

**An exploration of what experienced business coaches take to
supervision**

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Abstract

This study explored the question:

What do experienced business coaches take to supervision?

The aim of the research was to explore the views of coaches, coaching supervisors, buyers and coaching and supervision professional bodies on what work they believe and expect an experienced coach should take to supervision. The literature was reviewed primarily across coaching and coaching supervision but included literature from other helping professions who engage in supervision. Data was gathered from two Focus Groups with representatives from each of the aforementioned groups with the purpose of informing the semi-structured interviews with five business coaches, five coaching supervisors and eight buyers.

The thematic analysis of the interviews revealed an absence of specificity with regards to the scope of supervision work. The data and the literature review identified that there is a perceived difference in what an experienced coach should take to supervision compared to a novice coach although this lacks detail. A confirmed finding is that the coach has freedom to take whatever they choose to work on in supervision and that the key supervision models are used to supervise any topic brought by the coach.

This research provides evidence to challenge this perceived wisdom and recommends the adoption of a framework to establish boundaries and clarity for supervision. The framework facilitates alignment of the supervisor to their supervision work and supports the efficacy and ethicality of supervision for key stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

Taking on a doctorate is no small thing. It is a roller coaster of a journey where one minute you are flying and the work is joyous and the next minute you could cry at how challenging it is and wonder if you can ever complete it. There are so many people who have been part of this journey and trying to find the words to thank all those who should, need and deserve to be acknowledged is the hardest thing ever. I thought it might be fun to have those of you listed below share my struggle to find the right words so, here is a word search with words that define your part in this journey. I hope you find the words that are meant for you.

James, Teddy and Lily

Dr Annette Fillery-Travis

Dr Jane and Dr Phyllis

Laura

Deni and Kate

All my clients

All my supervisors

All my research participants

All my friends

Z	F	O	F	B	A	C	K	A	R	E	G	G	O	N	U	T	I	P	F
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R	Q	A	W	C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E	L	A	R	S	L	I
J	A	C	K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E	R	O	A	C	C	E	P	T
A	S	S	U	R	E	L	I	N	F	L	U	E	N	C	E	O	T	B	S

Accept	Attentive	Encourage	Inspire	Protect
Acknowledge	Back	Faithful	Interest	Provoke
Advocate	Believe	Cherish	Like	Push
Affirm	Care	Enthuse	Love	Respect
Agitate	Challenge	Help	Loyal	Sponsor
Aid	Comfort	Hug	Motivate	Supervise
Appreciate	Confidence	Humour	Nourish	Support
Assure	Friend	Improve	Nudge	Tender
Assist	Egg on	Influence	Persist	Trust

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1 Introduction

For the last decade, there has been a continued growth in the coaching sector, with increasing numbers of coaches entering the market and a consequent increased demand for supervision. (Hawkins and Turner, 2017)

The Rise of Coaching Supervision 2006 – 2014 (Hawkins and Turner, 2017), reported a significant increase in the number of organisations requiring external coaches to be in supervision. It included the following table summarising the relevant organisations' expectations of supervision.

Table 1-1 The expectations of organisations who employ coaches concerning supervision

Asked their coaches whether they had supervision	65.79%
Expected their coaches to have supervision	66.67%
Would only use coaches who had supervision	37.84%
Require supervision and also ask for a supervisor's reference	4.65%
Require coaches to explain how they use supervision with examples from their practice	13.95%
Do not provide supervision to any of the coaches they use, internal or external	27.91%

The above table confirms that supervision of their employed coaches is an important expectation by buyers.

Research commissioned by the Chartered Institute of People Development (CIPD) (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006) into good practice in coaching supervision, identified a shortage of research in the field of coaching supervision. This shortage was borne out in later research where according to Turner and Palmer (2018), research has not kept up to date with the practice of coaching supervision.

Several authors have highlighted the importance of having a systemic approach to coaching supervision (Tkach and DiGirolamo, 2017; Hawkins and Shohet, 2006; Murdoch and Arnold, 2013; Grant, 2012). To date, there are very few studies that involve buyers or the professional bodies as participants, despite their significant impact on the direction and execution of coaching supervision. Involving all coaching supervision stakeholders would ensure all relevant views are heard, yet most studies fail to include them. Instead, they involve only coaches and/or supervisors. The views of two significant stakeholder groups are therefore missing from current research.

This study is aimed at identifying from the perspective of all these stakeholder groups, what an experienced business coach takes to supervision. It is my belief that this question has been overlooked or worse, the answer has been assumed by the supervision sector.

Models of supervision are discussed in section 2.3.2 of the literature review and it is of note that there has been a rise in the number of supervision models that have been developed and deployed for coaching supervision. The authors of these models have focused on the format and structure of them and make little or no reference to the theoretical or evidence base on which they have been developed.

Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of supervision training courses being offered to prospective participants from independent training organisations and coaching and supervision professional bodies. Few training courses mention the theoretical or evidence base on which the training is based and instead tend to focus on the supervision model the participants will be trained in.

These two points raise an important ethical issue in terms of exposing the lack of evidence to support coaching supervision models and so by default, coaching supervision training. At present, there is little evidence to support any claims made of supervision models or supervision training in terms of the basis for its design and therefore, the results it can claim to deliver. There is a risk of undermining the ethical standing of coaching supervision as it has been built without a critical or evidential base. The coaching supervision market is still in the early stages of development so by providing an answer to my research question, it is hoped this study will legitimately impact several aspects of the coaching supervision sector.

1.1 The origin of this research question and investigation

I have been working in the field of coaching for nearly twenty years. The topic of this research has been of interest to me for most of that time based primarily on my practitioner experience as a coach and coach supervisor.

The origins of this research are rooted in four topics:

1. Duty of care
2. The perceived wisdom about supervision
3. Quality assurance of supervision

4. The increasingly mandatory nature of supervision

Duty of care

During my tenure in the corporate world, coaching was seen as a 'new' technique that could be used in many ways and for many different purposes. The deployment of coaching within my organisation was organic and there had not been a great deal of thought given by the Board or Executive Committees, from a strategic view, as to what coaching should/could deliver from a business perspective. At the time, my employer, a multi-national FMCG business, ran a flagship leadership programme that included a coaching element supplied by internal coaches. The coaching was intended to push high performance from the attendees and many achieved phenomenal results. However, a few people got caught in a downward psychological spiral that resulted in two very serious mental health incidents. These might have been prevented if there had been better oversight of the coaches' work. As a result of these outcomes, I was asked to conduct a review into what had happened and establish secure improvements to prevent this happening again. These changes would enable the company to illustrate they had taken action which showed duty of care to both the coaches and the coaching clients.

Following this review, I focused on creating a coaching strategy – a roadmap that directly linked the people strategy of the business to the deployment of coaching across the business. The people strategy was intended to enable people within the business to grow their skills and capabilities to ensure the delivery of the planned business growth. Coaching was seen as a key skill to enable this growth and the roadmap included several coaching initiatives including manager as coach training programme, to add coaching as a style of management to complement other management styles, and the establishment of a high calibre pool of internal and external coaches to accelerate and embed high performance. This led to the development of an external coach assessment process which appraised the coaching capability of external executive coaches. There had not been any previous assessment or central oversight of the external coaching pool so this process was necessary to illustrate due diligence in securing coaching service suppliers. At the time, this was pioneering work as few, if any, organisations ran an assessment process for coaches. The assessment involved a pre-assessment application form, a day of assessment and a two hour debrief and it ran six times in both Europe and Australia. These assessments enabled the company to tangibly illustrate a level of duty of care in how they selected coaches that

were fit for purpose and avoided engaging coaches who were not competent and could potentially do harm.

The perceived wisdom about supervision

In the assessment process discussed above, one of the pre-assessment criteria related to supervision. If a coach was not in supervision, they were dropped from the process. Twenty years ago, the coaching landscape was different from how it is now - professional bodies were only starting to establish themselves, there were no coaching or supervision competencies and accreditation was in its infancy.

My starting point for this assessment work had been to ensure we used coaches who were fit for purpose – capable of doing the work they were employed to do and working within safe boundaries. In short, coaches that ‘don’t damage people’. With hindsight, the assessment day certainly weeded out those coaches who were not fit for purpose. But as for working safely - I really had no idea how to ensure this. Supervision seemed an obvious criterion to focus on as the coaches I held in high regard spoke about the value of supervision in exploring their case work. This ‘perceived wisdom’ from coaches I valued seemed to affirm the inclusion of supervision as a selection criterion. Although this was a positive response to the challenge of finding coaches who worked safely, it was not empirically established as any form of guarantee of safety. This lack of evidence is one of the factors that provoked my interest in this research topic.

Quality assurance of supervision

Little has changed in the selection of coaches over the last 20 years. As a professional coach, I have rarely been asked to attend any form of selection assessment and at best, I have been asked to an interview and/or to complete an application form to be placed on a preferred supplier list. Where there is an assessment, I am typically asked if I am in supervision but I have never been asked to say more than ‘yes’ or ‘no’. I struggle to understand what value this process has for a buying organisation and can only imagine it leaves them in a similar position to me twenty years ago, i.e. holding an assumption that supervision ensures the quality assurance aspect of coaching work.

In the ten years I have been working as a supervisor, I have been asked only a handful of times to provide a reference of any description for a supervision client, even though many of my supervision clients’ clients have supervision as a mandatory criterion to coach in their

organisation. When I ask my supervision clients what these organisations want them to work on in supervision, they say they don't know and instead offer educated guesses or assumptions. As a result, I am curious to explore if quality assurance topics are something experienced coaches take to supervision.

The increasing mandatory nature of supervision

In addition to buyers demanding that coaches be in supervision, many of the professional bodies have set supervision as a mandatory requirement for their membership. This topic is dealt with in the Literature Review but suffice to say, the evidence on which this requirement is set is tenuous. Through this research, I am keen to explore if the topics experienced coaches take to supervision, support or negate an argument for coaching supervision to be a mandatory activity.

It is this journey, and state of affairs, that has led me to my research question:

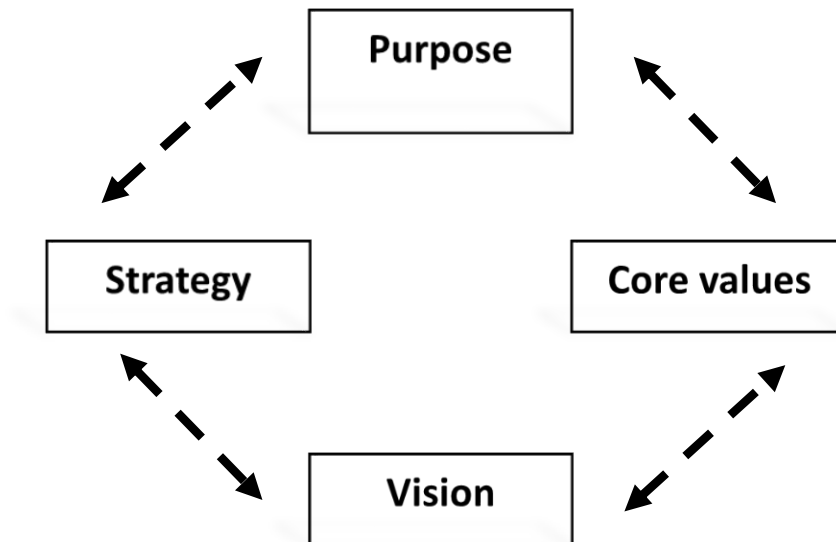
What do experienced business coaches take to supervision?

1.2 Impact of the Focus Group findings on the research question

In 2017, the origins of my research led me to title my research 'A practitioner inquiry into the efficacy of coaching supervision' and the research question that sat behind this was 'What is the efficacy of coaching supervision, beyond personal learning and development, for experienced business coaches?' The results of the Focus Groups and the initial Literature Review highlighted that this original research question was flawed as it assumed the purpose of supervision is clear, therefore, researching the efficacy of it would logically follow.

This view was supported by Hawkins and Smith (2006) who apply the framework in Figure 4-2 when working with businesses who are trying to establish their *raison d'être* and move towards delivering their services or products in the relevant market. They make clear that identifying purpose is the first step in the process of developing a service or product and without that, the subsequent points are ungrounded.

Figure 1-1 Hawkins and Smith: Mission of an organisation



Purpose is WHY we are in business, our raison d'être – the difference we wish to make in the world.

Strategy is WHAT we focus on, our core markets, competencies and geographies, also our unique value propositions and how we differentiate our organisation from the competition.

Core values underpin HOW we do business, the principles and behaviours that distinguish how we relate within the business as well as to our customers and suppliers.

Vision is what we could become if we were successful at fulfilling our purpose, focus our strategy and live in line with our core values.

A review of the original research question through this framework made it clear that to identify the efficacy of supervision, there must be a clear purpose for it in the first place. The Focus Group conversations and original Literature Review highlighted that the clear purpose for supervision was not evident and where a purpose was described, it was not based on coaching supervision evidence.

The Focus Group conversations and subsequent data analysis demonstrated that all the Focus Group participants were repeatedly drawn to issues of purpose and strategy rather than execution. Of the total 221 references, 69 of them (31%) related to the definition of coaching, the definition of supervision and the purpose of supervision and 43 of the 221 references (20%) were about the work to be supervised. In addition to the views of the Focus Groups, it is clear from the literature that the purpose and strategy of supervision are not fully identified and certainly not agreed between the various stakeholders.

As a result, the research question was re-focused to concentrate on the 'input' aspect of supervision including the purpose and strategy, prior to the collection of data from the semi-structured interviews. This shift in emphasis of the question did not require a change to my chosen methodology, though it did require me to broaden the scope of the literature review.

When exploring the impact of the Focus Group input, I reflected that Gray (2014, p. 30) mentions one of the advantages of phenomenological research, 'because of its emphasis on the inductive collection of large amounts of data, it is more likely to pick up factors that were not part of the original research focus.' My research is phenomenologically informed so this statement was certainly true for the Focus Groups and gives a rationale to how the analysis of the Focus Groups data brought about changes to the aims of my research and a subsequent refinement of my research question.

Crotty (1998, p. 59), talked about how we fall victim to the 'tyranny of the familiar' through accepting the way we make sense of things as being the truth. This 'truth' is what we then pass on to others and embed in our world view. The Focus Group discussions exposed what they and others hold as 'familiar' and started to ask questions and make comments that challenged this reification. As identified in Chapter 2, there is little empirical research on coaching supervision and a lack of scrutiny or challenge to truly attest its purpose. Yet it has become a generally accepted part of the coaching sector.

The original intent of the Focus Groups was to inform the questions I would ask in the semi-structured interviews. The Focus Group results did fill this brief but also made an unintended impact which resulted in a change to my research question at a crucial time in the research process. It is clear that if I had not run the Focus Groups, I would have wasted an incredible amount of time and effort in this research project.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

1.3.1 Aims

This research is important for the coaching and supervision sector as there is currently a lack of evidence on what an experienced coach takes to supervision. There is also little in the literature to support the current perceived wisdom that 'good' coaches have regular supervision and what the substantiated benefits of supervision are for the coach or for the coaching client.

This research could prove valuable to the supervision sector as it will provide evidence and therefore, clarity to the purpose of supervision. Establishing a clear purpose for supervision would enable:

- Supervisors to be clear about their practice, including what they do and do not supervise
- Supervision training providers to offer a clear training proposition that is based on evidence of what work is supervised
- Coaches to make informed choices about their supervision and CPD needs
- Buyers to make informed decisions about their needs and expectations of supervision
- Professional bodies to review their purpose for supervision based on research evidence

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the research are to establish:

- What can be learned from the current coach supervision literature and related helping professions literature that is relevant to the research question?
- How do current theories and models used in coaching supervision identify what coaches take to supervision?
- What do buyers, coaching supervisors and professional coaching bodies require of supervision?
- What do coaches take to supervision?
- A framework that covers the work an experienced coach takes to supervision
- A series of recommendations to supervisors, coaches, buyers, professional bodies and supervisory training organisations

1.4 Scope of the research

This study has been designed to identify what experienced business coaches take to supervision from the perspective of coaches, supervisors, professional bodies and buyers.

The selection of coaches was key for this study as there are reported differences between the needs of novice and experienced coaches. Joseph (2016) makes the point that most coaching supervision research is based on a wide range of coaching professionals and he

says there is a need for supervision in business coaching to be informed by specific, relevant research.

The stakeholder group that is not included in this research is the client being coached. In my experience of coaching in business, the client being coached tends not to be the group that assert supervision as a criterion for their coach and indeed, are often unaware that their sponsoring organisation has such a requirement. For this reason, this stakeholder group were excluded from this study.

Gray (2011, p. 5) cites Carroll (2006) who warned that '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.' In response to Carroll's view, the literature review does include some references from supervision in other fields, however, these were restricted to topics relevant to the research question and/or to provide a specific comparison between coaching supervision and other forms of supervision.

It is important to note that my study is not focused on the process or efficacy of supervision and does not differentiate between any differences of delivery, i.e. individual or group. This study is singularly focused on identifying what an experienced coach takes to supervision.

1.5 Key terminology

Business coaching

Business coaching is distinct from other forms of coaching that are also open to coaching supervision, e.g. life coaching, business development coaching, maternity returner coaching, etc. The Worldwide Association of Business Coaching (WABC) offers the following clear definition of business coaching:

'Business coaching is the process of engaging in regular, structured conversation with a "client", an individual or team who is within a business, profit or non-profit organization, institution or government and who is the recipient of business coaching. The goal is to enhance the client's awareness and behaviour to achieve business objectives for both the client and their organization.' (WABC, 2011)

Supervision

Supervision is typically run as a group or one to one activity in both the coaching sector and in the psychotherapeutic sector. This research is not concerned with the process of supervision but instead what work is taken to be supervised. If a study involved group supervision, this fact is highlighted in the text otherwise the term relates to one to one supervision.

Professional/business/executive coach

Accrediting professional coaching bodies allocate coaching titles that relate to their levels of coach accreditation. These titles do not necessarily define what field or sector a coach works in, rather it defines their level of coaching competence as dictated by the relevant professional body's standards. The coaching participants included in this study are all experienced business coaches irrespective of the title they use and are referred to as business coaches throughout this thesis.

Coaching client/coachee

Within the coaching sector, the terms client and coachee are frequently used, sometimes interchangeably. As an experienced business coach, I use the term client as it is coherent with my coaching model in which coaching is a service provided to a client and not 'done to' them. The term coachee can also have an implication of 'less than' and can create an imbalance of power. This imbalance can be particularly unhelpful in establishing a coaching relationship that Hawkins (2009) describes as a 'joint endeavour'. The term coaching client has been used throughout this thesis except when directly quoting others who may have a different term of choice.

Supervision client/supervisee

Similar to the coaching sector, the supervision sector uses the terms supervision client and supervisee interchangeably. For the same reasons stated above in relation to client/coachee, the term supervision client has been used throughout this thesis except when quoting others who may have a different term of choice.

Buyer

An organisation, or a representative of the organisation, is often a key stakeholder in the coaching and supervision services being provided. Responsibilities might include

commissioning the work or sponsoring the individual coaching client through the coaching process. However, the key responsibility of this stakeholder is typically to pay for the coaching as they are the buyer of the services being provided. The term buyer has been used to represent this stakeholder group throughout this thesis except when quoting others who may have a different term of choice.

References

There are several participant quotes contained throughout this thesis. In some instances, the whole participant response was included and in others, only part of the response was included. To avoid confusion in defining this difference, I have used the term reference for full or part quotes.

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis has been organised as follows:

Chapter 2 – Literature Review. This chapter explores the literature related to coaching supervision and expands this to include areas directly related to the research question. Included are overviews of the current coaching supervision literature, the key theories and models related to coaching supervision. Coaching supervision according to the professional bodies is covered in a separate section. This chapter ends with a summary of how the literature review impacts the research question.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and activities. This chapter discusses the rationale for the research approach, explains the aims, objectives and outcomes of the research, then sets out the research methodology and approach taken to data collection and data analysis. It concludes by presenting the confidentiality and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter 4 – Project Activity. This chapter describes the activities that underpinned the delivery of the research methodology, including the stages of the research that led to the reshaping of the research question.

Chapter 5 – Project Findings. This chapter sets out the detail of the findings from the Focus Groups and one to one interviews and presents the findings from the thematic analysis that was undertaken.

Chapter 6 – Project Discussion. This chapter discusses the findings of the research in conjunction with the results of the literature review, offers an interpretation of the results and summarises their implications and limitations.

Chapter 7 – Project Conclusions. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from the literature review, data collection and analysis of findings, offers an answer to the research question and makes suggestions for future research.

Chapter 8 – Project Reflection. This chapter is a reflection on my journey from my research activity and the entire Doctoral experience both from a personal and professional perspective.

2 Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and views of a sample group of business coaches, coaching supervisors, buyers and the coaching/supervision professional bodies in relation to the topic of coaching supervision. Specifically, the object of the supervision.

Coaching supervision literature to date highlights the need for more research to be undertaken as there is little available to support the long-held beliefs and assumptions underpinning many supervision principles and practices (Hawkins, and Schwenk, 2006; Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009a; Armour, 2018; Joseph, 2016b; Whitaker and Crabbe, 2019). Moyes (2009, p. 162) illustrated this point when she observed that ‘coaching supervision is an under-resourced – and sometimes contentious – subject’.

There is little academic literature relating to coaching supervision, however there is a plethora of literature written on other helping professions, in particular, clinical and therapeutic supervision. Whilst there is a connection between these fields, conflating these literatures will not necessarily yield an answer to the research question so it is important that the review is relevant and focused. To establish boundaries for the review, Cooper’s taxonomy (Randolph, 2009) was applied to structure this review. The details of the taxonomy are set out in Appendix 1.

Bluckert (2004), Butwell (2006) and Moyes (2009) all concluded that there is no specific theoretical basis for coaching supervision. Each observed that much coaching supervision is based on the work of the therapeutic professions and felt that this immediately raised questions about the validity of applying theory from one profession to another sector

There has been little research on the theoretical basis for coaching in the last decade. In that time, there has been contributions from several well-known and prolific authors that has tended to focus on models of supervision rather than the theoretical basis on which they are based. Instead, these models have been based on the experience and received wisdom of the author and not from a researched evidence base.

With this context, the focus of the Literature Review is to establish:

- What can be learned from the current coach supervision literature and related helping professions literature that is relevant to the research question?

- How do current theories and models used in coaching supervision identify the work a coach should bring to supervision?
- What do buyers, coaching supervisors and professional coaching bodies require of supervision?
- What do coaches work on in supervision?

To ensure that the relevant information was effectively captured from the review and to allow the identification of themes and patterns in the literature, as well as any outlying and contradictory views, I used versions of the forms set out by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019). One was used to analyse and critique research-based literature and another to analyse and critique theoretical literature. These forms are set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Various sources were searched including ProQuest, Sage Journals Online, EBSCO Host, Emerald, Directory of Open Access Journals for published academic research, peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed coaching and supervision publications, academic dissertations and theses, articles, books, journals and professional body websites and publications.

The following words and terms were applied to the search:

- Coaching supervision
- Clinical supervision
- Supervision
- Supervision of coaches
- Supervision of coaching
- Purpose of supervision
- Purpose of coaching supervision
- Intent of supervision
- Intent of coaching supervision
- Focus of supervision
- Focus of coaching supervision
- Work to be supervised
- Definition of supervision
- Definition of coaching supervision

The year 2000 was chosen as the primary cut-off date for the search but it was extended where there were earlier articles by thought leaders in the coaching and/or supervision sector, e.g. Peter Hawkins, Michael Carroll, Erik de Haan and Jonathan Passmore.

2.2 Overview of the current literature

Business coaching is big business. The 6th Ridler report (Mann, 2016) reported that of the 105 organisations who use coaching internationally, the average percentage of Learning and Development and Training budget spent on coaching was 12.5% and that 73% of organisations expected to increase their spend on coaching. Other types of coaching reported included group, team and one to one internal. All these types of coaching were expected to increase in activity. It is reasonable to assume that this growth in coaching activity would also result in an increased growth in coaching supervision.

This would appear to be the expectation of most organisations that took part in the 6th Ridler Report (2016), given that 88% of them stated that supervision is a fundamental requirement for a professional coach. Conspicuous by its absence was any critique of supervision; not one of the surveyed organisations gave a negative opinion or comment about coaching supervision.

In the CIPD report titled Coaching Supervision, Maximising the Potential of Coaching (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006), it was reported that 86% of participants believed that coaches should have supervision but only 44% were engaged in supervision. Intriguingly, the coaches who started to have supervision reported that they soon wanted more. The report is very broad and covers coaching with a range of foci – external coaches, internal coaches and manager as coach. The section on good practice in supervision is a thorough list of considerations for those involved in coaching supervision. However, the list as it stands applies to all types of coaches, from all backgrounds, with different approaches, techniques, experience and training. This arguably misses the point of clarity of purpose for coaches, and relevant to this study, experienced business coaches, on the intent of coaching supervision for a coach.

Hawkins and Turner (2017) re-ran the CIPD research study (Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006) and reported a large increase on the 2006 figure concerning the number of participants engaged in supervision. In 2006, the percentage of coaches having supervision was 44%. By 2014, this had risen to 92.31% in the UK and to 83.18% globally. Whilst the report highlights several interesting results, it does not specify any criteria required for coaches

to participate, so the results are not specific to any type of coaching or length of experience of the coach.

Coaching supervision's history has been influenced by some key authors. Kadushin operated in the field of social work and studied the development of social work supervision for many years. His seminal work, published in 1976, sets out a model that is not only one of the most commonly cited references in coaching supervision literature but has also acted as a platform for coaching supervision as it stands today. His model outlines three main functions of supervision – administrative, educative and supportive. These functions formed the basis of many views on supervision, in particular Hawkins and Shohet (2006) and Proctor (1988b), both of which are discussed further in section 2.2.2.

Since the CIPD study in 2017, there has been relatively little research in the supervision field. The International Coach Federation (ICF) supervision literature review by Tkach and DiGirolama (2018) identified that only six academic articles had been published on coaching supervision and eight academic articles on clinical supervision in 2017 and 2018 thus highlighting the need for specific academic papers to be published on coaching supervision.

In the psychotherapeutic world, Watkins (1998) makes a similar point regarding the need for more research in psychotherapy supervision and Davy (2002) concurs on the need for more research into clinical supervision. Spence et al (2001) also supports this need and points out that there is little evidence to demonstrate that clinical supervision makes any difference in clinician behaviour or in the outcomes for the patient. This illustrates that researchers in the clinical sector have concerns about the quantity of research into supervision and in particular, whether clinical supervision generates benefit for the patient.

Davy (2002, p. 229) wrote passionately about the need to improve research in clinical supervision and asked many of the same questions about clinical supervision that this research is asking about coaching supervision. In particular, he asked 'What are the functions of supervision for the client, the supervisee, the supervisor, different orientations/professions, for the system and for the acknowledged/discussed/intended versus the unacknowledged/unintended/hidden.' It is both curious and concerning that this question has not been answered in the clinical world when one considers that the origins of clinical supervision date back to the 1920s (Carroll, 1996).

2.2.1 Definitions of supervision

A Google search on 'coaching supervision definition' (Accessed 8th July 2020) produces over 7 million results. Moyes (2009) purports that there is no universally accepted definition of coaching supervision and as detailed later in this chapter, her assertion is backed by the fact that there is little agreement amongst the professional bodies on the definition of coaching supervision. Whitaker and Crabbe (2019) also reported that one of the challenges identified by the Global Supervisor's Network was the need for an agreed shared definition of coaching supervision. There is also not an universally agreed definition of coaching and as pointed out by Lawrence and Whyte (2014), it is almost impossible to define coaching supervision without an agreed definition of coaching.

As can be seen from Armstrong and Geddes (2009), the functions of supervision, or versions of them, are often used in or as, the definition of supervision. This can be confusing as the functions describe the intent of supervision or theme of the topics covered. Whilst they are useful for highlighting the general foci of the supervision process, and potentially, the type of role required of the supervisor, they do not fully define supervision. The functions of supervision are covered in more detail in Section 2.2.2.

Tkach and DiGirolamo (2017) presented several definitions taken from professional bodies and eminent writers on the topic. They identified seven themes, taken from ten definitions. It was interesting to see that there were only two themes common to most of the definitions: learning or development and reflection (on self and work). There was not one theme that was common to all. Definitions of supervision across the professional bodies are discussed further in Section 2.6.

Defining supervision appears to be a similar struggle in other sectors. In the therapeutic world, there is at least clarity that supervision is primarily focused on the support of training (Carroll, 2006b). That said, there is still some debate on the definitions, and indeed function, of different supervisory roles.

In teaching, Toll (2004) explores the difference between being a literacy coach and a literacy supervisor. Supervision in this context has an assessment angle to it as the supervisor is responsible for ensuring the teachers meet the standards that are required of them. In her definition, Toll is keen to point out that, like coaches, supervisors have a role to play in the growth of the teacher and that their role is not restricted to assessment

only. The notion of a coach being assessed by their supervisor is worthy of exploration and this subject is covered in 2.2.2.

Grant (2012) identified three distinct forms of supervision: formal supervision, informal supervision and peer supervision. Formal supervision has a designated supervisor, the supervision is clearly defined and can be conducted one to one or in a group. Informal supervision does not have a clearly designated supervisor or supervision agreement. Peer supervision is neither designated nor run by an expert in supervision. By itself, this creates six different supervision definitions supporting the aforementioned challenge of pinning down what supervision is.

The literature offers many definitions of supervision and, curiously, fewer areas of overlap than one might have assumed. Many of the definitions relate to what supervision is (a place for learning and reflection), the conditions of supervision (safe and open place) and the function of supervision (become a better coach). But what they do not address is the nature of the work that needs to be supervised, particularly for coaches at different stages of development. With this lack of cohesion and alignment, it is evident that there is a need for more to be done in defining coaching supervision if it is to establish and maintain itself as a credible service.

2.2.2 Purpose of supervision

Within the literature, the phrases ‘purpose of supervision’, ‘function of supervision’, ‘intent of supervision’ and ‘task of supervision’ are often used interchangeably and many cite the work of Kadushin (1976), Hawkins (2006) and Proctor’s (1988b, quoted in Hawkins and McMahon, 2020, pp. 37-38) as the basis upon which these phrases were developed.

These are shown in table 2.1 below.

Table 2-1 The Functions of Supervision

Hawkins	Proctor	Kadushin
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developmental• Resourcing• Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formative• Restorative• Normative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educational• Supportive• Managerial

Kadushin (1976) is a key influencer in the conversation about the purpose of supervision. He identified three functions of supervision in the context of social work, as set out in the table above. Similarly, as referenced in Armour (2018), Newton (2012) also developed Kadushin's social work functions for the counselling and transactional analysis fields, respectively. The supervision functions have been most notably developed by Hawkins and Shohet (2006). Their version proposed related functions for coaching supervision - developmental, resourcing and qualitative functions. In the context of coaching supervision, the developmental function, as the title implies, is intended to support the growth and development of the coach. The supervisor supports the coach to reflect on their work to understand what they did well and identify areas for development. The resourcing function is intended to focus on the emotional wellbeing of the coach. As coaching work can be intense, the supervisor explores emotional reactions and responses of the coach to ensure that these are not interfering with the effectiveness of the coaching work. The qualitative function is intended to provide a level of quality control in the work. The supervisor is responsible for checking the work for blind spots, oversights and to ensure the coach's work meets the standards expected both ethically and from the employing organisation.

In a paper by Tsui et al (2017, p. 241), the authors acknowledge that in the world of social work, supervision is falling short in the educational and supportive functions it is intended to serve. This view is also supported by Noble and Irwin (2009). They go on to propose that supervision should be integrated with other forms of organisational learning (mentorship, consultation and coaching) to enable these functions to be realised. They propose another role to address the typology of organisational learning that clearly identifies the 'major purpose, relationship between partners, sources of authority, format, duration, roles and resources.' The authors do not explicitly state if they believe that these four forms of organisational learning will be carried out by one or the same person, however, it is of note that there are now four different roles required to effect the supervision they propose.

Bachkirova (2016, p. 143) is another author who has built on the functions of supervision. She contends that a coach should view 'the self' as the most important instrument in coaching and it is this that should be attended to in supervision. She describes three conditions for the good use of self as an instrument, namely, 'understanding the instrument, looking after the instrument and checking the instrument for quality and

sensitivity' and asserts that these three conditions fit neatly with the three functions of supervision (normative, formative or developmental/restorative). She puts forward the view that the purpose of supervision is ultimately to attend to the conditions of good use of self as an instrument.

The literature reveals that many researchers believe the main purpose of supervision relates to the development and learning of the coach (Armstrong and Geddes, 2009; Carroll 2006b; Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, Grant, 2012; Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006; de Haan 2017; Gray 2010 and Homer, 2017). Lawrence and Whyte (2014) concluded that for most coaches, development is the most important function of supervision. Jepson (2016) states that it is difficult to navigate the different definitions, approaches, guidelines and purposes when there is no agreed approach on what constitutes coaching learning and development, continuous professional development or coaching supervision.

McGivern (2009) built on the research by Salter (2008) that had the express intent of discovering if there was a clear link between coaching supervision and a coach's ongoing professional development. Her research uncovered evidence to show that one purpose of coaching supervision was to enhance the ongoing professional development of the coach. The participants in Jepson's research (2016) agreed that reflective practice is one of the key elements that made supervision and continuous professional development effective but pointed out that supervision was not the only way a coach could engage in this. This observation raises the question of whether supervision should be a mandatory or voluntary activity – a topic that is discussed further in Sections 2.2.7 and 2.4.7.

Day and de Haan (2008) studied 28 experienced coaches to determine whether critical moments happen in coaching and if so, how the coaches responded to them. They wanted to identify what resources coaches sought in response to critical moments, including supervision, to support them resolve the issues the critical moments raised. This research found that many of the coaches used supervision as a resource and were looking for it to provide reassurance, guidance and a way to move the coaching forward. Although this study offers a purpose for supervision, the authors acknowledged that not all the coaches accessed supervision to gain this type of support and questioned whether other forms of support could be more/less effective.

De Haan (2008) conducted another study where he again interviewed coaches about critical moments in their work. He wanted to explore the paradox of coaches having to

develop a toughness and, at the same time, retain a vulnerability to and for their clients. The findings highlighted that coaches experienced three types of doubts – ‘existential doubts, relational doubts and instrumental doubts.’ De Haan concluded that of the three main methods of continuous professional development (supervision, coaching and structured reflection), supervision was best suited to support a coach with existential doubts. These included moments when the coach would question their identity as a coach and their coaching competence. The basis of this assertion was not clear from the research so it is not known if this assertion was the result of the research data or the author’s opinion. Either way, it does point to another possible purpose for supervision.

In Turner’s study (2010) on coaches’ views on the relevance of unconscious dynamics in coaching, the participants suggested that supervision would be an appropriate place to take such issues, particularly for less experienced coaches whose training may not have adequately prepared them to handle them. They also acknowledged that it would be important for the supervisor to be qualified to work with unconscious dynamics for this to be safe and effective supervision.

Armstrong and Geddes (2009) conducted a case study on developing a supervision practice. A part of this was the establishment of three categories of the purpose of the supervision on offer: a learning function, an insight function and an outside function. The learning function was focused on professional craft and knowledge enhancement, the insight function focused on self-awareness to enable self-regulation and the outside function focused on whole system influences. Interestingly, they did not include any regulatory purpose as they considered themselves a community of practice that did not require any form of assessment/accreditation. The supervision model they developed for use in this research emphasised the importance of paying attention to the whole system a coaching engagement is operating in. The outcome of this research involved putting in place a robust training programme for supervisors to ensure they were capable and confident to carry out this supervisory work. What is not clear from the research is how a coach would discern what to bring or not to bring to a supervision session, nor how the supervisor would discern what was or was not appropriate in that context. This is particularly relevant as the group expanded the scope of supervision to include attention to a whole system that would seem to significantly increase boundaries instead of tightening them.

The study into the views of Australian coaches on supervision (Grant, 2012) highlights that the coaches primarily saw supervision as an opportunity for professional and personal development. The participants were mostly experienced coaches, over 50% had more than five years' experience and 25% over ten years' experience making this research particularly relevant to my question. The coaches identified nine separate purposes for supervision. The author noted that most of these were intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated and this supports the view that experienced coaches are unlikely to have a single common purpose for supervision. Indeed, when they were asked about the frequency of their supervision, they reported that they adjusted it in line with their needs at the time that could also demonstrate that the purpose of their supervision is not necessarily constant.

Comparing this focus on development with the counselling field, Page and Wosket (2013) make a clear distinction between supervision for trainees and supervision for experienced practitioners. They acknowledge that this is rarely mentioned in the literature but is an important point as the supervision of these two groups will pay attention to different things. This is a point that is also lacking from the coaching supervision literature where coaches are often discussed as if they are one homogenous group. As a contrast to this, Drake (2011, p. 144) offers an alternative way to look at the purpose of supervision and proposed that this sits in the issue of what coaches could work on in supervision. He describes his MAKE model (mastery = artistry, knowledge and evidence) which focuses on what coaches need to know to develop their expertise. He proposes four types of knowledge: personal, foundational, professional and contextual and suggests that supervision is one of the delivery mechanisms for developing professional knowledge. His approach of having the coach and supervisor jointly identifying what area of expertise the coach needs to develop rather than the supervisor unilaterally determining which supervision model to apply to the coach seems more in line with the natural order of things. This approach has the dog wagging the tail and not the other way round.

Lucas and Larcombe (2016) expose that Proctor's functions of supervision, i.e. formative, normative and restorative, do not accommodate the commercial topics that supervisees often bring to supervision. They question whether the commercial aspects of coaching are an appropriate topic for supervision and assuming so, what are the implications of this including the qualifications/competence required to supervise this topic.

Joseph (2017) highlights that business coaching supervision has three broad functions:

1. To think through the systems agenda, frequency and ethics of the coaching work
2. To pay attention to the theoretical underpinnings of the supervisee and the appropriateness of the supervisor and supervisee working together
3. To reflect on the coaching work and practice

Although he acknowledged that business coaching supervision may have different factors to be considered, the author did not present evidence to back up the assertion that these functions are nevertheless relevant in that field.

Armour (2018, p. 33) adds to this argument by stating that the core functions of supervision are consistent with those defined by Hawkins and Shohet (2006) but 'there is a need to define the tasks and roles of coaching supervisors in many areas of coaching, including business and organisational environments where supervision may need to be more fast paced and pragmatic than in other fields.' recognising that there are other factors to take into consideration when determining the function of coaching supervision that go beyond the functions defined by Hawkins and Shohet (2006). Whilst Hawkins and Shohet's text is seminal, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that the functions they define are consistent or valid in the coaching supervision context. Therefore, Armour is potentially attempting to conflate the un-conflatable.

What has been more challenging to glean from the literature is clarity as to whether, even where the purpose of the supervision is established, there is no consequent clarity as to what a coach should bring to supervision? Hodge (2016) presents a table of supervisee and supervisor responsibilities that gives some clarity on what the key elements of supervision are but it does not specify what the coach should or should not bring to supervision.

However, for coaching psychology supervision, Carroll (2006b, p. 4) asserts a very clear purpose. In his view, 'there is no such thing as supervision where the work is not reviewed, interviewed, questioned, considered and critically reflected upon.' This view is echoed by Butwell (2006) who claims that many of the other purposes of supervision can be satisfied in other ways but supervision is the only way for coaches to discuss their coaching caseload.

Bluckert (2004) suggests that supervision has two clear purposes, namely, to support the coach in their learning and to secure quality control. More interestingly, he also suggests that supervision is one of the vehicles through which a coach could differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded market. This gives supervision an interestingly different purpose to those mentioned elsewhere in the literature – supervision as a marketing tool. This view seems to resonate with Mihiotis and Argirou (2016, p. 459) who present ways organisations can leverage more benefit from the coaching activities they undertake and to offer some insights around critical success factors. They state that, ‘Another important factor in selecting the right coach is the absence or presence of sound supervision.’ This supports the view that the purpose of supervision has a marketing functions and is in place to ensure the coach meets the criteria to be selected for work.

Another diverse view on the potential purpose of supervision is raised by Seiler (2019) in relation to executive coaches and formative feedback. Her study was focused on the use of client feedback for the developmental benefit of the coach. She suggests that the results of client feedback have encouraged coaches to take up supervision and seek accreditation. She goes on to report that there is disagreement in the literature about whether experienced coaches benefit from formative feedback, illustrating the continued lack of clarity surrounding the needs and expectations of experienced coaches versus more novice or inexperienced ones.

A focus on ethics has become an increasingly cited purpose of supervision that crosses over with the stance of some of the Professional Bodies (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009; Hawkins and McMahon, 2020; Lane, 2011).

Passmore (2009) concurs that coaches need to develop ‘ethical competence’ and supervision is a forum well suited to helping them to do this. He states that to enable this, coaches should have access to ‘emergency’ supervision so they can discuss present issues they are dealing with. This is supervision that is arranged on a more ad hoc basis when the need arises as opposed to pre-planned sessions.

Turner and Passmore (2018) place ethics as a central topic to be managed in supervision and supervision training. Their research included 106 coach supervisors who were asked how they work with ethical dilemmas that may come up with their supervisees. The results illustrated a lack of ethical understanding, therefore, a lack of adherence to the requirements of the law, of professional bodies and of those organisations that insure

coaching work. The author's noted that one limitation of this research is that supervisors with experience of handling ethical issues would be more likely to respond to this survey. Whilst this clearly is a limitation of the study, what is more alarming about this statement is, that if there is a lack of adherence to formal requirements even for those with experience, what is the position of those supervisors without experience?

Kemp (2008, p. 38) states that 'the establishment of a relationship with a credible and competent coaching supervisor is a critical step in ensuring ethical and responsible practice.' He highlights the importance of coaching psychologists being aware of their unique personal factors that may impact the coaching relationship and therefore the efficacy of the coaching. He asserts that coaches should bring specific coaching problems to supervision so that the supervisor can assist the coach explore these and surface their biases and blind spots. He goes on to suggest that this will help coaches develop their ability to self-manage, which he sees as an ethical requirement for coaching psychologists.

Garvey (2014) questioned whether coaching supervision and mentoring were creating a 'neofeudalistic and surveillance' state. This provocative paper questions whether the purpose of supervision is being directed, primarily by professional bodies, to establish their control and power over the coaching supervision discourse. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) attest to Hawkins and Shohet's (2006) three functions of supervision. Garvey highlights that there may be alternative views that the EMCC are aiming to assert as the purpose of coaching and he questions these. He puts forward a challenging argument about the intent of each function, summarised below.

Normative – Rather than focusing on normalising experiences for coaches, could this be intended to attain compliance and quality assurance?

Formative – Whilst this function is about learning, which is a good thing, ultimately the supervisor is in a position of power and holds the right to give feedback and judge what is right and wrong. This does not sit with a sector that is about unconditional positive regard or empowering the client.

Supportive – Again, this could be about learning but it is focused on what the coach is missing, a deficit model where the coach must be told where they are wanting and what the right answer is.

Without doubt, Garvey's views are thought provoking and illustrate that the coaching supervision sector should be wary of creating an Abilene Paradox for supervision and end up walking blindly into a position that does not serve its needs.

2.2.3 Roles in supervision

The literature surrounding the roles of supervision are broad in their reach. Carroll (1996, p. 53) describes the seven tasks of supervision that serve the supportive, educative and administrative functions in counselling supervision. These include, 'To set up a learning relationship to teach, to evaluate, to monitor professional ethical issues, to counsel, to consult and to monitor administrative aspects.' Hawkins and Smith (2006, p. 149) list eight sub-roles, 'teacher, monitor evaluator, counsellor, coach, colleague, boss, expert technician and manager of administrative relationships.' Each of these sub-roles and tasks illustrates the huge breadth of knowledge and/or skill a supervisor should acquire if they are to truly fulfil this supervisory role.

