



From coach to coach supervisor – a shift in mind-set

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Abstract

Coaching supervision is a relatively recent development, but already competency frameworks and content and process models exist. What does not yet exist is an articulation of coach supervisors' attitudes, and how these drive delivery and influence how relationships are managed. In this article, based on current literature and my experience as a practitioner, I propose a rudimentary framework, articulating seven principles of a coaching supervision mind-set. The discussion considers the validity of the framework and looks at some potential criticisms, before exploring how the principles might be useful for practitioners. Discussion highlights the need for further articulation, peer review and evaluation. The article ends with a call to action, seeking participants for an Action Research project.

Key Words: Coaching, principles of coaching, principles of coaching supervision.

Introduction

In recent years, professional bodies (for example the Association for Coaching and EMCC) have articulated competency frameworks to describe the work of coach supervisors. However, as a trainer of internal coach supervisors, I felt that these competency frameworks articulated behaviours rather than offering key principles which could underpin a supervisory perspective. This omission has been highlighted by Bachkirova and Lawton Smith (2015) who argue that “reliance on competency frameworks oversimplifies coaching practice and expertise”. They continue “it is likely that competencies identify behaviours that were successful in the past rather than addressing the mind-set needed for the future” (2015, p. 128). The intention of this article is to offer an alternative lens with which to examine how coaching supervisors work and, inspired by Bluckert (2006), to extend the seven principles of a coaching mind-set to the field of coaching supervision.

Before articulating these principles, I provide two definitions of coaching supervision to clarify the context in which this article is located and which are congruent with my work as a coach supervisor: Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support which ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of his/her coaching practice *through interactive reflection*, interpretative evaluation and *the sharing of expertise* (Bachkirova, 2008, p. 17, emphasis added).

Supervision is a working allianceThe object of this alliance is to enable the worker to gain in ethical competency, confidence and creativity *so as to give the best possible service to clients* (Inskipp & Proctor 2001, emphasis added)

Both definitions emphasise the relational, emergent and systemic nature of coaching supervision. It is my view that behavioural competencies are only one element of what trainee supervisors need, to understand how to be in the supervision relationship.

Principles

The coaching supervision principles that follow originate from the work of Bluckert (2006, pp. 4-8) who identified seven principles of a coaching mind-set. Through repeated reflection on my work as a coach and coach supervisor over the past decade I have extended those principles to have relevance for the work of a coach supervisor. The following questions were the catalyst for my reflective activity:

- How does this principle show up when working as a coach supervisor?
- Is this principle still relevant in the field of coaching supervision and if not, what might be more relevant instead?
- What happens when adopting this mind-set? What is the internal narrative?
- When this mind-set is in operation - what is the felt experience? How could I describe this to others?

To provide an understanding of its origin, the explanation of each principle begins with a brief description of the coaching mind-set principle from which it stemmed:

1. The first coaching supervision principle: 'from ask to offer'

The first principle refers to Bluckert's 'from tell to ask' maxim. He emphasises how dialogue needs to shift, re-calibrating where the sense of expertise lies. As a coach, he encourages us to move away from providing advice and to move towards asking questions that place expertise firmly in the hands of the coaching client.

In the supervision space, having unlearned being the expert, now it can be appropriate for the supervisor to bring his or her expertise back into the frame. This is not the same as mentoring, as sharing experience is not the purpose of the relationship. The supervisor will ensure that the sharing of experience does not overshadow the coach's opportunity for learning. The supervisor may however offer his or her experience to inspire, to share vulnerability or to role model good practice. The difficulty is that, as the supervisor, the role almost certainly infers a degree of power which could easily be taken to imply that the supervisor knows best. Similarly, many supervisees will have actively sought out a supervisor with a particular style, expertise or reputation. It is therefore a challenge to see how the supervisor can offer his or her experience without creating a succession of clones.

