

**Towards a systemic model of coaching supervision –
some lessons from psychotherapeutic and counselling
models**

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To what extent are coaches engaging with supervision, is this important to their professional practice, and, if so, what kinds of processes or models of supervision are appropriate? These questions now have some urgency, partly because of the exponential growth in people offering coaching services to organisations and individuals, but also because (at least currently) the coaching profession is largely unregulated, and many coaches not professionally qualified, as coaches. Indeed, in contrast to some professional services, there is, as yet, no universally recognised coaching qualification, or regulated set of approved skills or competencies for entry into the coaching 'industry'. This contrasts starkly, for example, with the professional training and development of counsellors and psychotherapists who engage with supervision through their professional training and as part of their ongoing professional practice.

Recent research reveals a growing engagement amongst coaches with supervision. Studies reported by Hawkins and Schwenk (2006), for example, suggest that 88 per cent of coaches believe that they should have continuous and regular supervision. However, a study by The Association for Coaching (2007) showed that only just under half of respondents had a supervisor, whilst a third had some kind of arrangement such as peer supervision. This means that just under a third had no supervision of any kind. Reasons given for this lack of engagement include cost and the lack of experienced supervisors available. Also, while the organisations that purchase coaching are clear that the coaches they hire should have supervision, they are unclear as to what forms that supervision should take (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006).

This article, then, sets out to identify what kinds of models of supervision are appropriate to coaches. In undertaking this objective, models and lessons from the supervision of counsellors and psychotherapists will be explored. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, many current practicing coaches are professionally trained and have practiced, or are practising, as counsellors or psychotherapist. Secondly, there has been over 30 years of debate and analysis of alternative models of supervision from which lessons for coaching supervision can be drawn. Thirdly, even when coaching focuses ostensibly on business issues, personal, experiential and problem-based themes often flow out of the coaching process. These include 'red flag' issues when the coachee may be experiencing psychological difficulties. As Whybrow and Palmer (2006) suggest, even non-clinical populations contain potentially vulnerable clients. It seems, therefore, that (arguably) supervision models from a counselling or psychological background may have some relevance for all business and evidence-based coaches.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SUPERVISION?

As Carroll (1996) points out, supervision is a word that has many meanings, its most common usage being to 'oversee'. This, however, is not the way in which many commentators on supervision would define the term. Loganbill et al., for example, describe it as: 'an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person (1986: 4). For Page and Wosket (1994) it is a two-way, interactive process in which the supervisor and supervisee act upon and influence one another, and where the end (re-contracting) mirrors the beginning (the contract). It is a dynamic process where both parties develop together. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy sees supervision as a formal collaborative process intended to help supervisees maintain ethical and professional standards of practice and to enhance creativity (BACP, 2005).

There is a sense, then, that supervision is a process in which the supervisor *assists* a supervisee towards an agreed goal. Carroll (1996), however, distinguishes between training supervision, in which someone undergoes initial professional development for one of the helping professions, and consultative supervision, an arrangement between two qualified persons where one helps the other to reflect on their professional practice (a kind of co-supervision). Trainee supervision, then, may indeed include (or even comprise) an element of overseeing and assessment – as well as collaboration. The supervision of qualified practitioners is more likely to contain a collaborative element.

The tension between this assessment and support functions is well reflected in Bernard and Goodyear's (1998) definition of supervision as being a relationship which is:

An intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the client(s) she, he, or they see(s) and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession. (Bernard and Goodyear, 1998: 6)

Various models of supervision are discussed next, not as a means of covering the entire territory, but as a means of illustrating a diversity of approaches that may have some relevance to the supervision of coaches.

SOME MODELS OF SUPERVISION

Carroll (1996) describes three phases in the evolution of models of supervision within the fields of counselling and psychotherapy. Phase 1 was associated with psychoanalytic models. In the days of Freud, supervision was largely informal, but in 1922 the International Psychoanalytic Society formulated a set of standards within which personal analysis of the trainee was the cornerstone. Thus began the tension between supervision and therapy that, according to Carroll (1996) remains unresolved to this day. In other words, in some models of supervision, the supervisor provides both supervision and personal therapy to the supervisee – a kind of blurring of roles. The second Phase of supervision, based on Counselling models, emerged in the 1950s with an emphasis on skills development and a rather didactic framework in some supervisory approaches. As in Phase 1, the supervisor remained firmly fixed within his or her parent theoretical orientation and taught through this view of the world. Phase 3, beginning in the 1970s, was associated with developmental and social role models that emphasised the roles and tasks of the supervisor and the learning stages of the supervisee.

