

How coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision: A Grounded Theory study

Louise Sheppard (2016)

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How coaching supervisees help  
and hinder their supervision:  
A Grounded Theory study

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## **Abstract**

Coaching supervision is an emerging profession with a need of developing its knowledge base. However, there is a lack of understanding of the supervision process from the coaching supervisees' perspective, a crucial element without which issues and debates about coaching supervision are incomplete. Furthermore, although most of the professional bodies that represent coaches in the UK require coaches to have supervision, they do not provide clear guidelines on how supervisee's can use supervision effectively. This study aims to fill that gap, providing empirical evidence on how supervisees can help and hinder their supervision.

A qualitative study was conducted, based on semi-structured interviews with nineteen participants – twelve supervisees and seven supervisors to gather data about participants' lived-in experiences of coaching supervision. Critical realist Grounded Theory was used to analyse the findings, to describe the underlying psychological and social structures that are a condition for valuable coaching supervision and to generate a framework for how supervisees can help and hinder their coaching supervision.

The study contributes empirically based insight into the benefits of coaching supervision from the perspective of the supervisee and adds to debates on the outcomes of coaching supervision. New evidence is provided about how supervisees can inhibit and enable their learning as they mature. Findings suggest that supervisee maturation can follow three stages and that how the supervisee interacts with their supervisor is affected by the relative stage. The study also identified that fear, power relations and our natural desire for learning might explain the lived-in experiences of supervisees. It was argued that supervisees can gain further value from the



supervision experience by overcoming fear and stepping into their authority in the relationship in order to enhance learning.

The study contributes to supervision practice by providing the first framework for supervisee-led supervision with guidelines for supervisees and supervisors, new stages of maturity to enable supervisees to understand where they are in their developmental journeys and practical recommendations for professional bodies, coach training organisations, coaching providers and learning and development practitioners.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 My motivation for this study**

I am a trained coach and coaching supervisor and I participate in coaching supervision both as a supervisee and as a supervisor. I have my own business and I have been working as a coach for over twenty years and as a coaching supervisor for the past seven years. I coach senior executives in organisations and supervise a mix of internal and external coaches. I have been receiving regular, paid supervision for the last ten years. This supervision takes a number of different forms and I use it for different purposes. Currently, I have one-to-one supervision on my executive coaching and group supervision on my coaching supervision. In addition to this, I have informal peer supervision relationships with a couple of coaching colleagues and regular therapy.

I would like to share my professional interest in coaching supervision from two angles: my experience as a coaching supervisee; and my experience as a supervisor. As a supervisee, I have been on a developmental journey. I recognise that when I first had coaching supervision, I was unsure about what supervision was or how to 'be' as a supervisee. I was a relatively experienced coach (10 years experience) on a high quality coach training programme that offered group supervision. However, I was new to supervision and I didn't receive any guidance on what to expect or how to use it. The group supervisor adopted an 'expert' stance and, although I respected his knowledge and skills in his area of psychology and supervision, I felt that I had solid business and coaching experience that was not fully recognised in the supervision process. The supervisees had little input into the process and on several occasions I felt chastised when discussing the issues that I brought. As a consequence, I was unsure how much I wanted to share or expose myself in front of the other participants. I spoke to the supervisor privately about this but he

didn't take any responsibility and I was left feeling dissatisfied. I recognise that I had been a novice supervisee, I was unclear about my role, the power dynamics, and how to get the most from the process. As I became more experienced I learnt how I could contribute to supervision by selecting carefully who I had supervision with, taking more responsibility throughout the process for my learning and changing supervisors as my development needs evolved. This experience has raised my interest in the role of the supervisee in getting the best out of their supervision.

As a trained, professional supervisor, I have increased my understanding about supervision through various CPD activities such as reading, further training, attending supervision conferences, conducting research, applying learning in my practice and seeking feedback on the impact of changes that I have made. The initial idea for this study was conceived whilst reading De Haan's (2012, p. 90) book on a relational approach to supervision. He rephrases Bion's quote, "in every supervision room there ought to be two rather frightened people; the supervisor and the supervisee. If they are not, one wonders why they are bothering to find out what everyone knows". I have experienced anxiety both as a supervisee and a supervisor and I am curious about what the anxiety is about and how supervisees can overcome the anxiety in order to get best use of their coaching supervision.

I attended an external course run by Robin Shohet at the British Psychological Society (BPS) that was entitled, "Supervision: the delights and difficulties" (2014). The course attracted many supervisors and some supervisees, largely from the helping professions. During the course we were encouraged to think about how we sabotage our learning during supervision, what we would least like our supervisor to know about our work and the reasons for this. I noticed that several supervisors on the course found this challenging and left the course prematurely. They had wanted to

discuss examples of poor supervisor behaviour and appeared uninterested in focusing on their contribution as supervisees. Robin encouraged us to identify what would help create safety for us in supervision as supervisees and stressed the importance of regularly checking-in with our supervisors and supervisees about the supervisory relationship. He advised that by looking at what is happening beneath the surface of the relationship, you can transform the supervisory sessions. I became interested in studying what supervisees experience during supervision and what practices they can adopt to make themselves safe and to get best use from their sessions.

Following Robin's course, I organised a focus group to explore supervisees' experiences of coaching supervision and to identify their beliefs about their role in the process. I drew the participants from a special interest group in coaching supervision that I belonged to that consisted of experienced coaching supervisors. The purpose of the interest group was to share best practice in coaching supervision and to experiment with new ideas and techniques. During the focus group, I noticed how difficult the supervisors found it to stick to focusing on the supervisee perspective and how they veered into discussing poor supervisor behaviour. I wondered if they found it challenging to dwell on their own contribution and responsibilities as supervisees. This experience made me curious about how I could best gather data about supervisee experiences.

I recognise that I have found coaching supervision more rewarding as I have become more confident as a coach, trained as a coaching supervisor and learnt what I do that helps and hinders during coaching supervision. I wish to support other supervisees, including those new to supervision, to enjoy and maximise the learning from their supervision. I consider that there has been a lack of information about how to be an effective supervisee and how to get best value from the process so I want to address this in this research.

## 1.2 Background

The coaching market is growing on a global basis. In 2016, the ICF Global survey (ICF, 2016a), completed by 15,380 coaches across 137 countries, estimated that there were 53,380 professional coaches worldwide, concentrated in the higher-income regions of North America, Canada, Western Europe and Oceania and that the annual income from coaching globally was \$2.36 billion and growing. In the UK, there is a widespread recognition of the value of coaching within the private, public and third sectors (Lane, 2010). This is supported by the expanding number of bodies providing training with university-based qualifications in coaching and coaching supervision, the increasing level of research into coaching related topics published in academic journals and the growing number of coaching and coaching supervision conferences and research events.

Although coaching as a profession continues to gain legitimacy and to grow, the fundamentals of the industry are still in flux (Kauffman and Coutu, 2009) as there is a lack of clarity around issues such as how to select coaches, the boundaries between coaching and therapy, how coaches and organisations measure and report on progress and how to make sense of the competing demands of the coaching bodies for recognition. As the coaching market is largely unregulated, coaching supervision is seen as a key part of adopting a professional stance (Lane, 2010). Many organisations purchasing executive coaching perceive supervision as a central indicator of professional standards and commitment without which more and more buyers would not even consider a coach (Ridler and Co, 2011). Many providers of coaching services also stipulate coaching supervision as a condition for their employees and associates, in order to ensure the quality of the coaches' work and that they are acting ethically (Humphrey and Sheppard, 2012). This increased relevance makes coaching supervision an important topic that will be addressed in this qualitative study.

“Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support which ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of his/her coaching practice through interactive reflection, interpretative evaluation and the sharing of expertise” (Bachkirova, 2008, pp. 16-17). Supervision is a learning and development process involving supervisees who are adult learners. Coaching supervision can be provided on a one-to-one and a group basis and some supervisees have both. Supervisees are coaches who bring their coaching work to a supervisor “in order to learn how to do their work better” (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011, p. 17). In this thesis, the terms coach and supervisee will be used interchangeably. Coaching supervisors are usually experienced coaches, outside of the line management relationship, who have undertaken training to learn how to provide coaching supervision. Typical functions of supervision are developmental, resourcing and qualitative (Hawkins and Smith, 2006). The developmental function is about developing the supervisee’s skills, understanding and capacity. The resourcing function concerns reflecting on how the client has affected the supervisee and dealing with any reactions, and the qualitative function focuses upon ensuring that the work of the supervisee is appropriate and upholding ethical standards.

Coaching supervision is in its infancy. The first training specifically for supervisors of coaches and mentors started in 2003 and the first research and book specifically on supervision for coaches, mentors and consultants was published in 2006 (Hawkins and Smith, 2006). A minority of coaches have been receiving supervision for longer but this was delivered by supervisors trained in counselling, psychotherapy or psychology (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). Moyes (2009) points out there has been a major debate in the literature on both therapeutic and coaching supervision about what supervision is about and also that there is no standard model of coaching supervision agreed across the profession. Coaching

supervision draws on many of the supervision models and approaches developed in other professions, however supervision of coaches has significant differences from supervision in other helping professions and there has been criticism of this - referring to coaching supervision using “borrowed clothes” (2009, p. 169). The model most commonly applied in coaching supervision is the ‘Seven-eyed’ Model’. The model was originally developed for social work and psychotherapy supervision although adapted with a seventh dimension, the organisational perspective, to better fit coaching supervision (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2011). Recently, new models for specifically supervising coaches have been developed which meet coaches needs, for example the ‘Three Window’s of Development Model’ (Drake, 2014) and ‘Full Spectrum Model’ (Arnold and Murdoch, 2013).

The growth in coaching interest has not only led to an increase in the number of supervision models for coaches; a number of major professional bodies have also been established to represent coaches in the UK (EMCC, ICF, AC and APECS) and their membership numbers are increasing. This is being mirrored on a global basis. For example, the largest professional body, the International Coach Federation (ICF), which was founded in 2005 had 1500 members in 1999 (DeFilippo, 2013) and in 2016 had over 27,000 members in 138 countries worldwide (ICF, 2016b). The major professional bodies in the UK are developing their requirements of their members in terms of credentialing, adhering to codes of ethics and continued professional development. They each stipulate in their codes of ethics (AC and EMCC, 2016, APECS, 2006, ICF, 2015b) that members should receive coaching supervision but they vary in the level of information they provide about how to go about arranging supervision; none of the bodies currently provide a separate code of ethics for coaching supervisors (Lane, 2011) or adequate guidelines on how to best use supervision effectively from the supervisee perspective (AC, 2015, APECS, 2014, EMCC, 2010, ICF, 2015a).



This is surprising as the professional bodies represent the interests of coaching supervisees.

Moreover, despite the increasing preference by organisations that executive coaches belong to professional bodies and have regular supervision, there is anecdotal evidence that coaching supervision appears currently under-utilised. It is a challenge to estimate how many actual coaches are receiving supervision because of issues about who to classify as coaches and how to collect the data. However, recent research carried out by Ridler and Co (2016, p. 2) revealed that, although 88% of organisations surveyed agreed that coaching supervision is a fundamental requirement for any professional coach, only 47% of the organisations were confident that their coaches were in supervision and 48% felt that unsupervised coaches exposed coachees to unacceptable risks. The 6<sup>th</sup> Ridler Report concluded, "There is a lack of conviction about the necessity for supervision which comes out of the data". There are multiple reasons for coaches not having supervision. The term "supervision" causes unfortunate associations in the mind of some coaches (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011): for example, some coaches fear that supervisors may impose their own coaching approach and, therefore, prefer other forms of continued professional development (CPD). Other experienced coaches do not feel that they need supervision - which McGivern refers to as "the vanity trap" (2009): and some coaches question the value of supervision on the basis of lack of evidence that it improves the quality of coaching (Bachkirova, 2011b, Lane, 2011). The use of coaching supervision in coaching practice is even less popular outside of Europe (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011).

Despite the lack of take-up of supervision globally, there is considerable resistance to supervision becoming mandatory in the UK. Bachkirova (2011b, p. 49) argues for supervision becoming "our professional conscience in practice", driving regular reflection and

questioning of our work. Haskins (2012), on the contrary, believes that supervision should be mandated through the professional bodies and argues for the need to demonstrate the benefits of coaching supervision and to encourage the sponsors of coaching to make coaching supervision a condition of employment. Another element could be added to this proposed strategy. There are a growing number of bodies providing coach development programmes and these often include coaching supervision as part of the training package. Yet in my experience, there is too little input on how to make the best use of it. I consider that there is a need to gather empirical evidence about how supervisees can enhance or potentially hinder their coaching supervision and for coach training bodies to include training and guidelines on this as part of their programmes, prior to the students embarking on coach supervision for the first time. This would enable coaches to get more from their supervision experience and encourage engagement in supervision following the training programmes. This study is aiming to provide the empirical evidence on how supervisees enhance and hinder their supervision as a first step to gathering the required knowledge to achieve this aim.

### **1.3 Existing research and literature**

Coaching is a comparatively new domain of research (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007) and coaching supervision is even newer and less researched (Moyes, 2009, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). The lack of research in coaching supervision was first highlighted in 2008 when the International Coaching Research Forum, co-organised by Harvard University and McLean Hospital, developed 100 coaching research proposal abstracts (Kauffman, Russell and Bush, 2008). They identified best practice in the supervision of coaching as a primary research gap to develop the coaching field as an evidence-based discipline. Whilst this lack of research is not surprising in an emerging profession, this presents a

challenge for coaches who are expected to participate in coaching supervision unsupported by research into what happens in practice and how they can get best value from it.

The limited peer-reviewed papers on coaching supervision discuss general supervision topics, e.g. the role of coaching supervision (Salter, 2008, Lawrence and Whyte, 2014), the extent it is used and the benefits received from supervisors, such as providing support, ensuring the quality of coaches' work and performing a developmental function (Salter, 2008, Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, Lawrence and Whyte, 2014). One study considered the lived-in experiences of supervisees (McGivern, 2009) and another looked at the efficacy of coaching supervision (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009). However, no empirical studies to date have focused upon how supervisees specifically can help and hinder their coaching supervision.

Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) comment that many supervisees do not have clear expectations of what supervision can bring them and both Butwell (2006) and Salter (2008) point out that there is a need to learn how best to use coaching supervision if it is to be truly effective. Lane (2010) recommends that more research on the value of supervision in coaching is needed: supervision is critical to coaching being viewed as a profession. An unpublished APECS paper on Supervision for Executive Coaching (2014, p. 5) recommends that we need to address, "what does it take to be an effective, good supervisee?" A number of valuable, theoretically grounded books related to coaching supervision have been published in the last decade (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011, De Haan, 2012, Hawkins and Smith, 2006, Arnold and Murdoch, 2013, Passmore, 2011). These provide guidance on the different contexts and approaches to supervision; the supervision process and various models; and the methods and techniques that can be employed. However, these books largely consider the

effectiveness of supervision from the position of the supervisor rather than the supervisee. De Haan (2012, p. 46) includes a chapter in his book on reflection techniques for the supervisee stating that it is more challenging and exposing to be a supervisee than a supervisor and that the supervisee is “at least as important for the success of supervision.”

A recent book on coaching supervision (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016), written as a practical guide for supervisees, makes a valuable contribution to the literature in this field, however this book is not empirically based and it does not explore what is happening at a deeper level in coaching supervision from the experiences of all involved.

There is more extensive literature on supervision in the helping professions, such as counselling and psychotherapy. Some of the literature focuses on how supervisors can best support supervisees (Shohet and Wilmott, 1991, Shohet, 2008b, Shohet, 2011b, Corrie and Lane, 2015), and some literature considers the role of supervisees themselves in the quality of supervision (Knapman and Morrison, 1998, Inskipp and Proctor, 1993a, Inskipp and Proctor, 1993b, Creaner, 2014, Boyd, 2014, Corrie and Lane, 2015, Carroll and Gilbert, 2011, Stoltenberg and Delworth, 1987). However, these books are not research based. Moreover, it is argued that the supervision needs of coaches differ from those of other helping professionals (Bachkirova, 2011b, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). Moyes (2009, p. 168) explains that coaching supervision has a much broader set of “masters” – the coach, the coaching client and the client’s organisation and, in order to achieve change, the coaching supervisor has to attend to all of these and so a systemic model is more relevant in this context than a therapeutic one.

Research studies on supervisees in the helping professions indicate the importance of various factors in the quality of supervision, for example, what supervisees think of supervision, helpful and unhelpful supervisor behaviours and issues around self-disclosure (Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2010, Yourman, 2003). However, the participants in these studies are trainee therapists receiving mandatory supervision with formal assessment from an assigned supervisor: a different model from coaching supervision. This qualitative study is intended to focus on the role of supervisees, at different stages of development in the coaching profession, in the quality of their supervision and explore the factors influencing this role from a variety of perspectives.

#### **1.4 Main aim and objectives of the study**

The main aim of this research is to explore how coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision. The following objectives have been set for this study. To:

1. Critically analyse the literature in the areas of supervisees in coaching supervision, supervisee issues in the helping professions and relevant areas relating to adult learners.
2. Explore the lived-in experiences of supervisees and the role they play in helping and hindering their coaching supervision.
3. Use Grounded Theory to analyse the findings and to propose a framework for how supervisees can hinder and enhance their coaching supervision.
4. Generate a theoretical framework that makes an original contribution to debates on how supervisees can hinder and enhance their coaching supervision and which contributes to practice by developing guidelines for enhancing learning through coaching supervision at all stages of supervisee's professional development.

## **1.5 Methodology**

This research was designed from a critical realist paradigm. Critical realism presupposes an objective reality that exists independently of our thoughts and in which all description of that reality are mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making and social context (O' Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). This study is about uncovering, understanding and explaining deep mechanisms involved in the learning and development of supervisees during coaching supervision.

The methodology chosen for this study was Grounded Theory because it provides an iterative approach for rich data collection and analysis and supports the creation of a new theory. Oliver (2012) describes Grounded Theory as user-friendly and compatible with critical realist tenets. Critical realist Grounded Theory involves gathering data about participants' lived-in experiences of coaching supervision and describing the psychological and social processes (causal powers) that are a condition for valuable coaching supervision (Kempster and Parry, 2014).

The data collection started with a pilot study, followed by semi-structured interviews with supervisees. Sampling was purposive. This was followed by further interviews with supervisees and supervisors who were selected theoretically. Theoretical sampling ensures that the emerging concepts influence further sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The supervisees selected had been having regular, paid supervision for at least a year and the supervisors had completed a supervisor training programme. Supervisees were identified through professional bodies and the researcher's coaching networks. It was important that the supervisees and supervisors in the survey all practised in the UK because coaching supervision definitions, practices and requirements vary significantly across different countries.

The 19 interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data collection was balanced with depth of data analysis and data collection stopped when no new conceptualisations emerged (Urquhart, 2013). The data analysis began as soon as data was available (Cresswell, 1998, Dey, 1999). In keeping with critical realist studies, theory from extant reading was applied to the data to see what other aspects might be occurring to explain the events that form the lived-in experiences of coaching supervision. Memos were written to capture ideas and record the decisions that were being taken.

## **1.6 Thesis structure**

Chapter 1 has outlined the territory for the study, introduced the existing literature, specified the gap in existing research and my professional interest in it and clarified the purpose and significance of this research. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical context for the study. I review relevant literature in three areas: supervisees in coaching supervision, supervisee issues in the helping professions and relevant areas relating to adult learners. Chapter 3 explains this study's methodology and covers my theoretical perspective and beliefs about the nature of reality, truth and knowledge. It discusses and defends the choice of methodological approach, explains the selection of participants and their context, describes the data collection methods and data analysis process and discusses issues relating to validity, reflexivity and ethics. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the research findings from this study by reporting on the lived-in experiences of supervisees. Chapter 7 discusses the findings in the light of the literature, identifies an overarching theme, explores underlying mechanisms that might explain these lived-in experiences and provides a theoretical framework for how supervisees can enhance and hinder their coaching supervision. Chapter 8 describes the theoretical contribution of this study and implications for practice. It discusses the study's limitations, suggestions for future research and provides personal reflections on the research process.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this research is to explore how coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision. The literature relevant for understanding experiences of supervisees in coaching supervision, the helping professions and in the context of adult learning was identified and critically reviewed. The purpose of this literature review is to contextualise the study and delineate the theoretical and empirical gap in existing knowledge that is intended to be addressed by the research. The review has also contributed to the formulation of the research question and initial interview questions.

This chapter is divided into four sections.

1. Supervisees in coaching supervision – important theoretical and practical aspects of coaching supervision that impact supervisees and main themes from empirical research, relating to coaching supervisees.
2. Supervisees in the helping professions – key theoretical models relating to supervisees and major insights from the literature and research about the issues impacting supervisees.
3. Adult learners – theories and models of adult learning that are relevant for coaching supervisees enhancing their reflective practice, learning and development.
4. A summary of key issues with implications for this study.

The initial literature searches of supervisees within coaching supervision did not yield many articles or books as the field of coaching supervision is very new and there is a paucity of literature,



empirical studies and theories in this area (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). Coaching supervision has borrowed from the models and practice of supervision in the helping professions, such as psychotherapy and counselling (Hawkins and Smith, 2006, Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, Moyes, 2009) and so the search was broadened to include supervisees in the helping professions to find out how this could inform this study. Here the term 'supervisees in the helping professions' means supervisees primarily in the fields of psychology and counselling and other associated disciplines who use supervision to facilitate professional development and client welfare such as social work and mental health (Creaner, 2014).

There was more extensive theoretical literature and research on supervisees in the helping professions, however most was focused on supervision in general and helpful and unhelpful supervisor behaviours and there have been very few publications and studies specifically about what supervisees can do to use supervision to develop themselves (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011). Therefore, the literature search was expanded further to the next most relevant field, adult learners, to explore how the role and responsibilities of adult learners might inform this study on coaching supervisees. This field was selected because theories of adult learning underpin coaching (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2010) and coaching supervision (Lane, 2011). Supervisees are adult learners and reflective practice is the essence of supervision (Carroll, 2014).

This literature review does not aim to be a complete review of all aspects of coaching supervision, supervision in the helping professions and adult learning. It focuses upon supervisees within coaching supervision and supervision in the learning professions and on the theories and models relating to adult learners in their reflective practice. The initial exploration involved a systematic search of books by academics and practitioners and articles published in peer-

reviewed journals about supervisees in coaching supervision. Databases and catalogues that were included in the search included British Library Catalogue, Google Scholar, Emerald Fulltext, Web of Science, Business Source Complete and EbscoHost. Search terms used included 'coaching supervision', 'supervisees in coaching supervision', and 'coach supervision'. The systematic search using 'supervisees in the helping professions' and 'adult learners' was too wide and yielded an unmanageable number of references and so more specific search terms were used, such as 'supervisees and self-disclosure'. Each of the three fields under review is recognisably related to the programme of research and is broad enough to encompass a range of different perspectives. Figure 1 shows the three key areas of the literature review diagrammatically.

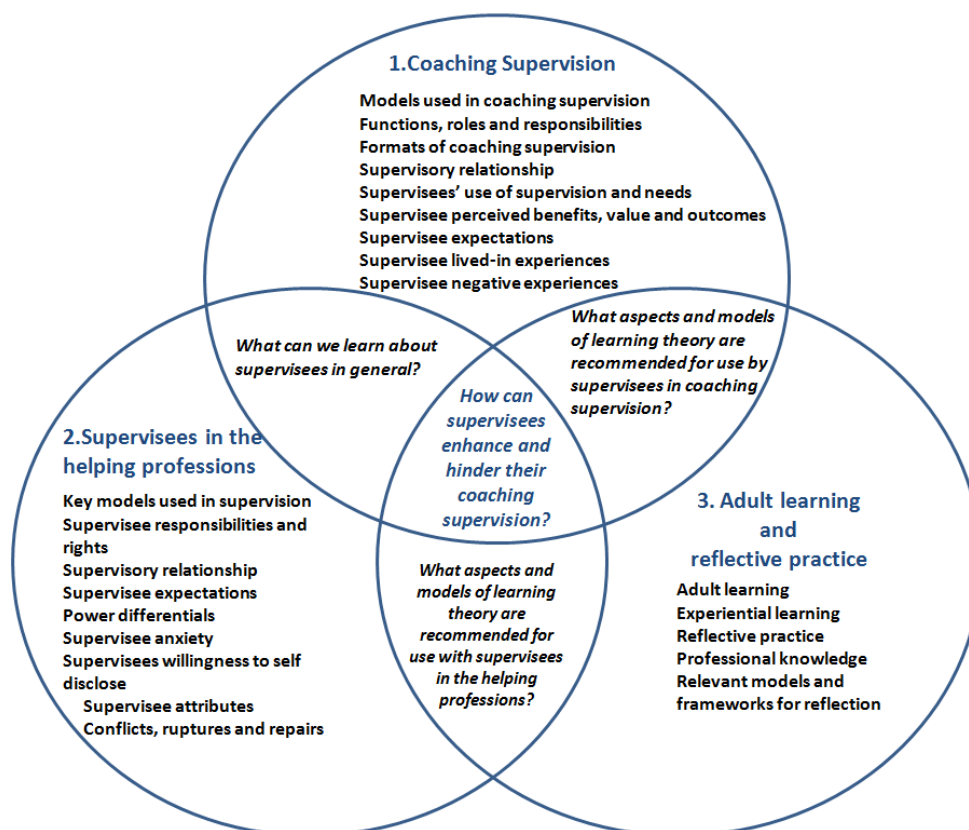


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

## **2.2 Supervisees in coaching supervision**

This section covers the literature and empirical research on supervisees in coaching supervision to understand what role they play and what has been written to-date about how they help and hinder their coaching supervision. It begins with a brief overview of the emergent nature of coaching supervision and moves onto consider important theoretical and practical aspects of coaching supervision taken from the literature, including the main models of coaching supervision, its functions and the roles and responsibilities of coaching supervisees, formats of coaching supervision, the supervisory needs of coaches and the supervisory relationship.

### *Overview of the extant literature*

Coaching supervision is an emergent field attempting to develop its own distinctive approach. Coaching has been in operation since the 1980's (Sherman and Freas, 2004) and yet the first training specifically for supervisors of coaches did not start until 2003 and in the past decade much has been done to develop this fast growing field (Moyes, 2009). Some coaches have been receiving supervision for longer, however the supervision was delivered by supervisors trained in counselling, psychotherapy or psychology, drawing on approaches from these fields (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). The first book and research on coaching supervision was published in 2006 (Hawkins and Smith) and, in the past decade, there has been a welcome increase in coaching supervision literature from practitioners in the field and the academic community who have published a number of valuable, theoretically grounded books related to coaching supervision (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011, Arnold and Murdoch, 2013, Passmore, 2011, De Haan, 2012). These books provide guidance on the different contexts and approaches to supervision, the supervision process and various models, methods and techniques that can be employed. However, these books largely consider the effectiveness of supervision from the position of the

supervisor rather than the supervisee. The first book written as a practical guide for coaching supervisees (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016) is not research based and does not explore what is happening at a deeper level in coaching supervision.

### *Models used in coaching supervision*

The models used in coaching supervision have been reviewed to evaluate the extent to which they address the needs of supervisees during supervision or are largely to aid supervisors. It is important to take a broad, historical perspective when identifying the models of coaching supervision available to coaches because coaching supervision is a new field that “borrows” (Moyes, 2009, p. 162) from the therapeutic professions. Yet, to date, no one specific theoretical base or single model for effective coaching supervision has emerged, (Moyes, 2009, Butwell, 2006, Lane, 2006) and recently an increasing number of coaching supervision models have been developed. This section comments upon models specifically for coaching supervision, and the next section summarises the main models of supervision within the helping professions that some coaches and supervisors draw upon.

There are different types of supervision models – developmental models, social role models and meta-models (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011, Palmer and Whybrow, 2006). The models have been largely developed to help supervisors navigate the supervision process rather than for supervisees to enhance their coaching supervision but some can add potential value for the supervisee. Drake’s (2014) ‘Three Windows’ model (AIM) offers three frameworks (artistry, identity and mastery) for enabling supervisors to work across a range of personal, interpersonal, professional and organisational expectations. Drake (2014, p. 39) envisages that the model will support supervisees to increase their ability to make informed choices about and gain optimal value from the coaching supervision process.

Social role models emphasise the process together with the roles and tasks of the supervisor. The most influential of these social role models in coaching supervision is Hawkins and Shohet's 'Double Matrix Model'. This was originally presented in 1985 (Hawkins) and has been developed since to include the different systemic aspects that can be focused upon during supervision and includes the range of supervisory styles and skills needed for each area of focus which is now referred to as the 'Seven-eyed Model'. The model was originally developed for those who supervise counsellors or psychotherapists but it has proved useful for those supervising across other professions and is used in many countries in the world (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2011). Figure 2 shows the model. It is predominantly used by supervisors to enable them to cover all the different relationships in the system but supervisees who are familiar with the model can use it to broaden their perspective on supervision as it provides a framework from which to reflect on client work, prepare for supervision and provide feedback to group members in group supervision.

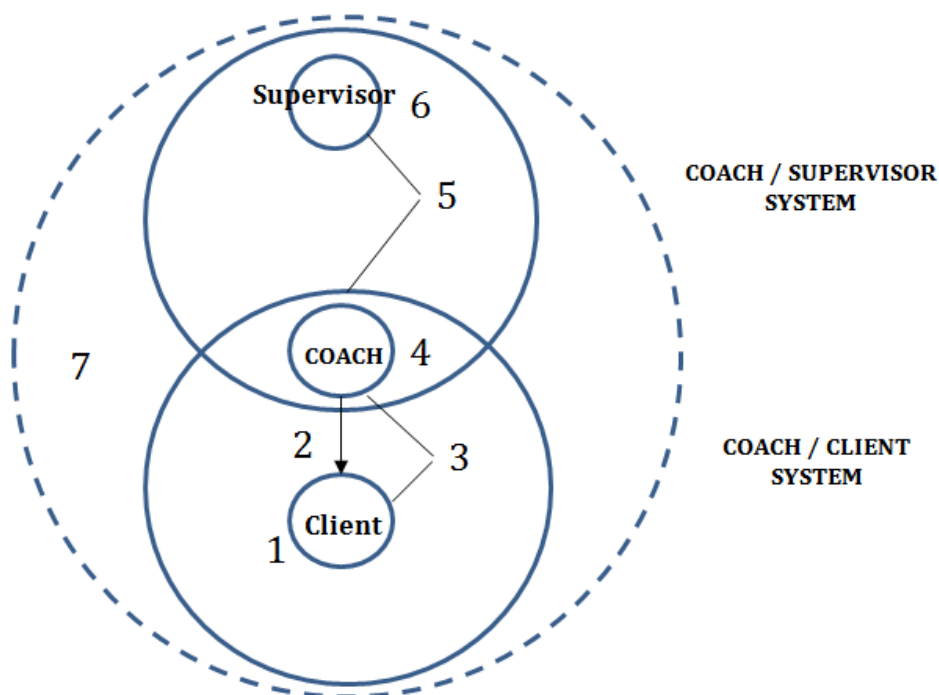


Figure 2: The Seven-eyed Model (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2011, p30)

The 'Seven-eyed Model' reinforces the interpersonal aspect of coaching and supervision as it is based on two systems (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2011, pp. 30-36). The first is the coach-client system and the second is the coach-supervisor system. These two systems are held in a wider organisational and systemic context. The seven modes that the supervisor and supervisee can explore are:

- Mode 1: the coachee and their context
- Mode 2: the coach's interventions
- Mode 3: the relationship between the coach and the coachee
- Mode 4: the coach's awareness
- Mode 5: the supervisory relationship
- Mode 6: the supervisor self-reflection
- Mode 7: the wider context.

Building on Hawkins and Shohet's (2000) original work, other practitioners developed social role models to be used in coaching. Munro Turner (1996, Munro Turner and Wilson, 2008) developed the 'Three Worlds Four Territories Model' (3W4T) of supervision that focuses on three worlds – the client's world, the coaching session, and the supervision session. Within each of these worlds, the supervisor can attend to four territories of experience for each of the players involved (the supervisor, the coach and the client). The four territories are insight, readiness, authentic vision and skilful action. The principal purpose of the model is to provide a map of what a supervisor can focus upon to ensure that the whole system is considered but the model can also be used by the supervisee for self-supervision, reflection after coaching sessions and as preparation for future coaching supervision sessions.

The 'Full Spectrum Model' (FSM) developed by the Coaching Supervision Academy (Murdoch, Adamson and Orriss, 2006, Arnold and Murdoch, 2013) puts the coach, supervisor and client

relationships at the centre of the model and points to the tools and techniques that enhance ethical practice. Again, this model was primarily designed to inform supervisors' practices and can be used to explore with supervisees the range of conversations to be had in coaching supervision.

Gray and Jackson (2011) offer a systemic meta-model that highlights the elements necessary in a supervisor-supervisee relationship – the relationship itself, contracting, teaching methods, and evaluation. These key elements are contained within environmental and organisational contexts and ethical norms. The model is designed for supervising coaches and takes into consideration that supervisors of coaches, unlike supervisors in the helping professions, need to understand the systemic and cultural needs of the organisation as well as the individuals' perspectives. Gray and Jackson (2011, p. 25) stress the importance of good contracting and point out that the nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship is harder to define if the parties are from different theoretical backgrounds because of different cognitive styles, belief systems and differences in ethical perspectives. If the supervisor and supervisee are from different theoretical backgrounds, they will need to be sensitive to this and work on resolving any differences.

Hodge (2016) developed a model of supervision, 'The Three Pillars of Supervision', as a result of her research inquiry. The three pillars are the supervisory relationship, creating the core conditions for adult learning and promoting the value of reflective practice. "The three pillars provide the foundation stones and conditions to contain the generative dialogue that takes place to enable new knowledge, insights, self-awareness and learning to emerge" (Hodge, 2016, p. 100). Hodge's model, unlike the others, is empirically based and reflects the importance of the supervisee taking responsibility for their learning within the supervision process.

The variety of coaching supervision models reflects the complexity of the supervision process and tasks of supervision. The early models used in coaching supervision were adapted from models used in supervision in the helping professions. All of the models, including the more recent ones, have been designed primarily for supporting coaching supervisors to map out the territory of supervision, rather than to enable supervisees to enhance their coaching supervision. There is not a supervision model that has been designed to enable supervisees to get the most out of supervision and, given this gap, supervisees can only adapt the supervisor-led models for meeting their reflection needs.

#### *Functions, roles and responsibilities in coaching supervision*

It is vital to look at existing models on the functions, tasks and responsibilities in coaching supervision to understand the purpose of supervision and the role that the supervisee plays in the process. Hawkins and Smith (2006) encapsulate the functions as developmental, resourcing and qualitative. The developmental function is about developing the skills, knowledge and capacity of a supervisee through reflecting on their client work as well as considering their on-going learning and development needs in line with their career aspirations. The resourcing function concerns how a supervisee is affected by the emotions of the client and how these impact the supervisee. This function ensures that the supervisee does not over-identify with the client or over-react to what the client stimulates in them. The qualitative function provides quality control and ensures that the work of the supervisee is appropriate and falls within defined ethical standards. Hawkins and Smith consider that these three functions are distinct but also overlap. They compare their analysis of the functions to those of Kadushin (1976) who wrote about the supervision of social work in the 1970's and Proctor's (1988) description of the functions in counselling supervision in the 1990's as shown in table 1. Some practitioners use more colloquial



terms to describe the functions, for example, de Haan (2012, p. 7) refers to them as “developing”, “nursing” and “gatekeeping”.

<b>Hawkins</b>	<b>Proctor</b>	<b>Kadushin</b>
Developmental	Formative	Educative
Resourcing	Restorative	Supportive
Qualitative	Normative	Managerial

Table 1: The functions of supervision (Hawkins and Smith, 2006, p 151)

Other practitioners have argued that the three functions are not sufficient and have added additional functions. Patterson’s (2011, p. 123) first three functions are in line with Hawkins but she adds the function of “celebrating and honouring the work of the supervisee”. Gray (2010) considers that there is a significant gap in the functions of supervision that can be filled by mentoring supervisees, for example in longer term career development or business strategy. He goes on to propose an integrated model for coach support which combines mentoring and supervision. Drake (2014, p. 44) also adds a fourth function of supervision which he calls ‘Integrative’. “This function helps supervisees to integrate what they know at a higher level, to continuously unlearn just as much as they learn, recalibrate their career and professional practice, re-weave the connection between their life and their work, and be more proactive in shaping their profession and the way they work.”

Roles and responsibilities of supervisors have been clarified in the literature on supervision in the helping professions and more recently in coaching supervision. There are a multitude of roles that supervisors typically play in coaching supervision. Hawkins and Smith (2006, p. 149) named these as teacher, monitor evaluator, counsellor, coach, colleague, boss, expert technician and manager of

administrative relationships. There is much less written about the roles and responsibilities of supervisees. Hodge (2014) provided a useful table of the responsibilities of coaches and supervisor's that emerged from her research, building on Carroll and Gilbert's (2011) work, see table 2. She lays out the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees alongside each other and this highlights how they compare and where the differences lie. The supervisee is assumed to take ownership for co-creating the relationship, preparing, being open and disclosing information, providing feedback to the supervisor and taking responsibility for learning. Ideally in supervision practice, roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees are discussed during contracting for coaching supervision and form part of a supervisory contract. However, there has been little research to date about the extent to which supervisees actually carry out these responsibilities and what enables and hinders them from doing so.

<b>Supervisee Responsibilities</b>	<b>Supervisor Responsibilities</b>
Need to ask for what is needed to co-create a safe place to share the work, coaching practice and whole of self; avoid deference and compliance.	Establish and co-create safe space to enable the supervisee to share their work; show trust, respect, non-judgment, presence, attending to supervisee needs - not supervisor agenda.
Explore and establish clear purpose of supervision.	Initially may guide on purpose and subsequently co-create with supervisee.
Give and receive feedback to and from supervisor - attending to the relationship, what is working or not working to support learning.	Give and receive feedback to and from supervisee to ensure the supervisee is supported in their reflection and learning.
Prepare for sessions.	Prepare for and manage time keeping in the sessions.
Bring all of self, present work openly and honestly. This includes relevant client issues, concerns and anything else that may impact on coaching effectiveness and overall practice.	Identify areas to explore and offer new perspectives/theory to expand supervisee's awareness and understanding.

<b>Supervisee Responsibilities</b>	<b>Supervisor Responsibilities</b>
Identify and explore own learning and development needs; apply learning that will enable changes to practice.	Respond to and engage with the learning style and needs of the supervisee.
Attend to own well-being beyond the supervision space to show up effectively with clients.	Attend to own well-being to show up effectively in supervision session and engage in own supervision of practice.
Keep notes and reflections from supervision sessions.	Keep notes and reflections from supervision sessions.
Share and explore concerns that may have ethical implications.	Attend to and support supervisee to resolve ethical concerns.
Keep in touch with developments in the profession that may impact on the field of executive coaching - organisational/leadership themes.	Keep in touch with developments in the profession that may impact on the field of executive coaching - organisational/leadership themes.
Manage boundaries and confidentiality.	Manage boundaries and confidentiality.

Table 2: Supervisee and supervisor responsibilities

### *Formats of coaching supervision*

There are a variety of formats for coaching supervision and these formats depend on a combination of three factors. The first factor is whether coaching supervision is carried out on an individual basis (one supervisor and one supervisee) or in a group. The nature of group supervision varies depending on the style adopted by the supervisor. Inskipp and Proctor (2001) identify four ways that a supervisor may work with a group. These are 'authoritative' where supervisees observe as the supervisor works with each supervisee in turn. 'Participative', where the supervisor takes responsibility and develops the supervisees as co-supervisors. 'Cooperative' where the supervisor supports and oversees the group in developing their own style and skills of supervision and lastly 'peer group', where responsibility is shared equally. Currently, there is an increasing interest in the group mode of supervision (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011) because it is generally less expensive and provides the opportunity to gather multiple perspectives on coaching

issues. It is also popular for supervisees to engage in a mix of supervision formats, for example, to attend both group and individual supervision because this enables coaches to benefit from learning through the group experience and have some private time to work with a supervisor on their specific issues.

The second factor concerns the media for supervision, whether it is carried out face-to-face or via telephone or on the internet, for example, by using Skype or Live Meeting. Hay (2011) points out that the difference between face-to-face supervision and e-supervision lies in the environment and dynamics and not in the context or approach.

The third factor is about who carries out the supervision. The options include a qualified supervisor or a peer and they could be internal or external. An internal supervisor is employed by the organisation the coach is working in and an external supervisor is independent of the organisation. Several practitioners have carried out research into internal coaching and describe the benefits and challenges of using both internal and external supervisors (Robson, 2016, St John-Brooks, 2014, Long, 2012). The choice of format can be dependent on a variety of factors related to the organisation's requirements and the coach's budget, needs, experience and stage of development (Hawkins and Smith, 2006, Stoltenberg and Delworth, 1987, Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010, Stoltenburg, 1981).

