

Access Evidence No. 2, March 2017

# COACHING & MENTORING

for frontline practitioners

**Access Evidence** is a series of evidence reviews for front line practitioners working with children and young people.

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## Acknowledgements

The Centre for Effective Services (CES) would like to thank the following people who made important contributions to this publication: members of the AcCESs Evidence Practice Advisory Group, Carmel Brennan, Beth Cooney, Anne English, Eimear Gilchrist, Michelle Harris, Sarah Kelleher, Paul Marsden and Teresa Bennett) and Anne McMurray, for contributing to, and reviewing, earlier versions of this report and offering valuable feedback and guidance. In addition, it would like to thank other members of the CES AcCESs Evidence team: Nuala Doherty, Niamh Farren, Melanie Stone, Mary Rafferty, Aisling Sheehan, and Dearbhla Quinn.

This report should be cited as follows:

Morgan, M. and Rochford, S. (2017) *Coaching and Mentoring for Frontline Practitioners*. Centre for Effective Services, Dublin.

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ISBN: 978-0-9957189-0-6

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## Introduction

Support and development for front-line practitioners who work with children, young people and families has become increasingly important in recent years due to greater demands on services, and practitioners themselves. Professions such as teaching, nursing and social work in particular are experiencing issues with staff retention and burnout. The service delivery demands on front line practitioners can lead to neglect of their own professional and personal needs.

The use of coaching and mentoring as support and capacity building interventions for practitioners is growing. These are recognised as approaches which offer additional benefits to traditional training approaches.

There are similarities between the use of coaching and mentoring as professional development interventions, and the processes that front-line practitioners (who work with children, young people and families) use to achieve positive behavioural, cognitive and attitudinal change to improve outcomes. Coaching and mentoring offer an additional development methods to the professional supervision that practitioner groups (such as social workers, psychologists, speech and language therapists etc.) receive as part of their role. This evidence synthesis will highlight the core differences between coaching and mentoring as professional development interventions and show how they are distinct from other approaches such as supervision and traditional training approaches.

This evidence synthesis is based on an overview of the evidence on the use of coaching and mentoring in social work, and draws on a systematic review CES conducted for the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland in 2014.<sup>1</sup> It is focused specifically on the application of coaching and mentoring for professional development purposes to improve front-line service delivery and practitioner wellbeing. This shows that providing coaching and mentoring for front line practitioners can have a positive mediating impact on outcomes for the children, young people, families and communities who use these services.

## What is Coaching?

There is no single agreed definition of coaching in the literature. The term is often used interchangeably with mentoring and sometimes counselling. All of these approaches use 'helping' behaviours. **Coaching is distinct in that it is a collaborative helping relationship between a coach and coachee, which is focused on working in a systematic way towards agreed goals to enhance professional performance, foster ongoing self-directed learning, increase personal satisfaction and personal growth.**<sup>2</sup> In a work place context, there are typically three parties to a coaching agreement: the coach, coachee and their organisation. The coaching agreement (sometimes referred to as the contract) sets out the goals for the coaching. This directs the work between the coach and coachee. As a discipline, coaching draws from a number of areas of study including psychology, sports coaching and business.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Social Care Board (2014)

<sup>2</sup> Kilburg (1996), Grant and Stober (2006)

<sup>3</sup> Lane (2006)

Although the exact definitions of coaching offered in the literature vary, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, coaching is:<sup>4</sup>

- A **non-directive** form of development
- Focused on **work performance improvement** and related **skill development**
- Dually focuses on both the **individual** and the **organisation**
- Provides **feedback, raises awareness and** imbues personal responsibility for action
- A **skilled intervention** delivered by those trained in coaching skills.

The International Coach Federation definition of coaching is:

*'partnering with clients in a thought provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential'*<sup>5</sup>

Coaching for practitioners can focus on areas such as performance coaching (enhancing performance in a particular work role); leadership and personal development; new role induction; succession, interview preparation and career coaching (focused on capabilities and exploring career options).

There are a number of different typologies of coaching such as peer coaching, internal coaching, external coaching and 'leader as coach' coaching. Other typologies of coaching are based on the context, such as **life skills coaching**, **business coaching** and **executive coaching**, with the latter usually focused on leadership development. One of the most important points to note about coaching is that is inherently action and goal focused.

