

Thought Piece

What do we mean by the term CSA coaching “supervision” and CSA Leadership “super-Vision™”?

An Ongoing Conversation

By Elaine Patterson



Introduction

This paper defines what CSA means when we talk of supervision for coaches, leaders and people professionals; and is offered in the spirit of shared exploration and discussion.

We enter the minefield with trepidation aware as the old adage says “one person’s meat is another’s poison” whilst remaining clear that we also want to clarify the ground on which we at CSA stand and what we mean by CSA super-Vision™.

Context

Our move into this territory is in response to the turbulence, complexity and uncertainty which leaders now report is the new norm of their daily working lives; and a sense that the riches of supervision has much to offer leaders and people professionals everywhere both survive and thrive.

A selection of the statistics tell their own story:

- 58% of new executives fail within 18 months of taking up post (Source: HBR Study, 2003)
- 89% of new employees admit that they do not have the full set of skills or knowledge to do their jobs (Source: Corporate Executive Board, 2005)
- Only 30% of CEO’s are confident that they have the talent needed to grow their organization in the near future (PWC Key Trends in Human Capital Management, 2012)

- Worldwide only 13% of employees are actively engaged (Source: HBR: State of the Global Workplace 5th November 2013). The majority of employees are either not engaged or disengaged
- 2/3rds of employees admit they feel overwhelmed at work (Source: 2014 Deloitte's Global Human Trends)
- 70% of employees surveyed reported that they do not regular time for creative or strategic thinking time (Source: 2014 Schwartz & Porath "Why you hate work")
- A 50% overuse of our planet's resources to sustain our current levels of consumption (Source: Scharmer and Kauffman, 2013)
- The poorest 40% of the world's population accounts for 5% of global income. The richest 20 % accounts for 75% of the world's income. (Source: 2007 Human Development Report United Nations Development Report)

Background

We are very aware at CSA that we are working in a developing market within a widening community of helping professionals. We believe that there is room for every contribution; and this paper is offered as part of a series of ongoing conversations with clients, practitioners, professional bodies, industry and society to define what is needed by whom, from whom, when and where - when in reality only the client can decide. In using words to draw out definitions we already lose the spirit of our work. But it seems that there is much shared ground with subtle differences in emphasis which must be celebrated and encouraged, as we engage with others in what is needed.

An Historical Perspective

Coaching is the relatively new arrival within the broader community of the helping professions; and to date supervision has largely been confined to practitioners working as helping professionals or in education (and excluding the various forms of managerial or clinical supervision discussion here). Supervision has not really strayed outside these confines but its riches have much to offer the work of leaders, their Boards and anyone working in the people professionals arena.

Schon (1984) popularized the value of reflective learning and reflective practices for all professionals when faced with the messiness of working with other human beings in the real world, where we tack into the unknown. This is the territory beyond pure technical competence or technical expertise where there is rarely a clear cut or right or a wrong answer.

Taking the long view, it seems that all forms of coaching are maturing with increasing professionalization and an increasingly robust academic and research base proving efficacy, effectiveness and returns on investment despite the economic downturn. All forms of supervision are coming of age - we now have three PhD's in coaching supervision. But the context and external environment within which we are working is rapidly changing and with that, we as helping professionals also need to change.

This paper respectfully focuses the discussion on the similarities and subtle differences between what is currently defined as counseling, personal/life coaching, executive coaching, mentoring and supervision. Team or group coaching is not included for discussion in this paper.

Naming the Similarities

It appears that counseling, personal/life coaching, executive coaching, mentoring and supervision share many similarities.

