

BOUNDARIES AND BEST PRACTICE

Adrian Myers and Tatiana Bachkirova

Introduction

This chapter considers the role of professional boundaries and best practice in coaching psychology. Professional boundaries describe the scope and limits of professional practices (Doel et al., 2010). The concept of Best Practice emerged in healthcare in the 1970s and 1980s (Nelson, 2014, p.1508) and is used to refer to a protocol or guidelines (e.g., “best practice guidelines”); equivalent or similar terms are evidence-based or clinical practice guidelines (Nelson 2014, p.1510). Boundaries and best practices are important in the field of coaching psychology not only in protecting the coachee and in ensuring the delivery of a professional service but also in safeguarding the provider of those services and the reputation of the practice.

This chapter will begin with an overview of the boundaries of coaching psychology practice and consider where the lines might be drawn between coaching psychology and related disciplines. This is important because it is not possible to state what a boundary transgression might be without first defining the scope of a professional practice. A discussion on how ethical principles are promoted in coaching psychology will follow. Managing ethical boundaries will then be considered, particularly in relation to counselling and psychotherapy where the transgression of boundaries presents a risk for coaching psychologists. A review of online working will follow as this is becoming increasingly common in coaching practice and raises challenging ethical issues. The importance of continued professional development and supervision will finally be considered as ways of helping coaching psychologists and coaches drawing on coaching psychology to work ethically and effectively within professional boundaries on an on-going basis.

References to best practices will be considered as an integral part of the chapter as best practices are relevant not only to maintaining high ethical standards but also in order to provide an effective service. While many references will be made to the British Psychological Society and the UK, these references are intended to be illustrative of the principles and practices which can be achieved in other nations already promoting or aspiring to promote coaching psychology. Practices in other countries will however also be highlighted. Similarly, while this chapter is written specifically within a framework of coaching psychology, it is likely to be of interest to all coaches who want to explore what they can learn from the application of the principles of psychology and the high professional standards and practices expected of coaching psychologists.

This chapter addresses:

- The issue of defining the boundaries of coaching psychology
- The importance and practice of ethical principles in coaching psychology
- Managing boundaries with other practices
- Good practice in the digital age
- Continuing professional development including supervision

Defining the Boundaries of Coaching Psychology

The term “Coaching Psychology” has been used both in the UK and in Australia to denote a type of coaching which is associated with the knowledge and application of psychology. In the UK, the Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP), an interest group within the British Psychological Society (BPS) sets out to “promote the development of coaching psychology as a professional activity and to clarify the benefits of psychological approaches within coaching practice” (Special Group in Coaching Psychology, 2019). In Australia, the equivalent Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (IGCP) established within the Australian Psychological Society clearly positions coaching psychology as a “sub-discipline of psychology” and an “applied positive psychology” (Interest Group in Coaching Psychology, 2019). This sub-discipline

draws on and develops established psychological approaches, and can be understood as being the systematic application of behavioural science to the enhancement of life experience, work performance and wellbeing for individuals, groups and organisations who do not have clinically significant mental health issues or abnormal levels of distress (Interest Group in Coaching Psychology, 2019).

The international Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) defines coaching psychology as a “practice” and

process for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult and child learning or psychological theories and approaches. It is practised by qualified coaching psychologists who have relevant qualifications and have undertaken suitable continuing professional development and supervised practice (International Society for Coaching Psychology, 2019a).

In the UK, the scientist- practitioner model provides the underpinning competency framework for coaching psychologists (Special Group in Coaching Psychology, 2008). Cavanagh and Grant (2006) state that this model

exhorts the coaching psychologist to develop interventions based on a well-researched and continually developing body of knowledge and techniques. The psychologist is said to be able to understand and evaluate their interventions against a background that incorporates significant training in the production and interpretation of scientific knowledge. This lends epistemic authority to the claims of the coaching psychologist. (p.149)

Despite attempts to distinguish clearly or differentiate coaching psychology from coaching in general, it is still argued that in practice, “there are few observable differences between coaching and coaching psychology” (Passmore, Stopforth & Yi-Ling Lai, 2018, p.121). Passmore et al. (2018) argue that this could follow from increased coach training in evidence-based approaches.