For those coach supervisors who position themselves as non-directive, the choice of the word 'offer' may generate some discomfort. I acknowledge that my own style, whilst largely non-directive, is also pragmatic and allows for the sharing of expertise within a supervision setting. The expertise shared, is more than story telling of similar client situations or of passing on technical know-how. As an experienced reflective practitioner, I am able to articulate the

felt sense of what happened in me as something unfolded in my coaching work. In describing the somatic experience of working with clients (whether articulating vulnerabilities or sensations of flow) it can help supervisees to inspect their own internal experiences. This will often be at a level of granularity not previously noticed, explored or articulated. Thus the supervisor's 'offer' is not provided as a substitute for the supervisee's own thinking; rather it is a sharing of how to inspect internal experience. The supervisor is role-modelling the value of an imperfect language when he or she describes those experiences and in doing so expands what is available for discussion.

The timing of when a supervisor offers his or her experience is critical. I propose that the offer comes only once the supervisor has tested that the coach's own thinking has been exhausted. Further, the supervisor will need to judge whether the supervisee has the capacity for taking on more information. For example, the result of independent thinking may be sufficient for the supervisee, even when the supervisor might notice it is incomplete.

The supervisor's style and intention is also relevant. When a supervisor offers his or her experience, it is proposed that it is done lightly and with an absence of ego. It can be helpful to offer conflicting experiences so that it is clear that the supervisor is not offering his or her experience to showcase how it should be done. Instead real experiences are offered to illustrate the richness of the coaching challenge, the complexity of the landscape in which we work and the multiplicity of truths that are in operation with any one client. Doing this well is more of an art than a science and probably relies on a combination of grounded-ness, humility and a generous respect for individual difference.

Finally, the supervisor's experience is offered with careful due diligence that the supervisee will not see the anecdote as a thinly veiled instruction of how the coach is expected to work. The experience is offered as data for inspection, from which the supervisee may determine its usefulness - or not. This allows the supervisor to be truly OK when the coach chooses to ignore it. The supervisor's quiet hope is that supervisees reject the specifics of the offer and become able to surface latent awareness and create something that uniquely works for them.

2. The second coaching supervision principle: 'from solution-eering to exploring'

Bluckert's second coaching principle is framed as 'performance and potential'. He identifies how it is the role of the coach to act as a catalyst to help unleash the potential of the individual client. There are links here to his fourth principle where the coach facilitates the individual to believe in him or her self. When considering how 'performance and potential' might apply to coaching supervision, it is the implied goal orientation which feels pertinent.

The notion of the practitioner acting as a catalyst is helpful in both coaching and coaching supervision contexts. However, in coaching there is a sense of momentum, a working assumption that we will help the client find a solution and take action. Conversely, I propose that in supervision value emerges not by considering what comes next, but by exploring more deeply what is already known. Inevitably, some of what is known lies just beyond conscious thought. Therefore the supervisor's role is to help supervisees examine their experience more fully thereby increasing the amount of data available to work with. When we focus attention on the existing experience, it serves to heighten awareness so that a sense of resolution

emerges naturally rather than being deliberately engineered. The supervisor therefore aims to open up the dialogue with a greater curiosity to understand what impacts on what. There is a similarity here with magic eye pictures when, if we manage to look just beyond our natural field of vision, suddenly everything jumps into view. When this happens in supervision, typically the coach lets go of technique and of worrying what to do next. The supervisee becomes grounded again and a greater certainty emerges that in the next coaching session, his or her 'whole self' will show up for work. Therefore, this principle infers that the goal for supervision is the supervisee's heightened awareness not the way forward itself – although this can be a lovely by-product.

3. The third coaching supervision principle: 'from ownership to ensuring guardianship'

Bluckert's labels his third principle 'awareness and responsibility' and it is probably one of the most well-known facets of good coaching. This principle identifies the fundamental belief that the client needs to own the solution in order to move forward.

As in coaching, the supervisor plays a developmental role - i.e. to support supervisees to find their own way forward, for their personal and professional development. However, in my supervision work I believe that the supervisor has an additional responsibility - a responsibility to the ultimate client - i.e. the person who sits in the coaching chair. This notion of 'guardianship' is of particular importance to the normative function of supervision. It means that at any time a supervisor needs to be prepared to correct or at worst blow the whistle, on their own client. At its best supervision is a collaborative and developmental relationship with the coach. Yet the supervisor has to hold in view that the beneficiary of the supervision work is not simply the coach in front of them, but also his/her coaching clients – past, current and future. Overlaid on this, the supervisor needs to keep the ultimate client's safety in mind whilst enabling the coach to develop at an appropriate pace. For example judging what it is appropriate to expect given the number of coaching hours accrued or the contract agreed with the commissioner of the coaching. Done well, the supervisor pulls, rather than pushes the coach's awareness forward. The positive impact energises the coach to improve rather than become overwhelmed by what has been missed. Where supervision has been experienced as particularly critical, or for a novice coach, this more nurturing approach can be especially pertinent. Done poorly it is likely that the coach will become more concerned about personal performance, serving to increase anxiety and reduce the coaches capacity to attend to the client.

