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1. Purpose

The aim of this supervision document is to outline the COMENSA policy, recommending supervision for all COMENSA members, but making it compulsory for all credentialed coaches and mentors.

2. Scope

This document aims to provide members with the necessary information to answer questions about supervision. It will enable them to consider what supervision is, how to use it and what value it offers. It will help members make informed decisions about their engagement with a supervisor.

3. Reference

This document is an adaptation of the 2018/2019 and the 2020 documents and is aligned to the latest framework provided by the Board. The process of applying to become a COMENSA registered coaching and / mentoring supervisor is outlined in a separate document (Guidelines for Application to become a COMENSA-registered supervisor).

4. COMENSA's Definition of Supervision

Supervision for coaches and mentors provides a formal space for reflective practice in which a qualified supervisor and supervisee engage in dialogue. It is focused on supervisees' coaching and mentoring practices, for the purposes of their professional and personal development, so that their clients receive the best possible coaching and mentoring.

Supervision may take on different forms such as one-to-one and one-to-a-group. Duration and frequency of supervision sessions may also differ. The form of supervision will depend on the needs of the coach. This in turn will be determined by the context and the purpose of the supervision and by the developmental needs of the coach.

The goals of supervision are the following:

- a. To provide a space in which the coach can learn and maintain professional standards, develop theoretical and practical acumen, and get psychological support
- b. To provide a learning environment so that the coach can reflect on their coaching practice and assess the extent to which they are meeting the needs of their clients
- c. To raise awareness of the coach's own reactions and responses to the client
- d. To help understand the dynamics of how the coach, the client and (where relevant) the organization/sponsor are interacting
- e. To challenge the coach's interventions and practice in a supportive and educative environment
- f. To develop new approaches and explore other ways of working within client situations
- g. To ensure that high standards of ethics are maintained

5. Responsibilities

- a. The Supervision Portfolio committee, SPC, is established by the Board to administer, promote and support supervision for coaches and mentors on behalf of COMENSA
- b. The SPC is responsible for ensuring that supervision is made available to COMENSA members by COMENSA registered supervisors and other qualified supervisors

6. Principles

- a. COMENSA recommends monthly supervision (group or individual) for all its members. This regular supervision is regarded as necessary to remain fit for practice, irrespective of hours of coaching or mentoring; to maintain professional development and quality standards of practice
- b. For credentialed coaches and mentors, supervision is compulsory and is a requirement for part of the CPD allocation. A minimum of four sessions of supervision are required per annum.
- c. The COMENSA Code of Ethics advocates supervision in accordance with the supervision policy. The supervisor will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality referred to in this Code, but note the exclusions concerned with “harm to self, harm to others, organized crime and money laundering”. (See Annexure A Behavioural Standards of Supervisors)

7. Procedures

a. Procedure for coaches to claim CPD points for supervision

- i. COMENSA credentialed members can submit their CPD claims by entering a record of each supervision event on their CPD profile on the COMENSA website, or maintain their own supervision log that will be submitted when requested.

8. COMENSA-Registered Supervisors

- a. The SPC has as one of its tasks the building of a group of COMENSA-registered supervisors.
- b. The SPC allocates portfolios to its members as appropriate, one of which is the Supervision Registration Coordinator, through whom applications for registering as supervisors are evaluated and administered.
- c. The guidelines for applying to become a COMENSA-registered supervisor are outlined in a separate policy document.

9. Outcomes

The successful implementation of this supervision policy will result in a growing adoption of supervision as standard practice for all COMENSA members, high standards of supervision, a growing list of trained and skilled registered supervisors and an ever-increasing quality of coaching and mentoring provided by COMENSA coaches and mentors.

