



Fields of Learning

Reflective Advantage

How do you prepare to get the most from your supervision session?

You could just turn up and see what happened. Your supervisor should be prepared to work with you and help you focus on things that you will find helpful.

However if you put some work into your preparation you will probably find that you make more progress – and get a bigger return on your investment in supervision. Your coachees will benefit more too.

A guiding principal that will help you to prepare is to ‘bring yourself into supervision’. What does this mean? It means being prepared to respond authentically. It is about using your full sense of self awareness. How often do we phrase what we say to attempt to create the impression that we believe others would want to receive? In supervision we seek to move beyond the façade.

Have a think through the coaching that you have undertaken and note your reflections.

You might want to bring to supervision:-

- An issue from your coaching which is pre-occupying or puzzling you right now.
- Share the good work you have done with a particular coachee - think about what worked and why.
- Review an aspect of your work as a coach you would like to improve.
- Any ethical issue about which you are unsure.

As you think through specific coaching sessions the following questions may help you to spot areas you’d find it valuable to explore:

- What did you notice when you were coaching your coachee?
- Which interaction pleased you and why?
- What was difficult for you?
- What were you thinking and feeling during the conversation?
- Given the coaching goals, what stage do you think the coachee is at now?
- What did you do (or not do) say (or not say) that helped the individual during a specific coaching session? How do you know?
- If you were to hold the same session again what would you do differently?

You may have answers to all of these – or just a few. Notice the questions that you answer easily and the questions that prove more challenging. It’s likely that the questions that create an impact are worth considering more deeply.

Supervision is an investment in your practice and so it's worth taking care to be emotionally and physically prepared. When are you at your most receptive? What can limit your focus on a conversation? How can you take care of yourself so that you are at your best?

Things to consider include:

- Creating space before the supervision session so that you are able to move out of the previous activity in which you were engaged and into the mind-set you wish to enjoy in the supervision conversation.
- Creating space after the session so that you are able to note things down, complete reflection and then to shift focus at your pace onto the next activity in your day.
- Make a proactive choice of the place where you meet. What sort of place inspires you? What sort of space does your supervisor feel supports their best performance? Where will your partnership be most effective?
- Turning off your phone – or PC – or anything else that might create interference.
- If the supervision is taking place virtually – turning off all your notifications such as email text WhatsApp helps you focus on present rather than any incoming work issues. Again making sure you are in a quiet location where you won't be interrupted. Perhaps doing a mindful pause to give you space between online interactions and as above adding a space in your diary straight after the zoom or teams session to reflect on what came up for you – the learning and any actions.

So you are ready emotionally, physically and cognitively. You are in a place in which both you and your supervisor feel able to be at their best – and inspired. You have some thought through ideas that will start the session rolling. You are with a supervisor who has the skills and qualities to support the learning that you are seeking.

You are now ready to make a great return on your investment!

Supervision

Definitions of Supervision:

Peter Hawkins and Nick Smith

‘The process by which a coach with the help of a supervisor, who is not working directly with the client, can attend to understanding better both the client system and themselves as part of the client/coach system and therefore transform their work’

‘Supervision sessions are a place for the coach to reflect on the work they are undertaking with another more experienced coach. It has the dual purpose of supporting the continued learning and development of the coach, as well as giving a degree of protection to the person being coached.’

Peter Bluckart

‘Coaching supervision provides a unique and creative space for reflective inquiry into your practice honouring you and your work. Supervision helps to build your awareness and insight; gives you safe and creative support and challenge; and gives you the chance to refuel, restore, re-energise, to re-view and helps you to become the best of who you arewhich then helps your clients to become the best of who they are.’

Sam Magill

‘As coaches we are regularly immersed into the worlds of our clients. We are called to be fully present and connected in such profound ways that we can evoke questions in ourselves and in our clients that have only crouched beneath the surface activities of their/our lives. Whether we are new to coaching or have been at it for a very long time, it is utterly natural to, in a sense, fall asleep to the effects of our connections, to the intentional practice of being present. In the process, we become less aware of our own practice and while acting instinctively it is very often a good thing, over time we develop unconscious patterns that may or may not be right for our current client.

Supervision of coaching is like climbing up a tall tree or standing on a hilltop looking out over the sea and landscape around us. It is also like polishing a mirror that has become fogged with activity. It is also like revisiting our truest self from which our best coaching emerges.’

Unlike coaching for performance or to build a new strategy or life, coaching supervision has no intention to go anywhere. On the contrary, it is about coming home and turning on the lights again rather than bumping around in the dark. It is a balancing antidote to the very legitimate demand for concrete results expected by coaching clients’.

How does supervision differ from coaching?