This is therefore a principle which requires careful execution. The notion of governance could be seen as an invitation to move into a parental role, having the tendency to infantilise the supervisee. The supervisor can navigate this tension by assuming the supervisee was working with good intent, is operating appropriately given their knowledge base and is working congruently with the preferred coaching model. To work in this way, one must first suspend the possibility that information or a perspective held by the supervisor has greater relevance than that held by the supervisee. The supervisor therefore approaches any concern in the spirit of enquiry to understand what it is in the supervisee's world that meant that the intervention was an appropriate course of action. This will highlight gaps in knowledge or differences in understanding or subtle differences between what is intended and what is

enacted. From here the supervisor is in a position to take an educative role, seeking permission for providing information. With additional information the supervisor and supervisee can take a more collaborative enquiry to explore whether this new information would have led to a different approach. Where there is dissonance between the supervisor's view of best practice and the supervisee, it can be fruitful to allow time for the supervisee to reflect further and indeed for the supervisor to embark on some supervision themselves. If differences continue and the supervisor has concerns around the safety of the supervisee's practice, escalation can still be done collaboratively. This would require the supervisor to be transparent about the decision to escalate, sharing the impact the work is having on their value system. At a practical level the supervisor would partner with the supervisee in preparation for the next level of escalation - the supervisor would present the matter as reporting differences of approach and seeking further clarification, rather than simply assuming malpractice had occurred.

4. The fourth coaching supervision principle: 'from growing self-belief to harnessing self-doubt'

With the principle of 'building self-belief', Bluckert reminds us that the coach's role is to affirm the client to as a resourceful individual. The notion of affirming the client in the supervision context may still be appropriate from a relationship building and restorative perspective – however, this framework contends that self-belief may not be as universally helpful as it first appears. As a coach travels the journey to coaching mastery he or she often begins by seeking affirmation and certainty that the coaching intervention was 'correct'. In truth, this is almost impossible to assess. For every intervention that seems to have a constructive outcome, there will have been many other interventions which would have yielded different insights and learning of equal, less or more value. As a coach gains maturity, there is less investment in the client's outcome, less searching for a perfect intervention and more comfort with the notion of being 'good enough'. However, supervision is not about condoning complacency. Supervision helps the practitioner maintain a curious stance about what else might have been happening, and to be comfortable with the discomfort that exists in the not knowing. In my supervision practice I therefore encourage practitioners to consider what they don't yet know – I believe this to be an opportunity to take their reflection and self-awareness to another level.

When testing this framework with other supervisors there was a suggestion to re-phrase this principle with more positive language. There was concern that the use of the word 'doubt' carried with it a negative overtone. However, the intention of articulating this particular principle is to create a paradigm shift around how we perceive doubt. Let us start by considering what it is that prompts the supervisees to bring something to supervision. At a practical level, the developing coach will tend to bring issues of stuckness, omission or uncertainty. From the supervisee's perspective, I would contend that this will be first experienced as self-doubt. Through the supervision dialogue, the supervisor has the opportunity to help the coach explore this further, to normalise it and encourage the supervisee to embrace the learning that this uncertainty holds. Over time as the supervisee matures in through reflective practice, there is growing recognition that the potential contained in uncertainty can be embraced as 'the richness of not-knowing'. When the supervisee notices a level of doubt and is able to greet this as a friend, not a foe, this can be an incredibly

empowering shift in experience. Self-doubt is useful to our practice when we celebrate its potential to hold untapped insight. The paradigm shift will have been achieved when doubt is seen as a positive opportunity for learning.