When considering roles in supervision, Page and Wosket (2013) contend there is a distinction between the role of trainee and practitioner supervision. In addition, they assert that there are two types of supervisors who could fulfil this role – approach orientated and eclectic approach. An example of this in practice could be that an approach orientated supervisor is likely to be of particular value to a trainee counsellor as they will need supervision from someone expert in the approach they are training in, whereas an experienced counsellor may have broadened this approach and be looking for supervision to assist in incorporating this approach into their work. This differentiation enables some clarity in the approach of the supervisor but does not necessarily identify what the role is in terms of responsibilities and duties.

De Estevan-Ubeda (2018, p. 132) reported on the role of power in supervision that surfaced as a theme in her research. The participants were all highly experienced supervisors who had extensive supervisory experience, were 'scholar practitioners' and had made writing contributions to the coaching sector. The group identified that power for the supervisor, presented in two ways, 'unhelpfulness of being regarded an expert' and 'as a motivator for being a supervisor'. The first of these themes offers an insight into the expert role expected from these supervisors but what is not clear in the study is what they would be expert in. The second theme offers an insight into the motivations of someone who wants to be a supervisor rather than illuminating what that role might entail. But what is clear is that holding power over their client was seen an integral part

of the role of a supervisor. Again, the study is not clear on the definition of power in this context so one can only wonder if this related to positional power, hierarchical power, role power, physical power, etc. a point worth further exploration in relation to supervisory role expectations.

Building on the point made by Page and Wosket (2013) that there is a clear distinction between supervision for counselling trainees and supervision for experienced counselling practitioners, Gray (2010) highlights the needs of new coaches in establishing their coaching practice and managing a coaching business. This view is supported by Bluckert (2004) who acknowledges the struggles new coaches may face and suggests that they may glean value from some support on managing their practice from an experienced coach.

Much of the literature to date is focused on the role of the supervisor as opposed to the role of the supervision client. Sheppard (2016, p. 185) observed that little had been written about the roles and responsibilities of supervisees and noted that much of the focus is on the supervisor. In contrast, her Doctoral research focused on the role the supervisee plays in the supervisory relationship and identified that supervisees could maximise the benefits of their supervision through, 'adopting a positive mindset, co-creating the relationship with their supervisor and participating more effectively in the supervision process.'

Several authors (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009; Bachkirova et al, 2011; Moyes, 2009) have mentioned the role of the internal supervisor, i.e. whereby the coach self supervises their work. This 'role' also received attention in the therapeutic profession.

Self-supervision has been referred to in many ways, 'self-reference, self- management, self-control, self-analysis, self-monitoring, self-assessment or self-evaluation.' (Meyer, 1978, p. 96). Hardin and Gehlert (2019) ponder the issue of using supervision as the vehicle to develop a coach's ability to self-manage. Meyer (1978) also spoke of the use of self-supervision to maintain counselling skills. In his paper, he asserts that self-reinforcement was the only tactic that featured consistently in the research in other disciplines that proved to be a way of encouraging skill maintenance. Meyer's point is an interesting one as it has applicability to coaching, in particular to novice coaches. This view is of interest because some writers on the topic of self-supervision or self-management tend to focus on more experienced coaches. In support of this point, Basa

(2018) asserts that self-supervision benefits more traditional forms of supervision as the supervisee comes better prepared to get value from the supervision session. She also states that if trainee counsellors develop their ability to self-supervise, they are more self-sufficient and independent therapists when they come to practice independently.

Mellon and Murdoch-Eaton (2015) published a paper illustrating the continuing need for clarity in active supervisory roles. They acknowledge the need for robust training and mention the assessment and support functions that the supervisor role must perform. They comment that assessing supervisees and supporting them can create a tension and conclude that separating the educational and clinical supervisory roles from a separate mentor role might enable better trainee support.

2.2.4 Qualifications of supervisors

When considering what roles exist within supervision, it is logical to then think about who will perform the supervision and how well equipped they are to do so. Essentially, what are supervisors taught to supervise and, therefore, what qualifications do they need in order to do this effectively and safely?

Tkach and DiGirolamo (2017) state that there are no universally accepted guidelines or best practices for coaching supervision. The absence of agreed best practices has been highlighted by others, including Passmore (2009) who contends that there is a need for more formal coach supervision training within the UK. He added that this training should be built around the needs of coaching supervision and not on the needs of therapeutic supervision. McGivern (2009) stated that more research was required to establish what makes a good supervisor and that that would in turn inform what training/qualifications would be appropriate.

Grant (2012) highlighted the need for supervisors to have a balance of business and behavioural sciences experience and noted that this combination was difficult to find. 70% of the participants in his study stated that supervisors should have a specific qualification or training in coaching supervision. The remaining 30% said that they did not think supervision training should be compulsory as different types of supervision require different skill sets.

One of the ongoing debates in coaching supervision is, whether one has to have been a coach in order to become a coaching supervisor? In counselling supervision, the supervisors are required to assess the developmental level of their supervisees. A study

by Chagnon and Russell (1995) highlighted that supervisors' experience did not influence the assessment they made of the developmental level of the counselling trainee. This illustrates that it is the experience as a counsellor that has greater importance when supervising trainees and not supervisory experience. The parallel for coaching would mean that in order to be a coaching supervisor of trainee coaches, you would have had to have first been an experienced coach. In support of this view, Joseph (2017) cites being proficient in coaching skills as a pre-requisite for being a coaching supervisor.

Research conducted in Australia (Grant, 2012), identified that only half of Australian coaches who offered supervision as a professional service had received any supervision training. The main reasons cited for this was firstly the challenge of finding training and secondly, finding high quality training. Similarly, Salter (2008) gathered data from 218 coaches on their thoughts on the role of coaching supervision. In her research, the participants enumerated 11 themes that supported the case for ongoing supervision and 14 themes that supported the case against enforced ongoing supervision. One of the considerations against enforced ongoing supervision was the need for supervision to be delivered by credible supervisors and it was participants' view that there were not so many of these around.

This data suggests that not only is it a challenge to find a qualified supervisor, but it is also difficult to find a credibly trained supervisor. This in turn, points to a need for clarity on what supervisors can and should be supervising to ensure they work ethically and with integrity.

A knowledge of/ability to work systemically is a commonly cited 'qualification' for supervisors. Hawkins and Smith (2006) believe it is working systemically that differentiates the attributes of being a coach and supervisor. Bachkirova et al (2011) and Gray (2010) hold that having a systemic perspective is essential for a coaching supervisor. Carroll (2006b) argues that a systems perspective is vital otherwise unseen, but important, other people involved in the wider field will go unseen. Turner and Passmore (2018) assert that coaching supervisors do not receive adequate training and that ethical issues should be central to supervisory training. Lucas and Larcombe (2016) emphasise the importance of supervisory scope. They discuss whether supervising a coach on commercial issues is appropriate and if so, what would constitute appropriate training for that.

Carroll and Holloway (1999) make a strong case for the context of the supervisee to be given more attention in supervision work. They argue that because supervisors in the counselling world are first trained as counsellors, their training can lead them to focus on an individual perspective rather than an organisational or systemic one. They add that factors such as gender, sexual orientation, race and disability need to be considered as well as the contextual setting the client is in, i.e. educational, workplace, uniformed and religious settings. They go on to say that ignoring these factors may well result in the supervision missing important factors that affect not only the client but the supervision required. Hawkins and McMahon (2020) also explore what it means to work with difference. They offer several models that can be used in supervision to enable greater awareness of potential issues and support in how to work with these issues.

Armstrong and Geddes (2009) found that it was not the qualifications of the supervisor that were considered the most important, it was their qualities, i.e. challenging the status quo, modelling effective coaching supervision, creating an environment of safety and openness, steering rather than dominating conversations and engaging in different views without judgement.

De Estevan-Ubeda (2018, p. 134) conducted a study into the learning journeys of highly experienced coach supervisors. The main theme arising from this research was that highly experienced coaching supervisors learn the most through experiential learning. An additional insight was that highly experienced coach supervisors reported that they benefitted from having supervision early in their coaching careers and continued it throughout highlighting that supervision on supervision was undertaken by highly experienced coach supervisors voluntarily.

Ross (2015, p. 13) highlighted the ongoing debate about the qualifying background for a supervisor. He reported that, 'the concept that a supervisor does not need to be an expert in the professional field in which they work remains controversial.' Lane (2011, p. 100) offers a model to assist in determining whether a supervisor needs to have expertise in the supervisee's practice area and identifies four types of supervision – 'process model, continuous professional development (CPD) model, peer mentoring model and expert/apprentice model.' He suggests that depending on the model to be applied, consideration should be given to what code of ethics needs to be applied. This may be a useful model for considering both the purpose of the coaching and who should be conducting the supervision.

Krapu (2019) pointed out that if coaching supervisors are to continue to apply psychotherapeutic models of supervision to their work, current supervisory training is woefully inadequate and does not produce the necessary training or understanding required to make them competent to work with these approaches.

Exploring another facet of supervisory conditions, Hess (2008) studied the stages of counselling supervision. He identified three stages (beginning, exploration and confirmation of supervision identity). This is particularly interesting as little has been written about this topic and reminds us that there are novice and experienced supervisors as well as novice and experienced coaches and that supervision development is an important issue for the sector.

DiAnne Borders (2008) makes the point that becoming an effective supervisor is not just about qualifications. He claims that counsellors need a shift in mindset to accompany the transition from therapist to supervisor and this mindset needs to be one where they see the counsellors as learners and themselves (as supervisors) as educators. He suggests that specific supervision training is required to support this shift and identifies some ways to achieve this in counselling supervision. The shift of mindset from therapist to supervisor is an interesting point for coaching supervision, particularly as many coaching supervisors were, or still are, practising coaches and so arguably need to make an equivalent mindset transition from coach to supervisor.

2.2.5 Benefits of supervision

Within the literature, there is some research on the benefits of coaching supervision. Grant's research (2012) identified three themes in relation to benefits of supervision: supervision as an opportunity for reflective practice, gaining new insights and perspectives and supporting good quality coaching, particularly in dealing with difficult cases.

In her literature review of coaching supervision, Moyes (2009, p. 164) states that, 'we don't know enough about what happens in coaching supervision or how effective it is so how can we assume coaching supervision is a good thing?' This observation supports the research by Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) which identified potential gains from supervision for the supervisee and the buyer. However, the research also highlighted that although the coaches and supervisors believed there were potential benefits from

supervision, they struggled to make a direct link between the supervision and their coaching practice.

In her Doctoral research, Sheppard (2016) explored how supervisees help and/or hinder their own supervision. The participants reported that a key feature of supervision was the learning they gained through it. They went on to describe some of the benefits they received from this learning that were both personal and work-related. Examples included, 'shifting and gaining perspective on issues' and 'feeling less tangled, more complete and lighter as a result.'

Donaldson-Feilder and Bush (2009, p. 37) identified six key benefits from having supervision; 'opportunity for reflection on self and process, learning from others, learning about self, restorative focus and building internal supervisor.' There were no details on the final point to better understand what benefit this delivered to the coaches.

Müller et al (2020) reported on the connections between life and work satisfaction and issues of mental strain, and how supervision influenced these factors. They identified that coaching supervision has a moderating effect on mental strain that in turn positively impacted the level of job satisfaction. This is an interesting point when one considers the work of Graßmann et al (2018) who identified that on average, coaches have seven negative experiences per coaching assignment that can impact the overall mental well-being of the coach. Neither study described the format and focus of the supervision so it is difficult to establish from either what the supervision was that was having a positive influence or what work the coach brought to supervision that was being positively impacted. That said, the correlation between life/work satisfaction and the use of coaching supervision is an interesting point as this topic is not mentioned by others.

Lawrence and Whyte's research (2014) reports an interesting conclusion that coaching clients needed an assurance that a coach could do their job but did not see supervision as a key part in securing assurance. They go on to suggest that if an experienced coach is not a member of a professional body and does not have a psychological background, supervision is unlikely to feature as an important issue in their practice. It would make sense that if supervision was not on a coach's radar it would be unlikely to feature in their world so they would not know what they could benefit from if they were to include it in their development. As a result, they would likely satisfy their development needs in different ways.

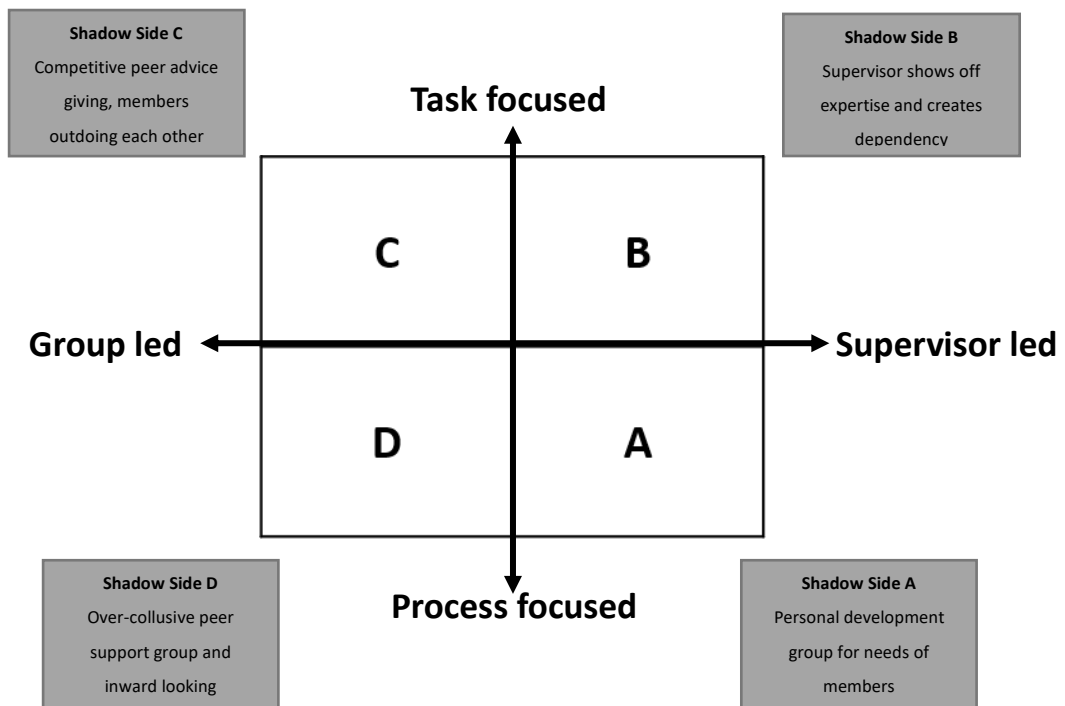
Participants in Butwell's study (2006, p. 48), reported that 'even though case supervision was not set out as an expectation of the purpose of the group supervision, it was seen as, an obvious strength of the process.' One of the unresolved questions from this study was if, and how, the client benefited from the coach being supervised. Coaching supervision is often cited in the literature, and by some of the professional bodies, as having a benefit to the client but the literature offers little evidence that this is the case. This point is echoed in Virgil's (2017, p. 156) paper on supervision in social work where he reports that, 'this study shows there are no researches directly measuring the key factors of effective supervision.' This study highlights the gaps that exist in the supervision research base of a more established helping profession and raises some concerns about the reliability of the coaching supervision practices used, given that so many of them have been borrowed from other related professions, including social work.

2.2.6 Risks of supervision

There is little written about the risks associated with having/not having supervision. The risks of poor supervision and the risk of mismanaging the boundaries of supervision are not generally discussed. Joseph (2016, p. 166) recommends that there be more research into the 'unintended negative consequences' of coaching supervision.

Grant (2012) acknowledges that there has been little research into the negative experiences of coaching. The question asked in his research related to negative experiences coaches had had in supervision as opposed to any form of risk of supervision. The responses tended to focus on the coach's feelings of negative supervision experiences, namely poor supervisory skills and group supervision being dominated by individuals, rather than the risks associated with these. Figure 2-1 from Hawkins and Smith (2006) supports a view that there are risks and suggests these emerge through a shadow side of group supervision styles.

Figure 2-1 Hawkins and Smith: Models of group supervision styles



They point out that if a supervision group gets stuck in one particular style, there is a risk that the corresponding shadow side will emerge and affect the positive impact of the supervision. Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) identified limiting factors to effective supervision including; limited understanding of supervision, the types of issues being brought to supervision, coach supervisor relationship and coach behaviour. The limiting factors highlighted in this research related to the efficacy of the supervision process as opposed to any risks these might create.

Page and Wosket (2013) highlight some risks if the supervisor is not clear in their boundaries between their role of a counsellor and their role of a supervisor. They suggest that if these differences are not clear, it can create risks, e.g. if the supervisor is holding their counsellor role too tightly, they are unlikely to confront their supervisee as this is not typically the role a counsellor would play with a client. If the supervisor did confront their supervisee, as is typical of the role of a supervisor, the supervisee may see the confrontational behaviour from the supervisor as a form of role modelling good counselling and be overly confrontational with their client.

Milton (2008, p. 77) adds another point to consider in counselling supervision. He questions the assumption that 'supervision ensures quality' as this position holds that 'the supervisee is likely to do harm' and means the supervisor assumes this and looks for evidence to support this position in the supervision. He argues that this poses the risk of

going against the values of the profession and making it more challenging to form trusting relationships.

Chatterjee (2005, cited in Duignan, 2006, pp. 10-14) argues that the strategic risk management in the supervision of coaching psychologists is overlooked. He highlighted three risks; 'demand, capability and competitive – relevant to the actual practice and work of coaching in a market economy.' He offers a framework that supervisors and supervisees can use to benchmark the degree of these risks so they can determine their place and importance in the supervision.

Research conducted by Homer (2017) on the value executive coaches saw from peer group supervision, raised two specific risks of running supervision in this format. The first was the risk of group think that would reduce the learning value for the group members and the second was the risk of not having a qualified supervisor.

Bachkirova's (2015b, p. 5) study focuses on self-deception in coaches and aims to explore the implications of this for coaches and supervisors. The participants in her study, all experienced coaches and supervisors, confirmed that this was a topic that was frequently surfaced in supervision and that it is often driven by fear or gain for the coach. She also highlighted the risks associated with self-deception such as, 'seeing the client's issues through their own filter and limiting the client's awareness.' This is one of the few studies that raises any specific risks of issues that are brought to coaching supervision.

Butwell (2006) reported that a risk in an organisation's internal group supervision was that the participants would not discuss some of the issues that were really challenging them for fear of self-disclosure. She also identified that the frequency of the supervision sessions could create a risk in that infrequent sessions were seen as inadequate to provide the level of support the coaches required.

A long running point of contention in the coaching world is where the boundary is between coaching and therapy (Zeus and Skiffington, 2000), the obvious risk here being that coaches stray into therapeutic territories that they are neither willing nor trained to work in. Maxwell (2009) offers a model that could be useful in supervision to help surface this risk and have the coach explore what they hold as appropriate coaching work for them to be carrying out.

Graßmann and Schermuly (2018) discovered that there was a relationship between the level of neuroticism of the coach and negative effects for both clients and coaches. The factors associated with this included feeling too much responsibility for their clients, concern over fulfilling the role of coach and being personally impacted by the content of the coaching conversations. Their study concluded that the coaches who used supervision could mitigate the influence on this relationship for novice coaches, although they acknowledge that one of the limitations of the study was that the participants were all novice coaches. This may lead one to believe the results would only apply to novice coaches and that experienced coaches are likely to be better resourced to handle these negative experiences. However, it could be argued that these results could well also apply to experienced coaches as they are more likely to have more complex and challenging coaching assignments that would raise the possibility of their having negative experiences. There was little written about the supervision approach or model used but they did report the coaches received feedback and social support as part of the supervision process. They went on to say that for coaches with a high level of neuroticism, the opportunity to review and assess their clients' negative effects in supervision not only mitigated some of the aforementioned risks but also led to a reduction in their negative responses to such situations.

2.2.7 Mandatory versus voluntary supervision

One of the conversations that continues to attract different views, centres on whether coaching supervision should be mandatory. This section covers some opinion pieces and research whilst the voice of the professional bodies is covered in Section 2.4.

In an opinion piece featured in *Training and Coaching today*, Smith (2007) made a call for coaching supervision to be mandatory for all coaches, novice and experienced. There was little mention of who would make this mandatory or how it would be regulated but his opinion reflected a growing interest in establishing coaching supervision as a 'must have' activity for all coaches.

Bluckert (2004) identified coaching supervision as one of the latest trends. He pointed to the issue of supervision having a different meaning in the business world to the meaning it has in the psychotherapeutic, clinical and counselling world and asserted that due to these different stances, coaching supervision was likely to be embraced by some and actively resisted by others. This 'prediction' was borne out by subsequent research

(Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006; Salter, 2008) that identified some of the reasons coaches were resistant to coaching supervision being enforced or mandatory.

Salter's research (2008) identified themes for and against enforced supervision. Some of the themes for enforced supervision could, arguably, be re-categorised as benefits of supervision such as 'supervision improves performance and coaching skills' and 'supervision is supportive'. What is particularly interesting about these themes is that they demonstrated a paradox in that some of the participants had strong views on the benefits of supervision but also felt strongly that supervision should not be forced on coaches. It does indeed seem to be a paradox not to mandate coaches to take up supervision where there is a strong view this activity is highly beneficial and impactful on the quality of coaching work.

Bachkirova et al (2011) are also wary of mandating supervision for fear it will create more tensions on this topic. An example of this comes from Grant's research (2012) where the coach participants expressed a concern that for a coach to be a good coach, they had to be in supervision. They stated that some coaches in the industry looked down on coaches who did not receive supervision, even if they used other forms of reflective practice.

Dean and Meyer (2002, p. 14), assert that coaches should have 'significant (thousands of hours) supervised experience' which highlighted the importance placed on supervision. Carroll (2006b) wrote about some of the tensions he saw in coaching psychology supervision and proposed that the solution to the tensions sat not in either/or but both/and, in both parties establishing connections and combinations.

Day et al (2008) identified other forms of support coaches use, including action learning, informal consultation with colleagues, talking to partners and colleagues and self-reflection. Not all the participants were in regular supervision so this point illustrates that coaches are accessing other forms of support that may be in addition to, or instead of supervision. This is supported by Hodge's work (2016, p. 98) where the participants highlighted that on its own, one to one supervision was not sufficient to support all their needs to deliver their work and that the additional activities 'addressed their overall physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.'

Offering a buyer viewpoint, in the article Watch with Auntie that described the BBC's coaching supervision scheme, Hilpern (2007) reported that supervision is mandatory for

the BBC's network of internal coaches. The consequence of not attending supervision is a cessation in being assigned coaching clients.

Brock (2015) identified four risks she associates with mandating supervision including a blurring of the lines on how different coaching will be viewed to other helping practices, e.g. psychotherapy, this could lead to regulation or the need to be licensed, an increase in expense for coaches to have supervision and an external control on the coaching sector. Although these risks are set in relation to the ICF's position on coach mentoring and coach supervision, these points apply to any coach, whether a member of a professional body or not.

Krapu (2019) wrote an opinion piece that supported many of the points made by Brock and drew particular attention to unintended consequences that may come about from applying psychotherapy supervision models to coaching supervision. He supported Brock's view on blurring the lines and the implications of doing so and emphasised the legal responsibilities this could create for coaching supervisors.

Based on his work around trust and safety in coaching supervision, de Haan (2017, p. 47) suggests that supervision should continue on a voluntary and 'light touch' basis. Hawkins (2008, p. 35) wrote that if supervision were to be made mandatory, it would be reduced to preserving and conforming with professional norms that may not serve the needs of the coach, supervisor, client or organisation. Instead, he argues that there is a need for 'supervision to be the 'learning lungs' that assist the professional body in its learning, development and cultural revolution.'

2.2.8 Summary

Overall, the literature shows that continuous professional development and learning are generally accepted as a main function of supervision. There is no argument against this but what is conspicuous by its absence in the literature is evidence that supervision is the best, or only, means to deliver this.

As the conversation on the definition and purpose of coaching does not have an agreed or universal position, the potential scope of coaching supervision is broad and deep and often begs more questions about coaching supervision than it answers.

The conversation on the benefits and risks of supervision tends to be focused on the benefits or risks to the individual and does not take the other stakeholders in supervision

into account. In a similar vein, roles within supervision tend to mostly focus on the role of the supervisor and there is little evidence on other roles pertinent to supervision, e.g. the organisation, the client, the supervisee.

It can be seen from the literature that more has been written and researched about clinical supervision than there has been on coaching supervision. That said, there are still many gaps in the clinical supervision literature with many requests for more research to be conducted. This is a worrying position when so much of coaching supervision is based on this related field.

As there is a lack of literature on coaching supervision, perhaps the work of Milton (2008, p. 77) might offer a helpful mindset to adopt on this subject to ensure that this gap can be viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat and that we can build meaningfully on what is already there. He explored the expectations of supervision for counselling psychologists and concluded that 'supervision certainly is not everything to everyone and we should feel happy to speak of this.' He suggests a 'curious mindset and an openness to discuss these things might go some way to protecting our supervisory effort and therefore protect us from supervision being nothing to no one.'

2.3 Key theories, concepts and models related to coaching supervision

2.3.1 Introduction to key theories and concepts

This section is intended to focus on the theories and models that inform and direct supervision work.

As described earlier, many of the theories used in coaching supervision have been brought over from the therapeutic and counselling world. This has resulted in coaching supervisors grounding their work in psychological theories including Gestalt, Psychodynamic, Transactional Analysis, Person Centred, Systemic, etc. These psychological theories have been the focus of years of research and subsequent publications in the context of the work they were intended for, i.e. psychological work, and not necessarily coaching supervision work.

Butwell (2006, p. 49) argued that as coaching is neither counselling nor psychotherapy, it should not be assumed that 'we can blithely transpose one set of standards across to another arena.' By way of illustration, Gillie (2011, cited in Passmore, 2011) asserts that while there is an interest in applying the principles of Gestalt, there is no literature on how Gestalt theory applies to coaching supervision. Pampallis-Paisley (2006, p. 10) goes

further to say, 'There is no coherent theory of learning which could be systematically applied to supervision.' There is, however, some agreement in the literature regarding the importance of learning theory to coaching supervision. As highlighted earlier, there is broad agreement that learning is a core function and purpose of coaching supervision. This requires the supervisor to facilitate their supervisee's learning and for the supervisee to ensure they learn from the experience. Carroll (2010) states that supervision relates to the quality of awareness and that reflection enables meaning making at different levels.

There is little agreement on the relevance of general learning theories in the context of coaching supervision, therefore, the following will focus on the two areas where there is agreement on relevance, namely, reflective practice and adult development.

2.3.1.1 Reflective practice

The literature shows that there are many supporters of the view that reflective practice is a key part of coaching supervision. Murdoch and Arnold (2013, p. 93) state that 'reflective learning sits at the heart of supervision.' In a study into the efficacy of coaching supervision (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009), the participants name the opportunity to reflect on their practice as a key influencing factor on the efficacy of their supervision. This is supported by Grant (2012) who identifies the reflective cycle as a major benefit of coaching supervision and de Haan and Regouin (2018, p. 19) who asserts that, 'Learning in supervision is based on reflecting.'

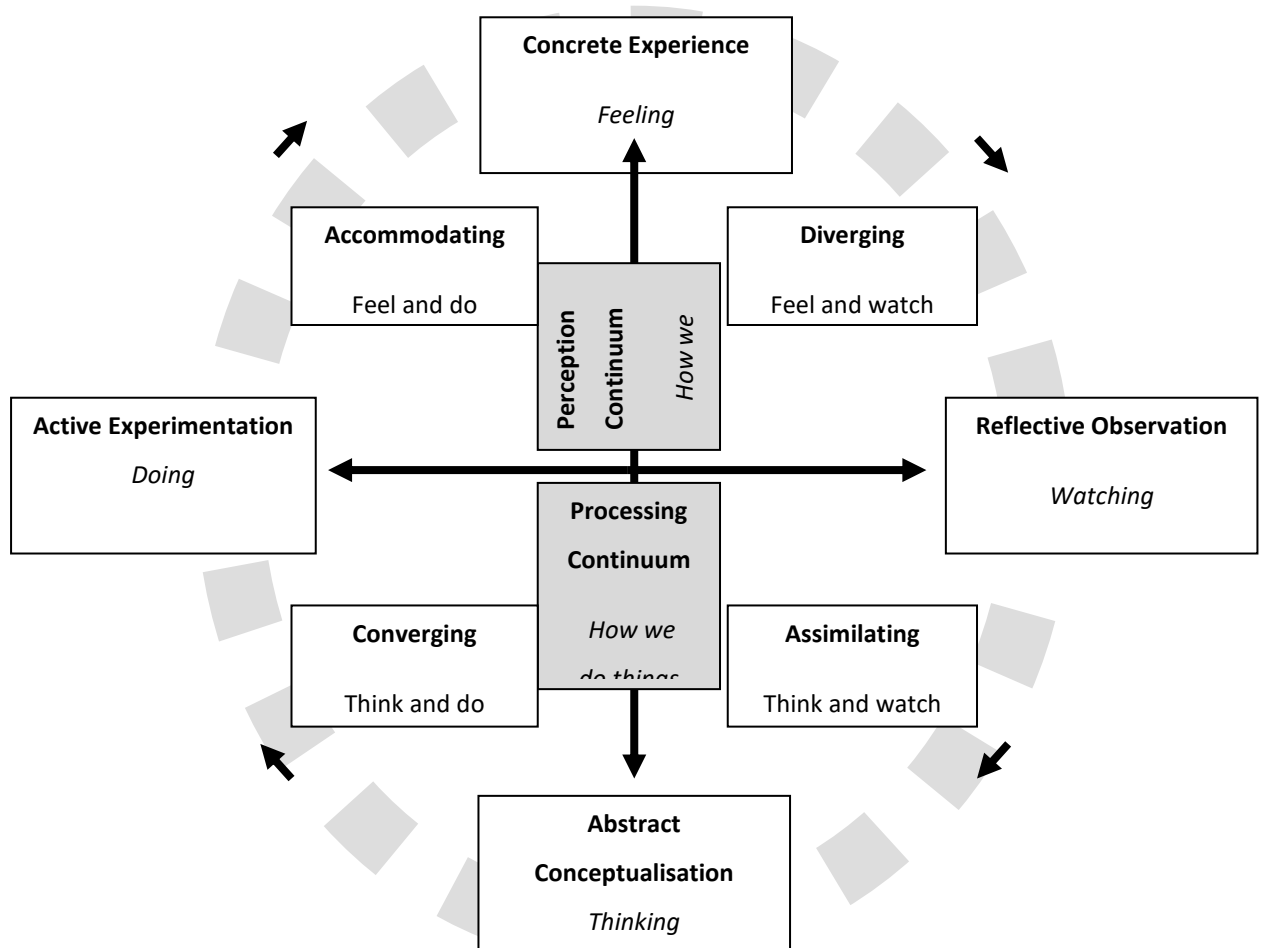
Carroll (2014, p. 26) highlights that supervision is about learning from experience whereby the supervisee learns to trust their experience as a rich source of learning. He contends that reflective practice has six stages and that these sit well in supervision as they acknowledge that reflection has stages and is not a one size fits all activity. He proposes that these stages allow the supervisee to make sense of their experience appropriately thus allowing them to take maximum learning from it. The six stages are:

1. Zero reflective – me stance, disconnection
2. Empathetic reflection – observer stance, empathic connection
3. Relational reflection - you and me = us stance, personal connection
4. Systemic reflection – you and me and others, contextual connection
5. Self-reflection – me (internalised) stance, incorporating connection
6. Transcendent reflection – other (universal) stance, universal connection

Many agree that Kolb (1984) made a significant contribution to the field of learning through his description of the Learning Cycle which he defined as, ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.’

The premise of this cycle is that people have different starting points in how they prefer to learn but for learning to happen, people must go through each of these stages, including reflective observation. One could argue that it is critical for a supervisor to know and apply this if they are to facilitate the learning of their supervisee.

Figure 2-2 Kolb's Learning Cycle



Another significant contributor to learning theory was Schon (1983) who was the author of the terms, ‘reflection in action’ and ‘reflection on action’. These types of reflection are also useful in supervision as they invite the supervisee to focus on different things. Reflecting in action refers to noticing what is happening during the experience and reflecting on action is noticing what happened after the experience.

Hullinger et al (2020) present an integrated model for learning and they claim that if coaches incorporate reflection, awareness and self-regulation, they will be able to

maintain and develop their skills further. They also claim that because these are skills, a coach can take action to acquire them. Coaching supervision is cited as one of the strategies to develop awareness and they assert the importance of getting external feedback through working with a supervisor, a mentor or a colleague. It is interesting to note that supervision is mentioned as one of many ways for coaches to develop reflection, awareness and self-regulation skills but not the only way.

2.3.1.2 Adult learning

As supervision clients are adults, it seems logical to reflect on adult learning theory in the context of coaching supervision. Grant (2005) emphasises that it is critical that coaches have knowledge of adult learning and development as most coaching clients are adults. One could logically assert that this must also be true for coaching supervisors. In contrast, Moyes (2009, p. 169), states that for coaches to reach learning breakthroughs, it might be useful for their supervisor to have a knowledge of adult learning/development models. She goes on to cite Hawkins' address to the CIPD 2007 conference where he stated that fewer than 40% of coaches saw knowledge of adult learning and development as an important pre-requisite for supervisors.

The literature offers several explorations into the topics of adult learning and adult development. Cox (2006) raised the issue that adult learning theories were critically important for coaching. She commented on the lack of academic papers on this topic and offered an approach to coaching that incorporated eight adult learning theories. Her paper focused on coaching but reinforces the point that if learning theories are critical to coaching, surely, they must also be critical to coaching supervision.

Human development is often differentiated as lateral and vertical development with the former tending to happen through more traditional forms of learning such as early schooling, training we received at work and self-directed learning. The latter is more rare and harder to secure as vertical learning is concerned with how we see the world, our worldview and any changes to this. Cooke-Greuter (2004) asserts that it is this type of learning that generates the most growth in human adults. She goes on to state that, 'The level of development of the managers, consultants and coaches constrains what they can see and understand and how effective they are in their efforts to help others develop and mature.' It would naturally follow that this would also be important for supervisors and makes a provocative challenge about whether a coach should only be supervised by someone who is at a higher developmental level than them. This point is echoed by Laske

(2007) who goes on to assert that if a client is coached by a coach of a lower developmental level, they could not only be ineffective in their work but could also cause harm.

Adult development and andragogy are not the focus of this project, however, there are some specific studies that relate these topics to supervision. One of these studies was conducted by Page and Wosket (2013). They present a table detailing the developmental stages of a counsellor and what the required supervision interventions and behaviours are for each stage. This offers an interesting supervisory alternative for experienced counsellors as it highlights that the needs of experienced counsellors are different from novice counsellors. It is worth noting that in the highest level, i.e. the integrated level, supervision is replaced with an alternative set up whereby there is mutual consent between two equal parties as to what the contract is. Although this framework relates to a counsellor and not a coach, it supports the view that supervision does change relative to the experience of the supervisee. In a similar vein, Murdoch and Arnold (2013), draw out a theme across several models of reflection that identify levels of reflection and how they relate to the developmental levels of both the coach and the supervisor. They argue that 'the depth or levels of learning appear to be related to the nature and degree of change that becomes possible.' Another view on this topic comes from Clutterbuck and Megginson (2011) who discuss the notion of coach maturity. They propose four levels of coach development: models-based, process-based, philosophy or discipline-based and systems eclectic. They emphasise that coach maturity does not dictate coach competence but suggest the two are highly related. In describing their experiences of assessing experienced coaches, they comment that this group were deep reflectors and used supervision differently than novice coaches in that they use supervision as a platform for challenge, they will often have different supervisors for different subjects and they integrate their use of formal supervision with self-supervision.

As this section has highlighted, reflective practice and adult learning are key features in the practice of supervision. The following section focuses on models of supervision that all encompass these two topics.

2.3.2 Introduction to supervision models

In the last decade, there has been an explosion of new models of coaching supervision being offered to the sector as means of conducting coaching supervision in groups or on a one to one basis. (Hawkins and Shohet, 2006; Carroll, 2014; Passmore, 2011; Turner and Palmer, 2018; Bachkirova et al, 2011). Lucas (2020) recently edited a book that offered 101 coaching supervision techniques, approaches, enquiries and experiments highlighting the proliferation of coaching supervision models, tools and techniques that one can choose to work with.

Van Beekun (2007, p. 141-147), asserts that supervision is 'a metamodality activity' and because of this, 'modalities are connected with different frames of reference' that means that supervision is also metatheoretical. He goes on to state that different types of supervision question will inform the supervision approach one would deploy, e.g. 'contractual', 'open space', 'role analysis' and 'relational'. This is useful both in terms of determining what to use and whether the supervisor is appropriately skilled to deliver it. He also asserts the importance of a supervisor having a choice of models to use to avoid the risk of forcing the client's world to fit into the supervisor's model of choice.

A question that appears to be largely overlooked in the literature is, how a coach knows what supervision model is most appropriate for them. Pampallis Paisley (2006) asked a similar question in her thesis. She questioned whether the current supervision models were sufficient for the supervision requirements of coaching work and found that this was not a straightforward yes or no answer. Gray and Jackson (2011) set out to identify which supervision models are appropriate for a coach based on the historical context of psychotherapeutic and counselling models of supervision. He identified developmental models, social role models and a discrimination model. In the latter, he highlighted that the supervisor is required to tailor their role to meet the needs of the supervisee. In addition, he asserted that novice coaches have a stronger need for the teaching role from the supervisor and more experienced coaches require more of the consultant role, thereby illustrating that coaches' supervision needs vary according to their experience.

This section of the literature review examines the models used in supervision - which sit in a variety of different psychological theories - to determine whether: there is clarity on what work they have been designed to supervise, they are intended to supervise the same work and any differences exist based on the experience base of the coach being

supervised. Some of the more commonly cited models have been selected to explore the type of work they are designed to supervise.

The 7 eyed model of supervision

The 7 eyed model of supervision along with the CLEAR process (Hawkins and Smith, 2006) is one of the most cited supervision models and through the Bath Consultancy Group, this model has been taught to hundreds of supervisors – including me. As previously stated, Hawkins originally worked in the field of social work and took the work of Kadushin (1976) and Proctor (1997) as a platform upon which he built the 7 eyed model.

The model focuses on 7 modes that represent the different aspects that can be covered in supervision. Overall, the model is intended to explore the coaching work being delivered by the supervision client. The authors stress the importance of a contracting stage prior to the deployment of the model to ensure there is clarity on what aspect of the coaching work the supervision client specifically wants to be supervised. In evaluating the model, Hawkins and Schwenk (2006) state that the model is ‘more about a *way* of looking than *what* to understand about the work’.

In summary, this model focuses on supervising work with a specific coaching client. The emphasis on contracting potentially give space for the supervisor and supervision client to agree the boundaries of the work to be supervised but does not explicitly state this. Additionally, the experience of the coach or the supervisor is not included as a material consideration for this model.

Full spectrum supervision model

The full spectrum model of supervision (Murdoch and Arnold, 2013) is an holistic and integrative model that is focused on the practice of supervision.

The sub-title of this book is, ‘Who you are, is how you supervise’ and the book stays true to that sentiment by generously sharing numerous case studies, insights, methods, tips, techniques and approaches.

There are 14 examples of what changes to their work a coach may leave the supervision session with, e.g. clear contracting, establishing good boundaries, enhancing reflectivity, attending to the coach’s personal development and there are some very specific case examples given in relation to ethical issues coaches could bring to the supervisor to work

on. The supervisory relationship is placed at the centre of the supervisory work and the other elements lead into this to enable a learning relationship.

The model is rich and deep and includes many different topics, e.g. mindfulness, presence and psychodynamics. These approaches could all have a place in supervision and one must wonder if there is any coaching work that this model could not conceivably supervise. This may seem appealing in principle. However, it seems an impossible task for one person to acquire the breadth of knowledge, skill and practice a supervisor would need in order to completely meet this brief. It may be that supervisors can pick and choose what they wish to take from the model but without clarity on what coaching work fits horizontally or vertically, applying this model appropriately could be a challenge.

There is also mention of two strands of supervision that would influence the approach the supervisor may take with their client. First, supervision for coaches in training, where the focus of the supervision is likely to be on skills development and secondly, working with experienced coaches where the ultimate aim of the supervision is to keep the coach 'fit for purpose'.

Three worlds/four territories model of supervision

Munro-Turner developed this model based on a coaching model called the Renewal Model (Newell and Munro Turner, 2008) and the well-documented 7 eyed coaching supervision model (Hawkins and Smith, 2006). The Renewal Model was based on the notion that leaders need to navigate four distinct territories if they are to evolve themselves and their organisations, and that the role of the coach is therefore to support them to do this well. This model does not provide evidence that this notion of evolution within leadership development could transfer to fit easily within many of the definitions of supervision, in particular, the learning/CPD aspect.

It is worth noting that the original Renewal Model does not explicitly exclude any aspect of leadership work to be considered for coaching. In fact, it includes all aspects of leadership work. By contrast, in transferring the basis of this model to supervision work, the author does focus on what work can/should be brought to supervision, namely, the coaching session being undertaken by the supervision client with their coaching client. By focusing on a coaching session and applying the model, the supervisor can explore eight different perspectives with the supervision client to enable them to identify new options in their coaching.

The Renewal Model article (Newell and Munro Turner, 2008) was part 1 of a 2-part feature in which a second aspect of its application in coaching was made. In part 2 of the article, the authors highlighted the importance of using different coaching interventions for coaching leaders in relation to developmental stages but this connection with adult development stages was not transferred to the supervision model.

In summary, this model focuses on supervising a specific coaching session but does not define how wide or narrow a focus this covers and it does not make any explicit differentiation between supervising a novice or an experienced coach.

Seven conversations in supervision (Clutterbuck, 2011)

The seven conversations model of supervision (Clutterbuck, 2011) was originally developed as a way of helping a coach deconstruct the coaching conversation to identify where it was least and most effective. The focus of the model is on the conversation between coach and client and identifies seven separate conversations that make up the overall coaching conversation.

The model provides a clear purpose and structure that helps the coach explore the conversations that happen for coach and client before, during and after the actual coaching session. It is interesting to note that the tone of this approach is focused on the negative, i.e. what was missing, what was avoided, what was held back rather than including a more rounded exploration of what was working and going well. This focus and approach supports the commonly held view that supervision is 'remedial' and problem focused and can thus close off potentially rich sources equally worthy of exploration.

The work to be brought to supervision under this model is clear, i.e. the seven conversations as identified by the author so the model has a clarity and focus to it. By the author's own admission, there is a lack of empirical data and practice experience to review how this supervisory model works. In addition, it does not explicitly enable ethical issues to be covered, nor some of the more traditional tasks associated with supervision. That said, there is a clarity this model offers in terms of what it is setting out to do and how supervisor and coach need to work with it.

Three pillars model

This model (Hodge, 2016, p. 100) was borne out of Doctoral research into the value of coaching supervision as a developmental process. The model is described as ‘the foundation stones and conditions to contain the generative dialogue that takes place to enable new knowledge, insights, self-awareness and learning to emerge.’ This model highlights the vital conditions that are required to underpin supervision work.

The model consists of three pillars: adult learning, supervision relationship and reflective practice. It proposes that ensuring these are appropriately attended to will effectively contain a generative dialogue. The model does acknowledge that the dialogue requires models of supervision to work through the dialogue and that this is not in itself a way to supervise but a framework of what needs attention in the supervisory process.

In terms of a purpose for the supervision dialogue – Hodge’s model quotes the purposes derived from the work of Proctor (1997) and she quotes the tasks derived from the work of Carroll (1996) and Hawkins and Smith (1996) that as aforementioned, were borrowed from the therapeutic world and were not originally developed with business coaching in mind.