**Peer coaching** is carried out by colleagues at a similar level of ability and experience, where support and practice expertise can be shared one- to-one between the two parties or among a small group of peers in what is referred to as a 'community of coaching practice'.<sup>6</sup>

**Internal coaching** has become increasingly popular in large organisations who have trained an internal pool of coaches who are deployed to support staff learning and performance.

**Leader as Coach** is where coaching skills are seen as a necessary competence of line managers and included in management training programmes so that line managers/team leaders integrate a coaching style into their 'everyday' interactions with staff and teams.<sup>7</sup> A recent survey reported that 50% of coaching is carried out by line managers through day to day supervision, appraisal and on the job development.<sup>8</sup> Research indicates a coaching style of leadership from front line managers can have a significant positive impact on staff engagement.<sup>9</sup>

**External coaching** is typically offered to more senior levels in organisations and service settings.<sup>10</sup> This type of coaching tends to focus on strategic executive leadership development. External coaches at this level provide confidentiality for senior leaders to focus on their performance issues and access to an external perspective.

## What is Mentoring?

Mentoring typically involves two parties (a mentor and a mentee or protégé), a relationship (formal or informal), and the transfer of skills, knowledge and attitude with the objective of development

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<sup>4</sup> CIPD (2007)

<sup>5</sup> [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)

<sup>6</sup> Shams (2013)

<sup>7</sup> De Haan and Duckworth (2012)

<sup>8</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2011)

<sup>9</sup> MacLeod and Clarke (2009)

<sup>10</sup> Whybrow and Lancaster (2012)

and growth of the mentee.<sup>11</sup> It can be defined as ‘**offline help by one person or another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking**’.<sup>12</sup> The role of mentor is usually undertaken by someone in a more senior position than the mentee, with the aim of supporting the professional development of a less experienced mentee.

Some of the core characteristics of mentoring are:

- It can have **both personal and organisational focuses**.
- Provision of guidance, feedback and confidential discussion to raise self-awareness and develop potential.
- Focusses on **future career management and development** offering information and signposting.
- Outside of the line management relationship

Mentoring can be a formal matching arrangement, like coaching, or more informal and organic, such as when a mentee seeks out a mentor, a mentor seeks out a protégé or vice versa. There are different categories of mentoring according to the nature of the mentoring relationship, which include:

<b>One-on-one</b> mentoring where the mentor works with one mentee over a sustained period of time
<b>Team mentoring</b> is when one mentee has team mentors who meet collectively to provide mentorship to a mentee. This approach is helpful for eliciting multiple perspectives and availing of a more diverse skillset. Likewise, a mentee can have numerous mentors who he/she meets with individually.
<b>Peer mentoring</b> is another approach where colleagues, who are at similar stages in their career, mentor each other.
<b>Functional mentoring</b> is a more specific and structured type of mentoring relationship, to assist a mentee complete a particular project or assignment sometime as part of an educational or professional development programme. <sup>13</sup>

### What works in Coaching?

Models of coaching typically highlight the following as critical elements to the relationship: the quality of the relationship between coach and coachee, the need for reflection on practice and assessment and evaluation or assessment of progress.<sup>14</sup> Evidence indicates that it is not the model of coaching per se which is important for success, rather it is the nature of the coaching relationship.<sup>15</sup>

Two factors are important in the coaching relationship: the level of **trust** and the coachee’s **openness to introspection**.<sup>16</sup> This is supported by research which reported that outcomes of coaching are significantly related to the relationship with the coach, the self-efficacy of the coachee and the range of techniques used by the coach.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Bilesamni (2011)

<sup>12</sup> Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995)

<sup>13</sup> Thorndyke et al (2008)

<sup>14</sup> Augustijnen et al (2011), Dingman (2004)

<sup>15</sup> De Haan et al (2011)

<sup>16</sup> Augustijnen et al (2011)

<sup>17</sup> De Haan and Duckworth (2012)

Finally, further clarification and research about the exact nature of the factors that mediate the effectiveness of coaching is required according to a recent systematic review.<sup>18</sup>

A review of a range of approaches used in coaching in the fields of executive, personal and performance coaching concluded that there are seven common elements of effective coaching practice:

