



## About coaching supervision

Whilst there seems to be near-universal support (within the coaching and mentoring “world”) for the role and importance of supervision, there are numerous definitions and perspectives on what “it” is.

We subscribe to Inskipp and Proctor's view that supervision is:

***"A working alliance between two professionals where coaches offer an account of their work, reflect on it, receive feedback and receive guidance - if appropriate."***

It's generally accepted that supervision performs three main functions:

1. **Formative/ developmental:** developing skills, understanding, capacity of coach/ mentor
2. **Normative:** check-and-balance, ethical “compass”, quality control
3. **Restorative:** providing confidential space/ download for cases

Our approach to supervision is to provide coaches with a combination of support, challenge and guidance, as well as a confidential **“download” space** which ensures that their clients receive a consistently high-quality, ethical coaching experience.

An essential role of supervision is to provide a **check-and-balance** - to ensure that the coach/ mentor is practising safely, ethically and delivering the most effective coaching or mentoring to his/ her client base. It's this oversight of the “3 worlds” – the world of the client, the world of the coach and the world of the supervision conversation - that is so crucial in keeping both the client - and the coach - safe.

## How we work: Group supervision

Group supervision sessions provide an opportunity to share experiences with other coaches/ mentors, to benefit from additional perspectives, and to develop fluency in techniques specifically designed for group sessions.

Sessions usually involve a combination of observation, questioning, listening and feedback to create a conversation that is rich in insight and learning. From the coach/mentor's perspective, their time with the supervisor (and any conversations in-between scheduled sessions) is focused totally on their client-work, relationships and their coaching/mentoring practice.

## Frequency of Supervision

There are no definitive recommendations as to how often coaches/ mentors should receive supervision; the frequency/ scheduling of supervision is typically influenced by the following factors:

- Experience – newly-practising coaches or mentors will benefit from more frequent supervision sessions (typically every 12-15 hours contact time) than experienced coaches (circa every 20-30 hours contact time).
- Case load/ frequency of coaching/mentoring – sessions are scheduled according to coaching hours delivered, rather than calendar weeks/ months as case-loads/ assignments may be sporadic.
- Complexity of assignments – some assignments will be more complex than others due to relational/ organisational/ political dimensions and may therefore drive requirement for specific support.

Level of peer to peer interaction/ support – Often when a coach/ mentor is part of a community of practice, undertaking regular discussions and practice reviews with peers, elements of peer supervision will surface within these discussions, and issues can be shared and dealt with within the group.

## Preparing for supervision – see Preparing for Supervision document (ResourceHub)