Is it necessary, though, to have a model of supervision? Hess (1986) takes a somewhat phlegmatic view that the work of supervision probably gets done, irrespective of the particular theory or model used by the supervisor. This is partly because reality demands it. If the supervision misses core problems, these will return to irritate the supervisor-supervisee relationship until they are resolved. It also happens because the essential elements of supervision while addressed, are being given different terms by people with different theoretical orientations. Hence, what a psychotherapeutically orientated supervisor may call a therapeutic alliance, a client centred supervisor may call positive regard. What is clear, however, is that while, for example, psychotherapy can be seen as helpful to the process of supervision, it is not in itself a *theory* of supervision. A theory of supervision has to address issues that are those of the supervisee, not those of the client. The remainder of this section outlines some of these theoretical models. Note that while it is recognised that group

supervision is possible, the focus here will be on *individual* supervision, primarily because it is, at least currently, probably the most widely adopted format.

Developmental models of supervision

A developmental model of supervision has dominated counsellor-psychotherapist supervision for many years, focused primarily on a *stages* model of development (Ronnestad and Skovholt, 1993). Indeed, Holloway (1987) comments that developmental models of supervision have become the 'zeitgeist of supervision thinking and research' (1987: 209). Developmental models are useful, because they allow us to understand changes in a trainee's personal constructs through the process of assimilation, accommodation, conflict and disequilibrium (Stoltenberg, 1993).

One of the first developmental models was suggested by Hogan (1964) who outlined a four-stage process. At Stage 1, the therapist tries to apply everything he/she has learned, demonstrating high degrees of dependence (on the supervisor) and insecurity. One of the supervision methods at this level is direct teaching. At Level 2 the therapist's growth is characterised by what Hogan terms a dependency-autonomy conflict, with the therapist oscillating between being overconfident to being overwhelmed by the responsibilities involved in working within the profession. This period also involves considerable fluctuations in levels of motivation. Level 3 is where the therapist becomes a master of his (sic) trade, with stable levels of motivation and increased professional self-confidence. At Level 4 the therapist demonstrates an artistry and creativity that is characteristic of being at a 'master' level. Hence, he/she is both insightful but also aware of the limitations of insightfulness, personally secure but aware of insecurity. At this level, the use of a peer supervisor is preferred to that of a control supervisor. Hogan makes it clear, however, that the four levels are not mutually exclusive or discreet and that within his/her own lifetime, the therapist may move from Level 1 to 4 many times. Subsequent models, however, tend to abandon this approach, preferring a more sequential, linear formulation.

Stoltenberg (1981) takes Hogan's (1964) model to develop what he calls the *counsellor complexity model* with counsellors achieving more cognitive development as they progress through a series of developmental stages. Stage 1 is characterised by a process in which the counsellor is encouraged to develop personal autonomy but within a structured environment. At the next stage new skills and advice are offered by the supervisor whilst in Stage 3 more sharing and collegiality are encouraged. In the final, master, stage, consultation is provided but only when it is sought. We find, then, a developmental process in which the supervisee moves from a dependent to a more autonomous position and in which the interventions of the supervisor are largely determined by these stages of growth.

Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) suggest a three-stage Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) in which trainees move through a series of levels, progressing against three primary structures – self-awareness and other-awareness, motivation and autonomy. In terms of self and other-awareness, what they term Level 1, trainees focus primarily on themselves, especially in terms of fears and uncertainties. This often clouds the trainee's ability to be empathetic and insightful about the needs of their clients. At Level 2, the trainee begins to focus more on the emotional and cognitive needs of the client. But by trying to see issues from the perspective of the client, the Level 2 trainee may become immersed in their problems and as confused and pessimistic as the client themselves. In contrast, Level 3 trainees are able to identify the impact a client's problems have on themselves and can move backwards and forwards between a focus on his/her own emotional responses to the client and what the client is experiencing. Levels of motivation also fluctuate across the three levels. Level 1 trainees tend to be highly motivated, but this is motivation characterised by uncertainty and a desire to follow the 'correct' approach to

counselling. At Level 2, trainees work with clients with a greater breadth of problems, and find that their own skills levels challenged, often resulting in fluctuations in motivation levels. At Level 3, motivation becomes more consistent as the trainee begins to gain greater self-knowledge and understand and accept his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