The focus of Hodge’s research was on supervision as a developmental process. It was not an inquiry into the work brought to supervision. Instead, it considered what further benefit the coach could glean from the supervision process to enhance their development. In the original research, participants were all experienced coaches in business but the different/common needs of this group were not expanded upon in her original research. Rather, in a subsequent paper she co-authored (Hodge et al 2014) it was reported that the frequency and regularity of supervision amongst experienced coaches varied and that this was attributed to the development of their ‘internal supervisor’ and agility with reflective learning practices. This point supports the view that experienced coaches have different supervision needs to novice coaches and this is what my research is seeking to understand.

Action Learning Supervision

Action learning as an approach was developed by Revans, a Cambridge scientist, in the 1930s. He had observed that his colleagues enhanced their learning when they congregated in small groups, shared problems and shared views and asked each other

questions – and that this was the case even if they were from different disciplines. This observation forms the backdrop for Action Learning Supervision (ALS) which Childs et al (cited in Passmore, 2011) deployed as a low-cost option for novice coaches to form a community of practice. However, this model is not aimed solely at novice coaches and Childs acknowledges that it is a model to be practised alongside other supervision models. This observation indicates that the authors recognise that the needs of experienced coaches are different from those of novice coaches and that they may therefore benefit from a different form of supervision.

A key feature of this model is that group participants are invited to sign up to the model's set of principles before the work begins. The first of these principles is that participants must bring a problem, question or issue to be explored with the group. This principle does guide participants on what work they should bring to supervision to some extent but the parameters of problems, questions or issues lack clarity and boundaries to ensure the topics are appropriate and that inappropriate topics are selected out.

This raises interesting points about how such a potentially wide range of topics can be managed within the group and the role of the supervisor. ALS as a model does not require the supervisor to have superior knowledge or experience to the group members; rather all members are equally empowered to make their contribution through the ALS process with the supervisor acting as facilitator. This model offers an interesting alternative to the more traditional supervision models that require the supervisor to hold more knowledge, experience and/or skill than the people they supervise. It affords a space for exploration and provocation rather than providing a solution or getting to an answer. This clearly has value. But this absence of expertise in the room illustrates a potential gap in quality assurance and oversight and may explain why it is recommended that this model sits alongside other models rather than be an alternative to them.

The Ring Model

De Haan (2012) introduces his views on supervision being relational and though he is clear that supervision is primarily a developmental process, he also maintains that it has a strong quality assurance purpose as well. He builds on the work of Kadushin (1976), Proctor (1988) and Hawkins and Smith (2006) to create his own 'services' of supervision. These three services shed some light on the nature of the work covered in each, i.e. learning, ethical and professional boundaries and self-imposed boundaries.

The model aims to map the many relationships that exist in the supervision case and covers what the client, the other party (supervisee) may bring to the relationship and also examines what is going on between these relationships.

Of note is that this model is considered applicable to both coaches and consultants. The principles of this model may apply across both groups but the work that each does and the way it is contracted, delivered and measured, is likely to be very different. De Haan suggests that coaches should be trained and accredited yet this same basic principle is not the norm for consultants. There is no specific work this model is designed to supervise, rather it is said to be relevant to all and any work in which the coach is engaged.

2.3.3 Summary

As can be seen from the literature, reflective practice and adult learning are integral parts of coaching supervision and of many of the supervision models being applied today.

What was not apparent in the review is how a coaching supervisor learns reflection. In the words of Carroll (2010, p. 25), 'if reflection is so important for us, then why isn't it taught more?'

What is clear is that there are many models a supervisor can choose to work with and get trained in. But the literature does not explain how a supervisor is supposed to make that choice.

Butwell (2006, p. 47), noted that there was 'no consensus in the literature on an appropriate model for counselling/therapy supervision.' This would also appear to be the case for coaching supervision as the literature does not typically explain which models should or should not be used to the best effect in coaching supervision.

2.4 Overview of coaching supervision according to the Professional Bodies

The literature review would not be complete without exploring what the professional coaching and supervision bodies say on the topic of coaching supervision.

Over the last decade, there has been a growth in the number of bodies associated with coaching and supervision. Most professional bodies have tended to focus their members on skills competence to acquire a level of accreditation and for many, supervision forms a key part of this process. Table 2.2 below highlights the key differences in the professional bodies' views on the key issues related to this research.

Table 2-2 Supervision comparison of Professional Bodies

BODY* ₁	EMCC	ICF	WABC	AC	AOCS	BPS SG	BACP	APECS	IAPCM	IAC
Is there a clear definition of supervision?	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Is there a purpose for the supervision beyond CPD?	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Is there mention of what coaching work is to be supervised?	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Is supervision a requirement for membership of the body?	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Is supervision linked to accreditation ?	✓	✓ * ₂	✗	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Are there clear roles in supervision?	✓ Supervisor only	✗	✗	✓	✓ Supervisor only	✓	✓	✓ Supervisor only	✗	✗
Are there qualifications required to be a supervisor?	✓	✓ Not fixed	✗	✓	✓	✓ Not fixed	✓ Not fixed	✓	✗	✗
Are there benefits of supervision?	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Are there risks of supervision?	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

N/A = These bodies do not accredit coaches. The accreditation route for people who want to be a member of the BPS is related to training and chartered status as a psychologist and not a coach.

Appendix 4 offers a more detailed version of this analysis.

*₁ Abbreviated bodies include:

- European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)
- International Coach Federation (ICF)
- Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)
- Association for Coaching (AC)
- Association of Coaches and Supervisors (AOCS)

- British Psychological Society Special Group on Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP)
- British Association for Counselling and Psychology (BACP)
- Association of Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS)
- International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPCM)
- International Association of Coaches (IAC)

*2 Supervision is not linked to initial accreditation but is linked to ongoing accreditation as an option to accrue credits for Continuing Coach Education

2.4.1 Definition of supervision

As seen in Table 2-2, most coaching bodies list coaching supervision, in one form or another, as a requirement to be a member of their professional body – by implication, this means they hold the view that a professional coach should be having supervision.

Seven of the professional bodies have a clear definition of coaching supervision. There are some clear similarities but there are equally clear differences in how the professional bodies choose to position supervision.

The focus of the definition

The EMCC, AC, AOCS and APEC state that coaching supervision has the coaching work as the focus of the coaching supervision. They each list different headings of what this work could be, e.g. working through ethical dilemmas or developing competence but there is a lack of specificity in how these are listed. Interestingly, AOCS states what coaching supervision is **not**, i.e. a policing function. Similarly, the BPS SG mentions what coaching supervision is **not**, i.e. personal therapy or a substitute for line management or training. However, focussing on what supervision is not, does not necessarily lead to clarity on what it is.

The ICF and BACP are very clear that supervision is directly linked to accreditation and/or membership of the group. This straight-line link to accreditation gives clarity not only to the definition but also to the purpose, process and benefit. This stance may lack sophistication and complexity but the unashamed simplicity of what supervision is and what purpose it is serving to these professional bodies is clear and unambiguous – it serves the perpetuating needs of the professional body to have a role to play by requiring action on behalf of their membership if they wish to remain a member.

The BPS SGCP have deployed the definition of coaching supervision suggested by Bachkirova, Stevens and Willis (2005). They also make a distinction between coaching supervision and coaching psychology supervision and are clear that the latter's focus is on the psychological aspect in terms of application, theory and methods.

The WABC mentions supervision as a form of continuous professional development in their Professional Standards for Business Coaches document but give this no more or less significance than other forms of continuous professional development. Similarly, the IAPCM only mentions supervision as an example of continuous professional development activity in the Professional Standards section of their website in the continuous professional development tab. The IAC makes no mention of supervision anywhere on their website. Continuous professional development is a requirement to be a member but there is nothing specifically mentioned about supervision.

It is also interesting to note that the experience of the coach is only linked to coaching competencies (for those professional bodies who have them) and does not mention the type of work an experienced coach would be doing or the sorts of topics they would be working on.

The supervision process

Of those professional bodies that mention coaching supervision, all state that support and learning form a key part of it. There are several delivery mechanisms mentioned including facilitated feedback, appreciative dialogue or specialised forms of mentoring; all of which may offer some clarity in defining supervision. It is worth noting that the two bodies who link supervision to accreditation and/or membership are more directive in the use of language about their process. It is clear that for these two bodies, the representative delivering feedback to the supervisee is the person in control of the process.

To what end?

All the professional bodies that have a definition of supervision state that coaching supervision is for the benefit of the coach and most say it is also for the benefit of the client. The benefit to the organisation and the benefit to the professional associations are also stated but there is no further clarity on what the benefit is or even expected to be.

In section 2.4.5, the benefits of supervision, as defined by the professional bodies, is explored in more detail but it is worth noting here that in defining coaching supervision, there are gaps in the professional body definitions of what the benefits of supervision can or should be.

2.4.2 Purpose of supervision

In addition to reviewing the definition of coaching supervision, some bodies also mention the purpose of the supervision separately.

All those that have supervision as a requirement mention learning and/or development as a key purpose. The EMCC and AC refer to the functions of supervision. The former applies the functions of supervision as defined by Hawkins and Smith (2006) of developmental, resourcing and qualitative and the latter uses alternative titles for these functions, i.e. support, development and professional assurance. These are useful groupings for one to reflect on when considering what one might want or expect contextually of coaching supervision.

AOCS holds a different perspective that centres on the supervisor and the need for them to be a more experienced coach than the supervisee. The description of the purpose of supervision emphasises the importance on the level of experience of the supervisor and what they bring to help the supervisee suggesting that AOCS considers coaching supervision to have a mentoring flavour to it.

The BPS SGCP are clear that the purpose of supervision is to demonstrate best practice in personal and professional development and also focus on demonstrating the quality of the services a supervisor provides. They offer some examples that may require attention in supervision. This is an interesting list of the sorts of things a supervisor could expect to discuss in supervision but would be more useful if it listed the potential risks or benefits of working on these so that supervisees had more clarity on the relevant importance or priority of these topics.

It is also interesting to note that the BPS SGCP do not have coaching supervision as a mandatory requirement, nor do they hold a standard supervision process or framework they require their members to adhere to. Instead, they expect coaching psychologists to secure supervision that will meet their practice needs.

As highlighted previously (Mellon and Murdoch-Eaton, 2015; Toll, 2004), supervision has assessment as part of its purpose in the medical, psychological and teaching sectors. Most of the coaching professional bodies link assessment to coach training in the first instance and then subsequently, to their accreditation process. Assessment of training is not a typical coaching supervisor activity but perhaps it could be. Assessment for accreditation takes many forms but few of the professional bodies require any assessment from the coach's supervisor.

APECS requires its members' supervisor to submit an annual report to say that their supervisee is working ethically and to an acceptable standard. Assessment is not mentioned here but clearly there is an assessment of some description required for a coaching supervisor to be able to comply with this request.

Townsend's chapter on ethics (2011) highlights that ethical issues are an important topic for many of the professional bodies and she suggests that the common themes identified across the professional bodies are useful examples of what a coach could bring to supervision.

A global study sponsored by AOCS and conducted by McAnally et al (2020) received 4,437 responses from 1,058 coaches on the types of challenges they took to supervision. These included client related issues/challenges/situations, personal related issues/challenges/situations, questions about skills and competencies as a coach, developing a practice, emotional reactions in or about coaching work, managing wellbeing as a coach, ethical concerns, habitual patterns to change in coaching style and appreciation of what one does well as a coach. Client related issues were taken 77% of the time and personal related issues 60% of the time. The data does not give any specificity on what these client or personal related issues are and/or the boundaries. The coaches were asked what challenges they took to supervision. As it stands, this question leads them to focus only on topics they find challenging. It may be that coaches took more positively focused topics to supervision too such as opportunities or successes but the phrasing of the question would not necessarily elicit that type of response. However, 'an appreciation of what I do well' was cited as being a topic taken to supervision 28% of the time. Although this is a large respondent pool, the data is not categorised by experience or type of coach so similarities or differences cannot be identified between different coach groups.

2.4.3 Roles in supervision

It would seem reasonable that if there were a definition of coaching supervision and a clear purpose for that supervision, roles within the supervision relationship would be easily defined.

Six of the professional bodies reviewed mention supervision roles. Of note is that four of the bodies only refer to the role of the supervisor but do not mention the role of the supervisee. The supervisory role generally involves their adhering to a competency framework, conforming to a code of ethics and/or applying a list of duties and responsibilities.

The BACP is the only body to mention the role of supervisees and states that they have a responsibility to record the details and impact of their supervision so they have information to present should they be selected for an audit.

The remaining professional bodies describe a more shared responsibility in the roles in supervision to varying degrees.

Some of the bodies also acknowledge that there are other relevant stakeholders who may have a role to play, particularly in the set-up of the supervision but there is no clear process or best practice put forward as a way of doing this.

The literature tells us that currently, it is the role of the supervisor to determine how they behave and how they perform their part in the coaching supervision relationship that the professional bodies focus on.

2.4.4 Qualifications of supervisors

Having reviewed the roles within coaching supervision and the level of attention given to the role of the supervisor, it would seem logical that the professional bodies place an equal emphasis on what qualifications are required to perform this role.

One of the unresolved questions is, whether one has to have been a coach, and a good one at that, to be an effective coaching supervisor (Moyes, 2009; de Haan, 2012). For the professional bodies reviewed, the same interesting question is also in debate.

The EMCC, AC and AOCS all require coaching supervisors to be trained and/or accredited coaches before they can become an accredited supervisor. To become an accredited supervisor, a coach must also have completed accredited supervisor training, so for these bodies, qualification is clearly important.

APECS require that those applying for supervision accreditation meet the criteria set out in their guidelines. They hold a slightly different view on previous experience. Rather than stipulating that applicants must have been a professional coach; they require them to have 'Significant (i.e. a minimum of five years) executive business experience personally (e.g. line management and / or consultancy) in addition to experience as a Supervisor'. This stance is very different from that of the other professional bodies and potentially takes the role and impact of supervision in a different direction.

The ICF does not stipulate particular qualifications for supervisors but they do for their coach mentors – this is the role solely related to coach accreditation. There is a requirement to be Master Coach Certificated and be an 'MCC of good standing'. As the ICF is a 'broad church', in that it acts as a professional body to a broad range of coaches, it is unclear how a coach looking for a coach mentor is appropriately matched or whether the body holds that the principles of coach mentoring transcend the focus of your coaching, the approach to your coaching and the purpose of your coaching.

The BACP is not a pure coaching professional body. Their focus is on counsellors and psychologists so their views on supervision primarily relate to the supervision of those groups rather coaches. That said, there is a link to the question of whether one has to have been a good coach to be an effective supervisor. The BACP is clear that to be a supervisor, one must first be experienced in counselling or psychotherapy. They also say that a supervisor would ideally be trained and qualified in supervision but do not stipulate what that entails.

The BPS SGCP puts the onus for 'qualification' on the coaching psychologist and assert that it is their responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently competent to do the work they are taking on and that they monitor this to ensure they are working within their competence levels.

2.4.5 Benefits of supervision

One would reasonably assume that where a professional body defines what supervision is, provides clarity on its purpose of it and on the roles within the supervision relationship, requires coaching supervisors to be trained and accredited and mandates that coaches must be in supervision, that it would also make the benefits of supervision abundantly clear. That would not however appear to be the case from a review of the various websites, guides and frameworks from the professional bodies. There is a level of

commonality across the professional bodies about what some of the features of supervision are, i.e. learning or development of the coach, a time for reflection, to help benchmark one's practice, etc. and in some instances, benefits are mentioned. However, none of the professional bodies clearly sets out what benefits a coach can categorically expect from being supervised. So, why do so many of the professional bodies mandate that a coach must be in supervision?

One can appreciate that a coach participating in coaching supervision holds at least 50% of the responsibility to gain some benefit, otherwise, why would they be taking part in it? What is not clear, or explained by any of the professional bodies, is what these benefits are. Also conspicuous by its absence is detail on how the client or organisation will benefit from its coaches being supervised. If professional bodies are to mandate supervision for coaches, it is surely incumbent on them to provide the data to support that requirement and detail what the benefits are for all parties concerned. If this data does not exist, then the professional bodies are demanding coaches meet an unsubstantiated standard.

The global study sponsored by AOCS (McAnally et al, 2020, p. 30), asked participants about 'the benefits of working with a Coach Supervisor' and were given a series of statements to select from. 50% of the respondents repeatedly selected six of the statements. The most frequently selected responses were:

1. Working through a client challenge (74%)
2. Space for me to gain greater clarity (73%)
3. Developing my coaching skills (65%)
4. I learn from my supervisor's experience (65%)
5. Developed confidence in my coaching (52%)
6. Working through a personal challenge (51%)

A total of 982 coaches responded to this question but the data is not broken down into type of coach or experience of coach. That said, the selection of the top two statements were rated high so this would most likely have included coaches with experience.

2.4.6 Risks of supervision

As with any service provision, one might expect that there are things that could go wrong and expose a coach to some form of risk. It would also seem reasonable that a professional body might highlight what these risks could be and suggest ways to avoid,

mitigate or complain should they occur. Other than the BPS SGCP, none of the professional bodies explicitly mentions risks of coaching supervision. It is unclear why this topic is ignored in the works of the professional bodies. For the professional bodies who assert coaching supervision as a requirement, one could say they had a duty of care to ensure their membership were fully informed about the benefits and risks of engaging in an activity they demand as a criterion for membership.

Only the BPS SGCP acknowledges that supervision has a part to play in ensuring the coach does not deliberately or otherwise influence the coaching process adversely. It might have been useful to have had this explored further so the potential risks of this are more clearly articulated and better understood. That said, there is an acknowledgement in the Practice Guidelines that things may go wrong but these are not specific to coaching supervision.

Perhaps an implicit risk sits with the issue of ethics. Virtually all the professional bodies have their own code or subscribe to a shared code of professional ethics. It may seem obvious that coaches need to be aware of ethical issues and blind spots to ensure they work professionally and provide an ethical service to their clients, so one can see that ethical issues would be a suitable topic for supervision. The Henley Business School and the Association of Coaching's Manifesto for Supervision (Hawkins et al, 2019) attempts to make the case for ethics to be one of the key elements that should sit at the centre of supervision – a position also supported by some of the other professional bodies. However, there is an unchecked assumption in this position namely, that supervision is the best place to work on ethical dilemmas. Is it? And if so, where is the evidence to back up that assumption. In thinking about this question, many more quickly follow. They include: What qualifications and training does a supervisor need to be able to do this work? What approach or model of supervision will effect the best result? And what are the benefits and risks of any given topic being supervised well or badly?

Overall, only the BPS SGCP mention any risks associated with supervision illustrating a potential gap in the professional bodies' communication on supervision.

2.4.7 Mandatory versus voluntary supervision

As discussed in section 2.2.7, supervision as a mandatory or voluntary activity is one of the unresolved debates in the coaching and coaching supervision literature. This issue is not so much unresolved but rather incongruent across the professional bodies.

Of the ten professional bodies reviewed, six stipulate coaching supervision as a requirement to be a member of their organisation and all mention in some form that the purpose of coaching supervision is to help a coach learn and develop. It seems somewhat confusing then that all the professional bodies have singled out supervision as one of the key media for learning and development yet not all have made being in supervision a mandatory requirement to join, or continue to be a member of, their body.

In Salter's (2008) research about current thinking on the role of supervision, she identified several themes that built the case against enforced ongoing coaching supervision. One of her conclusions encouraged professional bodies to decide if they are acting for their own membership only or if they want to play a part in the broader agenda for the whole coaching and supervision sector. This identified lack of decisiveness is evident in the review of the professional bodies' written positions on supervision.

In the AOCS report (McAnally et al 2020, p. 39), participants were asked to select a series of statements that represented their views in relation to supervision – they were not restricted in how many statements they could select. Virtually all participants reported that they accessed other forms of support either in addition to or instead of coaching supervision. This indicates that across a broad range of experiences, coaches seek out other professional support beyond supervision. Whilst this research study did not expand on the reasons for this, it is clear from the results that coaching supervision alone is not considered a panacea for supporting coaches.

2.4.8 Summary

Hodge (2014) makes the point that many of the professional bodies have provided benchmark levels for coaches to be assessed against for both training and accreditation. These levels enable buyers to understand what skills and competencies they can expect from different accreditations and training that would provide objective, data-based criteria on which to select a coach. Supervision features for many of the professional bodies as a requirement for accreditation, see the summary of a sample of the professional bodies in Table 2-2. So, it is unclear why supervision is often taken as a separate activity to accreditation level.

2.5 Summary of literature

There is much written in both the academic and grey literature that aims to define what coaching supervision is and how it should be done through the application of various

models, frameworks, tools and techniques. Whilst this may give insight into what coaching work is performed by the coach, it does not identify if these aspects are what an experienced business coach takes to supervision. It does identify that, as a relatively young service offering, there is vast breadth and depth of approaches, training, standards, underpinning theories and techniques as well as a broad population of people with different backgrounds, education experience and competence working in the field. With such an abundance of perspectives, one can see that codifying the supervision of coaching is a complex matter.

The literature review identifies that coaching supervision practice has often been 'borrowed' (Moyes, 2009) from the therapeutic profession and that the coaching and supervision community believe there is a need for more research and evidence in the coaching context to specify its unique requirements and hence enhance efficacy and credibility of coaching supervision practice.

There have been several studies into coaching supervision that have noted the lack of evidence on coaching supervision and in particular, evidence on the impact supervision has on coaching practice (Bachkirova et al, 2011; Moyes, 2009; Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009; Tkach and DiGirolamo, 2017). The literature demonstrates that the professional coaching and supervision bodies have given some clarity on the topic of coaching supervision. Many have declared a definition of what they consider coaching supervision to be and have identified a purpose that the coaching supervision is meant to serve. As the literature illustrates, these definitions and purposes have no empirical evidence to support them and one could argue that they are only practitioner assumptions based on evidence borrowed from the therapeutic and social work literature.

Subsequent work that has been done on identifying what roles exist in a coaching supervision relationship and what qualifications a coaching supervisor should hold are admirable but lacking in evidence to support the claims.

There has also been a lot of work by the professional bodies to establish coaching competencies and supervision competencies. However, conspicuous by its absence is the evidence of the benefits and risks of coaching supervision to support the reasons for a professional body to mandate coaching supervision.

For most professional bodies, coaching supervision has also been linked to coaching accreditation and for many, it is mandatory for any coach wishing to gain the body's

accreditation. In addition, some professional bodies require supervisors to be accredited. Whilst one can argue the case for accreditation as a badge of credibility, the literature to date does not offer evidence to support the theory that coaching supervision is a necessary component of being a good coach.

Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) highlight that a significant theme from their research was how little understanding or expectations coaches had of supervision. Based on the lack of clarity in the literature and the often-conflicting views of the professional bodies, a clear answer to this dilemma is not easy to discern.

In a BPS Occasional Paper, Milton (2008) muses on the expectations held in psychological supervision including four broad assumptions that are commonly held about what supervision offers. He makes a strong argument that it is nigh on impossible for supervision to be all things to all people and that without paying attention to an increasing need for clarity, there is a risk of supervision failing on all fronts.

Carroll (2006a) asserts that executive coaching supervision is different to supervision in other fields and that a significant stakeholder that cannot be ignored is the sponsoring organisation. Towler (2008) referred to organisations as the 'invisible client' in organisational supervision. One can see that there are more than the supervisor and supervision client involved in any coaching supervision intervention and these others demand attention.

Arney (2007) was asked what she believed tipped coaches into supervision. She acknowledged that this was not included in the CIPD research she commissioned but suggested 'a sense of professional integrity' and recognition that buyers are starting to ask about supervision.' This opinion reflects a push and a pull for coaches when considering supervision as a form of support.

The notion of 'borrowed clothes' is a term that is often used to describe this position and my contribution to this conversation is: not only are the clothes borrowed, but they are also invisible and untailored - coaching supervision is the current embodiment of 'the emperor's new clothes.'

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will justify and discuss the methodological choice for my research; the epistemology and theoretical perspective; the data collection methods and the selection of participants for both data gathering stages, including a justification for those I did not select; and the approach to data analysis. Following this, I will explore the ethical issues relating to this research.

When considering the methodology, I applied the four most important elements of social research as stated by Crotty (1998, p.2). He encourages researchers to ‘consider what methods to use, what informs the choice of methodology and methods, the theoretical perspectives of the methodology and the epistemology stance that informs this theoretical perspective.’ These four elements all feature in the methodology for this project.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) suggest that it may be more advantageous for a researcher to start with their research question, then select the most appropriate methods to answer it instead of starting from a place of epistemological purity. This point has relevance to this project as the research question has been a focus of my practice for several years.

This research is intended to establish what work experienced coaches should take to supervision from the perspective of different stakeholder groups. This research question is different to the original question intended for the research. Chapter 4 explains how this change came about and the rationale for changing it. However, it is important to note that the change to the research question has no impact on the research methodology and there has been no change to how it was conducted. The research question for this study is:

What do experienced business coaches take to supervision?

3.2 Aims and objectives of the research

This research is intended to contribute to the coaching and supervision sector by providing evidence of what purpose coaching supervision serves for experienced coaches, beyond the purpose of personal development. This will allow meaningful conversations to be had within the sector about whether this supervisory intent is sufficient and/or

appropriate and to provoke an exploration of other ways in which this intent could be met.

3.3 Research outcomes

Based on the aims of the research, my intention is that this evidence base will enable the following to be developed:

A framework for all stakeholders of coaching supervision to allow them to construct a new meaning of the purpose of supervision that is useful to them in their work.

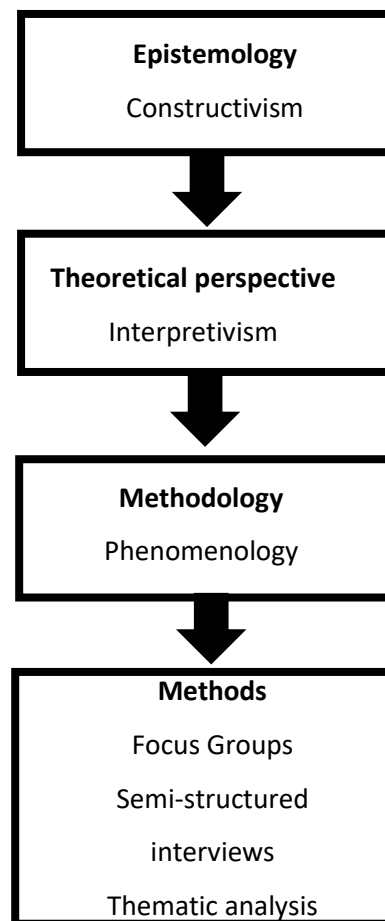
Constructing new meaning of the purpose of supervision may provide the following opportunities:

- **For supervisors** –to position themselves and their work with more clarity. It may help them structure their training and provide a basis for them to develop measures/feedback mechanisms to monitor the benefit of their work.
- **For buyers** –to support their consideration of whether and/or how supervision fits as part of their coach selection process. Clarity on this point would then inform the development of the coach selection criteria and process. Clarity on the purpose of supervision would also be useful in their consideration of whether and/or how supervision applies to their internal coaching faculty. This would lead to clarity on what is provided, for what purpose and how to measure its benefit.
- **For professional bodies and supervisory training organisations** – to inform their thinking on training and accreditation programmes for coaches and supervisors.

3.4 Research process

Figure 3-1 highlights the process that has informed my research. The remainder of this chapter will discuss each aspect in turn.

Figure 3-1 Crotty's four elements of research



Ontology and epistemology

Ontology is concerned with the study of being and reflects how we structure reality, how we hold 'what is' (Crotty, 1998). Epistemology is concerned with what it means to know what we know. Both one's ontology and epistemology inform one's theoretical perspective and, therefore, deserve investigation.

I hold a nominalist ontology and a constructivist epistemology that means I do not believe that truth and meaning exist independently in the world. Instead, I believe meaning is constructed and a nominalist ontology sits comfortably alongside a constructivist epistemology (Elgin, 2019). My research is focused on a topic that has been primarily built on perceived wisdom, where meaning has been made by individuals, i.e. supervision is not an inanimate object and would not exist in the world if it were not constructed by people. So, my ontological and epistemological position supports this work.

As people are different, they may well construct different meaning from the same experience. So multiple meanings for the same thing, I believe, can and do exist. As a

result, a qualitative approach is likely to enable me to gather data from multiple sources without worrying about their experiences and meanings being different.

For this research, I considered both a deductive and inductive stance. Dewey (1933) outlines a general paradigm of enquiry that underpins the scientific approach, consisting of deductive proof and inductive discovery. Deduction begins with a universal view of a situation and works back to the particulars; induction moves from fragmentary details to a connected view of the situation. The aim of my research suggests an inductive paradigm would be a more natural fit than a deductive one. As described by Gray (2014, p. 17), 'plans are made for data collection after which the data are analysed to see if any patterns emerge that suggest relationships between variables.' As a practitioner researcher, I want to focus on the data gathered to look for themes, patterns, consistencies and inconsistencies. I am not designing a research process around a hypothesis I want to test.

Theoretical perspective

There are several theoretical perspectives that inform the choice of methodology (Gray, 2014) including positivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry and postmodernism.

Positivism holds that the social world exists externally to the researcher and that properties are searched through observation. So, if I were to adopt a positivist stance, it would require me to consider specific approaches. Crotty (1998) implies that results of the research will tend to be presented as objective facts and established truths. This is not the intention of my research so adopting this stance would lead me to an inappropriate design.

Interpretivism looks for, 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Williams and May (1996, cited in Gray, 2014) state that interpretivism has no direct, one to one relationship with ourselves and that the world instead, interpreted by the classification of schemes of the mind.

Within interpretivism, there are five key approaches:

1. **Symbolic interactionism** – meaning is central to social behaviour; it is not fixed or stable but revised on experience
2. **Phenomenology** – grounded in peoples' experience of their social reality and revisited to create new meaning

3. **Realism** – objects act independently of the researcher
4. **Hermeneutics** – interpretations are more important than explanations and description
5. **Naturalistic inquiry** – there are multiple, constructed realities that can only be studied holistically.

In reviewing these five approaches for this research, the realism and naturalistic inquiry have been eliminated as these do not sit comfortably with my epistemological perspective. Hermeneutics has some resonance for me but has not been followed here as the purpose of my research is to focus on description and explanation and to leave it to participants and readers of the research to make their own interpretation.

There are some common aspects that overlap between symbolic interactionism and phenomenology and both have resonance in the way I approach my work. As a practitioner researcher, I can relate to the essential tenets of these approaches (Gray, 2014, p. 25), including:

- People interpret the meaning of objects and actions in the work then act upon those interpretations
- Meanings arise from the process of social interactions
- Meanings are handled in, and are modified by, an interactive process

Much coaching and supervision work is steeped in meaning-finding and meaning-making. However, this approach tends to be associated with ethnography and participative observation methods and I want to focus on the lived experiences of others rather than mine as a researcher.

Phenomenology on the other hand, has a more natural fit with my research aims. Key to phenomenology, is to refute the existing meaning system and not explore our everyday meanings. Instead, it is about understanding the experiences of others, i.e. putting oneself in the place of the subject. As a coach and a coach supervisor, my research could be phenomenologically influenced, however, I would go on to construct meaning from the data from my participants.

In line with my research aims and objectives, I intend to explore current meanings with the aim of creating new meanings. This fits well with the phenomenological insistence that, 'we must lay aside our prevailing understanding of phenomena and revisit our

immediate experience of them, possibilities for new meaning emerge for us or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of our former meaning.’ (Crotty, 1998). I believe that adopting a phenomenologically informed approach would permit access to the lived experiences of the stakeholder group participants and yield a rich level of data and minimise the risk of research bias.

In designing the methodology, I am aware the results will be presented in text and that this has implications for achieving the research aims. Crotty (1998, p. 109) sets out three different ways for texts to be described that illustrate how people may experience reading a text and therefore, take different meanings from it, including:

Empathic – hearing what the author wanted to say.

Interactive – interacting with what the author wanted to say, disagreeing or questioning it.

Transactional - the reader has insights or new thoughts that did not feature in what the author was trying to say.

In support of the importance of presenting the research, Straw (1990) speaks about the importance of reading and interpretation. ‘From the transactional view, meaning is not a representation of the intent of the author, it is not present in the text, rather, it is constructed by the reader during the act of reading. The reader draws on a number of knowledge sources to create or construct meaning.’

There is significance in this in relation to my research aims and objectives as I want to offer stakeholders in the coaching and supervision sector the opportunity to construct new meaning that is useful to them. The way in which I present my findings will take this constructivist point into account in order to enhance their impact.

3.5 Research methodology

I selected phenomenology to inform my research because it sits most at ease with my constructivist epistemology and my interpretative theoretical perspective.

The type of knowledge I am drawing from my participants from applying this approach is access the participants’ lived experience. I am not just looking at idiosyncratic individual experiences, I am seeking a general structure and/or commonalities across the participants’ responses with the intent of exploring if there is useful knowledge.

Phenomenology is often held as a theoretical perspective and a methodology and its intent is described as being, 'to investigate the meaning of lived experiences of people to identify the core essence of human experience or phenomena as described by research participants.' (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019, p. 54)

It is implied in phenomenology, that there are things or objects that we relate to our experiences and therefore our understanding of the world. This links to the notion of intentionality that is seen as central to phenomenology, i.e. it relates the vital link between conscious subjects and objects that means an object cannot be described separately to the subject and vice versa (Crotty, 1998).

Phenomenologists often speak of the need to 'bracket' their own understanding so as not to allow the researcher's opinions, biases or views contaminate the phenomena. As a research practitioner, this is an important factor to observe in the methods to mitigate the risk of bias in the research process. A pure phenomenological approach focuses on description rather than interpretation and the role of the researcher differs. Jackson and Cox (2020, p. 77) describe the role of the researcher in phenomenology as, 'bracketing foreknowledge, comparing accounts, establishing a general structure around the phenomenon' and for interpretative phenomenology as, 'micro-analysing and interpreting with reflexivity the convergence and divergence in accounts to interpret the meaning of experiences.' A more purist phenomenological approach privileges the views of participants' lived experiences resulting in knowledge that is open to others to interpret and make their own meaning from it rather than have an interpretation presented.

Phenomenological research relies on qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. It is not uncommon for qualitative research to be viewed as a less robust, valid and/or reliable than quantitative. But it is also recognised that qualitative methods enable context to be considered (Crotty, 1998). In reviewing the aims and objectives of my research, it is clear that context will be important to those who read and make use of this research.

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) state that qualitative research typically has the following characteristics:

- It is conducted through intense contact within a 'field' or real-life setting
- The researcher's role is to gain an 'holistic' or integrated overview of the study, including the perceptions of participants

- Themes that emerge from the data are often reviewed with informants for verification
- The focus of the research is to understand the ways people act and account for their action.

In considering my approach, I paid particular attention to the aims and objectives I had for this research. Gray (2014, p. 192) explores the notion of nomothetic and ideographic research. The former is more concerned with establishing law-like findings or rules and as a result, leans more towards quantitative methods of research. The latter, on the other hand, is more concerned with depth and intensity in the findings and leans more towards qualitative research.

As there is no universal agreement on a definition of supervision (Lawrence and Whyte, 2014), it would seem illogical to engage in nomothetic research with the intent of asserting rules for supervision. It is typical for quantitative methods to be applied when pursuing this approach and as this research is intended to explore the views of different stakeholder groups, it points to adopting an ideological approach and, therefore, qualitative methods.

3.6 Other methodologies considered

My research question demands rich data from several sources who are likely to have differing views and experiences informing their answers.

Other methodologies I considered were grounded theory and action research.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory is often applied where there is little known about the research topic (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). It is inductive, which sits well with my theoretical perspective, and its purpose is to generate theory from data, i.e. ground the theory in the data. As my research is not intended to generate a theory, this methodology would not support the delivery of my research aims.

Action research

Action research is a participative and collaborative methodology that has a strong appeal as it follows a familiar format to my everyday work (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). Lewin (1940, cited in McNiff, 2013) coined the term Action Research and developed a model

that involved iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. McNiff (2013) states that action research is often conducted by the researcher or the practitioner on an aspect of their own practice. This research will undoubtedly influence my practice, however, the research question will be more fully answered by including additional practitioners and stakeholders involved in coaching supervision.

Action research has been criticised for not being 'real' or 'proper' research. For example, two decades ago researchers would not have studied their own practice as it could be argued that it blurred the line between theory and practice (McNiff, 2013).

As stated in the literature review, there is a lack of robust research in the field of coaching supervision and I want this research to be credible and adding value to the evidence base. As action research is not considered a universally credible methodology, I decided not to choose it as it might be open to criticism and detract from the research itself.

3.7 Methods

Rationale for methods

According to Costley et al (2010, p. 92), choosing a method of data collection should be 'methodologically coherent, practically and ethically feasible and capable of providing the type of information that you need'. They go on to highlight the importance of considering how much you want to report on the quantity of the data, i.e. 'how much and how many' versus the quality of the data including deeply held views and opinions.

Gray (2014) refers to four different types of information to consider for data collection. Table 3-1 illustrates the relevance of each to this research.

Table 3-1 Types of information for data collection

Type of information	Description	Relevance to the choice of method
Contextual	Data relating to the context, situation in which the participant exists	Low Participants must be business coaches, however, this forms part of the selection criteria for participants
Demographic	Data such as age, gender, years of experience, etc.	Low

		The research question is focused on experienced coaches and this forms part of the selection criteria for participants
Perceptual	Data relating to the views, opinions of an experience	High This is the main information type the research method is intended to gather
Theoretical	Data relating to what is already known about this topic	Low This data forms part of the Literature Review

As the research could potentially affect a broad range of coaching and supervision stakeholders, I concluded it would be useful in the method design to have representatives from those directly and indirectly involved in the coaching supervision field to elicit new or alternative points to be gathered.

As the data I intend to collect is perceptual in nature, I planned to run Focus Groups and semi structured interviews. The sole purpose of the Focus Groups is to inform the interview questions.

3.8 Data collection methods

3.8.1 Focus group

A Focus Group is essentially a discussion where a group of individuals convene to discuss questions focused on a particular topic. (Cyr, 2015). The intent of these Focus Groups is to inform the format and structure of the one to one interviews. One of the major strengths of a Focus Group is that it is a familiar set up for people where they can relax into the conversation and participants can influence the pace and rhythm of the conversation more easily than in a formal structured interview setting. This is supported by Kreuger and Casey (2000) who list several uses for Focus Groups. They include:

- Eliciting a range of feeling, opinions and ideas
- Understanding the differences in perspectives
- Uncovering and providing insight into specific factors that influence opinions
- Seeking ideas that emerge from the group

Like an interview, a Focus Group needs to have structure as it is a focused discussion (Gray, 2014). As a result, a Focus Group needs to have an interview guide that the facilitator can use to navigate the group through the discussion. They need to be strongly facilitated to ensure both a logical sequence to the conversation and that any negative issues that can arise in the group are managed or at least mitigated. Kreuger and Casey (2000) set out the qualities of good questions and the qualities of a good questioning route that support a thorough design process.

3.8.1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of Focus Groups

Advantages

Gray (2014), Kreuger and Casey (2000) and Mansell et al (2004) identify several advantages of Focus Groups. The key advantage of a Focus Group is the flexibility the format affords to the course of the discussion and the depth and richness of data that can be surfaced. The facilitator is at liberty to ask follow-up questions, probe for understanding and clarity and ask questions related to the participants' answers. This opportunity to follow up on any comment made by any of the participants enables insights, new ideas or observations to emerge and be captured in the discussion.

Another advantage is the conversation building that takes place. The group discussion can often have a synergistic effect and expand the parameters of the original questions - broadening and deepening the conversation and allowing new insights to emerge.

In addition to the spoken responses from the discussion, the facilitator can also observe how the responses are delivered including facial expressions, tone of voice, pitch and volume of voice and pace of speech.

The facilitator can also see immediately where there is collective agreement or disagreement on a point. This immediate feedback allows the facilitator to cut off or further explore specific points to make more effective use of the time available.

Disadvantages

There are several disadvantages of Focus Groups.

Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that sometimes group participants will make up an answer where they have little or no experience or knowledge of the topic. This can happen where the participant may feel they ought to know/have an answer or they feel

embarrassed that they don't and so instead of telling their truth, they choose to make up an answer.

Connected to this, another disadvantage can be the emergence of 'group think'. This was originally defined by Janis (2008) as, 'a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.' As participants in Focus Groups are highly likely to have a connection to the topic that will be discussed, it is likely that they will be a cohesive group. Discussions on the topic are therefore at risk of being driven to a consensus or majority agreed position, as described in Janis' definition. Figure 2-1 from Hawkins and Smith (2006) identifies the shadow side of different styles of group supervision and highlights that a group led, process focussed style can lead to an over-collusive and inward-looking group arguably another form of group think.

It is also possible that the Focus Group holds the conversation at a superficial level and does not get deeper into the topic. This can happen where participants are overly polite or conflict averse, wanting to avoid any disagreement or difference.

Power dynamics and difficult behaviours can play a large part in any group situation so the facilitator needs to be aware of these and skilled in dealing with them. Some authors have offered suggested criteria for Focus Group facilitators and most suggest that they should have some subject matter expertise and strong facilitation skills. (Mansell et al, 2004 and Gray, 2014).

Another major disadvantage of a Focus Group is the logistics involved in making it happen. The identification and invitation of participants, agreeing dates, venue and timings then handling cancellations or drop-outs can all make this a challenging method to deploy.

Despite the above disadvantages, I believe that the value a Focus Group can add to the structure and content of my interviews make them a critical part of the research design. In my professional career, I have facilitated and coached hundreds of groups of varying sizes and am confident in my ability to mitigate the disadvantages and leverage the advantages to be had from using a Focus Group method.

3.8.1.2 *Sampling of Focus Group participants*

There were four key stakeholder groups that could feature in the research:

- Coaching supervisors
- Coaches
- Professional coaching and coaching supervision bodies
- Buyers of coaching and possibly coaching supervision services

I focused on purposeful sampling as a way to identify potential participants in order to contain the amount of time spent on selecting participants. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 442) state that, '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.'

There are several purposeful sampling strategies including homogenous sampling, snowball or chain sampling and emergent sampling. As my research involves experienced business coaches, supervisors of experienced coaches and buyers, it was important that there were criteria in place to ensure that participants were able to assess whether they were eligible to take part. As a practitioner researcher, I have well developed coaching and coaching supervision networks, built up over nearly two decades, which meant I had a large and diverse pool of people to draw from.

In terms of group size, I determined that I would aim for a group of 5 – 8 people (Kitzinger, 1995 and Krueger and Casey, 2000). A group of this size will be logistically easier to manage in terms of communications, arranging a date, securing an appropriately sized meeting room and recording the session.

3.8.1.3 *Selection criteria for Focus Group participants*

I decided upon the following criteria for participation in the Focus Groups to ensure that I involved experienced executive/business coaches:

- Professional, qualified coaches
- Professional, qualified supervisors
- Buyers who have supervision as a criterion for their preferred coaching suppliers
- Coaching professional bodies

In refining this further, I established the following detailed criteria to describe each of the above:

Professional Coaches

- At least 500 hours of paid for coaching work. This figure is taken from the EMCC Professional Certificate Coach Requirement (EMCC, 2017).
- In regular supervision – as stated in Passmore and McGoldrick (2009), there is debate about what being in regular supervision means. They go on to assert that it is perhaps more important that the supervision is planned and formal rather than unplanned and voluntary. Based on this, I will specify that participants must be in coaching supervision that is formal and scheduled in advance.
- Supervision format – This can be one to one or group supervision. Coaches often have a mix of supervision arrangements including peer, group and one to one (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009).
- Accredited coach training – Training accredited through one of the professional coaching bodies to ensure a set of standards across the training.
- A mix of male and female coaches.

Supervisors

- At least 500 hours of paid for supervision work.
- A mix of supervisors with a counselling/therapeutic background and an alternative background, i.e. business. As noted in Passmore and McGoldrick (2009, p. 154), 'the context in which coaching takes place is fundamentally different to counselling and the failure to understand these differences can be dangerous for both the coachee and their employing organisation'. By noting background, I will be able to identify if this has any significance in the data analysis.
- Accredited supervision training – through one of the coaching and/or supervision professional bodies and/or through the British Psychological Society.