Boundaries between coaching psychology and coaching are complicated by a lack of clarity over what coaching is, an on-going debate in the literature which has lasted for the past 30 years (Bachkirova & Borrington, 2019; Passmore et al., 2018). This lack of clarity may be due in part to the breadth of theoretical knowledge which contributes to the knowledge base of what is understood as coaching including andragogy/ education, philosophy, systems

thinking, counselling, psychotherapy, business management and leadership (e.g., Stober & Grant, 2010). It might also relate to the diversity of professionals who become coaches. Coaches come from a breadth of backgrounds including business and education, management consulting, organization development, training, human resources, linguistics, education, sports, and assorted psychological disciplines (Peterson, 2010, p.52) each bringing with them their own knowledge and experience about how to coach and what knowledge base might be usefully applied.

The status of “coaching psychologist” is not or is not yet, a protected title in the UK unlike other titles such as “occupational psychologist” or “counselling psychologist” which are protected in the UK under the statutory regulation of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). In the UK, any registered psychologist using coaching as part of their service provision is expected to conform to shared codes of ethics and practices. In the UK, the Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) has issued a framework which provides guidance on coaching psychology standards or competencies which “are the benchmark psychological standards required for people to demonstrate competence to practice as coaching psychologists” (2008, p.2). The professional status of “coaching psychologist” can be different however in other countries. In Switzerland for example, the Federation of Swiss Psychologists (FSP) specialist title in coaching psychology certifies the competence for self-responsibility as a specialist psychologist for coaching psychology. The title is protected by private law and serves customers as a seal of quality (Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology, 2019).

In summary, clearly demarcating the practice of coaching psychology is difficult. However, processes are in place to promote standards of professional practice for psychologists who are registered by Interest Groups as “Coaching Psychologists”. They provide the basis for a professional service based on evidence-best research, best practices and high standards of ethics and compliance with legalities. Cavanagh and Grant (2006) argue that coaching psychology has “the very real potential to become a powerful methodology for individual, organizational, social and systemic change” (p.157). The standards and practices developed within the field of coaching psychology are also relevant to non-psychologists with an interest in psychology who wish to incorporate principles, research and practices promoted by Coaching Psychology Interest Groups into their own practice.

Understanding ethics and how ethical principles are promoted in coaching psychology

Ethics is a system of moral principles which provide guidance about the decisions we make and whether our acts can be justified (Wicks & Freeman, 1998, p.123). Professional bodies set out to provide ethical guidance through the provision of ethical codes and practices. The provision and adherence to these codes is intended to act as a way of promoting trust in professional practice (Dyer, 1985, p.73). Professional ethical beliefs develop over time and are shaped by many factors including philosophy, societal expectations and professional practices (Rosenkoetter and Milstead, 2010, p.138).

The British Psychological Society’s (BPS) latest version of its Code of Ethics and Conduct (British Psychological Society, 2018) is based on “The British eclectic tradition” (British Psychological Society, 2009, p.4) and highlights four primary ethical principles: respect, competence, responsibility and integrity (Table 1). Each principle is described by a set of values which guides ethical reasoning, decision-making and behaviour. Under each principle, issues and considerations are highlighted which psychologists are required to be aware of in their work. The aim of the Code is to guide the decision-making for all psychologists but “cannot and does not provide the answer to every ethical decision a Psychologist may face” (British Psychological Society 2018, p.8).

Table 1 The Primary Ethical Principles of the BPS (for full details, see BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018)

Respect
Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples. Respect for dignity recognises the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of perceived or real differences in social status, ethnic origin, gender, capacities, or any other such group-based characteristic. This inherent worth means that all human beings are worthy of equal moral consideration.
Competence
Competence refers to their ability to provide those specific services to a requisite professional standard. A psychologist should not provide professional services that are outside their areas of knowledge, skill, training and experience.
Responsibility
Psychologists must accept appropriate responsibility for what is within their power, control or management. Awareness of responsibility ensures that the trust of others is not abused, the power of influence is properly managed and that duty towards others is always paramount.
Integrity
Acting with integrity includes being honest, truthful, accurate and consistent in one's actions, words, decisions, methods and outcomes. It requires setting self-interest to one side and being objective and open to challenge in one's behaviour in a professional context.