The IDM model is dynamic in the sense that a trainee may be at Level 2 in some domains (such as intervention skills, assessment techniques or theoretical orientation) but at Level 1 in others. Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) suggest, however, that a fourth, higher level occurs (the Level 3 Integrated Counselor) when the therapist has integrated Level 3 skills and knowledge across all the domains. This, however, is a stage not attained by most therapists and can be regarded as a 'master therapist' level, reflecting both horizontal movement across domains as well as depth.

Empirical research by Chagnon and Russell (1995), however, raises questions about the validity of developmental models in general by exploring the developmental model proposed by Stoltenberg's (1981). If the model is to be trusted, not only must it be shown that trainees move sequentially through the stages, but supervisors must be able to assess the stage their trainees have reached and to adapt their intervention accordingly. Chagnon and Russell's (1995) study of 48 supervisors found that experience was not significantly related to the assessment of trainee's development level – in other words, both low and highly experienced supervisors tended to be equally effective in assessing the developmental level of the trainees. However, most, regardless of experience level, had most difficulty in identifying development Level 2 in Stoltenberg's (1981) model. According to Chagnon and Russell (1995) this raises some questions about the model itself. It may be that, instead of discreet development levels, that are mutually independent, the levels are overlapping and interdependent. This may be particularly true of Level 2 trainees who exhibit characteristics of both Level 1 and Level 3. Hence, rather than a sequential process, trainees may 'ebb and flow from one developmental level to the next' (Chagnon and Russell, 1995: 557). Holloway (1987) is also prepared to give developmental models only marginal support. Analysing the results of numerous empirical studies, she finds that differences between levels appear most pronounced at a very beginning-level and amongst internee-level trainees, and that these are largely based on relationship characteristics. Hence, as we have seen, initial-level trainees seem to need more support, while interns demonstrate a sense of increasing independence.

Social role supervision models

As noted above, social role models emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, emphasising the roles and tasks of the supervisor as well as the stages of development of the supervisee. One of the most influential is the six focused model developed by Hawkins and Shohet (2000).

The six focused model

Hawkins and Shohet (2000) present what they call a 'double matrix' model of supervision, arguing that it differs to other models because it concentrates on the *process* of supervision, but within an organisational context, constraints and social norms. Far from supervision moving through a series of stages, supervision involves, at any time, operating at many different levels. Four elements are involved: a supervisor, a therapist (supervisee), a client and a work context. While usually only the supervisor and supervisee are present during the supervision, Hawkins and Shohet (2000) argue that both the client and work (social) context are carried into the supervision session (both consciously and unconsciously). Hence, the supervision process involves two interlocking matrices:

- A therapy system connecting the supervisee and the client (foci 1 to 3 in Figure 1)
- A supervision system connecting the supervisor and supervisee (foci 4 to 6 in Figure 1)

[Figure 1 about here]

The purpose of the supervision system is to pay attention to the therapy system. This can happen in two ways - through discussing reports, viewing written notes or viewing videotapes, or through how that session is reflected in the here-and-now experiences of the supervision process. In brief, the six elements consist of:

1 Reflection on content of session (therapist narrative)

The aim here is to help the therapist to focus on the client and the choices the client is making. The first stage here might be to get the therapist to describe the client in some detail, including their physical appearance, their verbal and non-verbal behaviours and how they came to engage with therapy.

2 Exploration of strategies and interventions (therapist activity)

Here the aim is to improve the therapist's choices and skills in intervention, by exploring the strategies they used and what alternative strategies were available. New options are generated through brainstorming, with the supervisor taking care not to impose their own strategies but to get the therapist to devise their own.

3 Exploration of the therapy relationship (therapy process)

In this mode, the supervisor focuses on what is happening at the conscious but also the unconscious level in the therapy session. This includes what is happening 'around the edges' of the session, the metaphors and images that emerged and changes of voice, posture, and Freudian slips. It also involves looking for clues to the transference that is happening from the client to the therapist (and the therapist's counter transference – see next section)

4 Focusing on the therapist's counter-transference (supervisee's state)

At this level, the focus is on the therapist's own internal processes and how these are affecting the therapy process. These include the therapist's counter-transference, a predominantly unconscious reaction by the therapist to the client's transference.

