
Professional Certificate in Evidence-Based Coaching Supervision

Reflective Practice and Self-Awareness for Coaching Supervisors

Active Listening – The disciplined practice of fully concentrating on what a client says, observing non-verbal cues, and responding in a way that demonstrates understanding.

Related terms: Empathy, Paraphrasing.

Example: A coaching supervisor repeats back a co-coach's description of a challenging client interaction, highlighting the emotions expressed.

Practical application: Use a reflective journal after each supervision session to note moments when you truly listened versus moments you were distracted.

Challenges: Maintaining focus when personal judgments arise; resisting the urge to "fix" rather than to listen.

Assumptions – Beliefs held without proof that shape perception and interpretation of coaching situations.

Related terms: Bias, Mindset.

Example: Assuming that a co-coach's silence indicates disengagement, when it may actually reflect contemplation.

Practical application: Conduct a "belief audit" quarterly, listing assumptions about co-coach competence and testing them against observed evidence.

Challenges: Recognising hidden assumptions; confronting deeply ingrained cultural or professional stereotypes.

Attunement – The capacity to synchronise emotionally and cognitively with another's state, fostering a sense of safety and connection.

Related terms: Presence, Empathy.

Example: Noticing a co-coach's subtle tension during a role-play and adjusting your tone to create a calmer environment.

Practical application: Use a "body scan" before supervision sessions to sense your own tension and align with the co-coach's mood.

Challenges: Over-identifying with the co-coach's emotions, leading to loss of objectivity.

Authenticity – The alignment of outward behaviour with inner values, beliefs, and emotions, thereby modelling genuine leadership.

Related terms: Self-Awareness, Congruence.

Example: A supervisor admits uncertainty about a particular coaching model, inviting collaborative

exploration rather than pretending expertise.

Practical application: Maintain a reflective log where you record moments you felt you were “wearing a mask” and analyse the triggers.

Challenges: Fear of vulnerability; organisational cultures that reward façade over honesty.

Bias – Confirmation Bias – The tendency to seek, interpret, and remember information that confirms pre-existing beliefs, while ignoring contradictory data.

Related terms: Assumptions, Blind Spot.

Example: Noticing that you only recall co-coach successes that fit your preferred coaching style, overlooking failures that could inform growth.

Practical application: After each supervision, ask a peer to review your notes for evidence of selective attention.

Challenges: Implicit nature makes it hard to notice; may be reinforced by echo chambers within professional networks.

Bias – Projection Bias – The inclination to project one’s own feelings, motivations, or expectations onto another, assuming they share the same internal state.

Related terms: Self-Awareness, Empathy.

Example: Assuming a co-coach feels nervous because you often feel nervous in similar contexts, without asking.

Practical application: Use a “question-first” habit: before interpreting, ask the co-coach directly about their experience.

Challenges: Requires discipline to pause and check one’s internal narrative.

Boundary Management – The deliberate establishment and upkeep of professional limits that protect both supervisor and co-coach from role confusion or ethical breach.

Related terms: Ethics, Role Clarity.

Example: Declining a request for personal advice unrelated to coaching practice, and redirecting to appropriate resources.

Practical application: Draft a boundary checklist before each supervision session, noting topics that are permissible versus those that require referral.

Challenges: Cultural expectations of “helpfulness” may blur boundaries; fear of disappointing the co-coach.

Cognitive Dissonance – The uncomfortable mental state that arises when a person holds two contradictory beliefs or behaviours simultaneously.

Related terms: Self-Reflection, Change Management.

Example: A supervisor values evidence-based practice but continues to rely on intuition without justification.

Practical application: Identify moments of dissonance in your reflective journal and explore strategies to resolve them, such as seeking training.

Challenges: Tendency to rationalise away discomfort rather than address the underlying conflict.

Coaching Presence – The state of being fully engaged, open, and responsive in the moment, allowing the co-coach to feel seen and heard.

Related terms: Attunement, Mindfulness.