The key similarities appear to be generally that:

- The relationship is voluntary
- The relationship is underpinned by some form of contract between the two parties based on trust and is bounded by strict confidentiality rules
- Practitioners are trained, are responsible for their own CPD and can be accredited
- Practitioners work to a clear code of professional ethics and conduct
- Practitioners are invited to be in some form of supervision of their work
- Practitioners carry professional indemnity
- The work takes place in the relationship and through the conversation between the client and the practitioner
- The focus is on learning, development and change

Naming the Differences

Each of the respective professional bodies provide their own definitions of their work on their own websites. There is a lot of overlap but also differences in emphasis. For clarity these definitions are given in the Appendix. We are also very aware that individual practitioners are also invited to define their own offer and brand within the broad definition offered by their respective umbrella profession. It must also be acknowledged that practitioners may belong to more than one professional organization. This is to be welcomed as it offers huge diversity and extensive choices to potential clients.

For us at CSA, the differences might lie in understanding the primary purpose of focus of the work from an energetic perspective, as well as a sense of space, place and time.

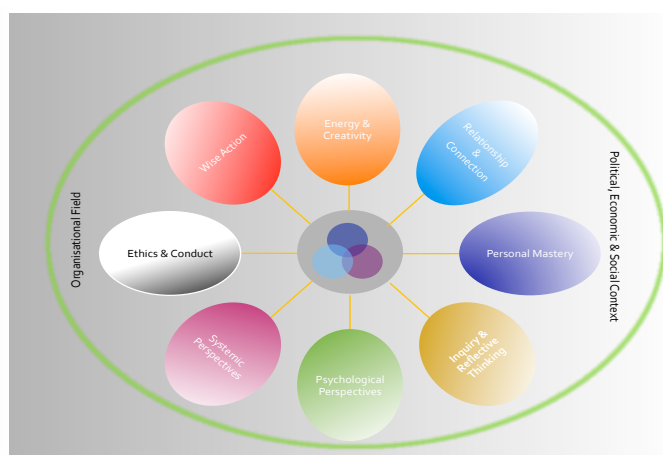
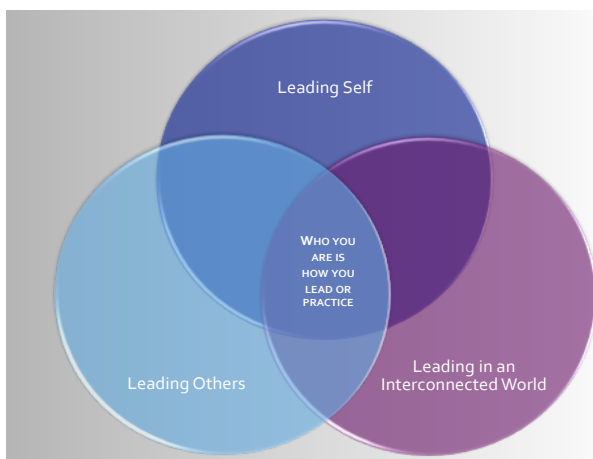
CSA therefore offers a definition of therapy and counselling as looking backwards to the past to understand the energetic impact of the past and how this might be affecting clients in the present (rather than in the future). CSA sees both 1:1 coaching, mentoring and coaching supervision as energetically working in the present looking towards the future (whilst holding in awareness and possibly helping to reframe the impact of what may be held in the past which might be affecting the present and influencing the future). Both usually work in the here and now and look towards the future. However, CSA sees the difference between coaching and mentoring and supervision as being in subtleties of emphasis in the primary intention of the work and how and to what attention is paid. The difference may be best expressed in the spaciousness for inquiry, exploration and discovery, which is typically possible.

This means that for 1:1 executive coaching it may be argued that the primary intention is enabling the client to develop and optimize themselves and their performance in the service of the organization's purpose and goals, from which personal growth, wellbeing and success might ensue. The focus of attention is primarily on the individual in their work context although personal, professional and life exploration is also welcomed. Executive coaching may more typically be specifically targeted operating within a tighter timeframe than mentoring which typically may take a longer view with a more generalized purpose.

