



THE EMCC POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON SUPERVISION

Introduction

This document is intended for coaches, mentors, supervisors and training providers of coaching / mentoring supervision; its purpose is to summarise the position taken by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) regarding some of the key questions that are frequently raised on the topic of supervision. In this document you will find a definition of supervision, clarification about the purpose of supervision, a copy of the EMCC Supervision Competence Framework; information is shared regarding training as a supervisor and recommendations are made for finding and selecting a supervisor.

The EMCC definition of supervision

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.

The purpose of supervision

The purpose of supervision is to enhance the wellbeing and develop the practice of coaches and/or mentors of all levels of experience. Supervision is considered a powerful vehicle for deep learning: its benefits extend beyond the supervisee and include their clients and sponsoring organisations.

We recognise the functions of supervision described by Hawkins and Smith (2013) as follows:

The Developmental Function

Concerned with development of skills, understanding and capacities of the coach / mentor.

The Resourcing Function

Providing a supportive space for the coach / mentor to process the experiences they have had when working with clients.

The Qualitative Function

Concerned with quality, work standards and ethical integrity.

EMCC supervision competence framework

EMCC supports the use of competence frameworks as part of a wider approach to the training, development and assessment of coaches, mentors and supervisors. The EMCC Supervision Competence Framework describes the skills and behaviours we believe to be associated with best practice in supervision.

At the same time, EMCC also accepts that competence frameworks do not capture everything. For instance, qualities such as 'personal presence' and the 'capacity to engage fully in the supervision relationship' cannot be reduced, easily, to a group of capability indicators. Therefore, when considering the work of the supervisor, EMCC advocates an awareness of the whole person in addition to the skill-set that they have to offer: 'how they are being' is equally as important as 'what they are doing'. Please bear this in mind when working with the EMCC Supervision Competence Framework.

The Supervision Competence Framework contains 6 main competences, each of which is supported by more detailed indicators of capability. EMCC does not expect every supervisor to be able to demonstrate every one of the capability indicators: they are not requirements. The full framework is given in Appendix A of this document.

The six core areas of competence are:

1. Managing the Supervision Process

Establishes and maintains a working contract with the supervisee and manages the supervision process effectively.

2. Facilitates Development

Enables the supervisee to improve the standard of their practice through a process of facilitated reflection.

3. Promotes Professional Standards

Supports industry standards, compliance with an ethical code and commitment to continuing professional development.

4. Provides Support

Offers an appropriate level of support, ensuring the supervisee prioritises their own wellbeing.

5. Relationship Awareness

Understands and works with the multiple layers of relationship that exist in the supervision process.

6. Working with Groups

Skillfully handles supervisees and group process, enabling all present to benefit from supervision.

Amount and regularity of supervision

Coaches and mentors are encouraged to think about the type, duration and frequency of supervision that they need in order to be supported, sufficiently, in their practice. EMCC believes that coaches / mentors should undertake, as a minimum, 1 hour of supervision per 35 hours of practice, ensuring at least 4 sessions per year.

Formats for supervision

Forms of supervision vary from country to country and culture to culture. The EMCC recognises 1-1 individual supervision and different forms of group / peer supervision all of which may be underpinned by different theoretical approaches. These are too numerous to mention. However, as a general principle, EMCC believes that supervision only occurs when a person is actually spending time considering their work and development as a coach / mentor with a trained supervisor, irrespective of the format of the session.

Code of ethics

One of the objectives of supervision is to maintain high, ethical standards in coaching and mentoring. Through supervision, a practitioner may uncover ethical questions and resolve ethical dilemmas. The Global Code of Ethics provides guidance on ethical matters for practitioners.

Supervisor training

[The EMCC European Supervision Quality Award](#) (ESQA) endorses a number of supervision training programmes. Coaches and mentors interested in pursuing a supervisory career are referred to the list of accredited providers on the website.

Finding a supervisor

The EMCC operates an accreditation process for individual coach/mentor practitioners seeking formal endorsement as supervisors: the European Supervision Individual Accreditation (ESIA). You may wish to select a supervisor from the list of [ESIA holders](#).

Click here to find out more about the [European Supervision Individual Accreditation](#)

You may find that one of the [ESQA providers](#) will be able to offer you names and contact details of potential supervisors.

EMCC acknowledges that coach/mentor supervision is an evolving discipline throughout Europe and that in some countries it may be difficult for our membership to find a supervisor who fulfils all the criteria recommended in the paragraph selecting a supervisor. We therefore support members making their own arrangements e.g. engaging psychotherapeutically qualified supervisors, supervisors accredited by other coaching organisations/ ESQA approved awarding bodies or supervisors aspiring towards EMCC accreditation.