Example: Sitting quietly, maintaining eye contact, and suspending judgment while a co-coach shares a difficult case.

Practical application: Practice a 3-minute grounding exercise before each supervision to centre attention.

Challenges: Competing demands (emails, interruptions) can erode presence; personal stress may spill into the session.

Coaching Supervision – A structured process where an experienced supervisor supports a coach or co-coach in developing competence, reflective practice, and ethical integrity.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Professional Development.

Example: A supervisor facilitates a debrief after a co-coach conducts a client session, exploring what went well and what could be improved.

Practical application: Adopt a supervision model (e.g., GROW, Reflective Cycle) consistently to provide a familiar framework for learning.

Challenges: Balancing support with challenge; avoiding “coach-to-coach” dynamics that limit critical feedback.

Culture of Inquiry – An organisational environment that encourages questioning, curiosity, and evidence-based exploration rather than unquestioned acceptance.

Related terms: Evidence-Based Coaching, Learning Organization.

Example: A supervision team regularly reviews recent research articles and discusses implications for practice.

Practical application: Schedule a monthly “research spotlight” where a supervisor presents a study and leads a reflective dialogue.

Challenges: Time constraints; resistance from members comfortable with status-quo methods.

Data-Driven Reflection – The systematic use of qualitative or quantitative data (e.g., session recordings, client feedback) to inform self-assessment and growth.

Related terms: Evidence-Based Coaching, Reflective Practice.

Example: Analyzing a transcript of a coaching conversation to identify recurring patterns of interruption.

Practical application: Create a simple spreadsheet to log observations, themes, and action steps after each supervision.

Challenges: Data overload; interpreting data without bias.

Deliberate Practice – Repetitive, focused activity designed to improve specific skills, combined with feedback and reflection.

Related terms: Skill Development, Feedback Loop.

Example: Role-playing a challenging client scenario weekly, with the supervisor providing targeted feedback

on questioning techniques.

Practical application: Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals for each practice session.

Challenges: Maintaining motivation when progress feels slow; ensuring feedback is constructive rather than evaluative.

Empathy – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another, while maintaining professional boundaries.

Related terms: Attunement, Compassion.

Example: Recognising a co-coach's frustration about a client's resistance and validating that experience.

Practical application: Use "feeling statements" (e.g., "It sounds like you felt...") to confirm understanding during supervision.

Challenges: Risk of over-identifying with the co-coach's emotions, leading to loss of objectivity.

Ethical Dilemmas – Situations where moral principles conflict, requiring careful deliberation to choose the most appropriate course of action.

Related terms: Boundary Management, Professional Standards.

Example: A co-coach wishes to share client information with a colleague for peer support, raising confidentiality concerns.

Practical application: Apply an ethical decision-making model (e.g., Four-Box) to systematically evaluate options.

Challenges: Ambiguity in guidelines; pressure from organisational hierarchy.

Feedback Loop – A cyclical process where information about performance is gathered, analysed, and used to adjust future actions.

Related terms: Deliberate Practice, Reflective Practice.

Example: After a supervision session, the supervisor receives a brief satisfaction survey from the co-coach and integrates suggestions into the next meeting.

Practical application: Establish a "plus-delta" format (what went well, what could improve) at the end of each session.

Challenges: Ensuring feedback is honest rather than perfunctory; acting on feedback promptly.

Growth Mindset – The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, learning, and persistence.

Related terms: Self-Awareness, Reflective Practice.

Example: Viewing a co-coach's mistake as an opportunity for learning rather than a failure.

Practical application: Encourage co-coaches to set "learning goals" alongside performance goals during supervision.

Challenges: Fixed-mindset cultures may resist this perspective; internalised self-criticism can undermine growth orientation.

Imposter Syndrome – Persistent self-doubt and fear of being exposed as a fraud, despite evidence of competence.

Related terms: Self-Compassion, Self-Awareness.

Example: A supervisor feels unqualified to critique senior coaches, fearing they will be judged incompetent.