CSA was founded in 2001 to extend the range of coaching supervision options to coaches. For 1:1 coaching supervision CSA sees the primary focus as being on the person or practitioner who practices (or does the work) which is explored through the lenses of the “Full Spectrum Model”. The primary intention of the work is seen as an exploration of the intimate relationship between “who you are” and “how you coach, supervise, or work” (Murdoch & Arnold (ed) 2013). On its website, CSA defines its coaching supervision as (Murdoch in 2012):

“When I hire a coach supervisor, I want someone who will walk with me, and create a reflective space in which I can become curious about all aspects of my work. One way of describing what coaching supervision does is to think of it as a process of Reflection, Insight and Support. Supervision enhances ‘seeing’ – the seeing into one’s practice, the illumination of subtle processes in coaching conversations and of blind spots in oneself and in one’s thinking. Super-vision is then something that I, the coach, take away with me – an enhanced view, a super-vision of my practice.’ ‘Reflection and Insight’ point to the range of learning which emerges as a result of sustained, supervisory focus on a piece of coaching or on a particular aspect of the coach’s current style. The ‘Support’ of coaching supervision is often overlooked; coaches in supervision regularly comment on the level of relief they experience because they have a safe, reflective space in which to explore their work”

CSA now aims to develop CSA Leadership super-Vision™ as a distinctive practice which is being developed in consultation with many leaders, super-Visors and coaches about what is needed. In essence CSA sees leadership super-Vision as grounded in the maxim “WHO you are” and “WHO you are becoming” is “HOW you lead”. The focus is on developing the person who is also the leader or practitioner. Leadership super-Vision is seen as helicoptering above but also embedded in and working in all of life’s living relational, conversational, thinking and learning energy fields. A Full Spectrum Map called the “Living Fields of Leadership” offers the lenses for exploration to help frame the core relational and conversational processes, which underpin the work (Patterson, Murdoch and Orriss, 2014). Learning to lead is understood as first and foremost a radical act of learning to lead self because the self is always present. And in order to relate and connect with others leaders must first learn to relate and connect with themselves.



However, in this we are also keen to acknowledge that some of the best coaches achieving deep transformational change may be working in a supervisory way as we define it. Our aim is to raise the bar and bring what we see as the riches of CSA supervision to a much wider audience of leaders and coaches and supervisors who are working with leaders to successfully lead in today's VUCA world (Johansen 2012). And there is much to do: in a PWC Trends in Human Capital Report only 30% of CEO's were confident that they had the talent to grow their organization in the near future. Only 15% of leaders sampled by Torbert, Rooke and Fisher in 2000 showed a consistent capacity to innovate and successfully transform their organizations.

What makes CSA's coaching supervision and leadership super-Vision™ distinctive?

What makes CSA coaching supervision and leadership super-Vision™ different is the energetic and relational grounding from which we work.

At a deep philosophical level our work is grounded in the natural energetic principles of the universe, in psychology and in quantum physics. Our work pays attention to the subtleties of relationship and dialogue which are so significant in every business or professional transaction.

As O'Brien the CEO of Hanover says (quoted in Scharmer 2013)

"The success of any intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor"

Our presence and the energy we are transmitting infuses who we are, and the relationships which we have built through the conversations we have with others and with our wide world.

CSA's practice is therefore underpinned and made distinctive by the following principles which are brought alive in the "Full Spectrum Model for Coaching Supervision" for coaching supervisors or in the "Living Fields of Leadership Map" for leaders and people professionals. These models and maps uniquely integrate the latest thinking and research on leadership and human development including mindfulness, psychological mindedness, relational dynamics, dialogue practices, quantum physics, systems thinking, consciousness, learning and change with inspiration from the arts, poetry and music to unlock people's natural wisdom and ways of knowing. These principles are then underpinned by key core competencies, capabilities and skills, which are taught and shared on our training and development programmes.

CSA's underpinning principles are:

- The focus is on establishing and developing the energetic magnetic heart to heart connection to unlock the natural intelligence of the heart, mind, body and soul to serve the inquiry. The connection is grounded in the sense of our shared humanity, what it means to be human and what it means to be with self, others and active in the world. The focus is on joining the client as fellow human being on their journey towards becoming all of "WHO" they are in their life and work. The work is invitational, based on a deep honoring and respect of the client and what they bring to the work.
- The work is grounded in a rich contemplative reflective stance. This gives a unique space and a reflective spaciousness for the client to be seen, heard and witnessed; to be uniquely themselves which will enable them to help others become uniquely themselves.