Buyers

- The organisational person responsible for deciding whether an executive/business coach is put forward to their internal clients to deliver coach services in their organisation. This person need not necessarily hold the budget for coaching services but must be the decision-maker on whether an executive/business coach can be put forward to a prospective client.

- The person who is the custodian of the organisation's standards on coaching services. They need not necessarily have been involved or responsible for determining the standards but are seen as the custodian of them.

These criteria were intended to ensure participants had sufficient experience and knowledge of the executive/business coaches themselves rather than experts purely in procurement and contractual issues but rarely meet or work with the coach. I wanted to engage the buyers who 'broker' the coaches to their organisation.

Professional bodies

The only criterion for this was that the person had to be a representative of a professional body and had to have secured prior agreement from that professional body both to participate in the research and that any answers they gave to my questions could be treated as the views of the professional body.

3.8.1.4 Format and questions

Each Focus Group was intended to last no longer than 90 minutes each and a session guide was prepared to structure the format of the Focus Groups (see Appendix 8) including the key questions to be asked in the meeting.

3.8.2 Semi structured interviews

Semi structured interviews are typically used in data collection in qualitative research projects. This format allows a high level of flexibility for follow up questions to be asked, enabling the interviewer to probe answers and have the participant expand on what they have offered. This flexibility is 'vital where a phenomenological approach is being taken where the objective is to explore subjective meanings that respondents ascribe to concepts or events' Gray (2014, p. 386).

Barriball and While (1994) advocate that semi structured interviews are suited to exploring perceptions and opinions of participants where the topic is complex or sensitive in nature and allow probing of answers for additional data.

3.8.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of semi structured interviews

Overview

Semi structured interviews can offer many advantages. For this research, the interviews will enable rich data to be gathered in one sitting. As mentioned by Harvey-Jordan and

Long (2001), 'during an interview the subject is free to talk as openly as he or she wishes and the frankness of opinions can get to the heart of the matter.'

In terms of disadvantages, care has to be taken to limit interviewer bias (Opdenakker, 2006). The key issue for this type of research instrument is to ensure it is applied consistently. This can be an issue even in a structured interview as the way the interviewer presents the questions, their tone voice, the words they emphasise and the pace at which they ask them can all influence the consistency of the interview.

It is almost impossible to eliminate all bias from semi structured interviews, but Gray (2014) suggests the use of an interview protocol as a way of minimising bias. Table 3-2 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews.

Table 3-2 Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews (Coolican, 2014)

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Loose (non- directive, informal, semi structured)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview questions can be adapted to context, the interviewee characteristics and the general flow of answers • Respondents more relaxed, informed and involved • The less constrained nature of open questions produces richer, fuller, more genuine, more realistic information on the interviewee's own terms; enables capture of respondent's construction or unique perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and depth of process may limit numbers it is possible to interview and some people may not want to commit the time and energy • Problems with reliability and generalisation • Important topics could be missed if there is no schedule of questionnaire to check • Thorough training of interviewees may be costly and time consuming • Limits data analysis to qualitative

3.8.2.2 Sampling of and criteria for interview participants

Three of the stakeholder groups were included in the interviews.

- Coaching supervisors
- Coaches
- Buyers of coaching and possibly coaching supervision services

The professional bodies were not included in this stage of the research as their view was covered in the Focus Groups and Literature Review.

As with the Focus Group, I intended to apply a criteria based purposeful sampling approach, using the same criteria as before.

3.8.2.3 Selection criteria for interview participants

A similar sequencing approach to the Focus Groups was applied to selecting interview participants and could allow a minimum of five people from each stakeholder group to be interviewed.

3.8.2.4 Format and questions

Similar to the Focus Groups, participants were offered face to face and virtual interviews.

An interview guide was developed and is set out in Appendix 10.

3.9 Confidentiality and ethics

As a practitioner researcher, it is important that I adhere to a code of ethics to ensure I can make informed decisions about how to conduct my research and also to guide me if I meet an ethical dilemma that I had not anticipated.

As part of my coaching practice, I am a member of the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Both organisations embrace an involvement in and/or association with research. The EMCC (2019) states, 'We are rigorously working towards professionalization of mentoring and coaching based on innovative research and good practice to develop a unique and highly regarded body of common knowledge'.

The WABC (2019) states, '(The WABC) is committed to engaging in or being affiliated with research that is based on rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain robust knowledge relevant to business coaching practices, programmes and standards.'

These two statements are clear that any research they would associate with must adhere to some standards. This will in part be evident in my methodology but also in how I conduct my research.

Gray (2014, p. 72) highlights that, 'Ethical principles fall into four main categories, namely the need to:

- Avoid harm to participants
- Ensure informed consent of participants
- Respect the privacy of participants
- Avoid the use of deception.

Both the WABC (2013) and EMCC (2018) have a Code of Conduct/Code of Ethics that relates to how they expect their members to conduct themselves as professional coaches and I will continue to embody these standards and incorporate them into how I conduct myself as a practitioner researcher.

As an accredited member of the WABC, I hold myself to account on their professional standards for coaches. These are divided into three areas that are detailed further as follows:

1. The business coach-client interaction

- Professionalism and ethics
- Client focus
- Business and organisational context
- Business coaching process and contracting

2. Factors affecting the coaching interaction

- Boundaries
- Confidentiality
- Diversity
- Responsibility and respect

3. Developing the profession

- Professional development
- Promotion of the emerging profession

I recognise that these relate to how one should conduct oneself as a coach but they have applicability to how I will conduct myself as a researcher and I intend to adhere to them in that role.

3.9.1 Approach to quality and ethics

I wanted to ensure that the research was seen as being reliable and credible within the academic and coaching supervision sectors. I chose to answer my research question through completing a Doctorate as work at this level as it is well known that doctoral level work is conducted with clarity and academic rigour with high quality oversight and advisor input(s). The research work meets a pre-defined standard and the work to get to this point must be transparent.

In addition to the rigour of the doctorate process, the following points illustrate further reliability and robustness of the research:

- The choice of methodology was congruent throughout and complemented my ontological, epistemological and theoretical stance
- A clear rationale for the choice of methodology and methods alongside a rationale for not selecting other methodologies and methods to ensure the decision making process was both transparent and clear
- A clear criteria for participant selection was in place
- A structured format for the Focus Groups and the one to one interviews
- Verbatim transcripts from both Focus Groups and interviews
- Nvivo records of the themes demonstrating how these had been developed
- My supervisor and close doctoral colleagues coded some of my interviews to test my themes
- Chapter 8 – Project Activity, clearly details how the research journey played out, i.e. how the plan of activity compared to the reality of deploying it

All the above points illustrate care and attention being given to ensure the research was reliable and robust.

The EMCC's Code of Ethics (2018) clearly has overlap with Professional Standards but is more focused on trying to promote best practice and ensure the highest possible standards are maintained. I am conscious that ethical matters may arise through working in disparate business contexts and cultures. As my research participants will come from different organisations, and have differing levels of experience and interests, I have

applied the EMCC Code of Ethics framework to consider the ethical issues that may arise in my research. This framework implicitly and explicitly covers the four ethical principles described earlier by Gray (2014).

Competence

I have carried out several research projects in the past and am confident in my ability to carry out this research to a high standard. I also plan to have regular contact with my Doctorate supervisor and doctorate learning group, who will challenge my thinking and oversee the quality of my work.

In addition to my research competence, I am a qualified and experienced coach and coach supervisor. My knowledge of the field is both broad and deep and I have many resources to draw upon. Whilst this gives me an advantage in terms of content, I must be aware that this could inform and/or create some bias in my research.

Context

As my research will involve participants with differing backgrounds and experience, I will ensure that their involvement in the research is clearly explained. I will also ask for their expectations of being involved so these are jointly understood and agreed or re-contracted.

As my research is intended to benefit the coaching and supervision community, I will offer to send a copy of the final report to those who contributed so they can see the whole research work and make meaning of their part in it.

Boundary management

As mentioned above, I plan to work with my Doctorate Supervisor and my Doctorate learning group and a key focus of this will be to ensure I am aware of and work within the limits of my own competence.

In addition, I will pay attention to any potential conflicts of interest when inviting participants to take part in my research. I am not intending to interview any of my supervision clients to ensure I minimise the potential for bias and/or conflict on both sides.

Integrity

As my research is intended to do no harm and to promote and protect human dignity and diversity, I will communicate in writing the purpose of the interview and my role as interviewer to all participants to ensure I avoid colluding, agreeing or passing judgement on the participants' contributions.

Terms of confidentiality will be clearly agreed and communicated with participants before they contribute to the research. Participants will be asked to sign a formal consent form agreeing to participate in research interview. Where a participant is representing an organisation, I will ensure the appropriate permission is in place and also in writing. Anonymity will be a key feature of participating throughout interviews, surveys, data analysis and final write up.

The consent form will also make clear the circumstances in which I will break confidentiality which relate to safety and legal issues. This would be under the guidance of my Doctorate supervisor and/or professional body advisor.

All electronic data will be held in a password protected computer and any paper or audio tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office.

3.9.2 Potential risks

Potential risks to participants

One potential risk is that of conflict of interest. I will review any potential conflicts of interest when inviting participants to take part in my research. In particular, I will commit to keep research communication separate to other communications and will send it from my personal email address and not my commercial one. I will also be clear that the research is not intended to be a vehicle for business development and those who participate will have the opportunity to request not to be contacted by me again on any other matter.

There may well be opposing views and disagreement arising in the Focus Groups. Disagreement would be neither good nor bad as there is not a right answer in this area so all views are valid and welcome. This will also be made clear in the invitation and in the opening of the Focus Groups.

I also intend to invite a critical friend to review my analysis thereby offering a challenge to the results and testing the integrity of my analysis.

In my research, I will be meeting two groups of people (Focus Group) and approximately 20 people for a semi structured interview.

Potential risks to the investigator

I believe the risks here are small and very unlikely to happen, however, it is possible that in the group sessions, there may be disagreement that could lead to argument and/or conflict. As the subject matter could be contentious and people there are representing bodies as well as themselves, there could be accusations of conflict of interest that may tarnish the credibility of my research work and lead to personal verbal attacks.

In the interviews, there may be a risk to my personal safety or being exposed to improper behaviour.

In my day to day working activity, I am required to visit various locations to work with both groups and individuals. To ensure I minimise risks to myself, the following is in place:

- My PA has full knowledge of and access to my diary so is aware of where I am and who I am with should there be an issue
- I wear appropriate business dress when meeting clients and behave with traditional business protocols (handshake to meet a client, keeping physical space between client and myself and clarity of purpose for the meeting)
- Meetings are diarised electronically so there is evidence of the meeting being arranged, often including room booking details
- I typically meet clients in their offices or pre-arranged rooms so there is security staff on site
- I work in office hours where buildings are normally fully staffed.

Rarely has there been any overt risk to myself but where this has been the case, I have several tactics I have deployed to disarm the situation.

As my research will follow a similar format to my work, I plan to continue to apply the above and will also contact my supervisor if something arises that is something outside my ability to manage.

Potential risks to the University

In both the Focus Groups and the interviews, there is a risk of participants feeling challenged by the questions and/or that their views are somehow discredited in the setting. This may lead to dissent or questioning of the validity and ethics of the research.

That said, the research will be conducted professionally and following the guidelines and policies of the UWTSD.

In my day to day working activity, I pay close attention to the set up and 'contracting' of work. As aforementioned, I intend to send out clear briefing notes inviting people to participate so people will know exactly what to expect in the process of the research and a sense of the content. In doing this, it is anticipated that it will give participants the opportunity to self-select in or out of the research activity.

In addition, participants will also have the opportunity to cease their participation in the research at any point.

As a trained professional, I intend to conduct myself, and the research process, with the utmost level of professionalism that I anticipate will set the tone for the integrity and ethical stance of the research.

Adverse outcomes

I have considered that it is possible that availability of participants for the Focus Group may be an issue. If, on the day, participants do not turn up, I may have to consider running a third group to ensure I have sufficient data to inform the content of the semi-structured interviews.

It is also possible that this situation could occur during the interview stage in that I do not get enough people agreeing to be interviewed or they do not turn up on the day. To mitigate this risk, I have identified a pool of more than 40 possible interview candidates and can increase this if required.

The final risk I can anticipate is that my initial project timetable might slip. I have built in contingency in the timetable and will be able to run data collection and data analysis work concurrently.

3.9.3 Confidentiality

Focus Group

Within the Focus Group, it is possible that providing a transcription of session could have a negative impact on total anonymity being maintained as people will be able to recall and identify who said what in the session. That said, the transcript will be anonymised.

I plan to offer the group three options as part of the invitation to be part of the Focus Group:

- The transcription is not shared with any of the group members
- The transcription is shared with all the group members
- The transcription is shared with only those group members who want it

Where there is a difference of view, I intend to speak to the group member(s) and ask what they would like to do, i.e. change to the majority view, withdraw from the Focus Group or suggest an alternative option.

Semi structured interviews

Interview participants will be offered anonymity as part of the set up. Each interview will be coded and the coded data will be used in the thematic analysis. Only the researcher will have access to the participant details that will be stored on a password protected computer.

4 Project activity

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the activities that underpinned the research methodology as described in Chapter 3. It sets out the two staged research methodology of Focus Groups and semi structured interviews and details the project activities that led to the completion of the research.

In this chapter, I also describe the impact of the Focus Group results in reshaping the research question and how this resulted in changes to the Literature Review and the content of the semi structured interviews.

4.2 Participants – Focus groups

I have access to a large network of individuals in the coaching and supervision sector and considered Bryman and Bell's (2007, p. 442) position on purposeful sampling as a way of selecting research participants. They emphasise that the goal of purposeful sampling is to be strategic about who is selected to take part. In doing so, the researcher can invite participants who are relevant and have a good understanding of the research topic. Potential negatives of this approach include participants not being representative of the broader population, the range of variation not being known at the start of the survey and there not being a significant level of similarity or difference to allow meaningful comparisons and contrasts to emerge (Palinkas et al., 2013). I concluded that due to importance of participants having knowledge of the subject, inviting people I knew would be acceptable for this research.

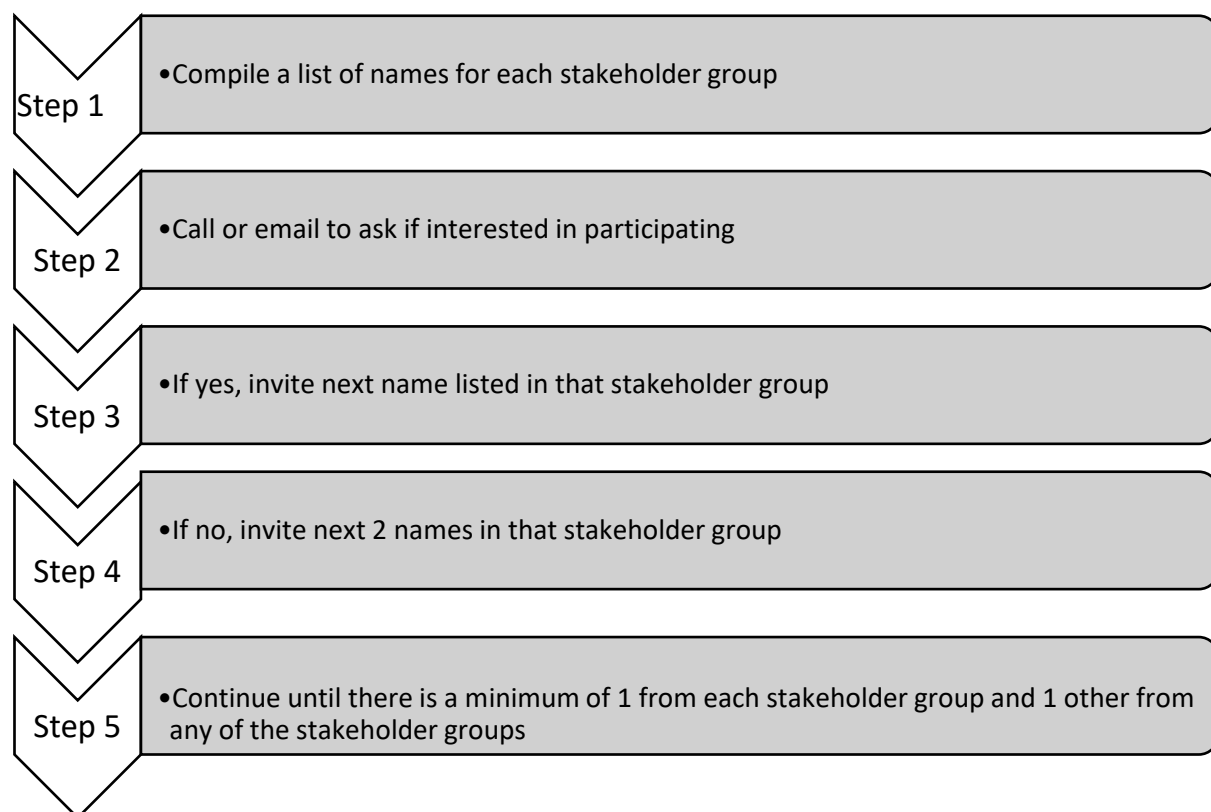
As mentioned in Chapter 3, I identified four key stakeholder groups I wanted represented in the Focus Groups, these were:

- Coaching supervisors
- Coaches
- Buyers of coaching and possibly coaching supervision services
- Professional coaching and coaching supervision bodies

A set of selection criteria were developed for each group (Appendix 6) that reflected the needs of the research to include experienced coaches and supervisors. This also enabled invited participants to self-select in or out of the research based on whether they met the criteria.

A formal invitation (Appendix 7) was sent to potential participants and the responses secured eight research participants that were divided into two Focus Groups. Figure 4-1 below sets out the full sequence followed to invite participants to the Focus Groups.

Figure 4-1 Invitation sequence for Focus Group participants



4.3 Data collection – Focus Groups

The participants in Group 2 are based in or travel to London. Two of the participants offered to host the meeting in a client meeting room in their London offices allowing us to all meet in one room.

One group was organised to meet face to face and the other met virtually on a phone conferencing service. The conversations of both groups were recorded on a handheld digital recorder and voice memos on an iPhone. In addition to the voice recordings, I also took copious handwritten notes to ensure I had another back up to the recordings.

The two Focus Groups provided six hours of transcribed discussion and the groups included representatives from all the stakeholder groups.

4.4 Data analysis – Focus Groups

The voice recordings were uploaded to a secure PC and then manually transcribed using the Express Scribe Transcription software. This software, along with a foot pedal, enabled me to slow the conversation speed down and capture verbatim what each participant

said. Even with this facility and my handwritten notes, there were still some words that I could not discern and so identified this within the transcription.

Once transcribed, the documents were analysed using thematic analysis. This analysis produced ten clear themes that are set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4-1 Focus Groups superordinate and subordinate themes

Super-ordinate theme	Definition	Sub-ordinate theme	Definition	No of references
1. Buyer considerations	Ideas, thoughts, doubts, assumptions and reflections brought up by the conversation that buyers pay attention to.	N/A	N/A	21
2. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) expectations	The standards and expectations coaches are required and/or assumed to meet on an ongoing basis on their CPD.	Profession	As determined or influenced by a professional coaching body	15
		Regulation	As determined by law or a buyer /contract for coaching services	5
3. Definition of coaching	The lack of definition, the need for a common definition and clarity.	N/A	N/A	7

4. Definition of supervision	Thoughts, observations, ideas, challenges and doubts about what is missing and needs changing from the definition given to the group.	N/A	N/A	34
5. Purpose of supervision	The results or outputs of supervision in terms of benefits, expectations and risks.	Benefits	Benefits as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body	6
		Expectations	Expectations as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a	14

			professional body	
		Risks	Risks as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body	8
6. Qualifications of supervisor	Qualifications, permission, rights and criteria to be a supervisor.	N/A	N/A	26
7. Supervision conditions	The conditions expected to be in place when supervision happens.	N/A	N/A	12
8. Supervision doubts	Concerns, questions, doubts and troubles about the current state of supervision.	N/A	N/A	9
9. Work to be supervised	The topics covered, focus of the conversation and	N/A	N/A	43

	balance of negative and positive.			
10. Unanswered questions	The gaps, concerns, lack of information /agreement and questions about supervision.	N/A	N/A	21

4.5 Impact of Focus Group findings on the semi structured interviews

The collection of the Focus Group data confirmed that asking broad, open questions resulted in a depth and breadth of rich responses for analysis. This experience confirmed that semi structured interviews would likely yield further rich data for analysis.

The interview questions were drawn from the questions asked in the Focus Groups and the themes that emerged from the analysis. Appendix 9 sets out the points from the Focus Group themes that informed the choice of questions for the one to one interviews. The final set of questions for the one to one interviews are listed in Appendix 10.

4.6 Participants – Interviews

The same purposeful sampling process that was applied to the Focus Groups was used to select interview participants.

Five buyers and five supervisors responded to the formal invitation and agreed to take part. The interviews were scheduled to fit with their availability which meant most of the interviews were conducted virtually.

Potential participants I approached from the professional bodies were not forthcoming either because they did not have expertise on the content and/or they were not permitted to contribute to the research as a representative view of that professional body. Looking for alternatives would have delayed the overall timetable. So instead, more participants from the buyer group were invited.

Although unable to secure representatives for interview from the professional bodies, the desk top research of information from their websites is included in the literature review.

4.7 Data collection – interviews

A total of 18 interviews were organised using a mix of face to face, phone and Skype, resulting in 18 hours of data to analyse.

4.8 Data analysis – interviews

The voice recordings of all the interviews were uploaded to a secure PC and manually transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Through this analysis, a total of ten themes emerged verbatim.

Appendix 11 illustrates the linkages that arose between the interview questions and the emergent themes and this is explored in more detail in Chapter 6 Project Discussion.

4.9 Summary of Focus Groups and interviews

This section has described the activities that underpinned the research methodology as described in Chapter 3, Methodology. It set out and described in detail the activity involved in the planned two staged research methodology of Focus Groups followed by semi structured interviews.

It has also described the impact of the Focus Group results in reshaping the research question and the effect this has on the structure of the semi structured interviews.

Despite the impact the Focus Group analysis had on the research question, the project activity was completed in line with the overall timetable (Appendix 12).

4.10 Confidentiality and ethics

Chapter 3, Methodology set out the ethical frame I would be working within to ensure I could make informed decisions about how to conduct the research and to act a guide should an unexpected issue arise. Overall, the research was successfully completed within this frame and only two issues arose that I had to manage, namely, agreeing confidentiality of the Focus Group transcripts and the involvement of Professional Body representatives in the research.

4.10.1 Confidentiality of Focus Groups transcripts

Confidentiality for the Focus Groups was an important topic to cover as the participants would know who said what. I wanted the groups to agree what was appropriate for them in terms of confidentiality so decided to have the group discuss and agree this as part of the discussion.

The group were comfortable to agree that they would not engage with others outside their group about what was said and by whom. With this clear, I reminded the group that I would be creating an anonymised transcription of the conversation so wanted to know how they wanted to handle the confidentiality of that. I offered three options:

- No one has a copy of the transcript
- Everyone has a copy of the transcript
- An alternative suggestion

I also reminded the groups that in the invitation to take part, it mentioned that they would receive an electronic copy of the final dissertation (unless they asked me not to send it to them) once it had been approved. So, the content of the Focus Group conversations would be referenced in that documents, albeit not in totality.

Both Focus Groups agreed that they did not want a copy of the final transcription so there would be no issues of storage or sharing for any of us to consider. As a result, none of the Focus Group participants received a copy.

4.10.2 Involvement of Professional Body representatives in the research

I had not expected problems in identifying and contacting representatives from the Professional Bodies. I was aware that any such representative would need to have permission from their organisation to take part and confirmation of their authority to represent the views of the relevant body. I made several attempts to contact people through my network and came to realise that I was not getting a favourable response. I was concerned that postponing the groups and/or interviews could risk the overall research timetable so I discussed it with my supervisor and decided to drop this group as an active participant in the one to one interviews. Instead, I increased the number of buyer representatives to begin to mitigate the findings of my literature review that this group are underrepresented in research on this topic.

5 Project findings

5.1 Introduction

The data collected for analysis was collected in two stages. Stage 1 involved running two Focus Groups, the output of which was intended to inform the interview format used in Stage 2. Stage 2 consisted of several one to one interviews with representatives from key stakeholder groups. Findings from both stages resulted in six hours of transcribed Focus Group discussions and 18 hours of transcribed one to one interviews.

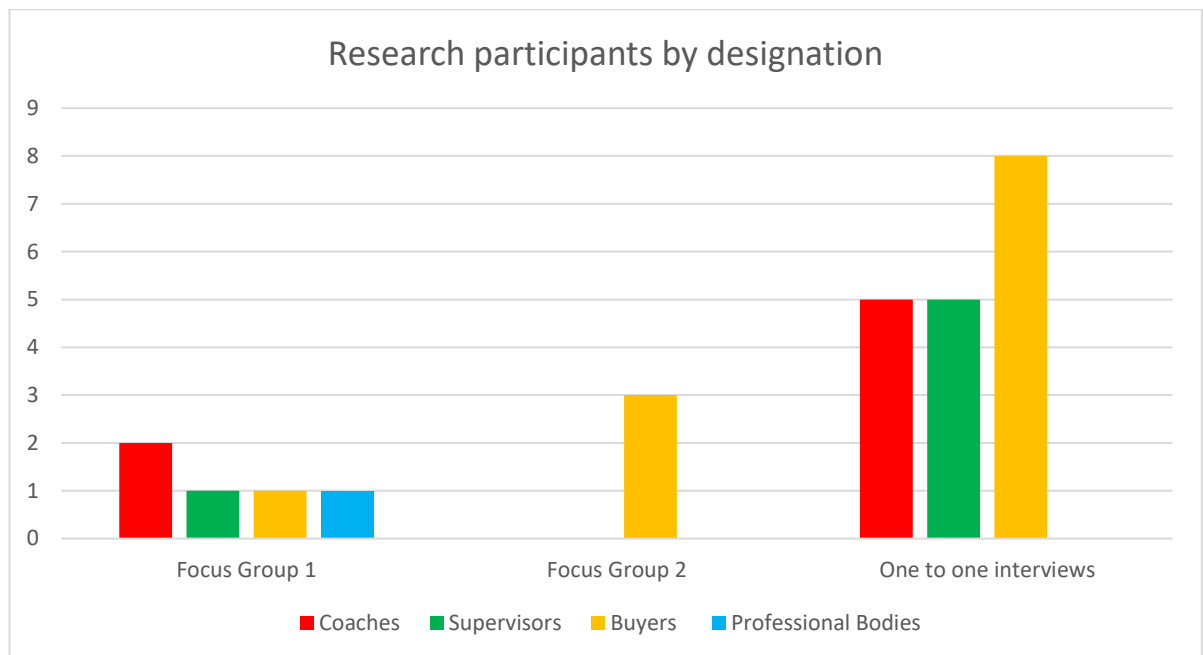
In this chapter, the findings from the research will be presented sequentially, starting with the Focus Group findings that highlight the themes that emerged from the analysis. Following this, there is a detailed report of the findings from the one to one interviews, including the superordinate and subordinate themes that emerged from the analysis of all 18 interviews. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the interview findings.

5.2 Research participants

The Focus Group participants and the one to one interview participants were drawn from the same groupings, namely, coaches, supervisors and buyers. The makeup of both Focus Groups and the one to one interviews are detailed in Figure 5-1 below. In terms of gender split, both the Focus Groups and the one to one interviews participants were mostly female. Focus Group 1 had four female and one male participant and Focus Group 2 was all female. The one to one interviews consisted of 13 female and 5 male participants.

All the research participants met the criteria for inclusion in this research as specified in Appendix 6.

Figure 5-1 Designation of research participants



5.3 Focus Groups – General overview

The structure of the questions for both Focus Groups was targeted on specific topics and open to allow the participants to take the conversation in whatever direction they saw appropriate. Early in the conversations, both groups were drawn to question the overall purpose of supervision and how this purpose was positioned in the overall coaching assignment. Participant 2's quote illustrates this point:

FG Participant 2, *'For me, the primary question is what is the purpose of supervision for business coaches and is it necessary? Everything else would fall from that. I don't feel that fundamental question has been appropriately answered.'*

Both Focus Groups examined the definitions of various points related to supervision including, the definition of coaching, the coaching work, mentoring and supervision. There was plenty of discussion on the meaning of these phrases, there was no consensus reached on these definitions within the groups.

The clear sense of the Focus Groups' conversations was that the questions they were being asked were thought provoking. The structure of the conversation demonstrated that many of the participants had obviously not considered these questions before, i.e. many of the responses were co-created by the group in the moment, building on the contribution of one another. Participants in both groups also commented that the questions were exposing several assumptions they held and that they would be reviewing their own supervision requirements and/or policies because of this conversation.

5.4 Focus Group - Themes

Each Focus Group was individually analysed and a total of ten superordinate themes and five subordinate themes emerged. There were only two subordinate themes that were exclusive to each group. The theme 'Regulation' only appeared in Focus Group 1 and had five references; whilst 'Risks' only appeared in Focus Group 2 and had eight references. All the other superordinate and subordinate themes identified in the analysis appeared in both Focus Groups.

In reviewing the Focus Group transcripts, several broad themes emerged that were prevalent in the text; these are shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Focus Group themes

Super-ordinate theme	Definition	Sub-ordinate theme	Definition	No of references
1. Buyer considerations	The points brought up in the conversation that attract the attention of buyers including their ideas, thoughts, doubts, assumptions and reflections.	N/A	N/A	21
2. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) expectations	The standards and expectations coaches are required and/or assumed to meet on an ongoing basis on their CPD.	Profession	As determined or influenced by a professional coaching body	15
		Regulation	As determined by law or a buyer /contract for coaching services	5

3. Definition of coaching	The lack of definition, the need for a common definition and clarity.	N/A	N/A	7
4. Definition of supervision	Thoughts, observations, ideas, challenges and doubts about what is missing and needs changing from the definition given to the group.	N/A	N/A	34
5. Purpose of supervision	The results or outputs of supervision in terms of benefits, expectations and risks.	Benefits	Benefits as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body	6
		Expectations	Expectations as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or	14

			representative of a professional body	
		Risks	Risks as they have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body	8
6. Qualifications of supervisor	Qualifications, permission, rights and criteria to be a supervisor.	N/A	N/A	26
7. Supervision conditions	The conditions expected to be in place when supervision happens.	N/A	N/A	12
8. Supervision doubts	Concerns, questions, doubts and troubles about the current state of supervision.	N/A	N/A	9
9. Work to be supervised	The topics covered, focus of the	N/A	N/A	43

	conversation and balance of negative and positive.			
10. Unanswered questions	The gaps, concerns, lack of information/agreement and questions about supervision.	N/A	N/A	21

The following details the superordinate and subordinate themes outlined in Table 5-1.

5.4.1 Superordinate theme 1 – Buyer considerations

Definitions: *Ideas, thoughts, doubts, assumptions and reflections brought up by the conversation that buyers pay attention to.*

All 21 references were given by participants who are buyers whereas, none of the other groups offered a view on this topic. Most references within this theme covered the set-up of the supervision either by the supervisor, the coach or the organisation.

Many of the buyers stated that the questions they were being asked highlighted the fact that they hold a lot of assumptions about supervision.

FG1 Participant 4 – *‘It has made me question a number of assumptions that I have always made about why I am asking for coaches to assure me that they are being supervised.’*

FG2 Participant 2 – *‘I assume that if they are in an organisation that they are doing some kind of peer supervision or have some good supervision.’*

Another common point made by the buyers related to how little they know and/or fully understand the details of supervision undertaken by coaches.

FG 2 Participant 1 – *‘I kind of just trust them professionally to do it but (our) due diligence is pretty poor around that.’*

5.4.2 Superordinate theme 2 – CPD expectations

Definition: *The standards and expectations coaches are required and/or assumed to meet on an ongoing basis in relation to their continuous professional development.*

This theme has references from all eight of the Focus Group participants and is split into two subordinate themes based on the data. The first related to the CPD expectations associated with being part of a profession although many of the references also pointed to coaching not yet being a profession. The second subordinate theme related to the issue of regulation as in whether coaching should be regulated, by whom and how.

There was a total of 20 references from both Focus Groups and there were some distinct differences of opinion in the subordinate themes that are detailed below.

Subordinate theme 2a – Profession

Definition: As determined or influenced by a professional coaching body.

This subordinate theme had references from all participants in both Focus Groups and is one of only three themes that secured comments from all Focus Group participants.

There were three distinct views on this topic. The first represented the participants' view of the importance of CPD in the context of being professional.

FG1 Participant 2, *'It would be absolutely critical that if you are going to be a business coach with real clients then you are going to need to stay on the edge of the development of the field you find yourself working in.'*

The second represented the importance of coaches keeping up to date on coaching matters and the field in which they work.

FG1 Participant 5, *'I think if you just keep doing what you have always done you don't get better, you don't stay in the same place, you are likely to get worse. So, I don't think just doing the job is enough personally, any job.'*

FG2 Participant 3, *'If you are coaching in our sector, how do you keep up to date with what is going on in our sector? What is going on in the world of Learning and Development, all those kinds of things.'*

The third view on this topic questioned whether coaching is a true profession.

FG1 Participant 2, *'I think part of the issue we may be having here as well is the word profession. You are going to find that all of the established professions have the expectancy of personal development. I would argue that coaching is not yet a profession.'*

Some participants were supportive of coaching becoming a profession and others were non-committal about this point.

Subordinate theme 2b – Regulation

Definition: *As determined by law or a buyer /contract for coaching services.*

This theme received comments from only one of the Focus Groups.

The word ‘regulation’ was repeated several times by most of the participants, however, the comments focused on different aspects of regulation including who would regulate, what would be regulated and whether coaching/supervision should be regulated.

Examples include:

FG1 Participant 3, *‘I would expect them to continue to develop themselves but whether we could make it mandatory, I think it would be difficult as a buyer, it would be really difficult for us to regulate that. So, we are putting a lot of trust in our coaches.’*

FG1 Participant 5, *‘I guess as the buyer you regulate it by not buying people that you don’t see continuing to do good work. So, you are quite a powerful regulatory control actually on quality.’*

5.4.3 Superordinate theme 3 – Definition of coaching

Definition: *The lack of definition, the need for a common definition and clarity.*

The Focus Groups were not asked directly, or indirectly, to discuss the definition of coaching yet two participants, mentioned it seven times in the course of the conversation.

Two participants, one from each group, pointed out the difficulty in answering questions about coaching supervision without a clear definition of coaching.

FG1 Participant 2 – *‘I think there is a real need to define when you are talking about coaching, again it is used in a generic form, the word coach is really unhelpful.’*

Most of the references from Focus Group Participant 2 focused on the lack of definition and how generic the term had become in everyday use. She highlighted that this could have real implications of misuse such as a danger in what work coaches are capable of delivering and what checks are in place to ensure that the coach is working within the bounds of their competence.

5.4.4 Superordinate theme 4 – Definition of supervision

Definition: *Thoughts, observations, ideas, challenges and doubts about what is missing and needs changing from the definition given.*

For each Focus Group session, participants were invited to comment on what they liked and did not like about a given definition of supervision (See Appendix 13). All participants responded giving a total of 34 references.

Some participants chose to comment on the specific wording, i.e. what they liked or disliked about the definition given, whilst others mentioned what they thought was missing or what should be changed to improve it.

FG 1 Participant 1 – *‘The only word that I missed in that definition is the word challenge.’*

Some responses went behind the definition to ask whether a more fundamental question had been asked about the purpose of the supervision and whose needs were being served.

FG 2 Participant 2 – *‘I do not feel the most foundational, fundamental question has been adequately addressed which is why, what is the purpose of supervision?’*

Other comments focused on the distinction between a personal coach and business coach and there were several mentions about how supervision should be carried out.

FG 2 Participant 2 – *‘We expect someone to go to a supervisor if they are having problems.’*

5.4.5 Superordinate theme 5 – Purpose of supervision

Three distinctions emerged from the Focus Groups regarding the purpose of supervision which were: the benefits, the expectations and the risks.

Definition: *The results or outputs of supervision in terms of benefits, expectations and risks.*

Subordinate theme 5a – Benefits

As part of the requirement to take part in this research (see Appendix 6), all participants needed to have a connection with supervision; as a buyer who expects it of the coaches they engage, as a supervisor who offers the service, as a coach who takes part in supervision or a representative of a Professional Coaching body who is knowledgeable about this topic. It was interesting to note that even though all the participants have

some level of knowledge and/or experience of supervision, there were only contributions from four participants on this topic, i.e. only half the participants commented on the benefits of supervision.

In Focus Group 2, the references were unconnected and there was no clear indication of a common benefit of supervision. Instead, the conversation focused on the benefits of supervision for larger groups, including a group of coaches, stakeholders or others involved in the process.

Subordinate theme 5b – Expectations

Definition: Expectations as participants have experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body.

This subordinate theme had 14 references that came from both Focus Groups. In Focus Group 2, it is worth highlighting that six of the seven references were from the same participant which means only a third of that group contributed to this theme. None of the other participants offered additional comments on what they would not expect of supervision, however they all agreed with Participant 2's comments.

The participants mostly described their expectations in the future rather than past tense, which may point to their lack of previous and/or current knowledge about what happens in supervision. For example:

FG1 Participant 3 - *'As a buyer, I would be looking for supervision to help the coach be the best they can be (for themselves), not just for the coach the client and the organisation.'*

Subordinate theme 5c – Risks

Definition: Risks as each participant has experienced them from their perspective as a coach, supervisor, buyer or representative of a professional body.

This theme was only discussed by Focus Group 2 and all three of those participants commented. Five of the eight references addressed the supervisor or the role of the supervisor as the main risk. Examples include:

FG2 Participant 2 - *'If you have the same supervisor for too long that you get too comfortable then miss the challenge that supervision should be having?'*

FG2 Participant 1 - *'I can see a risk of the supervisor giving advice but only knowing what they have learnt via the coach. With blind spots, etc. so that is a risk but that would just*

go in the poor supervision risk I would suggest. As in, you have got the risk of the supervisor not being good enough.'

It is interesting to note that this was mentioned as a key risk by buyers given that they would not typically have direct contact with a supervisor.

5.4.6 Superordinate theme 6 – Qualifications of supervisor

Definition: Qualifications, permission, rights and criteria to be a supervisor.

There were marked differences between the comments from each Focus Group. In Focus Group 1, half the references related to bad experiences where the supervisor was not well qualified to supervise and the other half related to good experiences from qualified and experienced supervisors.

A common theme for Focus Group 1 was that participants expected supervisors to have been a coach and/or still be working as a coach.

FG 1 Participant 1 – *'I am looking for great coaches to supervise me.'*

This point was seen as important as it indicates the importance of the supervisor having a degree of professional empathy.

FG 1 Participant 5 – *'I want someone who is competent and understands my world as a coach and the business world in which I operate as a coach.'*

A point mentioned by both Focus Groups was for the coach to understand the world of business:

FG1 Participant 2 - *'Coaches just get the wrong kind of supervision because the supervisor is not embedded in the work, who doesn't understand the context, they don't understand the work in the role of the business coach and the supervision is misdirected, it is ill informed.'*

FG1 Participant 5 - *'I want someone to understand the business world, I want someone to understand what it is like to be a coach in the business world and I also want them to have a sense of what it is like to be a human doing those difficult things.'*

Conspicuous by its absence from this theme was any mention of formal supervision qualifications or specific skills. Participant 2 from Focus Group 2 made an astute observation about there being no barriers to entry, i.e. there are no mandatory or minimum requirements to be a supervisor.

5.4.7 Superordinate theme 7 – Supervision conditions

Definition: The conditions expected to be in place when supervision happens.

This superordinate theme had a total of 12 references, 11 of which came from buyers. This is particularly relevant as several of the participants are not direct users of supervision so might not have expected to raise this point.

Endeavouring to ensure and maintain confidentiality was a key point for both groups and seen as a vital component in supervision. Examples include:

FG 1 Participant 3 – *‘Maintain confidentiality but I don’t know if you can but you don’t have to mention names or even talk about the situation and still get some input on it maybe?’*

FG 2 Participant 1 – *‘I would hold it (confidentiality) the same as solicitor/client confidence and I think people would be utterly horrified if that were breached.’*

Focus Group 2 also made three references to conducting supervision in a group rather than a one to one setting and highlighted the challenges of maintaining confidentiality when internal supervision is delivered in a group setting.

FG2 Participant 2 - *‘And I guess in an internal coaching context, which as I said I would love to be putting in place, if we were to have peer supervision, you would also be saying and your situation might be discussed by a bunch of internal people that are all going to sit down and talk about it. There’s a lot of a two-person conversation getting much bigger isn’t it?’*

FG2 Participant 1, *‘Internally, supervision is really hard around confidence because with the best will in the world, you sort of get to know who people are coaching and in the abstract it becomes just a bit of a gossip.’*

5.4.8 Superordinate theme 8 – Supervision doubts

Definition: Concerns, questions, doubts and troubles about the current state of supervision.

Several of the comments in this theme were stated as questions rather than absolute doubts or troubles.

The need for supervision was questioned along with the mandatory nature associated with supervision.

FG 1 Participant 2 – *'I think my main concern still sits with the predominant view that seems to be prevailing in some circles that you must have a supervisor.'*

Participant 1 from Focus Group 1 made a connected point about the fact that in the past supervision used to be talked about more and that it is not spoken about so much now and this led them to question whether it was still important to the coaching community.

Another question discussed by the groups relates to what constitutes adequate supervision.

FG 1 Participant 4 – *'We trust them (the coaches) to have adequate supervision and the question what is adequate, has never occurred to me.'*

Some outlying concerns were raised in relation to the influence of the psychological community, the supervision of coaches and of people in the workplace and the link with stakeholders in the coaching process.

5.4.9 Superordinate theme 9 – Work to be supervised

Definition: *The topics covered, focus of the conversation and balance of negative and positive.*

The most common point that arose in both Focus Groups was that the work to be supervised should be focused on more negative issues including dealing with those things that are not going well in the coaching, finding gaps in the coach's work, handling challenges in the work or in the coach themselves. There was no mention of positive or successful work being the work that should be taken to be supervised.

Several participants viewed the coach's mindset, presence, attitude and approach to their work as the work that ought to be supervised. Examples include:

FG 1 Participant 3 – *'I think it is something about the coach themselves, the state they are in when they are coaching.'*

FG 1 Participant 5 – *'The work is where the personal intrudes into the professional, where the coach's 'stuff' is actually showing up and potentially contaminating the work.'*

The third common topic in this theme related to boundaries including the importance of having them, creating them and then managing them. Both groups mentioned this topic and examples of this include:

FG1 Participant 2 - *'It sits around contracting and the proper boundaries of our work.'*

FG2 Participant 3 - *'As a buyer, for me what needs to be supervised is that I want to make sure that the coach knows when they have gone beyond, something has gone beyond what they can help with because there are conversations that will move beyond something that perhaps the coach feels they are qualified for.'*

The reasons for the need to pay attention to boundaries in supervision varied from participant to participant. Some saw it as a quality check or reassurance about the safety of the coaching work, others saw it as the common root of problems that coaches frequently encounter and others viewed it as a key aspect of personal development for the coach.

It is also of note that there were two references to the experience of the coach having an impact on what work would be supervised.

FG2 Participant 3 - *'As you become more experienced, your need for supervision and guidance, I imagine, becomes different because of course when you are starting out as a coach, I imagine there is a lot of the assurance and confidence.'*

5.4.10 Superordinate theme 10 – Unanswered questions

Definition: *The gaps, concerns, lack of information/agreement and questions about supervision.*

Participants from both groups offered several examples of unanswered questions they had about coaching supervision. On the basis that these references may be of value as future research topics, they are listed in their entirety in Appendix 14.