### *The supervisory relationship*

The models, functions, roles and responsibilities of coaching supervision stress the central importance of the supervision relationship (De Haan, 2012, Arnold and Murdoch, 2013, Hawkins and Smith, 2006). Bernard and Goodyear (2014, p. 34) depict the supervisory relationship as "a product of the uniqueness of two individuals paired with the purposes of meeting for supervision." The relationship is influenced by many internal and external factors such

as the assumptions and beliefs, confidence, behaviours, expectations, cultural background and theoretical orientation of both the supervisor and supervisee. Gray and Jackson (2011, p. 22) point out that in the relationship, “the pros and cons of diversity must be weighed against the pros and cons of homogeneity.” Typically, supervisees choose to work initially with supervisors who share their theoretical underpinnings, for example, systems or psychodynamic theory, and later they may choose supervisors who have different theoretical underpinnings in order to be more stretched in their supervision.

In coaching supervision, the relationship extends beyond the supervisor and supervisee. Murdoch (2013, p. xxxi) explains that the relational field, that includes, the supervisor, the supervisee and those that operate in the wider system, “impact all the way into the supervision session”. De Haan (2012, p. 10) describes how “the supervisor and supervisee work by means of conversations within an evolving supervision relationship that reflects on the supervisee’s case material and working relationships.” Much of the power and effectiveness of supervision can come from the fact that the supervisee’s relationships with the client are reflected in his/her relationship with the supervisor during supervision and this enables the supervisee and supervisor to make new discoveries about the supervisee’s relationship with the client and the client’s relationships with others. This is called “parallel process” (Sumerel, 1994) in supervision and is known as “transference” and “countertransference” in psychoanalytic circles. The theoretical literature points to the centrality and power of the supervisory relationship but there is little advice or research on how supervisees can co-create and play their part in managing the relationship.

#### *Overview of the research studies*

There has been limited empirical research on coaching supervision to date. To my knowledge, there have been less than twenty peer-

reviewed articles on research studies, published in *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* and *International Coaching Psychology Review*. These studies are based on coaching supervision in the UK and globally. There have been three doctoral theses in coaching supervision that I have come across. The first was Pampallis Paisley published in 2006, followed by DeFilippo in 2013 and then Hodge in 2014. Table 3 summarises the foci and coverage of the published empirical studies and a more detailed summary of them is given in Appendix 10-1.

<b>Author and year</b>	<b>Focus of the study</b>	<b>Countries covered</b>
Pampallis Paisley (2006)	What makes supervision distinctive and appropriate models for supervision	UK
CIPD (2006)	Survey of coaching supervision	UK
Butwell (2006)	Internal group supervision – value and supervisee needs and fears	UK
Salter (2008)	Role of coaching supervision – reasons for and against supervision being integrated into coaching practice	UK, Europe, USA, Canada
Armstrong and Geddes (2009)	External group supervision – role of the supervisor and insights on supervisee benefits	Australia
Passmore and McGoldrick (2009)	Efficacy of coaching supervision – supervisee and supervisor expectations, supervisee attitudes and what limits the effectiveness of supervision	UK
McGivern (2009)	Lived-in experiences of supervisees	UK
Grant (2012)	Survey of coaching supervision in Australia	Australia
DeFilippo (2013)	Emotions generated during supervision and the effects of supervision	UK, USA
Hodge (2014)	Action research study into what goes on in coaching supervision	UK

<b>Author and year</b>	<b>Focus of the study</b>	<b>Countries covered</b>
Lawrence and White (2014)	Functions of coaching supervision	Australia/New Zealand
Turner and Hawkins (2016)	Current global use of coaching supervision and whether multi-stakeholder contracting is taken to supervision	Global
Robson (2016)	Internal coaching supervision – an ethnographic study	UK

Table 3: Published research studies on coaching supervision

The following sections discuss some important coaching supervision themes from the above studies and other literature that are concerned with experiences of supervisees – how much they are using supervision and the reasons for this; how supervisees perceive the benefits, value and outcomes from supervision; supervisees’ expectations of supervision; their lived-in and negative experiences.

*Supervisees’ use of supervision and the reasons behind it*

The scale of use of supervision in the UK and globally and reasons why coaches do and do not use coaching supervision is of primary interest to the coaching and supervision communities (Moyes, 2009, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). In 2006, there was the first large scale research survey into good practice in coaching supervision commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, CIPD (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006). It involved web-based questionnaire responses from 528 coaches and supervisors and 125 organisers of coaching services, feedback from practitioner focus groups and interviews with 6 organisations using coaching supervision. The survey found that 88% of organisers of coaching and 86% of coaches believe that coaches should have continuous and regular supervision of their coaching - but only 44% of coaches received it and 23% of organisations provided it. The main reasons that coaches didn’t have supervision were that it was

too expensive, it wasn't 'required' and coaches could not find a supervisor.

Salter's (2008) survey involving 218 coaches across the UK, Europe, US and Canada found similar results: 44% were still having supervision. Two thirds of respondents had experienced professional coaching supervision but, interestingly, 46% received coaching supervision only when in training. The reasons given for avoiding supervision, in addition to the cost and lack of credible supervisors, were that supervision stifles creativity, violates confidentiality, breeds conformity, and it isn't considered to develop practitioners or improve the coaching process. The case supporting coaching supervision was that supervision is supportive, developmental, promotes feedback and constructive criticism, improves performance and coaching skills and has a direct positive impact on the effectiveness of coach-client relations.

More recently, Grant (2012) carried out an on-line survey in Australia to examine Australian coaches' views on supervision. In total, 174 experienced professional coaches completed the survey and although 82% of them were receiving some form of supervision only 26% had a formal supervisor. The barriers to engaging in supervision in Australia were similar to those in the 2006 CIPD survey in the UK (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006): supervisor availability and cost. A third of coaches reported having regular, paid supervision in Australia and New Zealand in a survey conducted by Lawrence and Whyte (2014) who used interviews with 33 executive coaches and 29 purchasing clients to study the functions of coaching supervision.

Since the original CIPD study, professional bodies, coaching providers and many organisations in the UK now require coaches to have supervision and more organisations and academic institutions provide both coaching supervision and coach supervisor training (Humphrey and Sheppard, 2012). In 2014, Turner and Hawkins



(2016) conducted research on multi-stakeholder contracting in coaching and presented an update on the latest practice in supervision. They carried out an on-line survey and received 428 completed responses from coaches, 63 from organisations and 29 from individual clients on the supervision questions. Globally, 83% of coaches reported having supervision, 92% in the UK and 47% in the USA and Canada - where there is little extrinsic requirement for supervision. Whilst these figures are very encouraging, they should be treated with caution as the main method for accessing coaches was through the professional bodies, so the sampling frame is unlikely to be representative of all coaches. Furthermore, the number of respondents from some areas of the world were relatively low so caution is required in making generalisations from low response rates.

The top two reasons why coaches have supervision were intrinsically motivated – it is my personal commitment to good practice (93%) and it contributes to my CPD (52%). Some coaches are having supervision to meet requirements, either those of professional bodies for membership (34%) or accreditation (26%); others state that organisations are requiring it for external (19%) or internal (15%) coaches. The key reasons for not having supervision are that coaches do their own reflective practice, work with a coach or are part of peer networks. The cost or availability of supervisors were not key factors in this survey (Hawkins and Turner, 2015) suggesting that there are now more trained supervisors available and that coaches perceive paying for supervision as part of their business costs. Hawkins and Turner concluded “there is still a long way to go in clarifying and establishing best practice, developing coach supervision training and researching this important practice” (2016, p. 35).

Since 2006, a number of surveys have focused on quantifying the extent to which coaches are using supervision and identifying

reasons for this. Initially the reasons for the low numbers were attributed to the cost and lack of trained supervisors, however this appears to have changed. The number of coaches using supervision in the UK has risen and supervisees are having supervision to improve their practice as well as to meet external requirements.

*Supervisees' perceived benefits, value and outcomes of supervision*

The developmental function is perceived to be the most important benefit of coaching supervision for supervisees whereas, not surprisingly, the qualitative function is the most critical for purchasing clients (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006, Lawrence and Whyte, 2014, Farmer, 2012, Moyes, 2009, Turner and Hawkins, 2015). In Grant's (2012) survey of Australian coaches, the benefits of supervision were seen as providing a reflective space for practitioners, potential for insights, help with difficult cases and an opportunity to develop professionally and personally. Butwell (2006) observed internal group supervision in a professional services firm in the UK and found that the coaches most valued similar aspects: the opportunity to discuss their difficult cases; to explore their feelings about clients; to generate ideas on a 'stuck' client; and to discuss boundary issues. Armstrong and Geddes (2009, p. 10) carried out an action research study on external group coaching in Australia, and supervisees stressed the role of supervision in keeping them honest, experiencing different views on issues and learning from mistakes, "it's a place where you can allow insecurity to build your confidence."

Hodge (2014) explored the retrospective supervision experience of a group of coaches and a group of supervisors over a year using a participatory action research approach. She reported that supervision provided a meta-perspective, insights into client systems and space to explore personal and professional uncertainty and vulnerability. McGivern (2009) focused on the supervisee, investigating how important supervision was to the coach and the experience of being supervised with six participants using an interpretative

phenomenological approach (IPA). She found that there was a clear link between supervision and continuous development experienced by participants. A small study carried out for the third APECS annual symposium (Hodge et al., 2014, p. 5) found that supervision provides value and interlinks with coaches other CPD activities and they recommended areas for further research including, “what does it take to be an effective, good supervisee?”

DeFilippo (2013) carried out a doctoral study to establish what the supervisee and supervisor consider the effects of the supervision to be. He used a qualitative approach and interviewed nine coach supervisory dyads using critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) and thematic analysis. DeFilippo looked at the outcomes from coaching for the coach and reported improved skills and behaviours: developed confidence; improved objectivity; feeling resourced; implementing new approaches; increased self-awareness; being able to self-supervise.

In summary, there has been some useful research into supervisees’ views of the perceived benefits, value and outcomes of supervision. The developmental function is seen as the most important benefit and supervisees value the opportunity to discuss client issues and bring their insecurities into sessions. The research has stopped short of identifying how supervisees can enhance their supervision.

#### *Supervisees’ expectations of supervision*

Passmore and McGoldrick’s (2009, p. 158) study reported that, before starting supervision for the first time, “coaches had no prior understanding or expectations of supervision.” Once coaches had experienced it, they expected to feel safe and to be able to discuss their issues without being judged; supervisors expected supervisees to be open, willing to be challenged, reflective and be ‘present’ in the supervisory relationship. Hodge (2014) noticed that sometimes supervisees are not clear on the purpose of supervision, “it is only

once they had engaged in supervision that they really appreciated its true value” (2016, p. 98) and how to make the most of it, for example, what issues to bring to supervision. Both studies identified that supervisees are unsure of what to expect from supervision and there is a need for supervisees to have a greater initial understanding of what supervision involves.

### *Supervisees' lived-in experiences*

There has been limited research on supervisees' lived-in experiences. DeFillippo (2013) reported that supervisees felt listened to, stretched, worthwhile, anxious, confident, trusting and open whilst supervisors felt connected, overwhelmed, full of admiration, frustrated and nervous. The coach and supervisor both experienced feeling safe and happy during the supervision session. In some cases, contradictory emotions were experienced one after another, for example, supervisee anxiety was followed by happiness as an issue was worked through. These emotions are similar to those identified in other research studies (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, McGivern, 2009). DeFilippo identified the factors that develop the supervision relationship - experiencing significant moments and challenges with each other, managing relationship boundaries and a high degree of trust and mutual respect. DeFilippo recommends that supervisees should be less tactically and more holistically focused and be prepared for the emergence of emotions before, during and after the supervisory process. These findings echo the research on critical moments in coaching (Day et al., 2008, De Haan et al., 2010).

McGivern (2009, p. 34) identified four themes in her study of the lived-in experiences of supervisees: “granting permission”, “opening up my practice to scrutiny”, “taking a look in and through the mirror” and “improving my practice”. “Granting permission” involved establishing trust and contracting, having the freedom to choose and not be coerced into supervision and seeing supervision as non-hierarchical and non-judgmental. “Opening my practice to scrutiny”

consisted of having the humility to open one's practice up to exploration, valuing professional support and demonstrating credibility through having supervision. The conditions that need to be met for supervisees to have the confidence to open up their practice to scrutiny included coaches having chosen to be supervised and adopting the right mindset. The right mindset involved being self-critical, vulnerable, seeking support, being brave, humble, not fearful and being open to change and development. "Taking a look in and through the mirror" was about reflecting on practice, exploring limiting assumptions and raising self-awareness about what the supervisee brings to the coaching relationship. "Improving my practice" was about recognising that supervision could be the best form of CPD, bringing theory and practice together in a practical way and seeking professional challenge and continuing to learn and grow as a coach. The overarching theme from her research was the importance of "avoiding the vanity trap" which refers to the trap that some coaches fall into when assuming their experience removes the need for supervision. Whilst the research was focused on supervisees and valuable, it was conducted on a small group of 6 participants and stopped short of exploring how supervisees can avoid falling into "the vanity trap" and add value to their supervision. Butwell (2006, p. 52) echoes this gap in her study of group supervision, pointing out that coaches fear exposing their limitations and self-disclosing and need "to learn how to be a supervisee".

### *Supervisees' negative experiences*

There is little dedicated empirical research on negative experiences in supervision (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011, Lane, 2015) although several studies have touched on the issue. In Grant's (2012, p. 17) survey of coaches in Australia, 30% of supervisees reported having a negative experience of supervision with complaints about peer group supervision and unskilled supervisors being most common. Hodge (2014) reported that some supervisees had negative experiences around power and compliance during

supervision and this triggered rebellion, resistance, selective sharing of practice and disengagement. She noticed that, when supervisees do not find supervision fulfilling, they tend to blame the supervisor. Passmore and McGoldrick (2009, p. 155) commented that supervision effectiveness is limited by the coach-supervisor relationship and the behaviour of both the supervisee and supervisor. The study highlighted the primary importance of the supervisee in the supervision process. Supervisees need to feel comfortable to discuss their issues freely and openly, avoid trying to present a particular perspective of events and “be open to alternative perspectives whilst retaining their individuality and confidence in their ideas.” Whilst this is an important study in relation to this research, the sample size (observing a 1:1 supervision session and interviewing 8 participants) is small, particularly for a Grounded Theory study, even though the researchers state that saturation was achieved.

### *Summary*

This section considered important theoretical and practical aspects for supervisees taken from the literature and identified key themes and insights from recent research studies relating to supervisees in coaching supervision. Practitioners and academics have started to develop some specific models for use in coaching supervision but there are no models aimed specifically at supervisees to enable them to get the most from coaching supervision. There is very little research on coaching supervisees to date and the research that there is stops short of identifying how supervisees themselves can hinder and enhance the value of their coaching supervision. Given the emergent nature of the field of coaching supervision and the gaps in the literature and research, the review needs to be broadened to consider relevant areas of literature and empirical research on supervisees in the helping professions to ascertain what can be learnt from this wider, related field.

### **2.3 Supervisees in the helping professions**

This section starts with a brief overview of the history of supervision in the helping professions, some key models used and the responsibilities and rights of supervisees. This is followed by themes and insights relating to supervisees in the helping professions drawn from literature and research studies.

#### *History of supervision*

The history of supervision dates back to Freud's Wednesday Psychological Society meetings starting in 1902, when a group of peers met weekly to discuss cases and theory and to share ideas for professional development purposes (Carroll, 1996). This first form of supervision was institutionalised in 1922 when the International Psychological Society developed standards for the personal analysis of psychoanalytic trainees. This was followed in the 1950's by supervision based on counselling models that focused on teaching skills development and in the 1970's by developmental models emphasising the roles and tasks of the supervisor and the learning stages of the supervisee.

#### *Key models used in supervision in the helping professions*

It is important to describe some of the key supervision models and frameworks used in supervision in the helping professions for two reasons. Firstly, many practising coaches are professionally trained counsellors and psychotherapists and may know and use these models and, secondly, there is a longer history of discussion of alternative models of supervision in the helping professions that coaches can learn from (Gray and Jackson, 2011). It is not possible to summarise all of the models and frameworks used in supervision in the helping professions (Creaner, 2014) and so the following paragraphs focus on four in common use. These are the counselling bound, developmental, generic tasks and best evidence synthesis models. In addition, the 'Seven-eyed Model' (Hawkins, 1985,

Hawkins and Shohet, 2000) that was originally developed for use in supervision in the helping professions is a popular model and has already been described earlier in this chapter.

Counselling bound models apply the principles of the therapeutic approach in a given orientation to the practice of supervision. Therapy approaches also contribute much to supervision theory across perspectives. For example, the psychodynamic perspective has provided the concepts of the internal supervisor, attachment behaviour, the working alliance, transference and counter-transference and parallel process (Creaner, 2014). An advantage of using counselling bound models is that there is a body of theory and research to draw upon, however counselling bound models may not be enough in themselves because supervision is a distinct professional activity requiring supervision specific models (Bernard and Goodyear, 2014).

Developmental models of supervision date back to the 1960's when Hogan (1964) outlined a four stage process through which the therapist could move many times during his lifetime. Stoltenberg (1981) developed Hogan's model into a 'Counsellor Complexity Model' in which the supervisee grows from a dependent to a more autonomous position and the supervisor's interventions become more empowering and collegial as the trainee develops. Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) created the 'Integrative Development Model' (IDM) which has been developed into a comprehensive guide to the professional and personal journey of clinical supervisees based on research in clinical supervision as well as other disciplines (Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010). The IDM, shown in table 4, describes four developmental levels through which a trainee will progress on their journey from novice to expert with shifts in motivation, autonomy and self-other awareness taking place at each stage. The model offers supervisors suggestions for each of the levels to facilitate supervisee learning.



Level	Characteristics
1. Self-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novice supervisee is highly motivated</li> <li>• Their primary focus is on their lack of competence</li> <li>• Little self-awareness is demonstrated</li> <li>• Anxiety is high</li> <li>• Supervisee appears dependent on the supervisor</li> <li>• Supervisee seeks structure and direction from the supervisor</li> </ul>
2. Client-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisee is shifting their focus from self to the client</li> <li>• Can oscillate between independence and dependence</li> <li>• Can feel uncertain and ambivalent about their choice of career, particularly when working with complex client presentations.</li> <li>• Supervisee seeks support and modelling from the supervisor.</li> </ul>
3. Process-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisee is more flexible and able to focus on what is going on between self and the client.</li> <li>• Supervisee seeks challenge from the supervisor.</li> </ul>
3i. Integrated – process in context-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisee’s confidence and competence has developed.</li> <li>• Their knowledge, insight, personal awareness and skills become integrated in the service of the client.</li> <li>• High levels of self-other awareness are demonstrated along with high motivation and appropriate autonomy.</li> </ul>

Table 4: Supervisee developmental levels (Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010)

Carroll and Gilbert (2011, pp. 53-56) proposed a three stage framework specifically aimed at helping supervisees to understand the stage of learning that they are at. The three stages were ‘relying on your own internal critic as supervisor’, ‘the stage of the ‘internalised’ supervisor’ and ‘developing your own internal supervisor’. Carol and Gilbert drew on Robinson’s (1974) earlier work on stages of learning and developed a useful series of questions to

enable supervisees to assess whether they are moving from one stage to another.

Developmental models have been criticised by academics and practitioners for a number of reasons. Firstly, the original developmental models were based on the US trainee context and may not easily translate to the European context (Carroll, 1996). Secondly, developmental models simplify trainee development and do not take factors such as cognitive complexity and the ability to integrate learning into account (Lochner and Melchert, 1997). Thirdly, the validity of developmental models has been questioned. Chagnon and Russell (1995) carried out a study and found that, in practice, the levels trainees reach are overlapping and interdependent, particularly at the middle levels and so it may not be so 'clear cut' for supervisors to assess how much support to provide based on an evaluation of the level of trainee. Finally, supervision requires considerable skills and emotional maturity and supervisors will be on their own developmental journeys and may not be capable of supporting more experienced trainees at the higher levels (Hawkins and Shohet, 2007). In view of this, Hawkins and Shohet (2007, p. 75) advise against applying developmental models too rigidly but suggest that they can be useful maps "for matching the right supervisee to the right supervisor, or for exploring difficulties in the supervision relationship."

Carroll (1995) identified seven tasks that supervisors do during supervision – to set up the learning relationship, to teach, to evaluate, to monitor professional/ethical issues, to counsel, to consult and to monitor administrative aspects. Whilst the model is designed to clarify the tasks for supervisor, the tasks can be used to enable supervisees to prepare for supervision and to evaluate it.

Creaner (2014) describes the 'Best Evidence Synthesis' (BES) model that was developed by Milne and colleagues (2008) to address the

need for an evidence-based, conceptually integrative and complex model of supervision. They conducted an empirical review of 24 supervision research studies and developed the BES model that was made up of contextual variables, supervision interventions and outcomes of effective supervision. One of the contextual variables seen to moderate the effects of supervision was supervisee factors and this included “experience, ability and psychology mindedness and motivation” (Milne et al., 2008, p. 178). The researchers noticed that Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle was evident in supervisee learning outcomes and that experiential learning was identified as significant in the studies reviewed. The limitations of the model are that it is awaiting empirical testing and it says little about the attributes of participating supervisees, supervisors and the supervisory alliance.

Each of the supervision models focus on particular theoretical underpinnings and understanding of the supervision relationship and process. Although many of the models are informed by research, few have been empirically tested (Milne, 2009). The models have all been designed to highlight areas of supervisor enquiry rather than to guide supervisees, although supervisees can adapt them to prepare for and reflect upon supervision issues. There is only one framework (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011) designed specifically to support supervisees and this is focused on helping supervisees’ assess their own level of learning. There are no models designed to enable supervisees to get the most from supervision even though preparing for and presenting in supervision are key responsibilities of supervisees, as described below.

### *Responsibilities and rights of supervisees*

The responsibilities and rights of supervisees in supervision in the helping professions have been largely ignored in the literature until recently. Carroll and Gilbert (2011, p. 33) provide useful guidelines on supervisees’ responsibilities and rights. They divide the

responsibilities into two areas, those that supervisees need to sort out before supervision, such as belonging to a professional body, subscribing to a professional code of ethics and having professional liability insurance and other responsibilities relating to the supervision sessions. The other responsibilities are identifying learning objectives, preparing for supervision, presenting in supervision, providing feedback to self and to the supervisor, applying learning from supervision and keeping notes of supervision sessions.

Carroll and Gilbert (2011, p. 11) also provide an empowering declaration of supervisee rights, shown in table 5. This manages supervisees' expectations, provides professional standards for how supervisees can expect to be treated by their supervisors and guides supervisees on what to do if they are not happy with the supervision process.

<p>As a supervisee you have the right to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Be respected for being a professional.</li><li>2. Become the professional you can be and want to be (and not a clone of your supervisor).</li><li>3. A safe, protected supervision space.</li><li>4. A healthy supervision relationship.</li><li>5. Fair and honest evaluations and reports.</li><li>6. See your supervisor's reports on you with opportunity to comment on the contents.</li><li>7. Know what your supervisor thinks of your work.</li><li>8. Make good any areas of development outlined by your supervisor.</li><li>9. Clear and focused constructive feedback.</li><li>10. Give clear and focused feedback to your supervisor.</li><li>11. Ongoing, regular and systematic reviews of the supervisory arrangement.</li><li>12. Your own learning style.</li><li>13. Negotiate the supervision contract (and being aware, in advance, what is non-negotiable in the contract).</li><li>14. Mediation should the supervision relationship break down.</li><li>15. Appeal decisions made in supervision with which you have problems.</li></ol>
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Table 5: Declaration of supervisee rights (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011, p 11)

### *Overview of the extant literature and research studies*

This section presents analysis of the wider literature in terms of the main themes and insights relating to supervisees. These themes are the supervisory relationship, supervisee expectations, power differentials in supervision, supervisee anxiety, supervisees' willingness to disclose, supervisee attributes contributing to good and poor supervision and conflict, ruptures and repairs in the supervisory relationship.

Most of the research on supervision in the helping professions involving supervisees gathers supervisees' views on supervision in general and helpful and unhelpful supervisor behaviours (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011). There has been little research and few publications specifically about what supervisees can do to use supervision to develop themselves. Carroll and Gilbert (2011, p. 14) point out that "there is little literature to which supervisees can turn to help them make sense of, understand and be a collaborative partner in supervisory relationships". The first practitioner literature on what supervisees need to know to use supervision effectively is Inskipp and Proctor's (1993a, Inskipp and Proctor, 1993b) manuals which were written for counsellors and psychotherapist supervisors and supervisees. Knapman and Morrison (1998) developed a self-development model for supervisees and a manual five years later for use in health and social care supervision. In 2005, Carroll and Gilbert published, "On Being a Supervisee", a seminal text on the subject. More recently, supervisee's needs have been catered for in the literature through tips for supervisees in books written for supervisors (Corrie and Lane, 2015) or some books dedicated solely to getting the best out of supervision for supervisees (Boyd, 2014, Creaner, 2014, Dunnett et al., 2013, Bond and Holland, 2011). The key themes from the empirical studies on supervisees and practitioner literature are analysed below.

There is a vast amount of research available on supervision within the helping professions and this review is confined to selected studies relating to supervisees, using articles from over 40 different key journals on supervision in the fields of counselling, psychology, social work, health and health areas. The two most common journals cited are *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training* and the *Journal of Counselling Psychology*.

### *The supervisory relationship*

The supervision literature in the helping professions confirms the centrality of the relationship (Worthen and McNeill, 1996, Nelson and Friedlander, 2001, Watkins Jr, 2014, Ladany, Mori and Mehr, 2013, Creaner, 2014). The creation of a good relationship in supervision contributes to good outcomes (Horrocks and Smaby, 2006, Bucky et al., 2010, Norcross, 2011) and an effective supervisory relationship is positively associated with supervisee self-efficacy (Efstation, Patton and Kardash, 1990, Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2015) and supervisee self-disclosure (Ladany and Lehrman-Waterman, 1999, Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2015, Hess et al., 2008).

Whilst the literature tends to focus upon the supervisors responsibility for the working alliance, Bernard and Goodyear (2014) identify two supervisee variables, 'supervisee negative experiences' and 'secure attachment' that contribute to the working alliance and these deserve attention as they relate closely to the research aims. A mixed method study by Ramos-Sanchez (2002) on negative experiences in supervision reviewed the impact of negative events on the supervisory alliance and supervisee satisfaction levels. The findings from the qualitative analysis were that 20% of the supervisees experienced negative events and the impact of these negative experiences was a poorer supervision relationship and diminished confidence in the supervisees' competence and client relationships. Furthermore, previous experiences of supervision, both good and bad can impact current supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (2007, p.

36) point out that a previous negative experience “can lead a supervisee to be wary, but a good one can lead to comparisons that no one will be as good as my last supervisor.” They recommend that supervisees reflect upon past experiences of supervision, positive and negative, and their learning in terms of managing the relationship and themselves in the light of their needs and share these with their current supervisor.

The concept of attachment draws on the seminal attachment theory work of Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (1979). Ainsworth noticed three attachment styles in infants - secure, avoidant and ambivalent. The attachment systems that children develop are a template for adult relationships and anxiety activates attachment behaviours. It has been argued that supervision can cause anxiety for helping professions trainees which provokes attachment behaviours (Renfro-Michel and Sheperis, 2009). A study by Foster, Lichtenberg and Peyton and colleagues (2007) with 45 supervisor and supervisee dyads found that supervisees’ patterns of attachment to their supervisors were similar to the attachment patterns in their other relationships and the supervisees who displayed poor attachment to their supervisor self-reported poorer professional development. Supervisees who demonstrate secure attachment behaviours in supervision, contribute positively to the supervisory working alliance by establishing open and trusting relationships with their supervisors and seeking help when dealing with challenges in the client work (Renfro-Michel and Sheperis, 2009).

There have been more studies in the helping professions than coaching supervision confirming the centrality of the supervisory relationship and identifying the impact of an effective relationship on the supervisee, for example, increased self-efficacy. The literature highlights that two supervisee variables contribute to the working alliance, supervisee attachment and supervisee negative

experiences and provides some tips for supervisees on contributing to an effective relationship.

### *Supervisee expectations*

The theme of supervisee expectations is explored in the literature. Supervisees can be unsure of how best to use supervision from the beginning of their practice and it takes time to understand what to bring to supervision, what supervisees wish to learn and how to make the most of the sessions. Those involved in group supervision will need time to get to know and trust the group members and to establish a way of working together (Carroll, 2014). Creaner (2014, p. 29) cites Walker-Strong's retrospective phenomenological study of the needs of trainees in a two-year counselling psychology course. In the initial stages the trainees asked, "What's it all about?" as they tried to develop an understanding of what engaging in supervision meant in practice. Participants recommended that induction be provided at the start of supervision covering how to present client work and how to reflect on it. Over time, the trainees' needs changed and they wanted support with how they could most productively use supervision for their professional development.

Whilst this adds to the knowledge about the value of induction in managing supervisees' expectations of supervision and how supervisees' needs change over time, it is important to recognise that coaching supervision and supervision in the helping professions do differ in a number of respects. In particular, supervision in the helping professions tends to involve a qualification route with more evaluation and it can be divided into a number of different stages of the professional journey - whilst training, post training when applying for accreditation and registration and beyond that, as a career long requirement for professionals in the helping professions. During these different phases of career development, the needs of supervisees will change and the process will become less focused on evaluation and more on consultation (Creaner, 2014). Therefore, the



supervision journey of a supervisee in the helping professions may be more varied and prone to different challenges as supervisees progress through their qualification route.

### *Power differentials in supervision*

Power differentials is a key theme in supervisees' supervision experiences. Kadushin (1968) and Hawthorne (1975) refer to the psychological games that both supervisors and supervisees can play in supervision and these games are often referred to as 'resistance' in supervisees. Kadushin (1968, pp. 25-26) described the games that supervisees play as "Be nice to me because I'm nice to you", "You are the best supervisor I've ever had" and "Evaluation is not for friends". Supervisees own difficulties with authority may manifest as feeling the need to prove themselves and competing with the supervisor about who can manage the client better or not being able to step into their own power and giving the supervisor too much power in the relationship (Hawkins and Shoet, 2007).

The literature on power differentials in supervision in the helping professions focuses on the actions of supervisors but one study focusing on the link between abusive supervision in the workplace and subordinate supervisor-directed deviance (Liu et al., 2010) showed that, where subordinates perceived their supervisors as abusive, they had a desire for revenge. Corrie and Lane (2015, p. 120) describe some ways that supervisees can undermine supervision by 'bad-mouthing' a supervisor: making an unfair, official complaint, continually rejecting a supervisor's advice and withholding information during supervision. They provide some useful tips for how supervisees can manage power differentials in supervision through reflecting upon how power impacts their work and expectations of supervision and building regular discussions on power into the supervision agenda. The issue of power differentials has not been investigated to the same extent in the coaching supervision literature and so this is useful knowledge to draw upon.

### *Supervisee anxiety*

Supervisee anxiety is another theme that is discussed in the literature in relation to experiences of good and poor supervision, particularly for new therapists (Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2010, Mastoras and Andrews, 2011). Anxiety has been attributed to a number of different causes including feelings of inadequacy in the role (Worthen and McNeill, 1996), power differentials (Nelson et al., 2008), a lack of understanding about what happens in supervision (Berger and Buchholz, 1993, Creaner, 2014) and attachment patterns (Renfro-Michel and Sheperis, 2009). Research has shown that lower levels of anxiety in a single supervision session were related to higher willingness to disclose in that session (Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2010). Providing induction on supervision has been identified as a means to reduce anxiety (Ellis, 2010, Bahrack, Russell and Salmi, 1991) and has led to clarity for supervisees about what supervision entails and how best to use it. Evaluation anxiety is particularly relevant for therapists in the helping professions who are concerned about competence and who fear negative outcomes in performance reviews (Lizzio, Stokes and Wilson, 2005).

Hawkins and Shohet (2007, p. 38) explain that “when assessment is a feature of supervision, some supervisees say that they are reluctant to bring cases where they might not be working well and do not feel safe.” Supervisees can become needlessly defensive in supervision, protecting themselves against being judged, when, in fact, they might be poor judges of themselves. Gilbert and Evans (2000) provide a useful list of different defence routines that supervisees employ, including the information flooding approach, the self-flagellation approach and the nit-picking approach to supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (2007, p. 35) suggest that assessment anxiety can be eased for supervisees if they increase their understanding of the assessment criteria, process and any potential pitfalls and share their feelings of anxiety with their supervisor. They recommend that supervisees think of evaluation and review as a two-way process and

schedule regular time into supervision sessions to provide clear feedback to their supervisor and, where necessary, renegotiate the supervision contract.

Supervisee anxiety has been investigated more in the literature on supervisees in the helping professions than in coaching supervision. The causes of anxiety during supervision and how to manage it are very relevant to this study. However, it is important to bear in mind that some aspects of supervision are different in coaching supervision to supervision in the helping professions. For example, there tends to be less assessment in coaching supervision and supervisors are more likely to be independent and paid rather than have a line management relationship to the supervisee.

#### *Supervisees' willingness to disclose*

The willingness of supervisees to disclose pertinent information to their supervisors plays an important role in the eventual success of supervision (Ladany et al., 1996) and this topic has been the subject of a number of research studies in the past twenty years. A study by Mehr, Ladany and Caskie (2010) calculated that, in a single supervision session, 84% of trainees withheld information from their supervisors and trainees reported an average of 2.68 nondisclosures occurring in a session. Yourman (2003, Yourman and Farber, 1996) argued that non-disclosure is a normal, self protective response in a supervision session and the point is not to maximise self-disclosure but to decide what material to disclose and for what purpose. Studies have revealed that non-disclosure in supervision typically involves information about clinical issues, personal issues and concerns about the supervisory relationship – it is the latter topic that is the most likely to be withheld (Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2010, Ladany et al., 1996, Ladany, 2004, Hess et al., 2008, Banks and Ladany, 2006, Yourman and Farber, 1996, Yourman, 2000).

There has been less research on what contributes to supervisees' willingness to disclose. Ladany (2004) found that the reasons for nondisclosure were in deference to the supervisor, impression management and the fear of political consequences in their career. Yourman (2003) suggested that shame stops self-disclosure, interfering with the open exposition of a trainee's work and rupturing communications in the process. He concluded that trainees experience more difficulty discussing negative feelings in the 'here and now' with supervisors because supervisors can be perceived to be the 'cause' of the feelings.

A recent study by Mehr, Ladany and Caskie (2015) used structural equation modelling to investigate the interrelationships between the supervisory working alliance, trainee anxiety and counselling self-efficacy and trainee willingness to disclose in supervision. The study found that there was empirical support for a relationship between willingness to disclose and a stronger supervisory alliance but not between willingness to disclose and supervisee anxiety. This study partially supports a previous study by Mehr, et al. (2010) that found that the perception of a stronger alliance relates to higher willingness to disclose in a single supervision session and less anxiety in that session. The researchers pointed out that supervisees value the supervisor being open to ideas and being empowered by the supervisor. This reflects Bordin's (1983) view that supervisors should encourage supervisees to self-direct their supervision.

The studies on self-disclosure in supervision in the helping professions are informative but such studies often focus on younger trainees and so the results may not be generalisable to older, more experienced supervisees. All of the studies on self-disclosure conclude with recommendations for supervisors and they do not address what supervisees can do to manage themselves and the relationship.

### *Supervisee attributes contributing to good and poor supervision*

Few studies focus on the contribution of the supervisee to good or poor supervision in the helping professions - most of the studies focus on supervisor behaviours and use the supervisee perspective. However, one study that did focus on supervisee behaviour (Norem et al., 2006) identified the key supervisee attributes that contribute to 'excellent' supervision outcomes through interviewing 12 experienced supervisors about highly successful supervisees attitudinal factors, traits, behaviours, knowledge and skills. The researchers identified six different attributes – “maturity, autonomy, perspicacity, motivation, self-awareness and being open to experience” and commented that these attributes appeared to be “connected, mutually enhancing, interactive and synergistic” (Norem et al., 2006, p. 40). The researchers suggested that supervisees use these attributes as a model for achieving optimal growth from supervision.

The same researchers conducted research into 'lousy' supervision outcomes from the supervisor perspective. They found four spheres in which supervisees contributed to poor supervision outcomes and these spheres and their manifestations were: intrapersonal development – fearful of change and unwilling to examine self; interpersonal development – unable to grasp client's perspective, unwilling to accept feedback and avoidant in supervision; cognitive development – unable to conceptualise and rigid; counsellor development – mechanistic focus and unwilling to grow and change (Wilcoxon, Norem and Magnuson, 2005, p. 39). Again these spheres were considered to be interactional. The results were offered to assist supervisees in avoiding counterproductive behaviours. Although this is interesting data about supervisee attributes, the research is limited because it focused on the supervisor perspective only, involved a small number of supervisors and did not address whether the qualities associated with excellent supervisees can be taught or learned.

### *Conflict, ruptures and repairs in the supervisory relationship*

Conflict can arise in the supervisory relationship for a variety of reasons including personality clashes, relational dynamics, transference, counter-transference and parallel process, attachment styles, differences of opinion regarding cases and differing theoretical approaches to client work (Creaner, 2014, p. 21). Whilst it is considered the supervisor's role to manage conflict, the literature states that some supervisors lack the skills to handle this or may not be aware of the issue if it is not disclosed by the supervisee (Nelson et al., 2008). Whilst supervisees initially perceive conflict in supervision to have a negative impact, open discussion of the issues can enhance the relationship (Nelson and Friedlander, 2001), bring about learning and act as a model for repairing inevitable ruptures in therapeutic relationships (Safran et al., 2007). Carroll and Gilbert (2011, p. 143) recommend that supervisees discuss strategies for dealing with conflict when setting up a supervisory contract with their supervisor including agreeing to give regular on-going feedback about the process of supervision and raising areas of conflict as they arise. They caution that sometimes certain relationships do not work and "that is that" and advise supervisees "to be alert to the signs that your supervisory relationship might be at an end or that it would be unhelpful for you to continue it." There is more relevant literature and empirical studies on handling conflict, ruptures and repairs in supervision in the helping professions than in coaching supervision.

### *Summary*

This section has reviewed important theoretical and practical aspects and analysed relevant themes and insights from literature and research studies about supervisees in the helping professions. These topics are relevant to coaching supervision yet have attracted little research focus to date and the coaching supervision literature does not cover them as adequately from a supervisee perspective.

Although there is more literature aimed at supervisees in the helping professions, much of the advice is theoretical rather than evidence based. The empirical research on supervision in the helping professions involves supervisees, however they have largely been participants in research studies providing their views to inform supervisor development (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011). Most of the participants have been trainees - there is little research on “the post-qualification experienced supervisee and how supervision may best serve their learning needs” (Creaner, 2014, p. 117). Furthermore, trainee therapists receiving mandatory supervision with formal assessment from an assigned supervisor is a very different model from coaching supervision and so the data needs to be treated with caution. In view of this, it is important to expand this literature review further to the wider field of adult learners.

## **2.4 Adult learners**

Supervisees are adult learners and therefore it is important to know what the theoretical literature says about how adult learners learn in order to understand how supervisees can enhance their learning. In the coaching supervision literature, the role of the supervisor is to facilitate the learning process and the role of the supervisee in this process is not explicit. Therefore, broadening the scope of the review to include the role and responsibilities of adult learners might inform this study on coaching supervisees. This section considers theories and approaches to adult learning, experiential learning, reflective practice and professional knowledge in the light of some of the relevant models and frameworks that are used in coaching supervision and supervision in the helping professions for reflective practice by supervisors and supervisees.

### *Adult learning*

Adult learning is a very wide area of knowledge and so it has been important to be selective and consider theoretical aspects of adult

learners that are relevant for coaching supervisees. There is an extensive set of theories and models that seek to explain the adult learning process that can be drawn on in supervision. Knowles (1968) acknowledged the differences between how adults and children learn. The concept of 'andragogy', how adults learn, represented a shift in perspective away from the educator to the learner. Knowles believed that, as a person matures, he/she becomes a more self-directed, autonomous human being (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2005). "These assumptions or principles have come to underpin views about learning and development" (Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 7). Knowles (1980) describes the characteristics of adult learners and these characteristics impact the way in which adults approach learning. They are shown in table 6.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Adults need to know</i> what they will be learning and treated like a collaborative partner by the supervisor so that the agenda is theirs.</li> <li>2. <i>Adults are self-directed</i> and need to be facilitated by the supervisor rather than directed. They want to be treated as equals and shown respect for what they know and how they prefer to learn.</li> <li>3. <i>Adults have a wealth of prior experience</i> and this is a source of learning as well as a potential block. The unlearning process is as important as the learning process and it is important for the supervisor to challenge existing assumptions in relation to new learning and experiences.</li> <li>4. <i>Adults learn when they have a need to learn</i> and so the more the supervisor can anticipate and understand the client's situation and readiness, the more effective their role will be.</li> <li>5. <i>Adults are relevancy-orientated</i>; they like to apply their learning immediately, enjoy problem solving and learn best when addressing a pressing issue. Therefore, supervisors and supervisees may need to work on immediate problems as well as longer term, developmental issues.</li> <li>6. <i>Adults are internally motivated</i> which means that their internal needs and values are more powerful motivators than external recognition and encouragement. The supervisor's role is to help provide the sense of connection between the supervisee's needs and values and the results of the supervision.</li> </ol>
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Table 6: Characteristics of adult learners (Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 7)



Adult learning theory underpins all coaching practice (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2010) and by implication coaching supervision and supervision practice. Supervision is one of the useful forums to learn from practice. Carroll (2014, p. 133) explains that “supervision helps supervisees to take responsibility for the experiences that happen in their work and supports them to make sense of that experience.” Supervisors can support supervisees to use their own experience as their guide. Supervision can be perceived as a mutual learning relationship in which supervisors and supervisees are both knowers and learners (Creaner, 2014).