To help the coach achieve this paradigm shift, the supervisor can role model the positive potential of self-doubt. The supervisor can demonstrate this by bringing into the room what he or she usually hardly dares to say, inviting the coach to do similarly. Clearly this can only occur in an environment and relationship of high trust. It also requires the supervisor to have the courage to begin to articulate the shape of the space in which something substantive seems to reside. The supervisor can help the coach see that this personal self-doubt and preparedness to work with vulnerability is how value is brought to the supervision relationship. By role modelling how to work with doubt, the supervisor reassures the supervisee that working in this way is likely to be the most unique way in which the coach can bring value to his or her own clients.

Working with self-doubt is perceived as a courageous step. However, the position of the supervisor legitimises a tentative and imperfect response. As a supervisor it is a rational position to recognise the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty that is inevitable when exploring something one step removed. It places the supervisor in a paradoxical position. The supervisor must work with humility. Missing something is almost inevitable. The supervisor also needs to be grounded, comfortable that omissions are not automatically an indication of incompetence. This combination allows the supervisor to work with what is unknown, viewing this in and of itself as potentially usefully information. This requires a language of communication from the supervisor that weaves together authenticity, depth, credibility yet with openness to not knowing.

Many coaches began their careers in a role where voicing expertise was rewarded. Therefore, the journey towards embracing self-doubt as the richness of not knowing is likely to be filled with dread. The journey is not completed as a leap of faith, neither can it be rushed. It is a developmental not an intellectual shift and one that will subtly evolve in the safety of the wider relationship.

5. The fifth coaching supervision principle: ‘from single to multiple contexts’

The context for Bluckert’s coaching principles was executive coaching. His fifth principle of ‘business focus’ reminds us that coaching does not happen in a vacuum. Measures of success need to consider both the domain of the client and the impact of the client in the wider organisation.

Extrapolating from this particular coaching principle was more difficult for coaching supervision. However, the commercial nature of the principle prompted consideration of the market in which coaching and coaching supervision operate.

The current markets for coaches and for coach supervisors have distinctly different dynamics. The coaching market is flooded; there is a plethora of choice for the client. If a coach’s offering is undifferentiated it makes selection difficult. In response, coaches will specialise and provide a niche offering. Whilst we learn through our training that direct similar

experience is not necessary in order to be a good coach – in reality when a client chooses a coach, he or she will tend to gravitate to something familiar. Referral is a common route to winning coaching work. When a coach has impact with a client in a particular topic area – more work of the same kind is attracted. So whilst a practising coach can in principle work in a whole range of contexts, typically our coaching work will mirror something of our background and history. The phrase ‘single context’ is used to describe this.

When we look at coaching supervision, the number of specifically trained coach supervisors is small in comparison to the number of coaches in the market. The supervision client has relatively limited choice. Indeed, many supervisors of coaches come from different helping profession disciplines and have no direct coaching experience. A supervisor will often work in a broad range of contexts. For example, those with experience almost entirely in the private sector will work with just as many “not for profit” clients as commercial ones. Similarly, a supervisor may work with coaches who have specialised in a philosophy or approach, of which the supervisor has no personal experience or training. In my supervision practice, this allows me to generate additional insight through bringing contrasting experience and alternative perspectives. The phrase ‘multiple contexts’ is used to describe this.

Therefore, a supervisor in the current market must embrace the paradox of holding lightly any personal experience gained in different contexts whilst not discounting the insight and diversity that different backgrounds might offer. In time, as the number of coach supervisors grows, we may see supervisors specialising in particular areas. However, in the meantime coach supervisors will need to work flexibly across multiple contexts – being sufficiently self-aware to identify where different experience could bring both insight and blind spots.

6. The sixth coaching supervision principle: ‘the parallel process’

Bluckert’s penultimate principle of a ‘systems perspective’ serves to remind us that the coaching client is part of a complex environment and that coaching will impact on the client’s equilibrium.