1. **The coaching relationship:** characterised by trust, direct communication, mutual commitment, support and collaboration.
2. **The coaching cycle and learning process:** Understanding coaching as a goal-oriented and person-centred, non-linear learning process.
3. **Feedback and evaluation of outcomes:** Using multiple methods to assess the effectiveness of coaching.
4. **Context, environment and organisational governance:** Paying attention to the whole context including governance arrangements.
5. **Essential coaching skills and techniques:** Developing coaching expertise through a combination of techniques, skills and capacities and maintaining these through ongoing development and supervision
6. **Qualities and attitudes of an effective coach:** Coaching as a dispositional aspect of being, thinking and feeling.
7. **Ethics in coaching practice:** Professionalism, confidentiality, consent and boundary management in coaching contracts which are embedded in the International Coaching Federation (ICF) coaching competences.

The last element is important and can be neglected when a coaching intervention is being implemented in an organisation. Complex ethical issues may arise for individuals in the coaching relationship, especially in front line services with high levels of risk such as those working with children, young people and families. As stated above, issues such as confidentiality, potential and actual conflicts of interest, professional standards, service user best interests, legislative requirements, and performance management issues can arise. Practitioners and coaches need sufficient clarity as to how these issues can be handled if they arise.<sup>19</sup> Internal and external coaches should receive regular supervision to help them in their role from both a wellbeing and quality assurance perspective<sup>20</sup>, which has been recommended by a number of professional coaching organisations such as the International Coach Federation (ICF).

Research indicates that individuals with lower self-acceptance are less likely to accept a professional coaching intervention.<sup>21</sup> In practice, this may mean that individuals in need of coaching, or those who are highly critical of themselves and their professional performance, may not seek it out or may even avoid coaching opportunities. This has important implications for the implementation of a coaching intervention in an organisation or front-line service setting. It is not recommended that coaching be introduced on a compulsory basis. The coaching agreement is coachee led and will not be effective if the coachee feels 'coerced' to participate. A compulsory approach will negatively impact on the 'coaching brand' in an organization. Coaching should be seen as a benefit which is targeted at developing people's potential rather than an intervention for 'failing' performers. In sport, it is accepted that elite athletes have a number of coaches and no high performing sports person achieves results without coaching.

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<sup>18</sup> Grover and Furnham (2016)

<sup>19</sup> Hannafey and Vitulano (2013)

<sup>20</sup> Moyes (2009)

<sup>21</sup> Ellam-Dyson and Palmer (2011)

## What works in Mentoring?

Determining 'what works' is complex since many mentoring relationships are informal, may last for a long period of time, and may be implicit i.e. individuals may be engaged in an informal mentoring relationship without this ever being explicitly stated.

However, similar to coaching, the evidence does indicate the core elements or processes which must be common in a mentoring relationship to make it effective. The most important elements that should be present in a mentoring relationship include:

1. A relationship between the mentor and mentee which is characterised by trust, empathy respect and confidentiality, and the sharing of experience and knowledge.
2. Establishment of clear professional development needs and a relationship which facilitates exploration of related goals and ambitions.
3. Effective communication skills of the mentor with the ability to actively listen to and supporting the mentee, but also challenge and question where necessary.

The evidence base also highlights a number of issues which should be considered in developing an effective, fit for purpose, mentoring relationship. Gender is a factor with research indicating that male mentors can be especially beneficial for female mentees who work in male dominated sectors<sup>22</sup>, and vice versa. Similarly, mentoring an individual who represents a 'minority' can be beneficial to accelerate their understanding of the cultural norms and expectations of behaviour. It is also crucial that the mentee has respect for the mentor and that there are effective and ongoing, open and honest communications between the two parties in the mentoring relationship.<sup>23</sup> Perceived supportiveness of the mentor is also important, with mentees often referring to the requirement for an effective mentor to be nurturing, caring and affirming.<sup>24</sup>

Trust and respect, while appearing to be rather nebulous concepts, are important in the mentoring relationship for a number of reasons. First and foremost because a mentoring relationship characterised by trust and respect is one where a mentee feels comfortable disclosing information and discussing challenges.<sup>25</sup> Related to trust and respect is empathy, with research indicating that individuals who are high on empathy are better able to foster the intimacy and trust that is crucial to the interpersonal dynamics in mentoring.<sup>26</sup> Empathy can result in a mentor who is more alert to mentees concerns and dilemmas as well as an ability to recognise feelings.