5 Focusing on the supervisory relationship (supervision process)

Here, the processes at work between the client and therapist are explored through how they are reflected in the relationship between the supervisor and the therapist. So, a therapist who is experiencing challenging behaviour from a client, may exhibit challenging behaviour towards the supervisor. The task of the supervisor is to identify this process so that learning can emerge from it.

6 Focusing on the supervisor's own process (supervisor's experience)

The emphasis here is on counter-transference towards the therapist. For example, do they feel threatened, challenged or merely bored? In this mode, the supervisor has to be aware of their own shifting feelings and sensations towards the therapist, while at the same time attending to the content and process of the session. Ellis (in Bernard and Goodyear, 1998) suggests that the choice of focus for any particular supervision session should be determined by factors such as the contract between the supervisor and supervisee, the developmental stage of the supervisee, their theoretical orientation and the learning needs identified from previous sessions. The implementation of some of these factors is discussed later.

The Discrimination model

The Discrimination Model (Bernard and Goodyear, 1998) is another example of a social role supervision model. It purports to be 'a-theoretical', and focuses instead on the role of the supervisor who has three roles: teacher, counsellor and consultant and for each of these can adopt three different types (foci) or supervision:

- Intervention, where the supervisor concentrates on the supervisee's intervention skills
- Conceptualisation, that is, how the supervisee understands what is occurring in the session
- Personalisation, or how the supervisee adopts a style of approach which is uncontaminated by personal issues and counter-transference responses

For example, in the role of teacher, the supervisor might adopt an intervention focus that didactically teaches the supervisee a therapeutic technique. Again as a teacher, but this time adopting a conceptualisation role, the supervisor might use transcripts of sessions to help the supervisee to identify themes within the client's statements. In the role of counsellor, and adopting a focus of intervention, the supervisor might help the supervisor to identify how the client is impacting on him/her and undermining his/her ability to use his skills in therapy sessions.

It is called a discrimination model, precisely because it requires the supervisor to tailor her or his responses to the supervisee based on their individual needs. It is also a social model because it requires the supervisor to tailor their intervention, depending on the situation they face. Hence, at any one moment, the supervisor might be responding in any one of nine ways (three roles multiplied by three foci). As in other models, there is a recognition that for novice supervisee's, there may be more of a focus on the teaching role of the supervisor. For more advanced supervisees, greater emphasis is placed on the consultant role, or a balance across all roles. Implicit, then, is the acceptance that supervisees do pass through developmental stages.

TOWARDS A MODEL OF COACHING SUPERVISION

Although the models of counselling and psychotherapeutic supervision just described illustrate a range of debates and arguments, a number of themes (for coaching supervision) appear relevant:

- Supervision involves facilitating the development of the supervisee in terms of confidence, motivation and knowledge
- The relationship is complex and includes paying attention to what is happening both between the supervisor and supervisee and the supervisee's relationship with their client
- The supervisee's development is not necessarily linear and can involve progressing at varying speeds for different functions and processes. It can also include regression (for example, in confidence)
- Teaching (or more accurately, learning) is at the heart of the relationship, both for the supervisee but also for the supervisor
- The supervisor/supervisee relationship is influenced by social and organisational contexts within which it occurs

As Carroll (2006) warns, supervising coaches is not the same as supervising counsellors, in part, because coaches are often working in and for organisations, and it is the organisation that sets the coaching agenda, particularly if they are sponsoring the coaching intervention. The role of the supervisor becomes one of handling the

tensions between the coach, the coachee and their organisation (Paisley, 2006) and coping with complex dynamics such as maintaining professional boundaries, managing contracts and being aware of the needs and responsibilities of each player (Carroll, 2006). Hence, while a coach and coachee may negotiate a set of objectives as part of a contracting process, the needs and requirements of the coachee's sponsoring organisation are never far from the surface. Towler calls the organisation the 'invisible client' (2005: 309), which imposes unconscious influences in the supervision room. The supervisors of coaches, therefore, need to add the systemic and cultural aspects of organisations to their knowledge sets, as well as their understanding of an individual's perspectives. The influences of organisational culture become a significant rather than an incidental factor in the process of supervision (Towler, 2005).