Annexure A: Behavioural standards of coach / mentor supervisors

Throughout the supervisory relationship the supervisor should demonstrate:

- integrity, rapport and flexibility
- a co-creative approach and a non-judgmental, humble and non-competitive stance
- a meta-perspective to include systemic issues while holding the big picture in mind
- respect for and an ability to work with individual and cross-cultural diversity
- the ability to appreciate and integrate complexity
- transparency in their area of orientation and possible limitations

With these behavioural standards, the supervisor's role includes the following:

Facilitates the process

- Creates clear contracts and renegotiates as required
- Is able to explain what supervision is, and provide the conditions for maintaining the ethical and holding space
- Ensures an effective working alliance built on trust and collaboration
- Agrees outcomes and establishes processes to evaluate effectiveness
- Monitors and evaluates the supervisory process
- Chooses and applies appropriate models of supervision

Ensures ethical and professional behaviours for the benefit of the coach / mentor's clients

- Encourages high standards of coaching / mentoring professionalism, including understanding and adherence to an ethical code of appropriate professional bodies
- Explores the coach / mentor's understanding of ethical and boundary issues
- Works with the coach / mentor to identify boundary issues in relation to specific contexts and techniques, and so raise the coach / mentor's awareness of their duty of care to the client
- Intervenes appropriately and suggests referral where ethical issues are at stake
- Is able to identify and deal with issues of transference and other behaviours which may impact their own and their clients' perceptions and/ or judgments

Supports the wellbeing of the coach / mentor

- Builds confidence in the coach / mentor to address their blind spots
- Enables the coach / mentor to work on difficulties when coaching or mentoring, is "stuck" or in managing conflict situations
- Identifies and intervenes when the coach / mentor is at risk, e.g. isolation, burnout or out of depth
- Builds conscious competence and expanded learning
- Celebrates success

Facilitates reflection, learning and development of the coach / mentor

- Challenges the coach / mentor to consider how their own thoughts, beliefs and perspectives influence their work
- Builds skills of reflection and enables the coach / mentor to develop awareness, insight and identify patterns of thinking, behaving and practice
- Provides feedback, challenges appropriately, and is sensitive to the developmental stage of the coach / mentor
- Encourages creativity and experimentation
- Works with the parallel process and enables the coach/ mentor to do the same
- Enables the coach / mentor to have new perspectives, systemic and cultural awareness

Demonstrates psychological mindedness

- Is able to articulate and demonstrate the principles and philosophies of human psychology that underpin their practice
- Has a highly developed awareness of the origin and purpose of their chosen course of action with their coach / mentor. In any recording, this will be evident “in the moment” and/or in their reflection
- With an open and humble mind-set, has a continuing curiosity about how their supervision may be stretched and enhanced
- Encourages coaches / mentors to reflect on not only what they did, but what they did not do, and why, thus encouraging coaches / mentors to consider whether they might have chosen to do things differently and where it might have taken them and their client had they done so
- Is able to observe their own feelings and responses to what is happening in a session, distinguishing what might ‘belong’ to whom and, where appropriate, to offer such insights to the coach / mentor to promote their understanding of what might be going on
- Responds constructively to the coach / mentor’s internal psychological tensions
- Appreciates and deals with complexity, accepts and manages uncertainty, and resists the need to always have a clear answer or solution

Demonstrates credibility as a coach and/or mentor

- Is able to role model coaching / mentoring and is able to demonstrate essential attributes and ways of being, e.g. reflective, client focused, collaborative
- Shares where appropriate their own knowledge and experience, and is able to explain how their reflections have informed and shaped their practice
- Has met the requirements for experience within the field

Enables value creation for clients and their stakeholders

- Provides perspectives of wider contexts, cultures, stakeholders, and systems
- Explores the coach /mentor's understanding of the client's wider context and enables the coach / mentor to consider how best to serve the client in the context of client's stakeholder needs, to honour and work with multi-party contracts
- Understands the context within which they are supervising and ensures that their work is aligned to supporting the coaches / mentors to achieve the objectives of the sponsor within such a context. This is to note that both the coach / mentor and the sponsor/organization are supervision "clients"

Supervisors who conduct group supervision will require:

Knowledge of group dynamics

- Demonstrates flexibility in style of facilitation of the group appropriate for the stage of group development
- Manages the behaviours of individuals within the group
- Raises awareness of group dynamics impacting on the group effectiveness and invites the group to explore them
- Identifies group dynamics, which may relate to the parallel process of the coach / mentor-client system

Competence in facilitation skills

- Creates a safe learning space for all group members
- Elicits the knowledge of the individual members or the group as a whole
- Works purposefully for the group members' mutual and collective benefit
- Holds the accountability for ensuring the time is used equitably amongst participants, whilst sharing responsibility with all those present