Practical application: Use a “strengths inventory” to remind yourself of verified achievements before each supervision.

Challenges: May lead to avoidance of challenging conversations; can erode confidence over time.

Integrative Reflection – The process of synthesising insights from multiple sources (experience, theory, feedback) into a cohesive understanding of one’s practice.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Data-Driven Reflection.

Example: Combining client outcome data, peer feedback, and personal feelings to decide on a new coaching technique.

Practical application: Allocate dedicated time each month to write a reflective essay that weaves together various inputs.

Challenges: Time-intensive; risk of superficial integration if not deeply examined.

Judgmental Bias – The tendency to evaluate situations or people through a lens of personal values, leading to unfair or inaccurate conclusions.

Related terms: Bias, Self-Awareness.

Example: Assuming a co-coach’s informal language indicates lack of professionalism, ignoring cultural communication styles.

Practical application: Practice “bracketing” by noting your assumptions before interpreting a co-coach’s behaviour.

Challenges: Deeply ingrained cultural norms; pressure to conform to organisational expectations.

Learning Agility – The capacity to rapidly acquire, apply, and adapt knowledge in new or changing contexts.

Related terms: Growth Mindset, Reflective Practice.

Example: A supervisor quickly integrates a newly published coaching model into supervision after reviewing its evidence base.

Practical application: Maintain a “learning log” that captures key take-aways from each professional development activity.

Challenges: Over-commitment to new ideas without sufficient testing; burnout from constant learning demands.

Meta-Cognition – Awareness and regulation of one’s own thinking processes, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating mental strategies.

Related terms: Self-Awareness, Reflective Practice.

Example: Recognising that you tend to jump to conclusions during supervision and deliberately slowing down to gather more information.

Practical application: Use a “thinking checklist” (e.g., “What am I assuming? What evidence do I have?”) before delivering feedback.

Challenges: Requires sustained discipline; may feel artificial initially.

Micro-Reflection – Brief, immediate contemplation of an event or interaction, often captured in a few sentences, to capture raw insights before they fade.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Journaling.

Example: After a supervision session, noting “felt tension when co-coach mentioned ‘failure’ – possible trigger for my own perfectionism.”

Practical application: Keep a pocket notebook or digital note app for quick entries right after each session.

Challenges: Consistency; avoiding superficial “tick-box” entries without depth.

Mindful Listening – An attentional stance that combines present-moment awareness with non-judgmental curiosity, enhancing comprehension and rapport.

Related terms: Active Listening, Coaching Presence.

Example: Silencing internal commentary while a co-coach speaks, allowing full absorption of tone, pace, and pauses.

Practical application: Begin each supervision with a 30-second breathing pause to centre attention.

Challenges: Internal mental chatter; multitasking habits.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) Techniques – Strategies drawn from MI that facilitate client self-exploration, such as open-ended questions, reflective statements, and summarising.

Related terms: Coaching Skills, Reflective Practice.

Example: A supervisor models the use of “What would success look like for you?” to help a co-coach uncover intrinsic goals.

Practical application: Integrate one MI technique per session into supervision practice and track its impact.

Challenges: Misapplication as a scripted script rather than an adaptable mindset.

Non-Verbal Synchrony – The subtle mirroring of body language, posture, or facial expressions that builds rapport and signals attunement.

Related terms: Attunement, Presence.

Example: Matching a co-coach’s relaxed posture after they have settled into a comfortable seat.

Practical application: Conduct a brief “body language check” before sessions to become aware of your own stance.

Challenges: Over-mirroring can appear manipulative; cultural differences may affect interpretation.

Oblique Feedback – Indirect or subtle communication that conveys critique without explicit statements, often leading to ambiguity.

Related terms: Feedback Loop, Transparency.

Example: Saying “I noticed the conversation drifted” without specifying the impact on coaching

effectiveness.