A career in coaching can be seen as a ‘lifelong learning’ commitment. The concept of ‘lifelong learning’ (Faure et al., 1972) assumes that supervisees will keep their knowledge and skills up to date in a continually changing world. Argyris and Schon (1974) foresaw this and warned, “professional skills of yesterday and today will not be adequate in the future.” The coaching professional bodies recognise this and require coaches to have CPD, including supervision, as a condition for membership and accreditation.

### *Experiential learning*

Experiential learning is another important learning theory that informs supervision practice. Like adult learning, experiential learning underpins all coaching practice (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2010) and therefore by extension, supervision practice and it is seen as the central model in clinical supervision to facilitate learning outcomes (Milne et al., 2008). Experiential learning was first mentioned in the philosophy of Dewey (1910) and later Kolb (1984, p. 38) developed the idea and defined learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. His model is a continuous learning cycle consisting of four stages. It depicts how a real experience occurs (‘concrete experience’), is reflected upon (‘reflective observation’), is theorised about (‘abstract conceptualization’) and the theories generated are

used to problem solve ('active experimentation'). The learning cycle can be entered at any point but the learner needs to proceed systematically through all the stages for learning to occur. Experiential learning mirrors the process used in supervision (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2010) and supervisees will vary in their aptitude and preferences for these stages. Honey and Mumford designed a learning cycle and tool for identifying preferred learning styles (1992, Honey and Mumford, 2000). This learning cycle forms the basis for 'reflective practice'(Schön, 1983), the capacity to reflect-on-action so as to engage in a process of continual learning, reflective practice and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990).

### *Reflective practice*

Coaching supervision facilitates reflection on all aspects of professional practice – the client, the supervisee, the supervisor, the organisation, the supervisory relationship and the system. As supervisees become more experienced and skilled at 'reflection-on-action', they progress to using 'reflection-in-action' (Argyris and Schon, 1974) and begin to develop what Casement (1985) called the 'internal supervisor', in other words, to self supervise. 'Reflection-in-action' is mindful consideration of what is happening in the moment as we work. 'Critical reflection' (Brookfield, 2013, Mezirow, 2000) is the ability to move beyond the content of reflection to examine the unhelpful assumptions that we hold. Supervision provides the place where we can uncover and review the assumptions that underpin our work and thereby bring about transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990).

Carroll (2014, p. 125) describes supervision as "a reflective-practitioner's oasis" and learning how to become a reflective practitioner takes time, practice, skill, effort and focus. Learning can take place at a number of different levels and Carroll connects these different levels to approaches to supervision for supervisees. When supervisees project old learning, models and frameworks onto new

experiences and find the answer from there - single-loop learning takes place. The next level of learning is learning from experience. Double-loop learning occurs when supervisees' assumptions and 'habits of mind' (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7) are challenged and they can feel disorientated and have a perceptual shift as a result. Triple-loop learning happens when supervisees are able to "view experience through relationships and systems with an open heart ... facing ourselves and our shortcomings as learners"(Carroll, 2014, pp. 130-131). Carroll adds a fourth level of learning, transformational learning, "radical learning coming from within" which results in a fundamentally different way of seeing and being in terms of oneself, others and relationships. Supervision provides a vehicle for all of these levels of learning to take place.

#### *Professional knowledge*

Supervision is a growing professional field and so it is helpful to consider Eraut's (1994) work on 'professional knowledge' in this context. Eraut refers to three types of knowledge that are relevant for supervisees. These are 'propositional knowledge', the know what - coaching knowledge including theory and research, 'process knowledge', the know how – knowing how to use coaching knowledge in a professional context and 'personal knowledge' which is informed by personal experience and 'experiential knowledge' (Heron, 1996, Kolb, 1984, Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1993). Personal knowledge includes 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi, 1966) and this may be accessed through supervisors exploring use of metaphors and parallel process with supervisees. Reflection in and on their professional practice enables supervisees to learn from experience, to increase self and professional awareness, to uncover tacit knowing and to use that knowledge in future practice.

#### *Relevant Models and frameworks for reflection*

There are many ways to reflect critically on practice and practitioners in the helping professions have developed and adapted models and

frameworks, in addition to Kolb's learning cycle, to help supervisees to do so. For example, Bernard and Goodyear (2014) provide questions that can be used alongside Kagan's (1980) 'Interpersonal Process Recall Method' in supervision, to increase supervisees' insights into their underlying thoughts and feelings relating to clients. This involves the supervisor reviewing a recording of a client session with the supervisee and looking at the critical events in the session and asking reflective questions.

Some of the books on coaching supervision provide guidance for supervisees on how to carry out critical reflection. Campone (2011) suggests a model to help coaches develop broader repertoires and customise the choice of strategies to client and context. The model is based on Schon's original model (1983) and has three steps - research in action, naming and reconfiguring mental models and enacting the changes. De Haan (2012, p. 45) devotes a chapter to reflective techniques emphasising that the role of the supervisee is more difficult than that of the supervisor because not only do you have to expose your practice and discuss all your "doubts, hesitations, emotions and spontaneous discoveries" with your supervisor but "you are then expected to reflect further on all of these things and in the process discover more doubts, tensions and unpalatable revelations and the limits of your reflections." He suggests three models for reflection. Firstly, Rogers (1958) 'Model of Reflective Phases' (none, aloof, declarative, reflection after the event, reflection now, living reflection and reflecting while experiencing). Secondly, Torbert's (1991) 'Model of Reflective Modalities' (Opportunistic, Diplomatic, Expert, Achievement-oriented, Individualistic, Strategic and Alchemistic). Thirdly, Carroll's (2014) 'Model of Modalities of Reflection' (zero reflections, empathetic reflections, relational reflections, systemic reflections, critical self-reflections and transcendental reflections). Whereas Rogers and Torbert's models have sequential stages, Carroll's model has the advantage of recognising each lens as valuable in itself and

supervisees do not have to proceed through all of the stages systematically.

### *Summary*

Reviewing the literature on adult learners has provided an understanding of the underlying theories and principles of coaching supervisees' learning and some theoretical models and frameworks that supervisees can use to develop their reflective practice (Carroll, 2009, Kagan, 1980, Schön, 1983, Torbert, 1991, Kolb, 1984, Rogers, 1958). However, these models and frameworks have been designed and adapted by academics and practitioners to enable supervisors to facilitate supervisees' learning. In the supervision literature from both coaching supervision and supervision in the helping professions, there is more of a focus on the role of the supervisor in facilitating reflection and learning than on the reflective techniques of the supervisee; de Haan (2012, p. 46) points out that "the quality of the supervisee's techniques is at least as important for the success of supervision as the technical input of the supervisor". Furthermore, there is currently a gap in empirical knowledge about how in practice, coaching supervisees have learnt to help and hinder their learning and development through supervision.

## **2.5 Implications for this study**

Coaching supervision is in its infancy as a profession (Lane, 2010) and until recently has borrowed in terms of supervision models, approaches and guidelines from supervision in the helping professions (Moyes, 2009). However, the needs of coaching supervisees are different from those of other supervisees for a number of reasons. Firstly, because coaching supervisees serve multiple clients and therefore their supervisors need to take into account the organisation's and system's needs (Bachkirova, 2011b, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011). Secondly, coaching supervisees are likely to have a business background with more of a

systemic, organisational focus to their work and they may not be trained in an area of counselling or psychotherapy and may require more support to look at how their work is affecting them personally (Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011, Bachkirova, 2011b). Thirdly, coaching supervisees tend to experience a more flexible qualification route with less formal evaluation, the supervisor is unlikely to be in a hierarchical position to them and the supervisee is more likely to require support with facilitating reflection and learning rather than 'teaching'. In view of these differences coaching supervisees require their own models and guidelines.

In the past decade, practitioners and academics in the field of coaching supervision have started to define what coaching supervision is and develop some specific, new models (Drake, 2014, Arnold and Murdoch, 2013, Munro Turner and Wilson, 2008, Gray and Jackson, 2011, Hodge, 2016) to provide a map of coaching supervision territory for supervisors to use. Some of the older models that are still used in coaching supervision are based on supervisees in training in the helping professions. All of the models are primarily developed for supervisors and it is questionable how applicable these models are to coaches, particularly as there has been no published research on this to date.

### *Literature gaps and contributions of this study*

From the review of knowledge relevant to this research study, three key gaps have been identified in the literature and research studies. The gaps are depicted in the conceptual framework shown in figure 3. The gaps are:

1. There is a lack of empirical research on the lived-in experiences of coaching supervisees at all stages of professional development, including more experienced supervisees. The coaching supervisees' perspective is a crucial element without which issues and debates about coaching supervision are incomplete.

2. There is a need to provide evidence-based data relating to coaching supervisees on some important supervisee themes explored in the theoretical literature and studies in the helping professions. These areas are: power differentials; how supervisees may sabotage their learning; supervisee anxiety; supervisee disclosure; how supervisees can contribute to good supervision; conflict, ruptures and repairs in supervision. These topics are relevant to coaching supervision, yet have attracted little research focus to date and the coaching supervision literature does not cover them adequately from a supervisee perspective.
  
3. There is not an empirically informed framework with guidelines, for how supervisees can help and hinder their coaching supervision.

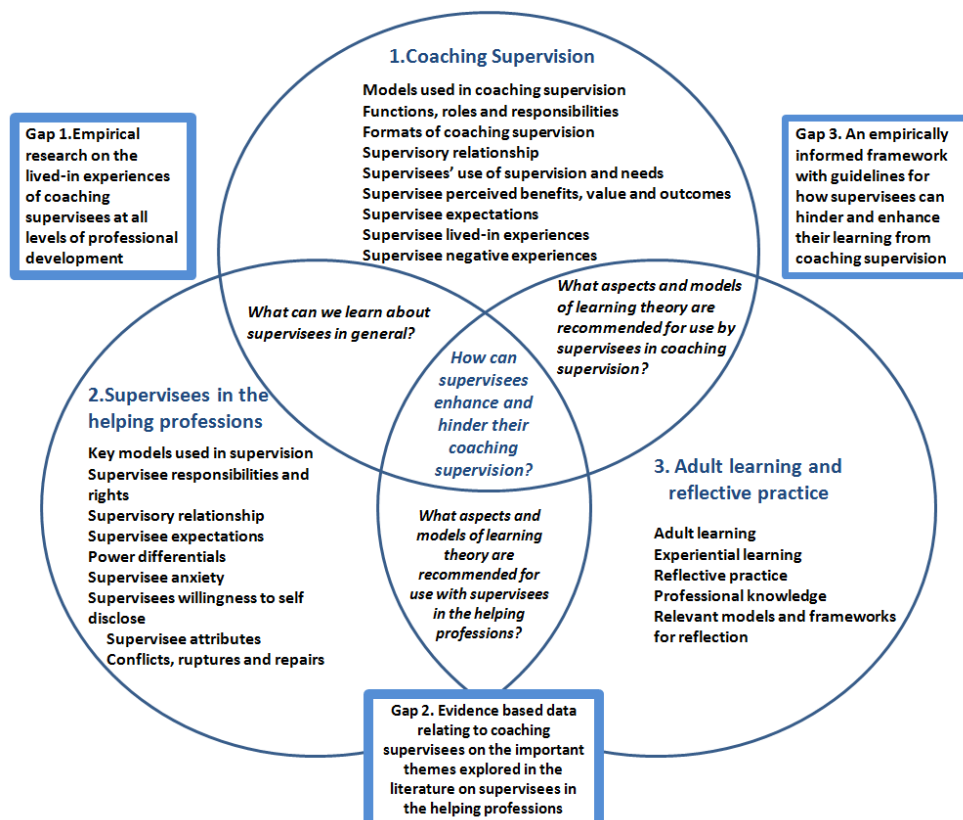


Figure 3: Conceptual framework showing the gaps in the literature

Therefore this study was designed to contribute to current debates about the processes and value of coaching supervision at all stages

of the supervisee's professional development. It aimed to generate empirical data on how coaching supervisees can help and avoid hindering their coaching supervision, which could lead to a practical framework useful for various parties.



## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided the theoretical context for the study. This chapter situates and anchors the research. It covers my theoretical perspective and beliefs about the nature of reality, truth and knowledge. It will discuss and defend the choice of methodological approach, explain the selection of participants and their context, describe the data collection methods and data analysis process and discuss issues relating to validity, reflexivity and ethics.

### **3.2 Theoretical Perspective**

The starting point for qualitative research is to pay attention to philosophy and theory because our worldview on the nature of existence and knowledge has implications for how we study (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2013, p. 3). This study was approached from a postpositivism, critical realist perspective. For critical realists, ontology is primary in the research process to epistemology (Adler et al., 2013).

Critical realism (CR) presupposes that an objective reality exists independently of our thoughts (O' Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). At the same time, a critical realist is critical of our ability to know reality with certainty. Where the positivist believes that the goal of science is to uncover the truth, the critical realist believes that the goal of science is to hold steadfastly to the goal of knowing reality, even though we can never achieve that goal. Gibberson (2012) depicts the critical realist approach to understanding the world as through a spiralling discovery process, where we continually circle the phenomena we are trying to understand, getting closer and closer to understanding it better but never reaching absolute certainty. Oliver

(2012) suggests that the obligation to search for the account that comes closest to approximating and explaining what is “real”, provides the moral impetus for inquiry.

Roy Bhaskar (1944 -2014), a founding member of the Centre for Critical Realism (Norrie, 2015), describes a stratified reality that has three primary layers. The first layer is the “real”; this layer cannot be seen and we can only speculate about it, for example, human nature or gravity. It is the underlying mechanisms and structures that are responsible for what we observe. The second layer is the “actual”. These are events caused by real things, for example, an event caused by human nature such as a car crash or an apple falling as a result of gravity. The third layer is the empirical. This is the observable experience that we can sense. This research will provide data of the third layer of nature but will aim to explore what underlying mechanisms might explain supervisees’ experiences. Oliver (2012) describes how we come closer to understanding the real and actual domains by inferring from their experienced effects.

Critical realists are primarily interested in explanation. They seek vertical explanations that link events and experiences to their underlying generative mechanisms rather than their antecedent events and experiences (Bhaskar, 1978). Critical realism offers a nuanced understanding that practitioners seek because it goes further than identifying generalisable laws (positivism) or purely lived-in experiences (interpretivism) and offers deeper levels of explanation and understanding. However, we must seek empirical evidence for any emergent ideas to check whether the proposed or alternative theories best explain the phenomena.

Researchers from other philosophical paradigms use induction, where observations give rise to new ideas, or deduction, where the researcher approaches the data with a theoretically informed framework (Willig, 2013). Critical realists, by contrast, use abduction

or retroduction. “Abduction involves redescription or recontextualisation, most usually in terms of a characteristic causal mechanism or process which serves to explain it. Retroduction involves imagining a model of a mechanism, which, if it were real, would account for the phenomenon in question.” (Bhaskar, 2014, p. vii). Bhaskar points out that both abduction and retroduction are very similar and “often shade into each other”.

Epistemologically critical realists are constructivists who believe that we each construct our view of the world based on our perceptions of it. All description of that reality is mediated through filters of language, meaning making and social context (O' Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). Because perception and observation are subject to such influence, our constructions of any underlying truth will be imperfect. However, critical realists reject the relativist idea of the incommensurability of different perspectives, the idea that we can never understand each other because we come from different experiences and cultures.

In this critical realist study, I believe that the data reflects the phenomena under study and my interpretation of the data will help understand the underlying structures. The data cannot be accepted at face value and the aim is to look for what is driving the views and feelings expressed. I can never be wholly certain but aim to make sense of the data by providing an explanatory account of what is described. O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014, p. 11) summarise critical realist activity as “two intertwined activities: firstly a description of empirical things and events (often in research itself) and secondly, an analysis that theorises the mechanisms that generate these”.

Using a critical realist paradigm presented challenges. Firstly, the writing of Bhaskar (1978) is challenging to comprehend for a novice researcher. Secondly, critical realist empirical studies are relatively new. There have been few practical studies carried out to inform the

researcher. “There is a serious lack of appealing and accessible material on critical realist-informed methodology to set those new to these ideas off on a path to accomplish interesting and insightful research” (Ackroyd and Karlsson, 2014, p. 45). This presents an opportunity for me to contribute to critical realist-informed methodology with a practical, critical realist study.

### **3.3 Methodological Approach**

I selected Ground Theory as the most appropriate methodology for my research question, “How coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision?” Little empirical research has been conducted to date on coaching supervision and there is a lack of theory in this area. Grounded Theory is an appropriate methodology because it supports the creation of a new theory. Grounded Theory is also particularly suited to research questions that are about processes and stages (Robson, 2002, Urquhart, 2013, Glaser, 1978). My research focused upon the supervision process and explored the stages that coaches go through as they develop as supervisees. In order to address my research question, I needed to gather data about participants’ experiences of their contribution to productive and unproductive coaching supervision. Grounded Theory provided an iterative approach for rich data collection and analysis.

Grounded Theory fits with my critical realist position and originated from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Annells (1996) explains that the classic Grounded Theory method is philosophically critical realist in perspective, with an associated methodology aiming for theory discovery that may be subsequently verified by sequential research. She points to statements by Glaser (1992) about Grounded Theory focusing on concepts of reality and searching for true meaning as evidence of a critical realist position and inherently post positivist. Oliver (2012) describes Grounded Theory as user-friendly and compatible with critical realist tenets.

It is important to be clear about the strand of Grounded Theory used as Grounded Theory has evolved as a methodology since Glaser and Strauss's initial work and can be used by researchers with different assumptions about how knowledge can be obtained. Glaser and Strauss fell out in 1990 about specific principles of the theory. The argument between Glaser and Strauss reflects different philosophical positions being taken when using Grounded Theory. Glaser believed that findings are discovered within the data whereas Strauss and Corbin believe that the findings are the result of construction of inter-subjective meanings.

I have chosen Glaser's suggestions on open, selective and theoretical coding techniques and used the same names for the three stages of coding. I have used a Glaserian approach because I consider that it is more in keeping with my critical realist philosophical position and provides flexibility by offering many different options for relating categories at the theoretical coding phase. Recently, Glaser explained that "Grounded Theory is just developing patterns that explain how to resolve your main concern" (Walsh et al., 2015, p. 593).

Urquhart (Urquhart, 2013) describes the key features of Grounded Theory which she has adapted from the work of Cresswell and Dey and are summarised below. Her approach to Grounded Theory inclines towards the Glaserian version.

1. The aim of Grounded Theory is to generate or discover a theory.
2. The researcher has to set aside theoretical ideas in order to let the substantive theory emerge.
3. Theory focuses on how individuals interact with the phenomena under study.

4. Theory asserts a plausible relationship between concepts and sets of concepts.
5. Theory is derived from data acquired from fieldwork interviews.
6. Data analysis is systematic and begins as soon as data is available.
7. Data analysis proceeds through identifying categories and connecting them.
8. Further data collection (or sampling) is based on emerging concepts.
9. These concepts are developed through constant comparison with additional data.
10. Data collection can stop when no new conceptualisations emerge.
11. Data analysis proceeds from open coding (identifying categories, properties and dimensions) through selective coding (clustering around categories) to theoretical coding.
12. The resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or a set of propositions.

There are several principles that are fundamental to Grounded Theory and I have incorporated these into my study. These are the principles of emergence, theoretical sampling and constant comparison (Walsh et al., 2015). Emergence is about the researcher entering the research setting with as few preconceived ideas as possible. I have attempted to do this but acknowledge that, as a practitioner, I am not a blank canvas and I comment on my potential biases in the section on reflexivity, later in this chapter. However, my on-going intention was to be as faithful as possible to the voices of the participants.

Theoretical sampling is an on-going process of data collection for generating theory. It involves the researcher “collecting, coding and analysing the data and deciding what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I used theoretical sampling by developing the interview questions as the interviews proceeded, coding after each interview and filling the categories of the emerging themes and deciding where to interview next (supervisee or supervisor) in order to develop the emerging theory.

Constant comparison involves data being continuously compared with previously collected and analysed data and involves asking, “Does this instance of “x”, compare with all the other instances of “x” that I have labelled?” to see if the data support emerging concepts. I used constant comparison throughout my coding and data analysis.

Writing memos is a key tool in Grounded Theory and I have captured three types of memos during the research - personal memos, process memos and theoretical memos. I captured my ideas in a Word file, dated each memo and gave it a heading. My personal memos recorded what I was noticing about myself during the study, including my biases. The process memos reflected my ideas about how the process was working, what was going well and what I needed to modify. I started the theoretical memos once I had begun coding and these contained my thoughts and ideas about coding and the relationship between codes. I have included some memos in this thesis. Glaser (1978) recommended the use of theoretical memos for breaking off from coding and thinking conceptually and creatively about the data so that ideas are not lost.

#### *Other methodologies considered and rejected*

I studied and considered other methodologies before arriving at my decision to use Grounded Theory. The two serious contenders were Action Research and Thematic Analysis. Action Research is a good

fit epistemologically and I was initially drawn to its experimental nature. However, I am interested in ascertaining “how” supervisees see their role, responsibilities, power and agency in supervision and I recognise that Action Research is not an appropriate methodology for describing the characteristics of a group of supervisees and studying underlying processes. The other serious contender was Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis is a flexible methodology that is appropriate for answering research questions starting with “how”. However, Thematic Analysis is considered to have limited interpretative power beyond mere description (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and I want to uncover social and psychological processes impacting supervisees and to develop theory.

### **3.4 Selection of participants and their context**

#### *Purposive and theoretical sampling*

In order to find out how supervisees can help and hinder their coaching supervision, I interviewed both supervisees and supervisors. I selected this mix because I was keen to explore supervisees’ lived-in experiences of how they get in the way of and enhance their coaching supervision and I was interested in hearing supervisors’ perspectives on supervisees’ responsibilities and contributions during supervision. I interviewed them in a sequence that enabled me to fill out the properties and dimensions of the categories and notice where the data was similar and understand category variation, a process in line with theoretical sampling.

I used purposive sampling which is a non-probability form of sampling appropriate for qualitative research. “The goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research question posed and understand the social phenomenon under investigation” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 442).



### *Criteria for selection of participants*

I focused upon supervisees who had had regular, formal, paid, one-to-one and/or group supervision for at least one year. I defined each of these categories below:

- Paid – the supervisee paid the supervisor an agreed amount for their supervision.
- Regular – the supervision took place a minimum of four times a year.
- Formal – The supervisee had selected a supervisor and contracted with him/her about the timing, cost and number of supervision sessions to be provided. It was not an ad hoc arrangement.

I selected these criteria so that I could interview supervisees engaged in a professional supervision relationship. The 'regular' criterion was critical because I needed supervisees to be able to comment on their relationship with their supervisor over a period of time. The supervisees could be business coaches employed by organisations, coaches with their own companies or internal coaches with another role in the company. I excluded coaches who were only involved in peer coaching because peer coaching implies more complex relationships for example, friends and colleagues.

The criteria for the selection of supervisors were that the supervisors needed to have participated in a coaching supervision training programme and be practising supervisors. The first criterion was important because the coaching supervision market is unregulated and I wanted the participant supervisors to be able to draw upon some formal training and understanding of how to conduct and utilise supervision. I sought practising supervisors so that they could provide actual examples of what supervisees do that gets in the way of and enhances their coaching supervision. There was a further criterion that the supervisees and supervisors should be practising in

the UK as coach supervision definitions, practices and requirements vary significantly across different countries.

### *Process for selecting the participants*

Since I was seeking professional coaches who were committed to using supervision as part of their continued professional development and qualified coaching supervisors, I felt that the best route to recruit participants was through coaching professional bodies. It is a requirement of the professional bodies that coaches receive regular supervision. I approached two professional bodies which attract different types of coaches, so that there would be some variation in the levels of supervision experience of the participants. I considered this was important because I wanted to collect data from supervisees with a range of experience, that is, novice, moderately experienced and very experienced supervisees. The two professional bodies I approached were the Association of Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) and the International Coach Federation (ICF). APECS is a UK based association, founded in 2004, with a relatively small membership of highly experienced executive coaches and supervisors. The APECS website describes APECS as “the top level professional membership body for executive coaches, supervisors and advisory services to corporate organisations” (APECS, 2016). It was the first professional association to focus specifically on coaching supervisors in the UK. By contrast, ICF is the largest global coaching association and is more ‘broad church’ in its membership. The UK chapter of ICF includes business coaches, life coaches, executive coaches, leadership coaches and other coaching specialisms (ICF, 2015).

I am accredited as an executive coach and supervisor by APECS and so I had a relationship already with this professional body. I paid a small fee, £30, for my advertisement to be sent out to their membership. I am not a member of ICF and I contacted the UK President, Joy Harcup, whom I knew through my professional

network, to ask permission to advertise for participants. The ICF have research criteria and I had to complete an ICF research form (see appendix 10-2) and agree to share the findings through a webinar for ICF members.

In addition, I included two other supervisors in the research that I know through my professional network. They are both members of professional bodies, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the Association for Coaching (AC). They met the criteria of having been on coaching supervisor development programmes and actively practising as supervisors. I had not provided supervision to or received supervision from either of them.

Having secured two professional bodies to advertise through, I developed a process for selecting the participants. The process consisted of:

1. Utilising the two participant information sheets (one for supervisors and one for supervisees), a consent form and an advert that I had developed and submitted as part of the ethics process at Oxford Brookes. Copies of the information sheet, consent form and advert are shown in appendix 10-3.
2. Asking APECS and ICF to send out the advertisements in January 2015. Collating the email responses from coaches and supervisors and contacting them by email to arrange a pre-screening phone or Skype call and sending them the information sheets and consent forms to read.
3. Carrying out a screening discussion using a proforma shown in appendix 10-4. The questions included:
  - a. Checking whether they had received the participants' sheets and consent form and answering any queries that they might have about these.
  - b. Asking some general questions about their current supervision arrangements to ascertain whether they met the criteria.

- c. Letting the respondents know if they had met the participant requirements and, if so, confirming they were still interested in being involved, inquiring whether they were happy to be interviewed as a supervisor or a supervisee if they met both sets of criteria and arranging a date and venue for an interview.
4. Contacting participants a few days before the interview to remind them of the meeting details and venue, and sending them a list of the topics that would be covered during the interview so that they could reflect on their experiences beforehand.

#### *Response rates and characteristics of the participants selected*

The advertisements generated a total of twenty six enquiries, nine from APECS and seventeen from ICF. Out of these, nineteen became participants in the research. I did not hear back from five after I had emailed them and I did not pursue them. I screened out another three during my pre-selection phone calls because they didn't meet the selection criteria or for ethical reasons. One respondent wanted to be interviewed as a supervisor but she was still doing her coaching supervision training and so she didn't meet the supervisor criteria. A coach who wanted to be interviewed as a supervisee had only had two months of formal, paid supervision and, therefore, she did not meet the criteria for supervisees. The third respondent that I screened out met the criteria but she was an ex-supervisor of mine. We discussed the impact of her participation on the study and agreed that ethically it was not appropriate for her to participate as it might affect our neutrality in the process. During the interview process, one participant had to withdraw because of illness.

I carried out semi-structured interviews with nineteen participants in total. I interviewed twelve supervisees and seven supervisors. The choice of who to interview next followed theoretical sampling practices in the sense that I started off interviewing supervisees and

then moved onto interviewing supervisors in order to enrich the categories in terms of their properties and dimensions and make comparisons to develop the theory as it was emerging (Bryman and Bell, 2011). I then carried out further interviews with a mix of supervisees and supervisors. A timeline of the data gathering process is illustrated in figure 4.

The key characteristics of the research participants selected are described below and a full version of their details is provided in appendix 10-5.

- All of the participants were from business backgrounds and they carried out executive, business, leadership and/or general coaching.
- The participants consisted of 15 women and 4 men.
- All of the interviewees were white Europeans.
- Their experience as coaches ranged from 3-30 years, with an average of 13 years and a median of 12 years.
- The supervisors' experience of supervising ranged from 4-15 years, with an average of 7 years and a median of 6 years (this figure excludes the supervisors that I interviewed as supervisees).
- Only 5 of the participants had counselling or therapy training.
- Four of the 12 supervisees had been trained as supervisors.
- Of the 12 supervisees interviewed, 7 had one-to-one supervision, 1 had group supervision and 4 had both one-to-one and group supervision.
- The number of supervisors that the participants had had, ranged from 1-10 supervisors, with an average and median of 3.

### **3.5 Data collection methods**

#### *Semi structured interviews*

The data collection method was semi-structured interviews because of their flexible and adaptable nature. This enabled me to ask predetermined questions and to modify questions based on my perception of what was appropriate. For example, question wording can be changed, explanations given, the order of questions altered and follow-up questions added or omitted as required (Robson, 2002). This flexibility is important in a Grounded Theory methodology, a key part of which is theoretical sampling. As my interviews proceeded, I refined the interview questions as the dimensions of the research problem became clearer through analysis (Dey, 1993). For example, I started to ask more specific questions about how the power dynamic between supervisee and supervisor changed over time as this emerged as a theme from the early interviews. Appendix 10-6 shows how the questions developed during the interview process.

Semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to explore and probe underlying motives and mechanisms, an important facet of a critical realist study. In critical realist studies, the expertise of the participant is considered to be greatest when they are providing detail about their reasoning, choices and motivations. "Interviews, from a critical realist perspective, are necessary for accessing human thought, meaning, and experience, but they are not by themselves an adequate basis for analysing the multiplicity of causal factors in play in social relations" (Smith and Elger, 2014, p. 122). The researcher is seen as having particular expertise in looking at the wider context and the outcomes of actions.

There are some disadvantages to using interviews. Each part of the process - developing an interview guide, organising and carrying out the interviews and analysing the transcripts were all more time-

consuming than I had initially anticipated. I had to extend the timetable for data gathering by six weeks to allow enough time for all of the crucial stages.

Another disadvantage of conducting interviews is that I had to work hard during the interviews to ensure that, while I built trusting and supportive relationships with participants, I attempted to remain as neutral as possible and not influence their responses or collude with them. I advised participants that this was my role during the introduction to the interview. The researcher needs to demonstrate considerable skill and experience when carrying out effective semi structured interviews (Robson, 2002), making judgments about how to deal with problems, such as over-communicative interviewees, as they arise. I felt that I had the necessary technical skills to conduct interviews, drawing on my background in human resources, consultancy and coaching to do so. At the same time, I was conscious of the different, independent stance that a researcher needs to adopt when conducting interviews.

#### *Creating the interview guides*

Prior to developing the interview guide, I carried out an initial focus group with a group of experienced supervisors in my professional network to explore supervisors' experiences of receiving supervision and trial some interview questions. The focus group is described in the introduction (section 1.1) and shown in figure 4. I found that the participants gave their views rather than their experiences and focused upon aspects of poor supervisor behaviour, rather than on their own contribution to getting the most out of their supervision as supervisees. In particular, there was a reluctance to be open about their anxiety and fear concerning supervision. The questions that yielded the most useful data were asking the participants to name the first things that came into their heads when answering the questions, "Supervisees should always...?" and "Supervisees should never...?"

This experience informed both my research question and the creation of my interview guide.

When developing the interview guide, my objective was to gather data about supervisors' and supervisees' experiences rather than their beliefs about coaching supervision. I did this by asking for actual examples of productive and unproductive supervision experiences, asking them to provide metaphors to describe the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee and utilising a sentence completion exercise to generate data that more effectively revealed participants' lived-in experiences, best practice, learning and underlying fears regarding supervision.

I developed two interview guides, (given in appendix 10-7), one for supervisees and one for supervisors. I was conscious of the length of the interview and kept it to a maximum of 75 minutes. I needed to ask participants to talk openly about sensitive issues, for example what habits they employ that get in the way during supervision and how their anxiety manifests itself. Drawing on my professional experience, I knew that I would need to create a safe environment and interview structure that would enable the participants to open up. I shared an example of one of my habits as a prompt, so that participants could glean what I was asking about. The interview was divided into three parts, starting with easy, non-threatening warm-up questions at the beginning, such as, "Tell me about a good experience of supervision" to settle the participant down (Robson, 2002). In the middle of the interview, I explored their more challenging experiences and I finished the interview by enquiring about their learning and feedback from the research so as to conclude on a positive note (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The interview questions fell into three distinct topics - general questions about supervision, the supervisory relationship and learning through supervision. I chose to ask the biographical questions right at the end of the interview so that these would not spoil the interview flow.



A number of the participants asked me how they could prepare for the research interviews. I deliberated about whether to give them the interview guide in advance. My views about the advantages and disadvantages are captured in a memo.

*I feel that the advantages of having the questions in advance are that more reflective personalities can prepare, I may gather better quality examples and the interviews would be more efficient. I prefer to prepare myself and I didn't have the opportunity when I was a participant in doctoral research. However, the downsides are that I could get opinions rather than experiences and the participants could consult others for their views beforehand (Memo, 9/2/15).*

I discussed this issue with my supervisors and decided to compromise by not providing the interview guide but by offering participants a short list of interview topics so that they could reflect upon their experiences and identify some examples in advance of the interviews. The list would be sent out a couple of days in advance. Feedback from participants was that they found this form of preparation very helpful. A copy of the supervisees and supervisors initial topic areas can be found in appendix 10-8.

An introduction to the interview was developed and piloted. The aim of the introduction was to reassure the participants about the confidential nature of the interview and their right to stop the interview at any point. It was also to manage participants' expectations about the length and content of the interview, the role of the researcher and what would happen following the interview. A copy of the introduction is given in appendix 10-9.

### *Piloting the interviews*

The data collection started with a pilot study in order to identify any potential problems with the interview guide and ensure that the research method functioned well (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The

interview introduction and guides were piloted at the start of the research phase in two ways (see figure 4). First, I asked a colleague to interview me using the interview introduction and supervisee interview guide. This enabled me to experience the flow of the interview, to notice which questions were difficult to comprehend and to learn about my own reflexivity, in particular my lived-in experiences and views about how supervisees can enhance and hinder their coaching supervision. I did not include the data from my pilot interview in the data analysis as this would have impacted the credibility of my research. Second, I asked an experienced supervisee who had passed the selection process if she would be willing to take part in a pilot interview and provide feedback afterwards.

Both pilots provided useful feedback that I captured in my process memos and led to revisions of the interview materials and process. For example, following the feedback I added to the introduction by being more explicit about the structure of the interview so that participants knew where they were in the process and I shared the fact that I had been interviewed using these questions and so was empathetic as to what the participants were experiencing. Following the pilot, I changed the wording on some of the questions. Two examples are described in a process memo.

*One of the questions, “What do you try and avoid doing and feeling during supervision?” was confusing. I want to ask, “How can you sabotage supervision for yourself?” but I don’t want to put it that bluntly! So I changed the question to, “What habits or barriers are you aware that you employ that can make supervision less useful for you?” The second question that didn’t work for me was the question about roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees. This is because it felt like a textbook question and I am concerned that I’ll get a textbook answer. Having reflected after the pilot, I*

*changed this to “responsibilities and obligations” (Memo, 9/2/15).*

In addition, I developed some of the questions and exercises further. For example, asking participants to think of a metaphor to describe their relationship with their supervisor was effective and I wanted to build upon this, as shown in the memo.

*Asking participants what metaphor comes to mind that signifies the relationship between them and their supervisor worked well. I want to find out how participants perceive power relationships in supervision and so I’d like to follow-up on the metaphor question by asking what role power plays in the metaphor (Memo, 9/2/15).*

The pilots led to a refined protocol for assessing how participants feel after the interview. I added a question to seek participant feedback at the end of the interview, as described in a memo.

*When reviewing the pilot, we discussed how to finish the interview and both of us had concerns that participants may be left feeling that there is unfinished business because supervision issues have been stirred up for them. Participant A felt that it would be useful to check out how the participant was feeling at the end of the interview. I added a question, “How are you feeling in yourself now?” and a statement, “Please let me know if anything is troubling you, following this interview” (Memo, 9/2/15).*

Once I had conducted a number of supervisee interviews, I wanted to collect some data from supervisors. I carried out a pilot interview with the first supervisor that I interviewed. Again, I sought feedback afterwards. Much of the feedback was very positive and focused upon how well the interview flowed and how much the participant enjoyed the interview, learning about herself and her practice from participating in the process. The main learning from the pilot with the

supervisor was that it was challenging for the supervisor to focus solely on her supervisees during the interview as I noted in the memo.

*Sometimes participant G wasn't sure whether to answer the question as a supervisor about her supervisees or from her experience of being a supervisee. When she couldn't answer as a supervisor, I encouraged her to answer as a supervisee. I need to be open about this dilemma with supervisors in the interview introduction and if they haven't got examples as a supervisor commenting on their supervisees, ask about their experience of being a supervisee (Memo, 9/2/15).*

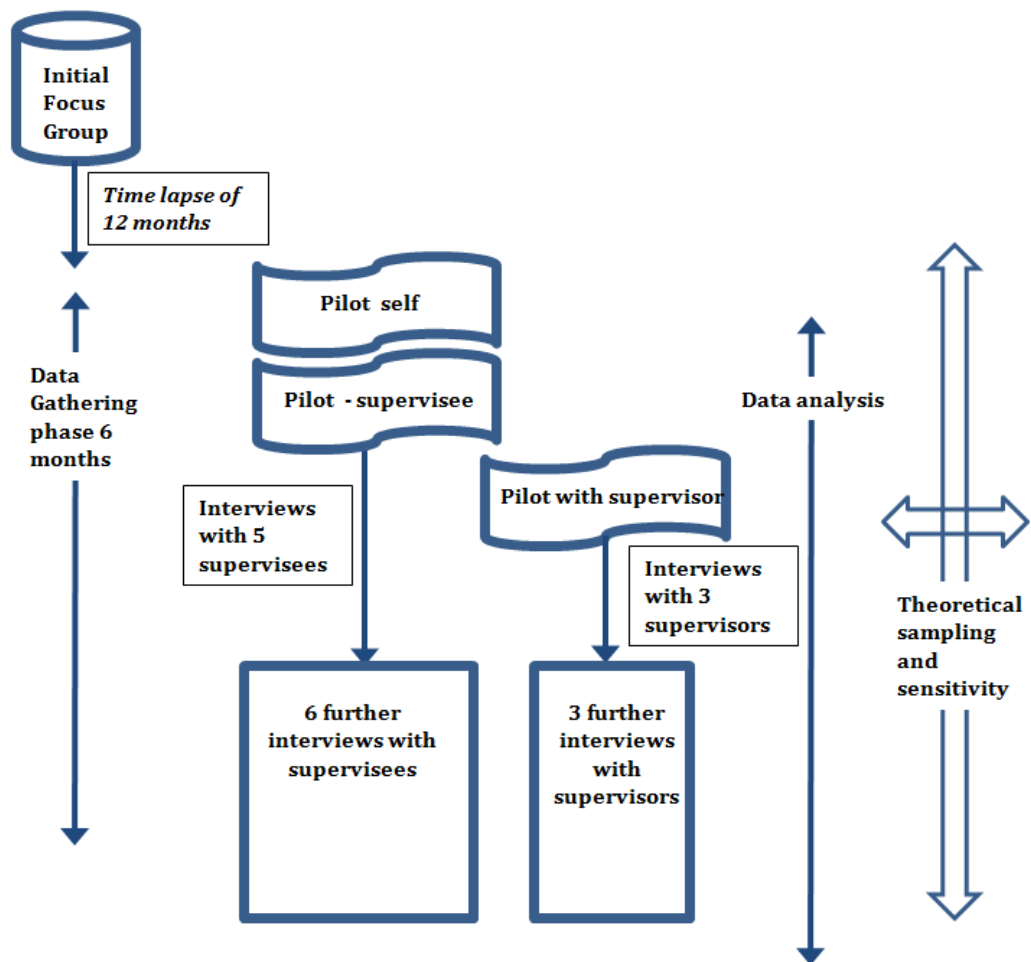


Figure 4: Timeline of the data gathering process, including the pilots

The interviews were carried out over a six month period as shown in figure 4. I started by conducting two pilot interviews and making amendments. This was followed by five further interviews with supervisees. Grounded research is an iterative process and I analysed the data after each interview. I used theoretical sampling and decided where I needed to interview next to collect data. After six interviews with supervisees, I wanted to gain the supervisor's perspective on supervisee behaviour and conducted a pilot interview with a supervisor, followed by three further supervisor interviews. I then interviewed six more supervisees and three more supervisors. In total I carried out 19 interviews.

The interviews took place at venues in Central London to suit the participant. I rented rooms so that the interviews were private. Some participants chose to have interviews over the telephone or Skype and these were conducted in private offices. Every interview, including the pilot interviews, was recorded and transcribed. The recordings were sent to professional transcribers and the notes were available within a week. The transcribers signed confidentiality agreements (see appendix 10-14).

During each interview, I made notes on which interview questions had worked well and any ideas for further changes. After the interviews, I amended the interview guides. Adding further questions to the interview guide based on what emerges from the interviews is a form of theoretical sampling (Urquhart, 2013). Overall, there were twelve different versions of the supervisee interview guide and seven versions of the supervisor interview guide. The participants' topic areas (sent out in advance) were also amended. A table illustrating how the questions changed over time is given in appendix 10-6.