The extension of this coaching principle to the field of supervision was simple as it is probably the most written about element of supervision, the parallel process. Parallel process occurs when the supervisor experiences in the here and now of the supervision session, dynamics which were in play, in the coaching session itself. As a supervisor there is something naturally helpful about being one step removed. Perhaps a greater objectivity to what was going on in the room and which allows the supervisor to notice the dynamic. Moreover, when a supervisor has worked with a coach over a period of time, an additional perspective is brought. Through experiencing how a coach tends to work, it is possible for the supervisor to notice a coach’s reaction to a particular client. Variations to the norm hint that something else could be occurring. Knowing that the parallel process is a possibility allows the supervisor to enquire about the impact of the wider system.

To do this well the supervisor needs to have an even deeper sense of self-awareness than the average coach. He or she may also have a deep expertise (theoretical, contextual, or practical) which informs what is explored. The nature of a supervisor’s self-awareness is more holistic than a rational understanding. The supervisor will tune in to the felt sense and the

somatic experience evoked by the supervision encounter. The supervisor will work courageously with his or her 'here and now' experience, bringing what is being noticed into the room. The supervisor's current experience can help to illuminate issues occurring in the supervisee's client work. However, there is always the possibility that what has occurred is actually a yet untapped part of the supervisors own personal development – personal unfinished business might be in play. As mentioned earlier the language of the supervisor is key, offering observations in an authentic way. This requires both a duality of confidence and humility. The hypothesis must be delivered with confidence and credibility as the coach may not yet understand what is being proposed. Humility is required because it is always possible that what the supervisor is noticing has more to do with his or her own development than with the case that the coach has brought. Therefore, what is particularly interesting is what happens whilst a supervisor works out what is coming from where. The supervisor must hold open the duality of what is becoming known in the system whilst at the same time working with the 'in the moment' experience. There is a need to do this in a way that avoids contamination from one to the other and yet allows connections between the two to emerge.

7. The seventh coaching supervision principle: 'a coaching supervision mind-set'

Bluckert's final coaching principle is entitled 'from coaching as a tool, to coaching as a mindset'. The point here is to consider that we need not restrict coaching simply to the conversations that happen in a formal coaching 'session'. Instead, we are encouraged to look for opportunities to take a coaching approach in many different types of conversations, however and wherever the opportunity emerges.

Extending this coaching principle to the supervision field required considerable thought. There may be some merit in applying a coaching style to a variety of conversations. By contrast, it is my contention that a supervisor will benefit from a willingness and ability to support the coach using a variety of styles. I see the supervision relationship as collaborative and professional. If it were not for the label 'coach supervisor', the role could be entitled coach-mentor, coaching the coach, thought leader, facilitator, educator, counsellor or critical friend. In practice, boundaries that one might theoretically place on a supervision relationship can be blurred. Whilst the purist might encourage us to notice the boundary and refer on to more appropriate support in reality there might be considerable pressure to make an intervention which will equip the coach to continue to work. There may simply not be the time, money or opportunity to refer onwards. As a consequence, to borrow from the Serenity Prayer (cited by Shapiro, 2014 as attributed to Niebuhr, 1951) – the supervisor needs to have the humility to acknowledge that there are some lines which they cannot cross, the courage to cross the ones which they believe they can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Discussion

Discussion with other practitioners, including the audience at Oxford Brookes 5th International Supervision Conference, has highlighted two additional principles:

8. From 'Authenticity' as a coaching principle to 'Authentic Symbiosis' as a coaching supervision principle

One criticism of the framework is that there is no explicit reference to the importance of working authentically. I would argue that it has an implied presence. For example, in Principle

One, how we offer our expertise, infers authenticity. Similarly, in Principle Six, how we tap into information which could indicate a parallel process being in evidence requires the supervisor to work with congruence.

The supervision mind-set is intended to represent an extension to the coaching mind-set. So, whilst, authenticity may be critical for a coach supervisor, it is also critical for a coach. The question for consideration therefore, is ‘What is it that the supervisor works with, over and above what we would naturally label as authenticity?’ As a coach, authenticity is about being congruent in the Rogerian sense (Rogers, 1957). This congruence comes from the here and now experience of the practitioner in the presence of the client. This has singular sense to it - interventions come from the position of the professional persona of the therapist. As a coach supervisor, we fulfill numerous roles (as described in Principle Seven), so perhaps in a coaching supervision context authenticity would recognise the multiplicity of who and how we are. Bachkirova’s (2011) work on personal development considers the notion of “mini-selves” and could be helpful here. For example, whilst we might ‘show up’ in the identity of supervisor, we have many other identities which could also present - in particular the supervisor is a learner too. Indeed, some practitioners contend that certain clients gravitate to us for our own development. Inskipp & Proctor (2001) describe supervision as a ‘working alliance’. With this lens, a kind of symbiosis begins to exist. Our coaching supervision mind-set allows for the possibility that our client work is an opportunity for testing and stretching our multiple authentic selves, whilst simultaneously we are working to support the client. ‘Authentic symbiosis’ is the term used here to describe this opportunity.

