

*Thrive*

Coaching and Consulting

# Coaching Supervision FAQs

## 1. What is coaching supervision?

Coaching supervision is a relationship between a supervisor and coach whereby the supervisor partners with the coach in a thought provoking, creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional development as a coach.

There are 3 aspects that a supervisor will focus on:

- **You as a coach**– helping you develop your coaching skills and capability, broadening your repertoire of tools and interventions, raising your awareness of patterns in your coaching, and uncovering strengths and blind spots.
- **You as a professional** – helping you resolve any ethical issues that arise in your coaching; and raising your awareness of industry best practice.
- **You as a person** - providing a safe space for you to bring issues that concern you in your coaching, a space that is restorative for you.

## 2. How is supervision different from mentor coaching?

The ICF defines **mentor coaching** as “providing professional assistance in achieving and demonstrating the levels of coaching competency demanded by the desired credential level sought by a coach mentee. It requires the mentee to be coached on their coaching skills rather than the wider development of a coach.”

If you are looking to attain or renew an ICF credential you will require 10 hours of mentor coaching. This involves recording some of your coaching sessions for the mentor coach to review and give you feedback against the ICF competencies. In this relationship the mentor coach is “the expert” and there is a set agenda - the ICF competencies.

**Supervision** helps you explore your practice more holistically. You may well choose to focus on certain aspects of your coaching skills, but the supervisory relationship is more of a partnership, with the supervisor using a coaching style to explore your relationships with your coaching clients and your coaching practice, and only guiding with authority around ethical and boundary issues.

### 3. Is coaching supervision essential for coaches?

A lot of coaching work is carried out in isolation – just the coach and the client. It is therefore inevitable that as a coach you will get stuck in some colluded or fixed thinking. Supervision provides an opportunity to get distance from your own perspective. As tempting as it is to join the word of “busy” the hallmark of a professional coach is to find the space to pause. In that space we are able to slow down, review past and anticipate future choices and bring more into our awareness so that we can operate with conscious competence more of the time.

The main coaching bodies – The ICF, EMCC and AC all regard supervision as a critical component of coaching practice. They all require coaches to be undergoing some form of supervision in order to attain and maintain a credential.

### 4. What can I expect from my supervisor?

The coaches I have worked with have described me as calmly supportive and challenging with a real sense of care and rigour. They also have commented on my ability to tune in and ask insightful questions, provide unique observations and show generosity in sharing insights.

I often use Hawkins [seven eyed model](#) in order to help coaches view a client relationship .



## 5. How many sessions, and what frequency works best?

This really depends on what you as a coach feel would be most beneficial. Many coaches assess desired frequency based on the volume of coaching they are doing at the time. If you have a high volume of coaching, once a month is a good frequency. Unlike coaching, the supervisory relationship is often open ended, with no specific goal. Supervisory relationships can go on for years if it is beneficial for both parties. It is good practice to set a review date on a regular basis to ensure that both parties are continuing to get value from the sessions.

## 6. How can I get best value from the sessions?

In supervision the coach sets the agenda so it is always worth thinking in advance of what you would like to bring to the session to discuss with your supervisor.

Have a think about the work that you do with coaching clients. What comes up for you when you review this? Where do you feel stuck? What are you pleased about? Where are you most comfortable? Where are you most uncomfortable?

## 7. How can I best prepare for sessions?

Here are some suggestions on what to think about in advance of a session.

You may wish to bring a specific client you are working with in order to gain a different perspective on the client situation, some insights into the interactions and new thoughts about how to take things forward.

You may choose to explore an aspect of your coaching such as contracting, setting goals, starting a coaching programme or ending a coaching arrangement in order to learn some different approaches, theories or techniques.

You may also choose to bring ethical dilemmas or issues that are puzzling you right now in order to get some support and challenge on how to move forward.

## 8. What if I don't have many coachees, is it still worth getting supervision?

If you are not doing a high volume of coaching then group supervision can be an option. This is where you would join a small group of other coaches facilitated by the supervisor. The supervisor will ensure the wisdom of the entire group is brought to bear with each individual challenge that is shared. Partaking in group supervision enables you to:

- Gain more than one perspective on a client situation
- Learn from others' theories, experiences, models and techniques
- Receive feedback and reflect on your content and process
- Review and discuss individual client issues



## **9. What will the first session involve?**

The first session will involve some contracting. I would be interested to know what you are looking for from the supervision, what type of clients you usually work with, what kind of coach training you have done in the past and what you see as your strengths and development areas as a coach. I would also be interested in how you best learn and how you usually reflect on your client interactions. Contracting is a two way process so we shape it together.

## **10. What if I am not sure supervision is for me?**

As a supervisor I offer a no obligations discovery call with potential clients to see if we can work together. This is an opportunity for you to ask any questions you want, and really consider if this is something you want to embark on. It is a commitment and important that you feel you are working with the right person, so you shouldn't feel rushed or pressurised into it.