Half way through the research phase I felt overwhelmed by data and short of time. The transcriptions were up to thirty pages in length and were taking approximately ten hours each to open code. I delayed

further interviews for six weeks so that I could code alongside conducting the interviews. This enabled me to overlap the data gathering and data analysis process fully. In practice it meant that I could gain ideas for interview questions in subsequent interviews, fill out the categories for emerging themes in the data and decide where I wanted to interview next in terms of selecting a supervisor or supervisee. Urquhart (2013) describes this as a “light” form of theoretical sampling illustrating some sensitivity to emerging themes in the data.

Nineteen interviews were conducted in total until ‘theoretical saturation’ was achieved. This is the point in coding where the interviews generate instances of the same codes but no new ones emerge and the categories become saturated (Urquhart, 2013). In my final few interviews, I was hearing similar themes and details. Theoretical saturation is achieved through ‘constant comparison’ of incidents in the data to elicit the properties and dimensions of each code.

### **3.6 Data analysis process**

Data analysis was undertaken manually. I went on a course to find out about the benefits and how to use NVivo and learnt that while software helps with data management, it does not do the analysis for you. I decided that I would rather start with pen and paper and use a simple word processing package. The advantages of the decision to code manually were that I was able to focus on learning the process of coding and I got a detailed understanding of the data by engaging with the transcriptions line-by-line rather than being distracted by what the software does or does not do. The disadvantages were that ‘constant comparison’ was cumbersome as it was more time consuming to retrieve all instances of a given code. Furthermore, I wrote my codes on the scripts and highlighted quotes and emotions in different colours and when I went through the transcripts again to

check for what I'd missed, it was challenging not to be distracted by my initial annotations.

I used a seven stage data analysis process (figure 5). Although I have described each stage separately, the process is iterative because, when conducting Grounded Theory, the data collection and data analysis are carried out at the same time and there is a constant movement back and forth between the different stages. The first stage, data transcription, involved listening to the tape recordings of the interviews for an overall sense of the whole and the flow of the interview. It was also an opportunity to check that the transcriptions were accurate and make amendments where there was a gap or a mistake.

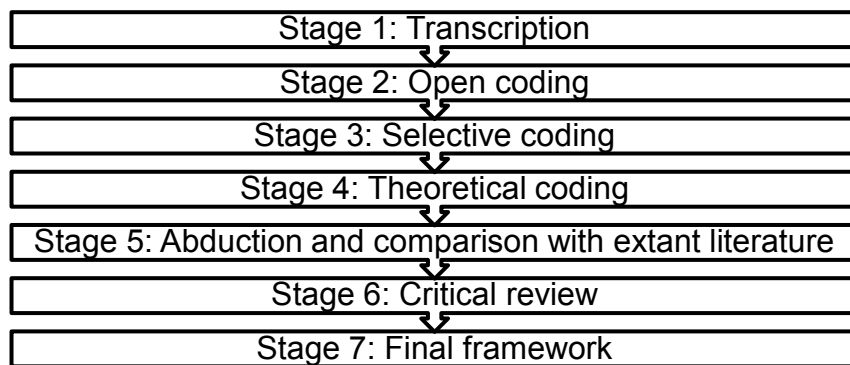


Figure 5: Seven stage data analysis process

The second stage, open coding, involved going through the transcription line by line and entailed a detailed and 'open' analysis of the data (Urquhart, 2013). Glaser (1992) strongly recommended conducting initial coding without holding preconceived concepts in mind and keeping the initial coding open ended. He (1978) shows how coding with gerunds helps to detect processes and stick to the data. I followed this recommendation, using gerunds in my coding so that there was a strong sense of action and sequence. I attached codes to groups of words by annotating in the margins of the transcripts. I then gathered the open codes together and put them

into a lengthy Word document; one page of this document is shown in appendix 10-10.

In order to ensure that I was carrying out open coding correctly, I asked an independent researcher, with experience in coding research on coaching supervision, to check my open coding on a participant's transcript. The researcher signed a confidentiality agreement and the transcript she worked with did not contain the participant's name. The professional researcher ratified the open codes that I had used and she came up with a couple of additional ones. I found it reassuring that I was analysing the data at a justifiable level and picking up on relevant themes.

Stage three, selective coding, enabled me to focus on the rich dimensions of the research problem (Urquhart, 2013). I reviewed the open codes and identified the categories that related to the major focus of the study, what supervisees can do to help and hinder their coaching supervision. At this stage I decided to keep a broad range of selective codes because I wanted to remain as open-minded as possible about the data and the interpretation of it. During stage three, I wrote theoretical memos describing my coding decisions. Where feasible, I used 'in vivo' codes, utilising words suggested by the respondents (Strauss, 1987). For example, participant A referred to supervisees "driving the bus of their supervision". The use of 'in vivo' codes is important for research from a critical realist perspective as it demonstrates that the data interpretation is authentically coming from the data itself (Urquhart, 2013).

I adapted my interview questions as I proceeded so that I could gather data to fill out the dimensions of the selective codes. This resulted in a mass of data, amounting to over twenty pages of codes. At this point I reorganised my data into selective codes, sub codes and sub, sub codes (see appendix 10-11) and then put the data to



one side to let the conceptual framework evolve and mature through reflection and distance.

Stage four is theoretical coding. A “theoretical code conceptualises how the substantive codes may relate to each other” (Glaser, 1978, p. 55). Theoretical codes can come from the coding families put forward by Glaser (1978, Glaser, 2005) or can be self-generated by the researcher. Glaser recommends that theoretical codes are not ‘forced’ and advised that it is better to have no theoretical code than a forced one! He argued that the theory emerges from the data. “Within critical realist-orientated research there is an acceptance of emergence; emergence reflecting re-configuring combinations of causal powers producing effects” (Kempster and Parry, 2014, p. 107).

I went through my selective codes looking at how they related to each other and drew an integrative diagram (appendix 10-12). Strauss (1987) defines integrative diagrams as visual devices that further cumulative integration. Seeing the relationships enabled me to clarify three core constructs. I made notes in theoretical memos to describe and elaborate my ideas and I drew further integrative diagrams to demonstrate how the theoretical codes related to one another.

Stage five involves abduction, recontextualisation of the phenomena in terms of characteristic causal mechanisms or processes which serve to explain them, and comparison with extant literature. I focused on theoretical integration, that is, reading widely and relating the emergent theory to other theories in the field. Glaser referred to ‘theoretical sensitivity’, that is being sensitive to what theory actually is. It involves considering whether the emergent theory confirms, extends or contradicts existing literature. I read extant literature that suggested possible themes and then revisited the data questioning my initial interpretations to see what other aspects might be occurring

to explain the lived-in experiences of supervisees (O' Mahoney and Vincent, 2014).

Stage six, the critical review, involved reviewing the findings. I sought feedback from my supervisors and selected colleagues on my findings and emerging framework. In addition, I presented my findings to the coaching and supervision community at a conference and noted the comments and questions that my presentation generated. Urquhart (2103, p. 124) cautions that, "if the emerging theory is not immediately understandable by a colleague once you have given a careful explanation, then this points to problems of conceptualisation or how to justify that conceptualisation". The emerging theory and framework was revised as a result of the critical review, and a final framework was produced. Stage seven is the final framework that will be covered in Chapter 7.

Arguably there is a stage beyond the scope of this thesis that is offering up the research for other researchers to critique for its usefulness in other contexts. I intend to do this through writing academic papers and presenting at further conferences in the future.

### **3.7 Issues relating to validity, reflexivity and ethics**

#### *Validity*

Traditionally, validity refers to how well a piece of research actually measures what it sets out to do. It is a concept drawn from the positivist scientific tradition and needs specific interpretation and usage in the context of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four alternative criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research. These are shown in table 7 below. In this section, I describe what I have done in relation to each criterion.

<b>Traditional criteria for judging quantitative research</b>	<b>Alternative criteria for judging qualitative research</b>
Internal validity	Credibility
External validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

Table 7: Traditional and alternative criteria for judging research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 55)

The credibility criterion is analogous with internal validity and requires establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable from the participants' perspectives. I used purposive sampling and invited participants from two professional coaching bodies in the UK to participate via an advert that went out to all members. The participants chose to put themselves forward for the research and the selection was random. I also used theoretical sampling to check developing ideas and inform the evolving theory. I was interested in how the participants experienced the research process and I asked a question to gather feedback about this, "What do you feel about this interview process?" I gathered data on what participants liked about the interview process such as, "It is an easy, helpful, positive process" and acted on the few suggestions about what could be improved, for example by sending the question topic areas out earlier. A summary of their comments is given in appendix 10-13.

Transferability is equivalent to external validity and refers to the extent to which the qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the person doing the generalising. I have enhanced transferability by being clear about the research context and conditions so that anyone wishing to transfer the results to a different context can make a considered judgment

about whether this is sensible. My use of thick description, describing the phenomenon in sufficient contextual detail, aids this process. Kempster and Parry (2011) argue that the need for generalisability can be replaced by the substantiveness of the findings to a particular population and, therefore, the plausibility of the findings to a lay reader is a component of the external validity of Grounded Theory findings. They consider that generalisation in critical realist, Grounded Theory studies can be addressed by checking whether the explanations seem plausible by sharing the results of the findings and seeking comments regarding the generative causal powers from peer researchers in the field.

Dependability is analogous to reliability and so is concerned with consistency of observing the same findings under similar circumstances. It required me to describe the changing circumstances of the research and to report changes in the process and context of the study. For example, for theoretical sampling purposes, I developed the interview questions as I proceeded with the interviews. There are twelve versions of the supervisee interview guide and these are shown in appendix 10-6. I noted changes to the process and context in my memos and I have described the changes I made in this chapter because it is important to have a transparent and auditable trail of theory building (Kempster and Parry, 2014).

Confirmability is comparable to objectivity and relies on the degree to which I can show that I am aware and can account for individual bias and demonstrate that others corroborate the research findings. I used a number of strategies to do this. I documented how I used an iterative process to recheck the data throughout my analysis, I used another researcher to check my initial coding and I was critical of my own study, citing the strengths and limitations as well as the negative cases that occurred.

### *Reflexivity*

Reflexivity is the process of critical self–reflection on all of our biases including our theoretical dispositions and the entire research process. In this section, I consider three types of reflexivity in research in relation to epistemological assumptions, method and discipline.

Reflexivity in relation to epistemological assumptions is to become more aware by thinking about our own thinking, by critiquing our epistemological stance and the effect this has on the research (Johnson and Cassell, 2001). My aim in conducting the research is to increase the understanding of coaching supervision in general. I am focusing my research on how supervisees help and hinder their coaching supervision and I want to provide insights for supervisees on how to enhance their coaching supervision and for supervisors on the views of supervisees and how to manage the relationship and process in order to encourage full participation.

As a critical realist, I am making many assumptions. I am assuming that an objective reality exists independently of our thoughts. The data I gather will not provide direct access to that reality. All knowledge I gather must be seen as tentative and fallible. However, through the research process, I will get closer to understanding the supervisee's role in coaching supervision but I cannot achieve absolute certainty about it. I am assuming that this reality is mediated through others and the participants can describe their experiences and can see how they contributed to situations. I am assuming that there are underlying generative mechanisms that I can uncover through my interviews, analysis, extant reading and interpretation and that these will explain the link between events and experiences. I am assuming that the causal explanations will make sense and provide epistemic gain to our understanding of how supervisees add value to coaching supervision.

As a researcher, I play a significant role in the research. My background and experiences influence the choice of research question, methodology, data collection, data analysis and how I present my findings. I am effected by extant research, theoretical perspectives and models from literature. I built some processes into the research to find out about and mitigate my own biases. These included:

- Choosing Grounded Theory as it is a solid methodology with a clear inductive process.
- Writing personal memos about my thoughts including my biases, writing process memos about what is and isn't working and writing theoretical memos about coding ideas and analytical decisions.
- Being interviewed myself using the interview guide as part of the pilot to ascertain my biases and assumptions on the interview questions.
- Using adverts through professional bodies to recruit the majority of the participants so that I did not know them.
- Recording and transcribing the interviews and repeatedly listening to the recordings and reading the transcriptions to carry out constant comparison and check for what I have missed.
- Seeking feedback from participants about how they experienced the process and acting on their suggestions.
- Sharing my findings with colleagues to check if they are plausible.

I also adopted some reflexive practices during the entire research study to provide space for constant reflection on my personal experiences of research. These reflexive practices included attending monthly supervision sessions with my doctoral supervisors, a bi-monthly supervision action research group and bi-weekly discussions with my research buddy.

### *Ethics*

This section covers the ethics of the research and how I safeguard the participants (Silverman, 2011). I belong to two professional bodies, APECS and EMCC, and abide by their ethical codes (AC and EMCC, 2016, APECS, 2006). In addition, all the participants involved in the research belong to professional coaching bodies with ethical codes. I did not use client names on the transcripts. These were substituted for letters.

I applied for ethics approval for research involving human participants from Oxford Brookes, University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The approval facilitated my thinking through ethical issues at an early stage in the project. I designed:

- Participant information sheets for supervisees and supervisors
- A consent form
- An advert for coaches and supervisors to be used with professional bodies
- A data compliance letter for the transcribers approved by UREC
- A list of draft interview questions for supervisees and supervisors.

Copies of these materials are provided in appendices 10-3, 10-7 and 10-14. Following the UREC meeting, I answered further ethical questions that the committee had about the research and I supplied evidence of how I was going to address their concerns (given in appendix 10-15).

I anticipated that there would be two main ethical challenges, the first related to the confidentiality of data. To counter this, I carried out the interviews in private rooms in Central London at locations to meet the client's needs and the interviews that were conducted by telephone

or Skype were also carried out in private offices. I audio recorded the interviews and sought permission to do this beforehand, giving each participant the right to ask for the recording to be switched off at any point and for any comments to be deleted. The data was encrypted to ensure its security when transmitting recordings and transcripts between researcher and transcriber. Both transcribers signed data compliance agreements, approved by UREC. I used de-identified data using alphabetical codes and kept the data, codes and all identifying information in separate locked filing cabinets in my office. Access to my computer files is available by password only and I have sole access to my computer. I will use pseudonyms in any publications arising from the research.

The second ethical challenge was the potential psychological impact of the interviews on the participants. I wanted to probe their experiences of effective and less effective supervision sessions in order to gain useful data about what supervisees can do to enhance and hinder their supervision. I knew that I would need to build trust with participants (Silverman, 2011) to encourage them to open up about their experiences and I drew on my experience of co-creating safe working environments to do so. When I designed the interview guide, I placed the more challenging questions halfway through the interview, so that participants had time to settle into the interview first and address easier topics towards the end. As an experienced coach and coaching supervisor, I felt confident about my ability to handle what came up and to manage unexpected situations. I was conscious that some participants might find themselves opening up to me more than they had anticipated. This concern was heightened by my participation in a pilot interview for this research because, at the end of the interview, I realised how affected I was by an early negative supervision experience. I told my academic supervisor about this and discussed it with my coaching supervisor. I carried out a pilot interview with Participant A and she had the same reaction. As a result, I added a question, "How are you feeling in yourself now?"



Please let me know if anything is troubling you following this interview”. All of the participants said that they felt fine and some of them added that they appreciated being asked. In addition, I contacted an external, professional counsellor, who is also a trained coach and coaching supervisor and had him ‘on call’ to provide any support or guidance should participants be affected by the interview. Thankfully, none of the participants needed this support.

### *Summary*

This chapter has outlined the research methodology. I describe my theoretical perspective and beliefs about the nature of reality, truth and knowledge, discuss and defend the choice of methodological approach, explain the selection of participants and their context, describe the data collection methods and data analysis process and discuss issues relating to validity, reflexivity and ethics.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I report the findings from the interviews. Chapter 4 focuses upon the benefits of supervision that supervisees experience; Chapter 5, supervisee inhibitors; and Chapter 6, supervisee enablers. In Chapter 7, I describe an overarching theme, underlying mechanisms for supervisees lived-in experiences are explored and I provide a theoretical framework for how supervisees can help and hinder their coaching supervision. Conclusions and recommendations are made in Chapter 8.

## **4 Findings – Experiencing the benefits of coaching supervision**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The interviews generated a wealth of data from supervisees and supervisors about coaching supervision and decisions about what to include have been made guided by the research question - how supervisees can help and hinder their coaching supervision. This has involved hard choices and has meant excluding some data for the purposes of this study, for example material relating to how supervisors can enhance supervision.

As the research interviews focused on what supervisees do that helps and hinders their coaching supervision, supervisors were asked for their views on the supervisee perspective and, where they could not provide this, to consider their perspective as supervisees. In the findings the views expressed are attributed, specifying where the views are from supervisees, supervisors or both groups.

The data from the interviews was so rich that it speaks largely for itself in the next three chapters and there is minimal interpretation. Interpretation is provided in the discussion chapter. In addition, the findings are not related to the literature until the discussion chapter because the data seems richer than the literature on supervisees within coaching supervision - which is an emergent field. In Chapter 7, additional literature is introduced to inform the discussion, in line with normal Grounded Theory practice.

The three core categories identified as the result of the analysis are shown in figure 6. They are: experiencing the benefits of coaching supervision, supervisee inhibitors and supervisee enablers. The benefits of supervision are described first in this chapter because the research participants emphasised how much they learnt from and

how highly they valued supervision. Supervisees' 'tendency to get in their own way' during supervision is explored in Chapter 5. Chapter 6, looks at what supervisees do to 'drive the bus of their supervision' and maximise the benefits of supervision.

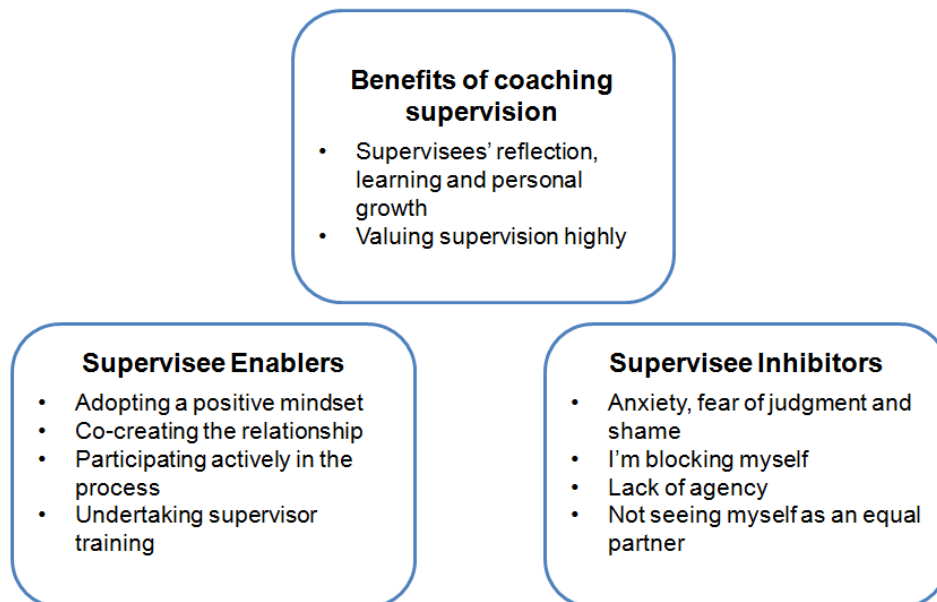


Figure 6: Core categories

Two of the core categories, the inhibiting and enabling factors, are focused on in order to provide a balanced picture of what supervisees can avoid doing and what they can do to enhance their supervision. This is not to suggest that half of what goes on in supervision is negative but to shed light on what may be going on consciously and unconsciously during supervision.

This chapter presents the benefits that supervisees experience from supervision. The themes that emerged from the data are:

- Learning through supervision
- Valuing supervision

## 4.2 Learning through supervision

This section describes the views of the supervisees on what they learnt through supervision, the different ways in which they learn, the impact of their learning and how this develops over time. The types of learning are shown in table 8.

Type of Learning	Sub-categories
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing coaching knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Making sense of personal experiences</li> <li>• Learning to observe self</li> <li>• Gaining new perspectives on clients</li> <li>• Recognising and working with ethical issues</li> <li>• Increasing well-being and restoration</li> <li>• Learning how to accelerate learning</li> <li>• Gaining knowledge about the coaching profession</li> <li>• Learning about on-going development needs</li> </ul>
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical learning, e.g. new theories, models and tools</li> <li>• Presenting work in different ways, e.g. recordings, journaling and using cards</li> <li>• Rehearsing conversations during supervision</li> <li>• Learning through play, e.g. drawing, walks and constellations</li> <li>• Learning through the supervisor modelling and the relationship</li> <li>• Learning through others' experiences (group supervision)</li> <li>• Receiving feedback</li> <li>• Observing self and self evaluating</li> <li>• Reflexive learning following supervision</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifting and gaining perspective</li> <li>• Feeling less tangled and 'lighter' as a result</li> <li>• Developing a sharper awareness of what's happening in the moment and knowing their patterns better</li> <li>• Learning and adopting new skills and behaviours</li> <li>• Developing their capacity to self-supervise</li> <li>• Developing the ability to handle ethical issues</li> <li>• Feeling encouraged, more confident and wise</li> <li>• Learning not to be so hard on oneself and how to restore oneself better</li> <li>• Changing their practice, e.g. improved contracting</li> <li>• Improving relationships with clients</li> </ul>

Table 8: Learning from supervision

Supervisees spoke about increasing their coaching knowledge and skills during supervision. They learnt at an emotional level by making sense of their coaching and personal experiences through exploring what was going on for them in specific situations, learning to observe

themselves and think about what they could do to develop themselves going forward. Supervisees gained new perspectives on their clients: *“So quite often I’ll see the client in a slightly different way, once I’ve had a session”* (F16). They recognise and work with ethical issues through supervision. Supervisees learnt how to enhance their well being and how to increase their learning, *“being more open to other possibilities”* (A33). They also gained knowledge about the coaching profession and their on-going development.

*“And I say every year, the most important CPD I’ve done comes from my supervision, because I get more learning working with my supervisor, than from anything I go on, and I go on some good stuff”* (H16).

Supervisees learnt through a variety of ways depending on their learning styles and preferences. Some supervisees enjoyed learning on a theoretical level by being introduced to new theories, models, methodologies and tools and researching these following the session, *“I’ll go off and research topics that we’ve covered”* (C19). Supervisees described the different ways they presented their work in supervision, for example, through listening to recordings, *“there is so much to notice from recordings and we don’t have to focus on problems but on being two human beings connecting”* (K23), using cards or metaphors to explore their issues or feelings, a supervisor commented *“one supervisee loves to choose a card for their mood and then to talk about what it means”* (P18) or keeping a diary of events to increase self awareness. One supervisee addressed the following questions in her diary:

*“When do you feel anxious about something? What do you notice? What response did you have? What does that tell you about you? How can you care for yourself when that happens?”* (T37).

They also learn through different techniques that supervisors employ during supervision, such as rehearsing client conversations with the

supervisor or their peers in group supervision, *“she gives me language to use with a client”* (F3). Some supervisees described learning through ‘play’ and enjoyed getting out of their rational, comfort zone, for example by going on reflective walks with their supervisor or participating in a constellations exercise to look at what is happening in the system, *“all of a sudden that whole business of standing in someone else’s shoes sparked an insight”* (U16). Other supervisees reported learning through the supervisory relationship, by observing their supervisors’ interactions and skills, *“my supervisor modelled being comfortable in her own skin and having the courage to say what is going on in the moment”* (R16). Supervisees who participated in group supervision learnt through hearing about others’ practices and experiences, *“you get a very deep and rich experience from everybody there, you’ll get four different viewpoints really”* (N3). They also learn through receiving feedback from the supervisor, *“I experience you as being a very empathetic person”* (J20) and through noticing how they behave and what they say, in other words, self-evaluating during supervision, *“I am hearing myself say things and thinking: Is this right? How is that? Is that true?”* (M3) and by carrying out reflexive learning following supervision, *“what am I learning about myself here?”* (J21).

Supervisees described many benefits resulting from their learning. Some of these benefits were personal and others impacted their clients and practice directly. The benefits of personal learning included shifting and gaining perspective on issues and feeling less tangled, more complete and lighter as a result at the end of a session. Supervisees reported learning about themselves as coaches and people, for example learning about their response to change and developing a sharpened awareness of what is happening in the moment and being able to share this. Supervisees spoke about tangible, observable benefits like learning new skills, for example paying attention to parallel process in coaching and supervision, adopting new practices through embedding learning

after supervision, developing an ability to handle ethical issues and learning to self supervise. Supervisees also reported psychological benefits such as feeling more encouraged and confident, *“reinforcement that I am tapping all the bases I need to tap”* (M20), learning not to be so hard on themselves, *“she gives me comfort in being good enough”* (F2), taking themselves less seriously, *“being able to laugh at myself”* (R16), and learning how to look after themselves. Some supervisees described how their practices were slowly changing as they became more aware of their habits and patterns and adopted new behaviours, for example improving their contracting, *“it added some things to the way I contract”* (S28) and learning not to get so caught up in their clients’ stories. Other supervisees remarked that their clients benefited from their learning.

*“Bringing myself much more to my coaching sessions has been adding a huge amount to the coaching sessions themselves and the coachee has been benefiting”* (N3).

All of the supervisees, bar one, described a transition in their learning, over time, in three phases. Their development started with a transactional phase when they were keen to understand how they were doing, how to handle specific issues and interested in developing basic techniques and approaches.

*“My approach to learning was, I’ve got this issue, tell me how to solve it, give me the tools and tell me what to look at and read and I’ll go away and figure it all out, and there was little depth about me there”* (C20).

During the next phase more experienced supervisees describe developing their internal supervisor, *“I’m even developing my own internal supervisor although at the moment it still has stabilisers on it”* (H17). Supervisees wanted to discuss particular cases and get advice when they are getting stuck, *“well I’m hearing the client has potentially got clinical depression and here is a way that you can approach that”* (S29).

The third phase involves very experienced supervisees who see learning in a more holistic way, talk more about emotions and feelings, focus on themes and see their patterns as 'old friends', *"I'm fed up with being stuck in this pattern, now let's do something different"* (U17). Supervisors noticed that experienced supervisees start talking at a deeper level straight away in supervision sessions, *"with less wrapping paper"* (G15) and that these supervisees can be at their learning edge during supervision. Over time, supervisees felt able to bring themselves more fully to the coaching process, *"the issues that I'm bringing are much more about being a coach than doing coaching"* (N22). Very experienced supervisees learnt how to self supervise, manage ethical issues and break 'the rule book' safely, *"I had too rigid a boundary between coaching and therapy and, as a consequence, missed a number of opportunities to support clients"* (S29). One supervisor described supervisees' learning over time as like, laying down layers of rice paper, *"you can't see any difference in the individual layer but, over time, when you have a stack, you can see that your practice has changed"* (Q26). Supervisees noticed that they were not the only ones who were developing – their supervisors were on their own developmental journey too.

This section has focused on what supervisees reported that they learnt from supervision and how they learnt in terms of different ways that they present their work and techniques employed during supervision. Supervisees described the benefits arising from their learning and how their learning develops over time.

### **4.3 Valuing supervision**

In this section I describe what supervisees value about supervision and how the value of supervision is perceived to grow over time. Supervisees talked about valuing their supervisors and used a range of positive adjectives to describe the relationships that they have with





supervisees rely heavily on supervision and come to sessions 'desperate', with a long list of specific questions, *"I've no idea what I'm doing and I need to speak to someone before I next speak to this particular client"* (S2). Experienced supervisees said that they felt that there was much to talk about, *"there is always something to chew on"* (A7), they welcomed bringing mistakes and things that had not worked to supervision and they felt more relaxed and less anxious during supervision. Over time, they saw layers of complexity and believed that multiple perspectives enabled good reflection and they had deeper, more wide-ranging and insightful conversations about 'life' with their supervisor. Some very experienced supervisees felt that supervision was invaluable. They reflected that they could not do without supervision and described themselves as wanting *"to get everything, every morsel I can out of it"* (B3) and *"feeling addicted to it"* (U15). Several of these supervisees commented that they would continue with supervision even if it was not a professional requirement.

The benefits of supervision articulated by supervisees and supervisors fall into two distinct themes, learning and valuing other aspects of supervision, such as their relationships with their supervisors and how they feel as a result of supervision. The next two chapters focus upon what supervisees can do that inhibits their supervision experience and what enables them to enhance it. It is clear that supervisees are already getting much learning and value from supervision, however they can magnify the benefits from the supervision process still further if they address supervisee inhibitors and adopt supervisee enablers.

## 5 Findings – Supervisee inhibitors, “I’m getting in my own way”

This chapter presents the findings of the study in relation to the factors that can inhibit supervisees from getting the most from their supervision. Supervisees and supervisors reported what contributed to their less productive supervision sessions and four themes emerged from the data:

- Anxiety, fear of judgment and shame
- I’m blocking myself
- Lack of agency in the supervisee
- Not seeing myself as an equal partner

These inhibitors are shown in figure 8.

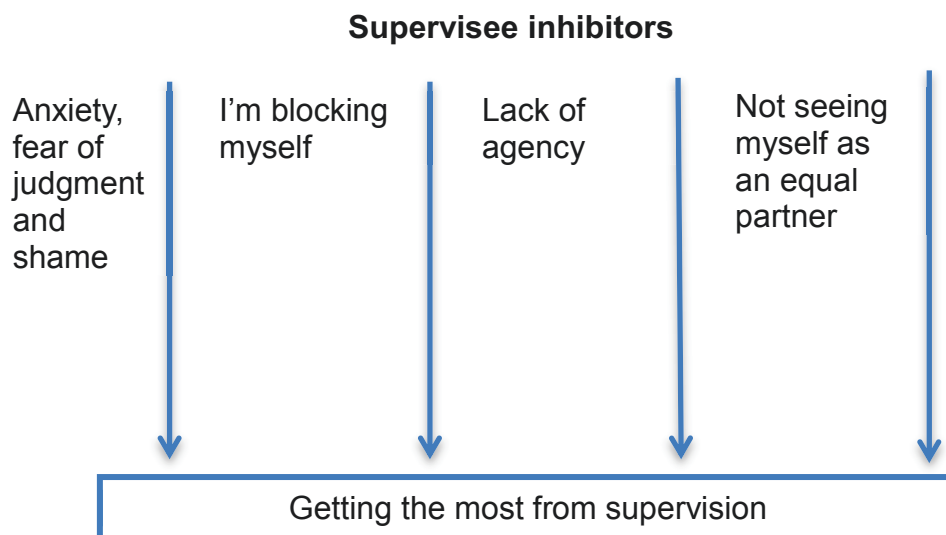


Figure 8: Supervisee inhibitors

### 5.1 Anxiety, fear of judgment and shame

In this section I will describe the range of negative emotions expressed by supervisees and explore the contexts for anxiety, fear of judgment and shame and the impact of these emotions. During the interviews, participants spoke of a range of negative emotions that they experienced during supervision and these are summarised in the word cloud, in figure 9. As the interviews progressed, theoretical



supervisor. For example, one supervisee felt anxious when his supervisor recommended a course of action that he was not comfortable with; another supervisee didn't trust her supervisor to review their relationship in an open way; and an experienced supervisee picked up on her novice supervisor's own discomfort and this caused her to be anxious.

It is important to note that over half of the supervisees interviewed did *not* report feeling anxious during supervision, *"I'm not consciously aware that I get anxious about telling her stuff because I do actually trust her with it"* (B9). Although there could be various explanations for this, I wonder whether some supervisees might not be aware of their anxiety or are in denial about it. A novice supervisee said, *"To be honest, I never felt anxious, I felt more excited"* (E4). When pressed, some supervisees who had said that they couldn't remember moments of anxiety, did acknowledge these feelings.

*"I suppose that there would be anxiety just as I'm about to say something that I don't feel proud of, because you're telling another human being that, you know, the whole shadow side"* (F6).

Many of the supervisees interviewed spoke about fear of judgment during supervision. The contexts for this varied. Some supervisees reported feeling judged by external supervisors, *"obviously confidentially, I felt a bit judged by my recent supervisor, which is why I wouldn't contract again"* (N5). A couple of supervisees commented that internal supervisors in their organisations could be too close to the issue being discussed. Fear of judgment was felt to be greater in the group context, as there was the potential for judgment by peers as well as the supervisor.

*"I found the group very tense and some of that was probably about me and some of it was probably about other people in the room... not wanting to feel ashamed, or embarrassed or kind of found out or badly judged"* (F1).

Some supervisees said that they judged themselves and a few supervisees commented that they were concerned that they were judging the supervisor and their peers too. Other supervisees said that they didn't feel judged, *"I have never felt judged at all. I certainly felt challenged"* (N10) and one supervisee recognised that that was unusual, *"No I haven't felt judged in group or individual supervision and that's quite something really isn't it?"* (U5)

Supervisees felt that fear of judgment knocked their confidence. *"If I feel that I'm being judged, it is crucifying because I'm already judging myself pretty badly"* (A40). Supervisees said that it can slow or stop their development, *"I feel I've closed down"* (R17). Supervisees talked about the consequences of anxiety which were to edit the thoughts that they shared and the topics that they raised, *"I don't feel free to say what is going on in my mind"* (B3), to be defensive, to protect themselves by ensuring that they did not allow themselves to be vulnerable or expose themselves and their practice. Anxiety and fear of judgment led one supervisee to want to distract her supervisor by asking her lots of questions, *"because I wasn't feeling good about myself, my practice or my business and I was a bit worried about it"* (B10). A Supervisor explained that shame can smother a supervisee's ability to see and explore their vulnerability, *"shame is like a wet blanket that sits on our vulnerability and stops it from seeing the light of the day"* (G9).

Anxiety, fear of judgment and shame were raised by a number of supervisees and supervisors as a major inhibitor in coaching supervision. These emotions were particularly prevalent for new supervisees and present for some at the start of every new supervisory relationship. The impact of these emotions was to slow down development because the emotions stopped supervisees from bringing or fully exploring issues or feelings that they were ashamed about and this prevented supervisees from being able to explore self-limiting beliefs and to move forward.

## 5.2 I'm blocking myself

Supervisees were asked “What personal habits got in the way of their supervision?” I asked this question as I have noticed that I, and the supervisees that I supervise, have habits that we employ during supervision that get in the way of exploring our issues. Three themes emerged: lack of preparation; psychological diversion tactics; and holding a limited view of potential learning.

### *Lack of preparation*

Lack of preparation was the most common habit to which supervisees admitted. This was described as not preparing and ‘winging it’ with the result that they were unclear about what they wanted from the session. *“I think the big one is preparation and not preparing” (B8)*. Lack of preparation could take the form of bringing too many issues, bringing superficial material, focusing on tangential or generic issues or bringing an inappropriate topic, for example one supervisee regretted asking her supervisor about transactional analysis because this provoked a didactic response. Supervisees described how lack of preparation led to focusing on one perspective, such as their clients, rather than their personal patterns or the wider system. Another supervisee explained that he had the opposite habit and tended to over prepare and spent too much time *“coming back to those same kind of things” (W7)*. Supervisors recognised that supervisees were not always fully present in the supervision sessions for a variety of reasons including being busy and feeling tired, *“rushing in without pre-thought and so their mind is somewhere behind rather than fully in the moment” (P6)*.

### *Psychological diversion tactics*

Supervisees provided examples of different diversion tactics that they employed – asking the supervisor lots of questions so that they could hide, over talking and getting drawn into stories and getting lost in detail. *“I know that one of my supervisors will happily get distracted*

*and doesn't spot it" (P6). Many supervisees mentioned over-rationalising and 'analysis paralysis', "let's intellectualise it to death" (U4). Some supervisees admitted that they could be defensive and verbally beat themselves up about their inadequacy, being determined to be at fault. Supervisees were self-judging and self-conscious about bringing familiar patterns and issues.*

*"I catch myself out kind of feeling, my goodness, I've been here before, haven't I got to grips with this yet? I can't bring this up again...the fear is, haven't I learnt that yet?" (N6).*

Some supervisees were too polite to ask for what they needed from the session and said too little. *"I'm blocking myself often by that whole thing around introversion, I think through things a million times before I say the end result" (C7). They self censored, were guarded, displayed diminished curiosity and were concerned to be seen as a good coach. Group supervision increased this self-consciousness, "the fear of being or doing something wrong or acknowledging that you made a big mistake" (E3). Some supervisees said that they were overly concerned about being entertaining and not boring the group. Another habit prevalent amongst supervisees at group supervision was worrying that there was not enough time to go into depth on their issue - and so avoided bringing it.*

#### *Holding limited beliefs on the potential for learning in supervision*

Some supervisees said that they held limited beliefs about potential learning in supervision. This took many forms including focusing on finding solutions to questions rather than learning, not reflecting afterwards, not knowing how to capture the learning from supervision and not committing to actions after the session. One supervisor explained that his problem solving habit involved the supervisor too, *"it starts with the supervisee but the supervisor gets hooked into it" (Q9). A couple of supervisees acknowledged that they were reluctant to focus on what was going well and held an assumption that supervision is for remedial purposes, "coming to the headmaster" (K8). In a group context, supervisees spoke about getting overly*



involved in other members' issues and not reflecting on how the discussion related to their own practice and learning.

*"It's a bit of a mask so you can feel that you are working, you feel you're being part of the group, but not actually getting into the stuff that's important to you" (G6).*

One supervisee tended to use her partner to talk things through with before supervision and this devalued supervision for her, *"when I come to supervision, it is superfluous" (R4)*. This raises questions about what supervisees want to get from supervision. While, in some circumstances, it may be sufficient to self-supervise or to use a peer as a sounding board, supervisees have stressed how valuable they find it to select challenging issues to bring to supervision to explore and learn from, with a qualified supervisor.

Supervisors noticed how some supervisees can limit their learning. Several talked about supervisees going through the motions of supervision to obtain accreditation. One supervisor spoke about supervisees blocking themselves and being unwilling to explore and experiment in the sessions and this reducing their learning; another spoke of how supervisees can hide in sessions, referring to this as *"a small, thin layer of obstruction" (K9)*. A supervisor had experienced supervisees taking against the supervisor in some way and therefore not being open to learning, *"I suspect that this is probably a defensive thing on their part" (G5)*.

Supervisees can block themselves in a number of ways during supervision. Three common practices that supervisees and supervisors talked about were not preparing prior to the session, employing psychological diversion tactics during supervision and holding limiting beliefs about the potential for learning from supervision. Supervisees commented that whilst some of these practices were conscious, others were unconscious. The impact of these tactics is to reduce the potential for learning during supervision.

### 5.3 Lack of agency in the supervisee

Supervisees' lack of agency was another factor that could potentially limit their learning and development. The lack of agency can take different forms. Firstly, being unsure about what coaching supervision is and how they can best use it and benefit from the process. Secondly, being reluctant to discuss issues arising in the relationship. Thirdly, not changing supervisor when their needs are no longer being met.

#### *Lack of awareness about supervision and how to use it*

Supervisees reported an initial lack of understanding about what coaching supervision was, how it could add value to their practice and how to make the most out of it. Some supervisees found themselves having supervision as a result of being on a coaching programme or coaching within an organisation.

*"I remember doing my coach training and on the last module they talked about supervision and I didn't even know what it was at that point. I remember thinking why do I need a supervisor?" (A4).*

Many supervisees had no guidance about how to use the supervision process and, in some cases, no choice about who supervises them as a supervisor was allocated to them as part of the programme. This lack of awareness and choice provoked anxiety in the supervisees,

*"Before I started it was scary because I anticipated this supervisor telling me if I was doing well or not but then actually when I had supervision, I felt happy because it helped me to become a better coach and that's what I wanted" (E1).*

By contrast, one supervisee who had a counselling background had had a different experience of early coaching supervision. She had a sense of what she wanted from coaching supervision because she was used to having counselling supervision.

*“And so, because I’d done a post-grad in counselling, I understood about looking at what’s going on for me as well as the client and recognising that, very clearly when you are working with people, stuff comes up for you and you need to tend to yourself in order to be able to be present for the client” (B2).*

The supervisee selected her supervisor because she was reading a book by her and was attracted to her background, expertise and style. She contacted her and was clear about what she wanted from the supervision process. However, the majority of supervisees interviewed were less sure about what supervision entailed and were not aware how to use supervision effectively early on in their supervision journeys.

#### *Reluctance to discuss the supervisory relationship*

Four out of twelve supervisees had never discussed their supervisory relationship with their supervisor and they had each had supervision for at least five years, *“I don’t think we’ve ever discussed our relationship” (W15)*. The following paragraphs focus upon examples of issues that arise during supervision that some supervisees had discussed, reasons other supervisees had not discussed the supervisory relationship and the potential impact of avoiding the discussion.

A couple of supervisees had had monetary issues. They felt that they were overcharged or that the supervision had been too expensive or poor value for money. Several supervisees felt that their expectations of supervision were not being met and they were being ‘coached’ rather than supervised or being provided with ‘expert’ input rather than coaching supervision, *“anyway, very early on, I brought up this issue around what I wanted was supervision, as opposed to being coached” (R13)*. In a couple of cases, there was poor connection and a lack of trust with a supervisor. Other supervisees hadn’t liked their supervisors’ challenges or had felt judged, *“I’m feeling judged right*

*now and it is not helpful” (A24).* One supervisee had found out that his supervisor had broken confidentiality and it had got back to the client.