A common question that emerged throughout the discussion across both Focus Groups relates to the purpose of supervision. This covered what the overarching purpose of supervision is or should be and whether supervision is necessary for coaches.

FG 1 Participant 2 – *'The primary question is what is the purpose of supervision for business coaches and is it necessary?'*

5.5 Focus group summary

Overall, analysis of the Focus Groups surfaced four key superordinate themes:

- Work to be supervised
- Definition of supervision
- Purpose of supervision

- Qualifications of a supervisor

The four superordinate themes were embedded into the interview guide questions and the results of these are discussed in the following section.

5.6 One to one interviews – General overview

The one to one interview participants gave a clear sense that the questions they were being asked were thought provoking. Many of the responses came after long pauses and hesitations and many used language to reflect this:

Coach 4 - *'So, ehm, I well, urgh.'*

Supervisor 1 - *'What an interesting question'.*

Buyer 5 - *'Good question'.*

Following their interview, one of the participants sent an email that contained their reflections on our conversation and several other participants shared their thoughts on the answers they gave in the interview in subsequent conversations and business meetings, demonstrating that the conversation had stayed on their minds long after the interview had ended.

All the interview participants commented that they would be taking action and making changes to their practices because of the thoughts provoked by the interview questions.

5.6.1 Themes – One to one interviews

The 18 interviews participants included:





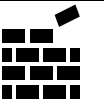


- 5 business coaches
- 5 coach supervisors
- 8 buyers

The transcripts of the one to one interviews do not identify the names of the participants. Instead, each participant has been assigned a code to keep their contributions anonymous.

Given that the interview structure was heavily informed by the outcome of the Focus Groups, there were several superordinate themes that directly matched the themes that had emerged from the Focus Group analysis. In addition to these superordinate themes, the analysis highlighted several subordinate themes.

The superordinate and subordinate themes from the thematic analysis of the one to one interviews are shown Table 5-2. These represent the results of all three groups of participants. Each group will be discussed in detail in the following sections of this chapter.


Table 5-2 One to one interview superordinate and subordinate themes and references

Theme	Subordinate theme	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer		Total
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No	
 1.Purpose	1a. Intent	47	5/5	33	5/5	38	7/8	118
	1b. To be supervised	25	5/5	23	5/5	26	7/8	74
	1c. Not to be supervised	0	0/5	0	0/5	6	2/8	6
								198
 2.Benefits	2a. Growth	14	5/5	18	5/5	7	6/8	39
	2b. Reassurance	10	5/5	9	4/5	7	6/8	26
	2c. Agency	0	0/5	6	2/5	0	0/8	6
								71
 3.Risks	3a. General risks	0	0/5	5	2/5	0	0/8	5
	3b. Quality	14	5/5	6	5/5	22	7/8	42
	3c. Contract	2	1/5	5	3/5	3	3/8	10
	3d. Psychology	3	3/5	12	4/5	4	3/8	19
	3e. Blind spots	8	4/5	5	3/5	3	3/8	16
	3f. Boundaries	1	1/5	5	3/5	2	2/8	8
								100
 4.Definition of supervision	4a. Likes	6	3/5	8	3/5	9	6/8	23
	4b. Dislikes	2	2/5	3	3/5	11	6/8	16
	4c. Missing	6	3/5	10	3/5	10	6/8	26
								65
 5.Process set up	5a. By the organisation	1	1/5	6	3/5	21	7/8	28
	5b. By the supervisor and/or coach	14	5/5	17	4/5	13	5/8	44
								72
 6.Professionalism	6a. Qualification of supervisor - broadest sense	18	3/5	10	4/5	14	6/8	42
	– Experience	18	5/5	8	4/5	13	7/8	39
	– Badge	7	4/5	7	3/5	9	5/8	23
	6b. Behaviours in supervision	4	3/5	16	5/5	9	4/8	29
	6c. Professional bodies	2	2/5	6	4/5	4	4/8	12
								145
 7.Unanswered questions		11	5/5	9	4/5	12	7/8	32

5.6.2 Superordinate theme 1 – Purpose

Definition: What the purpose of supervision is for the coach.

Table 5-3 One to one interview: Purpose references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 1.Purpose	1a. Intent	47	5/5	33	5/5	38	7/8
	1b. To be supervised	25	5/5	23	5/5	26	7/8
	1c. Not to be supervised	0	0/5	0	0/5	6	2/8

This superordinate theme received the highest number of references – a total of 198. However, subordinate theme 1c., only received references from the buyer group. This is particularly interesting as members of this group are unlikely to be in supervision so their direct experience of it is potentially limited. The coach and supervisor group did not mention anything that they did not think appropriate to take to supervision. In contrast, the buyer group did mention topics they thought were inappropriate to take to supervision.

The following is a more in-depth analysis of each subordinate theme for each of the participating groups. This analysis highlights the similarities and differences across the groups and includes some illustrative quotes.

Purpose: Subordinate theme 1a – Intent of supervision

Definition: What the supervision is intending to achieve or deliver.

This subordinate theme had the highest number of references of all the subordinate themes – a total of 118 across all the groups – which illustrates how much the participants had to say on this topic.

Coaches

For the coaching participants, there was no one overarching focus of this subordinate theme rather an indication that the intent of supervision can be many things to many people. One of the coaches made a comment that illustrated the struggle many coaches experience about what to take to supervision:

Coach 5 - *'I think the more experienced you get the more difficult it can be to find what you really want to take to supervision.'*

Instead of one intent for supervision, a variety of topics were raised by this group. One was the need for supervision to support the growth and development needs of the individual coach. Examples include:

Coach 1 – *'So, the purpose is for me to grow and learn myself and challenge myself, just like my clients are doing and being honest about myself and failure and limitations, etc.'*

Coach 2 – *'So, if I am the instrument of my practice, then there is an opportunity for me to continually or periodically transform to the next level of my competency in a more systemic way.'*

Coach 4 – *'I see it as a developmental piece of work for me.'*

There were also several references to the purpose of supervision being to provide safety for the coaching and in particular, safety for the coach. Examples include:

Coach 1 - *'It is a one to one intervention so it is for your safety that you know, that I am sometimes taking a second, in layman terms, taking a second opinion and to expand , for safety and for sense checking really that that is happening.'*

Coach 2 - *'Where else do you take your fears and concerns and feel the compassion of someone who can empathise without rescuing you but allowing you to be but knowing they are walking with you?'*

Another topic arising from this subordinate theme related to the requirements of professional bodies, a topic that also emerged in the professionalism theme that is discussed later. Examples include:

Coach 1 - *'There is a bit about inter-relationship with the accreditation in the professional bodies and how you align to the accreditation of that.'*

Coach 5 - *'Obviously, you know if you keep with your accreditation, you have to go through it (supervision).'*

Supervisors

This group emphasised that supervision should focus on the coach and the work the coach was engaged in. There were three distinct areas that the references highlighted for

this subordinate theme. First, references relating to a broader view, having perspective and looking at the coaching work more systemically. Examples include:

Supervisor 4 – *‘It’s the one word that is coming up is holistic.’*

Supervisor 5 – *‘It is really helping them (the coaches) be able to step away from that and see themselves looking back into the system and seeing how they can resource and support their coachees more.’*

Secondly, that the intent of supervision is about providing some form of check on ethics, competence and professionalism in the work. Examples include:

Supervisor 1 - *‘I have heard people say, supervisees, I am hearing the coaching police in my head.’*

Supervisor 5 - *‘Whether it is one to one, team, organisational and it’s really making sure that you are being, you are able to work as a professionally, ethically and competently as you can as a coach.’*

Thirdly, there was a focus on the intent of supervision being about the growth and development of the coach. Examples include:

Supervisor 1 - *‘Well, I think because I am so steeped in the supervision world, the why is very obvious, it is about the monitoring, the support and growth (of the coach).’*

Supervisor 3 - *‘I see my job as a supervisor, as ultimately about helping that coach to go back and do an even better job. Ok, that to me is the goal of supervision.’*

Buyers

The buyer group did not offer a clear view on what they thought the intent of supervision should be - as illustrated in this quote:

Buyer 2 - *‘I have no idea who the coach is having supervision with’*

This group answered this question by speculating as to what they thought the intent of supervision might be. This was reflected in the language they used to answer the questions. Examples include:

Buyer 4 - *‘What I think the supervision can do is...’*

Buyer 6 - *‘I wonder whether ...’*

Buyer 7 - *'I imagine...'*

This group's references related almost entirely to the intent of supervision in relation only to the coach. This included the work they would be doing and the coach's personal growth and development. No mention was made of other stakeholder groups who may be affected or involved in the supervision. Examples include:

Buyer 3 - *'I want coaches who are developing and supported and I think good supervision can provide both of those.'*

Buyer 5 - *'I would probably be expecting them to use their supervision for themselves as opposed to for an organisational bias point of view.'*

Buyer 7 - *'I think a coach, a really good coach, will always look to improve their game, always, always, always.'*

In describing their views on intent of supervision, the buyer group made several references to the quality and professionalism of the work being an important part of what supervision should be giving attention to. The following are examples of how this group described quality as part of supervision:

Buyer 5 - *'I'd say there is a quality thing, the quality of the conversation. Potentially less good. I think it is that I am conscious that I come from such a qualification driven profession that it feels important to me and that maybe it isn't but it does feel important to me. I just think it is like a kite mark.'*

Buyer 6 - *'The reassurance for me would be that there is something else going on, there is another high quality process that is happening which is almost like a triple lock, a high process that is happening that is focused on making sure that the coaching relationship delivers value and is done properly.'*

Purpose: Subordinate theme 1b – To be supervised

Definition: What are the coach and supervisor actually working on in supervision in terms of the content, the items and topics?

This subordinate theme had the second highest number of references – a total of 74 references across all three groups of interviewees.

Coaches

References from the coaches demonstrate that there is not one typical topic or recurring item that a coach brings to be supervised but more that this can change and is fluid from session to session. Examples include:

Coach 3 – *‘All of the work one does as a coach in a sense needs to be supervised but on a regular basis, not every session obviously but an appropriate interval.’*

Coach 4 – *‘Skills, performance, transition and transformation type model of coaching, I would say that probably all coaching needs supervision.’*

Coach 5 – *‘What I am thinking about is how I have changed my use of supervision as I have become more experienced and what I bring for supervision or to supervision.’*

Only one coach specifically mentioned taking an example of good work to be supervised and they mentioned that they often take aspects of the coaching they wish to celebrate. This observation contrasts with several references stating that coaches typically take problems or challenges to supervision.

In addition to citing good and challenging work as topics to take to supervision, this group also referenced some specific topics that feature in the work they think should be taken to be supervised. Examples include:

Coach 1 - *‘A new scenario I have not come across before as a coach that I would like help with’*

Coach 5 - *‘I sometimes take business development type things as well to supervision.’*

Coach 1 - *‘The ethical piece, am I behaving ethically?’*

Coach 5 - *‘I think it is around boundaries, so any coaching that has got the potential to cross boundaries either ethically or moving out of the coaching space say more into mentoring or more therapeutic space.’*

Supervisors

Similar to the coach group, the supervisor references illustrated the breadth of issues and topics that are brought to be supervised and because of this breadth, they highlighted the specific need for clear contracting and boundary management to ensure the supervision agenda was clear.

Supervisor 5 – *‘(But) a lot is them understanding the whole aspect of making sure that expectations are clear on all sides and there is transparency, so it is down to the whole aspect on contracting.’*

There were also several references to the coach’s behaviour and impact on the work as important topics to be supervised:

Supervisor 1 - *‘The coach has their own anxieties and their own areas of blinds spots and so forth, so I think that is what is very often being presented in supervision.’*

Supervisor 3- *‘Reflect on the areas that you haven’t reflected on, to pay attention to the relationship with the client, surface things that may be getting in the way of you doing as good a job as possible with your coachee.’*

Buyers

Like the other groups, the buyer group also referenced the breadth of work that can be taken to supervision:

Buyer 3 – *‘I think it is looking at the client, coach relationship, ethical issues, coach development, approaches to coaching, stress testing those, anything that I think is useful for the coach.’*

Buyer 5 – *‘The glib answer is everything.’*

This group referenced some specific topics that they would expect to be included in the breadth of work coaches would take to supervision including:

Buyer 2 - *‘I suppose tools and techniques. Different approaches and different ideas and you know, sort of peer to peer so that you carry on learning.’*

Buyer 5 - *‘Team coaching and one to one coaching at a real high level.’*

Buyer 7 - *‘Times they had come across a sticky situation and from a coaching perspective just didn’t know how to work through it.’*

Purpose: Subordinate theme 1c – Not to be supervised

Definition: What should or could not be worked on in supervision, i.e. the content, the items and topics that should be excluded.

This subordinate theme only had references from the buyer group. It is surprising that there were no references from the coach or supervisor groups given that coaches and

supervisors are likely to have more knowledge and personal experience of supervision and therefore be likely to have a view on this.

Within the buyer group, two interviewees had a clear view on what they specifically thought should not be taken to supervision. For one, the focus of the comments related to issues of confidentiality and examples include:

Buyer 2 – *‘What I would be uncomfortable with is any information about the firm or the client or whatever it is being passed onto someone I don’t have any control over.’*

Buyer 2 – *‘You know there could be sensitive commercial stuff coming out and you know, that would make me nervous.’*

The other buyer referenced topics where coaching is conducted in a more informal manner and they did not see supervision as a necessary requirement:

Buyer 5 – *‘Where people are doing informal, so like a manager as coach.... I don’t feel that is the place for formal supervision. It might be the place for an action learning session... I don’t think that is where supervision is needed.’*


Buyer 5 – *‘Working in those territories as opposed to what people might call team coaching which is facilitating an away day.’*

Buyer 5 also mentioned that they had neither set an expectation, nor had an expectation, of a coach working in their organisation to take the coaching cases from their organisation to supervision.

5.6.3 Superordinate theme 2 – Benefits

Definition: The value added.

Table 5-4 One to one interview: Benefits references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 2.Benefits	2a. Growth	14	5/5	18	5/5	7	6/8
	2b. Reassurance	10	5/5	9	4/5	7	6/8
	2c. Agency	0	0/5	6	2/5	0	0/8

All participants identified benefits from supervision as they saw or experienced them. Within this overall theme, there were three subordinate themes identified: growth, reassurance and agency. Whilst growth and reassurance feature across all groups, there

are subtle differences in the focus of this subordinate theme and these are presented in more detail below.

Benefits: Subordinate theme 2a – Growth

Coaches

For the coaches, the focus for this theme was on personal and profession growth. The following quotes illustrate how the coaches described this:

Coach 1 – *‘This is the time to sit down, reflect, have a change of pace, really look at who you are, you know, if your practice is what you want it to be?’*

Coach 3 – *‘A personal learning first of all, a coach being supervised, learns. Absolutely, and that is what you are there to do, learn about your practice and actually about yourself.’*

The group discussed both support and challenge being necessary to develop a coach’s learning and growth and said this happens most effectively in a reflective space.

Comments included:

Coach 1 - *‘Time to sit down, reflect’*

Coach 1 - *‘The quality of the aha moment.’*

Coach 5 - *‘The opportunity to have that space, time, framework to think.’*

Supervisors

For the supervisors, the focus of this theme was on personal growth for the coach and for the supervisor. Examples include:

Supervisor 1 – *‘I just love it actually. I find it really stimulating and I do genuinely feel that I am learning a lot as well, it’s not just about the growth of the supervisee, it is about my growth as well.’*

Supervisor 5 – *‘It has really improved my learning, my competence, my growth.’*

Like the coaches’ responses, supervisors reported that the benefits for the coach came from a reflective space where the coach would consider and explore issues with a view to taking action:

Supervisor 3 - *‘The supervisee reflects, goes away, feels empowered to do thing differently, do things better, carry on doing what is working already.’*

Supervisor 4 - *'People have generated clarity during the conversation.'*

Buyers

The buyer group had a shift in focus for this theme that related to the growth of the coach, as a coach. They questioned how well the coach was given support, guidance and challenge and whether the coach gained different perspectives, experience or insight that would help them develop their craft. For example:

Buyer 1 – *'I think they can speak a bit more freely and openly about problems or things they have struggled with or what an opportunity for them sort of think about what they did right, what they did wrong, what they could improve on.'*

Buyer 7 – *'You are then gaining input from different perspectives, different types of experience from the other coaches and I can imagine that being super helpful on a very non-professional level.'*

Benefits: Subordinate theme 2b – Reassurance

Coaches

Definition: *Feeling part of a wider group, community, not alone, ethical dilemmas, safety net.*

The coaches highlighted the need to give attention to their personal safety as a coach and the need to be able to normalise the work they were engaged in.

Coach 4 – *'Normalising my experience of difficult work. Normalising my experience of not needing to be perfect.'*

In addition to normalising their coaching experiences, the coaches also commented on reassurance as a form of professional and personal safety about the work they are delivering.

Coach 2 - *'I think there is the provocation to be with moments of flawed practice in the service of me growing'.*

Coach 5 - *'It is that kind of check and balance piece that is important', (the benefit) I am sure is safe, boundaried, professional practice.'*

Supervisors

The definition for this subordinate theme for the supervisors had a different focus to the coaches but a similar one to the buyers.

Definition: Quality, risk management, being held to account, consistency and ethics.

As with the coaches, the supervisor group also saw a benefit of supervision as the ability to give attention to the reassurance of the coach as well as giving quality assurance and safety centred around ethical practice. In addition to reassurance for the individual coach, the supervisor group also mentioned the benefit of giving reassurance to some of the stakeholders in the supervision process.

Supervisor 1 - *'I think they (organisations) need to know there is some sort of quality control about the supervision as well'.*

Supervisor 2 - *'It gives someone a huge sense of their contribution to another'.*

Supervisor 5 - *'So that coaching will be seen and experienced as a profession.'*

Buyers

The definition for this subordinate theme for the buyers had a different focus to the coaches but was the same as the one for the supervisor group.

Definition: Quality, risk management, being held to account, consistency and ethics

For the buyers, the focus was on the quality and standards of the coaching being delivered to ensure that the coach was in some way being held to account for the coaching work they were delivering for the client organisation. Examples quotes include:

Buyer 2 – *'The benefit would be consistency, a certain quality standard, I would see it as being because somebody would feel like they are being held to account, normal sort of responsibility I suppose.'*

Buyer 6 – *'So, if I look at that as a buyer of coaching services, for me, that would give me reassurance around risk management and quality of coaching.'*

Another benefit mentioned was having reassurance that the ethics of the coaching would be supervised.

Buyer 3 - *'(It is) better development for the coach that should impact on the client, different approaches, helping them to resolve any ethical issues that they need to step out of the coaching or change it or speak to the buyer, so there is something about keeping it ethical which I think is really important.'*

Benefit: Subordinate theme 2c – Agency

Definition: A form of self-determination, purpose and self-advocating.

This was addressed only by participants from the supervisory group. As discussed in the literature review, the concept of coaching agency is becoming increasingly topical.

Examples of how the supervisors discussed this include:

Supervisor 2 – ‘Well, one of the primary benefits of us looking closely at what they want or seem to want, and some of that is not yet conscious, is that they have agency. About how we have contracted and that is really important, I mean like that is really important.’

The concept of agency was also raised in a later sector on unanswered questions and is listed in Appendix 15.

5.6.4 Superordinate theme 3 – Risk

Definition: The risks of supervision.

This definition was deliberately broad so that participants could answer this question in whatever way they thought appropriate. Participants made references to both the risks of not having supervision as well as the potential risks of poor supervision, although the latter were more frequently mentioned.

Risks received the third highest number of references that illustrates the importance this theme has across all groups. However, there are differences on what aspect of risk is important to each of the groups and these are described below.

Table 5-5 One to one interview: Risks references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 3.Risks	3a. General risks	0	0/5	5	2/5	0	0/8
	3b. Quality	14	5/5	6	5/5	22	7/8
	3c. Contract	2	1/5	5	3/5	3	3/8
	3d. Psychological	3	3/5	12	4/5	4	3/8
	3e. Blind spots	8	4/5	5	3/5	3	3/8
	3f. Boundaries	1	1/5	5	3/5	2	2/8

Risks: Subordinate theme 3a – General risks

In this theme, only two supervisors raised general risks of supervision that could apply to a coach, namely, the importance of professional insurance. The following are quotes that explain their concern:

Supervisor 3 – *‘I always have in mind, does your professional liability cover you for this?’*

Supervisor 4 – *‘Your insurance could be invalidated if you are working with clients in a leadership context or something and you could be taken to court if you haven’t been keeping up your practice, including supervision then your insurance could be invalidated.’*

Supervisor 4 mentioned another risk that could apply to all coaches, namely the risk related to the storage of supervision notes. These are required to be stored safely and appropriately in line with legal requirements.

Risks: Subordinate theme 3b – Quality

Definition: Related to quality of the supervision or the coaching.

Coaches

All the coach participants referenced quality as a risk of supervision and in particular, the possibility of poor supervision or poor supervisor behaviours:

Coach 3 - *‘I think these (risks) all associate with inept supervision, a risk of feeling, I am safe now because I am supervised when actually the quality of the supervision leaves a lot to be desired.’*

Coach 2 - *‘I think there is a great risk to create an unhelpful hierarchy for judgement to be part of the mix which is not driven by wisdom or experience but driven by ego.’*

Coach 5 made 5 references to supervision being ‘superficial’ or a ‘tick box exercise’, and invariably in pursuit of satisfying the needs of a coaching professional body.

Supervisors

All the supervisors commented on this theme and like the coaches, the focus was on the risk of having poor supervision.

The supervisor group added an alternative view on the risk of supervision, that of not having any form of quality control to protect the client, the coach or the organisation.

Supervisor 3 took this further:

'They could be getting overconfident, they you know, whatever, worst case scenario, could they do damage?'

Buyers

In responding to the question, a few of the buyers commented on either their lack of knowledge about the risks of supervision and/or how little thought they had given to it until now.

Buyer 5 - *'I realise I have made a lot of assumptions around the quality of supervision that I may not have thought about before.'*

Buyer 7 - *'I am making this up as I am going along, sorry.'*

This group identified the risk of supervision not delivering any value or benefit for those involved.

Buyer 6 - *'I think for some it might have an impact.'*

Buyer 6, took this further:

'I would say risk number 1 is that the coachee doesn't derive much benefit from it which may cause some negative discussion within the organisation around the programme wasn't worth it or that's the point of coaching or why should I give coaching or allow my team to have coaching cause it is useless.'

Buyer 8 - *'Principally, the only risk I perceive is that it just doesn't work and we have wasted some money.'*

Buyers also referred to the skill and approach of the coach.

Buyer 1 saw a risk of them being *'too inflexible'*.

Buyer 7 saw a risk of *'promoting approaches, techniques which may not be the best for the client.'*

In addition, three of the buyers mentioned that there is a risk of supervision being devalued, particularly if there were no standards set for the people delivering it. This state of affairs was seen as making a risk of supervision becoming a tick box exercise.

Risks: Subordinate theme 3c – Contract

Definition: All things related to the written and unwritten contract. This can be with the client, the supervisor, the buyer or the professional body.

The similarity in the number and content of references does not warrant further analysis by group as the comments are all related to issues of contracting. Examples to illustrate this from each group are as follows:

Coach 3 - *'Issues within the coaching contract itself, if not examined from an independent 3rd party perspective might begin to fester and cause problems for both the coach and for the individual client themselves.'*

Supervisor 1 - *'I know that there are a lot of cowboys and cowgirls out there who are not so keen on the idea of supervision sometimes and it does bother me, how unconstrained coaching can be. So, this is why I always place emphasis on the contracting aspect that I think without a contract we can't be accountable as a profession.'*

Buyer 2 - *'I think in terms of the confidentiality piece and the lack of control, you know you are not contracting with that, as a buyer, I am not. I don't have a direct relationship with that person (the supervisor), the other person involved.'*

Risks: Subordinate theme 3d – Psychological

Definition: Related to psychological topics or effects.

A fifth of all the references related to the psychological risks associated with supervision and included psychological terms and language.

Coaches

Several of the references contained psychological terms and language. **Coach 4** mentioned a risk of projection, **Coach 2** mentioned guarding, keeping things hidden and shame and **Coach 5** mentioned isolation.

Supervisors

The comments from this group on the psychological risks related mostly to either the experience of being supervised or to the experience/knowledge of psychology by the supervisor giving the supervision.

Supervisor 1 - *'I think having too much (psychological background), I suppose I am speaking from the situations I have observed, I think there is a risk of pathologizing.'*

Supervisor 2 - *'I suppose there could be a downside if there's a collusive way of thinking, you know, so we just reinforce each other, we reinforce each other's prejudices, we reinforce each other's mental models.'*

Supervisor 2 - *'There might not be a readiness to address some of the stuff that is seen.'*

Buyers

Two of the buyer group interviewees identified the issue of reliance and dependency on the supervisor as a psychological risk. Others highlighted the risk of supervision not working and causing embarrassment and/or damage to the coach.

Risks: Subordinate theme 3e – Blind spots

Definition: The risk of the things that coach, client, supervisor or buyer might miss.

Across all the groups, the focus of the comments related to a concern that either the coach or the supervisor might miss something in the supervision session. Examples include:

Coach 3 - *'There is a greater risk of blind spots in the coach and staying there because you don't see it any other way and how do you find out if you have a blind spot unless you hold yourself to account?'*

Supervisor 3 - *'I think not having enough (psychological knowledge) means you might not recognise a serious situation when someone needed a different kind of help.'*

Buyer 3 - *'You could risk missing something. But it is interesting, the more I talk about this, the more I think well, yeah, but if you don't go to supervision and I don't bring up a client with a supervisor then they are not going to know what work I am doing anyway!'*

Risks: Subordinate theme 3f - Boundaries

Definition: Risks that relate to personal, contractual, organisational and relational.

Boundaries, and the management of them, received the highest number of references from all the participants. Interviewees in the supervisor group used the word 'boundary' in four of their five references

Supervisor 3 - *'I don't mean not safe in a dangerous way, you know, just because they could end up being blamed for certain things that could have been managed much earlier on in making sure the boundaries were all managed.'*

Confidentiality was also mentioned as an area of risk for all the stakeholders concerned with supervision services and that the physical meeting place also required boundaries.

Buyer 2 - *'I've got a coach who I have worked with before but they have lots of these discussions in coffee shops opposite big train stations and what worries me about where these conversations are happening. If you can hear them, you know.'*

5.6.5 Superordinate theme 4 – Definition of supervision

This superordinate theme had a specific definition that was given to the participants during the interview. The participants were asked to comment on what they liked, disliked and thought was missing from the given definition. The given definition was:

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


Within this theme, there were three subordinate themes:

Likes – What the participants liked about the given definition

Dislikes – What the participants disliked about the given definition

Missing – What the participants thought was missing or conspicuous by its absence from the given definition

Table 5-6 One to one interview: Definition of supervision references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 4. Definition of supervision	4a. Likes	6	3/5	8	3/5	9	6/8
	4b. Dislikes	2	2/5	3	3/5	11	6/8
	4c. Missing	6	3/5	10	3/5	10	6/8

Definition of supervision: Subordinate theme 4a – Likes

Coaches

Three coaches made specific comments about what they liked about the given definition. One said she agreed with the whole definition whilst the others mentioned specific words or aspects of the definition that they liked. Specific words that were liked in the definitions included collaboration, dialogue and reflection.

Supervisors

Only three of the supervisors made comments about what they liked about the given definition including:

Supervisor 1 - *'Sounds ok actually'*

Supervisor 2 - *'Yep. I like it. I like that the words are not complicated and that it is quite crisp.'*

The supervisor group also singled out the words collaboration developmental as words they liked in the definition.

Buyers

Like the other groups, the buyers singled out specific words within the definition. This group highlighted the words 'collaborative' and 'reflective'.

Other than this, the buyers' comments were more neutral and non-committal regarding the definition. Examples include:

Buyer 1 - *'As a definition of the traditional interaction between coach and supervisor as we understand it, it is pretty good.'*

Buyer 6 - *'It is sort of to the point, it's inoffensive.'*

Definition of supervision: Subordinate theme 4b – Dislikes

The references for this subordinate theme encompassed three topics:

- **A dislike for a specific word or phrase**

An example comes from **Supervisor 3's** dislike of the word periodically.

- **A dislike for the meaning of a word or phrase**

Coach 3 commented on the meaning of a phrase in the definition:

'And reflective dialogue, well yes but does it say enough about the nature of the exchange because it could be head based, cognitive learning, it could be a moment of deep emotionality reflected or referenced and brought back into the room, it could be something intensely emotional in the room, the coach is in terms for example or part of the work, it could be something phenomenological, something about the fact that my left leg has suddenly gone incredibly lame and I don't know what is going on and who knows where that goes. In other word, reflective dialogue is a shorthand for a very significant, multifaceted quality of engagements.'

- **A dislike for the impact it had on the participant**

An example comes from **Supervisor 5**:

'You know what, it sounds like a load of coaching twaddle. I am being brutally honest here. I am a plain speaker. So, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with what it is saying, it is just it seems to be up its own backside.'

Definition of supervision: Subordinate theme 4c – Missing

Like the dislikes subordinate theme, the references for this subordinate theme centred mostly around the three topics of:

- **A specific word or phrase was missing**

Examples include:

Coach 2 - *'The piece that is missing is the compassionate support of the coach.'*

Supervisor 1 - *'So, if I was writing it, I would probably add something like the stimulating or creative interaction that occurs.'*

Buyer 2 - *'I suppose from a risk perspective, confidentiality (is missing).'*

- **The meaning of a word or phrase was missing**

Coach 1 - *'It doesn't actually say what the ultimate purpose, the end of it should be, the output I suppose the result.'*

Supervisor 2 - *'So then you would have to add another thing that clients mean, could be people they manage, could be colleagues, they could be stakeholders, you know, so there would be space for wiggle room.'*

Buyer 1 - *'It misses the, what to me is so more in a way, more significant, not a philosophical kind of notion of self-supervising.'*

- **The impact it had on the reader was missing**

Coach 3 - *'(What is missing is) professional holding to account, adherence to higher standards, something that answers the question, well why did he even think about supervision in the first place?'*

The supervisory group made no references to anything missing in relation to the impact on the participant. However, Supervisor 2 mentioned that there may need to be a different definition to address the supervision of team coaching.


Buyer 4 - *'A normal person wouldn't have clue about what that (the definition) was talking about.'*

5.6.6 Superordinate theme 5 – Process set up

Definition 1: The process set up by the organisation consists of the transactional pieces and logistics that are set up, owned and/or run by the buyer.

Definition 2: The process set up by the supervisor and/or coach consists of the transactional pieces and logistics that are set up, owned and/or run by the supervisor and/or the coach.

Table 5-7 One to one interview: Process set up references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 5.Process set up	5a. By the organisation	1	1/5	6	3/5	21	7/8
	5b. By the supervisor and/or coach	14	5/5	17	4/5	13	5/8

All three groups contributed to this superordinate theme although there are differences in the number of references made by the coaches in process set up by the organisation. The following is a more in-depth analysis of each subordinate theme, highlighting the differences in focus and including some illustrative quotes.

Process set up: Subordinate theme 5a – By the organisation

Coaches

Only one of the coaches made a reference to this theme addressing several process set up points. The focus of this subordinate theme was based on this coach's experience of what they are required to have in place, as a professional coach, in order to have their coaching services made available within a buying organisation. This requirement was based on both their direct contact with the buying organisation and their experience of working through a coaching organisation where their services were being brokered to a buying organisation.

Coach 2 - *'I think there is a corporate expectation where an external coach for example, if being recruited then it is a fairly common question to say and do you have a supervisor? And, occasionally to have to send a letter of confirmation from the supervisor that those practices are in place. Ehm, I have, I think I have also experienced recruitment, almost like coach bureaus wanting verification from the supervisor that the coach is in supervision so that they are seeking to underline the professionalism, credibility and CPD and from professional organisations who are offering coach credentials for some, it is very important that supervision is in place and for others, less so but it is always mentioned so far as I understand.'*

Supervisors

The supervisor group's responses were broad in that they offered views on what they thought was in place, what they thought should be in place and what was not in place or absent from the process set up. The following quotes represent the concerns about what was absent from the process set up:

Supervisor 1 – *'And one of the things that occurs many times is the lack of 3-way meetings so that although the coach and client are well able to come up with a set of objectives, the content in which they are doing that, hasn't always been defined.'*

Supervisor 5 – *'We have to have much tighter governance you know, clarity about who can coach who and managing the boundaries in terms of relationships.'*

Buyers

The buyer group had the most to say on this subordinate theme. They identified the lack of process set up in supervision from buyers, themselves included, and stated that this was a topic to which they had not given much thought or attention.

Buyer 1 - *'Like many others, we are guilty of expecting, and to a degree, monitoring that our coaches are in supervision but actually we don't really. If we put our hands on our heads and say, how do we know that, under challenge, how do we know that, what does that mean? We wouldn't be able to answer those questions.'*

Buyer 2 - *'I haven't even, as a buyer, I haven't even thought about that side of it to be perfectly honest. And so, I think until quite recently, it wasn't really something that I thought about to be it honest. It has been more recently though when I have remembered about it, if that makes sense, that I have thought, actually, how would that work and how should that work in terms of supervision?'*

Process set up: Subordinate theme 5b – By the supervisor and/or coach

Coaches

The two topics mentioned by this group highlighted the importance of making a distinction between one to one supervision and group supervision. Examples include:

Coach 1 – *'I have had individual and I am currently in group. I have not had group and individual together, so I was drawn naturally earlier on in my career to individual and now I have moved to group.'*

Coach 4 – *'So, I would say it can be structurally one to one, it can be group, it can be face to face, it can be Skype.'*

Coach 5 – *'I have various supervision arrangements, I have some group, individual and peer.'*

The other topic this group mentioned about setting up supervision was confidentiality. Examples include:

Coach 1 - *'I always say to my client when I say to my coachee client that I am in supervision and so I might talk about your cases in supervision on an anonymous basis.'*

Coach 2 - *'I speak to my clients and let them know that there may be situations that I might take to supervision, that I would honour the confidentiality.'*

Coach 3 - *'What are the foremost responsibilities of a supervisor in relation to the employing organisation? How far does a supervisor go in revealing information about supervision to the employing organisation?'*

Coach 3 also raised a question on the topic of confidentiality – *‘Does the supervisor have a whistleblowing responsibility in very extreme circumstances? I don’t know?’*

Supervisors

The focus of the references centred around what choice the coach or supervisor had in how the supervision was set up. Examples include:

Supervisor 3 – *‘I contract at the beginning and I say what I have said to you already that I treat you like grown-ups, you chose who you want to bring to supervision.’*

Supervisor 4 – *‘It would be different in a group situation because there is 3 or 4 people co-creating what is happening rather than with an individual where there is just the supervisor and the individual creating that.’*

The other topic referenced was accountability for the supervision. Three of the supervisors mentioned that holding the coach to account was a key part of the supervision process.

Buyers

This group gave a significant number of views on the overall process of the supervision set up and in particular, what they would expect those involved to provide.

Buyer 7 – *‘What I would expect from engaging with a coaching company is that they do offer supervision to their coaches. I would expect it.’*

Buyer 6 – *‘I guess if I was an HR/L&D person and I wasn’t a coach myself, I would just need to know the basics, you know a Q&A of what is supervision? Why is it used? How is it used? Why do I need it? Just the basics of it.’*

The context for these comments primarily related to formal supervision sessions.


Buyer 3, *‘(A coach) is a former psychologist and he said that I kind of do peer supervision with a friend. Which again in terms of supervision is pretty low on the scale in terms of formality.’*

Buyer 7 commented on coaches having more than one supervisor, *‘You know, even having more than one supervisor, maybe a collection of coaches that come together, you know three or four coaches and share who they have been talking to, how the conversations have gone, that would possibly be better than just one supervisor.’*

5.6.7 Superordinate theme 6 – Professionalism

Definition: Credibility of the roles, people, processes and behaviours in the supervision.

Table 5-8 One to one interview: Professionalism references

Superordinate theme	Subordinate themes	Coach		Supervisor		Buyer	
		Refs	No	Refs	No	Refs	No
 6. Professionalism	6a. Qualification of supervisor - broadest sense	18	3/5	10	4/5	14	6/8
	– Experience	18	5/5	8	4/5	13	7/8
	– Badge	7	4/5	7	3/5	9	5/8
	6b. Behaviours in supervision	4	3/5	16	5/5	9	4/8
	6c. Professional bodies	2	2/5	6	4/5	4	4/8

Within this theme, the interviewees made clear distinctions on the theme of professionalism. They identified professional qualifications a supervisor should/could hold, professional behaviours that would be exhibited by a supervisor and connections a supervisor could/should have with professional bodies.

The participants described some differences in the subordinate theme Qualification of the supervisor and two further themes emerged, namely 'Experience' and 'Badge' that are described below.

Professionalism: Subordinate theme 6a – Qualifications of supervisor

Definition: In the broadest sense of the word, including and beyond academic/accredited training.

This subordinate theme had a broad spread of responses. The group identified topics that sat in and around topics that the supervisor should know, what they thought a supervisor should do and the mindset and self-awareness of the supervisor in their work.

Coaches

Nine of 18 references from this group related to the mindset/self-awareness of the supervisor.

Coach 1 - *'There is something about them managing themselves too because they are the receptacle for the supervision and so coming without ego or agenda is also really important.'*

Coach 5 - *'I want them there in the market doing coaching as well as the learning and everything else.'*

Supervisors

Nine of the ten references from this group related to what knowledge and action were considered as important qualifications.

Supervisor 1 - *'I would also expect them (the supervisor) to acquaint themselves with the field and to recognise the difference between counselling and coaching.'*

Supervisor 3, *'A good supervisor should be getting supervision themselves.'*

Buyers

Whilst this group commented on what they expect the supervisor to do – a view common across all three groups - they also referred to what they would expect the supervisors to know in their capacity as a supervisor.

Buyers also commented on the fact that there is no barrier to entry to becoming a supervisor and commented on the implications of this. Examples include:

Buyers 5 - *'I think any other Tom, Dick or Harry could become a supervisor and I think it devalues it.'*

Buyer 3 - *'I don't think there is tick box on that in terms of the, at different points in your coaching professional life, you may need different things and it is finding the person who can fit that but I don't think there is a criteria of you be a supervisor you need to have this, this and this.'*

Professionalism: Qualification of supervisor - Sub-theme 1 - Experience

Definition: Coaching, supervision, life, work, business or other experience that has been acquired over time.

As the definition implies, the comments were all focused on the coaching, supervision, life, work or other experiences the supervisor had acquired over their career. It was clear that where this topic was raised there was an implicit assumption that the supervisor had or would have more experience than the coach in one or several of these categories.

Coaches

The comments were evenly spread across coaching, supervision, life and work.

Examples include:

Coaching: **Coach 1** - *'It is somebody who has been out there at the coal face and done lots of coaching with real clients in real industries.'*

Supervision: **Coach 5** - *'(Supervision) hour under the bonnet.'*

Life: **Coach 4** - *'My current supervisor is somebody who has had a huge amount of life experience.'*

Work: **Coach 5** - *'I want somebody who has got the right experience to, you know, plug the gaps that I know I want plugging.'*

Supervisors

Like the coaches, many of the comments related to coaching, supervision and work experience although **Supervisor 1** was the only person who directly referenced supervision experience. Conspicuous by its absence from this group were any references to life experience.

Examples include:

Coaching: **Supervisor 3** - *'I think you should be coaching yourself, I think you should still be in the market.'*

Supervision: **Supervisor 1** - *'Obviously, length of (supervision) experience is one (qualification).'*

Work: **Supervisor 3** - *'If you are supervising business coaches, you have got to have some understanding of the business world.'*

Buyers

Ten of this group's comments related to coaching experience and three to supervision experience. No one in this group mentioned of life, work or other experience. All clearly held coaching and supervision experience as key. Examples include:

Coaching: **Buyer 7** - *'I think initially someone who had been in the game of exec coaching for 10 plus years.'*

Supervision: **Buyer 4** - *'Maybe life a golf handicap.... so you know you want to feel that your supervisor has been observed, monitored and signed off by someone of exceptional judgement and skill.'*

Professionalism: Qualification of supervisor - Sub-theme 1 - Badge

Definition: A formal qualification or attended course. An accreditation. An acquired/taught skill.

As the definition implies, the focus of this sub-theme is on a qualification, accreditation, a training course or a specific skill.

The focus of both the coach and supervisor groups was on qualification and training; there were no references to accreditation. The buyer group's focus was on qualification or training, skill and accreditation; with several questioning whether having a formal qualification means you are a good supervisor. Examples include:

Qualification and training

Coach 2 - *'I don't need them to have a Masters in Coaching Supervision and however, I do want them to have a formal qualification, a training course that has been safely crafted for a supervisor.'*

Buyer 5, *'So, are qualifications important? For me, yes they are. And the reason for that is, I genuinely think there are skills the supervisor needs to bring.'*

Accreditation

Buyer 5 - *'I have very strong views around well, yes, they should be accredited and I have zero views on what that actually means. Apart from could someone else give them a kite mark and I will be happy.'*

Buyer 6 - *'I would expect as a hygiene factor is to have a formal recognised accreditation in coach supervision from one of the main coaching bodies.'*

Professionalism: Subordinate theme 6b – Behaviours in supervision

Definition: What is said or done or not said or done in the supervision.

For this theme, the coach group had the fewest references and the supervision group had the most.

Coaches

Three of the references specifically mention behaviours that a coach would expect to observe in supervision and one coach mentioned behaviours they would not expect to

see in supervision. All the comments related to the behaviour of the supervisor and there were no comments on behaviours of the supervision client.

Coach 1 mentioned *'coaching the coach'* and *'honest feedback'*.

Coach 5 mentioned *'rigour'* and *'encouraging self-care'*.

Coach 3 mentioned supervisors revealing information by accident and the risk attached to supervisors holding commercially sensitive information as behaviours they would not expect to see in supervision.

Supervisors

The supervisor group repeatedly cited support and challenge as the behaviours they would expect to see in supervision. Examples include:

Supervisor 1 - *'I guess it begins from support, it begins from providing emotional support for the coach and alongside that, ensuring the work that the coach is doing is ethical.'*

Supervisor 3 - *'I will challenge you if I think maybe we are not looking at areas that might be useful to look at.'*

Supervisor 4 - *'You know, might say that they have been supported in thinking through a situation. Again, I may feel that I have been challenging them to think through the situation.'*

Buyers

Buyer 6 was mostly focused on specific behaviours such as listening, challenging, being honestly candid in reflecting back, being provocative and present.

Buyer 1 mentioned self-supervision, *'I think that a lot of great supervisors are really encouraging the coach to self-review and self-evaluate so, if you like, their primary role is to strengthen the internal supervisor of the coach.'* This is a topic that surfaced in the literature review and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 Project Discussion.

Professionalism: Subordinate theme 6c – Professional bodies

Definition: Any professional body related to coaching and supervision.

Interestingly, the three groups had quite disparate comments.

Coaches

Less than half the coaches raised this topic and both coaches who did, identified the lack of consistency across the professional bodies. They mentioned competencies as a key part of the function of the professional bodies and commented that there is not yet consistency across the bodies on this issue.

Supervisors

Most of the supervisors mentioned professional bodies in their interviews and their comments related primarily to the role of a professional body.

Supervisor 1 - *'Well, I would like to see the coaching profession become more of a profession which it isn't.'*

Supervisor 2 - *'In the world out there, coaching supervision is becoming so contested and how useful is it that the professional associations are trying to redefine what they are doing and collaborate together or not and so many people seeking it, it just seems to an imbalance as accreditation of coaching supervisors, the system seems to be expanding and worked on but the number of people who need be shown their accreditation as a supervisor is depleting or is less.'*

Supervisor 3 mentioned the need for professional standards and Supervisor 2 mentioned the professional bodies' attempt to control things by proceduralising them.