Figure 2, then, offers a systemic model of coaching supervision that highlights some of the elements necessary within a supervisor-supervisee relationship (contracting, the relationship itself, teaching and evaluation) but one which is bounded within organisational and social contexts, and within ethical norms. What follows is offered in the spirit of discussion, rather than as a definitive model.

[Figure 2 about here]

Contracting

Supervision starts with defining and structuring the supervisor-coach relationship. This, then, is the entry point to the systemic model. Applying the work of Ronnestad and Skovholt (1993) to coaching, contracts can serve to identify and clarify:

- The supervisee's (coach's) developmental needs including their education and work experience
- The supervisor's competencies, making these explicit in terms of their professional skills and experience (including knowledge of organisational behaviour)
- Opportunities (and limitations) provided by work settings so that goals set are practical and realistic
- Supervisory goals, methods and focus which are made explicit

It is important that both supervisor and coach explore each other's expectations to see if they match. If there is a mismatch, it is important that these differences are explored and negotiated.

The contract should deal with the expectations and needs of third parties such as the client or their sponsoring organisation (Copeland, 1998; Hawkins and Shohet, 2000). It is essential that the boundaries between operational and any clinical issues that arise are described (Towler, 2005). Organisations may have their own policies on supervision, but even if they do not, they are likely to have clear expectations about the quality of the work. As Copeland (2006) also warns, the culture and values of supervisors and the organisations in which they operate, may often be diametrically opposed.

Whatever the supervision approach, ground rules need to be established. Hawkins and Shohet (2000) suggest that these include the frequency, duration and timing of the supervisory sessions. Boundary issues should also be made explicit, including the essential issue of confidentiality. They warn, however, that confidentiality is easier to

promise than always keep. When reporting on the progress of a coaching intervention, for example, supervisors (and coaches) will have to take care in defending the anonymity of individual coachees. Some organisations, of course, may insist that individuals (for example those who are under-performing) are named. The degree of anonymity, then, needs defining explicitly in the contract. Counsellors, psychotherapists and others then have a choice of whether to take part in such a programme or withdraw due to ethical reservations.

The supervisory relationship

According to Bernard and Goodyear a supervisory relationship is 'a product of the uniqueness of two individuals, paired with the purposes of meeting for supervision and modified by the demands of the various contexts that are the subject or content of the experience' (1998: 34). This complex, unique, yet evolving relationship, is, of course, influenced and shaped by many internal and external factors and processes. One is the self-presentation of the coach, that is, his or her behaviours, confidence (or anxiety) and expectations. Belief systems, theoretical orientation, and cultural differences (including both racial and gender differences) are all likely to play a significant role in the relationship.

An important issue raised by some commentators (Worthington, 1987; Feltham and Dryden, 1994) is whether the supervisor and supervisee should come from the same theoretical traditions. Coaches who are trained in transactional analysis (TA), for example, might find the supervision of someone steeped in a person-centred perspective 'woolly' and lacking in clear guidelines. An empirical study by Efstation et al. (1990) found that of the 185 supervisors contacted, 25% took a psychodynamic position, 17% cognitive behavioural, and 27% eclectic – but a total of 8 different approaches were identified. Of course, creating homogeneity between supervisor and coach may run the risk of failing to stimulate the creativity of active debate.

A more pluralistic approach may go some way to overcoming this, particularly in the way in which supervisors may be prepared to critically challenge the orthodoxy of a model. In general, however, Feltham and Dryden (1994) warn that a pluralistic model is probably more suited to those at the 'journey person' or 'master craft person' stages of development than to those who are still trying to consolidate their understanding. Of course, in any one supervision session, some or all of these processes may be prominent. In agreeing a supervisory contact it is important that both parties agree on what theoretical models the supervision draws upon and what are being requested.

Pluralism may be taken a stage further. Foster (2000) points to the USA and Canada, where hierarchical supervision is available to trainees, but once qualified, the approach is more often one of peer group consultation. The management of supervision services, particularly in large organisations, may benefit from economies of scale (and diversity of support) if peer or group supervision is established.

Teaching methods

We have seen that direct teaching or instruction does not play a particularly prominent role in the psychotherapeutic models described earlier. Nevertheless, there may be times when a supervisor wishes (or needs) to pass on skills, knowledge or ideas in a fairly didactic way. There may, however, be different ways of approaching this.