Supervision whilst paying attention to the coach’s development is also offering a degree of protection to the client. Supervision also differs from coaching as it can have a degree of mentoring in the mix in order to develop the coach. It therefore provides a source of continuous professional development (CPD) for the coach. Supervision can provide a safe container for enhancing personal growth and development through offering assistance with coaching issues and development planning. It is essentially a partnership between coach and supervisor that, through collaboration, can de-construct coaching relationships and the challenges and dilemmas they entail plus identifying different perspectives to offer fresh learning and insight. Another key difference between coaching and supervision is in relation to the end point of the session. The end point of supervision may be simply a new piece of learning that may be integrated into action at some point down the line. The end point of coaching is about forwarding the action for the coachee, with a clear action plan drawn up by the coach at the end of the session.

How supervision supports you

The relationship between coach and supervisor is a hugely special one. It is the only place, outside of the relationship with a coachee, in which it is ethical to discuss and work with the content of your coaching sessions. Our experience is that many things come up in coaching that are worthy of further consideration, and that alone we are unlikely to make the progress or achieve the learning that we will with a supervisor. Some situations occur that can impact you as a coach very unexpectedly and deeply. We never know what the coachee may bring into the room. Knowing that the supervision relationship is there provided an ethical and appropriate place to take these forward.

Coaching Accreditation: Supervision requirements

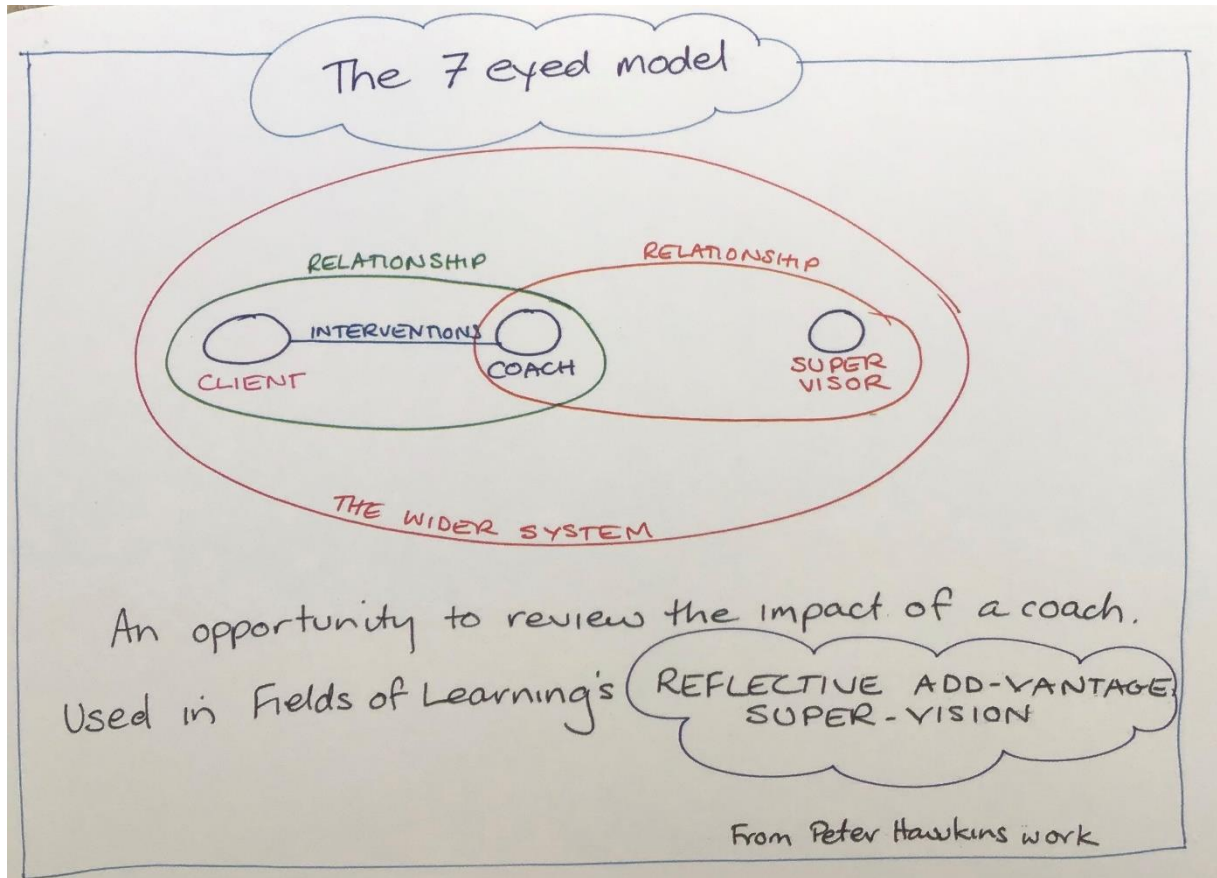
All coaching bodies that provide Coach Accreditation expect that a coach engages in regular supervision as part of their practice. In the AC, supervision is an indicator of competence within their coaching competency 'Undertaking continuous coach development'. For Foundation Coach / Foundation Executive Coach, you have to be able to demonstrate that you have spent a minimum of 3 months in supervision at the time of application and at a suggested ratio of 1:15; ie, 6 supervision hours for 90 hours of coaching. It should be with one consistent supervisor, over multiple sessions with regular intervals between¹.

