



COMENSA (Association incorporated under Section 21)

## **Coach/Mentor Supervision Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 The term Coach/Mentor Supervision (C/M Supervision) has been selected to describe the process of engagement between a Coach or Mentor and a person qualified to offer the service of supervision as described below. This individual is known as a Coach/Mentor Supervisor (C/M Supervisor).
- 1.1.2 The aim of this C/M Supervision policy document is (a) to convey the official stance taken by COMENSA on this aspect of professional practice and (b) to provide members with the necessary information to answer questions about C/M Supervision and to empower them to make informed decisions about their engagement with C/M Supervision . i.e. What is C/M Supervision? What value does it have for me? How do I use it? How do I select a C/M Supervisor? How do I become a C/M Supervisor?
- 1.1.3 Coaching and mentoring need to establish themselves as professions of excellence in services which are capable of getting results and maintaining standards. Accountability, effectiveness and professionalism are core values for coaches and mentors. C/M Supervision is a mechanism to provide the coach or mentor, the client and the organisation with best practice and quality management.
- 1.1.4 C/M Supervision offers a context in which practitioners can develop professionally . to re-construct their experience, to reflect, to understand, to design their professional reality, and to develop new responses for future practice. It can be described as a collaborative, co-constructed space in which coaching/mentoring competencies are explored and developed. C/M Supervision serves to help the coach/mentor manage high levels of complexity, have a mechanism for ensuring accountability and ethical practice and maintain continued professional development.
- 1.1.5 C/M Supervision may take on different forms such as one-to-one, one-to-a-group, or peer supervision (peers can provide supervision to one another without an appointed supervisor). Duration and frequency may also differ. The particular form of C/M Supervision will depend on the needs of the coach or mentor which will be determined by the context and the purpose of the coaching or mentoring and by the developmental needs of the coach/mentor.
- 1.1.6 The COMENSA Code of Ethics requires that all members have regular C/M Supervision with a suitably qualified C/M Supervisor. COMENSA recommends a ratio of 1:15 hours of C/M Supervision to coaching or mentoring.

## 1.2 Structure

1.2.1 This Policy is structured as follows:

- (a) Goals.
- (b) Functions and benefits.
- (d) Competences.
- (e) Training.
- (f) Selecting a C/M Supervisor

## 2. Policy on C/M Supervision

### 2.1 Goals

2.1.1 The goals of C/M Supervision would be to:

- (a) Provide a space in which the coach/mentor can learn and maintain professional standards, develop theoretical and practical acumen, and get psychological support.
- (b) Provide a learning environment in order to reflect on the coaching/mentoring practice and assess the extent to which they are meeting the needs of their clients . i.e.; understanding the dynamics of the coach/mentor-client relationship more clearly.
- (c) To raise awareness of the coach/mentor's own reactions and responses to the client.
- (d) Understand the dynamics of how the coach/mentor, the client and (where appropriate) the organisation are interacting.
- (e) Challenge the coach/mentor's interventions and practice in a supportive and educative environment.
- (f) Develop new approaches and explore other ways of working within client situations.
- (g) Ensure that high standards of ethics are maintained

### 2.2 Functions and benefits

According to Hawkins and Smith (2006), C/M Supervision has essentially three functions and areas of benefit for the coach/mentor:

- (a) **Qualitative** function . provides quality control in working with people. All coaches have issues they don't see, blind spots, vulnerabilities and prejudices which may be missed in isolation but will become apparent in the supervisory relationship. C/M Supervisors can ensure that a coach's work is appropriate in the context and is ethical. This builds the credibility of the individual coach/mentor and therefore the profession as a whole. It also offers protection to the client through sustained focus on ethical standards and professional conduct.
- (b) **Resourcing** function . provides emotional support to enable the coach to deal with the intensity of working with clients, to become aware of how their own emotions and reactions are being affected through the inevitable pressures of being attentive and empathic. Coaches need to also attend to themselves . C/M Supervision offers a safe space within which coaches can recognise their needs and the risks of collusion, burn-out and somatic reactions to stress.
- (c) **Developmental** function . promotes reflection on and exploration of the increasing skills and competencies evident in the work of the coach. They may be challenged to become more aware of their own reactions and responses to the client; to understand the client better and the dynamics of how they and their client were interacting; how they have intervened and the consequences of their

intervention, all in service of promoting understanding, increasing options for different ways of working and overall professional development.

