



# ICF Supervision Literature Review 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is an update on the state of coaching supervision for 2017. For a comparison to last year’s report, please see Tkach and DiGirolamo (2017). We examined a total of 16 academic and industry research articles on coaching supervision and five academic articles on clinical supervision published between 2016 and 2017. The research primarily focused on supervision models, theories, ethical dilemmas, or general discussions of coaching supervision. A few articles, examined specific elements of coaching supervision that shed light on supervision competencies, the efficacy of coaching supervision, and the current state of coaching supervision practices and adoption.

## ACADEMIC RESEARCH

### Supervision Competencies

An article by Falender and Shafranske (2017) discussed the need for competency models for clinical supervisors. The authors discuss the lack of agreement about whether supervisors should have a unique set of competencies that are distinct from clinical therapist competencies. Despite the existence of supervisor-specific training for clinical supervisors, large portions of the clinical supervisor population never received such training. Additionally, they argue that until there are widely accepted supervisor competencies, it will be difficult to measure and demonstrate the efficacy of supervision. “Competencies and supervision practice need to be interwoven, and in such a manner that leads to valid and reliable assessment of effectiveness anchored to observable clinical behaviours rather than subjective self-reports of supervision effectiveness or supervisee satisfaction” (p. 87). Coaching supervision suffers from the same difficulties.

### Value of Supervision

A study by Graßmann and Schermuly (2017) examined the relationships between coach neuroticism, self-report negative effects for coaches, self-report negative effects for clients, coach-report negative effects for clients (in other words, the coach’s perception of the negative effects a client may have been experiencing), and coaching supervision. Supervision seemed to weaken the relationship between a coach’s perception of negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches. Supervision also reduced the effects of coaches’ neuroticism. These findings should be considered with caution, given the small sample size. Despite this limitation, the study provides some evidence for the efficacy of the “resourcing” function (support) of supervision. However, the findings also suggest

that this function may benefit coaches with high neuroticism more than coaches with low neuroticism. Future research into the efficacy of coaching supervision should include measures of neuroticism in order to factor out this confounding variable.

### How Often Coaches Participate in Supervision

A few studies investigated how often coaches participated in supervision. Two studies provided enough statistical information to compare data. One study explicitly states that the participants were from Europe (Passmore, Brown, Csigás, & the European Coaching and Mentoring Research Consortium, 2017) while the other only suggests that the participants were mainly from Europe (de Haan, 2017). In order to compare the two studies, the de Haan data was transformed into the same format as the Passmore et al. data. Figure 1 is a graph of the transformed data. Note that both studies found similar rates of supervision.

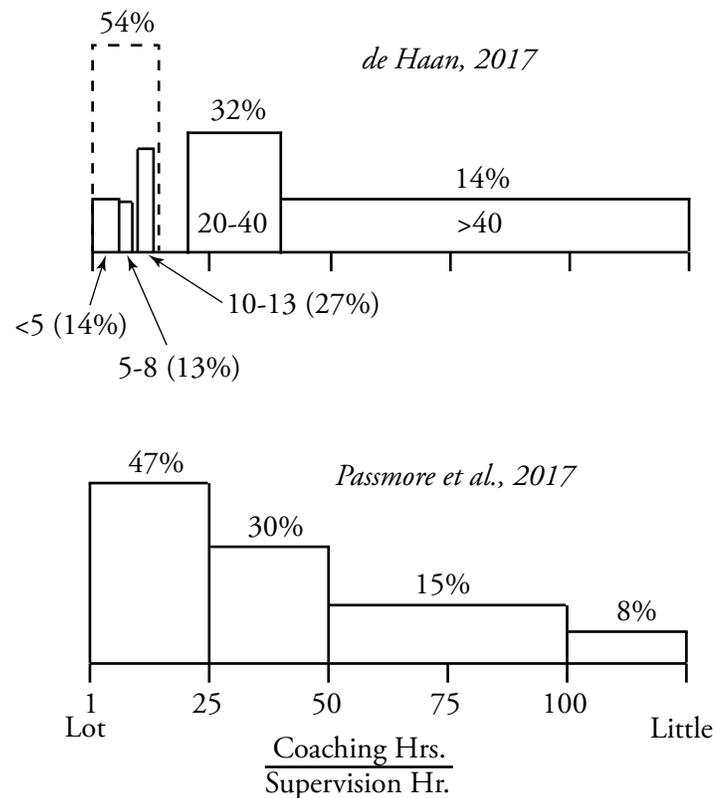


Figure 1: Ratio of Time Spent Coaching vs Time Spent in Supervision

From the data it's hard to determine whether or not coaches use less formal types of supervision, such as peer or group supervision.

## Comparison of Types and Frequency of Reflective Practices

Passmore et al. (2017) used a survey of 2,791 coaches and mentors from Europe to investigate how often they take time to reflect and the types of reflective practices coaches use. Forty-three percent of coaches reported engaging in 60-90 minutes of reflection per week, 25% engaged in less than 60 minutes, 20% reported spending 90-120 minutes, and the remaining 12% said they spend more than 120 minutes a week in reflection.

Coaches reported using a wide variety of reflection methods, the most popular being "self-reflection" (76% of coaches), followed by "reading coaching books" (66%) and "peer networks" (59%). "Formal supervision (with qualified supervisor)" fell to the middle of the list with 38% of coaches reporting its use. Please note that participants could choose multiple forms of reflective practice methods. From the data it's hard to determine whether or not coaches use less formal types of supervision, such as peer or group supervision. Given previous studies on the use of coaching supervision, it is likely that coaches do utilize these types of supervision (Hawkins & Turner, 2016).

## How Much Coaches Pay for Supervision

Passmore et al. (2017) also researched how much coaches pay per hour for reflective practice (which includes supervision). Because this population was from Europe the findings may not be generalizable to other regions of the world. Thirty-six percent expected it for free, 17% reported paying less than €50 per hour of reflective practice, 20% said they paid €51-€100 per hour, 18% paid €101-€199 per hour, 8% reported paying €200-€399 per hour, and the remaining 1% paid more than €400 per hour. Given that 36% said they expected this service for free, it is likely they are using informal types of supervision, such as peer to peer.

## CONCLUSIONS

Research on coaching supervision in 2017 has revealed one piece of evidence for the efficacy of the resourcing function (support) of coaching supervision (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017). More research should be done to confirm this finding. Despite this finding, research into the efficacy of coaching supervision may be stunted by a lack of agreed upon coaching supervision competencies as argued by Falender and Shafranske (2017). While these new findings on coaching supervision bring us closer to understanding the efficacy, competencies, and best practices for coaching supervision, the industry is still a long way from coming to a consensus about these issues.

Studies by de Haan (2017) and Passmore et al. (2017) shed further light on how coaching supervision is utilized in Europe. The findings suggest that informal and free types of supervision may be used frequently in Europe, perhaps more frequently than formal supervision from qualified supervisors. Research on the adoption of coaching supervision in other regions of the world should be conducted in order to compare with the current findings.

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