Practical application: Convert oblique feedback into clear, behaviour-focused statements using the "SBI" (Situation-Behaviour-Impact) model.

Challenges: Co-coach may misinterpret or miss the intended message; supervisor may feel uncomfortable being direct.

Paraphrasing – Restating a speaker's words in one's own language to confirm understanding and demonstrate active listening.

Related terms: Active Listening, Reflective Listening.

Example: "So you're saying that the client's resistance feels like a personal failure for you."

Practical application: Use paraphrasing at least once per turn in supervision to ensure clarity.

Challenges: Risk of oversimplifying complex statements; can be perceived as patronising if not done sincerely.

Professional Boundaries – The defined limits that separate personal, therapeutic, and supervisory roles to protect integrity and confidentiality.

Related terms: Boundary Management, Ethics.

Example: A supervisor refrains from discussing personal life details that are irrelevant to the coaching context.

Practical application: Draft a boundary contract at the start of each supervisory relationship outlining expectations.

Challenges: Cultural expectations of "friendliness" may blur lines; power differentials may pressure supervisors to over-extend.

Reflective Cycle (Gibbs) – A six-step framework (Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, Action Plan) for systematic reflection on experiences.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Self-Awareness.

Example: After a supervision session, a supervisor completes the cycle to explore how their own anxiety influenced feedback delivery.

Practical application: Keep a template in your journal to fill out after each significant event.

Challenges: Tendency to rush through steps; may become formulaic without deep engagement.

Reflective Journaling – The habitual recording of thoughts, feelings, and insights related to professional practice, fostering self-knowledge and growth.

Related terms: Micro-Reflection, Integrative Reflection.

Example: Writing an entry titled "Trigger: My own perfectionism surfaced during today's session" and exploring its origins.

Practical application: Set a daily alarm for 10 minutes of journaling, using prompts such as "What surprised me today?"

Challenges: Consistency; avoiding self-censorship that limits honesty.

Reflective Supervision – A supervisory approach that prioritises the supervisor’s own reflective practice as a model for the co-coach, encouraging mutual learning.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Coaching Supervision.

Example: The supervisor shares a personal reflection on a recent coaching challenge, inviting the co-coach to mirror that depth.

Practical application: Allocate a dedicated “reflection segment” in each session where both parties share insights.

Challenges: Balancing self-disclosure with professional authority; ensuring focus remains on the co-coach’s development.

Resilience Building – Strategies aimed at enhancing the capacity to recover from setbacks, maintain well-being, and sustain performance under pressure.

Related terms: Self-Compassion, Growth Mindset.

Example: Introducing a brief “strengths reminder” at the start of each supervision to reinforce confidence.

Practical application: Develop a personal resilience plan that includes physical activity, mindfulness, and peer support.

Challenges: Over-reliance on resilience may mask systemic issues; burnout can undermine efforts.

Self-Compassion – Treating oneself with the same kindness, concern, and support one would offer a good friend, especially in moments of failure or inadequacy.

Related terms: Imposter Syndrome, Self-Awareness.

Example: When a supervisor feels they “failed” to challenge a co-coach, they acknowledge the difficulty and remind themselves of past successes.

Practical application: Use the “3-fold self-compassion” exercise (self-kindness, common humanity, mindfulness) after each challenging session.

Challenges: Cultural norms that prize self-criticism; difficulty shifting from entrenched negative self-talk.

Self-Efficacy – Belief in one’s capacity to execute behaviours necessary to achieve specific performance outcomes.

Related terms: Confidence, Growth Mindset.

Example: A supervisor feels capable of facilitating a difficult ethics discussion because of prior successful experiences.

Practical application: Record mastery experiences in a portfolio to reinforce self-efficacy when facing new challenges.

Challenges: Over-confidence may lead to insufficient preparation; under-confidence can inhibit necessary risk-taking.

Self-Regulation – The ability to monitor, control, and adapt one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviours to meet situational demands.

Related terms: Meta-Cognition, Emotional Intelligence.