Instruction

During the early stages of supervision, the supervisor may need to provide direct instruction to the coach, especially in terms of building their skills. Bernard and Goodyear (1998) outline four steps in what they call microtraining.

- Teaching one skill at a time. Sometimes these skills will comprise part of a larger set of meta-skills or a more complex intervention.
- Present the skill. The supervisor demonstrates or models the skill.
- Practice the skill. This can be achieved through, say, role playing with the supervisor. However, this might prove uncomfortable to the coach and might be better accomplished through a group supervision model.
- Allow for mastery. This can only be achieved by practice, but also through assessing the level of mastery achieved. According to Gagné et al. (1992), this can only be determined by defining the criteria that demonstrate the achievement mastery.

Sometimes, the supervisor may even recommend books or other reading matter (Carroll, 1996).

In supervising organisation-based coaches, supervisors need to consider learning opportunities embedded within the organisation itself. These might include accessing or co-ordinating with mentoring and appraisal systems, and with attaining feedback from the coachee's sponsor, peers and line managers on their progress and performance.

Self reflection

It is important to stand back and to reflect on the supervision process, particularly in relation to whether it is fulfilling personal needs and goals. Such reflectivity may improve the supervisee's work with their clients as well as their overall professional judgement (Neufeldt et al., 1996). This reflective process is triggered by causal conditions, often the supervisee's feelings of uncertainty, dilemma or surprise. Before moving towards understanding phenomena, intervening conditions mediate between the problem and reflective processes. These include the cognitive capabilities of the supervisee (some will be more capable of reflection than others) and the organisational environment. In searching to understand the phenomenon, attention will be directed by the supervisor towards the coach's reflections on their own actions, thoughts and emotions and secondly towards the interaction between the supervisor and coach themselves. The reflective process needs to avoid defensive self-protection and look to changing perceptions and practice, and the capability to make meaning out of experience. Hawkins and Shohet, (2000) recommend that this self-reflection can be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current support system, decide whether the contract with the supervisor requires some renegotiation, or whether alternative forms of supervision (such as peer supervision) needs to be arranged. Given the influences of the organisational context in which the supervision may be taking place, this could include the occasional introduction of non-therapeutic supervisors if a more business-orientated perspective is needed.

Modelling

Modelling involves the coach observing the supervisor engaged in the process of professional practice, and can provide a useful means of demystifying the process and providing the individual with a template for their own work (Stoltenberg, 1993). As Ronnestad and Skovholt (1993) point out, one of the hazards of modelling is that even experienced supervisors may demonstrate inappropriate model characteristics. Senior practitioners, for example, may tend to operate from her/his own expert experience base, while novice practitioners under supervision may prefer a more structured, simple and step-by-step modelled procedure. So, supervisors may need to reflect on (or discuss through their own supervision), what kinds of modelling behaviours they are going to demonstrate, and how.

Feedback

Feedback is part of the coaches' learning process because it comprises an evaluative quality or judgement by the supervisor. For the coach to learn from feedback it must be clear, concise and honest. This may sometimes mean that the feedback is critical and even confrontational. When provided in an organisational context, feedback might include a focus on how the coach is dealing with organisational objectives and needs during the coaching process. It may be prudent to prepare coaches at an early stage by indicating in the contract that feedback of this kind may occur. Feedback is also a form of evaluation. So not only may evaluation influence the coach's choice of teaching interventions, it may even trigger a re-contracting process.

Evaluation

According to Gray (2004), coaching should be evaluated, because it allows us a critical window into professional practice. It also allows us to develop self-knowledge, and the opportunity to identify how personal interactions, processes and outcomes can be improved. But if evaluation is appropriate for coaching, then it must be equally valid for the supervision of coaching. According to Loganbill, et al. (1982), evaluation is the final function of the supervision process, but one that may suffer from a tension with the goal of other functions such as promoting the development of the supervisee. One approach might be to ignore or deny this judgemental element of evaluation. A better approach, however, would be to encourage an ongoing dialogue involving the effects of evaluation upon the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Indeed, as Hawkins and Shohet (2000) argue, evaluation should be a two-way process and needs to be scheduled into the arrangements for supervision.