### 2.3 Benefits of C/M Supervision to the buyers and sponsors of coaching/mentoring

- (a) A return on investment.
- (b) An increased efficacy of coaching/mentoring.
- (c) Frees coaches/mentors from focusing on the person only, developing an ability to engage with the broader client needs.
- (d) Oversees and maintains consistency within the group of coaches / mentors.
- (e) Satisfies the buyers' expectations that the coach/mentor is getting support.
- (f) Provides the client with a second opinion, i.e. feedback from C/M Supervisor to coach/mentor and back into the organisation.
- (g) Ensures standards, accountability and provides support for the coach/mentor.

### 2.4 Competences

As a baseline the C/M Supervisor needs to:

- (a) have a coach/mentor qualification;
- (b) be actively coaching/mentoring; and
- (c) have a qualification as a C/M Supervisor or experience as a supervisor (minimum of 50 hours).

This latter qualification or experience needs to include a further competency that is core for C/M Supervision . viz. understanding of a psychological framework for differentiating between *conscious* and *unconscious* processes. This is the ability to distinguish and make sense of the difference between, and the impact of, *conscious* processes (such as theory, structure, content, the story) and *unconscious* processes (such as the unspoken, the impulsive, shadow, transference) upon the coach/mentor. client+relationship and the coach/mentor. supervisor+relationship.

Throughout the C/M Supervisory relationship the C/M Supervisor demonstrates:

- (a) integrity, rapport and flexibility;
- (b) a co-creative approach . a non-judgemental, humble and non-competitive stance;
- (c) meta-perspective thinking and/or systems thinking . holding the big picture+in mind;
- (d) respect for individuality and diversity (especially cross-cultural awareness); and
- (e) an ability to appreciate and integrate complexity.

And the C/M Supervisor has the competence to pay attention to, work with and balance the three FUNCTIONS of C/M Supervision:

1. QUALITATIVE . Focus is on the Coach/Mentor as a Professional
  - (a) Understands and respects ethics and standards of conduct in the field of coaching/mentoring . alerts and holds coach/mentor to them.
  - (b) Contracts efficiently . works to agreed goals contracted with the coach/mentor, and alerts and hold the coach/mentor to their contracts.

- (c) Sets context and attends to boundaries.
  - (d) Is clear about own stance and values.
  - (e) Establishes safety and protection for coach and clients . e.g.; confidentiality and boundaries.
  - (f) Capacity to recommend a referral . ability and courage to identify professional limitations and/or personality mismatches and then recommend a referral. This can be between coach/mentor and client, or between coach/mentor and supervisor.
  - (g) Considers the entire system and stays aware of contextual influences.
  - (h) Takes account of organizational and community perspectives.
  - (i) Makes and honours multi-party contracts.
  - (j) Self-manages, including getting own supervision and time for reflection/development.
2. RESOURCING . Focus is on the Coach/Mentor as a Person
- (a) Focuses attention on the coach/mentor's needs.
  - (b) Establishes trust, contact and intimacy with the coach/mentor.
  - (c) Maintains positive affirming approach.
  - (d) Gives permission to be with what is . i.e. coach's map+
  - (e) Works with ambiguity, paradox and not knowing+
  - (f) Uses intuition effectively.
  - (g) Values own response as material for learning (use of self+).
  - (h) Identifies, names and works with conscious and unconscious processes in the supervision . i.e. keeps psychological level clean+
  - (i) Recognises patterns+in coach/mentor and self.
  - (j) Gets own support . through supervision, coaching, therapy.
3. DEVELOPMENTAL . Focus is on the Coach/Mentor as a Coach or Mentor
- (a) Promotes reflection, active experimentation and self-discovery.
  - (b) Identifies underlying issues for coach, brings into awareness.
  - (c) Intervenes appropriately for coach's development (functions within supervision+and scanning searchlight+).
  - (d) Notes changes in coach's knowledge, skills and awareness and promotes development.
  - (e) Integrates theory and practice . with an outcomes-based philosophy and an emphasis on experiential learning.
  - (f) Has heart and backbone+. the ability to give tough and objective feedback which challenges actively and appropriately to promote growth.
  - (g) Includes systemic thinking and cultural awareness.
  - (h) Ability to work with groups and individuals and to manage boundaries between organizational issues and individual issues.
  - (i) Invites adult awareness and solution-focus.
  - (j) Has knowledge and experience of various coaching theories, models and frameworks
  - (k) Maintains own ongoing development and professional competence.