9. The role of ‘Self-Care’ as a coaching supervision principle

My contemporaries have also highlighted the omission of ‘self-care’ from the coaching supervision principles. This was a useful observation and occurred because it is an omission within Bluckert’s original principles. However, self-care is also an essential principle for a coach. Having good energy for our clients, starts with having good energy for ourselves. This raises a similar challenge to that discussed above, regarding authenticity. In order to be consistent with the rest of the framework, the coaching supervision principle related to self-care, needs to build on and be more than the coaching principle. It is not yet clear how to articulate an extension of self-care such that it has utility in a coaching supervision context. It is likely that definition of this potential ninth principle will require additional work.

During the discussions of the principles, some critical questions emerged:

1. *To what extent do the principles describe the work of other coach supervisors?*

The tone of the discussions with a wide variety of other coaching supervision practitioners have been generally affirming and encouraging. The principles as outlined seemed to resonate. Whilst this provides early validation, it is acknowledged that wider socialisation and more rigorous research will be necessary.

2. *Differences between the work of a coach supervisor and a master coach:*

Whilst the principles described above were developed with the coaching supervisor in mind, a common question is whether these principles might equally describe the mind-set of highly experienced coaches - for example, those coaches who are accredited at Master level

by one of the professional coaching bodies (hereafter referred to as ‘master coaches’). The answer to this question will influence where this framework is located in the literature.

Initial discussions suggest four areas where potential differences between the mind-set of a coach supervisor and of a coach become blurred. The overlap becomes particularly noticeable when coaches work at a master level.

i. Clarifying who the client is:

As outlined in Principle three - the coach supervisor must attend to both the client in front of them (the coach) and the individuals with whom that client works (the coaching clients). By comparison, when we consider a coaching context, typically it is the person in the chair, who is the coach’s primary concern. This could therefore be a differentiator - when working as a coach, there is a single client and when working as a coach supervisor, there are multiple clients. However, in the world of executive coaching, that is a simplification of the reality. A key coaching component will be the raising of the executive client’s self-awareness. However, the system surrounding them also deserves attention. The coaching dialogue needs to consider multiple ripple effects, asking questions such as: What impact does the clients work life have on other areas of their world? How does the client impact the wider system? This illustrates that the differentiation between the coach supervisor’s mind-set and that of the master coach may be less marked than it at first appears.

ii. The context for the work:

Principle two describes the intention of supervision as heightening exploration rather than finding specific solutions, whereas, typically we see coaching (particularly performance coaching) as outcome focused. Initially, this looks like a distinction for the coaching supervision mind-set. However, whilst this outcome orientation may be true for performance coaching, this is less clear cut in the world of executive coaching. Working in a VUCA world (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) - a concept attributed to Hicks and Townsend (2002) - the executive client must first get to know themselves to establish a personal sense of vision and purpose in order to navigate the landscape effectively. Master coaches who work with such clients are therefore likely to spend more time helping them explore their independent thinking than setting action plans. In this context the mind-sets required for a coach and a supervisor, appear remarkably similar.

iii. The maturity of the client:

Whilst working as a coach and as a coach supervisor, I have noticed that mature clients more often see development as a continual journey. The client who is a mature learner seeks out another professional to act as a sounding board, rather than for specific development challenges. As a result, a more exploratory and collaborative style is drawn from the helping practitioner, regardless of whether the purpose of the work is coaching or coaching supervision. This would infer that the mind-set principles have less to do with the characteristics of the supervisor and as much or more to do with the characteristics of the client.

iv. The degree of volition in the client:

In my experience, I have noticed that clients who are ready and willing to embrace the developmental opportunity tend to take an exploratory and emergent approach to deep and transformational questions. Those who engage in the relationship because it is expected are likely to generate a more transactional scope for the helping practitioner to work with.

