventually unconscious competence, where you now apply your skills almost effortlessly.

Just as you mastered coaching, so too can you master supervision with patience, practice, and the willingness to learn.

Finally, instead of worrying about potentially being no good, ask yourself, "How can I enjoy the journey of learning to become a coaching supervisor?".

Is It Worth It Training As A Coaching Supervisor?

The question, "Is it worth it to train as a supervisor?" is a natural concern given the commitment of time, effort, finances and resources involved in training.

You might wonder if the additional training is necessary, given that you're already an experienced coach, or if the benefits of the training justify the investment.

Firstly, understand that coaching supervision, while based on coaching, involves mastering unique skills that relate specifically to supervision.

A more practical question, then, is “How will the training enhance my capability to effectively supervise other coaches?”.

Secondly, in an industry where the focus on accreditation is increasing, having formal training as a supervisor can significantly enhance your credibility – indeed, it is likely to be a prerequisite given the direction of travel of the professional associations.

Lastly, perhaps you see training as a journey of growth, rather than just a means to an end.

In which case you might consider, “How can this journey enrich me as a professional and as an individual?”.

Embrace the joy of learning, the deepening of your skills, and the broadening of your perspectives that this training offers.

Training to be a supervisor is not just about the destination; it’s also about the richness of the journey.

What Am I Going To Learn That I Don’t Already Know?

Another question that emerges and relates to the last is, “What am I really going to learn that I don’t already know?”.

You may feel that your extensive experience and knowledge as a coach is sufficient and wonder what additional insights training could possibly offer.

Firstly, it's important to appreciate the shift in perspective that supervision demands. Most significantly, it introduces a systemic and ethical lens, requiring you to pay attention to the broader coaching system, beyond just the client.

You'll need to consider the dynamics and interrelationships within the system, including the organisation, stakeholders, and wider societal contexts.

A useful exploration is , "How can training expand my understanding of the coaching system?".

Secondly, as a supervisor, you are no longer a facilitator of someone's thinking as you when coaching.

Instead, you'll be called upon to use your full range of expertise, experience, and authority. This might include direct feedback and challenge, offering insights and sharing personal experiences where appropriate.

It's a nuanced shift from your role as a coach and one that can significantly impact the effectiveness of your supervision.

Ask, "How can training help me balance facilitation with a more directive approach when needed?".

Lastly, remember that learning is a lifelong process.

Even with your rich experience, there's always more to discover.

Consider, "How can training enrich my practice and open up new areas of knowledge and skills?".

Embrace the possibility of growth that training presents, as it can lead to unexpected and rewarding outcomes.

Can I Give It The Time That's Needed?

The question, "Can I give it the time that's needed?" is a common worry for those considering training as a supervisor.

This arises from the understanding that the process will require a significant investment of time for training, practising new skills, and serving clients in a new capacity.

All this is true but it can be surprisingly simple to factor this time across the length of a training course.

For instance, our Diploma in Coaching Supervision requires around 200 hours of work including the live training sessions, reflective practice groups, mentoring, supervision of clients, reading and reflective practice. That's just over 20 hours per month, 5 hours per week or 1 hour per day with the weekend off!

Seen like this, it can suddenly feel more manageable.

Another way to think about it is, "How can I manage my time effectively to accommodate this new commitment?".

Time management and prioritisation are key skills for any professional, and this could be a great opportunity to reassess your current time commitments and productivity strategies.

Reflect on how you've successfully managed your time in the past when faced with new challenges or commitments.

Secondly, instead of viewing the time required as a cost, consider it an investment.

Ask yourself, "How will this time investment enhance my professional growth and opportunities in the long term?".

Remember that the time you dedicate now lays the foundation for a whole new avenue in your career.

What Will The Long-Term Outcomes And Benefits Of Becoming A Coaching Supervisor Be?

Finally, when considering training to become a coaching supervisor, the question, "What will the long-term outcomes and benefits be?" is likely to arise.

There is, of course, always uncertainty about what the future holds and this is no different from how becoming a supervisor might impact your career trajectory.

You may wonder whether it will become a significant part of your business, a minor add-on, primarily serve your personal and professional growth, or something else.

Firstly, it's perfectly acceptable not to have a clear-cut vision for how supervision will fit into your professional life right from the start.

Rather than asking about definitive outcomes, you might ask, "Am I open to exploring where this journey takes me?".

Cultivating an attitude of curiosity and openness can be extremely valuable, and the path you ultimately take may surprise you.

Secondly, consider, "What do I hope to gain from this new role, regardless of its impact on my practice?".

Regardless of whether supervision becomes a significant part of your business or a smaller adjunct, it can bring a wealth of benefits, including personal growth, skill enhancement, and the satisfaction of facilitating other coaches' development.