Buyers

Buyer 5 questioned whether supervision should be mandatory which, as identified in the Literature Review, is a hot topic for the coaching sector. **Buyer 2** commented on the large number of professional bodies that exist. **Buyer 3** mentioned the specific standards of the professional bodies in relation to the number of hours' supervision in which coaches should engage. **Buyer 4** mentioned how useful it would be if the professional bodies had more formalised structures.

5.6.8 Superordinate theme 7 – Unanswered questions

Definition: The gaps, concerns, lack of information/agreement and questions about supervision.

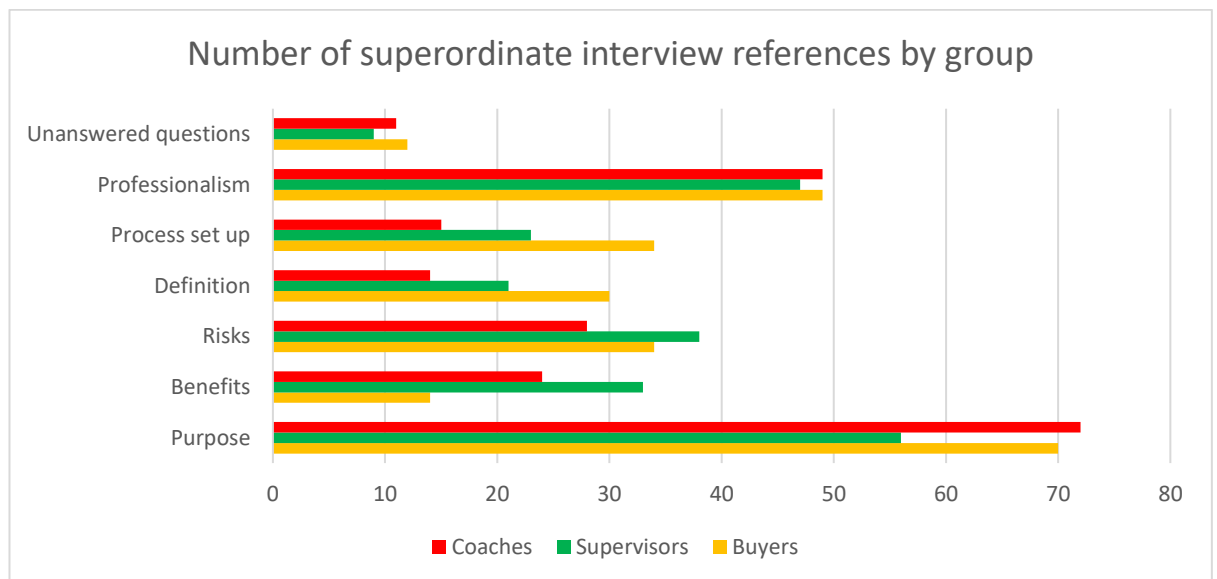
This was an open question asked of the interviewees and they were free to offer any topic, issue or subject they thought relevant and appropriate to mention. As a result,

there was no unifying theme within the groups or across the groups and the answers could not be themed. The only common thread for some of the responses is that many of them could form the basis of future research topics on supervision and related topics. The responses to this question are listed in full for each group in Appendix 15.

5.7 Summary

As seen in Figure 5-2, all three groups gave the superordinate theme Purpose the highest number of references. The second highest number of references was given to Professionalism and the third highest to Risks.

Figure 5-2 Number of superordinate interview references by group



Although each group identified differences in focus of these references, the research question and the themes derived from the literature review are directly related to the most referenced subordinate theme from the research participants – the purpose of supervision. The potential reasons for each group’s difference in focus will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 – Project Discussion.

6 Project discussion

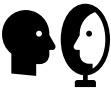



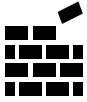


6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I offer an interpretation of the results, highlight their implications and identify their limitations. The recommendations based on these results will be detailed in Chapter 7 Project conclusions and recommendations.

The purpose of this research was to identify what an experienced business coach is expected to take to be supervised, from the perspective of coaches, supervisors, professional bodies and buyers. The aim of this study is to provide clarity so that each group's expectations can be understood, and potentially, become more aligned. In addition, it is hoped that it will help those involved in the supervision sector to make informed decisions on what they want from supervision, what they offer to potential supervision clients and what they expect supervision to cover, all of which could in turn impact how supervisors are trained and/or qualified.

Table 6-1 sets out how each participant group ranked the superordinate themes based on the number of references given in interview. As the table shows, the top three themes (purpose, professionalism and risks) were identically ranked across all participant groups. The superordinate theme 'unanswered questions' was the lowest ranked across all the groups.

Table 6-1 Superordinate themes ranked by number of references by participant group

Theme	Coach	Supervisor	Buyer
 Purpose	1 st	1 st	1 st
 Benefits	4 th	6 th	6 th
 Risks	3 rd	3 rd	3 rd =
 Definition of supervision	6 th	5 th	5 th
 Process set up	5 th	6 th	3 rd =
 Professionalism	2 nd	2 nd	2 nd
 Unanswered questions	7 th	7 th	7 th

Whilst studying for a Master in Executive Coaching at i-coach academy, my tutors shared a view that the practice of coaching could be viewed through a framework of inputs, throughputs and outputs (Horner, 2005). My tutors suggested that by populating this framework, coaches can develop their unique coaching framework and identify ongoing CPD requirements.

Inputs sit in a model of humankind. They relate to who you are as a coach including your training, your values and beliefs related to coaching, which key theories underpin your coaching model and what informs how you coach.

Throughputs sit in a process model. They relate to the logistics of your coaching including the tools and techniques you use, how often you meet a client, where you meet a client, how do you charge your client, etc.

Outputs relate to the purpose of your coaching including the aim of the coaching whether you work with a specific topic or client group, a learning, change or achievement focus, etc.

The purpose of this framework is to enable the coach to reflect on their whole coaching practice. The ideal position is to have a practice that is aligned across inputs, throughputs and outputs. This enables the coach to work in a way that is consistent with who they are as a coach and how they deliver their coaching so that it supports the purpose of their coaching work.

Each of the research topics discussed in Chapter 5 fall into inputs, throughputs or outputs (see Table 6-2). As a result, this framework also provides a useful structure to explore the findings of this research in more detail.

Table 6-2 Inputs, throughputs and outputs

Supervision lens	Topic
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Qualifications to be a supervisor – Experience – Badge of competence – Behaviours – Professional bodies
Throughputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process set up • Roles • Conditions of supervision
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Benefits • Risks • Self-supervision/internal supervisor

6.2 Inputs

6.2.1 Definition of coaching

Within the supervision literature, there is no universally accepted definition of supervision (Moyes, 2009) nor is there an accepted definition of supervision within the coaching and supervision professional bodies. As detailed in section 5.6.5, one of the supervisors expressed a similar view to Whyte and Lawrence (2014) that an agreed definition of supervision would require an agreed definition of coaching, i.e. a definition to describe the coaching work that was supervised. However, there is also no universally accepted definition of coaching, which makes defining coaching supervision a challenge.

As part of this research, participants were given a specific definition of supervision (see Appendix 13) and asked to comment on what they liked, disliked and thought was missing from it. This theme received the second lowest total number of references – the highest theme received three times more references. The lack of comments may reflect the low level of energy and enthusiasm this topic drew from the participants in their interviews as detailed in the responses set out in section 5.6.5.

Overall, the participants liked the definition but expressed their likes of the definition in neutral and unenthusiastic language. The word meh is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as ‘not very interesting or special.’ (Accessed 14th December 2020) and the participants’ responses to what they liked about the definition was the research equivalent of meh.

In Chapter 5, Project Findings, the dislikes of the definition fell into three distinct areas and these are shown in the table below.

Table 6-3 One to one interview: Distribution of dislike references

	Coaches	Supervisors	Buyers	Total
Dislike a specific word or phrase	1	1	3	5
Dislike the meaning of a word or phrase	1	0	3	4
Dislike the impact it had on participants	0	2	5	7
Total references for each group	2	3	11	16

The buyer group had the most to say on this topic and commented that the definition was narrow, lacking and limited. They also placed importance on supervision having a positive impact on the coach's work and to all those involved in the work.

Based on the lack of effusive likes of the definition, it might have expected there to be more dislikes and/or comments on what was missing from it. The coach participants did mention that the purpose of the supervision was missing but this observation may have been influenced by the interview process in which they are reminded of the research question that clearly points to a lack of clear purpose generally, in coaching supervision. Irrespective of whether this influenced their thoughts, this group still chose to mention it as missing from the given definition.

The supervisor group thought topics that looked beyond the coach and involved other stakeholders in the process were missing. Two of the supervisors noticed the absence of monitoring in some format and Supervisor 2 described it as, *'a barometer, like an ethical or guiding parameter framework.'*

In contrast, the buyer group mentioned that the lack of depth of meaning was missing from the definition and expressed a fear that the definition did not enable a reader to understand what supervision was or how it worked.

There is work to be done in getting coaches, supervisors, buyers and professional bodies more closely aligned on defining what supervision is and, I would argue, to also be more aligned on what it is not. However, observing the range and depth of definitions that already exist, I wonder if there is a need to have a prescribed definition or if holding the need for a clear definition is an unhelpful assumption. Carroll (2006b, p. 4) states that, '... at its simplest, supervision is a forum where supervisees think about their work to do it better'. If we take this simple definition of supervision, one could argue that it leaves open the opportunity for the definition to be co-invented to meet the specific supervision need rather than be pre-determined in the hope of meeting every need.

A Google search of the term coaching supervision definition yields over seven million entries illustrating that developing a definition is perhaps not the issue, the challenge is how to get a definition agreed between people. It could be argued that rather than have an agreed definition, there might be value in having an agreed framework within which a specific supervision contract or agreed purpose can be uniquely defined. If one had to define supervision by inputs, throughputs and outputs, there would be much greater

clarity on what supervision was for all concerned. This frame would also allow for an unlimited number of definitions and would therefore not constrain or restrict the definition of supervision. Instead, it would ensure the unique aspects of the different definitions could be made clear.

6.2.2 Professionalism

As detailed in Table 6-1, this theme attracted the second highest number of comments from the groups. The subordinate themes that emerged had distinct features including, the qualifications to be a supervisor in the broadest sense and also in terms of experience and a badge of competence; how the supervisor behaved and what connection the supervisor had with professional bodies. Each of these subordinate themes are discussed further below.

Qualifications to be a supervisor

Interestingly, none of the groups initially thought that supervisors should be formally qualified nor did they have any thoughts as to what would prevent someone from becoming a supervisor.

As detailed in section 5.6.7, the coaches commented the least on what they would expect of the overall qualifications for a supervisor and indeed, some questioned if they needed a qualification at all. Two of the coaches did identify what they would consider 'showstoppers', i.e. things that would prevent them from working with a supervisor. However, they stated that they could not objectively measure these, as they were issues of perception or fit. What is intriguing about this point is that a coach would typically attend a chemistry meeting (Stern, 2004; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001 and Coutu and Kauffman, 2009) to enable the client and coach to determine if they would work well together. It is worth pondering if coaches apply a similar chemistry meeting when choosing a supervisor and if so, what criteria they apply to make a decision about whether they could work well together.

The supervisors highlighted that for some, counselling techniques are present in coaching supervision, first, through their recognition that many coaching supervisors come from a counselling background and second, that knowledge of counselling/psychological techniques often feature in coaching supervision work. The supervisor group discussed the pros and cons of this point rather than overtly assert that counselling techniques should or must feature. The supervisor group also thought that a supervisor should have

knowledge of their field and be attentive to ensuring they remain up to date. This does put down a qualification marker but does not identify what this would mean in practice and how it could be measured or assessed.

The buyer group were the least specific in their responses to this theme. The conversation tended to move from the similarities and differences between training a coach and training a supervisor but without concluding what qualifications a supervisor should hold. The group acknowledged that this is a complex topic and that they had major gaps in their knowledge that also reflected the state of the literature on this topic.

Of note is the lack of structure in how the research participants discussed qualifications. Hawkins and Smith (2006) describe the skills and capacities of supervisors using three Cs: competencies, capabilities and capacity. 'Competencies' is the word used by most of the professional bodies to describe what is required of coaches and supervisors. It is striking that the professional bodies rarely mention capabilities or capacities. It could be interpreted that the professional bodies are focused only on skills rather than qualities. This is a perfectly legitimate position, however, it does not reflect the importance qualities have as detailed in the literature and this research.

It could also be argued that accreditation from the professional bodies has come to replace the traditional meaning of qualifications and become the word of choice in the coaching supervision lexicon when describing the qualifications of supervisors.

Experience

As can be seen in Table 6-4, supervisors' varied experience is important to each of the groups who participated in this research. Chapter 2 mentioned one of the ongoing questions in coaching supervision, i.e. does a supervisor have to have been a coach? As seen in the table below, all three of the groups consider it important that a supervisor has had coaching experience. Interestingly, the coaches also mentioned life experience as a relevant topic that reflects the ongoing debate about whether a supervisor should be more experienced than the coach they are supervising (Joseph, 2017; Moyes, 2009; Hawkins et al, 2019 and Lucas, 2017).

Ross (2015) highlights the ongoing debate about whether the master/apprentice model should still prevail in coaching supervision or if a model, whereby any supervisor can supervise anyone, is more appropriate. It could be argued that based on comments from

the participants in this research, the master apprentice model continues to be valued and the participants appreciate and expect supervisors to have more experience than their supervision clients.

Table 6-4 Type of experience required of supervisors

	Coaching experience	Supervision experience	Work/business experience	Life experience
Coaches	8	2	2	6
Supervisors	6	1	1	0
Buyers	8	2	0	0

Badge of competence

Section 5.6.7 indicates that most participants think a supervisor should have some form of supervisory qualification. The detail of what this should entail and the level it should be set attracted different views, with most participants being unsure how to address this point. This is not a surprising result when one reflects on the lack of clarity about what supervision is – without a clear definition of supervision, one cannot easily discern what a supervisor does and, therefore, what they need to be trained in. Clarity on this would undoubtedly enable a supervisor to market their services more effectively and allow coaches to make more informed decisions about the supervisor they want to work with.

The literature on supervisory qualifications speaks mostly about the gaps in this topic, i.e. what is not there including, the lack of quality training, the lack of research on what training is required and that generally, further research is required.

EMCC, AC and AOCS have supervisory competencies and other professional bodies outline competencies that are required for accreditation as a supervisor but these are not consistent between the bodies. The EMCC (2019) published a supervision framework that is extensive in the number of topics it covers. They emphasise that this is not a checklist of requirements but rather it is intended to stimulate discussion about supervisory development. This broad range of supervisory competencies is a mirror of the mainstream supervision models that are also equally broad in their range and a possible interpretation of this could be that supervision has a limitless scope. A common point between the professional bodies relates to whether a supervisor should have been a coach prior to becoming a supervisor. All the professional bodies do not endorse this

position but the majority hold that a supervisor should have previously been a coach, as set out in section 2.4.

Qualification of a supervisor is a topic that is lacking in understanding and evidence from the literature and the professional bodies and this position is reflected in the data from this research. This point does, however, highlight the importance and relevance of the research question in this study, i.e. if it is unclear what an experienced coach takes to supervision, it follows that the supervisor will not be clear on what qualifications they need to be able to supervise the work appropriately nor the model of supervision they should apply. In addition, it could be argued that if this is unclear, can the supervisor claim to be working competently or ethically?

Behaviours in supervision

As mentioned in 6.3.2, the literature tends to explore the roles within supervision that include some descriptors of behaviour and focus mostly on the role of the supervisor. The supervisory competencies referred to by the professional bodies describe a mix of skills, knowledge and behaviours as do the ethical codes of practice. However, the ethical codes of practice give an incomplete overview of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

Section 5.6.7 emphasises differences of opinion on behaviours in supervision between coaches, supervisors and buyers. A possible interpretation could be that the comments from each group resonate with the position each group adopts in relation to supervision:

- Coaches adopt a position of user or buyer of supervision and focus only on the behaviours of the supervisor. It is interesting that the coaches did not mention their own behaviour in supervision. It could be argued that as the coaches are paying for their supervision, they adopt a 'customer is king/queen' view of the relationship and can therefore behave however they choose.
- Supervisors adopt a service supplier position but one that is similar to a trusted advisor. The supervisor group highlighted partnering behaviours in their responses and challenging and supporting behaviours were cited as common behaviours expected of a supervisor.
- Buyers adopt a position as the custodians of good coaching performance/service delivery. The buyer group highlighted behaviours they associate with the

supervisor being a resource or guide for the coach to enable them to coach better or more effectively.

Professional Bodies

There is agreement amongst the professional bodies and the research participants that there is a role for professional bodies in the professionalism of coaching supervision. Although, there is no detail of what this role should be across the stakeholder groups. A key issue on this topic is whether the professional bodies will be involved in any regulation of the coaching and/or supervision sectors. Of note is that the buyer group could see the professional bodies playing a useful and important link between coaches, supervisors, buyers and coaching clients and stated that this should be encouraged.

Fillery-Travis and Collins (2016) state that, 'At the time of writing, the practice of coaching is definitely an industry, could be underpinned by a discipline but is yet to be a profession.' At present, coaching is still not a profession and it is unclear what direction the bodies will move in. This will undoubtedly have consequences for the supervision-only professional bodies who are following in the coaching bodies' footsteps. One can only speculate on what the implications would be for supervision if coaching became a profession and regulation became a key topic.

Other helping professions such as counselling and therapy have professional bodies that play a role in regulation. Brock (2015) makes a sobering point about coaches dragging themselves into the territory of psychotherapy and states that if the coaching industry is not careful, they will cross a boundary and leave themselves open to the same conditions that psychotherapists have to satisfy. Day and de Haan (2008) concur with this concern and assert that coaching is fundamentally different from therapy in that therapy focuses on a patient's emotions, feelings and the difficulties they are encountering in their lives. They go on to say that the outcome of critical moments reported by the coaches in their study is influenced by the coaches' ability to contain their own emotions which are arguably, issues for therapy. They question if it is appropriate for these critical moments to be taken to supervision or if the coach should work on them with a therapist.

The issue of regulation has major implications for the coaching and supervision sector and it could be argued that the professional bodies are well placed to support the resolution of this topic. If they do not step up to lead this, there is a risk that case law will ultimately

dictate a position on regulation that would not be influenced by any of the stakeholders involved in the coaching and supervision sector.

6.3 Throughputs

6.3.1 Process set up

This theme focused on the actors that are often involved in the set-up of supervision processes; organisations who commission coaches and the coaches and supervisors who work together in supervision.

Interestingly, in section 5.6.6, the participants offered significantly fewer opinions about the organisational set up than might have been expected, particularly as a third of the participants were buyers. Only one coach offered an opinion on this topic which is surprising when one considers that the coach participants are experienced business coaches who are likely to have had exposure to organisations' requests to be in supervision. This may point to the lack of process set up that currently exists in organisations – a point that accords with the responses from the buyer group. Several of the buyers admitted that even where they ask for coaches to be in supervision, they offer no specific detail of what this means and there is no follow up to verify that the coach is in supervision as they assume and rely on the integrity and professionalism of the coach. This is not as damning a position as it may seem given that the experiences on which the buyers based their comments involved a good working relationship with the coaches they employed in their organisation. The buyers who do not ask for coaches to be in supervision, stated that this was not a topic they had considered. However, they commented that the question made them reflect on whether they should implement some supervision requirements for their coaches.

The supervisor group said little about this topic – not surprising given that supervisors are rarely in direct contact with the buyer. Comments from the supervisors focused on the governance and structure of supervision and one questioned whether buyers actually knew anything about supervision. This is a fair observation and based on the responses of the buyer group, an accurate one as many admitted their ignorance on this topic.

All groups offered more comments on the process set up by the supervisor and/or coach although the topics tended to concentrate on the more transactional and functional aspects of supervision such as the structure of it, i.e. group, one to one, peer, etc, or the

frequency of the supervision. These may be interesting and important features of supervision but are not given much attention in the literature.

It is perhaps surprising that the participants said so little about the set-up of coaching supervision, particularly the coaches and supervisors. One interpretation of this could be that each participant group have several unchecked assumptions that result in them not questioning or exploring this further. The professional coaching and supervision bodies offer a view on some of the features to consider in setting up supervision but none has a template of what they consider appropriate or good practice.

It could be argued that coaches, supervisors, buyers and professional bodies have an opportunity to leverage more value from supervision arrangements and avoid potential risks by developing good practise in the set-up of supervision.

6.3.2 Roles in supervision

As explained in Chapter 2, the literature suggests that defining the roles in supervision is important in the set-up of supervision. Several roles are identified including the role of the supervisor, the supervision client, the coaching client and the organisational stakeholder. The literature mostly focuses on the role of the supervisor and there is considerably less literature available on the other stakeholder roles. The importance of the supervisor role is discussed by Armstrong and Geddes (2009) who published a case study on developing a coaching supervision practise. The practice was built over a two-year period and one of the findings indicated that the role of the supervisor was considered critical in whether supervision was effective. The factors included the qualities of the supervisor, their skill in challenging the status group of the group and how well they balanced the needs of the individual with those of the group. Another study that supported the importance of the supervisor came from Passmore and McGoldrick (2009). They identified six categories that impacted the effectiveness of the coaching supervision; clarity on the role of the coach and the role of the supervisor were highlighted as the most important.

As presented earlier, Kadushin (1976) identified three functions to supervision (educational, supportive and managerial) in the context of social work. The type of work he was referring to was undertaken by supervisees in a hierarchical set up where one could argue, the supervisor's role was not far removed from that of a traditional line manager. That said, the type of work a coaching supervision client is involved in is not

typically equivalent to that of social workers. There is a different type of complexity and consequence involved in social work. For instance, social workers tend to work with people in deprived social situations where the client may not have choice over whether the social worker is involved in their issues. There is a real power differential, e.g. the social worker has the power to remove a child from its family. Social work is regulated and the case work and the social worker are managed by others. All these factors are far removed from the power a supervisor has over a client. It can therefore be argued that the functions of supervision are not readily transferable to coaching supervision.

A managerial type of supervision relationship resonates with the differences between workers, managers and leaders as identified by Peltier (2001), and it could be argued that the supervisor/supervisee relationship has many similarities with the manager/worker relationship that involves oversight of work and performance appraisal. When a coach is going through an accreditation process, the professional body require a degree of oversight of coaches and one could argue this is a form of management. APECS also offer levels of accreditation and state that the purpose of coaching supervision is reflection, learning and discussing thoughts, feelings and reactions. However, as a coach, it may seem counterintuitive to have these discussions with your supervisor if you know that they will be using these conversations to assess your ethics and competence as part of your training and accreditation.

Toll (2004) states that the role of the supervisor has an element of assessment within it and has the consequent effect of having the supervisory role directing the content of the conversation. This concept suggests that the supervisor has a more directive role in the supervision. In support of this, the supervisor participants in my research report that some supervisors adopt a directive approach to their work and set the rules of engagement for the supervision clients whereas others have a more facilitative approach whereby the coach has greater influence over the supervision set up. It is not clear if there is a right or wrong approach and **Supervisor 4** offered the following quote that encapsulates some of the confusion surrounding this issue:

Whose responsibility is it to realise the value from the (supervision) conversation?

Participants from the buyer group made an interesting point about the importance of the supervisor to the coach. They stated that they trust the coach to secure appropriate

supervision arrangements and that they got this reassurance from the positive way in which the coach talked about their supervision.

As an alternative to the focus on the role of the supervisor, Sheppard's research (2016), focuses on factors that enable and inhibit supervision, in particular what supervisees do to enable or inhibit their supervision. She identifies four inhibiting themes that stop supervisees getting the most value from their supervision; anxiety – fear of judgement and shame; blocking oneself; a lack of agency; and not seeing oneself as an equal partner. Alongside these inhibitors she identifies four ways supervisees can enhance their supervision experience including adopting a positive mindset, co-creating the relationship, participating actively in the process and undertaking supervisor training. Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) also mention the role of the coach, or supervisee, in the supervision process. They report that the coaches have a lead role in the process that can extend beyond the supervision itself, e.g. preparation for the supervision session. They add that the quality of the information the coach brings has a direct influence on the quality of the supervision.

The literature has little to add about the role of other stakeholders in supervision although Carroll (2014) identifies the following eight considerations for supervisors, supervisees and organisations to pay attention to when setting up and maintaining credible supervision:

1. Organisations and their understanding of supervision
2. The supervisor and his/her organisational DNA
3. The supervisor as buffer
4. Ethical issues in organisational supervision
5. Looking after self in organisations
6. Supervision despite the organisation
7. Parallel processes in supervising organisations
8. Embedding supervision in an organisational culture

In the medical world, Mellon and Murdoch-Eaton (2015) identify the need for multiple roles to support the development of paediatric trainees. He claims there is a clear need for the technical aspects of the work to be supervised and assessed, a need for personal support and a need for learning and professional development. Could this translate to coaching? Is there an expectation being created whereby coaching supervisors become

all things to supervision clients? To have a coaching supervisor be expert in all these roles seems to be a stretch in terms of the level and depth of knowledge and experience required and provides an interesting challenge for those training to be a supervisor and those who train them.

6.3.3 Conditions necessary for supervision

In talking about the set-up of supervision, many of the research participants commented on the importance of having the right conditions for supervision to be effective.

Conditions related to the climate or domain of the supervision; the interpersonal environmental factors considered important for supervision to run effectively. Trust and safety are cited as being key conditions that need to be present in supervision and this view is confirmed in the supervision literature including de Haan's (2017) survey of over 500 coaches that revealed that trust and safety is important in the supervision experience.

On a similar theme of trust and safety, Fontes (1995) wrote a paper about her collaborative experience of supervision for counsellors working with trauma. She highlights that in traditional supervision, the issue of power is significant in trauma work and that she and her colleagues want to move to an alternative approach. They call this 'Sharevision' and moved to a peer group that provided the same level of support, quality oversight and development of new ideas as traditional supervision but without the traditional hierarchy of a formal supervisor. The power dynamic she referred to created a lack of trust and safety in the group, which is something that is identified as an issue in coaching supervision. Patterson (2008) highlights the importance of trust and safety in supervision through Bowlby's work on Attachment Theory (1988). She draws parallels to the fact that infants survive in trusted environments that are made safe and secure and, in her view, this applies equally to the needs of supervisees.

De Haan states that there are many empirical studies that support the view that coaches do not bring their most important topics to supervision for fear of being shamed or finding it too painful (Day et al. 2008 and Hawkins and Shohet, 2006). This view was affirmed by one of the participants in this research:

Supervisor 3 stated that '*supervision is not always nice and that it can be painful*'.

McGivern (2009, p. 33-34) states that, 'The importance of the coach feeling they have granted someone permission to supervise them and trust them enough to give that

licence seems to be an important finding. To feel ready, have the choice and be prepared for supervision and to be open to the learning possibilities rather than feeling coerced into it, will no doubt produce better learning outcomes. It will not serve the professionalisation of coaching to create a situation where more coaches merely tick the supervision box, nor will this do much for quality assurance.'

Passmore and McGoldrick (2009, p. 16) identified several conditions for effective supervision including, 'an open, safe, confidential and non-judgemental environment within which coaching supervision can take place. Other important factors include the supervisors training, experience and ethical maturity.' It could be said that the weight of responsibility for creating these conditions would appear to sit exclusively with the supervisor and that the supervision client has no role or responsibility in establishing effective supervisory conditions. In contrast to this, Homer (2017, p. 104) identified a need for a group to have a period of quiet preparation followed by a check in before starting the supervision session. For his research group, the preparation was often a Thai Chi exercise and the check in would be, 'a brief update about how they are feeling and what is on their mind before supervisory dialogue commences.' This approach illustrates a more proactive role for the supervision client in creating the conditions for the supervision to be effective. Active involvement by the supervision client is put forward by Sheppard (2016) who suggests that supervisees could enhance the effectiveness of their supervision by adopting a mindset of being in the driving seat of their supervision, co-creating the relationship and participating more actively in the process.

On the basis that the conditions of supervision are inextricably linked to the effectiveness of the supervision, it could be argued that both coach and supervisor share the responsibility for creating these.

6.4 Outputs

6.4.1 Purpose of supervision

The data identified in Chapter 5, shows that all three of the participant groups had a great deal to say about the purpose of supervision. The analysis confirmed that there is no single, universally agreed view on what the purpose of supervision is, rather, there are many and varied purposes considered for supervision.

The purposes mentioned were wide ranging and included: to have a sounding board, for safety, a quality check, to develop the coach, to hold the coach to account, as an early

warning system, to challenge thinking, to review the whole coaching practice, an inter-relationship with the professional bodies, an eco-system, to act as the coaching police, to enable a reflective space, CPD, to be restorative, to act as a kite mark, to notice the whole system, to check ethical practice, thematic work and to identify blind spots.

One commonly held view from the literature is that coaching supervision is primarily intended to support the learning and development of the coach and the participants in this research unanimously confirmed this view. In this context, learning and development is a term that lacks specificity and one could argue that the definition of learning and development could mean quite different things to each of the research participants. A view emerging from this research is that there are no limits to the scope of supervision so applying very broad terms such as learning and development colludes with this and perpetuates a lack of clarity and refinement about supervision.

If the view that supervision is primarily intended to support the learning and development of the coach is held as true, the literature is lacking sufficient evidence to support why supervision should be the main vehicle for delivering this learning and development. Jepson (2016) and Butwell (2006) identified that supervision was indeed not the only way a coach could achieve learning and development and that there are other formats of learning that coaches can, and do, access. This perspective is backed up in the AOCS Global Supervision Study (McAnally, K. et al., 2020) where 24% of coaches said the reason they did not work with a supervisor was because they do their own reflective practice.

Grant (2012) and Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) highlight that the purpose of supervision can often flex. This is an important point as it could help explain why supervision is difficult to define. If the purpose of supervision is not constant and can flex and change, this raises some important issues about ethics, training, supervisory selection, contracting, risks, etc. This point also supports the aforementioned view that the scope of supervision is limitless.

An example of how the purpose of supervision can flex comes from the variables the authors discuss that are involved in determining the frequency of coaching supervision. One of these is the immediacy of an issue and another is the size of the case load of the coach. The point about immediacy is described by Passmore and McGoldrick as crisis points. One of the research participants gave an example of this and stated that although

she has regular supervision that is planned in advance, there are times when something comes up and it needs immediate attention. She likened this need for supervision as a 'spot weld', something to fix an immediate issues so she can keep everything together and functioning.

Time is another variable that can impact the purpose of supervision. De Haan (2012) and Carroll (2006b) explore supervision in the context of working with the past, present or future and assert that supervision can work in all three time frames. This could mean that the purpose of supervision can be wholly focussed on past activities or the immediate activities happening between the supervisor and the coach in the supervision session or future activities – or some combination of these.

The research data in section 5.6.2 also reveals that the purpose of supervision changes depending on what role and responsibilities the coach and supervisor choose in the supervision work. The coach and buyers' groups appear to agree that irrespective of what the purpose of supervision is, it should be focused primarily on the views and actions of the coach. The supervisor group, on the other hand, have a broader perspective and see the purpose of supervision as being more holistic and systemic and would tend to explore the views and actions of other stakeholders. This accords with many of the supervision models (Hawkins and Smith, 2006; Murdoch and Arnold, 2013 and Hodge, 2016) where taking a systemic approach is seen as central to the supervision work. The main supervision models take a systemic approach, where anything and everything in the coach's system can be explored and so it could logically follow that anything and everything can be available to be supervised.

The point that anything and everything can be available to be supervised correlates with the research findings and the literature review. Indeed, Milton (2008) asks whether supervision would become everything to everyone or nothing to no-one.

Conspicuous by its absence in the literature and from the professional bodies, is information about what should not be supervised. Other than coaching supervision not being used as counselling or therapy, the coaching literature has nothing more to offer on this point. However, one group of participants from this research discussed what they think should not be supervised. Confidentiality is the core concern and the buyer group said they would want assurances that the confidentiality of their organisation and/or their coaching clients would not be compromised in any way.

One can argue that there are pros and cons in having several purposes for supervision. For coaches, this means there is unlikely to be a topic that they cannot take to supervision; so they have full choice about what they present. The buyer group stated that they need reassurance that coaching work is being carried out safely and ethically. If they knew that coaches can discuss any topic in supervision that could impact the coaching work, this may help satisfy their need for reassurance. Similarly, for supervisors, a breadth of topics could make their work more interesting, challenging and developmental for them and this could also be seen as a good thing. However, if the purpose of supervision is to supervise everything, how does a coach identify and prioritise the work they take to supervision to ensure they focus on what is most important? How do coaches get the most value from their supervision? How does a supervisor become competent to supervise everything? How do buyers ensure they get the reassurance they need and expect from coaches being supervised? How do professional bodies standardise the training and accreditation of ‘everything’? What are the ethics required to be supervised and be the supervisor of everything?

The literature and the research data highlight a very broad range of purposes and an equally broad range of topics that could be taken to supervision. There are advantages and disadvantages to this and reaching a clear position on this point could be made easier if there was a formula or guidelines to apply when considering the purpose of supervision.

6.4.2 Benefits of supervision

The results of this study and the literature review identify several features and benefits of supervision. However, features and benefits are not the same thing. According to Dictionary.com (Accessed 8th September 2020), a feature is a – ‘prominent or conspicuous part or characteristic, something offered as a special attraction.’ A benefit, on the other hand is, ‘something that is advantageous or good.’ It is unclear whether stated benefits of supervision are in fact features rather than benefits.

Learning

As previously mentioned, learning is often cited as a purpose and a benefit of supervision. Carroll (2007) lists the benefits of all forms of supervision, i.e. not purely coaching supervision and cites the opportunity to learn from peers as a benefit of supervision. One cannot argue that learning from peers would be a good benefit of supervision but this can

only be a benefit if the learning is realised, inwardly digested and integrated to make a difference. This is an important point to mention as learning is seen as central to supervision and in my interpretation, if learning is a benefit of supervision, one should be able to measure or quantify the benefit.

In support of this point, the absence of derived benefit was highlighted by Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) who classified benefits as potential gains but recognised they could not quantify these gains. The research and the literature share a common point about the apparent misuse of the term benefit when in fact it is features of supervision that are being described.

Growth

Growth is one of the topics raised as a benefit of supervision. For the coach participants, it is the personal and professional growth of the coach that is described as the key benefit, a point echoed by the supervisors who concur that the growth of the coach is a key benefit. The supervisor group also states that their growth as supervisors is another major benefit. Several of the participants commented on a difference between personal and professional growth. Personal growth was described as an evolvment of self, a betterment or enrichment of oneself as a human being. This could be interpreted as the vertical development identified in adult learning theory that involves changes to our world view. Professional growth was described as skills focused, movement from novice to master coach which could be interpreted as lateral development from adult development theory (Cooke-Greuter, 2004). Professional bodies were considered to play a role in defining the professional growth path. Some saw these types of growth as overlapping and others saw them compartmentalised. These views are philosophically thought provoking as they are based on cultural assumptions we hold about how people learn, grow and develop.

It is fair to say that the coaches should expect some personal benefit from supervision as they are paying for the service and are perfectly entitled to expect a worthwhile return. Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that the supervisors are aware they are providing a service to an individual coach and that their customer will expect a benefit.

It is interesting to note that coaches and supervisors want supervision to provide personal and professional growth. It is easy to see that any professional growth might have a

vicarious impact on the growth of a person, however, these groups are not looking for an indirect benefit, they want personal growth to be as a direct result of supervision.

Reassurance

The buyer group see the benefit of growth as simply enabling the coach to do a good job. They want the supervision to ensure the coach gets the 'right' answer to whatever they take to supervision and can do the coaching well as a result of being supervised.

Lawrence and Whyte (2014) confirm the view that buyers want assurance that a coach can do their job well although, intriguingly, supervision is not cited as the main way to secure it and the authors did not state how buyers could get this assurance.

Reassurance is also raised as a benefit by all groups although the coaches have a different perspective from the supervisors and buyers. For the supervisors and buyers, this topic is about the quality and ethics of the coaching being delivered; whereas for the coaches, reassurance is primarily focussed on supporting their personal needs. A study on the coaches' experience of critical moments in their coaching work (Day et al, 2008), showed that most of the coaches took critical moments to supervision and found that many coaches were looking for reassurance about how they handled these critical moments.

The coaches' definition of this theme highlights the need for reassurance through being part of a bigger something, i.e. not feeling isolated or alone. This need is confirmed by Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) who highlight that group supervision allows coaches to learn from others' experiences and create a community. This enables the coaches to not feel alone or isolated and it also gives them a forum to have their work validated.

An interesting feature about a coach's work is that it is not typically managed or appraised in the way an employee of a large organisation would experience, i.e. by their work being assessed by a boss or manager who delivers feedback on what they do well and where they can improve. Where a coach wants that kind of performance reassurance, supervision could be an obvious place to find it as many supervisors arguably perform an overseeing role. Indeed, as detailed in Table 2-1, one of the functions of supervision as stated by Kadushin (1976) is a managerial function where the supervisor has oversight of the work that is being performed. The other reassurance the coaches mention is the need to normalise their work. Coaching can be isolating for the coach so it is easy to see that to have a person or group normalise one's experience could be very reassuring. This point does beg the questions that if a supervisor is to be the 'normaliser',

do they have to have been a coach to be able to normalise the coach's experience? This topic is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Lawrence and Whyte's research (2014) reports an interesting conclusion that coaching clients needed an assurance that a coach could do their job but did not see supervision as a key part in securing assurance. They go on to suggest that if an experienced coach is not a member of a professional body and does not have a psychological background, supervision is unlikely to feature as an important issue in their practice. Perhaps a more logical conclusion would be that such coaches, who do not have supervision on their radar, would be unaware of its potential developmental benefits and as a result, be likely to satisfy their development needs in different ways.

Agency

The supervisor group suggested that another benefit a coach derives from supervision is agency. This is described as the coach seeing they have choice in how they approach and deliver their coaching work. The coach may realise that they have opportunity to advocate for something that is important to them as part of their coaching work, e.g. human rights, environmental issues, social mobility, etc. Neither the coaches nor the buyers mention this but when one considers that a supervisor is focused on delivering value to several coaches, it not surprising that they may see this as a theme in their supervision work whilst others might not. The notion of agency for coaches is a topic that has attracted attention in the coaching sector and coaches are choosing to link their coaching work to purposes beyond the direct needs of their client. As an example, the impact coaches can make to climate change is an area of growing interest and several coaches are choosing to include sustainable leadership as a feature of how they work in an attempt to have their coaching positively impact the world.

In her Doctoral research, Sheppard (2016) explores how supervisees help and/or hinder their own supervision. The participants reported that a key feature of supervision was the learning they gained through it. They went on to describe some of the benefits they received from this learning that were both personal and work-related. Examples included, 'shifting and gaining perspective on issues' and 'feeling less tangled, more complete and lighter as a result.'

Müller et al (2020) reported on the connections between life and work satisfaction, issues of mental strain and how supervision influenced these factors. They reported that

coaching supervision has a moderating effect on the influence of mental strain that in turn positively impacts the level of job satisfaction. This is an interesting point when one considers the work of Graßmann et al (2018) who identified that on average, coaches have seven negative experiences per coaching assignment that can negatively impact the overall mental well-being of the coach. In both these studies, the format and focus of the supervision is not described so it is difficult to establish how the supervision was positively influencing or what work the coach brought that was being positively impacted. That said, the correlation between life/work satisfaction and the use of coaching supervision is an interesting point as this topic is not mentioned elsewhere in the literature.

Who benefits from supervision?

One point where there would appear to be a consensus across all the research groups is that supervision primarily benefits the coach. Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) make this point by highlighting that there is no evidence to suggest that a coaching client benefits from a coach being supervised. This point has resonance with other helping professions as illustrated by Butwell (2006, p. 48). Participants in his study reported that ‘even though case supervision was not set out as an expectation of the purpose of the group supervision, it was seen as, an obvious strength of the process.’

Coaching supervision is often cited in the literature, and by some of the professional bodies, as having a benefit to the client but the literature offers little evidence that this is the case. In her literature review of coaching supervision, Moyes (2009, p. 164) states that, ‘we don’t know enough about what happens in coaching supervision or how effective it is so how can we assume coaching supervision is a good thing?’ This observation supports the research by Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) who identify potential gains from supervision for the supervisee and the buying organisation. However, the research also highlights that although the coaches and supervisors believe there were potential benefits from supervision, they struggle to make a direct link between the supervision and their coaching practice.

This point is echoed in Virgil’s (2017, p. 156) paper on supervision in social work where he reports that, ‘this study shows there are no researches directly measuring the key factors of effective supervision.’

It is interesting to note that the coaching and supervision community see supervision as an increasingly necessary activity for a professional coach, however, there is an absence of evidence on what the benefits of supervision are and who benefits from them.

6.4.3 Risks of supervision

In considering this theme, one might ask what constitutes a risk in supervision, who is exposed to the risk and what is the impact or consequence of this? The following answers these questions in part, thereby highlighting the lack of evidence on this topic from the literature and the professional bodies.

Do no harm

In section 5.6.4, the supervisor group emphasised the importance of coaches having supervision to minimise the risk of them doing harm to themselves or their clients. The risk of doing harm to a coachee is raised in the Ridler Report (Mann, 2016, p. 50) where it was reported that only 48% of organisations believed that a coach who was not in supervision would not expose their client to any unacceptable risks. This is a fascinating statistic as it is unclear what the risks are, let alone which of those would be acceptable or unacceptable.

Efficacy

The responses from each of the groups involved in this research tended to focus on the risks of poor supervision, i.e. issues that would affect the efficacy of the supervision. In the main, the groups considered poor supervision to be doing the right things badly rather than doing wrong things.

The buyer group stated that they had given this topic little thought so the answers they gave reflected their 'in the moment' view rather than opinions based on experience or previous thought. That said, the responses they gave were resonant with the other groups and the literature. Another noticeable point with the buyer group is that the risks as they saw them were important because they would reduce the buyers' level of assurance that the coaching work was being effective. This need for assurance on the quality and/or efficiency of the coaching accords with the stance the buyers have generally taken when responding to the interview questions (see section 5.6.4).

The efficacy of supervision is also seen as the key risk according to the literature (Butwell, 2006; Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009 and Graßmann and Schermuly, 2018). Passmore

and McGoldrick (2009) offer a view on the risk of who conducts the supervision and one supervisor held the view that it was dangerous for coaches to work with a supervisor from a counselling practice as the context is so fundamentally different although it is not clear what the 'danger' is.

Salter's (2008, p. 31-32) research identifies 14 themes that relate to the case against enforced supervision including: supervision stifles creativity, it violates confidentiality, it breeds conformity and it is difficult to prove that supervision is the cause of success. Some of her themes against enforced supervision could be re-categorised as risks affecting the efficacy of supervision. As an example, 'supervision breeds conformity' is listed as a theme and this could be interpreted as potential risk as it affects the efficacy of the supervision by stifling creativity and excluding exploration.

Following the topic of making supervision mandatory, the coach, supervisor and buyer groups all shared a concern that for some coaches, there was a risk that supervision could become a tick box exercise for coaches to comply with the requirements of professional bodies or buyers.

The professional bodies do not offer much commentary on the topic of risks. The BPS SGCP (2007, p. 11) encourage members to be aware of sources of influence and biases that may contaminate their work including cognitive biases, personal experience, motivation, health, control over the psychologist's own practice, pro bono public work, an unethical environment and overall environment. All these influences and biases could have a negative impact on the work so it could be said they are risks to discuss in supervision or could be a risk inherent in the supervision process. The BPS SGCP (2017, p. 64) offers guidance on what to do if things go wrong and includes topics such as if there is a breakdown in a working relationship or if a complaint is made, etc. This guidance refers more to the remedial action to be taken if the risk is realised than identifying what all the risks are.