Selecting a supervisor

In addition to the guidance already contained in this document and subsequent guidance on finding a supervisor, we recommend that you apply the following criteria in selecting a supervisor:

- They have experience as a coach/mentor
- They have experience of being supervised and are themselves currently supervised
- They have had training in supervision and are qualified as a supervisor
- They can explain a theoretical framework (s) for their own practice and you find this relevant to your own work
- They can explain a theoretical framework(s) relating to supervision
- They show commitment to CPD for themselves and others
- They agree to abide by the Global Code of Ethics even if not an EMCC member

References

Hawkins, P., & Smith, N. (2013). *Coaching, mentoring and organizational consultancy - supervision skills and development*, (2nd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press

Proctor, B. (2008). *Group supervision: a guide to creative practice* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

APPENDIX A. Supervision Competence Framework

1. Managing the Supervision process	
Establishes and maintains a working contract with the supervisee and manages the supervision process effectively.	
a. Contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Establishes a contract for the supervision relationship ii) Includes 3-way, 4-way and group contracts as required iii) Addresses practical, professional and psychological aspects of the relationship iv) Revisits and reviews the contract, on an ongoing basis, according to need
b. Managing the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Is able to explain the purpose and practice of effective supervision ii) Can describe the philosophy (including values and beliefs) that informs their practice iii) Is able to structure supervision sessions and tailor this to each supervisee iv) Works in an open, transparent and collaborative way v) Is able to adapt personal approach to meet the coach/mentor's preferred learning style
2. Facilities development	
Enables the supervisee to improve the standard of their practice through a process of facilitated reflection	
a. Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Has a good understanding of supervision models, theories, frameworks and ethical codes ii) Is able to assess the level at which the supervisee is working as a coach/mentor iii) Is able to use 'challenge' to assist the supervisee in developing new perspectives iv) Has the ability train and develop coaching / mentoring skills v) Is able to share personal experience e.g. stories, in service of the supervision process
b. Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provides interventions that match the developmental stage of the supervisee ii) Facilitates the supervisee to reflect on their coaching / mentoring work iii) Helps the supervisee to recognise unconscious biases iv) Facilitates deep shifts which are embedded in the supervisee's style and in their practice v) Assists the supervisee to develop their 'internal supervisor' vi) Encourages the supervisee to experiment with new techniques vii) Enables the supervisee to see things from different perspectives viii) Acts as a role model for good reflective practice

3.	Promotes professional standards
Supports industry standards, compliance with an ethical code and commitment to continuing professional development	
a.	Professional compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Promotes adherence to an ethical code ii) Encourages active membership of at least one professional body iii) Encourages appropriate and relevant insurance cover iv) Is aware of the relevant legal responsibilities of a coach/mentor & supervisor v) Maintains a record of supervision experience
b.	Ethical practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Applies a code of ethics as a supervisor ii) Supports supervisee to develop their own ethical maturity iii) Operates within the limits of own competence iv) Refers the supervisee to another professional when necessary v) Fosters awareness and competence in dealing with issues relating to diversity vi) Is committed to anti-oppressive practice
c.	Reflective practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Engages in a process of regular reflective practice ii) Collects feedback on their supervision and applies lessons learnt from this iii) Is committed to continuing professional development as a supervisor iv) Receives supervision on their supervision v) Is developing their own, authentic approach to supervision
4.	Provides support
Offers an appropriate level of support, ensuring the supervisee prioritises their own wellbeing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Develops supervisee confidence through active support and encouragement ii) Balances concern for the well-being of the supervisee with respect for their autonomy iii) Is able to detect issues which could impact on the supervisee's capacities iv) Assists in finding the most suitable way to proceed in relation to difficult cases v) Assists the supervisee in managing their workload, if required 	

5.	Relationship awareness
Understands and works with the multiple layers of relationship that exist in the supervision process	
a.	Intrapersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Recognises the limitations of their own perspective ii) Uses their whole self as a source of interpersonal data within the relationship iii) Utilises a capacity for working with uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity iv) Is willing to work at the edge of their own comfort and learning
b.	Interpersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Creates a safe reflective space for the supervisee ii) Establishes and maintains effective boundaries in the supervision relationship iii) Treats supervision as a collaborative relationship between equals iv) Seeks to overcome barriers or obstacles within the supervision relationship v) Understands and can also work with non-conscious psychological processes
c.	Systemic awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Is able to take a birds-eye view and hold multiple perspectives ii) Maintains an awareness of the system and/or culture in which the supervisee is operating iii) Maintains an awareness of the relationships that exist within the system iv) Is alert to the impact of aspects of the system on the supervisee v) Understands and is able to work with parallel process

6.	Working with groups
Skilfully handles supervisees and group process, enabling all present to benefit from supervision	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Manages time according to an agreed process ii) Creates a safe space for all group members iii) Understands, notices and is able to manage stages of group development iv) Confident handling group dynamics and adapting facilitation style as required v) Adapts to the stage of coach/mentor development within the group vi) Can vary approaches to meet the different learning styles within the group vii) Elicits contributions from individual group members viii) Works for the benefit of all present 	