To be an accredited coach (both internal and external coaches), you have to be able to demonstrate that you fulfil the supervision requirements by participating in one or more of the following;

- One-to-one coaching supervisor to coach
- One-to-one peer coaching supervision
- Group coaching supervision
- Peer group coaching supervision

¹ AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide

7 eyed supervision model



"Energy flows where the attention goes" - Hawaiian Huna saying

What is it?

The 7 eyed supervision model is an effective way to manage the flow of attention and energy and therefore the flow of discovery and awareness for a coach in a supervision session. It is a well-known supervision model, developed back in the mid 80's by Peter Hawkins. There have been refinements since then and yet essentially its original concept remains. The notes below are written from the point of view of the **supervisor**.

Current application

We present it on our Coaching Mastery programme as both a **supervision model** and also as a **model for looking at the wider system** in which coaching takes place.

On reading Hawkins and Smith "Coaching Mentoring and Organisational Consultancy" and reflecting on what I actually tend to do in supervision/coaching sessions when using the model, I have found I tend to "waltz" through each of the 7 modes by layering 1st, 2nd and 3rd perceptual positions on top. So, I notice at each mode of the discussion:

- (in 1st) what am I experiencing as we explore this?
- (in 2nd) in the coach/supervisee's world what might be the experience?
- (in 3rd) what pattern is there here that emerges as we stand back?

This also helps me to be aware of both my own, and the supervisee's preferred perceptual position and ease of exploration which clearly affects the whole system. So I suppose there might be a case for saying there is

actually a 21 faceted model here. To use a painting palette metaphor, the idea is to explore the seven colours separately and not mix it all together for a very muddy or murky view. My own supervision follows this model, so I have an experience of what it is like to be on the receiving end.

The model

We have been working a lot recently with the frame that “Knowing comes on the OTHER side of the experience” as people at present have to have strategies for a world of unknowingness.

So when using this 7 eyed approach both the Supervisor and the Coach follow the model with clean attention, observation, patience and wait for the knowing to emerge. At every stage there is a need to explore assumptions.

Not knowing	Clear out assumptions and be at ease with having none
How do you know?	Check assumptions already made
What don't you know yet?	Take stock of assumptions
Now what is known?	New working assumptions following our discussion

Mode 1 The Coachee / Client

Check out what the coachee actually did and presented in a recent session. How were they? What is the evidence you are working on?

Mode 2 What Interventions did the Coach use?

What interventions were used and how and what was the thinking of the coach behind this. What other options might there have been. Check appropriateness. How can we increase range and choice of interventions?

Mode 3 Relationship between Coach and Coachee

What is the history, cumulative relationship here? What was the relationship like in the session? What “moments” happened and explore impacts. What is the current relationship now like? The Couple counselling comparison is a helpful concept here.

Mode 4 Coach looks at self

What is happening here? Where do feelings come from? What “stuff” might be coming up here for the Coach. What strategies and choices might there be to add to Coach’s ability to operate well as a coach?

Mode 5 The Supervisor looks at whole coach / coachee system

“Me time” and reflection for the Supervisor. What is happening here and where do those feelings come from? What parallel process might be operating? What insights might be available here? What energy is the Supervisor picking up?

Mode 6 Relationship between Supervisor and Coach

Cumulative and here and now. What do I feel about the Coach? What does the Coach feel about me the Supervisor? How are we doing? Are there any barriers here? Review and re-contract if needed.

Mode 7 Whole system

Solar system metaphor is useful. What are the interactions with all the other systems at play? Take time to layer on PESTLE. PESTLE stands for - Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, Environmental. How does this explain, inform what else is going on? Look at this from both the Coach’s world and the Coachee’s world, in fact the wider world whilst you are at it!

Appropriateness, Pace and Rigor.

No wonder our heads hurt after supervision!!!! There is an art in pacing the whole exploration to match the Coach’s experience, energy, and emotion etc in the session.

The Supervisors judgment must play a part here in how to maintain rapport with the Coach so that learning actually occurs and they are not too overwhelmed. The length of the supervision session also has an impact here. So, a state of “flow” is most helpful when it matches the experience and knowledge of the Coach. The purpose of supervision is to build new learning.

The learning IS on the OTHER side of the experience.

How to use the model

This model can be used to explore all 7 eyes, or just to notice which eyes the attention is on during a supervision session. The model can be adjusted by coaches to use as a tool in their own coaching.

What if?

- What if you chose to ask for supervision feedback on different eyes at different times?
- What if you pre-prepared your own reflection before a supervision session by looking at what happened with one of your coaches in each eye and then chose which to explore with your supervisor.
- What if you used it to reflect on your own coaching and coachee relationship with eyes 1 – 4
- What if you use it as a coaching model with you coachee as a way of looking at a particular relationship they were having difficulty with.