*“I asked for a meeting between myself, the supervisor and the contracting organisation and we sat down the three of us in the room. It was a bit of a blow up and then we had a conversation about what had happened” (C17).*

Supervisees having group supervision had experienced different issues. One supervisee found that her group became too cosy, too much time was spent on chatting and check-ins and she wanted more challenge, another that there was not enough time for her issues to be aired. A couple of supervisees had felt that other supervisees in their groups were at a different stage of development to them.

The reasons for not discussing the supervisory relationship varied. Some supervisees were unaware of the option to discuss the relationship, the supervisor had not asked for feedback on how they were relating and the supervisees had not thought to raise it either.

*“I’ve not even thought about that before and that’s quite interesting coming from a coaching perspective where I do review the coaching process with people” (C16).*

Other supervisees had issues that they would like to bring up with the supervisor but they did not want to hurt the supervisors’ feelings. Some supervisees commented that their supervisors’ irritating behaviours had been going on for a long time and so they were embarrassed to give feedback and didn’t want to appear critical. A few supervisees minimised the importance of providing feedback.

*“It is just a small issue so I’ve never mentioned it and at the moment I have no intention of mentioning it, but sometimes she talks too much” (F14).*

One supervisee felt that a lack of trust prevented her from raising issues about the relationship as when she had brought up issues in the past, the supervisor had asked her how she had contributed.

*“I felt blamed for bringing the issue up, so I wasn’t getting value, because I was not creating value in the supervision session. I felt quite judged” (R6).*

The impact of not discussing issues that arise with the supervisor can be to rupture the supervisory relationship, *“so I felt short-changed and it did rupture the relationship. I did not call it early enough really” (A26)*. By avoiding discussing issues that arise, supervisees miss having additional ‘data’ to discuss with the supervisor, *“ruptures as data” (T29)* and exploring to what extent any parallel process is at play in the issue. A supervisor said:

*“We do get hunches and intuitions, and there was some parallel process and sure enough this has been happening to her as well and I have been able to point out that pattern” (J13).*

Discussing issues can lead to mutual learning and so avoiding the discussion can reduce the opportunity for learning. One supervisor shared:

*“I genuinely view anything that goes wrong as an opportunity for learning for both supervisor and supervisee and I will do anything in my power, my gift and skills to open that opportunity” (Q19).*

In addition, avoiding giving feedback to the supervisor restricts possibilities to build the relationship, create a more balanced partnership and develop mutual respect.

*“Stepping back and looking at it together can be difficult, but it can be very useful because it is part of breaking down the supervisor being seen as one of the police” (K15).*

### *Reluctance to change supervisor*

Five out of the twelve supervisees in this study expressed reluctance to change their supervisor and they had each been with the same supervisor for at least five years. In the following paragraphs, I outline the reasons supervisees and supervisors gave for wishing to

change supervisor, I describe why supervisees are reluctant to change supervisor and I report on supervisees' lack of transparency when ending the supervisory relationship.

Supervisees gave three main reasons for changing supervisor – work or organisation related, to gain a different perspective and due to a relationship issue or rupture with the supervisor. The work related reasons were coming to the end of a role, assignment or coach training or not having enough coaching work.

*“I haven't made a conscious choice to change the supervisor, it's just been the projects ended and therefore the supervisory relationship ended” (C18).*

There were two other reasons given that related to provision of supervision by the organisation – the company either stopped paying for it or provided an internal supervisor instead of paying for an external one.

Supervisees change their supervisors to gain another perspective, *“I change my supervisor every couple of years or so, because I like the idea of having a different perspective” (A6)*. Supervisees can outgrow the supervisor. One supervisee complained of feeling bored looking through the same lens. Another, that she changed supervision group because the group had become too cosy and repetitive.

*“If you want the jolt and the input that supervision gives you, then the chances are you need to change groups occasionally, to get that refresh and rethink” (S25).*

One supervisee said that she wanted to work with a new supervisor that she admired and hoped to learn from her supervision skills because *“it might be a new beginning as opposed to an ending” (A28)*.

Several supervisees said that they changed supervisor when they did not like the supervisor's style, for example, one considered she was being 'coached' rather than supervised and another that he was

being 'mentored'. Several supervisees ended their supervisory relationships as a consequence of being unhappy about their supervisors' responses to ruptures in the relationship, *"I could not trust her in the same way actually, and I just did not use her anymore"* (A26). Supervisees who chose to change supervisor reported that they gained from doing so as having a new supervisor provided an opportunity for fresh learning and growth.

Some supervisors also talked about ending the supervisory relationship. The most common reason given by five of the supervisors was their recommending that the supervisee works with another supervisor for developmental reasons. Other specific, negative reasons provided by individual supervisors were a supervisee's attendance was too infrequent for his high client portfolio, a supervisee not bringing her work to supervision and broken trust between a supervisor and supervisee.

Some supervisees were unsure how to select a new supervisor and this stopped them from ending with their current supervisor, *"we need a book on how to choose one"* (S34); others didn't know who else to approach for supervision, *"unfortunately none of the people I respect as supervisors have got supervisor training"* (B15). Some supervisees were afraid to end their current relationship. Several supervisees spoke about fear of the unknown going forward, *"fear, fear that the person that I engage with wouldn't be as good as the one I've got"* (W21). Others, of the fear of selecting the wrong supervisor.

*"You invest so much in a relationship with a supervisor that to find out two or three sessions down the line that it wasn't quite what you need is a real shame on both sides because that is quite hard to get out of then"* (S32).

One supervisee was concerned about the time it would take to build a new relationship, another of being without a supervisor and not having a safe space to bring his coaching issues.

Some supervisees gave positive reasons for not changing supervisor. They were experiencing a high level of trust, safety, connection and comfort with their supervisor. Supervisees said that there were benefits to longevity in the relationship – the supervisor recognised the supervisee’s patterns and the trust created meant that the supervisee experienced little or no anxiety and shame and valued the supervisor and supervision.

Some supervisees said that they had not had to face the issue of changing supervisor, *“I actually don’t think I’ve really had to answer that question yet”* (N21). The research process prompted over half of the supervisees interviewed to question themselves, *“Am I getting enough out of the relationship?”* (U14) One supervisee said, *“This process might actually get me to kind of reconsider that”* (B16). A few supervisees concluded that they were not ready to change - there was still some room for growth left *“I haven’t outgrown my supervisor yet”* (B17), *“I still get a complete work out whenever I have been supervised by her”* (D10) and *“I’ve come away with ideas for revitalising my supervisory arrangement a bit”* (U20).

In practice, few supervisees were open with their supervisors about the real reasons for ending the supervisory relationship. Only a couple of supervisees talked about being transparent to gain closure, *“I knew that she would genuinely want to know. I knew that she would value the feedback”* (S24). One supervisee confessed to providing a superficial reason because she didn’t think that the supervisor would welcome hearing the real reason, *“I think that he is very clear that he feels his process is good. I’m not sure that he’d be open to learning on that”* (R15). Some supervisees said nothing and drifted away. One supervisor described supervisees’ avoidance of providing feedback.

*“It would seem to me that unless I terminate it, there is a little bit of smoke and daggers, I mean smoke and mirrors but that is a very interesting slip of the tongue!”* (Q24).



Supervisees' lack of agency can manifest itself through a lack of understanding about what supervision is and how to get the most out of the process, not playing an active part in providing feedback to the supervisor or reviewing the supervisory relationship and not being willing to change supervisor when they have outgrown the relationship. A reluctance to find out more about what supervision is and how to make best use of it, initiate a discussion about the supervisory relationship or change supervisor at the appropriate time, potentially limits supervisees' learning and development.

#### **5.4 Not seeing myself as an equal partner**

Many supervisees did not see themselves as an equal partner with their supervisor in the supervision process, *"I'm not an equal partner in all of this"* (N6). Novice supervisees felt particularly powerless. They were concerned about bringing interesting enough coaching issues, being accepted and were reliant on the supervisor for managing the process. Over time, as the supervisees' familiarity with the supervision process and confidence and competence increases, the relationship gradually becomes more balanced. This section covers why the supervisor's role is seen to be imbued with power, how the power dynamic shifts over time, how supervisors can use their power in a positive and a negative way, potential sources of supervisee power and what is seen to underlie the power dynamic.

##### *Sources of supervisor power*

Supervisees all reported that the supervisors' role is imbued with power. Certain aspects of the supervisors' role gives them power, for example the assessment element of their job, the role of raising discussions about ethical issues and the fact that they can be seen to have an 'observer' role in the relationship. As one supervisor put it, *"I get to write your reference, you know"* (G14). Supervisees tend to consider that their supervisors have more knowledge and experience than they do and many select their supervisors on this basis. *"His*

*expertise, experience and wisdom definitely feel like a source of power” (U13). Supervisees want their supervisors to have more experience, “and that life experience can also give power” (H14) and yet may not want a ‘mentor’ relationship with the supervisor, “but I don’t want a mentorial relationship with the supervisor” (W18). This inspirational and aspirational gap can lead supervisees to defer to the supervisor. One supervisor described how a capable, senior professional woman, who was a new supervisee and coach, gave away her power, “relinquishing it and saying, oh well, it is just little me and I don’t know if I’m doing this right” (J16). Power dynamics can be exacerbated in group supervision because of peer pressure and competition, “I think that I was wanting to look good in front of teacher” (F5). Another perceived source of supervisor power is the choices that they make during the supervision session, for example, how deeply to explore an issue, “the power to do a deep or a superficial job” (S26); the extent to which supervisors put themselves out to support the supervisee; how much they choose to divulge what is going on for them and the power to bring the supervision relationship to an end, “they obviously have the power to say, this isn’t working, let’s call it a day” (S26). One supervisee chose a supervisor who had coached her in the past and she felt that the supervisor’s prior knowledge about her was a further source of power.*

#### *Shifts in the power dynamic over time*

The power dynamic was seen to shift over time and to be related to supervisee maturity. For novice supervisees, the relationship was depicted as parent-child, teacher-student, doctor-patient and expert-suppliant. *“I think I probably went in as a child wanting some advice and being told what to do, it took away the responsibility for my having to decide” (A12). Several supervisees confessed that they had felt very nervous and had been afraid of their supervisor when they started supervision, “It was scary at the start. The supervisor can either kill you or find a way of leading you to another level” (E6).*

New supervisees put their supervisors on pedestals and saw them as experts and gurus and it was more challenging to stay in an adult-to-adult relationship as a result. According to both experienced supervisees and supervisors, novice supervisees perceived supervisors to have more responsibility for the process than the supervisor wanted. Several supervisees described how they gave their first supervisor power but the power dynamic was in their heads and, in reality, the supervisor let them take responsibility, *“I think that I didn’t challenge the process soon enough” (R10)*. A supervisee explained that this was because inexperienced supervisees want the supervisor to take ownership of the process and to feel safe so that they can relax into it. Supervisors are conscious of the potential power issues when working with novice supervisees and many reported working to support the supervisees to empower themselves.

*“If you’re working with new coaches, and I work with a lot of new coaches, there is much more of a danger that they will put the supervisor on a pedestal because they’re new to it and they think you are the expert. And so to stay in adult is more of a challenge for new coaches than it is for coaches who are more mature and experienced” (P3)*.

Over time, in most cases, the relationship becomes more adult-to-adult and egalitarian. As the supervisee gains experience, the supervisor becomes more like an older sibling, *“I guess it would be two doctors together, one with a lot more experience than the other” (C14)*. Supervisees at this stage were keen to point out that the relationship was not yet equal as the supervisee and supervisor were often at different phases in their careers, *“as I’m growing up as a coach, then that feels like it’s having an impact on the relationship” (U12)* and at some point the supervisor and supervisee could be equal, *“so there’s that sort of sense that we might kind of converge” (U14)*.

Very experienced supervisees regard supervision as partnership: two human beings working together. *“It is more a conversation between two peers, I feel that is right for me, at my stage of my coaching development” (S14)*. At this stage, it could become a reversible relationship for some supervisees and the supervisee could supervise the supervisor if they were trained to do so, *“I have a sense of I could equally be supervising her on some of the work she does” (M16)*. Supervisors recognise that supervisees change their perception of the power dynamic as they mature.

*“Very mature coaches will be much more likely to absolutely get that it is collaborative enquiry, I’m certainly not the expert, I’m just someone who can explore with them” (P15)*.

The equal balance of power can become an issue if the supervisor does not maintain the level of challenge and clear boundaries. One very experienced supervisee, noticed her supervisor changing over time, from:

*“Me being quite scared of her really, to being very trustful and accepting the challenge in the one-to-one. Then we started doing group work and we became even more equal then in the power relationship. One of the reasons I was finding it less helpful is that I felt that she had become too friendly with us all” (S20)*.

This friendliness manifested itself in an extended group check-in with lots of chatting and less time for discussing supervision issues and this irritated the supervisee.

Some supervisees commented that not all supervisory relationships develop over time. Some supervisors behave like the ‘expert’ or ‘critical parent’ even with mature supervisees and these relationships often do not last. A few supervisees chose to see the supervisor as more powerful on a continual basis, *“I will be a child coach forever, because supervisors need supervising as well” (E6)*.

The supervisor's own maturity levels will affect their confidence and how they use the power dynamic during supervision. For example, several supervisees had worked with novice supervisors and some described these relationships as 'a conversation between peers'. A couple of supervisees had had negative experiences with novice supervisors imposing a supervision model on them, *"it was quite a passive aggressive session and made me feel like a poor coach"* (B5). Some supervisors recognised their own development journeys. One of the supervisors commented that as he had matured as a supervisor, he had *"created a safer space and made it okay"* (Q10) for supervisees. Another supervisor reflected upon the effect on her of supervising more experienced coaches than herself.

*"This presents some challenges for me and I can go down this rabbit hole, like pursuing content in a coaching session, and get distracted and I have to remind myself that I am with them as a supervisor and not as a coach"* (T5).

#### *Positive and negative uses of power*

The supervisor can use power both positively and negatively. A positive use of supervisor power is to create an environment whereby the supervisee can step onto the platform in an equal way. *"The supervisor's power is to use their experience to create the environment for me to have the power to drive my agenda"* (W19). Supervisees experienced this in both individual and group supervision.

*"So there is something about the whole environment that the supervisor creates there which allows you to kind of bring your deepest fears to the session and yet feel that you are very much held within that session"* (N15).

However, if the supervisor does not choose to create an empowering environment, there is an imbalance of power. When supervisors adopt an 'expert' stance, *"I think the supervisor played out the sort of expert power role"* (R9), this creates an expectation amongst

supervisees that the supervisor will teach them something and diminishes their ability to enable their own learning and choose what to do. Some supervisees reported that supervisors had made them feel guilty during supervision and they saw this as an abuse of power. Others had experienced supervisors not sharing what they were thinking during a session and this increased the supervisor's power.

*"It creates a power slope because the impression it gives me is that the supervisor retains a right to remain silent which gives them a certain level of power, which I do not have in that relationship" (K16).*

A supervisor acknowledged that she naturally tends to take power rather than to give it away.

*"I have to be very careful because there was a bit of a dynamic in the early days of expert and supplicant. I slipped quite easily into that" (Q22).*

Supervisees described how, when power was used in a negative way, they experienced discomfort and bruising, *"it felt more like a punitive experience than a developmental one" (B3)* and a rupture in the relationship can occur, *"after the teacher pupil interaction with my supervisor and her advice backfiring, I could not trust her in the same way actually and I just did not see her anymore" (A26).*

#### *Sources of supervisee power*

Supervisees recognise that they have some power in the relationship too. They have the power of being the client in supervision since they pay for the service. Although supervisees' first supervisors may be allocated to them, for example through a coach training programme, supervisees often select their subsequent supervisors, *"the supervisee has the power of choice" (R9)*. Alongside being the client and having the power to choose their supervisor, supervisees have the power to take ownership of the supervision discussion, for example they decide what issues to bring and what they need from

the session. During the session, supervisees have the choice about how open to be, what to divulge and what to take away from the session. *“We work on what I want to work on, so the power of the agenda is the big, big thing for me” (W18). In addition, supervisees can say if the supervisory relationship is not working. “It is a market in which both of us need to want to play” (S16).*

Supervisees noticed that power shifts during a session. One supervisee described this as, *“the to and fro of the baton of power” (U13)*. Supervisees experienced their power diminishing when supervisors chose how to structure the session, when discussing problem areas in their coaching, *“when it doesn’t feel equal is when we are going in an area where I feel things are not going so well” (D7)* and when sharing very personal information, *“there is some power she has when one is vulnerable” (G15).*

#### *Factors underlying the power dynamic*

The balance of power between supervisors and supervisees emerged as a theme early on in the research and, in accordance with theoretical sampling techniques, participants were then asked further questions in order to explore the theme further. Supervisees and supervisors pointed out that the power dynamic varies hugely depending on the combination of supervisor and supervisee. As one supervisor explained, *“I have twenty six supervisees at the moment and they’re all different and there’s no one answer” (P15)*. To understand more about what caused power balance issues, supervisees and supervisors were asked, *“What underlies the power dynamic?”*

A number of different causes were identified. Some supervisees and supervisors felt that the language of supervision contributed to a power culture because the nomenclatures ‘supervisee’ and ‘supervisor’ suggested that the supervisor was at a different level to the supervisee, *“it’s got a connotation of a hierarchy that you can*

*define within an organisational context” (W19). A supervisor realised that the supervisor role is imbued with power, “which you may not feel at all, but you are imbued with it” (G16). Others considered that supervisees and supervisors being at different phases in their careers and therefore having different levels of knowledge, skills and experience was the most significant factor. This idea was supported by data from supervisees and supervisors that, as the supervisee learns more and matures over time, the relationship becomes more balanced. The personality, confidence levels and background of the supervisee and supervisor were considered to contribute to their relationship with authority. Some supervisors take power from supervisees and some give it. Some supervisees empower themselves and take responsibility in the relationship and others allow themselves to be dominated, “I’m probably giving the supervisor too much power and I’m probably a bit too unwilling to accept it myself” (G17). The power differential appears to be both a supervisor and a supervisee phenomenon. Supervisors can take power or give it to supervisees and supervisees can take power or give it to supervisors. One supervisor considered that ego can lead supervisors to think, “I’ve been there” and to want to provide expert advice and that this corrupts the relationship. She recommended “acknowledging that there is a power relationship there, to make it visible and work in favour of the relationship rather than corrupting it” (T33).*

Both the supervisor and supervisee have power within the supervisory relationship. However, many supervisees did not see themselves as an equal partner with their supervisor in the supervision process and novice supervisees felt particularly powerless. Over time, the relationship often becomes more balanced as the supervisees’ familiarity with the supervision process and experience increases.



This chapter has focused on the factors that can inhibit supervisees from getting the most from their supervision. Supervisees and supervisors reported that supervisees can get in their own way during supervision through anxiety, fear of judgment and shame, personal habits that they adopt during the session, not utilising their agency in the process and not seeing themselves as an equal partner and therefore not stepping into their authority. The next chapter looks at how supervisees can and do enable themselves during supervision.

## 6 Findings – Supervisee enablers, “I’m driving the bus of my supervision”

This chapter explores how supervisees had learnt to enhance their coaching supervision over time, “*I’m driving the bus of my supervision*” (A34). Four themes emerged from the data:

- Adopting a positive mindset
- Co-creating the relationship
- Participating actively in the process
- Undertaking supervisor training

These themes are shown in figure 10. The first three themes are explored in terms of their time phases, for example participating actively in the process is covered in terms of the supervisees’ responsibilities before supervision, during supervision and after supervision.

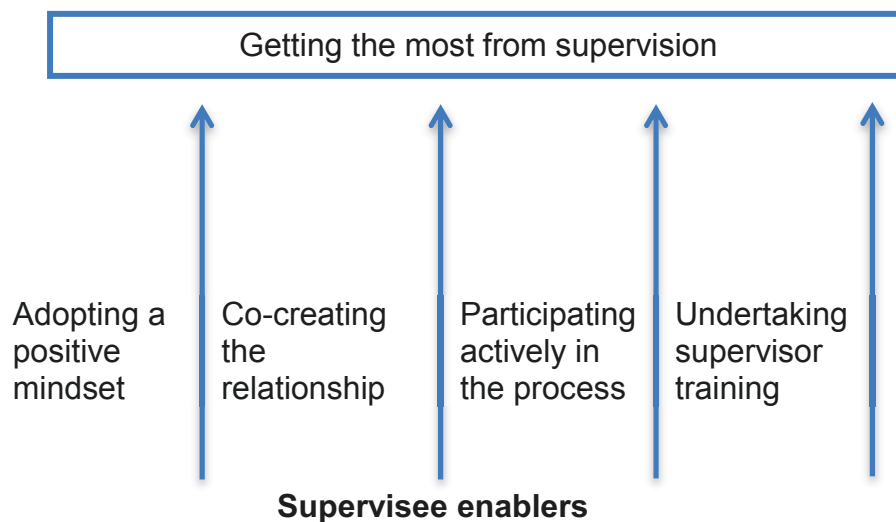


Figure 10: Supervisee enablers

## 6.1 Adopting a positive mindset

This section describes how supervisees adopt a positive mindset to coaching supervision so that they get the most from the process, *“the responsibilities for me are more about what mindset you bring” (T2)*. Adopting a positive mindset can be looked at in three distinct time intervals – identifying how you think about supervision beforehand; managing your internal state during supervision; and embedding learning through practice afterwards.

### *Identifying how you think about supervision beforehand*

In order to adopt a positive mindset to supervision, supervisees felt that they need to be aware of the thoughts and feelings they hold about supervision. Supervisees and supervisors were asked during the interviews to share their beliefs about supervision through two specific questions, “What must supervisees always do?” and “What must supervisees never do?” I asked these questions to find out what type of beliefs supervisees and supervisors were holding about the supervisees’ role in supervision and to explore the extent to which these beliefs were helpful or self-limiting. Supervisees and supervisors held a range of beliefs and these are shown in table 9. Some of the beliefs supervisees shared are specifically related to adopting a positive mindset, such as supervisees should always *“see supervision as very precious and make the most of it” (A20)*. While there are many positive aspects to holding these beliefs, they can also place pressure on supervisees. For example, holding a belief that supervisees should never ‘judge’ other supervisees during group supervision may not be realistic or practical as judgment is an important factor in making decisions. If supervisees are aware of their beliefs, they can identify where these beliefs have come from and assess whether they are useful beliefs to hold and if there are any self-limiting aspects to them.

<b>Belief</b>	<b>Supervisees must always...</b>	<b>Supervisees must never...</b>
<b>Mindset</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See supervision as very precious and make the most of it</li> <li>• Be open and honest about what is going on for them</li> <li>• Be receptive</li> <li>• Come as they are with their work as it is</li> <li>• Learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take supervision for granted</li> <li>• Judge or be judgmental about other supervisees in the group</li> <li>• Pretend or lie</li> <li>• Be afraid of what you bring to supervision</li> <li>• Feel that you need to censor yourself</li> <li>• Be closed to learning</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust your supervisor</li> <li>• Understand someone else's point of view</li> <li>• Tell the supervisor what you want and need</li> <li>• Enter into the spirit of the supervisory relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the supervisor be in control</li> <li>• Relinquish power and be told what to do</li> <li>• Knowingly abuse their relationships</li> <li>• Assume that you have nothing to learn from the supervisor</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have supervision</li> <li>• Turn up on time</li> <li>• Prepare well for sessions</li> <li>• Come with something to discuss</li> <li>• Be totally open to the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect the supervisor to do all of the work</li> </ul>

Table 9: Supervisee beliefs about their role in supervision

Before supervision, supervisees and supervisors considered it important for supervisees to clarify how supervision might benefit themselves, their clients and the organisations that they work for. Supervisees recommended taking a courageous stance and reflecting upon what is happening in their practice that they wish to bring to supervision, noting what confuses, puzzles or disturbs them, welcoming any mistakes that they have made, noticing what is occurring at a deeper level that they wish to explore and asking, "What am I editing out that needs to be aired?" One supervisee described her supervision sessions as *"it's like housecleaning on various levels"* (B4). Supervisees and supervisors remarked on the

importance of bringing what is working well too so that supervision is used in a positive way to learn what to repeat and to celebrate success, rather than always being a place to reflect on your challenges and issues.

### *Managing your internal state during supervision*

During supervision, supervisees felt it was important to manage their internal state. They talked about trying to be open when bringing material, *“be open, be really open to what is being said” (D8)*, being willing to be vulnerable and to take risks and work with things that they naturally wanted to avoid discussing. Supervisees’ felt that they could be self-critical and should think about things more lightly, *“I think sometimes I take myself a little bit too seriously, and should be able to laugh at myself” (R16)*. Over time, supervisees noticed that they brought the same issues and had patterns and that this was normal, *“hang on a minute, this one again” (B4)*. Group supervision brings additional pressures and supervisees recommended letting go of unhelpful, internal messages about the need to perform and be entertaining.

Supervisees and supervisors shared how they had learnt to overcome fear of judgment, anxiety and shame. Many of their tactics were related to addressing their negative thoughts and adopting positive beliefs around the supervisor’s behaviour. Several supervisees said that acknowledging their anxiety and fear helped them, as did sharing their negative thoughts with the supervisor and saying when they felt judged, *“I’m feeling judged right now and it is not helpful” (A24)*. A supervisee described adopting a belief that being vulnerable is a strength and telling herself that she could be herself and expose her weaknesses in supervision safely. Another told herself to view challenge as ‘critical analysis’ and not criticism. Several supervisees talked about recognising they were not enabling themselves and their supervisors to be the best that they can be and

challenging themselves *“to take risks, have faith and to go to the edge with their learning”* (C14).

Several supervisees talked about trust being key to feeling less anxiety and opening up. Many supervisees adopted positive beliefs around trusting the supervisor, *“For me it is about trust. Really trusting the supervisor to have that capacity to really be curious and learn together”* (R5). One supervisee told himself that the supervisors’ actions were for his benefit and would result in mutual learning, another that he believed that the supervisor’s challenge *“comes from a place of good intent”* (N8). Several supervisees adopted a belief that the supervisor isn’t attached to the outcome. Giving the relationship time is important too, *“it takes a couple of sessions to really get sufficient rapport, and that understanding, and that trust of both people”* (S9). However, if you cannot trust your supervisor after a couple of sessions, several supervisees’ commented that you should change supervisor.

Supervisees owned their contributions to feelings of anxiety, fear and shame. One shared that he felt less defensive and more open when he prepared prior to the session. Another recognised transference during group supervision and said that, *“you don’t know that they are judging you at all, are you just reflecting the fact that you are judging them?”* (S13). A supervisee noticed that there were positive outcomes from challenging moments, *“I have learnt to accept that some of the things that present as obstacles are the richest indicators of where the conversation wants and needs to go”* (F5).

Accepting being judged helped reduce negative emotions for both new and more experienced supervisees. New supervisees said that they told themselves that over time, they will feel more relaxed during supervision. *“I accept the feeling of being judged, knowing that it will take a couple of sessions to really get sufficient rapport and trust”*

(J11). Another supervisee said that she accepted that there is an assessment element to supervision.

A supervisor pointed out that the challenge with vulnerability is to access it.

*“The challenge is actually to get in touch with your vulnerability and really notice it, because it can be so deeply buried under shame you can’t even feel it...vulnerability quite wants to come out if it can just be allowed even a tiny bit of breathing space” (G9).*

Several Supervisees agreed that, if they can access their vulnerability, they can overcome shame and normalise their feelings and learn.

*“If I say, I’m feeling vulnerable about sharing this, it takes the pressure out of the pressure cooker and my logical, positive mind says it is great that you are not good at this because that is where you can learn and grow” (A41).*

#### *Embedding learning through practice afterwards*

After supervision sessions, supervisees felt it is important to notice their internal anxieties and continue to manage their internal state. They talked about translating insights and learning into actions, being braver with clients in order to find their edge and committing to embedding their learning through practice. Some supervisees recognised that the knock-on effects of insights and learning from supervision impacted other parts of their lives and, over time, this led them to change their thinking about who they are and to develop new behaviours.

Adopting a positive mindset is about supervisees’ managing their thoughts and emotions related to coaching supervision. Supervisees do this by examining what beliefs they hold about supervision and what they perceive the benefits of supervision to be for their various stakeholders. Supervisees conduct a ‘mental trawl’ before

supervision, allow themselves to be vulnerable, let go of the fear of judgment, trust that their supervisor will work in a way that is helpful for them and are open to the connections that may be made during supervision. After supervision, supervisees embed their learning through translating insights into actions and practising new behaviours.

## **6.2 Co-creating the relationship**

This section focuses upon how supervisees can co-create and manage their relationship with their supervisor so that they get the most from it. There are three aspects to co-creating the relationship – finding a supervisory relationship that works; sharing the driving seat; and keeping attuned with the supervisor.

### *Finding a supervisory relationship that works*

Supervisees felt that it is important to find a supervisor that they could connect with as this enabled them to trust the supervisor and be open and vulnerable. As one supervisor said, *“the most important thing is to create the relationship, to create the safe, protected space where anything is possible and it’s absolutely okay”* (P9). Supervisees felt that it is important to choose a supervisor who meets their specific needs and these needs relate to their coaching perspective, having the right level of business focus and suiting the stage that they are at in their supervisee development.

Early on in the supervisory relationship, some supervisees had learnt to participate actively in co-constructing the contract, *“we co-construct the contract together”* (J1), by stipulating what they were looking for and what they were not wanting from the relationship and briefing the supervisor about their coaching framework, practice and learning style. One supervisor disclosed that a supervisee had told her, *“what I need from you is not to be shocked by anything”* (Q10) so that she could bring her issues safely and the supervisor had



found this a helpful guideline. Supervisors talked about the importance of having an adult-to-adult relationship with the supervisee and seeing them as a colleague, *“I’m a fellow traveller because I haven’t travelled their road” (H1)*. One supervisee talked about equality in terms of her being *“one hundred per cent responsible for fifty per cent of the relationship” (B13)*.

#### *Sharing the driving seat*

Supervisees pointed out the necessity of being clear with the supervisor as to what they needed at the start of each session. During the session, supervisees had learnt to take ownership for choosing what they wanted to discuss next and to take responsibility for their actions afterwards. Supervisees talked about being prepared to challenge the supervisor in order to get their needs met and voicing any concerns with the supervisor during the session.

#### *Keeping attuned with the supervisor*

Supervisees take responsibility for ensuring that they have a responsive relationship with their supervisor over time and that they are using the supervisor to their full capacity. As supervisees become more comfortable with the supervisor and what is going on in the relational space, they need to watch out for too much complacency in supervision, *“making sure that we don’t collude and don’t get too cosy” (P3)*. Supervisees advocated carrying out a review of the supervisory relationship, providing feedback, recognising how their needs are shifting over time and re-contracting to meet their changing needs. *“Is it providing the value I want and should I be looking at other ways of getting more value out of coaching supervision?” (C21)* Some supervisees talked about encouraging the supervisor to develop their style of supervising to enable maturing supervisees to develop their own internal supervisor and do more self-supervision. Supervisees recommended that, if their needs are no longer being met, they need to take responsibility for ending the

relationship and changing supervisor, *“if it’s not giving you what you want, take yourself away”* (G1).

Supervisees’ enhance their supervision through co-creating the relationship. This involves supervisees’ finding a supervisor that they can connect with and making sure that they establish an adult-to-adult relationship. Supervisees ‘share the driving seat’ in terms of asking for what they need and being prepared to challenge if their needs are not being met. Over time as their relationship develops, supervisees keep attuned with the supervisor through reviewing the relationship and their shifting needs and if their needs aren’t being met, they end the relationship.

### **6.3 Participating actively in the process**

Supervisees increase their agency in the supervision process by participating more actively in it, *“supervisees empowering themselves to manage their supervision process”* (H18). Supervisees and supervisors were asked for their views on the responsibilities and contributions of supervisees and supervisors to the process. This section focuses on the responsibilities of the supervisee over phases – before the supervision session, during the session and after the session. A full list of the responsibilities of both supervisees and supervisors is given in appendix 10-16.

#### *Before the supervision session*

Before the supervision session, supervisees stressed the importance of preparing for the session by reviewing their client relationships so that they identify which clients they wish to talk about and bring real issues to work upon. One supervisee referred to this as *“going with a full plate to supervision”* (A15). Supervisees used different methods of preparation including looking through a client list, doing a *“mental trawl”* (G1) and journaling between supervision sessions about what is going well and what is challenging. Some supervisees identified in

advance how to get the most focus and depth out of the session and gave examples of achieving this through doing some pre-thinking using a mind-map of issues and themes, reflecting on the issues using a supervision model and bringing taped coaching sessions to supervision so that the supervisor could hear the supervisee coaching first hand. Some supervisees also prepared an update for their supervisor by identifying what they have done as a consequence of the last supervision session and reflecting upon the learning from their actions.

#### *During the session*

Supervisees felt that they are responsible for respecting the time boundaries of the supervisor, *“not messing your supervisor around”* (M10). Many supervisees took responsibility for creating the agenda at the start of individual and group sessions, *“I am part of a group and it is my responsibility to help create the agenda for that group”* (N14). In group sessions, supervisees were also responsible for taking a fair allocation of time, listening to others and providing feedback. During the session, supervisees emphasised that it was their responsibility to be willing to explore issues through different lenses and share thoughts, experiences and patterns. Supervisees and supervisors considered it a joint responsibility to ensure that time is given to review how the process is working, *“to ensure that we have time built in to review how our process is working together”* (R19).

At the end of the session, supervisees felt it was important not to force an action plan but to clarify their intent going forward. A supervisee commented,

*“don’t try too hard to make sure there’s a piece of learning or action that comes from everything because actually it’s something that evolves and builds over time”* (M26).

Supervisees and supervisors considered it was the supervisees’ responsibility to decide what to take forward. A supervisor remarked

on a productive session, *“we had traversed all of the different paths that might be possible to go down and the supervisee had come to a great solution” (H3)*. In group supervision, supervisees advocated identifying their individual learning from the discussions about other participants’ issues, *“recognising what my take would be on everything everybody else brings is one way of enhancing my experience” (G11)*.

#### *After the session*

After the supervision session, it is up to supervisees to develop a process for capturing and re-accessing the learning from supervision, *“I’ll make some notes and then I put them in the client’s file” (F20)*. Supervisees saw it as their responsibility to reflect upon their learning in a reflexive manner and to take things forward to embed the learning in a systematic way through practice in order to extract value from supervision. One supervisor said,

*“reflexive learning, looking at the meaning for you, can really enhance the supervisee’s experience of what is going on in supervision and their practice” (J21)*.

Between supervision sessions, supervisees saw it as their task to assess whether they were getting enough regular supervision and to ask for help if they need additional support, *“I ring up if I need more” (A7)*. Further responsibilities were to reflect upon what they want from supervision going forward and to pursue any training or other CPD that they have committed to.

Supervisees have many responsibilities relating to managing the process of supervision. They were more likely to understand these responsibilities and empower themselves to undertake them as they matured as supervisees. Many of the supervisees and some of the supervisors were surprised by the amount of responsibilities they had. At the end of the research interview a supervisee commented, *“the big take away is how much more responsibility I have” (R20)* and

a supervisor said, *“I wonder if I take on too much responsibility and don’t require enough of the supervisee”* (Q30). For some supervisees, supervisor training acted as a catalyst to their stepping into their authority as supervisees. The impact of supervisor training is reviewed in the next section.

#### **6.4 Undertaking supervisor training**

Having supervisory training improved supervisees willingness to have supervision and their experience of it, *“I’m more willing to have it and I use it smarter”* (M23) and has therefore been included as an enabling factor. When supervisees undertook supervisor training, their understanding about what coaching supervision is and how to make the most out of it developed and it reduced inhibitors, such as lack of supervisee agency. In total, eleven out of nineteen participants interviewed had had supervisor training and they commented on the benefits that this brought them as supervisees.

Supervisees reported that having supervisor training increased their willingness to have supervision because they now fully understood the purpose of it. For example, one supervisee admitted that, as a result of the training, she realised that the value of supervision was broader than quality assurance, *“I think I’m more able to use supervision in different ways”* (Q30). Supervisees noticed that they were more proactive about arranging supervision following supervisor training, *“I honestly would feel unsafe on the road without it”* (A7).

Following training, supervisees appreciated the importance of preparation, *“I’m just conscious that I will only get out of it what I put into it and that’s the biggest difference”* (P20) and, having been introduced to a supervision model, they wanted to work in a deeper, more systemic way. *“The seven-eyed model helped me to bring my cases better”* (Q29). Supervisees found it easier to self-supervise

and one supervisee talked about being aware of there being a bit of 'supervisor me' in the room whilst receiving supervision.

*"I guess the 'supervisor' bit of me is noticing and paying attention to the 'supervisee' me and what I might be able to do differently to get more out of the session" (T40).*

Having supervisor training appeared to reduce supervisee anxiety, *"I've also learned not to be embarrassed and not to be ashamed and to be vulnerable" (P20)*. One supervisee explained that he was *"greedier, I want to get more from this" (M23)*. It also helped supervisees to understand learning theories, learn more about coaching, witness how different coaches coach and to become aware of the different transitions that coaches make as they develop and the potential for their growth, *"me being meta to coaching helped me learn about coaching" (R18)*.

Supervisor training impacted the amount of responsibility that supervisees took in the supervision relationship and their relationships with their supervisors. Following the training, supervisees wanted supervisors who were trained and supervisees played a much clearer and more pro-active role in contracting.

*"I contracted much more clearly with the supervisor upfront and I held him to account if we weren't doing it, so it gave me much more confidence and clarity about what I wanted out of the particular coaching session" (A7).*

Supervisees were clearer about the quality of the supervision they wanted, *"I would notice if I wasn't supervised in a good way" (F19)* and held their supervisors to account for this. Supervisees co-created the relationship and felt a greater affinity for their supervisors, trusted their intent more and appreciated the connection between them.

Supervisor training enables supervisees to understand more about supervision and how to use it effectively. Although eleven out of nineteen of the research participants had undertaken supervisor

training, only a third of the participants interviewed as supervisees had had it. Some of the supervisees who hadn't undertaken supervisor training expressed interest in doing so at the end of the interview. One supervisee who wasn't a trained supervisor reflected, *"to be honest, I could probably give you a much more comprehensive and intelligent answer if I'd been on supervisor training myself, because I suspect I would be lot clearer about supervision"* (S19).

This chapter has focused upon the psychological stance and actions that supervisees take to get the most from their coaching supervision. Supervisees had counteracted the inhibitors to supervision by enabling themselves through taking specific actions as shown in figure 11.

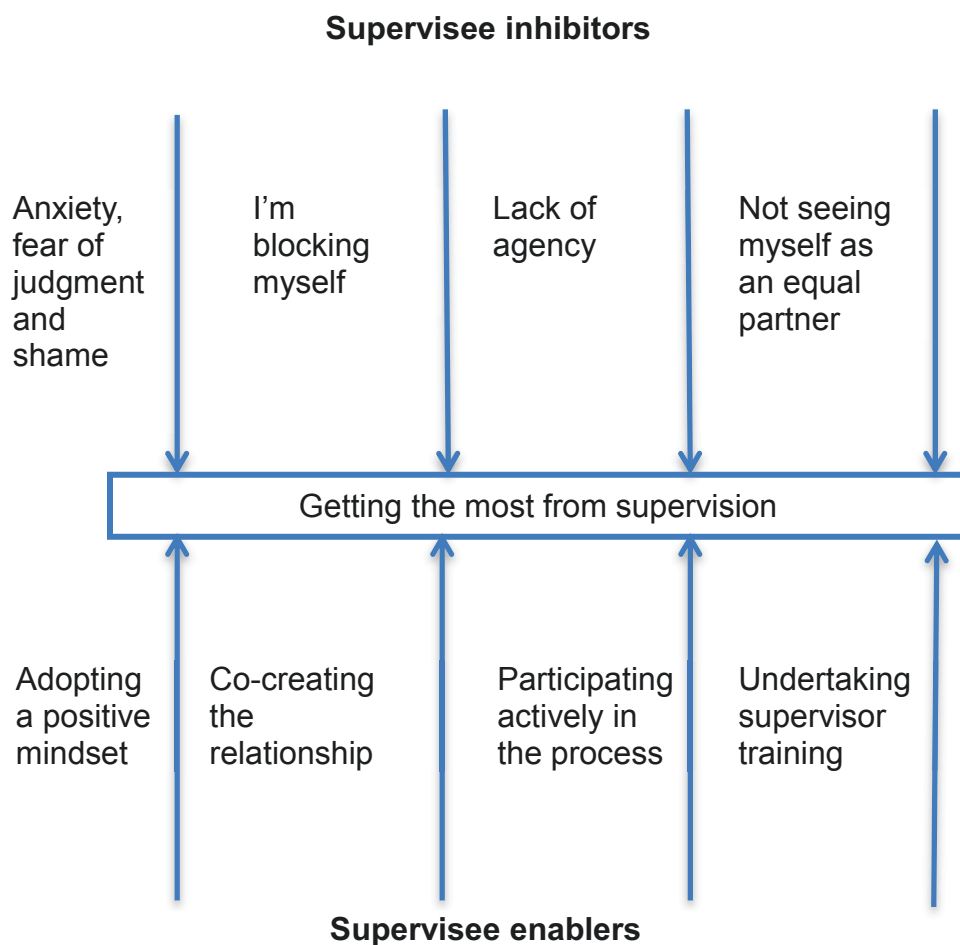


Figure 11: Supervisee inhibitors and enablers

Supervisees had learnt 'to drive the bus of their supervision' by adopting a positive mind-set, co-creating the relationship, participating actively in the process and undertaking supervisor training. In the next chapter, an overarching theme is identified along with some underlying mechanisms that potentially explain the lived-in experiences of supervisees. These are discussed in the light of the extant literature. I also present a theoretical framework to enable supervisees to increase the benefits from their coaching supervision earlier in their developmental journey.