It is from the basis of trust and respect that the mentor can effectively challenge the mentee's mind-sets, conceptual paradigms and open up an exploration of new or different perspectives. The 'yes but' challenge is an important function of an effective mentor to develop the mentees thinking and understanding.

There is evidence to suggest that a match of personality between the mentor and mentee may contribute to success of the mentoring relationship. Some congruence is required in relation to shared beliefs and values, to enhance communication and understanding. At the very least, the mentor should have an appreciation of the mentees cultural background<sup>27</sup> and how that impacts on how they make sense and respond to their external world.

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<sup>22</sup> Dougherty *et al.* (2013)

<sup>23</sup> Finkelstein *et al.* (2012)

<sup>24</sup> Colbin and Ashman (2010)

<sup>25</sup> Bouquillon, Sosik and Lee (2005)

<sup>26</sup> Allen (2003)

<sup>27</sup> Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004)

## What difference does coaching make?

There is an extensive evidence base demonstrating the positive outcomes of coaching not just for practitioners, but also for performance in other areas such as sport and academics. The literature on this area is vast, and in line with the topic of this report, this section will focus on the use of coaching to support practitioners and in different organisational contexts.

Studies on senior management/executive coaching report that senior managers who are coached are more likely to set goals, consult with senior colleagues to aid organisational improvement, and have improved on-the-job performance.<sup>28</sup> Coaching interventions have also been reported to increase workplace wellbeing, reduce depression and stress, help staff deal with organisational change<sup>29</sup>, improve communication between staff<sup>30</sup> and improve competitiveness for organisations.<sup>31</sup> In educational settings peer coaching was found to improve self-regulation in university students<sup>32</sup>, and a comparison of two different coaching approaches found both resulted in significant improvements in self-efficacy, resilience and academic performance at 12 and 18 month follow up.<sup>33</sup>

Coaching is particularly beneficial for the improving implementation of new practices, programmes and other prescribed interventions in front line services, and this has been reported with practitioners working in community development<sup>34</sup>, early years<sup>35</sup>, health<sup>36</sup>, education<sup>37</sup>, social work,<sup>38</sup> youth justice,<sup>39</sup> youth work<sup>40</sup> and intellectual disability<sup>41</sup> settings. It can be a beneficial intervention to deliver in a service or organisation after initial training to support effective implementation, during that ‘awkward stage’ of initial implementation following exposure to training.<sup>42</sup> It is argued that the use of coaching improves implementation of new practices in organisations through providing a structured opportunity for practice, modelling and feedback of new skills learned.<sup>43</sup> It also helpful generally in improving practitioner confidence and leadership skills.<sup>44</sup>

The timing, duration and frequency of coaching sessions needs to be factored into day to day workloads of both the coachee and the internal coach. Participation in coaching must be supported by both parties management.<sup>45</sup>

Coaching is also helpful in supporting the consolidation and implementation of new learning from training. An oft-cited meta-analysis of research into teacher training in the USA found that the provision of coaching, following participation in a traditional training course, significantly improved the transmission of learning from training to the classroom.<sup>46</sup> Results showed that with training alone, 0% of teachers implemented their new skills in the classroom. When feedback was offered following training, implementation improved slightly (5%). However, the provision of coaching in the

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<sup>28</sup> Smither *et al.* (2003), Ellinger *et al.* (2011)

<sup>29</sup> Grant *et al.* (2009)

<sup>30</sup> O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013)

<sup>31</sup> Vidal-Salazar *et al.* (2012)

<sup>32</sup> Ashgar (2010)

<sup>33</sup> Franklin and Franklin (2012)

<sup>34</sup> Quinby *et al.* (2008)

<sup>35</sup> Neuman and Cunningham (2009)

<sup>36</sup> Hayes & Kalmakis (2007)

<sup>37</sup> Cappella *et al.* (2012)

<sup>38</sup> McCrae *et al.* (2014)

<sup>39</sup> Taxman *et al.* (2014)

<sup>40</sup> Fischer *et al.* (2011)

<sup>41</sup> Roeden, Maaskant, Bannink and Curfs (2012)

<sup>42</sup> NIRN (2016)

<sup>43</sup> Snyder *et al.* (2012)

<sup>44</sup> Fischer *et al.* (2011)

<sup>45</sup> Health and Social Care Board (2014)

<sup>46</sup> Joyce and Showers (2002)

classroom following training resulted in a dramatic improvement in implementation of new skills, with the majority of teachers (95%) demonstrating their new skills in classroom practice.