## 2.5 Training

C/M Supervision training should:

- (a) Deliver the above-mentioned core competencies to students.
- (b) Include a theoretical psychological framework (such as TA, Humanistic, and Psychoanalytic) with which to understand human development, human interaction, personality and an appreciation of unconscious processes.
- (c) Be very practical in nature with academic underpinnings.
- (d) Offer a multi-model approach.
- (e) Teach the generic skills of supervision: i.e. the history of supervision practice in psychology and social work.
- (f) Include some assessment during the training: observed supervising (quantitative, qualitative assessment).
- (g) Have an outcomes-based philosophy, and be learner-centred and results-focused to develop depth of skill.
- (h) Encourage commitment to ongoing C/M Supervision by the trainee supervisor for her/himself.
- (i) Include an understanding of diversity of culture; a critical competence in ~~appreciating diversity~~ within the South African context.
- (j) Teach the theory and practice of group dynamics.
- (k) Request that trainee supervisors hand in case studies of live C/M Supervision with hours under your belt.
- (l) Have a two-level approach: (1) generic C/M Supervision skills and/or (2) specialising in a specific C/M Supervision model.
- (m) Have a link with CETASA.

## 2.6 Selecting a supervisor

2.6.1 The field of coaching / mentoring is still relatively young and as a result the establishment of recognised training schools for C/M Supervisors is relatively new. Local training schools are in the process of being established and only some overseas-based courses are currently available. There are some newly trained C/M Supervisors available in South Africa and there are also some experienced coaches and mentors who offer supervision by virtue of their training and experience in other fields such as Psychology and Social Work.

2.6.2 COMENSA is not determining who your C/M Supervisor can be, and we follow the EMCC suggestion of recommending that you apply the following criteria to any C/M Supervisor you choose:

- (a) They have experience as a coach/mentor.
- (b) They have experience of being supervised.
- (c) They have experience as a supervisor (not necessarily of coach/mentors).
- (d) They evidence theoretical framework(s) for their own practice and you find this relevant to your own work.
- (e) They evidence theoretical framework(s) relating to supervision.
- (f) They have an understanding of the context of coaching/mentoring (as practised by the supervisee).
- (g) They are aware of the impact of values, beliefs, assumptions and culture (of supervisor, and of coach/mentor in their own practice).
- (h) They are respectful of diversity in its many forms and alert to its potential benefits and pitfalls.

- (i) They show commitment to CPD for themselves and supervisee.
- (j) They agree to abide by the COMENSA Code of Ethics even if not a member.
- (k) There will be no dual roles (i.e. C/M Supervisor is not also line manager, business partner) and this does not include peer supervision . between colleagues, students . which is acceptable.
- (l) To ensure that a clear collaborative contract is established and which would include: (i) the responsibilities in any decision process of both coach/mentor and C/M Supervisor to other parties involved, for example, sponsors, managers, colleagues, and trainers; (ii) their respective legal liabilities to each other, the employing organizations and client; (iii) clear boundaries between supervision, consultancy, training and coaching, and in the area of dual relationships and (iv) a regular review of the effectiveness of the supervision arrangement.

### **3. Feedback**

- 3.1 COMENSA welcomes feedback on this Coach/Mentor Supervision Policy. A review date is set for 1 May 2011 at which point all additional feedback will be collated and assessed and the policy reviewed. This review process will repeat every 2 years after that.
- 3.2 Feedback should be forwarded by COMENSA members to: Gary Viljoen, Chairperson, Supervision Portfolio Committee, at: [gary@humanworks.co.za](mailto:gary@humanworks.co.za)
- 3.3 Members of the Supervision Portfolio Committee responsible for compiling this Policy are Gary Viljoen, Sally Brazier, Paddy Pampallis Paisley, and Sunny Stout Rostron.