## 7 Discussion

The previous three chapters have described the findings from the study - the benefits of supervision and what supervisees can do that inhibits and enables their supervision. This chapter expands and interprets the lived-in findings from supervisees in the light of the literature. I draw not only on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 but also on additional literature that has become pertinent following the data analysis, a process used in Grounded Theory (Kempster and Parry, 2014).

As a critical realist, I believe that interview data by itself is not an adequate basis for analysing the multiplicity of causal factors at play in social relations (Smith and Elger, 2014). A critical realist Grounded Theory study requires the researcher to describe the psychological and social processes that might explain the lived-in experiences of the participants. The process for moving from the empirical to the real is abduction. Abduction involves redescription or recontextualisation, most usually in terms of a characteristic causal mechanism or process which serves to explain it (Bhaskar, 2014). I can never be wholly certain but I can aim to make sense of the data by providing an explanatory account of what is described.

In this chapter, I start by discussing an overarching theme that has emerged from the research, supervisee development and maturity over time. I then explore three causal mechanisms that affect human nature and might explain supervisees' experiences – fear, power relations and the drive for learning. Finally, I bring this together by presenting my framework for supervisee-led supervision and discussing how supervisees, through increased awareness, can step into their authority and become the drivers of their own supervision earlier in their developmental journey.

## 7.1 Supervisee development and maturity over time

The data analysis revealed that the aspects for enhancing supervisees experience of supervision - adopting a positive mindset, co-creating a balanced relationship with the supervisor and participating actively in the process, developed over time. Supervisees' ability to learn through supervision and their valuing the supervision process also increases over the time they spend as a supervisee. This made me curious about the relevance of supervisee development and maturity and, in keeping with theoretical sampling, I started asking supervisees where they placed themselves on a development scale of 'novice' supervisee, 'experienced' supervisee and 'very experienced' supervisee. I gained a picture of supervisees' needs from supervision at different stages of their development and I have summarised these needs in table 10. Dunnnett et al refer to this as "a neo-developmental element that recognises the major shifts over time in what supervisees require from supervision" (2013, p. 20).

<b>Supervisee Stage</b>	<b>Novice supervisee</b>	<b>Experienced supervisee</b>	<b>Very experienced supervisee</b>
<b>Reasons for having supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of training programme</li> <li>- Natural extension to training course</li> <li>- Quieten their internal critic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal development and growth</li> <li>- Figuring things out and building their inner supervisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See supervision as invaluable and wouldn't want to be without it</li> <li>- Nature of work has ramped up</li> </ul>
<b>Choice of supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often no choice (e.g. part of programme)</li> <li>- Trusted tutor from previous training course</li> <li>- Supervisor with same philosophical perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Someone neutral, outside their group/system</li> <li>- Less concerned that supervisor has the same underpinnings</li> <li>- A recommendation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specifically selects supervisor with different philosophical perspective</li> <li>- Someone challenging with a robust approach as supervisee can self supervise if chooses to</li> </ul>

<b>Supervisee Stage</b>	<b>Novice supervisee</b>	<b>Experienced supervisee</b>	<b>Very experienced supervisee</b>
<b>Psychological State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anxious because feel like a 'pretend' coach, trying to make sense of what it is like to be a coach</li> <li>- Concerned about competence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less anxious about what they are 'doing' as a coach but anxious about how 'being' as a coach</li> <li>- Anxiety related to specific things, e.g. complex contracting and systemic issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feel less anxious and welcome mistakes</li> <li>- Feel confident, capable and effective</li> <li>- Willing to be vulnerable and say what is really going on</li> </ul>
<b>What take to supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Checking 'Am I doing this right?'</li> <li>- What do I do next with this client?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on how I'm 'being' as a coach</li> <li>- Where I'm 'stuck' and out of my depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Am I in touch with the latest thinking?</li> <li>- How do I break the rules safely?</li> <li>- How can I contribute to the professional community?</li> </ul>
<b>What want from supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reassurance</li> <li>- Urgent answers to specific questions</li> <li>- Feedback and Ideas on how to progress</li> <li>- Tools, techniques and models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflect on themes and patterns together</li> <li>- Ideas on how to move forward where 'stuck'</li> <li>- Support with developing identity as a coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An alternative perspective</li> <li>- Tactical support with complex coaching assignments</li> <li>- Someone to think through their legacy with</li> </ul>
<b>Power dynamic with supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inexperienced coach wanting guidance from experienced coach</li> <li>- Uncritical acceptance of advice</li> <li>- Can feel like parent/child relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experienced coach wanting support from very experienced coach, 'an elder sibling'</li> <li>- Experiences supervisor as 'sane voice' when they have a knock back</li> <li>- Supervisee chooses what actions to take forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A conversation between peers</li> <li>- Supervisee feels affinity with supervisor</li> <li>- Supervisee is demanding of supervision and wants more from it</li> <li>- Roles may be reversible</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection and Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited reflection</li> <li>- Tools and techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A deeper examination of assumptions and patterns</li> <li>- Being less hard on self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Embodying learning</li> <li>- Appreciating multiple perspectives</li> <li>- Learning to take self less seriously</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring quality of supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisee rarely initiates a review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review process together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisee may initiate review</li> </ul>

Table 10: Stages of maturity of supervisees

The reasons supervisees gave for having supervision; how they chose their supervisor; how they described their psychological state; the material they took to supervision; what they wanted from their supervisor; the power dynamic with their supervisor; the nature of their reflection and learning during and after supervision; and their role in ensuring the quality of their supervision - all varied in accordance with their maturity as a supervisee. The supervisee appears to go through various stages of development. I identified three stages of development and appreciate that, in reality, these stages are unlikely to be as clear-cut as depicted in the table; instead there is the potential for overlap between the stages of development and individuals may be at different points in some of the aspects.

This developmental stance on supervisee maturity has been influenced by adult developmental theories (Cook-Greuter, 1999, Graves, 1970, Kegan, 1982, Kohlberg, 1969, Loevinger, 1976, Wilber, 2000, Torbert, 1991). According to these theories, there are patterns in the development of various capacities of adults, such as cognitive and emotional. Some of the theories extend over the whole of a person's life and other theories focus upon the adult years. Bachkirova (2011a, p. 49) provides a cumulative description of the three stages of adult development in relation to coaching. She chose changes in ego development as the defining category in the description of developmental theories and the three stages she refers to are unformed ego, formed ego and reformed ego. Although these dimensions are not identical, I think that ego development is central to supervisee development. The data suggests that novice supervisees experience feelings of anxiety and concern about their competence and need much reassurance and support whilst very experienced supervisees were less anxious and concerned about their performance, enjoyed looking at issues from multiple perspectives and chose supervisors who would facilitate this, they integrated and embodied their learning and took themselves less seriously. During coaching supervision, supervisees bring

developmental themes to their supervisor, just as Bachkirova describes coaches bringing developmental themes to coaching, “formulated from their overarching needs and challenges” (2011a, p. 125).

Coach maturity (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2010) and supervisee maturity (Hawkins and Smith, 2006) has been explored in the coaching and coaching supervision literature. Clutterbuck and Megginson depicted four levels of coach maturity based on their observations in assessment centres. These levels are models-based, process-based, philosophy-based and systemic eclectic. They acknowledged, however, that they “have very little evidence with regard to how coaches at different levels of maturity approach supervision” (2010, p. 10). This study adds to their work by providing empirical evidence of how coaching supervisees at different stages of maturity approach supervision.

Traditionally most coach and supervisee developmental models have been developed to help supervisors understand the needs of supervisees. Hawkins and Smith present a four level developmental model of coaching supervision. The levels are self-centred, client-centred, process-centred and process-in-context-centred. The aim of the model is to help supervisors to more accurately assess the needs of supervisees, to understand the development needs of supervisees at and between stages and to make the point that supervision needs to develop alongside supervisees (2006, p. 139). The vast majority of supervisee development models in the helping professions (Hogan, 1964, Stoltenburg, 1981, Stoltenberg and Delworth, 1987, Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010) also focus on the needs of the supervisor. The exception is Carroll and Gilbert’s model (2011) which aimed to enable supervisees in the helping professions to understand their own stage of learning. The stages of maturity of coaching supervisees in this study builds on Carroll and Gilbert’s model in that it is aimed primarily at enabling supervisees to

understand where they are in their development journey. I consider that it is important for there to be a model aimed at coaching supervisees to enable supervisees to be aware that they are on a developmental journey and to understand where they are in the process. This would allow them to normalise the questions that arise and issues that they face and to know what the next stage might bring. Bachkirova and Cox (2007) stress that coaches need to be aware of their own stages of development in order to reflect on their own role in the coaching process and the dynamics of the coaching relationship.

This table of the stages of maturity in supervisees is not intended to be used to speed up supervisee maturity as any maturation process takes time (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016). The purpose of depicting the stages of development is to enable supervisees to envisage supervision as a lifelong process (Lane, 2011) and increase supervisees' awareness of their own stages of development. By gaining a perspective of the stages, supervisees may be able to reflect upon their role in the supervision process, the dynamics of the supervision relationship, who is best placed to supervise them at each stage of the journey and to what extent they want 'to drive the bus of their supervision' without over-forcing the pace of their development.

## **7.2 Fear**

Fear is the first underlying mechanism that I think might be driving the inhibitors identified in Chapter 5. Supervisees in the study described feeling a range of negative emotions during supervision and the most common ones, anxiety, fear of judgment and shame, are underpinned by fear. Many of the participant responses indicate that fear is present in coaching supervision. Extant reading about fear in coaching supervision, supervision in the helping professions and fear in general has confirmed this. For example, Bion (1990)

recognised the role of fear in psychoanalysis when he said, “In the consulting room there should be two frightened people”.

Fear is a natural, unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger, pain or harm and the threat can be psychological as well as physical. It comes from a sense that we are not safe in a situation and our response to this is anxiety and survival behaviour which often drives us away from another person physically and emotionally (Adamson, 2011). Shohet (2008a, p. 188) explains that fear can pose in a number of guises in supervision, including anxiety and shame, and that these defences are rarely useful and can create distance between the supervisee and supervisor. Human beings have a deep need to connect and fear gets in the way and can be a major block to intimacy and communication. Fear can be difficult to recognise in the moment. Supervisees in this study revealed how they naturally wanted to resist these unpleasant emotions and this led them wanting to please, to edit, being unable to say what they wanted and being fearful of assessment. Supervisors can also be affected by fear and the literature describes how fear in supervisors manifest itself as telling, judging and advising (Shohet, 2008a).

Fear can be more acute for coaches working within an organisational context where there is a culture of fear and shame “because the fear and anxiety about performance and pleasing could be parallel process, imported from their client system” (Shohet, 2011a, pp. 2-3). In other words, the resistance in supervision could be mirroring the resistance that comes from the client and is present in the organisation.

Negative emotions impede adult learning (Dirkx, 2001). Meaningful learning occurs when emotional factors facilitate personal transformation and, if people are anxious, uncomfortable, or fearful, they do not learn (Perry, 2006). If our brain picks up signals that we are in danger, it goes into survival mode - which Carroll referred to as

“learning disability territory” (2014, p. 67). In survival mode, access is limited to the frontal cortex of the brain, reducing our introspective, reflective and creative thinking.

This study adds to the empirical evidence on the impact of anxiety, fear of judgment and shame in coaching supervision on supervisees. In this study, fear was experienced in particular contexts, for example novice coaching supervisees felt high levels of performance anxiety (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) and other supervisees spoke about being more anxious at the start of every new supervision relationship. Fear was heightened in group supervision where supervisees experienced more fear of judgment and shame and not only feared judgment from the supervisor but also from their peers (Cohen, 2014, Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). Working with internal supervisors caused fear in supervisees around confidentiality and trust because they perceived the supervisors to be too close to the issues being discussed (St John-Brooks, 2014).

The consequences of fear were supervisees editing their thoughts and the topics that they brought so that they exposed themselves less. Supervisees blocked themselves by employing behaviours that got in the way, such as over-talking, asking the supervisor questions to distract them and failing to prepare for the session (Shohet, 2008a, Hawthorne, 1975, Kadushin, 1968). These findings build on previous research on supervisees in coaching supervision that recognised coaching supervisees’ fear (DeFilippo, 2013, Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, McGivern, 2009, Butwell, 2006). Butwell found that coaches taking internal supervision feared exposing their limitations and self disclosing and Passmore and McGoldrick’s study (2009) highlighted the importance of the supervisee feeling comfortable to discuss their issues freely and openly.

This study builds on the recent research on shame, one of the guises of fear, in coaching supervision. Cavicchia (2010, p. 881) considers



that we all have our “own unique shame templates which remain with us in adult life and colour our interactions with others”. Cohen (2014) carried out an inquiry into the relationship between shame and learning in coaches in supervision. She noticed that shame is in the field with supervisees, supervision is a shame prone process, shame always occurs in relationship with the supervisor, shame can flow from the supervisor and shame is perceived as hindering supervisees’ openness. She carried out a small survey and found that 15 supervisees had had issues in their practice that evoked a sense of shame and the supervisees had not taken these issues to supervision. In this study, supervisees and supervisors recognised the presence and impact of shame on their coaching supervision. This is in keeping with previous studies of non-disclosure amongst supervisees in the helping professions (Ladany and Lehrman-Waterman, 1999, Mehr, Ladany and Caskie, 2010). Following on from Cohen’s study, de Haan (2016b) carried out a wider survey on trust and safety in coaching supervision using a questionnaire which was completed by 518 professional coaches. He found more encouraging results - 85% of supervisees had taken shameful issues to supervision and found it helpful.

I wonder if many of de Haan’s participants were aware that fear in supervision is normal and experienced by both supervisees and supervisors and were therefore able to accept their fear, anxiety and shame, to put it to one side, to be more vulnerable and be open to learning (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012, Shohet, 2008a, Shohet, 2011a, Shohet and Wilmot, 1991, Cohen, 2014, Cavicchia, 2010). Shohet (2008a, p. 203) encouraged supervisees and supervisors to be vulnerable together and embrace “safe uncertainty” so that the energy devoted to ‘hiding’ is released and something new and creative can emerge. He believes that fear is related to beliefs and he encourages supervisors to work with supervisees to explore their underlying beliefs around coaching supervision and name any fears that they might have. In this study, I encouraged supervisees and

supervisors to explore their underlying beliefs around coaching supervision by asking them, “What should supervisees always and should never do?” This led supervisees and supervisors to question their underlying assumptions. The common reasons that supervisees’ cited for hiding things in supervision were fear of being judged, shame and not being good enough. Shohet considers that the reasons provided often turn out to be unjustified. My proposition is that if supervisees explore their beliefs around supervision and what they are not willing to bring to supervision and why, when preparing for supervision, they may be able to acknowledge their fears and thus overcome them.

There has been more focus on supervisee fear at recent coaching and coaching supervision conferences. Bachkirova (2015a), speaking at the Coaching at Work Conference, acknowledged that many supervisees feel resistance to supervision and fear lies behind it. She provided a useful addition to the debate on supervisee fear, describing fear as one of a number of conflicting voices representing different mini-selves that supervisees’ experience. For example, one voice may understand how important learning through supervision is and want to ensure that the session is successful and the other voice may be concerned about fear of exposure and judgment and focus upon self-preservation. Bachkirova recommended that supervisees take a curious stance, explore this tension and allow the different voices in their heads to surface and understand their open resistance because shadows need to be listened to (2015b). Shohet picked up the theme of internal tension when he talked about fear and love in supervision at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Coaching Supervision (2016). He pointed out that supervisees naturally want to protect themselves during supervision and our protection mechanisms separate us and make us more fearful. The problem with fear is that it is shameful and difficult to acknowledge. Shohet argued that human beings need to be disturbed to grow and he also advocated moving towards our disturbance (fear) and welcoming it.

In this study, supervisees described how they had learnt to move towards their fear. Supervisees had learnt to acknowledge their fear with their supervisor, choose to trust the supervisor, accept that there is an element of being judged and assessment in supervision and adopt positive beliefs around their supervisors' behaviour. They also considered that attending supervisor training reduced their anxiety and provided them with more clarity about how to use supervision to best effect (Hodge, 2014, Cohen, 2014). In the literature on coaching supervision, Cavicchia (2010, pp. 885-888) also recommends that supervisees adopt a positive attitude towards fear, in terms of compassion for themselves, acceptance of what is, playfulness and lightness of touch, detachment and indifference to specific outcomes, curiosity and inquiry. He advises that developing "an internal image of a supportive, sensitive and reflective coach, along with the feelings and thoughts this gives rise to, then enables supervisees to draw on a broader range of internal resources and counter any previous tendency to collapsing into incapacitating shame." In this study, supervisees found that owning their fear could transform their coaching supervision as exploring their fear provided useful data from a systemic perspective and had a positive impact on the supervisory relationship.

To summarise, I have been arguing that fear is a potential underlying mechanism for the supervisee inhibitors. Supervisees in this study described fear manifesting as anxiety, fear of exposure, fear of judgment and shame amongst others. Supervisees employed resistance during supervision as a result of fear and this was demonstrated through the blocks that supervisees used during supervision, for example over-talking. I am concerned that fear can put less experienced supervisees off having supervision altogether. The good news is that experienced supervisees have found effective ways of owning their fear and bringing issues related to fear to supervision. Supervisees noticed that this has resulted in more

openness, better relationships with the supervisor and enhanced learning.

### 7.3 Power relations

Power relations is the second underlying mechanism that I think might explain supervisees' lived-in experiences. I consider that power relations affects all of the inhibitors identified in Chapter 5 and, in particular, supervisee lack of agency and supervisees not seeing themselves as equal partners to supervisors in coaching supervision.

French and Raven (1959) defined power relations as the extent to which a person has the potential ability to influence another person in a given setting. Their work goes beyond looking at role-based power to describing the different types of power that can exist in interpersonal relationships and their descriptions are given in table 11. I have provided these descriptions as I want to develop their idea and illustrate how French and Ravens types of power appear in coaching supervision.

Type of power	Definition
Legitimate	The ability to influence another because of a socially proscribed role giving legitimacy to one's influence.
Expert	The ability to influence because one is seen as an expert on a particular issue and therefore should be believed and obeyed.
Referent	The power conferred because one wants to feel a sense of identity or oneness with the person.
Reward	The perception that the person has the ability to give rewards.
Coercive	The perception that the person has the ability to punish.
Informational	The ability to influence based on the higher power person having information that the lower power person does not possess.

Table 11: Types of power in interpersonal relationships (French and Raven, 1959)

The participants in this study perceived power relations as both a supervisee and a supervisor phenomenon. They were very aware of power relations in their supervisory relationships and described the different sources of supervisor and supervisee power. These sources of power are also defined using French and Raven's categories in table 12. The table shows that each of French and Raven's types of power were present in coaching supervision.

<b>Sources of Supervisor Power</b>	<b>Sources of supervisee power</b>	<b>Types of power (French and Raven, 1959)</b>
More knowledge and experience		Expert
Roles and responsibilities – observer role, assessment element, raises discussions about ethical issues.	Roles and responsibilities – usually select the supervisor, is the 'client' and pays for the service.	Legitimate
Choices during the session – how deeply/widely to explore issues, to disclose what they are feeling, to share their experience and what level of support to provide to the supervisee.	Choices during the session – selecting what to bring and what they need from the session, how much they want to disclose and what they wish to take away from the session.	Informational Referent Reward Coercive
Can review and end the relationship.	Can review and end the relationship.	Coercive

Table 12: Sources of supervisor and supervisee power

The table shows that, theoretically, both supervisors and supervisees have roles, responsibilities and choices that give them power during supervision and they both can review and end the relationship if they choose to do so. However, in practice, the supervisor's higher levels of knowledge and experience give them power that is rarely matched by supervisees. This is known as 'expert power' (French and Raven, 1959). Bernard and Goodyear (2014, p. 99) refer to this mismatch as "an asymmetry in power" and point out that the mismatch can be an

issue if the supervisor is unaware of it, abuses it or has difficulty assuming power comfortably. The power differential is greater when the supervisor and supervisee are at different phases in their careers, that is for novice supervisees and experienced supervisors. As supervisees mature, they gain increased levels of knowledge and experience and supervisor expert power diminishes.

Over time, the balance of power shifted for the vast majority of participants in the study. Whilst many novice supervisees experienced parent-child relationships with their first supervisor, as they matured as supervisees their relationships became more like that of a younger sibling (supervisee) with an older sibling (supervisor) and, eventually, very experienced supervisees described the relationship as an adult-to-adult partnership, with the supervisee and supervisor carrying out collaborative inquiry together and in some cases, their roles being reversible.

The descriptions of the supervisory relationship provided by the participants in this study come from Berne's well-known model which illuminates the power dynamic through the three ego states, parent, adult and child as shown in figure 12 (1964, p. 29). The parent ego state is a collection of attitudes, thoughts, behaviours and feelings that we take in from outside sources who served as our parent figures. This is split into 'controlling' and 'nurturing' parent. The adult ego state is aware, objective, autonomous, logical, practical, alert and receptive and is not subdivided, like the other two ego states. The child ego state consists of feelings, thoughts and behaviours that are typical of children. This is split into 'adapted' and 'free child'.

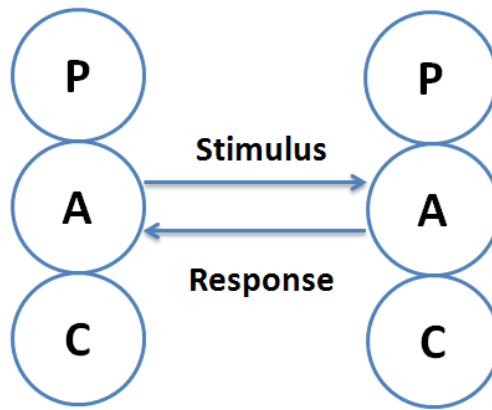


Figure 12: Berne's ego states

Berne's (1961, p. 23) goal was for individuals to have social control over their behaviour, that is "control of the individual's own tendency to manipulate other people in destructive or wasteful ways and of his tendency to respond without insight or opposition to the manipulation of others". When experienced supervisees in the study referred to their relationship with the supervisor as adult-to-adult relationship, they were referring to their communicating with each other in a consistent way, both speaking from the same ego state, respecting each other in their social interaction and not generating rebellious or complaint behaviour from the other. I was surprised by the marked imbalance in the power relationship between novice and experienced supervisees and their supervisors. Novice supervisees were particularly prone to relinquishing their power to their supervisors, even where supervisors worked hard to ensure a balanced relationship. I would have expected the relationships to be more adult-to-adult even for novice supervisees and their supervisors, given that coaching supervisees and supervisors tend to be mature adults with significant professional experience behind them. Furthermore, the power relations do not fit well with "the egalitarian ethos of coaching" Moyes (2009, p. 171).

Participants in the study considered that each supervisor-supervisee relationship is unique and depends upon the mix of background, personality and confidence levels of each individual and his/her

relationship with authority. The literature suggests additional factors can contribute too, differences in life stage, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, culture and class (Dunnett et al., 2013, Corrie and Lane, 2015). Some supervisors tend to give power to supervisees, for example by asking the supervisee what issues they wish to bring and what order they would like to discuss them in; other supervisors take power away, for example by acting as an expert or mentor. Similarly, some supervisees step into their authority and own their responsibilities and other supervisees allow themselves to be dominated by the supervisor, similar to the observations of Hawthorn (1975) and Kadushin (1968).

In this study, supervisees and supervisors noticed that power shifted 'to and fro like a baton' during the session. This builds on the idea that relationships are 'power in flux' (Spinelli, 1994). The literature on coaching supervision in the helping professions depicts power shifting during sessions depending on what supervision function is being performed (Hawkins and Shohet, 2000, Proctor, 1988, Kadushin, 1976, Corrie and Lane, 2015). For example, when the supervisor and supervisee are engaged in "qualitative" tasks, the supervisor is fulfilling a form of governance over the coaching practitioner's work to ensure the safety of their clients and so power tends to reside more with the supervisor during this part of the session.

Participants identified power being used in both positive and negative ways. For example, a supervisor taking a proactive approach to managing the supervision process for novice supervisees was seen as a positive use of power as it built a safe learning environment, whilst 'mentoring' the supervisee was perceived as a negative use of power as it diminished supervisee agency. Similarly, supervisees raising an issue or an aspect of supervision that they are not happy about with the supervisor was perceived as a positive use of power as it increased openness within the supervisory relationship,



whereas, when supervisees avoided bringing an item to group supervision, it was perceived as a negative use of their power to bring the agenda.

In this study, the perceived imbalance in power contributed to supervisee anxiety and lack of agency during supervision. Supervisees were reluctant to raise relationship issues that arose during supervision, for example when their needs were not being met. As a result, supervisees and supervisors missed opportunities to explore useful data arising in supervision, to experience mutual learning and to develop a more balanced relationship based on reciprocal respect.

Whilst the supervisor has a responsibility to manage their power appropriately and make power relations visible, it could be argued that supervisees have a responsibility not to subjugate themselves and play the victim. Similarly, Hodge (2014) found whilst conducting action inquiry research on coaching supervision that supervisees have a tendency to blame their supervisors. She noticed that, when some supervisees had negative experiences around power and compliance during supervision, this triggered rebellion, resistance, selective sharing of practice and disengagement. Whilst a natural response to perceived power relations issues in supervision might be to resist the supervisor, disengage and feel like a victim, I argue that supervisees could adopt an adult-to-adult approach and challenge what is happening by reviewing the relationship and providing feedback.

There is more research and literature on power relations in supervision in the helping professions that supports my argument. Stoltenburg and McNeill (2010) discuss the wide power differentials between supervisee and supervisor early on in their development, with the supervisee seeking structure and direction from the supervisor at the initial, 'self-centred' stage. This supports the view

that, early on in the supervision relationship, supervisees do not consider themselves equal partners. There is interesting literature on the psychological games that both supervisors and supervisees can play in supervision (Kadushin, 1968, Hawthorne, 1975). The games that supervisees can participate in include controlling the supervisory relationship, flattering the supervisor to encourage collusion and establishing a social relationship to lessen the challenges and demands made by the supervisor (Creaner, 2014, p. 91). Supervisees' own difficulties with authority may manifest as feeling the need to prove themselves and competing with the supervisor about who can manage the client better or not being able to step into their own power and giving the supervisor too much power in the relationship (Hawkins and Shohet, 2007). In this study, the data implied that supervisees did not raise the topic of power relations, suggesting that they may not be conscious of it. Once we had explored power relations, some supervisees reflected that they were giving too much power to the supervisor and some supervisors acknowledged that they were taking too much responsibility in the relationship. No supervisees or supervisors described supervisees taking too much power in the relationship. This suggests that supervisees would benefit from having conversations about power relations directly with their supervisors.

To understand why supervisees resist power in coaching supervision, we need to take a broader perspective. Discussions about power date back to Plato and Aristotle and, in the twentieth century, the debates are inter-disciplinary and power has become one of the central concepts of the social and human sciences. Despite its prominence, there is no such thing as an all-embracing concept of power (Clegg, 1989). Power has been defined as domination - imposing one's will on another person and, in a more positive light, as the power to be able to do something. Welman and Bachkirova (2010) point out that both of these definitions are present

in coaching and I argue that, by extension, they are present in coaching supervision.

Foucault suggests why we may experience power in coaching supervision (1982, p. 778). He explains that people criticise instances of power that are closest to them, “their immediate struggles”, rather than look for their “chief enemy” and that people oppose the effects of power that are linked with knowledge, competence and qualifications; a struggle against the privileges of knowledge. For coaching supervisees, this would include their coaching supervisors and the professional bodies to which they belong and whose rules they have to abide by. Supervisees in the study provided examples of how they resisted their supervisor by withholding information or by taking ultimate power and ending the supervisory relationship when they felt that their supervisor had overstepped their authority.

Garvey (2014) explores power relations within coaching supervision. He considers that supervision has become part of the power discourse, a paternalistic authority that sidelines the rights of individuals, that controls what is learned and how behaviour is valued. He warns that, if we are not careful, supervisors can act as neofeudalistic barons and supervisees can subjugate themselves. Garvey (2014, p. 41) comments that “language is often attached to power positions and it can be used to shape and organise and extract certain behaviours”. Participants in this study recognised the power culture in coaching supervision and pointed to the language used in supervision as an example of this, commenting that the terms ‘supervision’, ‘supervisor’ and ‘supervisee’ suggest a natural hierarchy and encourage a power imbalance.

There are dimensions of power embedded in the context of coaching supervision that we have become too used to working within and have lost sight of (Welman and Bachkirova, 2010). I advocate that supervisors and supervisees could minimise this potential imbalance

by being aware of power relations, openly discussing power dynamics and contracting to have equal, balanced relationships. I endorse Corrie and Lane's (2015, p. 123) recommendation to "reconceptualise power as influence" and their suggestion that supervisees and supervisors reframe their interpersonal interactions as "a process of mutual influence". In practice, it may not always be feasible in supervisee-supervisor relationships to maintain an equal balance of power. Welman and Bachkirova (2010), writing about power relations in coaching, recognise this and recommend that, when either party considers it appropriate to move from influence to imposition by exercising more power, they need to do this in a transparent way, by seeking permission and consent. This recommendation could be extended to coaching supervision, for example a supervisor may ask the supervisee for permission to challenge them around their client contracting or a supervisee may ask if they can give the supervisor some constructive feedback about the last supervision session.

The recommendations in the literature on managing the power balance in coaching supervision were reflected and developed in the data from this study. Supervisees described the actions they took to create balanced, healthy relationships with their supervisors. Specific actions that supervisees have taken are shown in table 13.

<b>Supervisee enabler</b>	<b>Supervisee action</b>
Adopting a positive mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examining beliefs and assumptions relating to the supervisor and power relations</li> <li>• Choosing to trust the supervisor</li> </ul>
Co-creating the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting a supervisor that you trust</li> <li>• Co-constructing the contract</li> <li>• Discussing the nature of the relationship, e.g. adult-to-adult</li> <li>• Sharing the driving seat during supervision</li> <li>• Raising difficult issues and giving feedback</li> <li>• Discussing supervisee maturity and future needs at regular intervals</li> </ul>
Participating actively in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing and agreeing roles and responsibilities in supervision</li> <li>• Supervisee empowering themselves to play a full role in the process</li> <li>• Carrying out joint reviews of the process</li> </ul>
Undertaking supervisor training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following training, reviewing how the training has impacted the supervisee and re-contracting to accommodate this</li> </ul>

Table 13: Supervisee actions to address power relations

Supervisees reported that when they chose their supervisor, they trusted them more and this enabled them to have more equal, balanced relationships. However, some supervisees said that they could not always choose their supervisors for example, coaches are often allocated supervisors when studying towards a coach qualification with a learning institution. This might be addressed if learning institutions consider how to provide some element of choice of supervisor (De Haan, 2016a).

The importance of trust and perceiving trust as a choice is highlighted in Gestalt literature on awareness. Supervisees do not have to trust their supervisor but they can choose to do so; they can exercise the power of choice (Stevens, 2007). In the process of

becoming more trusting, supervisees reported being more open with their supervisors.

As well as trusting the supervisor, it is important for supervisees to play an active role in contracting to establish the power relationship that they would like to have with the supervisor. Supervisees and supervisors in the study at every stage of maturity expressed their desire for adult-to-adult relationships with supervisors. The literature recommends recognising and acknowledging that power relations are present in the relationship and making these visible by discussing them with the supervisor when contracting to make the power relations work in favour of the relationship (Corrie and Lane, 2015). Findings in this study support this activity with a few supervisees already engaging in this open discussion about power.

Supervisees can exercise their power by adopting an active role in raising difficult issues and asking for the supervisor's support. Dunnet et al (2013, pp. 97-98) recommend talking about the specific situation, listening to and clarifying each other's point of view and coming to an agreement about the way forward. Several supervisees in the study gave examples of using this process, for example one supervisee discussed her discomfort with her supervisor's reaction to her issue, they then agreed how to manage this going forward and the supervisee felt that their relationship had developed as a result. Other coaching research studies have shown that taking 'critical moments' to supervision supports the coach (De Haan et al., 2010) and can lead to strengthening the supervisory relationship and, at worse, provides clarification that the supervisee needs to end the relationship.

Supervisees can also step into their authority by taking a pro-active stance on reviewing the supervisory relationship in order to keep it balanced and effective. There are frequently issues in any relationship and being willing to reflect upon these together is

important. Supervisees can provide feedback on the degree to which they feel heard, understood and supported by the supervisor and the extent to which they censor what they bring. It is also important to review supervisees' professional and personal development and to focus upon supervisee maturity, future development requirements and needs from the supervisory relationship. In particular, to discuss and agree what supervisees would like to experience differently from their supervisors and what they can offer to do differently going forward. Reviewing the supervisory relationship lends perspective, promotes innovation and a renewed sense of ownership of the process (Dunnett et al., 2013).

To summarise, I argue that power relations can be perceived as an underlying mechanism for the supervisee inhibitors, causing supervisees to view themselves as inferior to supervisors and contributing to supervisee lack of agency in coaching supervision. Whilst the power dynamic is unique to every relationship, supervisors tend to possess more expert power, particularly with novice supervisees. In this study, the impact of an imbalance in power is that supervisees try to please their supervisor and hold back from providing feedback on important issues relating to the supervisory relationship. As a result, there are missed opportunities to explore useful data arising in supervision, to experience joint learning and to develop a more balanced relationship based on mutual respect. As supervisees mature and the gap in knowledge and experience narrows, supervisees step into their authority and have more equal, collaborative relationships with their supervisor.

#### **7.4 Learning**

Learning as a natural state for human beings, is the third underlying mechanism that, in my view, explains supervisees' lived-in experiences. I consider that learning drives all of the enablers identified in Chapter 6. Learning is seen as "the changes a person

makes in himself or herself that increase the know-why and/or the know-what and/or the know-how the person possesses in respect of a given subject” (Vaill, 1996). Learning can be seen as primal - it is one of the most basic human behaviours and occurs instinctively. From early childhood, humans explore their world and develop new skills. The growth process in humans interacts with the development, learning and acquisition of skills to produce the human capacity successfully to function in varying social, cultural and ecological contexts (Lancy, Bock and Gaskins, 2010). Our minds engage in new ideas, new facts and new behaviours allowing new beliefs and principles to be applied in our lives (Shuck, Albornoz and Winberg, 2007). Adults look for ways of understanding experiences as they are occurring, hoping to learn something applicable to interactions and challenges in life (Goffman, 1959). Learning is constant and key to our adapting and long-term survival. This view is supported by recent findings from neuroscience which explain that our brains go on developing throughout life and we have the ability to develop new neural pathways, ‘neural plasticity’, in response to change or new situations (Siegel, 2010).

Participants identified a wealth of rich learning from supervision and the various types of learning are described in detail in Chapter 4. Learning was the main benefit experienced by supervisees in this study on coaching supervision. Supervisees’ learning developed over time. It started out as transactional learning for novice supervisees, focusing on tools and techniques with limited reflection. As supervisees became more experienced, they described learning to self reflect, developing their internal supervisor and examining their assumptions and patterns. Very experienced supervisees spoke about appreciating multiple perspectives, carrying out reflexive learning and learning in a more holistic, embodied way.

Supervisees in the study gained value through facilitated learning. The literature on adult learning in coaching describes adult learners



as self-directed and needing to be facilitated rather than directed. They want to be treated as equals and shown respect for what they know and how they prefer to learn (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 7). When supervisees are inspired and motivated to take personal responsibility for their learning as autonomous adults (Cox, 2006), they are more likely to enhance and develop their practice. In Hodge's study (2016, p. 101), the participants all agreed that learner autonomy and self-efficacy achieved better outcomes, "the relationship, the process and the learning is more highly valued and acted upon. This in turn leads to a deepening of the coach's personal development, practice and professionalism."

Supervisors have an important role to play in facilitating 'what' and 'how' supervisees' learn. Supervisees are not the only beneficiaries of learning in supervision as supervisors learn in the process too. Reflective practice is seen to be at the heart of supervision (Carroll, 2014) and in order for supervisees to take responsibility for their experience and get the most out of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and reflective practice (Schön, 1983, Mezirow, 1990), supervisees and their supervisors need to learn together (Creaner, 2014).

In this study, in spite of fear and power imbalance, supervisees were very motivated by their learning. The benefit of supervision is notably learning and this drives supervisees to want to get the most out of their supervision, to enable themselves and to overcome their inhibitors. A desire to maximise their learning accelerated their tendency to develop ways to enhance their supervision and reduced their tendency to get in their own way and inhibit their supervision, as shown in figure 13.

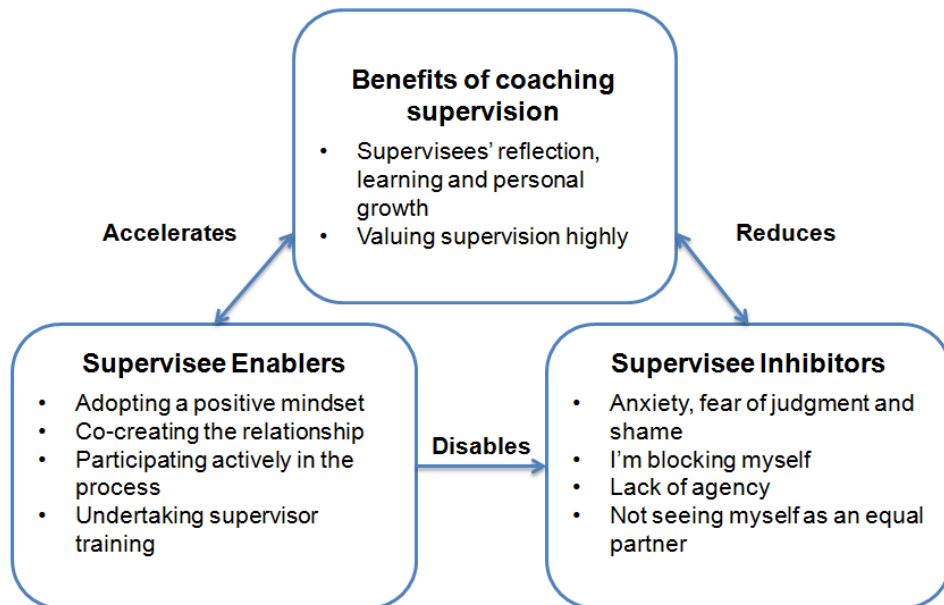


Figure 13: The relationship between learning and supervisee inhibitors and enablers

Supervisees' active participation in the supervision process enhanced their learning. Table 14 summarises what supervisees did at each stage of the supervision process to maximise their learning. This included thorough preparation for supervision, being focused on learning during supervision and carrying out further reflective practice and embedding learning through practise after supervision.

<b>Stage of supervision process</b>	<b>Supervisee Action</b>
Before the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review how you are, client relationships, what is going well, puzzling or disturbing you</li> <li>• Prepare for the session, thinking how best to present the material and reflecting on the issues</li> <li>• Review actions taken since last supervision session and prepare to update the supervisor</li> </ul>

<b>Stage of supervision process</b>	<b>Supervisee Action</b>
During the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be focused on what you want to bring and desired outcomes</li> <li>• Unpack background and patterns</li> <li>• Be prepared to explore through different lenses</li> <li>• Use tape recordings and other creative approaches to enhance learning</li> <li>• Clarify your learning and next steps but do not force an action plan</li> <li>• Allow time to review how the supervisory process is working</li> </ul>
After the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a process for capturing and re-accessing the learning, e.g. transfer notes into client files</li> <li>• Reflect upon your learning, make notes and record ideas, thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• Carry out any actions that you committed to</li> <li>• Embed learning through practise</li> <li>• Identify other CPD to build upon your learning</li> <li>• Reflect on the session - the highs and lows, learning and what you want from supervision going forward and share this with the supervisor</li> </ul>

Table 14: Supervisees' actions to maximise learning in coaching supervision

To summarise, learning can be perceived as an underlying mechanism for the supervisee enablers. It is one of the most basic human behaviours and occurs instinctively. Learning is the key benefit of supervision and it drives supervisees to want to get the most out of their supervision and to overcome their inhibitors.

### **7.5 Bringing it all together – a framework for supervisee-led supervision**

I consider that three factors affecting human nature - fear, power relations and our natural desire for learning - might be underlying supervisees' lived-in experiences. All three mechanisms appear to be fundamental in driving supervisee behaviour. The study revealed

how the majority of supervisees learnt to enhance their coaching supervision over time, by developing ways of countering the underlying mechanisms of fear and power relations, and were motivated to do so by their natural tendency to learn. I advocate that supervisees could gain more learning from their supervision earlier on in their supervision journey if they were more aware of the underlying mechanisms - the impact of fear and power relations and the innate drive for learning and how they can inhibit and enhance their supervision in respect of these factors.