A first, and obvious, question, however, is: what should be evaluated? Bordin (1983) suggests that this will be determined by the specific goals identified at the beginning of the supervisor-trainee relationship. Feltham and Dryden (1994) suggest three key areas for evaluation. The first is how the supervisee is progressing. Feedback on performance may be important to inexperienced supervisees who are anxious to know if they are attaining an appropriate standard. Supervisors may wish to provide feedback on both their perceived strengths and weaknesses. A second evaluation theme is: 'How are we getting on?', with a focus on the supervisory alliance itself. This may include an evaluation of the original contract to see if it still holds. The third theme is to identify and discuss some of the recurring concerns that have emerged during the supervision process, such as the supervisee's lack of challenge to the client when necessary. It is also important that trainees evaluate some of their less successful interventions (Brown, 1985). If supervision is taking place in a work-based context, then an important focus of evaluation will have to be whether the organisation's objectives have been fulfilled and the problems that were encountered in meeting them.

Ethical issues

As Figure 2 shows, all the systemic elements within supervision are bounded by ethical framework and constraints. If psychotherapists supervise coaches who are also psychotherapists, then there will be a congruence between the ethical codes of each. Complications arise, however, when, say, the supervisor is a professional psychotherapist but the coach is not. The latter may be a member of one of the professional coaching associations with its own code of ethics. The EMCC, for example, stipulates that its members must always act in the best interests of the client, function from the position of dignity, autonomy and personal respect for the client, and ensure that the client comes to no harm. For the International Coaching Federation, coaches are required to (inter alia), respect the confidentiality of the client's information, set clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries and

honour all agreements with clients. In the future, it may be necessary for both psychotherapy and coaching associations to consider how their ethical codes interface, the potential for conflicts and how these can be resolved.

CONCLUSIONS

We have seen, then, that many of the developmental models of supervision, drawn from psychotherapy and counselling, have been largely superseded by alternative and somewhat more socially rooted approaches. What most of these models have in common, however, is at least some notion of progress, development and change on the part of the supervisee – whether this takes place through distinct, sequential stages or not. For the supervision process to succeed, it needs to commence with a clearly defined set of principles in the form of a contract. This is the bedrock of the supervisor-supervisee relationship and should define the expected outcomes, process, and methodology that is going to be used. Even how the contract can be modified to meet changing circumstances should be described.

The nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship within coaching, however, is much harder to define, particularly if each party is working from different theoretical models. This may occur when the supervisee is, for example, an evidence-based business coach, while the supervisor is professionally trained as a psychotherapist. They may exhibit different cognitive styles, belief systems and differences in ethical perspectives. Both parties, then, need to be sensitive to their potential similarities, but seek to work to resolve any differences. How they do this, of course, could be specified in the contract. The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee will involve one or several approaches to teaching, ranging from didactic instruction (probably not a common occurrence) to collective reflection, modelling and feedback. All elements will be subject to evaluation (including the evaluation process itself). Given that coaching (even when ostensibly performance-related) often throws up emotional and psychological issues, it is worth considering a networked approach to supervision, where supervision can be augmented, when required, by a supervisor from an alternative tradition. For example, a psychotherapeutic supervisor could call upon a business-focused supervisor when issues of organisational behaviour or politics are flagged as major problems for the coach.

What key issues remain? One is a very practical one - the extent to which coaches *are* actually engaging with supervision. It seems from some recent studies that a significant proportion are not. In those cases where coaches are actively engaging the services of a supervisor, are these supervisors from the kinds of counselling and psychotherapeutic backgrounds discussed in this article? Should the models of coaching used by supervisors and coaches match? Or is it better to engage the services of a supervisor from a paradigm that contrasts with that of the coach? Does matching or non-matching affect the levels of satisfaction with the supervision process and even its skills and knowledge outcomes? How can contracts be written that focus on realistic outcomes and which are capable of meeting multi-stakeholder interests? Should supervisors work in networks comprising different theoretical traditions (including different psychotherapeutic traditions) in order to offer a diverse level of support? Should we move from a tradition of hierarchical supervision to peer supervision?

These, and many other questions, are worthy of further empirical research. Answering these questions may take us some way towards what is needed - a distinctive, accepted and applied model of supervision for coaches that moves us from clinical to professional developmental needs, as well as the needs of 'the invisible client'.