Example: Recognising the rise of frustration during a session and deliberately choosing a calming breathing technique.

Practical application: Implement a “pause-reflect-respond” habit before reacting to strong emotions.

Challenges: Habitual automatic responses; lack of awareness of physiological cues.

Self-Reflection – The purposeful examination of one’s own thoughts, feelings, actions, and underlying motivations to gain insight and promote growth.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Meta-Cognition.

Example: After a supervision, a supervisor asks, “What part of my own agenda influenced the feedback I gave?”

Practical application: Use the “5 Whys” technique to dig deeper into surface-level observations.

Challenges: May become an intellectual exercise without emotional depth; risk of self-justification.

Self-Talk – The internal dialogue that shapes perception, confidence, and behaviour; can be positive (affirming) or negative (critical).

Related terms: Self-Compassion, Imposter Syndrome.

Example: “I always mess up when I’m asked to give critical feedback” versus “I can learn to give constructive feedback effectively.”

Practical application: Record recurring negative self-talk patterns and replace them with evidence-based counter-statements.

Challenges: Automatic nature makes it hard to intercept; cultural tendencies that normalise self-critique.

Shadow Coaching – Observing a coaching session (live or recorded) without active participation, used to gain insights into the co-coach’s style and areas for development.

Related terms: Observational Learning, Reflective Practice.

Example: A supervisor watches a co-coach’s client session, noting moments of missed listening cues.

Practical application: Schedule regular shadowing sessions and provide structured feedback using a rubric.

Challenges: Ethical considerations around client consent; potential for over-analysis leading to paralysis.

Situational Awareness – The perception of environmental elements, understanding their meaning, and projecting future status to inform appropriate action.

Related terms: Presence, Attunement.

Example: Detecting a co-coach’s subtle body language shift indicating discomfort before they verbalise it.

Practical application: Conduct a quick “environment scan” before each supervision to note physical and relational cues.

Challenges: Cognitive overload; personal stress can narrow awareness.

Skill Transfer – The ability to apply learned competencies from one context (e.g., supervision) to another (e.g., client coaching).

Related terms: Learning Agility, Deliberate Practice.

Example: Using the “SBI” feedback model taught in supervision when giving feedback to a client.

Practical application: After each supervision, identify one skill to intentionally use in the next client session.

Challenges: Contextual differences may require adaptation; forgetting to apply new skills without prompts.

Social Learning Theory – The concept that people acquire new behaviours by observing, imitating, and modelling others, especially authority figures.

Related terms: Observational Learning, Modeling.

Example: A co-coach adopts a supervisor’s reflective questioning style after repeatedly witnessing its effectiveness.

Practical application: Demonstrate desired behaviours deliberately during supervision to facilitate modeling.

Challenges: If the supervisor models poor habits, they may be reinforced; cultural differences affect what is deemed appropriate to imitate.

Strengths-Based Supervision – An approach that focuses on identifying, cultivating, and leveraging a co-coach’s existing competencies rather than merely correcting deficits.

Related terms: Positive Psychology, Growth Mindset.

Example: Highlighting a co-coach’s skill in building rapport and exploring how that strength can support handling difficult conversations.

Practical application: Use a “strengths inventory” at the start of each supervision cycle and revisit it regularly.

Challenges: Balancing strengths focus with necessary development of weaker areas; risk of overlooking critical blind spots.

Supervision Contract – A written agreement that outlines the purpose, scope, responsibilities, confidentiality, and evaluation criteria for the supervisory relationship.

Related terms: Professional Boundaries, Ethics.

Example: The contract specifies that session recordings are for reflective purposes only and will be destroyed after review.

Practical application: Review the contract together at the midpoint of the supervision period to adjust as needed.

Challenges: Negotiating expectations; ensuring both parties feel the contract is equitable.

Socratic Questioning – A disciplined method of inquiry that encourages deep thinking through open-ended, probing questions, avoiding leading or judgemental language.