- The focus of the work is on making sense in order to make meaning out of experience for elegant action. The focus is on inviting in the hidden, emergent or not yet known. The client is held safely in a place of it being OK not to know trusting that the seeds of the future already exist in the presence if we come to know “WHO we are” and know HOW to pay attention
- The super-Visor works intelligently, creatively and skillfully from their knowledge, experience, training and intuition in service of what is needed. Questioning and challenge to the client is offered without a sense of right or wrong answers and without the ego of the super-Visor coming into play. The work is grounded in the unconditional acceptance for another human being seeking to become all of who they are (and not from fear, attachment or competitiveness). The super-Visor’s role modeling enables the client to develop or enhance new capacities and capabilities for their work and life. The proven approach is holistic, integrative, appreciative and generative from which profound learning and deep transformational change can spring.

Summary

In reality leaders and practitioners need a variety of supports to enable them to become their best.

There is room for every approach as we conclude with a David Whyte poem called “Loaves and Fishes” (2007)

*This is not
the age of information.*

*This is **not**
the age of information.*

*Forget the news,
and the radio,
and the blurred screen.*

*This is the time
of loaves
and fishes.*

*People are hungry,
and one good word is bread
for a thousand.*

Your thoughts and feedback are welcomed. Please email Elaine at elaine@coachingsupervisionacademy.com to continue the conversation.

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Appendix

<p>Counselling Source: From the BACP website</p>	<p><i>“individuals coming to therapy primarily because they may be experiencing difficulty or distress in their lives. That it is primarily but not exclusively focusing on understanding the stories of the past to understand reactions in the present and design new strategies for living... and is primarily focusing on life, personal, family or relationship issues or life events like trauma, divorce or bereavement..... or [when the individual] could be experiencing underlying dissatisfaction in life or be seeking balance in your life and spirituality..... with the purpose to bring about effective change or improvement in wellbeing”</i></p>
<p>Personal/ Life Coaching Source: AC website quoting Grant (2000)</p>	<p><i>“A collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee.”</i></p>
<p>Coaching</p>	<p><i>“Coaching and Mentoring are developmental activities within relationships based on trust and established through conversations. These activities aim to develop the personal or professional competencies of the client. The focus is on the individual or the team and the resources and solutions they generate for their specific personal or professional context”</i> Source: EMCC website</p> <p><i>“Coaching or "coaching" refers to a one-to-one developmental relationship with clearly focused aims related to the clients' effectiveness in a particular role in the sponsoring organization”</i> Source: APECS website</p> <p><i>“Professional Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life”.</i> Source: ICF website</p>
<p>Executive Coaching Source: AC website quoting Grant (2000)</p>	<p><i>“As for personal coaching, but it is specifically focused at senior management level where there is an expectation for the coach to feel as comfortable exploring business related topics, as personal development topics with the client in order to improve their personal performance”</i></p>
<p>Coaching Supervision</p>	<p><i>“The purpose of coach supervision is to support the coach's ("the supervisee's") professional, personal and coaching practice's health and wellbeing. In doing so, it is to ensure that the clients of the supervisee are also well supported and receive the best possible coaching experience”.</i> Source: CF UK Chapter</p>

“The EMCC Code refers to a supervisor assessing competence and supporting development. A more detailed way of defining the nature of supervision can be based on an idea by Proctor (1986) of its purpose as normative, formative and restorative”

Source: EMCC website

““Supervision” or “Supervisor” refers to the relationship between the coach and a qualified person who is not in any managerial relationship with the coach wherein the coaching work with particular clients may be discussed in strict confidence with the purpose of enhancing the quality of the coaching work and of ensuring client safety”.

Source: APECS website