In considering the effect of coaching on organisations, the most frequent focus has been on the potential of coaching to enhance leadership behaviour, which is usually assessed by the ratings of workers, peers and managers. A number of robust studies have examined the impact of coaching on leadership behaviour in organisations, with results indicating that receipt of coaching can significantly improve executive leadership behaviour.<sup>47</sup>

### What difference does mentoring make?

There is substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of mentoring not only as a professional development intervention, but also as a targeted intervention for children and young people. In fact, mentoring is one of the most widely used approaches in promoting prevention of aggression and delinquency among youth, especially in the US where over 5,000 organisations offer some version of this approach.<sup>48</sup> A recent review of the research in this area concluded significant improvements in behaviour and even academic achievement as a result of youth mentoring.<sup>49</sup> The general processes underlying mentoring are the same, regardless of context, in that it involves one individual helping, guiding and offering assistance to another more junior individual. While youth mentoring usually takes place in the form of a more formalised programme, the strength of the evidence lends itself to considering the usefulness of this approach with other groups.

Mentoring for practitioners is increasingly being used in front line services in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. In Ireland, the Teaching Council (which regulates the teaching profession) has introduced a mentoring programme, *Droichead*, to support the induction of newly qualified teachers in their first year of practice. An initial pilot evaluation of the programme indicated a positive effect of the programme.<sup>50</sup> There is also a cross-border coaching and mentoring service for available for some staff in the Health Service Executive in Ireland and the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland, called *The Connect Network*. Mentoring assists knowledge transfer within an organisation<sup>51</sup> and is a useful as a targeted intervention to support staff during change, or when someone is newly promoted or is implementing a new innovation or applying evidence to practice.

The evidence indicates positive outcomes of mentoring for practitioners including career advancement, improved self-confidence, and the implementation of evidence in practice<sup>52</sup>, in addition to increased personal and professional satisfaction<sup>53</sup> and enthusiasm.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the lack of a mentor may be perceived as a barrier to career progression.<sup>55</sup> This is supported by a meta-analysis which concluded that the two factors integral to career success are working hard and having a professional mentor.<sup>56</sup> Mentoring offers a valuable opportunity for an individual practitioner to build and enhance their professional networks, as they can gain exposure to the contacts and 'social capital' of their mentor.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> McKie (2014), Perkins (2009)

<sup>48</sup> Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove and Nichols (2014)

<sup>49</sup> DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn and Valentine (2011)

<sup>50</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute (2016)

<sup>51</sup> Bryant and Terborg (2008)

<sup>52</sup> Melnyk (2007)

<sup>53</sup> Lee et al (2011)

<sup>54</sup> Richter et al. (2013)

<sup>55</sup> Melnyk (2007)

<sup>56</sup> Ng et al. (2005)

<sup>57</sup> Ragins and Kram (2007)

Mentoring can be used as a form of professional socialisation in helping new or graduate practitioners adapt to norms and expectations of the workplace and their profession.<sup>58</sup> Peer mentoring has been found to be helpful for front line practitioners with practitioner groups such as doctors, nurses and educators with outcomes such as increased productivity, enthusiasm and leadership reported.<sup>59</sup> Having equal levels of subject or sector specific knowledge is especially important in peer mentoring<sup>60</sup> where, as the name implies, the mentors do not have the added benefit of significantly more career experience than the mentee. It can also help the development of supervision skills.<sup>61</sup>