I consider that there is currently a gap in supervisee knowledge, particularly amongst novice supervisees, about how to work through their fear and how to achieve a balanced, equal relationship in order to maximise learning from the supervisory process. Supervisees can be supported to be courageous and step into their authority earlier in their developmental journey. They can become active participants rather than passive recipients through increased awareness of what can hinder them during supervision and what thoughts, behaviours and actions they can adopt to enhance their supervision. I suggest that there may be a gap in supervisors' knowledge about how to facilitate this. It is important for the coaching and supervision communities to provide guidelines, training and literature, based on empirical research, to support coaches to gain awareness on how to be effective supervisees (Hodge et al., 2014, Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016). More detailed recommendations related to this are provided in Chapter 8 in the section on contribution to coaching supervision practice.

This idea of giving supervisees more authority has support in the wider supervision community. Carroll encourages supervisees to move towards the power within where they become "authors of their own lives" (2014, p. 52). He (2014, p. 3) describes how he has changed his stance about supervision and learning and he now believes that supervision should be more 'supervisee-led' rather than

'supervisor-led'. "I am convinced that until supervisees become the directors of their own supervision it will remain a teaching modality rather than a learning one". He believes that it is up to supervisees to "direct the supervisory orchestra" and the supervisor's role is to become facilitators of reflective practice. On the basis of this study's findings, the data supports the idea of supervisee-led supervision and suggests that, once supervisees have awareness of the underlying natural forces that they have to contend with and understand how they can inhibit and enable their supervision, many can choose to empower themselves to "drive the bus of their supervision". The following framework for supervisee-led supervision has been developed with this purpose in mind and reflects the findings of this study (figure 14).

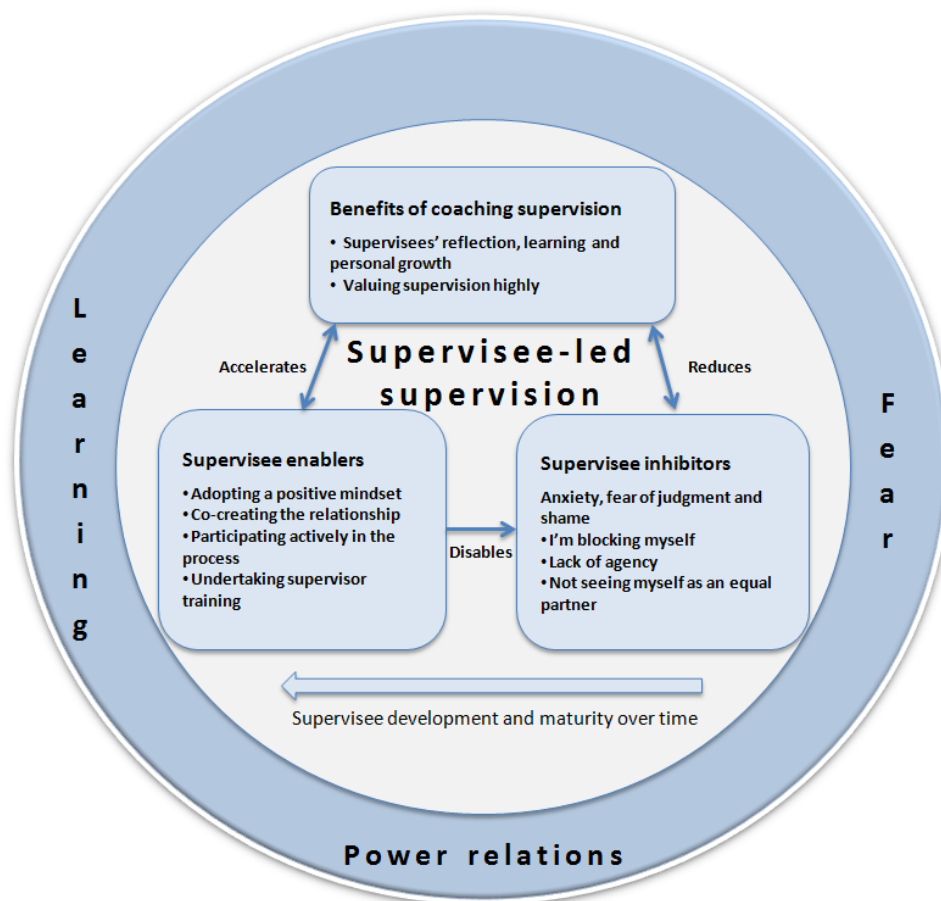


Figure 14: Framework for supervisee-led supervision

The framework is specifically designed for supervisees with an intention to increase their awareness of how to become active

participants in their supervision. Thus “supervisee-led supervision” is at the heart of the inner circle. The outer circle of the framework depicts the possible underlying mechanisms that affect coaching supervision – fear, power relations and our natural desire for learning. Inside the circle lie the benefits of coaching supervision, namely learning and how supervisees value the process, what supervisees can do to enable their supervision and what supervisees can do that inhibits it. The small arrows between the boxes illustrate the relationships between the categories. The benefits of supervision accelerate supervisees’ desire to enable their supervision and reduce their tendency to get in their own way and inhibit their supervision. The larger arrow at the bottom of the inner circle represents supervisee development and maturity over time. This does not mean that the pace of supervisee development should be forced. It is important to maximise the level of learning at each stage of supervisee maturation. I would like to share this framework with supervisees and supervisors to increase their awareness of the supervisee perspective in coaching supervision and how supervisees can make the most of their supervision.

I think that the enhanced role of the supervisee in coaching supervision needs to be reflected in how we define a coaching supervisee going forward. The few definitions of supervisees that I came across during my literature search appear to support ‘supervisor-led’ rather than ‘supervisee-led’ supervision. For example, “a supervisee is one who brings his/her work to another (individual or group) in order to learn how to do that work better” (Carroll and Gilbert, 2011, p. 17) and “the supervisee will be a practising coach. As a coach, they may work on individual, team or group basis with clients” (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016, p. 1). I do not feel that such definitions reflect the responsibility that supervisees want and can have in the supervisory process. On the basis of this study I have developed a new definition which

incorporates the supervisees' proactive and equal role in the process.

*A coaching supervisee is a coach who actively co-creates an equal, collaborative partnership with another professional coach or therapist (supervisor) in order to share and reflect upon his/her work, gain perspective, learn, develop and resource themselves and ensure that their practice is ethical and effective for clients.*

In this study, although I have focused on the role of the coaching supervisee in coaching supervision, I consider that coaching supervisors have a vital role to play in supporting and facilitating supervisees in their reflective practice and learning. With this in mind, I have developed some specific guidelines for both supervisees and supervisors that are based on my findings. These are provided in appendix 10-17.

In this chapter, I have discussed an overarching theme that has emerged from the research, supervisee development and maturity over time. I have explored three underlying mechanisms that affect human nature and might explain supervisees' experiences – fear, power relations and the drive for learning. I then brought it altogether by presenting my framework for supervisee-led supervision, describing how supervisees, through increased awareness, can step into their authority and become the drivers of their own supervision earlier in their developmental journey. The implications of this analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **8 Conclusions and recommendations**

In this study, I set out to answer the question – how can coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision? In this chapter, I will summarise the contribution this study makes to theoretical knowledge and to supervision practice. I will discuss the study's limitations and potential areas for future research and conclude with some personal reflections on my learning from the research process.

### **8.1 Contribution to theoretical knowledge**

The literature review identified three specific gaps in theoretical knowledge, as shown in figure 3:

- lack of empirical research on the lived-in experiences of coaching supervisees at all stages of professional development;
- lack of evidence about coaching supervisees in relation to some key themes in the literature, in particular, power differentials; how supervisees may sabotage their learning; supervisee anxiety; supervisee disclosure; how supervisees can contribute to good supervision; conflict, ruptures and repairs in supervision; and
- lack of an empirically informed framework with guidelines for how supervisees can get the most from their coaching supervision.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the coaching supervisees' perspective is a crucial element without which issues and debates about coaching supervision are incomplete. To address the lack of literature on the role of the supervisee in coaching supervision this first study looked at what helps and hinders supervisees in their coaching supervision. The results of this study address the three theoretical gaps in knowledge and add to the debates about coaching supervision in various ways.



New evidence is provided about how supervisees can block themselves psychologically during supervision, challenging the common misconception in the literature that successful coaching supervisory outcomes are largely related to supervisor behaviours. To date there has been no empirical evidence on how coaching supervisees can sabotage their learning. Supervisees' block themselves through lack of preparation, utilising diversion tactics, such as self censoring, and holding limiting beliefs about the potential of learning, for example holding an assumption that supervision is remedial and being reluctant to focus on what is going well. This evidence contributes to theoretical debates about the important and equal role that supervisees play in the success of supervision and highlights the need for empirically grounded literature to guide coaching supervisees through the supervision process.

Further empirical evidence is provided about the prevalence, contexts and consequences of supervisees' anxiety, fear of exposure and judgment, vulnerability and shame during coaching supervision as perceived by supervisees. For example, fear was greater for novice supervisees and supervisees receiving group or internal supervision. This adds to debates on the role and impact of anxiety, vulnerability and shame on disclosure and learning in coaching supervision (Cavicchia, 2010, Cohen, 2014, De Haan, 2016b) and the beneficial effects of supervisees moving towards fear by exposing it during supervision and using it constructively.

New light is shone on coaching supervisees' lack of agency in a number of areas, particularly early on in their development as a supervisee. Novice supervisees are unsure what coaching supervision is and how to make the best use of it and supervisees can be reluctant to discuss supervisory issues that arise in the relationship and to change supervisor when their learning has plateaued. This is the first study in coaching supervision to provide evidence about typical issues that can arise in the coaching

supervisory relationship from the supervisee perspective, reasons why coaching supervisees may choose not to discuss the issues with their supervisors and the potential impact of avoiding discussions on the coaching supervisory relationship. The study indicates why coaching supervisees change supervisor, the positive and negative reasons for some supervisees being reluctant to do so and why coaching supervisees lack transparency about their reasons for ending the supervisory relationship.

Findings provide new evidence to support concerns about the role of power and unequal power balance particularly between novice supervisees and their supervisors. This study contributes insights on the potential sources of coaching supervisor and supervisee power, what underlies the power dynamic and how this can shift over time.

Fresh insights are generated into how coaching supervisees can contribute to good supervision. Coaching supervisees have learnt to maximise the benefits of supervision as they have matured through adopting a positive mind-set, co-creating the relationship with their supervisor and participating more actively in the supervision process. The evidence includes how supervisees can find supervisory relationships that work, how they can share the driving seat during supervision and how they can keep attuned with their supervisor over the length of their supervisory relationship.

The study adds to evidence that supervisor training increases coaches understanding of coaching supervision, their willingness to have it, reduces coaching supervisees' anxiety and increases the level of responsibility they take in the process. This study raises a question about why supervision training is focused largely on supervisors and builds a case for coaching supervisee training being available to all coaches.

The study contributes empirical insight into the benefits of coaching supervision from the perspective of the supervisee. The evidence covers what is learnt, how it is learnt, the impact of the learning, what supervisees value about their supervisors, positive emotions generated through supervision and how these benefits and rewards become magnified over time. This adds to debates on the outcomes of coaching supervision from the supervisee perspective.

A number of psychological and social processes are identified that might explain the lived-in experiences of the participants. These are fear, power relations and the natural capacity for learning. The study goes beyond the empirical data to consider the underlying mechanisms that explain the experiences of supervisees and to suggest how supervisees and supervisors can take actions to address potential issues and enhance coaching supervision at a fundamental level.

The study provides evidence of stages of maturity as supervisees develop and this can enable supervisees to understand where they are in their development journey. The stages add to debates and literature on coaching supervisee developmental models (Hawkins and Smith, 2006) and to developmental models for supervisees in the helping professions (Hogan, 1964, Stoltenberg, 1981, Stoltenberg and Delworth, 1987, Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010, Carroll and Gilbert, 2011) by providing empirical evidence about how coaches at different levels of maturity approach supervision. In particular, the reasons supervisees have supervision; how they choose their supervisor; how they describe their psychological state; the material they take to supervision; what they want from their supervisor; the power dynamic with their supervisor; the nature of their reflection and learning during and after supervision; and their role in ensuring the quality of their supervision.

The study contributes to conceptualisation and definitions about coaching supervision by advocating that coaching supervision needs to be supervisee-led and providing a new definition of a coaching supervisee that reflects the supervisee's empowered role in the process. This study adds empirical insight into debates about supervisee and supervisor responsibilities during coaching supervision. It may be that the roles and responsibilities need further adaptation to maximise the benefits of the supervision experience.

Finally, this study's main contribution to theory is a framework for supervisee-led supervision, which reflects the supervisee perspective in coaching supervision (figure 14). It aims to fill the gap in terms of empirically informed frameworks that may lead to guidelines for how coaching supervisees can maximise their learning from coaching supervision.

## **8.2 Contribution to coaching supervision practice**

This research began by highlighting that coaching supervision is a new domain with relatively little research. The emerging profession has traditionally borrowed from the theories and models of supervision in the helping professions (Moyes, 2009) and, although further literature and research are growing, very little is known from a coaching supervisee perspective. Therefore, this study on coaching supervisees has much to contribute to the profession. In this section I outline the implications of the study for supervisees, supervisors, professional bodies, coach training providers, coach providers and learning and development practitioners. These implications are summarised in table 15.

The main beneficiaries of the study are coaching supervisees because it provides new knowledge, based on empirical evidence, about the supervisees' role in the coaching supervision process. I have developed a framework for supervisee-led supervision (figure

14) that includes guidelines for how supervisees can make the most of their coaching supervision (appendix 10-17).

The framework shows the benefits of supervision for coaching supervisees and illustrates how these benefits can reduce how supervisees hinder their supervision and accelerate how supervisees enable their supervision over time. These benefits, together with the natural desire to learn, could encourage supervisees to engage in coaching supervision throughout their coaching career more effectively. It depicts what coaching supervisees need to be alert to, both in terms of personal inhibitors and potential psychological and social processes that affect human nature – fear and power relations. The framework displays what supervisees can do to enable their coaching supervision by adopting a positive mind-set, co-creating the relationship with

<b>Theoretical contribution</b>	<b>Supervisees</b>	<b>Supervisors</b>	<b>Professional bodies</b>	<b>Coach training providers</b>	<b>Coach providers</b>	<b>L &amp; D Practitioners</b>
<b>Evidence of the benefits of CS</b>	Raise awareness of potential benefits	Review benefits with sup.ees	Encourage coaches to have lifelong CS by promoting benefits	Encourage coaches to have lifelong CS by sharing benefits	Encourage coaches to have lifelong CS by sharing benefits	Use to build case for internal or external CS
<b>Further evidence of supervisee anxiety in CS</b>	Raise awareness, acknowledge anxiety during supervision	Raise awareness, use to normalise feelings and create safety with sup.ee	Publicise to normalise feelings and provide guidelines	Increase awareness, normalise feelings and provide guidelines	Ensure sup.ors are aware and provide guidelines for sup.ees	Raise awareness of sup.ee anxiety and provide guidelines
<b>Evidence on power dynamics in CS</b>	Raise awareness about power relations and work on creating an equal relationship	Increase awareness about power relations, discuss with sup.ees and create an equal relationship	Raise awareness about power dynamics and provide guidelines	Raise awareness about power dynamics and provide guidelines for sup.ees and sup.ors	Ensure sup.ors are aware and provide guidelines for sup.ees	Raise awareness about power dynamics and provide guidelines
<b>Insights into how sup.ees can contribute to and hinder their CS</b>	Raise awareness of how can help and hinder CS	Raise awareness of and discuss with sup.ee	Provide guidelines on how sup.ees can enable and hinder CS	Increase awareness and provide guidelines. Build into sup.or training	Increase awareness and provide guidelines	Increase awareness and provide guidelines for internal coaches
<b>Impact of supervisor training on CS</b>	Attend sup.ee training	Encourage sup.ee to have sup.ee training	Recommend sup.ee training	Provide sup.ee training	Encourage/ provide sup.ee training	Provide sup.ee training
<b>New stages of maturity for coaching sup.ees</b>	Raise awareness of needs at each stage in CS	Raise awareness of & use to understand sup.ee's needs in CS	Promote needs of sup.ees at each stage of maturity	Use in sup.ee & sup.or training to explain sup.ee's CS needs	Use to understand sup.ee's CS needs at each stage of maturity	Use to understand sup.ee's CS needs at each stage of maturity
<b>Conceptualisations of supervisee-led CS</b>	Awareness of responsibilities and how to play a full role in CS	Raise awareness of responsibilities; take a sup.ee-led approach	Clarify responsibilities and advocate a sup.ee-led approach	Provide choice of Sup.ors and clarify responsibilities	Provide choice of Sup.ors and clarify responsibilities	Provide choice of Sup.ors and clarify responsibilities
<b>Framework &amp; guidelines on supervisee-led CS</b>	Use to step into their authority as sup.ees	Use to understand role of sup.ee/sup.or in CS	Use to clarify role of sup.ee/sup.or in CS	Use to clarify role of sup.ee/sup.or in CS	Use to clarify role of sup.ee/sup.or in CS	Use to clarify role of sup.ee in CS

Table 15: Implications for coaching supervision practice

the supervisor and participating more actively in the supervision process. The guidelines cover practical suggestions for getting the most out of the coaching supervision process. For example, how to play an active role in the initial contracting with the supervisor, set the relationship up as a collaborative partnership from the start and how to provide regular feedback to the coaching supervisor about what is working and what could be improved (appendix 10-17).

In addition to the framework and guidelines, I have developed a new definition of a coaching supervisee that reflects the supervisees' proactive and equal role in the process. This is supported by a list of supervisee responsibilities that supervisees can use to guide what they do before, during and after their coaching supervision and what they can expect the supervisor to take responsibility for (appendix 10-16). I recommend that supervisees be given more support to understand their role in coaching supervision. This support could be provided by professional bodies, coach training organisations, coaching providers and learning and development practitioners.

Supervisees can use the new stages of maturity to understand where they are in their developmental journeys. The stages provide guidance to supervisees on the drivers for supervision, how to select a supervisor, what material they are likely to bring to supervision, what they may want from their supervisor, possible power dynamics with their supervisor, the nature of their reflection and learning and their role in ensuring the quality of their supervision.

The study contributes to supervisor practice by providing empirical data about the lived-in experiences of coaching supervisees and may sensitise supervisors to supervisees' needs. The study encourages supervisors to adopt a supervisee-led approach to coaching supervision. Participants in the study highlighted that supervisors often take too much responsibility in coaching supervision and supervisees take too little. I developed a list of best practice

supervisee and supervisor responsibilities (appendix 10-16) from the data provided by the participants and this list can be used by supervisors as a focus for a discussion about responsibilities with supervisees. In practice, supervisees often assume more responsibilities as they mature and it would be useful to set expectations about roles early on in the relationship to encourage supervisees to participate actively from the start. The guidelines for supervisors (appendix 10-17) provide practical suggestions for how to contract with supervisees, welcome anxiety and fear in supervision, establish a balanced relationship and review the relationship so that supervisees are encouraged to step into their authority and play an equal role. The new stages of maturity for supervisees can be used to inform supervisors about supervisees' needs at each phase of their developmental journey. The data suggests that supervisors should encourage supervisees to attend supervisee training so that they get the most from their coaching supervision.

There are practical implications for professional bodies that can be indicated from this study. Professional bodies could recognise the important role of the supervisee in coaching supervision by providing better guidelines for supervisees about coaching supervision. Currently, the major professional bodies in the UK each stipulate in their codes of ethics (AC and EMCC, 2016, APECS, 2006, ICF, 2015b) that members should receive coaching supervision but they vary in the level of information that they provide about how to go about arranging supervision and none of the bodies currently provide sufficient guidelines on how to use supervision effectively from the supervisees' perspective (AC, 2015, APECS, 2014, EMCC, 2010, ICF, 2015a). I recommend that professional bodies develop guidelines and hold workshops and webinars on how supervisees can get the most from one-to-one and group coaching supervision at each stage of supervisee maturity, including how to select a



supervisor, contract with them, how to manage anxiety and power dynamics during supervision and how to review the relationship.

There are a number of practical implications for coaching training organisations. A growing number of bodies provide coach development programmes and these often include coaching supervision as part of the training package. Yet, in my experience, there is little input for novice supervisees about how to make the best use of supervision. The data suggests that coach training bodies should include supervisee training and guidelines on making the most effective use of one-to-one and group coaching supervision, prior to the students embarking on coach supervision for the first time. I would recommend that this includes the benefits of supervision, understanding the supervisees' responsibilities in supervision, the prevalence of fear and power relations in supervision, practical advice about making the most of supervision and positioning supervision as a vital part of coaches' CPD. This would enable novice supervisees to perceive the supervisory relationship as a collaborative partnership, to participate fully in it and to maximise their learning from supervision. I have designed an outline of some supervisee training, informed from empirical evidence, to be made available to supervisees (appendix 10-18). In addition, I consider that coach training bodies could provide students with a choice of supervisors, rather than impose a supervisor on the students. This would increase supervisee agency in the process (De Haan, 2016a). They could also inform supervisees about the stages of maturity as supervisees to manage their expectations about their developmental journey.

There are implications for coaching training organisations providing supervisor training. Supervisor training programmes would benefit from including the supervisee perspective, stages of maturity for supervisees and insights into supervisee contributions to productive and unproductive supervision. If novice supervisors are made aware

of the potential for fear and power dynamics in coaching supervision, they will be more alert to these underlying mechanisms and be able to discuss them with their supervisees. Novice supervisors will benefit from being introduced to the concept of supervisee-led supervision and incorporating this approach to their supervision practice.

Coaching providers usually stipulate that their coaches have to have coaching supervision and sometimes provide supervision for them (Humphrey and Sheppard, 2012). The evidence about the benefits of coaching supervision can be used to encourage coaches to attend regular supervision. Where coaching providers supply supervision, they could provide a choice of supervisor so that coaches have agency in the selection process. Coach providers can benefit by gaining insights into supervisee's requirements through the new stages of maturity for supervisees, and the quality of coaching supervision that will best meet the needs. They could recommend or provide supervisee training for their coaches.

Learning and development practitioners who provide supervision services for their internal coaches should be more aware of the needs of supervisees through the research and be more informed about how to design, procure and deliver internal or external coaching supervision services that maximise supervisee learning and support the needs of the organisation. Learning and development practitioners could ensure that their internal coaches are able to select their supervisor and provide supervisee training, in the form of a webinar or an interactive workshop for their internal coaches. In addition, they could seek feedback on the extent to which the supervision provided is supervisee-led.

### **8.3 Limitations of this research**

This study is subject to a number of limitations. The selection of the participants was by purposive sampling. Participants were recruited through adverts placed through two professional bodies to ensure that they were interested in the phenomenon under investigation. However, by answering the advertisement, the participants were predisposed to coaching supervision and this might create certain bias. Another source of potential bias is that I was acquainted with two of the participants. It is possible that they may have modified their accounts according to their perceptions of what I wanted to hear.

The interview method is open to question on many fronts and some of these are dealt with in Chapter 3. Theoretical sampling in Grounded Theory ensures that the emerging concepts influence further sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and I chose the next participant to interview and made choices about the questions I asked. Inevitably, interviewer choices influence what is revealed. Interviews are dependent on the researcher's interviewing skills. While I consider that my background and experience enabled participants to open up more than they might with some other researchers, my empathetic style makes it impossible to remain completely neutral during the interviews. I may have reacted more positively to some responses and thereby encouraged participants to elaborate and, at other times, reacted less enthusiastically to other responses and missed potential data.

Data analysis involves making many choices and is open to bias. The data was collected and analysed by a single researcher and, although I used another researcher to check some of the initial coding, this limitation may impact the confirmability of the study. Data analysis involved making lots of decisions, particularly at the stage of theoretical coding. Charmaz (2014) warns about the aura of

objectivity around theoretical coding and advises researchers to be reflective when doing theoretical coding. I aimed to let my findings emerge, tried not to use theoretical codes to impose frameworks and wrote reflective memos; however, it is likely that, as a practitioner researcher, I was drawn to categories with a practical application.

#### **8.4 Potential areas for future research**

There has been very limited research on the supervisee perspective in coaching research and so more research is called for and there are many gaps and potential areas for future research (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016, Bachkirova, Clutterbuck and Jackson, 2011) identified by this initial study. It would be valuable to carry out further research on the impact of the potential underlying mechanisms in supervision - fear, power relations and learning. For example, it would be enlightening to study the impact of fear, power relations and learning on matched pairs of supervisees and supervisors during supervision sessions as this would enable the researcher to check for convergence or divergence of perceptions and experiences. Another area for further research is the impact of supervision training on supervisees. One finding from this study is that coaches who have had supervisor training benefit as supervisees because their awareness of the supervision process is enhanced. It would be useful to develop supervision training for supervisees and identify the impact of this on their learning and satisfaction from supervision. These additional studies would add to the body of knowledge about the impact of the underlying mechanisms on supervisees and supervisors and the impact of supervision training.

The overarching theme from this study was supervisee development and maturity over time. There has been no research yet that I am aware of on coaching supervisee development stages or on the supervision requirements of particular groups of coaching

supervisees, such as novice supervisees and very experienced supervisees. Furthermore, there is little research on the needs of mature supervisees in the helping professions. I describe the stages of maturity as supervisees, based on the data gathered. It would be valuable to study supervisee development levels further with a view to ascertaining whether there are three levels or more, whether these levels are distinct or can supervisees be at different levels for different aspects of their development and how can supervisees and supervisors recognise the transition points. It would be interesting to investigate the relationship, if any, between supervision hours and supervisee maturity. Further research would support supervisees and supervisors to understand where supervisees are at in their developmental journeys and make decisions about how best to support their development.

This study has focused upon the coaching supervisee perspective. It would be valuable to extend the study to consider the coaching supervisor perspective, what helps and hinders supervisors and what are supervisors' experiences of fear, power relations and the natural desire to learn within coaching supervision. This would be valuable because there has not been any research on what makes a good supervisor. Although two of the professional bodies (AC, 2013, EMCC, 2013) have defined coaching supervisor competencies, these appear to be an extension of coaching skills competencies (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016). As yet, to the best of my knowledge, there are no specific coaching supervisee competencies. Therefore, it would be beneficial to carry out some research into what are the competencies of good supervisees and good supervisors and what differentiates a good supervisor and good supervisee from a good coach.

This study focused on both one-to-one and group supervision and there was some interesting data related to participants' feeling more anxiety and fearing judgment to a greater extent during group

supervision. It would expand our understanding of how different supervision formats impact supervisees if research was carried out on how supervisees' experience one-to-one compared to group supervision or a mix of the two formats and whether the choice of one-to-one and/or group supervision makes a difference for the learning of the supervisee.

The study did not look at the distinct supervisory needs of specific groups of supervisees. For example, it would be valuable to shed light upon the supervision needs and experiences of internal coaches compared to external coaches and of supervisees and supervisors from diverse cultural backgrounds, compared to supervisors and supervisees from common cultural backgrounds. This would increase our understanding of the best way to leverage difference in coaching supervision.

I studied what and how supervisees learn and the impact of this learning. The current literature in coaching supervision does not cover how a supervisee can learn how to be a good reflective practitioner (Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016). Therefore, our knowledge about supervisee learning could be expanded by further research on how supervisees can enhance their reflective practitioner skills in order to get the most from coaching supervision.

In this study, I looked at the benefits of supervision for supervisees. It would be fruitful to carry out further research into what supervisees consider as "value" from coaching supervision, how supervisees articulate the benefits of supervision compared with other reflective practices and forms of CPD that they utilise and the holy grail - what is the impact of supervisees having supervision on clients and their organisations.

## 8.5 Personal reflections on my learning from the research process

I have been on a learning journey during this study, supported by multiple, talented supervisors – two academic supervisors, two coaching supervisors and two supervisors on my supervision practice. They have all facilitated my learning and the learning has been supervisee-led. During my journey, I experienced the same underlying generative mechanisms that emerged during the research – fear about my ability to carry out the study and concerns about power relations in relation to the study participants, my supervisors and fellow students. I recognise that some of these feelings will be parallel process (Casement, 1985). I was motivated to overcome these concerns by the natural desire to learn and the sense of achievement that I experienced as I progressed along the path to completing a professional doctorate. In the first year of my studies I wrote a haiku to represent my feelings:

*Constant time pressure*

*Feelings of guilt, angst and joy*

*Hope for the future.*

I learnt to break the study into bite size tasks, step into my authority, to hold my research lightly when I became overwhelmed with data or felt stuck about coding decisions and allowing space for ideas to emerge, to seek early feedback on my writing from my academic supervisors and to enjoy the journey.

I found having a critical realist philosophy challenging for a number of reasons. Firstly, explanations of critical realism are difficult to comprehend for a novice researcher. Secondly, there are relatively few critical realist empirical studies and little accessible material on critical realist-informed methodology to inform the researcher. I decided to adopt a growth mindset (Dwenck, 2006) about this, believing that this presented an opportunity for me to contribute to

the development of new procedures. I have discovered that adopting a critical realist perspective has enabled me to provide deeper interpretations of the findings; to look underneath supervisees' lived-in experiences at the natural psychological and social mechanisms that may be driving behaviour.

I approached the study, like all researchers, with my own assumptions. I surfaced some of these through taking part in the pilot study. It was surprising to hear myself talk about how bruising my early supervision experiences had been because of issues relating to power relations. At times, I was surprised by supervisees' experiences, for example I did not expect supervisees to be so reluctant to provide feedback to their supervisors or to be so reticent to change supervisor when their learning had plateaued.

I have noticed how I have changed my views and practice both as a supervisee and a supervisor as a result of the study. As a supervisee, I now co-create the relationship with the supervisor, sharing how I can hinder my supervision. I am conscious of seeing the relationship as a learning partnership and not subjugating myself in the process. This has contributed to one of my supervisors asking me to co-facilitate a supervision group with him and I am looking forward to this new experience.

As a supervisor, I now understand my instinctive inclination to adopt a facilitative supervisory style and I feel more comfortable with it. I have learnt to contract with supervisees on how we work with our anxiety, fear and vulnerability during supervision, to acknowledge the role of power relations, to discuss our responsibilities and how these develop over time and to review the relationship in a more conscious way. I have changed my stance on supervisees going on supervisor training early on in their developmental journey as a coach. I used to think that coaches had to have significant experience to undertake supervisor training and now I recognise that supervisor training



enables supervisees to enhance their coaching supervision. I think that there is a gap in the market for 'supervisee training'.

Finally, I have learnt much about being a researcher. I value research more and I acknowledge the immense value that it contributes to the profession. I have enjoyed undertaking the doctorate and I feel encouraged to carry out further research, as reflected in my latest haiku.

*Mountains of data*

*The joy of sharing knowledge*

*A rewarding quest.*

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## 10 Appendices

### 10.1 Summary of the published research studies on coaching supervision

Empirical Study	Focus	Country	Methodology	Themes
Pampallis Paisley, doctoral thesis (2006)	Towards a theory of supervision for coaching	UK	Phenomenological approach Grounded theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes coaching supervision distinctive (18 phenomena)</li> <li>• Appropriate models for supervision (Integral theory)</li> </ul>
CIPD Survey of Coaching Supervision (2006)	Survey of coaching supervision	UK	On-line survey (525 coaches, 128 purchasers) Focus groups and interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons why people were and weren't having supervision</li> <li>• Coaching supervision best practice</li> </ul>
Butwell (2006)	Internal, group supervision	UK	Observation of a group over 14 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of group supervision</li> <li>• Supervisee needs and fears</li> </ul>
Salter (2008)	Role of coaching supervision	UK, Europe, US, Canada	Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for and against supervision being integrated into coaching practice</li> </ul>
Armstrong and Geddes (2009)	External, group supervision	Australia	Action Research Observed 3 groups Written reflections Interviews - 10 supervisees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the supervisor</li> <li>• Insights from supervisees on benefits</li> </ul>
Passmore and McGoldrick (2009)	Efficacy of coaching supervision	UK	Filmed a supervision session Interviews - 2 supervisors, 6 supervisees Grounded theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor and supervisee expectations of supervision</li> <li>• Supervisee attitudes to supervision</li> <li>• What limits effectiveness of supervision</li> </ul>
McGivern (2009)	Lived-in experiences of supervisees	UK	Interpretative Phenomenological Approach Interviews – 6 supervisees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions that need to be met for supervisees to open up during supervision</li> <li>• Supervisee's "right" mindset</li> </ul>

<b>Empirical Study</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Grant (2012)	Survey of coaching supervision in Australia	Australia	On-line survey (174 coaches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons why people were and weren't having supervision</li> <li>• Benefits of supervision</li> <li>• Negative experiences of supervision</li> </ul>
De Filippo doctoral thesis (2013)	Emotions generated during supervision and the effects of supervision	UK/USA	Interviews with 9 supervisory dyads Critical Incident Technique Thematic analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of issues raised</li> <li>• Emotions experienced by supervisors/supervisees</li> <li>• What develops the supervisory relationship</li> <li>• Outcomes from supervision for supervisees and supervisors</li> </ul>
Hodge doctoral thesis (2014)	What goes on in coaching supervision	UK	Participatory Action Research with 2 separate groups of supervisors and supervisees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions of supervision for supervisees</li> <li>• Negative experiences in supervision and the consequences</li> <li>• CPD needs of supervisees</li> <li>• Adult Learning needs of supervisees</li> <li>• Reflection on practice</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees</li> </ul>
Lawrence and Whyte (2014)	Functions of coaching supervision	Australia, New Zealand	Interviews - 33 coaches, 29 purchasers of coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions of coaching (developmental for coaches and qualitative for purchasers)</li> </ul>
Turner and Hawkins (2015)	Multi stakeholder contracting in coaching and update on coaching supervision situation	UK, Europe, Africa, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada	Survey 854 responses, (520 coaches, organisations and individual clients completed supervision section)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popularity of supervision globally and new growth areas</li> <li>• Frequency and payment patterns for supervision</li> <li>• Changing reasons for having supervision</li> <li>• Organisations' and clients' attitudes to supervision</li> <li>• Discussion of stakeholder contracting in supervision</li> </ul>



## 10.2 ICF research form



### RESEARCH CRITERIA

**Name of Researcher:** Louise Sheppard

**Title of Research:** Being a supervisee: How supervisees can enhance the value of their coaching supervision

Question	Answer
What background and qualifications/experience do you have in research?	I am currently studying for a doctorate in coaching and mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. My supervisors are Dr Tatiana Bachkirova, Reader in Coaching Psychology and Co-Director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies, Faculty of Business at Oxford Brookes and Dr Carmelina Lawton Smith, a Senior Lecturer at Oxford Brookes. The first year of the programme is taught and I have completed and passed modules in issues in psychological research, advanced quantitative methods and doctoral research design. I submitted research and ethics proposals in November 2014 and been given permission for my study to begin. I completed a Masters in Professional coaching with i-coach and Middlesex University, involving research in February 2009.
Are you an ICF member?  If so, do you hold an ICF credential and if so at what level?	No, I am accredited as an Executive Coach and Coaching Supervisor by APECS (Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision).
What is the intended output from the research? (e.g. a research paper to be published in an academic journal or an article to be published)  If it is a research paper or article where is it likely to be published?	A doctoral thesis A research paper to be published in an academic journal.  International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
What type of research are you undertaking e.g. qualitative or quantitative?	Qualitative research

<p>What process will you be using to collect the data and how will you store and treat the data?</p>	<p><i>Collecting data</i> The process I will be using to collect data is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design of semi-structured interview format</li> <li>○ Pilot semi-structured interviews</li> <li>○ Identification and engagement of participants</li> <li>○ Interviews with participants</li> <li>○ Transcription of interviews</li> <li>○ Analysis using grounded theory</li> </ul> <p><i>Storage and treatment of Data</i> The involvement, and all information collected about any individual who takes part in this study, will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality and privacy will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research by de-identifying the participants. Any publication arising from the research will use anonymised quotes. As the sample is small, anonymity can only be guaranteed within the limits of the law. Data generated by the study must be retained in accordance with Oxford Brooke's policy on Academic Integrity. Any laptops, memory sticks or audio records used in field research will be securely code encrypted so that they comply with the Data Protection Act in the UK and will be stored in a secure place. All data, both electronic and paper, will be kept in safe storage for ten years after the conclusion of this research project. I have prepared a data compliance sheet for the transcriber.</p>
<p>Please describe the methodology you are applying to the research in more detail.</p>	<p>The research is designed from a critical realist paradigm. The methodology chosen for the study is grounded theory as it is compatible with critical realist tenets. Grounded theory provides an iterative approach for rich data collection and analysis and supports the creation of new theory.</p>
<p>What is your approach to data analysis specifically?</p>	<p>I am using grounded theory methodology and will begin data analysis as soon as data is available. This will involve a technique called retrodution whereby data is reduced in stages to its core meaning. In the process, theory from extant reading is applied to the data to see what other aspects might be occurring to explain the events that form the lived-in experiences of coaching supervision. Memos are written to capture ideas and record the decisions that are being taken.</p>

<p>What data gathering instrument will you be using to collect data?</p>	<p>I will be using semi-structured interviews to gather my data. All the interviews will be recorded and transcribed.</p>
<p>Approximately how many people will be invited to complete the research; what is your intended number of respondents?</p>	<p>I am aiming to interview between 15-25 supervisees. Ideally, I would like to have approximately 30-35 respondents and I would then do a pre-selection process to ensure that they meet my criteria. I have prepared an advert, participants form and consent sheet for those interested in taking part.</p>
<p>What do you see as the proposed interest/benefits to the UK ICF and its members of this research?</p>	<p>There are two main benefits from the research. The first is a contribution to the body of knowledge and current debates about the processes and value of supervision at all stages of supervisees' professional development. The second relates to professional practice and is about developing practical, structured guidelines for how supervisees can enhance the learning from their coaching supervision. This will benefit supervisees, their clients and the organisations in which they are working.</p>
<p>What can you offer to the UK ICF and its members in return for their publicising/completing the research? (e.g. free access to the research; a webinar to share findings).</p>	<p>I will provide free access to a summary of the research findings and could offer a workshop/webinar on how to get the most out of coaching supervision.</p>

## 10.3 Participant information sheet, consent form and advert



### 1. Participant Information Sheet – Supervisee

Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring

Researcher: Louise Sheppard

Title: Being a supervisee: How supervisees can enhance the value of their coaching supervision?

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

#### *What is the purpose of the study?*

The purpose of the study is to explore what helps supervisees enhance the value of their coaching supervision. Coaching supervision is currently underutilised. The major coaching professional bodies, many organisations, coaching providers and coach training programmes require coaches to have coaching supervision and yet there is little guidance available about how to get the best value out of the process. Little research on supervisees in the coaching profession has been undertaken. I would like to fill this gap by proposing a framework and developing practical guidelines for how supervisees can enhance the value of their coaching supervision.

The study will take place between January and July 2015. The study will involve semi-structured, individual interviews with supervisees.

#### *Why have I been invited to participate?*

You are invited to take part because you indicated that you are a supervisee who has been having regular, paid coaching supervision for at least a year. I am interested in understanding how you experience supervision, how you approach the sessions, what you do during them and how you integrate the learning from them. I am also interviewing some supervisors and the data for the supervisees and supervisors would not be matched.

#### *Do I have to take part?*

It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason.

#### *What will happen to me if I take part?*

Participation in the study will involve an interview of no more than 75 minutes at a mutually agreed venue, date and time. The interview will be recorded with your permission.

*What are the possible benefits of taking part?*

You can contribute to the coaching profession's understanding and knowledge about the processes and value of supervision at all stages of coaches' professional development. In addition, through reflection on your supervision practice, you may gain some insights into how to enhance it.

*Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?*

Your involvement, and all information collected about any individual who takes part in this study, will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality and privacy will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research by de-identifying the participants. Any publication arising from the research will use anonymised quotes. As the sample is small, anonymity can only be guaranteed within the limits of the law. Data generated by the study must be retained in accordance with the university's policy on Academic Integrity. Any laptops, memory sticks or audio records used in field research will be securely code encrypted so that they comply with the Data Protection Act in the UK and will be stored in a secure place. All data, both electronic and paper, will be kept in safe storage for ten years after the conclusion of this research project.

*What should I do if I want to take part?*

If you would like to take part in the study, please email me at the email address below and I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient private location, date and time.

*What will happen to the results of the research study?*

The results of the research will form part of my thesis for the Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring. The thesis will be available from Oxford Brookes library. A summary of the research findings will be available on request.