One of the complexities in coaching or coaching supervision relationships is unravelling the client's genuine motivation for the relationship. The Executive Client may be managing multiple influences as the commitment to coaching is made. Sometimes the client will be self-directed; however, more often other stakeholders have either influenced the decision to engage a coach. In most cases, the organisation will at least have a stake in determining the coaching goals. This could lead to the presence of resistance and reduce the client's appetite for engaging in deep work. By comparison, given that supervision is still a discretionary activity, we might perceive that supervisees will be much more independent and engaged with the process. Once again, this feels like a simplification. Internal coaches may be mandated to attend supervision, and independent coaches may need to sustain supervision for the purposes of a contractual relationship or for accreditation purposes. Differentiation is difficult – the mind-set required may be less to do with the helping practitioner's role and more to do with the readiness of the client to do the work.

The inference here is therefore that the coaching supervision mind-set principles may have wider application than solely to coach supervisors. The principles could be viewed as a continuum – with the coaching mind-set at one end and the coaching supervision mind-set at the other. It would be the characteristics of the client and the working context that would determine where on that continuum the working relationship operated.

3. How useful are the principles for coach-supervisor practice

It is hoped that this framework will do more than provoke discussion in the community. Feedback has highlighted that the principles have some practical application. For example:

- Co-creating the contract. Both for coaches new to supervision, or for coaches switching supervisor, these principles could provide a framework around which the supervisor can articulate his or her own unique approach to supervision
- A reflective meta tool. This could be in the context of the supervisor's own independent reflection or as a catalyst for discussion with the supervisor's supervisor
- A developmental tool. When used alongside Bluckert's original coaching mind-set principles it would be possible for a practitioner to chart progress on the journey from coach to coach supervisor
- A framework for trainers to use in coach supervisor development programme
- A framework for the professional coaching bodies to refer to in support of assessment frameworks for Coach Supervisors

Conclusion

An early piece of feedback on this work questioned whether or not it was helpful to tie the coaching supervision principles to Bluckert's original work. As it was the source of inspiration this felt congruent. Now that the principles are in the public domain it would be useful to engage with further scrutiny and validation from the wider coach supervision community. The additional eighth and ninth principles need to be articulated more fully, differentiating them from a coaching mind-set. From an implementation perspective it would be useful to reach beyond coach supervision practitioners to educators of coach supervisors as well as professional bodies globally for a reaction to these principles. As highlighted in the recent paper by Bachkirova and Lawton-Smith (2015) competency is only one way of viewing capability. It would be useful to explore whether these more attitudinal principles might complement the existing competency based frameworks used in accreditation schemes.

Additional research is advocated. Specifically, an action research project would be useful. Looking at the literature there are a number of different approaches available for action research. It is anticipated that the research could take the form of Heron and Reason's co-operative inquiry as described by Reason and Rowan (1981). The methodology encourages the researcher to 'research with' rather than 'on' people. In this approach the participants become co-researchers. Co-operative inquiry creates a research cycle among four different types of knowledge:

- i. propositional knowing (as in contemporary science)
- ii. practical knowing (the knowledge that comes with actually doing what we propose)
- iii. experiential knowing (the feedback we get in real time about our interaction with the world)
- iv. presentational knowing (the artistic rehearsal process through which we craft new practices)

The research process includes these four stages at each cycle with deepening experience and knowledge of the initial proposition, or of new propositions, at every cycle. Increasingly robust iterations of the coaching supervision mind-set could then be created.

The extension of Bluckert's principles of a coaching mind-set to principles of a coaching supervision mind-set appears to have some validity when discussed with other practitioners. The article describes the seven principles in detail and considers how the coaching supervision principles are different to those that guide experienced coaches. A further two principles have been identified. Whilst articulation has begun through this article, more work will be required before these additional principles will be of practical use. To progress this work, I am advocating an action research project using the Co-Operative Enquiry methodology. Practitioners who are interested in participating in this research may contact me directly

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