Mentoring initiatives can also help with staff retention<sup>62</sup> and succession planning.<sup>63</sup> Distance mentoring, or e-mentoring over e-mail or skype, can be beneficial for practitioners working in isolated settings, working non-social shift hours, in rural areas or who are geographically dispersed.<sup>64</sup> Mentoring can help improve feelings of organisational support reported by staff<sup>65</sup>, assist in managing stress for graduates<sup>66</sup>, and help prevent burnout,<sup>67</sup> which are also positive contributors to staff retention rates. This is supported by research reporting an association between a formal mentoring programme for nurses and greater group cohesion, which is in turn associated with better staff retention.<sup>68</sup> However, research with teachers indicates that formal mentoring programmes for new staff can be challenging when devised and imposed by an external agency. Mentoring may result in more satisfactory outcomes when the mentors themselves have had a major input into the design of the programme.<sup>69</sup>

The benefits of mentoring are not all one way. Mentors report positive outcomes for themselves such as increased professional satisfaction, feelings of reward and the opportunity for knowledge transfer with their mentee.<sup>70</sup> It also offers mentors a valuable opportunity for self-reflection regarding their own practice<sup>71</sup>, and the insights gained can help mentors themselves with their own career progression.<sup>72</sup>

However, it is important to note that mentoring can sometimes come at a cost to the mentor, not only in terms of time but also an emotional cost. For organisations considering implementing a formal mentoring initiative it is imperative that there are organisational-level monitoring measures in place, such as anonymous mentor feedback surveys, support systems such as mentor network meetings, to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place<sup>73</sup> and to support ongoing development.

Mentoring should sit outside the line management relationship as there is a potential tension between a development focus (mentor) and the operational accountability focus (line manager).

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<sup>58</sup> Wang and Odell (2002)

<sup>59</sup> Byrant and Teeborg (2008), Hu *et al.* (2008)

<sup>60</sup> McClean (2004)

<sup>61</sup> Blackman and Schmidt (2013)

<sup>62</sup> Smith and Ingersoll (2004)

<sup>63</sup> Clutterbuck (2004)

<sup>64</sup> Stewart and Carpenter (2009), Aira *et al.* (2010)

<sup>65</sup> Baranik *et al.* (2010)

<sup>66</sup> Beecroft *et al.* (2006)

<sup>67</sup> Babin *et al.* (2012)

<sup>68</sup> Wallen *et al.* (2010)

<sup>69</sup> Hobson, Ashby, Malderez and Tomlinson (2009)

<sup>70</sup> Eby *et al.* (2006), Strand and Bosco-Ruggiero (2009)

<sup>71</sup> Simpson, Hastings and Hill (2007)

<sup>72</sup> Tauer (1998)

<sup>73</sup> McGeorge and Stone-Carlson (2010)

A focus and attention on coaching and mentoring staff in an organisation can help cultivate a culture of ongoing professional development, which itself can have a positive impact on service delivery and standards.

### How are coaching and mentoring different to more traditional approaches to training?

Coaching and mentoring are often terms that are used interchangeably, however as professional development processes they are distinct and offer different benefits to traditional training methods. A systematic review of the literature in relation to coaching and mentoring and its application to social work practice highlighted some interesting contrasts with traditional training approaches:<sup>74</sup>

- Training tends to be generically designed for standardised delivery in a group setting;
- Coaching and mentoring are tailored developmental activities for the individual and their existing skillsets;
- Training is often delivered in an ‘off the job’ environment which is removed from the front-line practice context;
- Coaching can take place ‘live’ in the practice environment by a line manager;
- Training is usually a one off event whereas coaching and mentoring is carried out over time to help practitioners respond readily to new needs and challenges as and when they arise;
- Coaching and mentoring can support the application of new learning and skills acquired in formal training to the work place.

There are some important distinctions between the processes of coaching and mentoring themselves as set out in the table below<sup>75</sup> and a brief overview of the professional development interventions for frontline practitioners is available in the appendix.

Domain	Coaching	Mentoring
Level of Formality	Usually guided by some type of formal agreement between the coach and coachee and relationship	Tends to be more informal, more likely to happen organically as and when the mentee needs advice, guidance and support.
Timeframe	Offered over a set time period	Can be more long-term and developmental in nature.
Orientation	More concerned with the improvement of current on-the-job performance	Less concerned with current performance and more focused on future career development and aspirations
Focus	Dual focused – on the individual coachee and on specific development areas/issues <i>and</i> the wider organisation or service	More focused on the broader development of the individual mentee.
Experience required of coaches/mentors	Unless the focus of a coaching intervention is specific skill development, the coach does not necessarily have to come from the same practice area as the coachee. Coaches usually have a	Generally, the mentor should be in the same field as the mentee and have practice or sector specific knowledge relevant to the mentee.

