

Coaching Supervision

“Coaching Supervision is a structured process that helps us examine our experiences in order to formulate how to address them. It is a safe, mutually respectful place to reflect, learn, experiment, and celebrate successes throughout the entirety of our professional journey as coaches. When we consciously pursue development, in awareness and in refinement of how we work and who we are, the client, the organization, the profession, and most especially, we coaches benefit!”

— Pat Marum, PCC, Certified Coach Supervisor & ICF Assessor

ICF's Definition

Coaching Supervision is the interaction that occurs when a coach periodically brings his or her coaching work experiences to a coaching supervisor in order to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the development and benefit of the coach and his or her clients.

Coaches at every stage in his or her coaching journey continually seek development, both personally in terms of deepening their coaching presence and awareness, and professionally in terms of competencies, ethics and standards. One of the growing trends internationally for undertaking such development is engaging in the practice of ‘coaching supervision’ similar in concept to the supervision which supports many behavioral science professions. Many parts of the world where coaching is well established already consider coaching supervision not only necessary for the coach and the client, but also necessary for maintaining the integrity of the profession.

Qualifications for those serving as Coaching Supervisors

- ICF member
 - Sanction-free from the ICF Independent Review Board for violations of ethical conduct
 - Experienced, mature, preferably credentialed coach—at least 3 years FTE practice
 - Continued expanding exposure to and knowledge of coaching approaches beyond their original coach training
- OR
- A member of another professional coaching organization with a history of using the concept of supervision whose Ethics and Standards the Coaching Supervisor abides by
 - Sanction-free from the Review board of the professional organization to which they belong
 - Willing to honor the ICF's Ethics and Standards, and Coaching Competencies, which also includes definitions of coaching, the coaching relationship, an ICF coach, the client, and the sponsor
 - Familiar with at least three (breadth of exposure) different coaching approaches/methodologies



Coaching Supervisor Selection Guidelines

Personal traits of the Coaching Supervisor:

- Evokes a sense of trust and has the ability to connect with the coach in terms of fit, chemistry and compatibility.
- Encourages the coach to reach beyond what the coach initially feels is possible
- Demonstrates equal partnership by being open, vulnerable and willing to take appropriate risks, for example, in providing feedback that may make one or both individuals uncomfortable, in the context of the supervisory role
- Understands and is able to model the value of partnership and encourages the coach to lead in designing areas to be worked on, in session, in between session, among others
- Authentic and supports authenticity including celebrating who the coach is, his or her achievements and growth throughout the process.
- Secure in his/her own work and is able to demonstrate appreciation and respect for the unique style of each coach.
- Encourages the development of the coach's own coaching style within the boundaries of ethical practice
- Contracts to hold both self and coach accountable for performance and to periodically encourage mutual assessment of the effectiveness of the relationship

Duties of a Coaching Supervisor:

- Models effective initiation of client relationship—understands and can convey what the potential coach supervisor means by coaching supervision
- Supports coach choice by encouraging coaches to interview more than one potential 'coach supervisor' in order to find the best match.
- Explores fully with the coach what they are looking to achieve for maximum clarity about the purpose of the coaching supervision, establishes measures of success in partnership with the coach and fully discusses fees, time frame, confidentiality and other aspects of a coach supervision relationship.
- Focuses on full practice development and indicates how they generally work as a coach supervisor including what is expected from the coach, methodologies and practices used, feedback mechanisms etc
- Demonstrates that s/he is learning about the coach at many levels at once and is able to hold all of that in the context of who the coach is, what the coach is seeking and honors the coach's unique style
- Engage in their own on-going coaching supervision

Value of Coaching Supervision

Value for the Coaching Supervisor:

- Contributing to the further development of the coaching profession
- Sharpen one's own skills ("to teach is to learn")
- Assess and possibly re-create a definition of "best practice" for oneself
- Come to appreciate another style of coaching

Value for the Coach:

- Environment for customized personal and professional growth,
- Environment to bring ethical issues, personal uncertainties and vulnerabilities, and boundary issues
- Diminished risk around ethical issues means diminished risk for coach and for coach's clients
- Opportunity to engage in a meta-view of client, competency, and or practice
- Opportunity to engage in a matrix view of client, competency, and or practice

For more information visit icf.to/coachingsupervision.