Commercial consequences

There were few comments on the risks of supervision to the commercial aspect of coach's work, however, the supervisor group offered comments on this related to the broader practice of coaching. The risks they identified concerned professional insurance and commercial practices relating to protection of confidentiality. It was interesting that such

risks were not mentioned by the coach group, particularly as coaching is their commercial practice.

In summary, the risks associated with supervision beyond affecting the efficacy of it, is clearly a topic that requires more research. This research is relevant in supporting this topic as understanding what experienced coaches take to supervision will help focus the scope of future research.

6.4.4 Self-supervision/internal supervisor

The notion of self-supervision or an internal supervisor was raised in the research and is detailed in Chapter 5. Buyer 1 attests that the most important part of a coach going to a supervision is to ensure they develop their own internal supervisor.

The coaching and supervision literature and some of the professional bodies mention coaches developing an internal supervisor. AOCS (2020) lists building a coach's internal supervisor as one of the activities a supervisor could cover. This opinion was supported by Supervisor 3 who stated that they have helped some of their supervisees develop their own inner supervisor. De Haan (2012, p.58) uses the term 'living reflection' and outlines the necessity for a coach to be consciously competent before they are capable of being able to sufficiently reflect on their work or self-supervise.

Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) found that an outcome of coaching supervision is the coach's ability to self-supervise. This is supported by Hodge et al (2014) who found that the research participants use more discretion on the frequency and regularity of their supervision in comparison to what they did early on in their coaching careers. They attribute this to their being more experienced coaches and developing an internal supervisor.

Donaldson-Feilder and Bush (2009) found that one of the benefits, and for some coaching psychologists a goal of supervision, is the ability to build an internal supervisor and self-supervise one's own work. Hawkins and McMahon (2020, p. 43) assert that it is important for coaches to develop the capacity to self-supervise so that they have 'a healthy internal supervisor that they can have access to while they are working.' Clutterbuck and Megginson (2011) purport that a mature coach, or in their language, a system eclectic coach would likely integrate their supervision with self-supervision and Carroll (2014) asserts that reflection-in-action is the basis for creating an internal supervisor.

In the therapeutic world, Basa (2018) contends that there are differing views on use of self-supervision including whether it should be a replacement for, preparation for or in support of traditional supervision. She asserts that one of the key aims of a supervisor is to support their supervisee to become self-sufficient and self-supervision can play a part in achieving that aim. She attests that self-supervision sits alongside later stages of professional development.

Morrisette (2001, p. 17) defines self-supervision as, 'an unique process whereby counsellors can reflect on intrapersonal, interpersonal and clinical issues that affect their work.' In his historical overview of self-supervision, he illustrates that this topic has been discussed for over twenty years in several helping professions that is of interest here as there is so little written about self-supervision in coaching.

Casement (2014) states that as a therapist, he deals with the everyday issues that arise in his work through formally developing an internal supervisor. He separates the support a supervisor can offer on what has gone before (hindsight) and support on what may arise in the future (foresight). He attests that therapists need to develop an ability to work with the here and now (insight) that he sees as internal supervision in the moment.

In summary, it is interesting to note that the notion of an internal supervisor has been around in the therapeutic field for two decades yet is only now beginning to attract attention in the coaching field. Experienced therapists are encouraged, if not expected, to demonstrate and sustain independence in their ability to practise as a professional yet in the coaching field, it could be argued that the opposite position is true and that coaches are being discouraged from increasing their independence through the drive for supervision to be made a mandatory activity.

6.5 Experienced coaches

This research, the literature and some of the professional bodies mention differences in the supervisory needs of novice and experienced coaches.

In the coaching and supervision field, several authors have commented on the supervision needs of coaches. Passmore (2011) comments on different formats of supervision relative to experience and suggests that novice coaches may benefit from group supervision and that experienced coaches have different supervision needs to new coaches so may benefit more from other self-supervision activities such as learning logs and peer mentoring.

Murdoch and Arnold (2013, p. 22) also consider the experience level of a coach to be an important factor in supervision. They consider there to be 'two strands for supervision that affect the supervision approach'. The first relates to coaches in training and the second to experienced practitioners. They claim the former focuses on developing basic coaching skills and the latter supporting the coach sustain a position of being 'fit for purpose' through activities such as reflective learning and paying attention to consistency in their work. Tkach and DiGirolamo (2017) identify different needs for different levels of practitioners, namely, early practitioners, mid-level practitioners and master practitioners. They propose that master practitioner coaches could co-create their own supervision plan with their supervisor.

A way in which this has had a practical impact is through the observation of supervision groups in practice. Armstrong and Geddes (2009) were supervising several groups of coaches and received feedback on how well the groups were working. The coaches wanted to select the level of professional development they wanted to work with in supervision. As a result, the groups organised themselves by the level of their coaching experience.

McGivern (2009) highlighted the vanity trap that many coaches can fall into. Her point relates to coaches who believe the coaching experience they have acquired means they no longer need to have supervision. This is an important finding as there is currently no evidence to support that experienced coaches need supervision. That said, McGivern (2009, p. 22) advocates for coaches to have supervision and her research was intended to provide evidence that might encourage coaches to 'open up their practice to scrutiny' but in the absence of empirical research, the assertion that experienced coaches do not require supervision could be correct.

Another topic relates to what coaches focus on in supervision. Clutterbuck and Megginson (2011), based on their observations in coach assessment centres, assert that mature coaches demonstrate they have deeply reflected upon several areas. One of these relates to how they use mentoring and supervision. The authors accept they have very little evidence about how mature coaches approach supervision but suggest the differences might include:

- How they choose their supervisor
- The contract they create

- What they choose to take to supervision
- Preparation
- Their reflection on supervision
- How they maintain quality supervision
- Awareness of changes in themselves and their practice that have come about in supervision

They go on to suggest that mature coaches have a need to be challenged, use different supervisors for different purposes and that they integrate their external supervision with self-supervision. Jepson (2016) concurred with this by identifying differences in the learning and development needs of novice and experienced coaches including experienced coaches wanting a deeper level of critical reflection and novice coaches wanting to focus on tools and techniques. Sheppard's research (2016, p. 186) provides evidence of the link between the stage of maturity of the coach and what they require of supervision and reported differences between a novice, experienced and very experienced supervisee. As can be seen in Figure 6-1, this did not specify the work, rather the general nature of the questions the supervisees would take to supervision. Although this gives an illustration of difference based on experience, it does not specifically answer what work the coach should take to supervision.

Figure 6-1 What different stages of supervisees take to supervision

Novice	Experienced	Very Experienced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking 'Am I doing this right?' • What do I do next with this client? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on how I'm 'being ' as a coach • Where I'm stuck and out of my depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I in touch with the latest thinking? • How do I break the rules safely? • How can I contribute to the professional community?

Ref: Sheppard, 2016.

Lucas (2017) presented a set of coaching principles, based on Bluckert's (2006) seven principles of a coaching mind-set. In exploring each of these with fellow practitioners and an audience at a conference, she reported that a common question that is frequently asked relates to whether these supervision mind-set principles are different to the mind-

set of an experienced coach. She goes on to explore four areas where the lines between a highly experienced coach and a supervisor are blurred. The four areas relate to:

1. Who is the client? - Supervisors and experienced coaches are expected to acknowledge the needs of more than one client/stakeholder
2. The context in which the work is set – Experienced coaches work with complex people, in complex contexts on complex issues, as do supervisors
3. The level of maturity of the client – Mature learners recognise that their development is a journey rather than a specific one-off intervention
4. The volition of the client to develop themselves – experienced coaches tend to work with willing clients who are seeking transformational change rather than transactional change.

The notion of the lines being blurred may support the argument that experienced coaches can be more independent in their supervision.

Bennett and Rogers (2011) use the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (1980) to identify whether there are differences between novice coaches and expert coaches. The results show that there are differences and expert coaches have higher levels of self-awareness and confidence, they have a fuller understanding of the coach role, they seek knowledge and experience in different ways and they present similar coaching skills to less experienced coaches but in a different way.

In the counselling field, Stoltenberg and Delworth's (1987, cited in Page and Wosket 2013) developmental stages of counsellor supervision. This sets out the developmental stage of the counsellor along with the supervisor interventions and behaviours. It is interesting to note that once a counsellor is considered fully functioning, supervision is no longer required and instead is replaced with a 'mutual consultation' determined by the supervisee.

Others mention the importance of the model of supervision in relation to the experience level of the coach. Basa (2017, p. 10) identifies several models and approaches to supervision in therapy. She states that 'Developmental Models', 'Lifespan Developmental Models', 'Integrated Developmental Model' and the 'Process Developmental Models' all involve an assessment of the developmental stage of the supervisee to ensure that the supervision interventions given are appropriate to their stage of development. Stoltenberg et al (1994, p. 49) reviewed the changes in supervision in relation to

counsellors and therapists gaining experience that illustrated that there is 'support for general developmental models, perceptions of supervisors and supervisees consistent with developmental theories, the behaviour of supervisors changes as counsellors gain experience and the supervisor relationship changes as the counsellors gain experience.'

Heppner and Roehlke (1984) also make a case for differences among counselling supervisees at different stages of their training. They say at the time they did their research, there was little empirical evidence to support a developmental model of supervision for counselling trainees but their research illustrated differences across different levels of trainee. This proves a case for a developmental model of supervision to support this population.

Spence et al (2001) report the importance of the approach taken by the supervisor and assert that inexperienced practitioners prefer a more directive supervisory approach (as do clinicians with more experience) when handling a crisis or complicated issues.

Few of the professional bodies assert a minimum number of hours of supervision for experienced coaches although many do specify supervision requirements for the accreditation process. In contrast, the AC are very clear on what supervision requirements they ask of their members and have devised a table of recommended supervision ratios that relate to the level of accreditation held by the coach (Hawkins et al, 2019). They do not explain what the basis of these ratios are nor indeed what would be different about the supervision itself. But in setting this standard, they are acknowledging there are differences based on experience.

Freedom of choice also features in the BPS SGCP (2007) and states that psychologists may select different supervisors depending on their preferred supervisory style, nature, orientation and their needs at the time and that this may particularly be the case for experienced psychologists. They go on to say experienced psychologists may choose an experienced colleague from outside their profession, professional specialty or organisation and that they can also invite supervision from experts where appropriate to the context of the practice. These studies along with professional body positions illustrate not only a difference in needs of novice and experienced coaches but also introduce the notion that experienced coaches can, or should be, more self-sufficient in satisfying their supervision needs.

In summary, it seems evident that supervision is different for experienced coaches, whether this be in the structure, the format, the approach or the frequency yet there is little evidence to identify what the differences are. Whilst it is useful to have some evidence to support the general point, it would be more helpful if there was information available showing what an experienced coach should take to supervision compared to that of a novice coach. It could also be argued that based on the literature and findings detailed in Chapter 5 that an experienced coach may not need to be supervised at all as their needs can be met in different formats.

6.6 Summary

Three consistent themes across all elements of this study, are the paucity of evidence relating to coaching supervision, a lack of clarity and/or agreement on most of the topics related to coaching supervision; including its core purpose and the lack of limitations to the scope of supervision.

These themes and the repeated requests for more research into psychotherapeutic and clinical supervision as detailed in Chapter 2, illustrates an ethical dilemma for coaching supervision. The coaching sector is borrowing from another sector that is seriously lacking in research and robust evidence about the validity and reliability of many of its practices. One could therefore argue that this must pose concerns about the validity and credibility of the coaching supervision base and requires attention if the sector is to provide an ethical service.

7 Project conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will set out the conclusions and recommendations related to the answer to my research question. I will also describe the dissemination of this research and how the results will impact my coaching and supervision practice. I will end with recommendations for further research.

The research question for this study is:

What do experienced business coaches take to supervision?

From the outset, this project accepted that supervision is a vehicle for coaches to attend to their CPD needs and therefore, this point was not contested in this research. The position being explored in this project is that for some of the stakeholders, i.e. the professional bodies and many coach buyers, supervision is increasingly becoming a mandated activity but there is little clarity on what informs this position, particularly for experienced coaches.

I started this research with a metaphor in mind that was akin to that of the Emperor's New Clothes and relates to exposing the gap between assumption and reality that surrounds coaching supervision. As set out in Chapter 1 - Introduction, coaching supervision is considered to be an important element of good coaching practice and much of established coaching supervision practice has been borrowed from other helping professions. I was curious to know if this research might offer evidence contrary to the perceived wisdom that emanates from a relatively small group of authors, researchers and the professional bodies who presently heavily influence the direction of the coaching supervision field. Assuming this to be the case, my invitation to them would be to grasp the opportunity this research presents to establish supervision credibly and not be accepting of 'borrowed clothes' (Moyes, 2009) or worse, invisible ones, as the platform on which this sector is built.

7.2 Response to the research question

To answer the research question, the following objectives were set and each are discussed in turn.

- **What can be learned from the current coach supervision literature and related helping professions literature that is relevant to the research question?**

Chapter 2 details the learning that was derived from the literature. The main learning points are that a substantial amount of the coaching supervision base is borrowed from other helping professions and much of that is not based on empirical evidence. There is also a lack of alignment in the literature on the definition, purpose, scope, roles, benefits and risks of supervision. Indeed, the main point of agreement is that there is a need for more research into supervision.

- **How do current theories and models used in coaching supervision identify what coaches take to supervision?**

Section 2.3 identifies the most common theories and models used in supervision. By not addressing this issue within the models, the default conclusion is that the key models used in supervision are intended to supervise anything and everything a coach chooses to bring to supervision. The write up of some of the models hold an assumption about the purpose of the supervision while others have a very broad scope for the model to work within. Either way, the supervision models do not provide clarity on what work should be supervised.

- **What do buyers, coaching supervisors and professional coaching bodies require of supervision?**

Chapters 2 - Literature Review and Chapter 5 – Project Findings detail the response to this question. The data is varied, sketchy, and based on questionable foundations. Indeed, as detailed earlier, for many of the research participants, this questions had not crossed their minds before. It is also unclear why many of these stakeholders have these requirements, other than for accreditation purposes.

- **What do coaches take to supervision?**

It is clear from this research that coaches can, and do, work on a very broad range of topics in supervision. The data revealed several topics that experienced coaches take to supervision including, new scenarios, business development issues, good and problematic coaching work, blind spots, tools and techniques and ethical and boundary issues. Only the buyer group mentioned work that should not be supervised and this involved sensitive or commercial information. Other than this caveat, the conclusion of this research is that currently, nothing is out of bounds for supervision.

- **A framework that covers the work an experienced coach takes to supervision**

This chapter introduces a framework for supervision. Refining and implementing this framework (or any other) for coaching supervision can and should be the topic of future research.

- **A series of recommendations to supervisors, coaches, buyers, professional bodies and supervisory training organisations**

This chapter contains recommendations for each of these stakeholders including the adoption of a supervision framework.

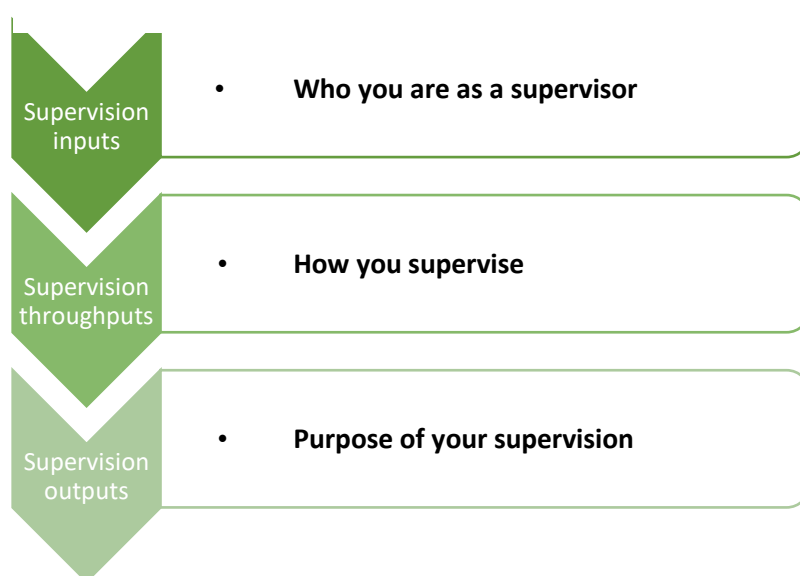
7.2.1 A framework for supervision

Sheppard (2016) explored supervisee-led supervision and based on this research, I would argue that there is a need for supervisors to continue to take an active role in defining and agreeing what the purpose and intent of their supervision practice is to enable them to agree with their supervision clients what they bring to supervision. In doing so, this would enable the impact of the supervision to be more readily assessed and recognised.

The literature is clear that coaching supervision does not have a clear or agreed definition (Lawrence and Whyte, 2014) nor is there a specific model or theoretical basis for coaching supervision (Bluckert, 2004 and Butwell, 2006). There is, however, a plethora of definitions of coaching supervision offered by professional bodies and eminent writers though these have little overlap (Tkach and DiGirolamo, 2017) and there does not appear to be any empirical research to support them. Observing the range and depth of definitions that exist, one could conclude that there might not be a need for a prescribed and universal definition of coaching supervision. This research indicates that the need for a clear definition is an unhelpful assumption and that leaving those involved in the activity to define it for themselves might be a more fruitful approach. This research does not propose yet another definition that could be deployed by supervisors as this would merely re-create another one size fits all approach. There is nothing in the data or the literature which presents any issues with different supervisors having different purposes for supervision. In fact, the data this research yielded appears to argue a case for this to continue to be available. The crux of the matter here is the obvious need for the supervisor to gain clarity on what the purpose of the supervision is, it is not about reaching a universally compliant position.

Based on this research, I conclude that the foundations of coaching supervision require serious attention if the sector is to maintain an ethical position. In order to work ethically, it is necessary to have boundaries which give clarity on what can and cannot form part of supervision work. To enable boundaries to be explored, there needs to be a structure or framework to facilitate this activity. Instead of striving for an agreed definition, I conclude that it is more effective to establish a framework for supervisors that enables them to define their own supervision approach. The adoption of the supervision framework set out in Figure 7-1 is my main recommendation to the supervision sector.

Figure 7-1 Supervision framework



Each part of this framework is intended to enable a supervisor to establish clarity on the boundaries of their supervision approach. The framework encourages the supervisor to explore the holistic nature of their work.

The **inputs** element requires clarity on intention, values, beliefs, theoretical underpinnings, knowledge and experience. The supervisor must understand their own practice sufficiently to enable them to identify where they can add value and what areas of coaching are beyond their expertise. Thus, they must be aware of the range of approaches that are congruent with their own theoretical underpinnings and have sufficient technical armoury to enable innovative approaches to be explored. Understanding inputs results in the supervisor having clarity on who they are as a supervisor and equally important, who they are not.

Being a coach is an important component of supervision work; similar to the 'signature presence' that Mary Beth O'Neill (2000) described for coaches. As derived from the research and literature, qualities of the individual supervisor are considered important, i.e. what they be, not just what they do is important in this work. There is little written or researched about what it means to be a coach and the book by Dean and Humphrey (2019) was intended to help bridge this gap and throws light on what it is like to be a coach whilst developing from novice to master level. The book is not empirically researched, instead it is based on the lived experiences of two established coaches and illustrates how being a coach impacts doing coaching.

The **throughputs** part of the framework attends to how a supervisor works and demands an explicit exploration of what constitutes the delivery of the supervision. This may include models, frameworks, concept, tools, techniques, logistics, roles and fees that the supervisor deploys in their work. The supervisor must be able to articulate their experience and framework of practice to allow this to be shared with their clients and the supervisory work to be agreed. This provides the opportunity for the coach and supervisor to negotiate supervision and determine if they deploy similar or alternative frameworks as a means of challenging their practice.

The **outputs** part targets the purpose of the supervision. The supervisor must focus on what their supervision is aiming to achieve and what difference the supervision is striving to make. This may relate to a type of supervision client, e.g. performance coach or a leadership coach, or a specific sector, e.g. public, private, not for profit or it may relate to progressing an outcome, e.g. critical moments, difficult clients, business development.

Where a supervisor devotes time to developing their supervision framework, the result will be a clear articulation of their supervision approach and the underpinning rationale. The supervisor will know who they are as a supervisor, how they supervise and the purpose of their supervision. As importantly, the supervisor will know what is not part of their approach. This knowledge provides the supervisor with boundaries and means they can work ethically.

In my experience, supervisors, unlike coaches, tend not to arrange formal chemistry sessions in the same way as coaches do with their clients. Though this may, in part, be mirroring what happens in the counselling and therapeutic world where formal chemistry sessions are uncommon and not included as a named part of the formal process, coaching

is not counselling and the parallel is a false comparison. This research has stressed the importance of a supervisor's presence with their clients, therefore, the match of the supervisor and client is important, as is the opportunity to explore what working together would involve. Adopting this suggested framework would enable supervision clients to determine if this is the type of supervision they want and if the supervisor is the one they want to work with. I suggest that this would constitute good and ethical supervision practice.

7.2.2 A series of recommendations for supervisors, coaches, buyers, professional bodies and supervisory training organisations

Recommendation 1 - Fit for purpose training

It is clear from this research that the lack of clarity on purpose and definition impacts how people view the qualifications required of supervisors.

De Haan and Regouin (2018, p. 3) identify the three paths that merge at the end of professional training and/or qualification. These are general and profession specific theory; methodological principles, practices and approaches; and practical skills. Based on the research findings, qualifying someone to supervise any coach on any topic would require a never-ending set of training in order to become acquainted with the topics, let alone be able to offer expertise in them, so the three paths identified above may never merge.

It can be inferred that issues of ethics and integrity arise on a supervisor's fitness for purpose. How does a supervisor show competence in everything? I would argue that they cannot achieve competence in everything and proving competence would be an equally impossible task. This position supports the conclusion that supervisors should focus their practice and offer clarity on what they do in supervision as this will enable them to better discern what training and qualifications they need to reach an appropriate level of competence.

The adoption of a transparent supervision framework will facilitate clarity on supervision strengths and training needs. Therefore, I recommended that supervisors review their supervision framework and conduct their own supervisory training needs analysis.

I recommend that professional bodies review their skills and competency frameworks to confirm whether their skills and competencies cover all aspects of a supervision

framework. It is recognised that the professional bodies may not wish to develop skills and competencies for all three elements of a supervision framework. However, it would be informative for all supervision stakeholders to be aware of this framework and its intention. There is also an opportunity for accreditation requirements relating to supervision to be made more transparent, i.e. specificity on what work the professional bodies require coaches to take to supervision.

The final recommendation on this point is for supervision training providers to review their training offering against the supervision framework provided here. As mentioned earlier, most supervision training focuses on the model, or throughputs part, of the supervision framework. Training providers may want to review the other two parts and determine how to explicitly manage these in the structure of their training so that trainee supervisors have a clear, and therefore ethical understanding of what they are 'qualified' to supervise. This will also give assurance to the trainee supervisor that they are appropriately trained to deliver the supervision framework they are offering to clients.

Recommendation 2 - Self-supervision

An aspect of supervision that arose through this research was the use of self-supervision, particularly for experienced coaches. In the therapeutic world, this is a capability that is encouraged early in a therapist's training so they start to develop their competence and confidence in self-supervising. The ultimate aim of therapeutic training is to produce an independent practitioner who can be self-sufficient and resourceful in the work they perform. Casement (2014) positions the internal supervisor in the here and now or insight position that can arguably only be performed by the practitioner in the room with the client at that moment in time. In stark contrast to this, the literature indicates that the coaching and supervision sectors are currently heading in diametrically opposed directions where a pull towards supervision being a mandatory activity is in danger of creating a dependency on it and diminishing the resourcefulness of the coach to self-supervise.

As a coaching supervisor myself, I conclude and recommend that coaches, supervisors, training organisations and the professional bodies reject supervision as a mandatory activity for experienced coaches. Instead, supervision should be viewed as one of many vehicles by which an experienced coach can engage in CPD and, as this research has accentuated, it is not the only vehicle for CPD. I further recommend that self-supervision

is incorporated as a key capability of professional practice. As can be seen in Figure 7.2 Key components of coaching supervision outcomes, self-supervision forms an important and integral part of a coach's supervision options. Creating dependency between coaching supervisor and supervision client is considered unethical practice in the supervision sector, therefore, the adoption of self-supervision as a regular activity would be a direct counterbalance to dependency on external supervision.

Self-supervision techniques can be incorporated as part of coach training to develop and sustain resourceful coaches and supervisors. It can also be argued that coaches who develop competence in self-supervision and who want to explore their client work in supervision will be better prepared for it. As stated by Casement (2014) traditional supervision can help reflection on what has happened (hindsight) and what the practitioner might want to focus on following the supervision (foresight) but without self-supervision, a coach would miss out on the insight aspect. The addition of this aspect would undoubtedly add to the supervision process and potentially bring an otherwise unexplored angle into the supervision discussion.

Recommendation 3 - Stakeholder dialogue

This research has drawn attention to the lack of alignment between, and within, the key stakeholders in coaching supervision. Buyers have different views, approaches and standards on supervision which is mirrored in the supervision sector as a whole. This lack of alignment leaves untapped opportunities for effective supervision.

I therefore recommend that professional bodies make it a requirement for supervisors to share their supervision framework with all supervision clients as part of the contracting process.

It could be argued that there is an opportunity for large scale project to be launched with aligning the needs and expectations of supervision stakeholders as a key objective. It could also be argued that this may force people towards a one size fits all answer rather than a practical solution. At this stage in the supervision sector's development, I recommend that supervisors and coaches include the needs and expectations of supervision stakeholders in their work. Supervisors can reflect on where these needs and expectations fit in their supervision framework and coaches can consider who their stakeholders are and where they fit in the work they bring to supervision. It may be that supervisor and coach choose to exclude these stakeholders in the work they do together.

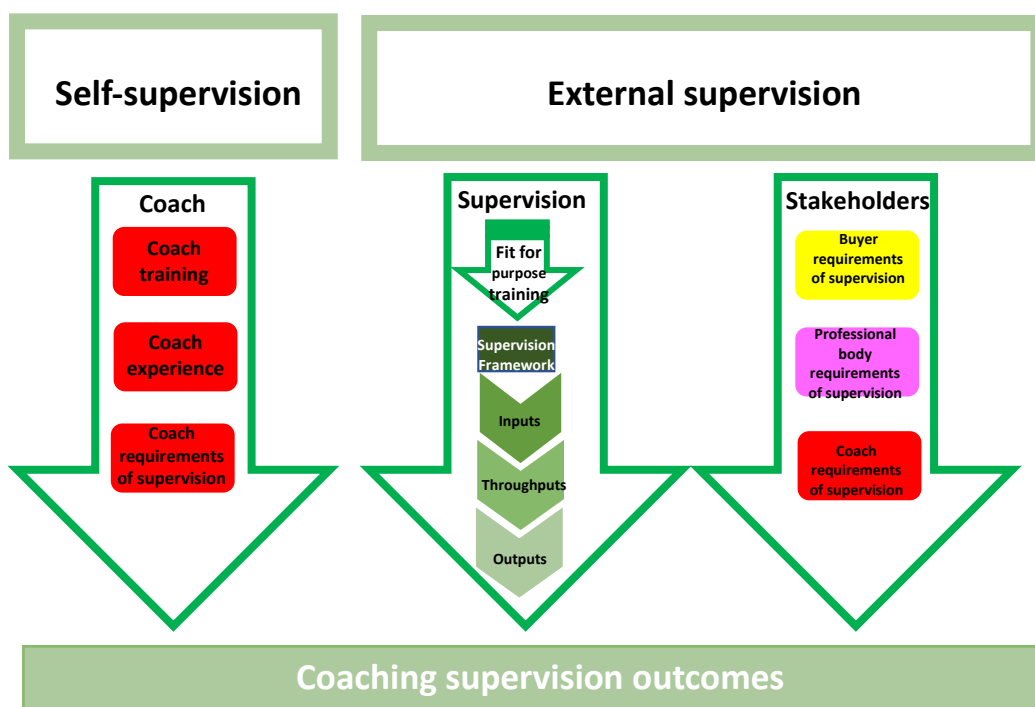
This recommendation to discuss stakeholder needs would not dictate that this position was unacceptable, rather it would make it perfectly acceptable as it has been explicitly discussed and agreed between them.

Summary

The question posed by this research has been answered and the answer is that a coach can take any work to supervision. Further, the research has revealed a lack of structure, boundaries and clarity surrounding coaching supervision and the ethical implications this creates.

The recommendations from this research provide a beginning to reframing supervision in a way that enables more explicit ethical practice. This will ultimately lead to greater clarity on supervision practices, training and the efficacy of supervision work. Figure 7-2 identifies the key components that relate to these conclusions and recommendations.

Figure 7-2 Key components of coaching supervision outcomes



7.3 How this research will be disseminated

This research was intended to reach several stakeholders in the coaching and supervision sector. This section will give an overview of how the research will be disseminated to each group and how it will be shared.

Coaching and supervision community

- Write an article for publication in a peer reviewed journal
- Write an article for Coaching at Work magazine – I am currently a member of the Editorial Board for this publication so there is an expectation that I contribute articles and content.
- Write or co-author an article for publication in a business publication – I believe the findings of my research may have some application beyond the coaching/supervision sector so would like to share the findings with that context in mind.
- Present the research findings at appropriate conferences – this will have the benefit of reaching a large and geographically spread audience.
- Offer to have a conversation with the professional bodies to share my research findings and explore the impact of this for them and their members.

Buyers of coaching/supervision services

- Send a synopsis of the thesis to those who took part in the research and to those who expressed an interest in it
- Target organisations who have a large coaching faculty (internal and external coaches) and send a synopsis of the research along with an invitation to discuss the implications for them in more detail. The synopsis will include a section of top tips about coaching supervision.

Coach and supervision training organisations

- Send a synopsis of the thesis along with an invitation to discuss the findings and implications in more detail. I will also offer to consult on content for use in coach/supervision training.

7.4 How this research will affect my practice

A benefit of this research has been the impact it has had on my confidence as a researcher. My supervisor said to me early in the doctorate process that one of the main aims of a professional doctorate is to learn how to become a professional researcher. At the time, I thought this would be a stretch as I did not see myself in that role but through the process of the doctorate, I have grown in competence and confidence in my research capabilities. The unexpected consequence of this is the level of scrutiny I now apply to

sources of data. This experience has enabled me to be more discerning in my acknowledgement or critique of papers and publications. This has made me a more curious and challenging learner as I no longer accept data on face value, I want to know what kind of data it is and how reliable it is so I do not fall into the trap of accepting data without question.

My confidence as a coaching supervisor has also been impacted in that I now feel I legitimately have permission to give more thoughtful attention to the purpose of my practice. The current state of the supervision sector has meant that I have not given attention to the validity of the research question and that I have perhaps accepted the perceived wisdom that this is not a topic we need to worry about. I believe this research does reveal the emperor's new clothes, i.e. a level of assumptions that are underpinning supervision and it also creates an opportunity for me to address this in my practice.

The research has also afforded me an opportunity to hold a different type of conversation with my clients, both as an experienced coach and supervisor. I have enjoyed going back to exploring basic fundamentals, challenging assumptions and creating light bulb moments for my clients. This happened during the data collection and I have no doubt it will continue in the follow up conversations. It is already allowing me the opportunity to create an even stronger relationship with my clients as the starting conversations will start with their needs, expectations and wants of supervision.

I have started to experiment with self-supervision. As an experienced coach, I have evidence to support my felt sense that my supervision needs are different to those of novice coaches and the research has enabled me to legitimately explore alternative ways of developing myself and my practice whilst staying in service to my clients' needs. I have started to develop different tools and techniques to enable self-supervision and hope to expand these further. I think this is a particularly exciting area as advancements in technology will undoubtedly support this activity. Indeed, the co-author of my book has an online product that supports a form of self-supervision (Dean, 2011).

The final way the research has impacted my practice is that it has re-ignited my interest in teaching. Over the last two decades I have been involved in coach training but have never taught in an academic setting. I am curious to explore this further and hope to identify further research opportunities alongside this.

7.5 Recommendations for further research

In Chapter 1, I identified the following three questions as areas of interest to me:

1. To be a good coach, do you have to be in supervision?
2. To be a good supervisor, do you have to have been a good coach?
3. Should coaching supervision be voluntary or mandatory?

I believe all warrant further discussion and suggest that there are some questions that may need to be addressed before these:

- The efficacy of coaching supervision – This topic was the focus of my original research question and I think this continues to be a question that demands attention. Where there is clarity on the purpose of the supervision and the work that will be supervised, the possibility of measuring efficacy becomes possible.
- The benefits and risks of coaching supervision – It became apparent in my research that this was a topic that had little evidence to support a view but had a large body of anecdotal references. The outcome of research on this topic may also create a stronger evidence to support or negate whether supervision should be mandatory.

In addition to these questions, one of the outcomes of the Focus Groups and the one to one interviews was a list of unanswered questions about coaching supervision (Appendices 14 and 15). I would argue that all these form the basis of questions for future research, albeit they are not all directly related to this research aim. The unanswered questions that are related to this research include:

- What is the business case for why supervision needs to occur at all?
- Why do coaches need to be supervised and what happens if we do not supervise?
- What is the impact on a business of a coach being in supervision?

7.6 Limitations of this research

The following sets out the immediate limitations of this research project.

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for both the Focus Groups and the semi-structured interviews. A limitation with this method is that the participants are all known to the researcher so their responses could be modified to give a response they think the researcher wants to hear rather than a more authentic response to the question.

The stakeholder groups do not include the coaching 'end user' or client. I discussed this decision with my supervisor and we agreed that as many coaching clients are unaware of what supervision is or indeed if their coach is engaged in supervision, it seemed a low risk to exclude them from the research.

The other stakeholder group that was excluded from the semi-structured interviews was the professional bodies. As detailed in Chapter 4 section 4.7 on page 91, the absence of professional body representatives in the interviews was not an intended outcome but my inability to secure participants resulted in me inviting more participants from the buyer group instead. The desk top research on the professional bodies which is detailed in Chapter 2, section 2.4 on page 47 ensures the views of the professional bodies are included in this research.

There are limitations associated with running Focus Groups and semi-structured interviews and the advantages and disadvantages of Focus Groups and semi-structured interviews are detailed in Chapter 3 in sections 3.8.1.1 and 3.8.2.1 respectively.

Another limitation of this research is that there is no differentiation between group or one to one coaching supervision. It is therefore impossible to know if the structure of the supervision has any impact on the answer to this research question.

The final limitation of this research is that only one of the participants was not UK based so it is unclear if there are geographical or cultural differences that would impact the result of this research.

8 Project reflections

This doctoral journey has been a long one and it has certainly been one of two halves. It started in 2011 when I had a wonderful conversation with Dr Annette Fillery-Travis about the topic I was interested in researching. We were both excited and as I had previous experience of working Annette when I was studying for my Masters, I knew I was in good hands. However, I was sadly not left in her hands, I was assigned to another supervisor.

The first half

I was delighted to have started this journey, to undertake a Doctorate was a dream I had had for decades and I was finally starting it. I had a strong sense of what I wanted my research question to be and I was excited to learn the skills of doctorate level research. Finding a way to fit in full time work, study and home was a challenge and I noticed how challenging it was to switch from work to academia. I know myself pretty well and know that I learn and work best in specific ways - I learn by doing; I am an extravert so I need to talk my thinking out loud; I need to know what good looks like; I need targets, I love a good process and I need feedback, constructive and positive. This part of my journey understandably, gave me none of those things as a Doctorate is not a taught programme, it is independent learning of the highest standard. I feared that many of my supervisors misread my needs as some form of overanxious dependency and this attacked my feelings of confidence and competence in new and debilitating ways. I could see I was withering. After 18 months, I felt like I had made no progress at all and had no idea where to start to change that. So, I paused - for a very, very, very long time.

The second half

My passion for this topic has not gone away and neither had the desire to complete a Doctorate. I considered writing an opinion piece that I could pepper with market research and anecdotes but I knew this would leave the Doctoral itch unscratched. So, I reconnected with Annette and she took me in hand. She knows me well and knows how to get the best out of me. She could see I was not needy or dependant, I was an independent learner with specific learning needs. Before long, I was part of a small group of Doctoral students who were studying coaching related topics. We met for half days where we had a say in what we covered as well as taking advice from Annette about what to pay attention to. I got to see what good looked like, I got feedback on my work –

constructive and positive; I set targets on what I would complete before our next meeting and I got to speak my thoughts aloud. Now I was motoring.

Annette moved from Middlesex to UWTSD and I went with her, there was no way I was losing her as my supervisor again. Two of my DProf buddies moved as well so we were able to continue our quarterly small group meetings. I also continued to meet virtually with my Middlesex DProf buddies and they invited me to join their weekly huddle. Both were further ahead than me and the clock was starting to tick loudly for them so they would talk weekly to share successes/failures and commit to what they would do the following week. This was target setting heaven for me and undoubtedly made a significant impact to my rate of work and my mental health. Despite them both having completed the whole Doctorate process, we continue to speak weekly. Submission and vivas do not mean you are finished, you still have to complete conditions, plan what articles to publish, circle back to research participants to thank them, etc. all of which require focused attention, so our calls continue.

I have enjoyed writing up most of the thesis but writing up my methodology chapter was excruciating. I had no academic style of writing, struggled with the content and was trying to get over my imposter syndrome. Writing this first and leaving it to the end before making any changes has helped me see how far I have come in my writing – still a way to go – but so improved. I loved doing the data collection and analysis that involved running Focus Groups and interviews, writing up transcripts, theming them, replaying them and drawing out the emergent themes - bliss. I learned a lot about having good systems in place to file, store and title documents. This paid off in spades when it came to writing the later chapters as I could easily find references and documents relevant for the chapter I was writing.

The literature review was the chapter I dreaded the most but in the end, I have to say I enjoyed writing it the most. Again, working to a system made this click for me. I created a form to record data relevant to my key research questions so every time I read something, important points were captured. Again, this paid off in spades later as I could easily search and find references and quotes for the section I was writing.

For my final year, I planned to work half time – two weeks working, two weeks on my Doctorate. I knew this was the only way I could make the time to write. It meant my business would take a hit financially but it was a price I was willing to pay. Then came

Covid-19. My half time plan fell apart and I was contacting clients, attending emergency planning meetings and working with my colleagues on projects to try and prop up our disappearing business. I could see that if I continued in this way, I would not have the time to finish writing up so I took the bold step to leave the business I had been part of founding. This left me free to focus solely on my Doctorate. This has been the Covid-19 cloud's silver lining for me as I have had six months of broadly uninterrupted time to focus on my thesis. I have loved knowing I have time to write and I have been able to set more targets and milestones to push the document forward and here I am, almost done.

Covid-19 has brought challenges to my Doctorate and in particular, I found sourcing some papers, books and articles to be a particularly hard. In part, this is because I have not been able to physically visit libraries to access papers and books so I tried to buy them. Many of them are out of print or unavailable and some are very highly priced because they are so rare – one second-hand version of a book by Carroll and Gilbert was on sale for £200. Needless to say, I have not been able to read all that I wanted and has meant I have had to include secondary references or leave out important texts.

So, here I am, almost ready to submit and take on the challenge of the viva. In my Master's dissertation, I included the words of the song 'On my way' from the film Brother Bear as a representation of how I was feeling about starting the next part of my journey having completed the course. The small bear's sings with optimism, excitement and joy about going on a journey that continues to embody how I feel about my life and career post-Doctorate. So, tell everybody I'm on my way!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmJzLipDbIA>



9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Coopers Taxonomy of Literature Review

Characteristic	Category	Sam's response
Focus	Research outcomes Research methods Theories Practices or applications	My primary focus is outcomes as in the literature review I want to see if there is a lack of information on my topic. Methods will be important to support the credibility of my review and my chosen methods Theories will also feature as a lot of theories have been borrowed from clinical supervision so I want to know if there are any coaching supervision theories that exist I will not focus on practices or applications as I do not want to review the execution of coaching supervision, I want to focus on what exists in the lead up to it being applied.
Goal	Integrations a) Generalisation b) Conflict resolution c) Linguistic bridge-building Criticism Identification of central issues	The primary goal is to critically analyse the literature and explicate the relationship between the purpose of supervision and the research to support it.
Perspective	Neutral representation Espousal of position	I have a position on this that I will declare, i.e. I don't think there is any empirical research on the purpose of coaching supervision for experienced coaches that goes beyond their personal development. That said, I am willing to be open to my view being challenged and altered through the lit review.
Coverage	Exhaustive Exhaustive with selective criteria Representative Central of pivotal	As I don't believe there is a large body of work on this topic, I plan to do an exhaustive review with selective criteria.
Organisation	Historical Conceptual Methodological	I think this will be a mix of these formats. I want to be able to show the development and growth of coaching supervision from its early start to current state; how supervision fits with clinical and business concepts of supervision and then discuss the results and implications of this.
Audience	Specialised scholars General scholars Practitioners or policymakers General public	The audience will not include the general public or general scholars. This study is intended to make a practical difference to the coaching and coaching supervision sector so will include specialised scholars and practitioners and policymakers.