<sup>74</sup> Health and Social Care Board (2014)

<sup>75</sup> Health and Social care Board (2014)

	skillset which is transferable across various sectors and areas of practice.	
<b>Seniority</b>	Coaches do not necessarily have to be in more senior position than the mentee, with having the requisite skills for coaching seen as more important.	In the practice arena, mentors are typically more senior than the mentee so they can pass on knowledge, experience and opportunities.

Coaching and mentoring are different to counselling and professional supervision – which they can sometimes be confused with.

Coaching is often confused with counselling – and there are important and distinct differences between the two.<sup>76</sup> Counselling is a psychosocial, therapeutic intervention which is focused on helping individuals understand and resolve or come to terms with psychological or emotional issues they may be experiencing. Coaching focuses on improving an individual’s performance and is a non-clinical professional development intervention. Coaching is not focused on resolving any underlying psychological problems. A coachee’s feelings, emotions and personal beliefs are likely to be explored in coaching if they impact on their ability to make progress in achieving their goals. The coach needs to be able to recognize when the coachee would benefit more from counselling or other therapeutic forms of help and signpost to appropriate support/s.

The distinction between a mentoring and supervision relationship lies in lines of accountability. Supervision is a formal requirement in many areas such as social work, psychology and other areas. Mentoring is an informal, developmental, helping relationship and it is important that the boundaries between the two are acknowledged.

Supervision, as provided to many front line practitioners working with children, young people and families, is concerned with professional governance and oversight. The aim is to ensure that an individual is carrying out the required task in an appropriate fashion. Of course many line managers provide supervision and in the course of doing so will ‘mentor’ those on their staff team by sharing their knowledge and experience. However the primary focus is on performance and quality issues, and the line manager has responsibility to address any deficits in how someone is carrying out their work through their supervision.

Mentoring, on the other hand, is an informal relationship between a mentor and mentee which, as stated above, is focused on the development of the individual rather than performance accountability. This highlights the need for trust and respect for each other’s role between the mentor and the mentee’s line manager to maintain boundaries and avoid collusion between the mentor and mentee.

### Practice Guidelines

The guidelines provide direction as to how coaching and mentoring may be appropriately utilised as well as the considerations in adopting their use:

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<sup>76</sup> Brefi Group (2016)

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## Appendix

### Professional development interventions for frontline practitioners

Intervention	Focus	When should it be introduced	Setting	Frequency	Who delivers it?	Challenges	Benefits/Outcomes
<b>Training</b>	Skills development/ Information on work tasks	-For new staff -In response to training need -To improve quality -To motivate staff	Group setting External environment	One off event or series of events	Skilled trainer	Implementing new skills Lack of feedback	New skills
<b>Management/ Supervision</b>	Quality/Performance	Required	One to one Workplace	Ongoing	Manager or supervisor		Quality of services for children and young people
<b>Counselling</b>	Personal support	For staff experiencing personal problems	One to one External environment	Offered over a set period	Counsellor		Personal benefits
<b>Coaching</b>	Short term 'on the job' performance.	To improve performance To support staff retention To help staff deal with change To improve communication To improve confidence To improve implementation of a practice/skill	One to one/group Internal environment	Offered over a set period	Internal or external – does not have to be senior, can come from a different field of practice	Additional workload/time required	-Increased confidence - implementation of new skills/practice -A learning culture
<b>Mentoring</b>	Longer term, developmental	To support staff retention -For new staff	One to one/group Internal or	Long term	Internal or external Senior role	Additional workload/time required	Increased confidence - implementation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To support career advancement</li> <li>-Succession planning</li> <li>-To improve confidence</li> <li>-To increase knowledge transfer</li> </ul>	external environment		with sector specific knowledge and contacts	Time/emotional cost of mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of new skills/practice</li> <li>-Increased networks</li> <li>- A learning culture</li> </ul>
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