Finally, while a concrete plan can be useful, it's not vital when you're starting. What's more important is your desire to become a supervisor and your commitment to the process.

So instead of focusing on specific outcomes, ask yourself, "Am I ready to embark on this journey, with all the learning and growth it promises, and see where it leads me?".

> ***Remember, sometimes the most rewarding paths in life are those we couldn't have planned for.***

Conclusion

Embarking on the journey to becoming a coaching supervisor can indeed feel daunting, fraught with self-doubt and questions.

These concerns are not only normal but demonstrate your deep commitment to the profession. They reflect your desire to make a positive impact and your respect for the challenges this transition can entail.

Remember that with every new endeavour comes uncertainty and a period of growth.

Yet, it's through these experiences that we stretch our abilities, broaden our understanding, and ultimately evolve both professionally and personally.

You've done it before in your journey to becoming an accomplished coach, and you have what it takes to do it again.

As a coach, you've witnessed the transformative power of coaching in the lives of your clients. Now, imagine amplifying that impact by supporting other coaches in their professional journey.

You have an opportunity to contribute to the coaching profession in a whole new way, enhancing its quality, integrity, and impact.

Embrace the journey with openness and curiosity, celebrate the growth it promises, and trust in your ability to navigate it.

Your experience as a coach, your dedication to your craft, and your resilience are all assets that will serve you well as you embark on this exciting new path.

You've got this, and the coaching community is ready to support you every step of the way.

Next Steps Towards Becoming a Coaching Supervisor

If the exploration of coaching supervision throughout this book has resonated with you and sparked an interest in advancing your career in this rewarding direction, I invite you to take the next steps toward realising your potential as a coaching supervisor.

Here's how you can begin your journey:

1. Book a Call with a Course Consultant

One of the most effective ways to start is by booking a call with one of our experienced coaching supervisors and course consultants.

This conversation will provide you with a personalised opportunity to discuss your aspirations, background, and any specific questions you might have about becoming a coaching supervisor.

Our consultants are well-equipped to offer guidance on how our supervision courses can align with your career goals and help you make an informed decision about your next steps.

You can book your call at http://go.oncehub.com/adcs



2. Apply for the Diploma in Coaching Supervision Online

If you're ready to take a significant step forward, consider applying for our coaching supervision course online.

Our application process is designed to be straightforward and accessible, allowing you to share your coaching experience and aspirations with us.

By applying, you're taking a decisive step towards enhancing your coaching practice and developing the sophisticated skills needed to supervise other coaches effectively.

You can apply online on the course page at https://iccs.co/coaching-supervision-training/



3. Read Further Through Our Website

If you wish to delve deeper before making a decision, our website is a treasure trove of information.

Here, you can find detailed course information, including curriculum outlines, dates, times, and the unique benefits of training with us.

Taking the time to read through this information can help solidify your understanding of what our coaching supervision course entails and how it fits into your professional development plan.

Check out our website at https:/iccs.co



Your Journey Begins Here

We understand that the decision to become a coaching supervisor is significant. It marks a commitment to not only your own professional growth but also to the elevation of coaching standards and practices.

Whether you choose to book a call, apply directly, or further explore our offerings, we are here to support you on this exciting journey.

Your next step could open the door to a fulfilling new chapter in your coaching career, filled with opportunities to inspire, mentor, and lead within the coaching community.

Take that step today and discover where your coaching journey can lead you as a coaching supervisor.

We look forward to supporting you in this transformative phase of your professional life.

Interested in becoming a coaching supervisor but overwhelmed with choice and questions?

What exactly is coaching supervision? How do I become a supervisor? What should I look for in a training programme? Where should I train? What would I do as a supervisor? Can't I just use my coaching skills to supervise? Am I even ready to become a coaching supervisor?

Written by Nick Bolton, the founder of the International Centre for Coaching Supervision (ICCS), this book answers these and many more questions.

The Complete Guide to Becoming a Coaching Supervisor provides a comprehensive resource for understanding what it takes to become a coaching supervisor and why you may want to take this journey of growth.

Read on and get ready to join the ranks of successful coaching supervisors making a lasting impact on the coaching profession.

About Nick Bolton and ICCS



Nick Bolton is the founder of the International Centre for Coaching Supervision (ICCS) and Animas Centre for Coaching.

Through both group work and one-to-one supervision, Nick has supported hundreds of coaches since 2008 and brings an integrative, philosophical approach to his work.

Nick developed ICCS to provide exceptional coaching supervision training for experienced coaches worldwide. To date, the school has developed coaching supervisors in over 30 countries, bringing fresh and vibrant international practice to the profession.

Find out more about ICCS at **www.iccs.co**

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