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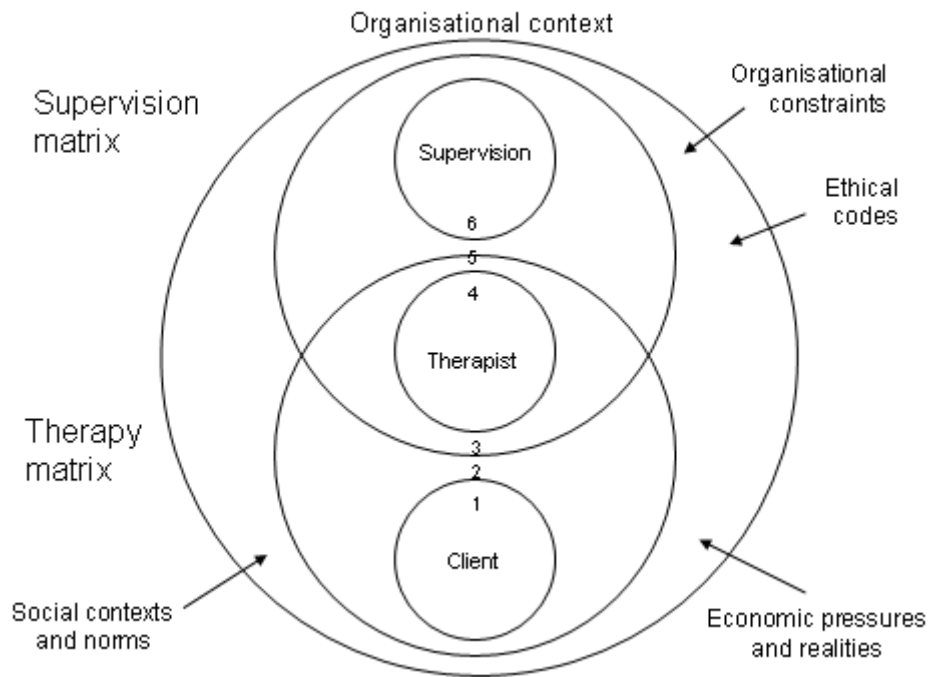


Figure 1 The six foci of supervision (Hawkins and Shohet, 2000)

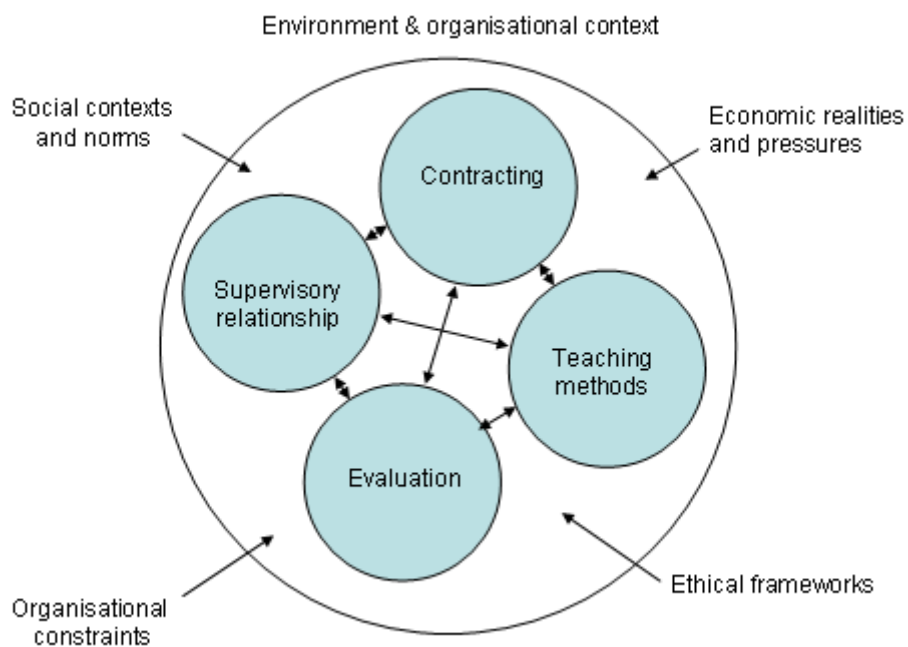


Figure 2 A systemic model of coaching supervision