Related terms: Reflective Practice, Coaching Skills.

Example: Asking “What evidence supports your belief that the client is resistant?” instead of stating “You’re assuming resistance.”

Practical application: Maintain a list of Socratic question starters (e.g., “What would happen if...?”) to draw upon during supervision.

Challenges: May be perceived as interrogative; requires skill to balance curiosity with support.

Systems Thinking – An approach that views individuals, teams, and organisations as interdependent components of a larger whole, emphasizing patterns and relationships over isolated events.

Related terms: Contextual Awareness, Complexity.

Example: Understanding how organisational culture influences a co-coach's client engagement strategies.

Practical application: Map out a simple system diagram of influences (e.g., client, supervisor, organisational policy) when analysing a coaching challenge.

Challenges: Tendency to over-complicate; difficulty isolating actionable interventions.

Therapeutic Alliance – The collaborative partnership between coach and client, characterised by mutual trust, agreement on goals, and emotional bond; its quality influences outcomes.

Related terms: Coaching Presence, Empathy.

Example: A supervisor helps a co-coach strengthen the alliance by practising validation techniques.

Practical application: Use a brief alliance rating scale after each client session to gauge co-coach effectiveness.

Challenges: May be conflated with friendship; cultural differences affect expression of alliance.

Triadic Supervision – A supervisory model involving three participants (e.g., supervisor, co-coach, and a peer) who share perspectives, fostering richer feedback and collaborative learning.

Related terms: Peer Supervision, Co-Supervision.

Example: A triad meets monthly, each taking turns to present a case and receive feedback from the other two.

Practical application: Rotate facilitation roles to develop leadership skills within the triad.

Challenges: Scheduling complexity; ensuring balanced contribution from all members.

Values Clarification – The process of identifying, articulating, and aligning personal and professional values to guide decision-making and behaviour.

Related terms: Self-Awareness, Authenticity.

Example: A supervisor discovers that "integrity" is a core value and uses it to navigate a conflict of interest.

Practical application: Complete a values inventory and revisit it periodically to assess alignment with practice.

Challenges: Hidden or conflicting values may surface; pressure to compromise values in organisational contexts.

Vicarious Learning – Acquiring knowledge and skills by observing the experiences, successes, and mistakes of others, without direct personal involvement.

Related terms: Observational Learning, Social Learning Theory.

Example: Learning how to handle a client's resistance by watching a senior coach navigate a similar situation.

Practical application: Maintain a "learning log" that records insights gained from observing peers or mentors.

Challenges: Over-generalising from observed cases; failing to adapt insights to one's own style.

Visionary Coaching – A forward-looking approach that assists co-coaches in articulating and pursuing aspirational goals, linking present actions to future impact.

Related terms: Goal Setting, Growth Mindset.

Example: Guiding a co-coach to develop a five-year plan for expanding their coaching practice aligned with personal purpose.

Practical application: Use a "future-self" exercise during supervision to spark imaginative goal formulation.

Challenges: Balancing visionary ambition with realistic constraints; avoiding overly abstract discussions.

Whole-Person Supervision – An integrative approach that acknowledges the co-coach's professional, emotional, relational, and physical dimensions, promoting holistic development.

Related terms: Self-Compassion, Resilience Building.

Example: Discussing how sleep quality impacts a co-coach's session energy and exploring strategies for improvement.

Practical application: Include a brief "well-being check-in" at the start of each supervision session.

Challenges: Boundary concerns about delving into personal life; time limitations within supervision contracts.

Zoom Fatigue – The mental exhaustion resulting from prolonged virtual meetings, characterized by reduced concentration, eye strain, and emotional drain.

Related terms: Digital Presence, Self-Regulation.

Example: A supervisor notices decreasing attentiveness after three consecutive video-based supervision sessions.

Practical application: Incorporate short "camera-off" breaks and encourage physical movement between virtual meetings.

Challenges: Remote work norms may increase reliance on video; expectation to be constantly available.