9.2 Appendix 2 – Analysis and critique of research-based literature

Title:

Type of source:

Author/researcher:

Publication date:

Methodology including data collection	
Research sample/participants	
Research problem/purpose	
Research question	
Key findings	
Limitations of the study	
Conclusions	
Controversies/disagreements with other research/ers	
Recommendations/implications for practice	
Overall impressions	
Value/relevance for my research (Very important, important, moderately important, mildly important, not important)	

9.3 Appendix 3 – Analysis and critique of theoretical literature

Title:

Author/researcher:

Publication date:

Overview of concept/theory	
Key premise/claim	
Reasoning Evidence is provided that clearly supports the claim Opposing claims are recognised and addressed	
Relevance Extent to which the information directly supports my topic and is useful. What are the implications for my current research?	
Overall impression/evaluation Does the author suggest the findings can be applied in theory and/or practice? How useful does this work seem to me with regard to theoretical and/or practical applications? (Very important, important, moderately important, mildly important, not important)	
Synthesis Synthesise the pieces of my critique to emphasise my own points about the author's work; its relevance and/or application to other theories I have reviewed and to my study	

9.4 Appendix 4 – Supervision in Professional Bodies

European Mentoring and Coaching Counsel (EMCC)	
Definition	Supervision is the interaction that occurs when a mentor or coach brings their coaching or mentoring work experiences to a supervisor in order to be supported and to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the development and benefit of the mentor or coach, their clients and their organisation
Purpose	<p>The functions of supervision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the competence and capability of the coach / mentor • Providing a supportive space for the coach / mentor to process the experiences they have had when working with clients • Encouraging professional practice related to quality, standards and ethics <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance wellbeing • Develop coach and mentor practice of all levels of experience • Develop the competence of the coach/mentor • Provide a supportive space to process the experiences they have had when working with clients • Encourage professional practice related to quality, standards and ethics
Work to be supervised	<p>Work experiences as mentioned in the definition</p> <p>In the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors, to which EMCC has signed up to, ethical dilemmas and potential or actual breaches of the code are stated as topics to be discussed in supervision</p> <p>See roles below</p>
Requirement	<p>Yes, as part of CPD</p> <p>Recommend 1 hour per 35 hours coaching, 4 hours per year min</p>
Link to accreditation	Yes
Roles	The EMCC Supervision Competence Framework sets out what competences a supervisor would demonstrate. The first of these, managing the supervision contract and process related to the set-up of the supervision with the supervisee and relevant stakeholders.
Qualifications	<p>2 types: Individual ESIA or for training of supervisors ESQA</p> <p>For individual, minimum needs are: European Individual Accreditation practitioner level as a coach, 3 years supervision practice, 120 hours of group or individual supervision contact hours, supervisee feedback, 20 hours CPD in supervision, supervision by a supervisor. If you have not done European Supervisor Quality Award training, you must also provide evidence of your competence as outline in the EMCC Supervision Competence Framework</p>
Benefits	They mention that there are benefits but do not list what they are.
Risks	<p>No.</p> <p>There are no risks of supervision mentioned on the website.</p>
Notes	They support the use of competency framework but recognise that they don't capture everything, i.e. personal presence and capacity to engage fully in the supervision relationship – how they are being is as important as what they are doing
International Coach Federation (ICF)	
Definition	ICF defines Coaching supervision as a collaborative learning practice to continually build the capacity of the coach through reflective dialogue for the benefit of both coaches and clients
Purpose	Coaching supervision focuses on the development of the coach's capacity through offering a richer and broader opportunity for support and development. Coaching supervision creates a safe environment for the coach to share their successes and failures in becoming masterful in the way they work with their clients.
Work to be supervised	<p>Supervision may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the coach's internal process through reflective practice • Reviewing the coaching agreement and any other psychological or physical contracts, both implicit and explicit • Uncovering blind spots • Ethical issues • Ensuring the coach is 'fit for purpose' and perhaps offering accountability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at all aspects of the coach and client's environment for opportunities for growth in the system
Requirement	No
Link to accreditation	Yes It does not link to initial accreditation but does count towards Continuing Coach Education credits
Roles	No
Qualifications	Yes but these are not specified.
Benefits	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased self-awareness Greater confidence Increased objectivity Heightened sense of belonging Reduced feelings of isolation Increased resourcefulness
Risks	No
Notes	There is a coach mentor arrangement that has a direct link to coaches training and accreditation. The definition, purpose, roles and qualifications for this are more clearly defined.
Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)	
Definition	Does not have one
Purpose	N/A
Work to be supervised	N/A
Requirement	No Supervision is mentioned as one of the activities for Professional Development in the WABC Professional Standards for Business Coaches
Link to accreditation	N/A
Roles	N/A
Qualifications	N/A
Benefits	N/A
Risks	N/A
Notes	N/A
Association of Coaching (AC)	
Definition	Coaching Supervision is a formal and protected time for facilitating in-depth reflection for coaches to discuss their work with someone who is experienced as a Coach. Supervision offers a confidential framework within a collaborative working relationship in which the practice, tasks, process and challenges of the coaching work can be explored. The primary functions of Coaching Supervision are to support, develop and ensure ethical and best practice of coaches in service of their coaching clients (individuals and organisations) and their professional associations. Supervision is not a 'policing' role, but rather a trusting and collegial professional relationship.
Purpose	<p>Ongoing supervision: Members will engage in supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor or peer supervision group with a level of frequency that is appropriate to their coaching, mentoring or supervision practice, the requirements of The Global Code of Ethics</p> <p>The AC adopts the following descriptors for the functions of coaching supervision: support, development and professional assurance.</p> <p>Support: where the coaching supervisor takes an encouraging perspective helping to restore the coach. This may include offering support to the coach to deal with any "unfinished business", personal and emotional reactions to client work and to ensure self-care, in order that they have energy for future client work. This function is also referred to as Restorative (Proctor 1986) or Supportive (Hawkins & Shohet 2006, Kadushin 1992, Hay 2007) or Resourcing (Hawkins & Smith 2006)</p>

	<p>Development: where the coaching supervisor takes a facilitative approach to the coach's development, and may include reflecting on the coach's work, the appropriate sharing of the supervisor's own coaching experiences and offering new perspectives. This function is also referred to as Formative (Proctor 1986) or Educative (Hawkins & Shohet 2006) or Developmental (Kadushin 1992, Hawkins & Smith 2006)</p> <p>Professional Assurance: the exploration of how the coach practises, taking into account the coach's own coaching approach, what is commonly accepted as best practice, as well as conforming to the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors. This function is also referred to as Normative (Proctor 1986) or Managerial (Hawkins & Shohet 2006) or Administrative (Kadushin 1992) or Qualitative (Hawkins and Smith 2006). In order to be working at the standard expected for Accreditation we require that the applicant demonstrate a breadth and depth of experience. "Breadth" could be indicated by a range (at least 3 types) of supervision clients (executive coaches, life coaches, internal coaches, coach managers, student coaches, coaching supervisors). It is likely that applicants will have gathered that experience across multiple organisations. "Depth" could be indicated by the longevity/continuity of relationship. We would expect that at least 50% of clients will have been in the supervision relationship "over time". By "over time" we would have an expectation that the client would have been seen for a minimum of four sessions of 1 hour (or more) over a period of not less than 4 months. This applies to both group and individual applications.</p> <p>Code of Ethics www.associationforcoaching.com 9 their professional body and the level of their accreditation, or evidence engagement in reflective practice, ideally with peers and/or more experienced colleagues. 4.4 Members need to ensure that any other existing relationship with the supervisor does not interfere with the quality of the supervision provided.</p> <p>4.5 Members will discuss any ethical dilemmas and potential, or actual, breaches of this Code with their supervisor or peer supervision group for support and guidance.</p> <p>CPD Members will systematically evaluate the quality of their work through feedback from clients, their supervisor and other relevant parties.</p>
Work to be supervised	<p>As mentioned in the definition, the practice, tasks, process and challenges of the coaching work can be explored in supervision</p> <p>In the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors, to which AC has signed up to, ethical dilemmas and potential or actual breaches of the code are stated as topics to be discussed in supervision</p>
Requirement	<p>Yes</p> <p>It is a stand-alone topic in the Global Code of Ethics and is also mentioned as part of CPD</p>
Link to accreditation	<p>Yes</p> <p>Does not specify amount</p>
Roles	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors highlights working with clients, professional conduct and excellent practice for the supervisor</p>
Qualifications	<p>To be coach supervisor you must be accredited which would include formal coaching supervision training. You must also be an accredited coach (min of 250 coaching hours experience). Also need evidence of supervision for previous 12 months</p>
Benefits	<p>Benefits of becoming an accredited supervisor but no mention of the benefits of being supervised</p>
Risks	<p>None mentioned</p>
Notes	<p>Global Code of Ethics is also signed by:</p> <p>EMCC</p> <p>Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision</p> <p>Associazione Italiana Coach Professionisti</p> <p>Mentoring Institute, University of New Mexico</p>
Association of Coaches and Supervisors (AOCS)	
Definition	<p>Supervision on a 1-1 or group basis is the formal opportunity for coaches working with clients to share, in confidence, their case load activity to gain insight, support and direction for themselves and thereby enabling them to better work in the service of their clients.</p>

Purpose	<p>A supervisor is a more experienced coach who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps you benchmark your practice against best practice • Works through ethical dilemmas with you • Brings a perspective about the quality of the coaching practice
Work to be supervised	Their case load
Requirement	<p>Yes</p> <p>To be a member, you must be in regular supervision</p>
Link to accreditation	N/A
Roles	<p>Yes</p> <p>A more experienced coach who helps benchmark your practice against best practice, work through ethical dilemmas and bring perspective about the quality of the coaching practice.</p> <p>Checklist of areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear contracting and creating a working alliance, including help with multi-party contracting where appropriate • Establishing good boundaries • Enhancing reflection when working with content and process • Attending to the coach's personal development; opening up new areas of competence for the coach • Deepening coaching presence • Building the coach's internal supervisor • Offering new perspectives to the coach • Increasing the coach's range of interventions and tools • Being sensitive to the coach's learning style • Knowing about coaching psychology • Working with Parallel Process • Giving constructive feedback • Offering experiments and applications through which the coach can learn • Working systemically – with the coach, the client and the wider field • Ensuring that standards and ethics are maintained
Qualifications	<p>To be a member, you must be trained and experienced in coach supervision, ideally be accredited, subscribing to a code of ethics, hold professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>The following requirements are offered as a guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant training and experience in supervision (although some may also be training or newly qualified) • In touch with developments in the field of coaching and with current coach training • Knowledge of corporate life and organisational systems, and to the ability to 'read' organisations • Psychological theory especially as it relates to professional life and relationships • Sensitivity to the coach's situation • Ability to work with different coaching and learning styles • Adopt ethical and professional standards • Be in regular supervision themselves
Benefits	Benefits of being a member mentioned but not the benefits of supervision
Risks	None mentioned
Notes	N/A
British Psychological Society Special Group on Coaching Psychology (BPS SG)	
Definition	<p>Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support that ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of their coaching practice through interactive reflection, interpretative evaluation and the sharing of expertise (Bachkirova, Stevens & Willis, 2005). The key difference between coaching and coaching psychology supervision is that coaching psychology supervision explicitly addresses the psychological nature of the coaching relationship as well as the application of psychological theory and methods within the coaching process.</p>

Purpose	<p>Coaching psychologists as a professional group have a responsibility to demonstrate best practice in terms of personal and professional development and demonstration of quality in the delivery of psychological services by adopting appropriate supervision practices themselves</p> <p>The coach can influence the coaching process unintentionally or intentionally and supervision plays an important role in ensuring the coaching maintains appropriate degree of awareness as well as due diligence with relation to the impact they have on the client at both surface and deep levels</p> <p>Examples of situations that emerge that require close attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching contracts • Management of boundaries • Management of values conflicts and confidentiality issues <p>Supervision is not personal therapy and nor is it a form of, or substitute for, line management of appropriate training.</p>
Work to be supervised	<p>Yes</p> <p>All aspects of practice are appropriate for discussion in supervision including research activity, administrative and managerial work, service developments, team working, teaching and the process of supervising others.</p>
Requirement	<p>Not mandatory but expected that coaching psychologists will have some of supervision that best supports their practice. There is not one prescriptive model and it is left to the supervisor and supervisee to negotiate an appropriate contract.</p> <p>Baseline amount of coaching supervision is suggested as one hour per month</p>
Link to accreditation	<p>Accreditation is related to becoming a chartered psychologist not a coach and supervision is not a legal requirement but is seen as an essential part of good practice</p>
Roles	<p>Yes</p> <p>For supervisor – not specific to coaching supervision:</p> <p>Mentions the importance of psychologists undertaking supervision that meets their needs, preferred supervisory style, nature and orientation, especially for experienced psychologists. They also mention that it may be appropriate to invite supervision from experts who provide other services that are appropriate to the context of their practice.</p> <p>For coaching supervisors and coaches:</p> <p>With the respect to monitoring, maintaining and enhancing their effectiveness in addressing the needs of their clients: (a) coaching psychologists are responsible for their work with a client and for presenting and exploring as fully as possible this work with the coaching supervisor; (b) supervisors are responsible for helping coaches to reflect upon that work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors and coaches must also take into consideration in any decision process their responsibility to other parties involved, for example, sponsors, managers, colleagues, and trainers • Supervisors should inform coaches about their own training, qualifications, philosophy and theoretical approach and the methods they use • Supervisors and coaches are responsible for effective contracting of their relationship and includes consideration of their respective legal liabilities to each other, the employing organisations and client • Supervisors and coaches are responsible for setting sufficiently clear boundaries between supervision, consultancy, training and coaching and being particularly sensitive and careful in the area of dual relationships • Supervisors and coaches must distinguish between supervising and coaching the coach. When the supervisor provides coaching to the coaching psychologist a clear contract must be negotiated to ensure that it is not done at the expense of supervision time • Supervisors are responsible for observation of the principles embodied in relevant codes of ethics and these regulations • Supervisors and coaches are responsible for regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the supervision arrangement and considering changing it when appropriate
Qualifications	<p>The onus is put on the psychologist to ensure they are sufficiently trained, experienced and competent to provide supervision and should operate within the Practice Guidelines.</p>

	Also identify areas where a coaching supervisor needs to be skilled for effective supervision of coaching, they must monitor their own supervision and monitor the limits of their competence
Benefits	Mention the main aims of supervision but these positioned as features rather than benefits of supervision
Risks	<p>Yes</p> <p>Psychologists will need to make decisions about clients that may have a profound impact on their lives. Decision-making is often subject to various competing biases. Psychologists should be aware of the possibility that they may be influenced by considerations that are not driven by professional knowledge, skills or experience. Maintaining awareness of these biases is important when trying to think through dilemmas. The document goes on to list some of these</p> <p>There is an acknowledgement that things may go wrong and these are covered in the Practice Guidelines but are not specific to coaching supervision. For supervision in coaching psychology, they hold a view that the coaching process holds substantial similarity to any psychological or psychotherapeutic service delivered on a one to one basis.</p>
Notes	<p>In supervision guidelines there is a recognition that they need to be contextualised for coaching psychology supervision and that they are not identical to psychological supervision</p> <p>Advocate that there is a role for psychologists in providing supervision</p> <p>Because supervision has a specific meaning and implication, they suggest that for some activities they might use the term support instead</p>
British Association for Counselling and Psychology	
Definition	<p>Supervision is a value of the Ethical Framework and all registered members must agree to engage in supervision appropriate to their practice.</p> <p>The Ethical Framework defines supervision as:</p> <p>"A specialised form of mentoring provided for practitioners responsible for undertaking challenging work with people. Supervision is provided to ensure standards, enhance quality, advance learning, stimulate creativity, and support the sustainability and resilience of the work being undertaken."</p>
Purpose	Supervision offers you a reflective space in which to develop practice and so benefits client safety. All aspects of your practice should be open to supervision.
Work to be supervised	<p>No</p> <p>There was no specific mention of this on the website</p>
Requirement	<p>Yes</p> <p>Varies depending on category but minimum of 1.5 hours per month</p>
Link to accreditation	<p>Yes</p> <p>As part of the Ethical Framework</p>
Roles	As a member, must record details of supervision and the impact it has had if selected for an audit.
Qualifications	The supervisor should be sufficiently experienced in counselling and psychotherapy, or a closely related field, and ideally have some training and qualifications in supervision.
Benefits	Mentions some features of supervision but not benefits and not in relation to coaching supervision
Risks	Not specifically to coaching supervision
Notes	N/A
Association of Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS)	
Definition	"Supervision" or "Supervisor" refers to the relationship between the coach and a qualified person who is not in any managerial relationship with the coach wherein the coaching work with particular clients may be discussed in strict confidence with the purpose of enhancing the quality of the coaching work and of ensuring client safety.
Purpose	<p>Supervision will be a forum for reflection on coaching work where supervisees will take responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p>Supervisors will provide APECS with a short annual report on supervisees assuring APECS that they are working ethically and to an acceptable standard.</p>

Work to be supervised	In ongoing and regular supervision, they will discuss confidentially their thoughts, feeling and reactions to their work at all levels: clients, relationships, interventions, contracts, impasses, joys, upsets etc. In the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors, to which APECS has signed up to, ethical dilemmas and potential or actual breaches of the code are stated as topics to be discussed in supervision
Requirement	Yes Must agree an annual development plan with their supervisor that forms part of their supervisor's report
Link to accreditation	N/A
Roles	In the set up and engagement, the coach or supervisor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take proper steps to ensure a sound understanding of the nature of the sponsor's and client's expectations of coaching or supervision • Where there appears to be inappropriate expectations of understandings of the nature of coaching or supervision, the coach or supervisor will explain its limitations and uses appropriately and simply • Explain this Code of Ethics and Conduct to the Sponsor and the Client including the confidentiality requirements and the rare exceptions to it • establish a clear contract with the Sponsor and the Client that covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the process of coaching or supervision – the aims of the specific coaching engagement or supervision – the duration, hours provision and periodicity of the engagement – specifically, who will be involved in the process and at which stages – the matters of confidentiality and boundary management (see below) – fee and cancellation arrangements • The Coach or Supervisor will not in any way use his/her position of influence to take advantage of the Client and will always act in the Client's and Sponsor's best interests
Qualifications	The coach or supervisor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be properly qualified to carry out the work (see APECS Accreditation Criteria Guidelines) • Ensure that the requirements of the coaching/supervision contract are within their professional ability to deliver or make clear to the client and the sponsor where the shortfall may be • Continue to learn and grow in their professional knowledge and expertise • Invest in personal development work to enhance their self-awareness and emotional balance • Work with an approved supervisor (see APECS Accreditation Criteria Guidelines) to ensure client safety, review their client case work and monitor their own well-being and effectiveness
Benefits	None mentioned
Risks	None mentioned
Notes	N/A
International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPCM)	
Definition	No Supervision only features as an example of a CPD activity
Purpose	N/A
Work to be supervised	N/A
Requirement	No
Link to accreditation	No
Roles	N/A
Qualifications	N/A
Benefits	N/A
Risks	N/A
Notes	N/A

International Association of Coaches	
Definition	No No mention of supervision on the website
Purpose	N/A
Work to be supervised	N/A
Requirement	CPD is a requirement but nothing mentioned specifically about supervision
Link to accreditation	N/A
Roles	N/A
Qualifications	N/A
Benefits	N/A
Risks	N/A
Notes	N/A

9.5 Appendix 5 - Criteria for research participants

To participate in this research, participants must meet the following criteria appropriate to their designation:

Professional Coaches

- At least 500 hours of paid for coaching work. This figure is taken from the EMCC Professional Certificate Coach Requirement (EMCC 2017)
- In regular supervision, i.e. coaching supervision that is formal and scheduled in advance in either group and/or one to one with an accredited coaching supervisor
- Completed accredited coach training – training accredited through one of the professional coaching bodies

Supervisors

- At least 500 hours of paid for supervision work
- From either a counselling/therapeutic background and/or an alternative background, i.e. business
- Accredited supervision training – through one of the coaching and/or supervision professional bodies and/or through the British Psychological Society

Buyers

- Responsible for the selection and management of external coaches – this may include activities such as matching coaches to clients, evaluation of coaching, coach briefing sessions, etc.

9.6 Appendix 6 – Invitation to Focus Group Participants

Invitation to take part in Doctoral research

Hi

You may recall that I am currently studying for a Professional Doctorate in Coaching Supervision and I am about to embark on the data collection stage of my research and I very much hoping that you would be willing to be part of the research as a member of the Focus Group.

There is some detail below which is intended to give you as much of the information you may need to allow you to make a fully informed decision about whether or not you want to agree to this request.

The proposed dates for the Focus Group are:

- Thursday 31st May – 16.00 – 17.30
- Friday 1st June – 16.00 – 17.30
- Wednesday 20th June – 10.00 am – 11.30

A venue has yet to be booked but will be in central London.

I very much hope you can take part in one of the Focus Groups so if you could let me know **your decision by no later than Wednesday 25th April 2018 and your availability for all the above dates**, I would be very grateful.

If you have any questions regarding this email, please let me know and I will be happy to respond.

Kind regards

Sam

Sam Humphrey

07767 417 450

Professional Doctorate in Coaching Supervision

A practitioner inquiry into the efficacy of coaching supervision

Background and context

This research is intended to give evidence that will influence the role of coaching supervision in the coaching profession.

As a coach, coaching supervisor, coach trainer and, at one point in the past, a coach buyer, I have become increasingly uncomfortable with the type and volume of evidence that sits behind the popularist assumptions that coaches must have supervision and that good coaches are in regular supervision.

From both a personal and professional point of view, I want to be able to justify and differentiate the services I offer as a coaching supervisor from others in the field but there is little credible evidence to enable me and others in my field to be able to do this.

My research is focused on delivering useful outcomes for coaches, coach supervisors, buyers of coaching, professional coaching bodies and coaching and supervision training providers.

My research will involve participants from all these groups, except the coaching and supervision training providers.

Aims and objectives

In essence, the research is concerned with identifying and substantiating what value is gained in supervision (group and individual) and to identify if and/or how these create value.

The objectives of the research are to establish:

- What can be applied and/or brought over from current research?
- What are the reported benefits of supervision, to whom and in what way?
- What are indicators that the value of supervision has been delivered/achieved, i.e. how do you know it was valuable?

The intended outcomes for the research are to enable credible and clear development of:

- A clear set of benefits of supervision for application individually or across groups
- A checklist for coaches in considering what supervision would be appropriate for them. This in turn will help in the selection of supervision
- A series of recommendations for supervisors to position themselves and their supervision work in a way that enables them to consider their training and CPD, maximise their business development efforts and to consider how they can measure and/or monitor the benefit of their work
- A series of recommendations for coach buyers to ensure their coach selection processes are fit for purpose

- A series of recommendations for professional coaching bodies to inform the professional standards relating to supervision

Methodology

In order to complete my research, I am seeking participants for two distinct activities:

1. **Focus Groups** – two groups of no less than 6 and no more than 8 people drawn from professional coaches, qualified supervisors, buyers of professional coaches and representative(s) from the coaching professional bodies.

This group session will last no longer than 1.5 hours. My role in the group will be to facilitate the discussion process and not contribute to the discussion.

The purpose of this group will be to contribute to the structure and content of the semi structured interviews that will collect the research data; it is not to agree a position or reach a consensus to the questions. If there is difference of opinion or fundamental disagreement, this will still be of value to the research as there are no established norms for this topic.

2. **Interview participants** – a group of approximately 20 participants of professional coaches and supervisors who will take part in the interview process. The interviews will last no longer than 90 minutes.

My role will only be to interview and not to contribute to, or comment on the content of the answers given.

The purpose of the interviews will be to only gather data on the questions formulated as a result of the Focus Groups.

Both the Focus Groups and the interviews will be recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Confidentiality

The Focus Group session transcription will have all group members contributions contained within it. Whilst names will not be included as part of the transcription, participants may recall who said what so the notion of anonymity may be somewhat compromised. In an attempt to mitigate this point, I can offer the three options for each Focus Group to consider:

1. The transcription is not shared with any of the group members
2. The transcription is shared with all the group members
3. The transcription is shared with only those group members who want it

Where there is a difference of view, I will speak to the group member(s) and ask what they would like to do, i.e. change to the majority view, withdraw from the Focus Group or suggest an alternative option.

For interview participants, anonymity is guaranteed. Your interview results will be recorded under a code so as to protect your identity and will be stored on a password protected computer.

For the Focus Group members who are professional coaches and professional supervisors, your participation in the group will be to represent your own views and experience as professionals in their field.

Anticipated contribution

For coaching buyers and professional body representative(s), you are invited to contribute from your organisational stance which may also be informed by your personal stance. Whilst the results of the Focus Groups will not be published, it is important to note this in case you need to gain internal organisational clearance to participate.

The research will be run in an ethical and professional manner under the governance of University of Wales Trinity Saint David as well as being compliant with EMCC and WABC Codes of Conduct.

Criteria for research participants

To participate in this research, you must meet the following criteria appropriate to your designation:

Professional Coaches

- At least 500 hours of paid for coaching work. This figure is taken from the EMCC Professional Certificate Coach Requirement (EMCC 2017)
- In regular supervision, i.e. coaching supervision that is formal and scheduled in advance in either group and/or one to one with an accredited coaching supervisor
- Completed accredited coach training – training accredited through one of the professional coaching bodies

Supervisors

- At least 500 hours of paid for supervision work
- From either a counselling/therapeutic background and/or an alternative background, i.e. business
- Accredited supervision training – through one of the coaching and/or supervision professional bodies and/or through the British Psychological Society

Coach Buyers

- Responsible for the selection and management of external coaches – this may include activities such as matching coaches to clients, evaluation of coaching, coach briefing sessions, etc.

Consent to participate

Assuming you agree to participate in the research, you will be required to accept and sign the consent form set out in Appendix 1 on page 5.

Research Title: Practitioner inquiry into the efficacy of coaching supervision Consent form		
<p>This consent form is designed to check that you understand the purpose of the study, that you are aware of your rights as a participant and to confirm that you are willing to take part.</p>		
Please tick as appropriate:		
	YES	NO
1. I have read the participant information sheet describing the nature and purpose of the research project and agree to take part.		
2. I understand the purpose of the research project and the nature of my involvement in it.		
3. I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status within the project either now or in the future.		
4. I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.		
5. I understand that I may be audio taped during the interview and that I reserve the right to terminate the recording at any point of time during the interview.		
6. I understand that the data will be held confidentially, in a secure place and in a password protected computer in the form of hard and electronic copies of transcripts and audio tapes. These data will be accessible to the researcher only.		
7. I understand that I can ask for a debriefing session following the interview.		
8. I understand that I may contact the Research Director if I require further information about the research and that I may contact the research Ethics Co-ordinator of Middlesex University if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.		
9. I agree to take part in this study.		
10. I confirm that quotations from the interview can be used in the final research output and other publications. I understand that these will be used anonymously and that individual respondent will not be identified.		
Signature:	Date:	
Print name in block letters:		

9.7 Appendix 7 – Focus Group Session Format

FOCUS GROUP 1 – CALL

Setting the scene

Background and content for this research:

- Provide evidence that will influence the role of coaching supervision in the coaching profession
- Personal and professional point of view, I want to be able to justify and differentiate the services I offer as a coaching supervisor but there is little credible evidence to enable me and others to do this
- Focus of the research is on delivering useful outcomes for coaches, supervisors, buyers of coaching, professional coaching bodies and coach and supervision training providers

Aim and objectives

Are to establish:

- What can be applied and/or brought over from current research?
- What are the reported benefits of supervision, to whom and in what way?
- What are the indicators that the value of supervision has been delivered/achieved, i.e. how do you know it was valuable?

Methodology

Two key activities:

- Focus groups
- 121 interviews

Purpose of Focus Group is to help shape the structure and content of the semi-structured interviews that will be the main data collection source.

Purpose is not to agree or reach a consensus in the group, if there is disagreement or multiple opinions, this will still be valuable to the research as there are no established norms for this topic.

Your role

- To offer views, ideas and suggestions to the questions posed
- Speak your truth
- Be curious and open to others' contributions
- Highlight which hat you are wearing when offering your contribution, e.g. professional body, buyer, supervisor

Sam's role

- Ask the questions
- Keep time
- Not to contribute to the discussion

Next steps

- Running Focus Group 2 next month
- Interviews start end of June
- Depending on what the group agree, I will send out the transcription
- Due to complete in 2020 and happy to send you a copy or speak to you about the research findings

QUESTIONS

1. Can everyone work with the following definition of supervision? If so, what is it that sits well, if not what doesn't sit well?

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

"The process by which a Coach with the help of a Supervisor, can attend to understanding better both the Client system and themselves as part of the Client /Coach system, and by so doing transform their work and develop their craft." (Hawkins and Smith)

Supervision on a 1-1 or group basis is the formal opportunity for coaches working with clients to share, in confidence, their case load activity to gain insight, support and direction for themselves and thereby enabling them to better work in the service of their clients. (AOCS)

Supervision is the interaction that occurs when a mentor or coach brings their coaching or mentoring work experiences to a supervisor in order to be supported and to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the development and benefit of the mentor or coach, their clients and their organisations. (EMCC)

2. What is the work that needs supervision?
3. What is the supervision that needs to be given?
4. What are the benefits of this?
5. What are the downsides of this?

Back up questions

6. What are the principles we should apply to coaching supervision?
7. What are the responsibilities of coaching supervision and to whom?
8. If a coach did more supervision, what would happen?
9. If supervision were taken away, what would be missing?
10. How should coaching supervision differ from CPD and training?

9.8 Appendix 8 - Focus Group impact on one to one interview questions

- Superordinate theme 1 - Buyer considerations. This topic raised a high number of references but they were not relevant to the research questions so I decided not to ask a specific question on this topic.
- Superordinate theme 2- CPD expectations. This topic had interesting responses, the refocus of my research question made focusing on CPD a redundant issue for this research. Whilst it was useful for me to hear from the Focus Groups about CPD, the literature review confirmed that CPD is seen as a fundamental part of supervision. This research has always intended to be focused on the work that is supervised rather than the personal developmental/learning aspect so I did not include a question focused on CPD.
- Subordinate theme 2b – Regulation. This is not a relevant subordinate theme for this research, as the coaching supervision sector is neither regulated nor a professional body.
- Superordinate theme 3 - Definition of coaching. This emerged as a theme even although only two participants, one from each group mentioned it. It generated seven references related to the need for clarity on what coaching is and/or that it is too generic a term. I had included a definition of a coach in the original invitation to take part in the research, which is set out in Appendix 7. As this research is focused on the supervision of business coaching and not coaching, I decided not to include this topic in the questions.
- Superordinate theme 4 - Definition of supervision. This topic had references from all Focus Group participants and included several varied points. I decided to include this as direct question to allow further exploration of participant views.
- Superordinate theme 5 - Purpose of supervision. This theme appeared at various points in the conversations so warranted a specific question in the one to one interviews.
- Subordinate theme 5a – Benefits. There were only six references about this, however, the stark differences between the two Focus Groups seemed worthy of further investigation in the one to one interviews.
- Subordinate theme 5b – Expectations. This highlighted the need for a clear understanding of what the purpose of supervision was, a question I intended to include in the one to one interviews.

- Subordinate theme 5c – Risks. This only emerged as a theme for Focus Group 2 who are not the main users of supervision. It is interesting that this topic did not emerge with Focus Group 1 but I decided to include it as a direct question in the interviews to discover if the participants see risks associated with supervision.
- Superordinate theme 6 – Qualifications of supervisor. This topic had 26 references with several varied points of view so I included this as a question.
- Superordinate theme 7 - Supervision conditions. In the 12 references about this topic most related to the execution of the supervision. As my research is focused on the stages before execution, I decided to eliminate it as a question from the research.
- Superordinate theme 8 - Supervision doubts. Responses to this were low and many of the topics were similar to those raised in the superordinate theme of Unanswered questions so I concluded that I would include a specific question on Unanswered questions instead.
- Superordinate theme 9 - Work to be supervised. This theme received the highest number of references. The conversation on this question led the Focus Groups to think about the purpose of supervision so I decided to include this as a question to explore if there were different views between the interview stakeholder groups as to what the work is that should be supervised.
- Superordinate theme 8 – Supervision doubts. All nine of the references could arguably sit within the theme of superordinate theme 10 - Unanswered questions so I decided to combine these themes for the one to one interviews.

9.9 Appendix 9 – One to One Interview Format

One to One Interviews

Setting the scene

Background and content for this research:

- Provide evidence that will influence the role of coaching supervision in the coaching profession
- Personal and professional point of view, I want to be able to justify and differentiate the services I offer as a coaching supervisor but there is little credible evidence to enable me and others to do this
- Focus of the research is on delivering useful outcomes for coaches, supervisors, buyers of coaching, professional coaching bodies and coach and supervision training providers

Aim and objectives

Are to establish:

- What can be applied and/or brought over from current research?
- What is the purpose of supervision over and above personal/professional coach development?
- What are the reported benefits of supervision, to whom and in what way?

Methodology

Two key activities:

- Focus groups
- 121 interviews

Purpose of Focus Group was to help shape the structure and content of these semi-structured interviews which will be the main data collection source.

Your role

- To offer views, ideas and suggestions to the questions posed
- Speak your truth

Sam's role

- Ask the questions
- Keep time
- Not to contribute to the interview

Next steps

- Due to complete in 2020 and happy to send you a copy or speak to you about the research findings

QUESTIONS

1. Definition of supervision. What do you like, dislike and what is missing?

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

2. What is the work that needs supervision?
3. What is the supervision that needs to be given?
4. What are the benefits of this?
5. What are the downsides of this?

Back up questions

6. What are the principles we should apply to coaching supervision?
7. What are the responsibilities of coaching supervision and to whom?
8. If a coach did more supervision, what would happen?
9. If supervision were taken away, what would be missing?
10. How should coaching supervision differ from CPD and training?

9.10 Appendix 10 – Linkages between one to one interview questions and emergent themes

Interview questions	Emergent themes Coaches	Emergent themes Supervisors	Emergent themes Buyers
What is the coaching work that needs to be supervised?	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised 2b Benefits – Reassurance 3a Risks - Quality 3b Risks - Contract 3d Risks - Blind spots 5b Process set up – By the supervisor and/or coach	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised 2a Benefits - Growth 3e Risks – Boundaries 5a Process set up – By the organisation 5b Process set up – By the supervisor and/or coach 6b Professionalism – behaviours in supervision	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised 1c Purpose of supervision - Not to be supervised 2b Benefits – Reassurance 5a Process set up – By the organisation
What's the supervision that needs to be given?	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised 2a benefits - Growth 2b Benefits – Reassurance	1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision 1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised

		<p>3b Risks – Contract</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p> <p>3e Risks – Boundaries</p>	<p>3a Risks – Quality</p>
	<p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6b Professionalism – behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>6b Professionalism – behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6b Professionalism – behaviours in supervision</p> <p>6c Professionalism – Professional bodies</p>
What are the benefits of supervision?	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p> <p>2a Benefits - Growth</p> <p>2b Benefits – Reassurance</p> <p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p> <p>2a Benefits - Growth</p> <p>2b Benefits – Reassurance</p> <p>2c Benefits - Agency</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p> <p>3e Risks – Boundaries</p> <p>6b Professionalism – behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p> <p>2a Benefits - Growth</p> <p>2b Benefits – Reassurance</p> <p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p>
What are the risks of supervision?	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p>

	<p>3a Risks – Quality</p> <p>3c Risks - Psychological</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p> <p>3e Risks – Boundaries</p> <p>6a Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor</p> <p>6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>3a Risks – Quality</p> <p>3b Risks - Contract</p> <p>3c Risks - Psychological</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p> <p>3e Risks – Boundaries</p> <p>5a Process set up – By the organisation</p> <p>6c Professionalism – Professional bodies</p>	<p>3a Risks – Quality</p> <p>3c Risks - Psychological</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p> <p>5a Process set up – By the organisation</p> <p>6a Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision</p> <p>6c Professionalism – Professional bodies</p>
<p>In the broadest sense of the word, what qualifications do you look for in a good supervisor?</p>	<p>1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised</p> <p>2a Benefits - Growth</p>	<p>3c Risks - Psychological</p> <p>3d Risks – Blind spots</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p> <p>1b Purpose of supervision - To be supervised</p> <p>5a Process set up – By the organisation</p>

	<p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p> <p>6a Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6a2 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Badge</p> <p>6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6a2 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Badge</p> <p>6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision</p>	<p>5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach</p> <p>6a1 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Experience</p> <p>6a2 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Badge</p> <p>6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision</p>
Definition of supervision	<p>4a Definition of supervision – Likes</p> <p>4b Definition of supervision – Dislikes</p> <p>4c Definition of supervision - Missing</p>	<p>4a Definition of supervision – Likes</p> <p>4b Definition of supervision – Dislikes</p> <p>4c Definition of supervision - Missing</p>	<p>4a Definition of supervision – Likes</p> <p>4b Definition of supervision – Dislikes</p> <p>4c Definition of supervision – Missing</p> <p>6a2 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Badge</p>
What unanswered questions do you have about coaching supervision?	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p>	<p>3 Risks</p>	<p>1a Purpose of supervision - Intent of supervision</p> <p>2a Benefits - Growth</p> <p>3a Risks – Quality</p>

			3e Risks – Boundaries
	5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach	5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach	4c Definition of supervision – Missing
	6a Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor		5a Process set up – By the organisation
			5b Process set up by supervisor and/or coach
	6c Professionalism – Professional bodies		6a2 Professionalism – Qualifications of supervisor – Badge
	7 unanswered questions	6b Professionalism – Behaviours in supervision	
		6c Professionalism – Professional bodies	
		7 unanswered questions	

9.11 Appendix 11 – Timetable

Detailed Research Timetable

	Activity	Start date	1st draft	RAG	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
Stage 1	Send out FG invites			X												
	Run FGs			X												
	Transcribe FG	27.04.19	04.05.19	X												
	Finalise interview ques	27.04.19	11.05.19	X												
	Invite and run															
Stage 2	interviewees	01.03.19	31.04.19	X												
	Transcribe interviews	01.04.19	31.07.18	X												
Stage 3	Conduct thematic analysis	11.05.19	31.08.18	X												
	Critical friend	01.09.19	14.09.19	X												
Stage 4	Chapter 3 - Methodology	29.07.19	07.02.20													
	Chapter 4 - Project Activity	29.07.19	07.02.20													
	Chapter 5 - Findings	01.10.19	19.01.20													
	Chapter 6 - Interpretation	01.01.20	28.06.20													
	Chapter 2 - Literature Review	01.01.20	19.04.20													
	Chapter 1 - Introduction	01.01.20	31.05.20													
	Conclusion	01.01.20	02.07.20													
	Bibliography and appendices	01.01.20	02.07.20													

WRITING REVIEW

9.12 Appendix 12 - Definition of supervision given to the research participants

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

Ref: UK ICF 2019

9.13 Appendix 13 – Focus Group Unanswered Questions

FG1 Participant 1

- Why is it necessary relative to other 121 conversations that happen in organisational life that don't require supervision? How is it regulated? how are supervisors trained? What is their CPD as well as the coach's CPD?

FG1 Participant 2

- The primary question, is what is the purpose of potentially supervision for business coaches and is it necessary? Everything else would fall from that. I don't feel that that fundamental question has been appropriately answered.
- The problem again is we use the term coaches generically and not all coaches do the same kind of work. Not all coaches are trained the same way, they don't follow the same competencies, the ICF competencies are not the same as WABCs competencies, what is the purpose of the work? What is the training for the work that the coach, you know in this case the business coach do? What is the business case for why supervision needs to occur at all?
- What does supervision look like after one has taken an appropriate training programme?
- Supervision is being overused, being misused so many of the supervisors are not qualified for it, and, quite frankly, one thing that hasn't been discussed today at all is that I am very concerned about the linkage between the role of supervision and regulation, there is a line there.
- There is a direct line between those 2 activities and the more you feel you have to supervise people's activities, I think we have to be very careful about what that means. What are we saying needs to be supervised? Why do they need to be supervised? What happens if we don't supervise? And the more you emphasise that the more you are saying we have problems, we have issues. These people have to be babysat a bit.
- I think we do have to be very careful about what is the role of supervision, is it mandatory? Is it a nice to have? Do you want to have it if you want to push the edges of your development as a coach? So, it is more of an individual decision rather than a mandatory provision. What is the role of supervision and what are the aims of it? What is its purpose? What is it all for? Why are we doing it? I have yet to hear a really compelling statement for why supervision appears to be so

important. There is lots of nice things that come out of it but that's different from is this a preventative thing. Is this a regulatory thing? Is this a risk assessment thing? Risk management thing? A management thing? You know, what is this thing we are doing? Why are we doing it?

- I am very curious that it seems to be felt that it is so integral to our work as coaches and if it is integral then the question for me has still not been adequately answered, why, what is the purpose?
- For what reason, what is the purpose? For me that is a big gap.

FG1 Participant 5

- You also made the point earlier #2 about what is the ongoing re-accreditation. How do we reaccredit people and ensure that 5, 10, 15 years down the road, they are still doing a good job? And there is a gap there I think.
- We need to have our own definition.
- So, it is not so much gaps as what is the niche that you are working in or I am working in.

FG2 Participant 1

- I have not seen much discussion about the business end of it.
- #3: Yeah, what's the impact?
- #1: Yeah, business impact, it is all quite front to middle.
- I am envisaging there asking questions of the coaches work where, I am asking myself what answer would be satisfactory.

FG2 Participant 2

- I am quite concerned about what ratio of supervision to the number, if I have a six session commission, which is going to be costing a lot of money, what we are talking about is I am not sure from what we are talking about is how many of those sessions you would expect to be discussed with a supervisor.
- Some of the less experienced coaches charge very high rates and I don't know whether that is because they are doing a lot of supervision. I don't know, I think the whole market is quite difficult and it is quite difficult to get to the bottom of how people are valuing their own time and what expenses they are paying for.
- I don't know are we saying that we expect a coach to get to discuss every coaching commission with a supervisor.

- I am still struggling with this whole how much we are putting onto the supervision.
- I would love to see more regulation and perhaps I should not be asking people how many hours experience have you got? What do you do about supervision?

FG2 Participant 3

- It is a difficult profession to get your head around in terms of quality, even coaching qualifications, there are so many, there's no, it's not like the SRA with the regulatory bodies and a formal career path and, you know, it is a bit of a mystery sometimes to know whether, is this coaching course better than that?
- Cause there are lots of coaches out there, I could spend my entire day interviewing, entire week interviewing coaches, it is a massively crowded market so how do you make those decisions about when you chose which organisations or individuals you partner with.

9.14 Appendix 14 - One to One Interviews Unanswered Questions

Coach 1

- Should there be better, not even regulation of it but how do we get knowledge out there of what good supervision is and what it looks like.
- How you measure the success of it?

Coach 2

- What it is about coach supervision that the United States so resists?
- What the corporate buyers think they are getting when they know their coaches are in supervision? I am curious, what do they think that demonstrates?
- How fit for purpose is the label? And what meanings do people make of the word supervision?

Coach 3

- I am not sure how many people are able to call themselves supervisors at any kind of appropriate, relevant training so I am suspicious about the absolute level of quality you find among supervisors.

Coach 4

- I have some general curiosity about the whole, you know we have seen the sort of professionalisation of the coaching world and I guess we are going to see that a little bit with the supervisory world too and some of the very experienced and some of them eminent people in the whole world of coaching who were there at the beginning, you know pioneering and driving qualifications and that sort of thing in the whole supervision world, I still think it is seen through a lens which is limited, I think it has been through a western capitalist lens and not a lens that would suit the world we find ourselves in at the moment. What I mean by that at the moment is I don't know how many supervisors are training people to think of you know climate change, and to what extent one might be using that as a question. So, the notion of agency I think I have some questions on. And the ethical and moral dilemma of whether a supervisor should or could have agency in opening those conversations for the good. Because I think that there is power in those relationships and if one finds oneself in an echo chamber in an organisation and simply asking questions from the construct of the organisational system and the system that operates in the western capitalist notion then I think it means we are missing some bigger questions

about, you know, particularly if we are working with influential leaders and they will really value some support in that space because it is difficult terrain.

Coach 5

- Where is the evidence base for it?
- What evidence is there for what works in supervision?
- Where the sweet spot is between length of relationship and quality of supervision?
- Value of the relationship?

Supervisor 1

- How can we persuade everybody that this is the way to proceed? Why does the ICF not accept supervision?

Supervisor 2

- How to enable the buyer, the consumer of supervision to make better choices or continue to make better choices.

Supervisor 3

- I think standards is a key one
- Why is there this resistance, what are we not or are we simply saying that there are very few, really, really good professional coaches out there?

Supervisor 4

- How to take coaches from where and what they are capable of thinking about now into thinking about the wider context and bringing that into their work so that they can offer more relevant challenge to the particular client they are working with today.
- Around blind spots, what people are not looking at, not working on, not thinking about, there's, that seems to be a theme at the moment unanswered.
- How much information from the outside in should we be seeking out of supervisors and to make sure that we, that the supervision meets the real world of the coach rather than just the coach's perception. Rather like the difference between just being a personality self-report test and doing a 360.
- There is more knowledge out there than we in the supervision profession will actually make use of so how can we have richer spaces about around what is emerging in the world.

- Automation has come up recently in the literature around you know coaching apps or coaching robots, you know so what kind of supervision is needed for them and how do we, how can supervisors with coaching that comes from that direction, what would it mean to coach a robot?

Buyer 1

- The things that are unanswered are in relation to how the coach actually uses the supervision.
- The requirement of being and being effective as a supervisor.

Buyer 2

- Who and how do people choose them?
- What people do with notes, from a risk perspective. What are people doing with their names and all of that side of it. Where are they doing this?

Buyer 3

- What supervision is most effective?

Buyer 4

- A lot of it is about confidentiality. I think. In some ways. So, if I don't know you are being supervised or it's not even that I am actually worried about things getting out but in principle it feels awkward.

Buyer 5

- I think it is about the guidance you get from the bodies around how often you should be in supervision.
- Who decides what good supervision training is?

Buyer 6

- What does somebody go through to become an accredited coaching supervisor. What are the checks and balances to make sure that that person is right to be a coaching supervisor? Cause they might be ill suited to it for some reason. I guess you know, what makes a good coaching supervisor.
- Does there need to be for buyers, these are the key things you need to be aware of to make sure you have got appropriate supervision in place or buying the right supervision.

- Where do you buy supervision from? Do you rely on the coach to find their own supervisor or do you if you are an organisational buyer do you actually say, actually I am using this organisation to do coaching supervision, that is who you are working with?

Buyer 7

- What qualifies these people to be supervisors and does it matter?

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