*Who is organising and funding the research?*

I am conducting this research as a part-time doctoral student of the Business School, Coaching and Mentoring, at Oxford Brookes University. I am self-funding the research. This research is being supervised by:

Tatiana Bachkirova, Reader in Coaching Psychology, Oxford Brookes University, Tel: 01865 488367 Email: [tbachkirova@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:tbachkirova@brookes.ac.uk) and

Carmelina Lawton Smith, Oxford Brookes University, Tel: 01865 488552 [clawton-smith@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:clawton-smith@brookes.ac.uk)

*Who has reviewed the study?*

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

*Contact for further information*

Researcher: Louise Sheppard  
Email: [13091295@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:13091295@brookes.ac.uk)

The University also provides advice if there are any concerns regarding the research and the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee can be contacted at [ethics@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@brookes.ac.uk)

*Thank you*

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Date: 3rd December 2014



## 2. Consent Form

Title: Being a supervisee: How coaches can enhance the value of their coaching supervision.

Researcher: Louise Sheppard

Contact address: c/o International Centre for Coaching and Leadership Development, Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1HX.

Contact email: 13091295@brookes.ac.uk

**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.

Yes      No

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications
6. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised), within the limits of the law, and that it will be stored, encrypted, for ten years.

Name of Participant                      Date                      Signature

Name of Researcher                      Date                      Signature

### **3. Advert (to professional body website/professional network)**

Dear Coaches and Coaching Supervisors

My name is Louise Sheppard and I am carrying out research for a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. You are invited to take part in a research study that aims to explore the factors that help supervisees enhance the value of their coaching supervision. I am interested in interviewing both supervisees and supervisors to learn about your different perspectives. For supervisees, I am interested in how you experience supervision, how you approach the sessions, what you do during them and how you integrate the learning from them. For supervisors, I am interested in understanding your perspective on supervisees' responsibilities and contributions during supervision.

The research includes both coaches who receive one-to-one and/or group supervision and supervisors who provide either one-to-one or group supervision. If you are a coach who has had at least one year's experience of being in formal, paid, regular coaching supervision and/or a supervisor who has participated in a supervision training programme, I would like to interview you about your experience and practice. The interview will take up to 75 minutes and can be done either face-to-face (in a mutually agreed location), by phone or via Skype. The interviews will be audio recorded. I will be conducting a minimum of 15 interviews and all quotes will be anonymised. Your participation and the contents of the interview will be kept strictly confidential (within the limitations of the law).

By participating, you can contribute to the coaching profession's understanding and knowledge about the processes and value of supervision at all stages of coaches' professional development. In addition, through reflection on your supervision practice, you may gain some insights into how to enhance it.

If you are interested, please contact me at [13091295@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:13091295@brookes.ac.uk) for an information sheet that will explain all the details that you need to know in order to make a decision about taking part in the study.

Louise Sheppard

## 10.4 Proforma for interview screening discussion

1. *Participant sheet and consent form*

Did you receive the Participants' Sheet(s) and consent form? Have you got any questions arising from these or about the research in general?
  
2. *Specific biographical and screening questions*
  - a. How long have you been practicing as a coach (and/or supervisor)?
  - b. Have you a psychotherapy or counselling background?
  - c. Are you also a trained coaching supervisor? Where did you train?
  - d. Explain what I mean by formal supervision (paid and regular with a qualified coaching supervisor). How many years have you been having formal paid, regular supervision?
  - e. What are your supervision arrangements at the moment? Is it group or individual or both (check that it is not peer)?
  - f. How many supervisors have you had over the years?
  - g. Supervisor only: Where did you train as a supervisor? How many supervisees have you got currently and what is the supervision format – individual and/or group?
  
3. *Would you like to be involved in the research?*
  - a. Would you like to be interviewed as a supervisee or supervisor?
  - b. Location of meeting or Skype (if Skype, Skype address?).
  - c. Access to a private room?
  - d. Allow 90 minutes.
  - e. Comfortable with being tape recorded?
  - f. Have opportunity to stop interview at any time or ask for their material to be deleted.
  - g. Access to findings. ICF - Webinar.
  
4. *Other query raised by participant?*



## 10.5 Participant characteristics

C O D E	Sup.e or sup.or I/V	M / F	Yrs. as a coach	Type of coaching	Psycho-therapy/ Counselling Trained	Yrs. had formal supn.	Type of supn.	No. of sup.or s	Had sup.or training	Yrs. as a sup.or	Prof. body
A	Sup.e	F	15	Executive	No	13	1:1	8	Yes	7	ICF
B	Sup.e	F	9	Executive	Yes - P	9	1:1 + G	2	No	N/A	APECS
C	Sup.e	M	7	Business	No	5	1:1	6	No	N/A	ICF
D	Sup.e	F	21	Executive	No	6	1:1	1	No	N/A	APECS
E	Sup.e	F	4	General	Yes - C	1	G	3	No	N/A	ICF
F	Sup.e	F	25	Executive	Yes - C	8	1:1 + G	2	Yes	6	APECS
G	Sup.or	F	15	General	No	9	1:1 + G	3	Yes	4	AC
H	Sup.or	F	30	General	Yes - C	10	1:1	3	Yes	9	AC, ICF
J	Sup.or	F	17	Executive	Yes - C	17	1:1	10	Yes	15	APECS
K	Sup.or	M	8	General	No	5	1:1	3	Yes	5	ICF
M	Sup.e	M	20	Executive	No	9	1:1	3	Yes	6	APECS
N	Sup.e	F	10	Leadership	No	4	1:1 + G	4	No	N/A	ICF
P	Sup.or	F	11	Leadership	No	11	1:1	5	Yes	6	EMCC , APECS
Q	Sup.or	F	17	Executive	No	10	1:1	4	Yes	6	APECS
R	Sup.e	F	20	Business	No	7	1:1	2	Yes	4	ICF
S	Sup.e	F	6	General	No	6	1:1 + G	2	No	N/A	ICF
T	Sup.or	F	12	Business	No	11	1:1	6	Yes	6	APECS
U	Sup.e	F	3	Business	No	3	1:1	4	No	N/A	ICF
W	Sup.e	M	6	Business	No	4	1:1	1	No	N/A	ICF

## 10.6 Development of the interview questions over time

The original interview guides are given in appendix 10.7.

### *Supervisees*

<b>Additional questions – supervisees' interviews</b>	<b>Supervisee Interview Introduced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What habits and barriers are you aware of that you sometimes employ that can make supervision less useful for you?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is common to feel anxiety during coaching supervision. Can you give me an example of when you've felt anxious? How did you manage this? What was the impact?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the responsibilities and obligations of the supervisee and supervisor in a typical supervision session?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the power dynamics of the metaphor that represents how the supervisee is during coaching supervision.</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What function does power play in your supervisory relationships now and in the past?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has your learning shifted over the years as a supervisee?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can you get even more learning from supervision?</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are you feeling in yourself now? Please let me know if anything is troubling you following this interview.</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What reduces your anxiety?</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you noticed any embodied feelings during this interview?</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give an example of an ethical issue that you've brought to supervision?</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When you change supervisor, do you say why you are doing this?</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you feel about this interview process?</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What difference has coaching supervision training made to you?</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have you learnt to enhance your learning about coaching supervision?</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has your training and experience as a coaching supervisor affected your learning?</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you know that you trust your coaching supervisor? How do you know that you are able to be completely open with your supervisor?</li> </ul>	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you know and decide when it is time to change your supervisor? Do you say why you are doing this?</li> </ul>	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the anxiety vary between group and individual supervision?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you ever felt assessed or judged during supervision?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How and why did you select your supervisor?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has your supervisory relationships changed/developed over time?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any issues, however small, that niggle you that you haven't said to your supervisor and why?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What causes power dynamics in supervision? Where is it coming from?</li> </ul>	9

Additional questions – supervisees’ interviews	Supervisee Interview Introduced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What reasons have and will you give for changing your supervisor?</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role does judgment play in supervision? How do you overcome fear of being judged?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group supervision – what are the challenges and what do you do about them?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you go to supervision initially? How did you choose your supervisor?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you see the power dynamic between you and your supervisor? In what areas does he/she hold power and where do you? Does it vary during a session? What underlies the power dynamic? Has this changed over time?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What benefits does discussing the supervisory relationship bring? How has your relationship with your supervisor developed over time?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you say why you are changing your supervisor? If not, why?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you value about supervision? How has this changed over time?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have you learnt to enhance the learning from supervision in the areas of relationship, process and emotional state?</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you get from supervision now that you didn't initially?</li> </ul>	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of an image or metaphor that represents how you are during coaching supervision now. What about when you first had coaching? What might the metaphor be in 5 years time? Explore the power dynamics in the metaphor.</li> </ul>	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have the responsibilities and obligations of the supervisee and supervisor changed over time?</li> </ul>	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stops you from explaining why you are changing supervisor?</li> </ul>	11

## Supervisors

Additional questions – supervisors’ interviews	Supervisor Interview Introduced
• How does supervisee fear, anxiety, vulnerability and/or shame impact on coaching supervision?	2
• What is the power dynamic in the supervisory relationship? How do you see the power dynamic when you are a coaching supervisee?	2
• How has this conversation contributed to your learning about coaching supervision, both as a supervisor and as a supervisee?	2
• How do supervisee’s obligations and responsibilities develop over time during the supervisory relationship?	3
• Have you experienced a ‘rupture’ in the relationship? Can you give me an example?	3
• What have you learnt about how supervisees can enhance their coaching supervision before, during and after supervision?	3
• How have you experienced this research process?	3
• Have you conducted a ‘review’ of the supervision relationship?	4
• How do supervisees ‘test’ the supervision relationship? Can you give some examples?	4
• What reasons do supervisees give for stopping supervision/moving supervisors?	4
• What difference has having supervision training made to you as a supervisee?	5
• Do supervisees’ obligations and responsibilities change depending on the supervisees’ level of development? How?	7
• In the productive recent supervision session that you described, what level of development was the supervisee at?	7
• In the less productive, recent supervision session you described, what developmental level was the supervisee at?	7
• In describing what supervisees do that gets in the ways during supervision, does this vary by supervisee developmental level? How?	7
• Does supervisee anxiety, vulnerability and or shame vary by developmental level? How?	7
• What are the advantages and challenges for supervisees in having group supervision and how do supervisees overcome the challenges?	7
• How do supervisees challenge the supervisory relationship and how does this differ by stage of supervisee development?	7
• Does the power dynamic differ by supervisee stage of development? How?	7
• Do supervisees’ reasons for stopping/moving supervision vary by supervisee stage of development? How?	7

## 10.7 Initial interview guides for supervisees and supervisors

### 1. Supervisee interview guide

#### *Experiences of supervision*

- When you first had coaching supervision, what was it like for you? What role did you play in it and what did you consider to be your responsibilities? What did you get from it and what concerned you?
- What does a rich supervision session look and feel like to you? Tell me about a specific session.
- Describe a less productive session. What did it look and feel like? How did you contribute to this?
- What do you try to avoid doing and feeling during supervision?
- What have you learnt about enhancing the value of your coaching supervision during the session?
- Complete the following sentences: Supervisees should always...? Supervisees should never...?
- Think of an image or metaphor that represents how you are during coaching supervision.
- How do you see the roles and responsibilities in a typical supervision session?

#### *The supervisory relationship*

- How often do you and your supervisor discuss your supervision relationship? Can you give a recent example?
- It is normal to face issues from time to time between a supervisor and a supervisee. What issues have arisen during your supervision between you and your supervisor? What did you do?
- How do you know and decide when it is time to change your supervisor?

#### *Learning*

- What and how did you learn from a recent supervision session?
- Sometimes learning happens *after* supervision sessions. Describe a situation in which learning happened after a supervision session. How did this come about?
- How has this conversation contributed to your learning about coaching supervision?

#### *Biographical (tick ones have got from pre-call)*

- How many years have you been a coach? What type of coaching do you do?
- Have you a psychotherapy background?
- Are you a coaching supervisor too?
- How long have you been having paid, regular supervision?
- How many supervisors have you had during that time?
- What supervision arrangements do you have at the moment, (e.g. 1:1, group, both, other)?

## 2. Supervisor interview guide

### *Supervisee's role and responsibilities*

- What are supervisees' roles and responsibilities during coaching supervision?
- How have you noticed that these develop over time?
- Can you describe a rich, recent supervision session? What did the supervisee do to enable this?
- Can you describe a less productive, recent session? How did the supervisee contribute to this?
- What have you noticed that supervisees' do that gets in the way during supervision?
- Are you aware of supervisees sometimes editing what they bring to supervision? Why do you think that this happens? What is the impact on the value of their coaching supervision?
- Complete the following sentences: Supervisees should always....? Supervisees should never....?

### *Enhancing supervision*

- What have you learnt about how supervisees' can enhance their coaching supervision before, during and afterwards?
- Think of an image or metaphor that represents how supervisees' can bring value to their supervision.

### *Supervisory Relationship*

- How do supervisees handle frustrations or ruptures in the supervisory relationship with you? Can you give some examples?

### *Learning*

- What, how and when do supervisees learn during supervision? Can you give some examples?
- How has this conversation contributed to your learning about coaching supervision?

### *Biographical (tick ones have got from pre-call)*

- How many years have you been a coach? What type of coaching do you do?
- How many years have you been a coaching supervisor? What type of supervision do you do?
- Are you from a psychotherapy background?
- Are you a trained coaching supervisor? Where did you train?
- How many years have you been actively supervising coaches?
- How many individual supervisees/groups do you have at the moment?
- What supervision arrangements do you have at the moment for yourself (e.g. 1:1, group, both, other)?

## 10.8 Initial topic areas for supervisees and supervisors

### *Supervisee – topic areas*

- Your early coaching supervision – expectations, experiences and concerns.
- An example of a recent productive supervision session.
- An example of a recent, less productive supervision session and what you contributed to this.
- What do you do that gets in the way of getting the most out of your supervision sessions?
- What have you learnt about enhancing the value of your coaching supervision over the years?
- What frustrations in the supervisory relationship have you encountered and what did you do about it?
- Examples of what and how you learn during and after supervision sessions.

### *Supervisor - topic areas*

- What are supervisees' responsibilities and obligations during coaching supervision and how do these develop over time?
- What did a supervisee do recently to enable a rich supervision session?
- What did a supervisee do recently to contribute to a less productive supervision session?
- What have you noticed that supervisees do that gets in the way during supervision?
- What have you learnt about how supervisees enhance the value of coaching supervision over the years?
- Give examples of how supervisees have handled a frustration in the supervisory relationship with you.
- Give examples of what and how supervisees learn during and after supervision sessions.

## 10.9 Interview introduction

### *Welcome*

- General introductions
- Teas and Coffees
- Consent Form

### *General*

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.
- The interview will last for up to 75 mins and normally lasts around one hour. See clock? Please let me know if you need a break at any time. Do you want to plan one in at all?
- Your participation and what you say will remain confidential and any quotes will be anonymised.
- I'm going to digitally tape record the interview for analysis purposes and the data will be stored safely. I'm using a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement.
- If at any point you wish to stop the interview, please just let me know.

### *The Questions*

- I am planning to ask you quite a few questions. Don't feel that you have to answer all of them because whatever you say will be helpful and there are no right and wrong answers.
- When answering, please draw on examples from any type of formal, paid supervision (rather than peer supervision).
- I've participated in research myself and know that it can take you back into your experiences. I'm interested in your experiences and so please try to approach the interview in the most open way that you can.
- I'm conscious that this is an interview and so I will participate less in the dialogue than I would if I was chatting, coaching or supervising. Please be reassured that I am not judging you and I have answered these questions myself as part of the pilot process and so know what it is like to participate.
- I am focusing in my study on being a supervisee and how coaches can enhance the value of their supervision and so my questions will ask you to tell me about your experience of being a supervisee and the supervisory relationship rather than about your views on supervisors. *(For supervisors the questions will be about your experience of supervisees rather than on the role of the supervisor. If you can't answer a question about your supervisees, you can draw on your own experience of being a supervisee).*
- The structure will cover questions about your supervision experiences, the supervisory relationship and lastly, your learning through supervision.
- I'm using a Grounded Theory methodology and with this methodology, additional questions may emerge as I progress with my research. Would it be okay for me to come back to you after today if I wish to explore an aspect of being a supervisee further or if I need to check the developing theory with you?
- I am happy to share my findings with you. I plan to write a paper and do a webinar to share my findings with the coaching community.

### *Any other questions?*



## 10.10 A sample page of the open coding document

### Discussing the Supervisory Relationship

#### *Supervisees' views*

- Saying, "I'm feeling judged right now and I'm not finding that helpful".
- Unpicking what the supervisor said or did.
- Feeling that the supervisor takes it seriously.
- Being invited to share how we are getting on by the supervisor.
- Discussing the relationship at the end of every call. Sharing what I appreciate and value about the session.
- Discussing the impact of my supervisor's serious illness on our supervision – using a different supervisor during her treatment, having shorter sessions because her energy levels are depleted and being given permission to say if I am not getting value from the supervision.
- Providing ideas to the supervisor about how I can get the most out of supervision by explaining my expectations and personal style.

#### *Supervisors' views*

- Checking in with how we are doing in terms of the relationship.
- Checking by the supervisor that the supervisee's needs have been met and feeling that it is easier to meet the supervisee's needs in a 1:1 than group supervision.
- Having an annual review and talking about how the supervisory relationship is going, whether there is anything different that we should do and whether we want to continue.
- Supervisor raising issues when boundaries are broken or they feel disrespected because a supervisee may not see the issue.

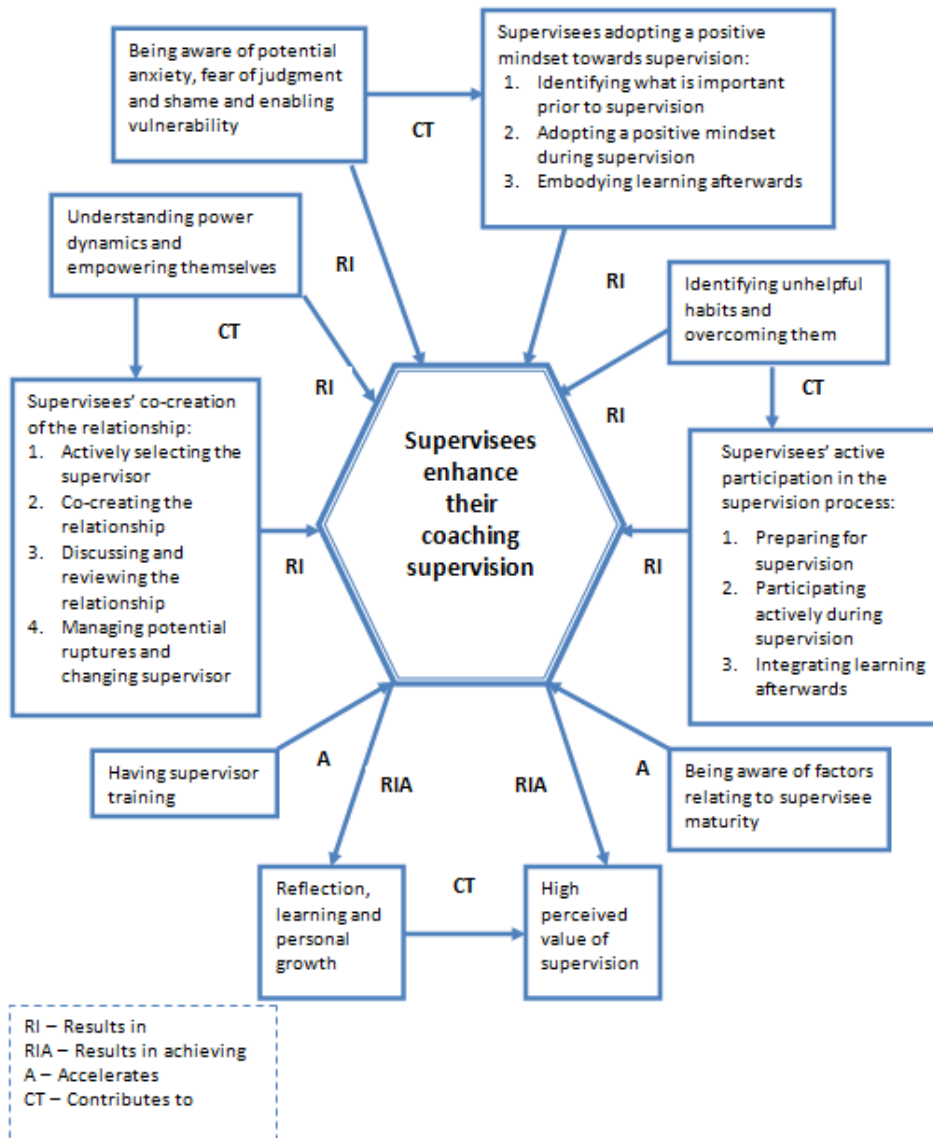
#### *Not discussing the supervisory relationship*

- Not discussing the relationship.
- Feeling that the balance of support and challenge needs to be refocused but we haven't discussed it.
- Rarely discussing the supervisory relationship, only initially when contracting.
- Haven't faced an issue with the supervisor.

## 10.11 Categories, sub-categories and sub sub-categories

Main Categories	Sub-categories	Sub, sub-categories
<b>Supervisee benefits</b>	Developing reflection, learning and personal growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of learning – what?</li> <li>• Methods for learning – how?</li> <li>• Impact of the learning</li> <li>• Development of learning over time</li> </ul>
	Valuing supervision highly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is valued?</li> <li>• Value grows over time</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisee inhibitors</b>	Identifying personal habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of preparation and clarity</li> <li>• Psychological diversion tactics</li> <li>• Limited view of potential learning</li> </ul>
	Anxiety, fear of judgment and shame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of supervisee emotions experienced</li> <li>• Contexts for anxiety, fear of judgment and shame</li> <li>• Impact of these emotions</li> <li>• Ways of overcoming anxiety, fear of judgment and shame</li> </ul>
	Supervisee not seeing himself/herself as an equal partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources of supervisor power</li> <li>• Shifts in the power dynamic over time</li> <li>• Positive and negative uses of power</li> <li>• Sources of supervisee power</li> <li>• Factors underlying the power dynamic</li> </ul>
	Lack of agency in the supervisee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge about supervision and how to use it</li> <li>• Reluctance to discuss the supervisory relationship</li> <li>• Reluctance to change supervisor</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisee enablers</b>	Adopting a positive mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how you think about supervision beforehand</li> <li>• Managing your internal state during supervision</li> <li>• Embedding learning through practice afterwards</li> </ul>
	Co-creating the supervision relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a supervisory relationship that works</li> <li>• Sharing the driving seat</li> <li>• Keeping attuned with the supervisor</li> </ul>
	Participating actively in the supervision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before the supervision session</li> <li>• During the supervision session</li> <li>• After the session</li> </ul>
	Undertaking supervisor training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in understanding and willingness to have CS</li> <li>• Reduction in anxiety felt</li> <li>• Increase in responsibility</li> </ul>

## 10.12 Initial integrative diagram



## 10.13 Participant feedback on the interview process

### *Research process*

- “Found the topics areas a useful start”. “Just enough detail”. “Set my mind going, rumbling around, writing a few notes but then not looking at them during the interview.” “Providing space for reflection”. “I thought that it was really good to have those question areas in advance, because even though you have asked a lot more questions, all of them plug into those, don’t they?”
- “Finding the process very professional but in a really friendly manner”.
- “Taking the time to set out the ground rules and stepping stones”.
- “The environment is good, i.e. in a private room in Victoria”.
- “Research covers all areas.”
- “The questions have been really clear”.
- “It is an easy, helpful, positive process”.

### *Researcher’s style*

- “You’ve got an unhurried style and so I didn’t feel under any pressure to get started. A relaxed start to the interview.”
- “Your presence as a listener.” “I felt that I could take as much time as I wanted to think about and answer the questions which is helpful for me.” “You gave me the space and permission to not answer something, but you also enabled me to dig a bit to see whether there was an answer I could offer you, so that felt about right.”
- “You pace beautifully, you gave me space.” “Letting me see what springs from my mouth.”
- “Your style and approach has been very helpful and open and you picked up things that were important to me, e.g. defining what we mean by supervision at the start was important to me and you let me do that. So you’ve modeled the openness that I’ve been talking about which is part of supervision.”

### *Reflections on participating*

- “It is an important topic”.
- “I have learnt through participating in the research”. “I have had a great insight, which I didn’t expect, so that is good.” “I expected just to give, and I’ve got something from it, so I think that’s amazing”. “I have been able to look at it fresh and come to the conversation fresh”.
- “I found the questions interesting”.
- “I find it a lonely profession so I enjoy talking about something I am passionate about with someone that is interested.”
- “It is nice to connect to somebody I didn’t know”.
- “It mirrors the supervision process – a space for stopping, thinking and reflecting.”
- “I’ll be intrigued by what comes out of it and learning about that”.
- “It has worked well. I’ve experienced it positively”.

*Suggestions for improving the process and actions taken as a result*

- “How can I find out what comes out of it? Can I have a summary?”  
*Action taken:* stressed that a summary will be provided in the interview introduction and again at the end of the interview.
- “I would have liked a couple more days to reflect on question areas because I have a strong introvert preference.”  
*Action taken:* Sent the topic areas out a week in advance following this feedback.
- Last interviewee, “I think there has been quite a lot of repetition. I seem to be saying the same things in different ways in my reflections.”  
*Action taken:* None - it was the last interview and this may reflect saturation point.

## 10.14 Compliance letter for transcribers

5<sup>th</sup> March 2015

From:  
Louise Sheppard  
XXXXX

To:  
**Oxford Brookes University & XXXXX**  
**Transcription of research interviews for Louise Sheppard**

In order for the University to utilize the Services, XXXXX may need to have access to some personal data (“**Data**”) which data is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998 (“**the Act**”).

These Data will include, but not necessarily be limited to tape recordings of research interviews carried out by:

- Name: Louise Sheppard
- Student Number: XXXXX
- Email address: XXXXX
- Mobile Phone Number: XXXXX
- Address: XXXXX
- Date started Doctorate: September 2013
- Gender: Female
- DOB: XXXXX

The parties agree that in respect of the Data, the University is the Data Controller and XXXXX is the Data Processor. XXXXX warrants to the University that she shall:

- (i) process the Data at all times in accordance with the Act and solely for the purposes of providing the Services to the University and for no other purpose or in any manner except with the express prior written consent of the Data Controller; and
- (ii) comply with the seventh Data Protection Principle by implementing appropriate technical and organisational measures to prevent unauthorised and unlawful processing of the Data and to prevent accidental loss, or destruction of, or damage to the Data; and
- (iii) ensure that each of its employees, agents and subcontractors are made aware of its obligations with regard to the security and protection of the Data and require that they enter into binding obligations with the Data Processor to maintain the appropriate levels of security and protection of the Data; and
- (iv) not divulge the Data whether directly or indirectly to any person, firm or company or otherwise without the express prior written consent of the Data Controller except to those of its employees, agents and subcontractors who are subject to (iii) above or except as may be required by any law or regulation; and
- (v) not process the Data outside of the European Economic Area except with the express prior written authority of the Data Controller; and

- (vi) to comply with any request from the Data Controller to amend, transfer or delete data and on completion of the Services to deliver to the Data Controller or destroy, at the Data Controller's sole option, all the Data Controller's Data in its possession or under its control.

XXXXX and/or pursuant to sections 13 and 14 of the Act arising from any breach by XXXXX of the above warranties; provided: (a) XXXXX has sole control of the defence and/or settlement of such claim to the extent possible; and (b) the University notifies XXXXX promptly in writing of each such claim and gives XXXXX all information known to the University relating thereto and (c) the University cooperates with XXXXX in the settlement and/or defence of such claim and (d) the University mitigates its loss to the fullest extent possible and (e) the University makes no admission in respect of such claim.

The parties agree that any commercially sensitive information disclosed during the provision of the Services shall be treated with confidence and used only to the extent necessary to perform the Services.

For the avoidance of doubt these terms and conditions replace and supersede any other terms and conditions between the parties relating to their respective obligations under the Act.

Please counter-sign a copy of this letter if you are happy to provide the Services on these terms.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Sheppard

---

Dear Sirs

**Data Protection Act 1998 Compliance & Confidentiality Acceptance**

We refer to the terms of your letter set out above and hereby unconditionally accept its terms and agree to comply with all Data Protection Act 1998 requirements in respect of any processing of personal data performed by us in the provision of the Services and to treat in confidence any confidential information which may become known to us during the provision of the Services.

Yours faithfully  
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF XXXXX

.....  
XXXXX

.....  
Date

## 10.15 Response to UREC, addressing their concerns

UREC recommendation	How this has been addressed
<p>1. Please confirm that the participant information sheet will be distributed with the introductory email, rather than given out after those invited have agreed to take part. This is to ensure they have sufficient information to decide whether or not to opt into the study.</p>	<p>The Participant information sheet will be sent out with the introductory email by the researcher.</p>
<p>2. Section 3.5 of the E2U form refers to an “appropriate, external professional counselor”. A little more information about this person is required and please also clarify if this service will be available free of charge.</p>	<p>The researcher has asked XXXXX, a UKCP registered, Existentialist Psychotherapist to be her external professional counselor. His details can be found at: www.XXXXX. XXXXX is also a coach and coaching supervisor and so he has experience in this field of work. He works with clients on work challenges, conflict and anxiety amongst other areas. Louise has worked with XXXXX in the past and trusts his work. The researcher would pay for one session of up to 75 minutes.</p>
<p>3. For the confidentiality agreement between Brookes and the professional transcriber, it would be better to use the copy of the template drawn up by the Information Compliance Officer and Legal Services.</p>	<p>The researcher will use the data compliance letter drawn up by the Information Compliance Officer and Legal Services for the confidentiality agreement between Brookes and the professional transcriber (to be appointed).</p>
<p>4. For the research advertisement, please use OBU headed paper and include the researcher’s name.</p>	<p>The advertisement is now on OBU headed paper and includes the researcher’s name. She has also amended the text to use the term “supervisee” and “supervisor” wherever possible to minimise confusion.</p>
<p>5. It would be useful to explain in the participant information sheet that the data for the coach and supervisors would not be matched.</p>	<p>The participant information sheets include the information that the supervisee (coach) and supervisor would not be matched. In addition, the researcher has amended the text of the participants’ sheets to use the terms “supervisee” and “supervisor” wherever possible to minimise confusion, as supervisee and coach are the same person.</p>



## 10.16 Responsibilities of supervisees and supervisors

### Supervisee

- **Gaining knowledge about what supervision is**, what it can bring and identifying what you want from it. Understanding that it is a professional relationship and a requirement of practice.
- **Choosing a supervisor.** Being careful whom you select and being aware if you work in different professional contexts. Thinking of the supervision relationship as an equal adult-to-adult relationship; seeing the supervisor as a colleague and a 'fellow traveller'.
- **Contracting** about what you are expecting and not wanting in supervision. Co-constructing the contract together. Briefing the supervisor about your coaching framework, practice, learning style, personality and development stage as a coach and supervisee. Talking about responsibilities upfront and discussing the power dynamic in supervision. Revisiting the contract at the beginning of each session and when you have a formal review.
- **Preparing for supervision** by noticing how you are in yourself, doing a mental trawl of your practice, bringing what is going well, what is challenging in your work and all ethical issues. Reflecting upon what you are avoiding bringing and why and challenging yourself to bring it. Identifying what it is that you want as outcomes from the supervision session and being prepared to share this with your supervisor.
- **Creating the agenda** at the start of the session or helping to do so for the group.
- **Being present, focused and speaking openly** about what is going on. Sharing your thoughts and experiences and bringing your whole self to the table. Being willing to expose your concerns and be vulnerable, transparent and congruent. Being open to multiple perspectives, to being challenged, to observations and feedback and to having a tough conversation when appropriate. Managing your anxiety that the supervisor will judge you and seeing the conversation as a 'collaborative inquiry'.
- **Listening** to the supervisor and others in group supervision and supporting them.
- **Engaging in learning, development and growth** as an individual and a supervisee. Being open to the outcomes of supervision, choosing whether to take any advice and being willing to change. In group supervision, identifying what your learning is from the issues that others bring. Not placing too many expectations on output, e.g. an action plan.
- **Taking responsibility for acting on the learning** and embedding the learning through practice.

- **Saying when you not getting enough from the session.** Watching out for complacency and comfort in supervision and challenging the supervisor, other group members and the process. Saying when you notice that the supervisor is not being at their best and asking, “Is something that we are co-creating?” Asking for what you need and offering suggestions.
- **Identifying how much supervision you require** and asking for additional supervision if you feel stuck or have a concern about yourself or a client.
- **Reviewing your supervision needs with the supervisor** every six months and taking responsibility when it is time to change supervisor. Taking yourself away if your needs aren’t being met in the meantime.
- **Approaching supervision as a professional.** Upholding ethical guidelines and professional standards and having professional insurance. Not rearranging sessions, turning up on time and making the most of the time available. Respecting the boundaries of the supervisor and paying for the sessions.

## **Supervisor**

- **Initiating the contracting with the supervisee.** Being clear about your approach to supervision, what you see the functions of supervision to be (e.g. normative, formative, restorative) and saying what you can and can’t provide. For example, can the supervisee contact you between sessions for email or phone advice and what are the limits of this? Contracting about confidentiality and being clear upfront about the limitations of this and when you need to disclose information. Being explicit about what the supervisee’s and your responsibilities are and any shared responsibilities.
- **Managing the supervisory process.** Ensuring that time is allocated fairly when the supervisee brings multiple issues to individual supervision and between participants in group supervision. Holding the whole process. Ensuring that there is a balance of normative, formative and restorative supervision over time.
- **Creating a safe environment** that enables a supervisee to bring real issues and to be vulnerable, normalising any feelings of anxiety, concern about being judged and shame that a supervisee may have. Getting alongside the supervisee and setting a positive tone, being open and present and not colluding or rescuing him/her.
- **Supporting and nurturing the supervisee in his/her learning.** Recognising where the supervisee is in his/her developmental journey and adapting the supervision to this. Supporting the supervisee at their own pace of development to be the best that they can be. Respecting the supervisee’s coaching framework and working with that and not imposing your theoretical underpinnings on him/her. Having a duty of care and being concerned about how

you leave the supervisee. Ensuring that the supervisee is resourced and not dependent and developing the supervisee's internal supervisor.

- **Being aware of, transparent about and managing the power dynamics.** Avoiding being an expert and ensuring that the supervisee does not put you on a pedestal. Ensuring that you are in an adult-to-adult relationship with him/her and that the supervisee values his/her own intuition and understanding of things. Being clear about your role and supervising rather than coaching or providing therapy.
- **Providing challenge and giving feedback including constructive criticism.** Going beyond a cosy relationship, looking at what is going on beneath the surface, helping the supervisee to dig deeper and enabling him/her to unpack complex situations. Avoiding colluding with the supervisee. Being courageous, naming what you see and having tough conversations when necessary. Being open about the fact that you can be wrong.
- **Sharing knowledge and experience where appropriate,** for example, models, tools and resources and your learning. Bringing a different perspective so that you can challenge the supervisee's thinking. Checking whether the supervisee wants you to do this and how helpful this is.
- **Bearing the client and system in mind.** Asking how the supervision work benefits the client. Naming what you see in the client system. Upholding the safety of the client and their organisation.
- **Challenging the supervisee to think through ethical issues.** Upholding your and the supervisee's ethical guidelines and professional standards. Being obliged if the supervisee is being unsafe, unethical or has a blind spot to point this out and to tell the professional body if the supervisee is endangering anyone including himself/herself.
- **Reviewing the supervision relationship and process.** Identifying where the supervisee is on his/her development journey. When appropriate, asking if it is time for the supervisee to seek another supervisor. Supporting the supervisee to obtain closure when supervision ends.
- **Approaching supervision as a professional.** Not cancelling clients except in exceptional circumstances. Asking whether the supervisee is having sufficient supervision for their coaching hours. Being available for additional supervision support by phone and email between sessions. Conducting assessments for professional bodies and organisations. Checking that the supervisee has professional indemnity insurance.
- **Carrying out continued personal development.** Recognising where you are in your own supervisor developmental journey and

what you need to do to maintain your skills and progress. Developing your supervisor knowledge, skills and business experience, e.g. utilising multiple models of supervision so that you provide varied supervision and keeping up with business developments, e.g. digitalisation.

- **Having supervision on your supervision.** Being fit and resourced to attend to supervisees. Having a preparation routine before supervision sessions that enables you to be present with them. Checking out advice on ethical situations with your supervisor and the professional body.

## 10.17 Framework guidelines for supervisees and supervisors

### Guidelines for the supervisee

Identify where you are in your supervisee development journey.

Reflect upon:

- Why you want coaching supervision?
- Whom would best serve you at the moment as a supervisor?
- How you can establish an equal partnership with your supervisor?

2. Adopt a positive mindset.

Identify:

- What assumptions and beliefs you are holding about coaching supervision?
- How you tend to block yourself during supervision?

3. Co-create the supervisory relationship.

Co-construct the contract together, discussing your:

- Coaching framework, practice, personality and learning style.
- Needs, expectations and desires from coaching supervision.
- How to create an equal, balanced relationship and what might get in the way of doing so.
- Responsibilities in supervision.
- How you will discuss and review the relationship and the effectiveness of your supervision?

4. Participate actively in the process.

This involves:

- *Preparation*
  - Do a mental trawl and bring what is working well and what is troubling you.
  - Identify what you would like from supervision and what desirable outcomes would be.
  - Ask yourself what am I avoiding bringing and why?
- *During*
  - Bring the agenda and work through it.
  - Be present, manage your anxiety and fear of exposure and judgment and share what is going on for you including any vulnerabilities and concerns.
  - Be open to multiple perspectives and undertake a collaborative inquiry with the supervisor.
  - Choose what you want to do following the supervision.
- *Follow-up*
  - Develop a process for integrating your learning through practice following supervision.
  - Review how effective the session was for you, what enabled this and how can you get more value from supervision.
  - Say when you are not getting enough from the session and take responsibility when it is time to change supervisor because your needs have developed and/or are no longer being met.

## 5. Undertake supervision training.

Invest in:

- Supervisee training to increase your knowledge and awareness of coaching supervision.
- In time, supervisor training if appropriate.

## Guidelines for the supervisor

### 1. Adopt a 'supervisee-led' supervision mindset.

Identify:

- What assumptions and beliefs you are holding about coaching supervision?
- Where is the supervisee in his/her development journey?
- How you can manage power relations in coaching supervision and establish an equal partnership with your supervisee?
- How can you minimise the impact of fear, which can manifest as anxiety, fear of judgment and shame in coaching supervision?

### 2. Co-create the supervisory relationship together.

Initiate the contracting process with the supervisee and discuss:

- Your coaching background, framework, practice and experience.
- The functions of supervision and what you can and cannot provide.
- Supervisee and supervisor responsibilities.
- How to create an equal, balanced relationship and what might get in the way of doing so.
- How you will discuss and review the relationship and the effectiveness of the supervision?

### 3. Participate actively in the process

This involves:

- *Start*
  - Refresh yourself about the supervisee's needs and ask for reflections since the last session.
  - Ask the supervisee what he/she wishes to focus upon in this session and what are desirable outcomes from the session.
  - Ensure that time is allocated fairly.
- *During*
  - Create a safe environment, normalising any anxiety and fear present in supervision so that the supervisee can be vulnerable.
  - Be transparent about power relations; avoid being an expert and treat supervision as collaborative inquiry.
  - Broaden the supervisee's perspective by examining what is happening beneath the surface and bearing the client and system in mind.
  - Challenge the supervisee to think through ethical issues, building their confidence in their own judgment in the process.
  - Offer to share your knowledge and experience as appropriate.
  - Respect the supervisee's theoretical underpinnings and framework.
  - Ask the supervisee about their learning from the session and what actions, if any, they wish to commit to.

- Review how the supervisee experienced the session – what was helpful and what could have been added to enhance the session.
  
- *Follow-up*
  - Be available for additional support by phone or email between sessions.
  - Review the supervisory relationship and process and support the supervisee to move supervisor when they have outgrown you and/or would benefit from an alternative perspective.

## **10.18 Coaching supervisee training programme outline**

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the session are to:

- Increase awareness about the multiple purposes and possibilities from coaching supervision.
- Reflect upon what helps and hinders supervisees during supervision.
- Enhance knowledge through sharing empirical evidence-based data about the stages of coaching supervisee maturity and what can enable supervisees to get the most from coaching supervision.
- Provide some practical tools for making the most of supervision.

### **Desirable outcomes**

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Have expanded their awareness of what supervision is, coaching supervisees' responsibilities and the potential benefits arising from supervision.
- Recognise where they are at in their supervision journey.
- Know more about what can help and hinder coaching supervision from the supervisees' perspective.
- Have gained some practical ideas for how to enhance their coaching supervision.

### **Content**

The content of the session will include:

- Multiple purposes and possibilities of supervision, responsibilities in the process and potential benefits.
- The supervisee developmental journey.
- Exploring what gets in the way for supervisees.
- Identifying what supervisees can do to enhance supervision.
- Maximising the supervision experience – selecting supervisors, active contracting, avoiding putting your supervisor on a pedestal and having a collaborative partnership, preparing for sessions, overcoming fear and opening up during supervision, integrating learning following supervision, handling issues that arise in supervision and ending the relationship.

### **Style**

The style of the session will be informative, participative and practical. I will share the findings from recent research conducted into the coaching supervisee perspective in supervision. There will be several small group exercises and handouts will be provided.



How coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision: A Grounded Theory study

Louise Sheppard (2016)

<https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/b622add5-7b08-44a1-be82-87a1ebbcf4be/1/>

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