Other documents of the BPS are intended to be used alongside this Code: Code of Human Research Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2014) and Practice Guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2017). The BPS does not provide a specific code for coaching psychologists; the published codes are for psychologists generally. However, in this way, common norms are established, and coaching psychologists can be expected to work to the same high ethical standards as all psychologists. The HCPC also publishes “Standards of Proficiency” (Health and Care Professions Council, 2015) for all practitioner psychologists with specific requirements for psychologists with protected titles. The SGCP also provides a “Standards Framework for Coaching Psychology” (Special Group in Coaching Psychology, 2008) which outlines what is required for being awarded registration as a coaching psychologist.

In the BPS Practice Guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2017), the importance of professional judgement is stressed just as it is in the Code of Ethics and Conduct:

No guidance can replace the need for psychologists to use their own professional judgement. Effective practice means exercising this professional judgement in a defensible way that does not put clients or the public at risk, or undermine, or call into question the reputation of the profession as a whole. (p.3)

Deciding upon an ethical course of action is therefore seen by the BPS as something which is difficult to proscribe or endorse; it requires professional judgement. This is a theme which is reflected in the coaching literature. Duffy and Passmore (2010) highlight for example how codes may not cover all important concerns, may be overly prescriptive, vary between professional bodies and how principles can be self-contradictory (p.143). Similarly, Diochon and Nizet (2015) argue that ethical codes can lack relevance, have major shortcomings and can even be an obstacle to the ethics of the coach. The limitations of ethical codes call for a

need for coaches to build “ethical maturity” (Carroll, 2011) or what Iordanou and Williams (2017) describe as “ethical capabilities” developed through gaining awareness of “one’s principles and values, embracing ethical dilemmas, making courageous ethical choices, and reflecting on them”(p.696).

Van Nieuwerburgh (2017, p.191) presents a list of “ethical moments of choice” that coaches might encounter (Table 2). The range of ethical dilemmas a coach is likely to face will be much more extensive than this, but the list serves to provide an indication of some ethical issues, coaches might encounter.

Table 2: Ethical Moments of Choice

The coach seeks to exceed the agreed number of coaching sessions
The coach is offered additional work in a coachee’s organization
The coach develops a physical attraction to the coachee
The coachee claims they are being bullied
The coach cannot accept the moral position of the coachee
The coachee contravenes the principle of equal opportunity

Integral to ethics is the provision of an effective service. In the BPS Practice Guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2017), psychologists are urged to “distinguish the nature and quality of the evidence underpinning any knowledge or techniques being applied”. They are also asked to be mindful of psychological processes which might impact on their evaluation of evidence. As a result of their extensive training in psychology, coaching psychologists are expected to be able to draw on evidence-based practice as a key element of a competency framework which is underpinned by the Scientist-practitioner Model. Beyond the UK, the ISCP also has a Code of Ethics and Guide to Coaching Psychology Practice (International Society for Coaching Psychology, 2019b).

Global activity in the education and practice of coaching psychology has been summarised by O’Riordan and Palmer (2019). They reported that since 2002, twenty-one widely recognised coaching psychology groups have been set up across the world (e.g. Australia, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Spain, Sweden, South Africa). Some of the key initiatives of these professional bodies and groups include a focus upon accreditation/certification routes for coaching psychologists (and coaching psychology supervisors), publications and offering professional development opportunities through conferences and events. O’Riordan and Palmer (2019) observed that the codes of ethics and good practice of nationally recognised psychology bodies also inform the work of coaching psychologists who are members of those groups in particular countries or regions.

Ethics and the use of assessments

Coaching psychologists can work ethically through the application of psychological methods and psychometrics which are shown to be valid and reliable through robust research. In using these instruments, coaches need to be mindful of their limitations;

the possible impact of feedback on the coachee and whether the instruments are suitable for the context in which they are intended. Coaching psychologists can also be mindful of how organizational sponsors might make sense of any assessments and their role in educating the coachee and other stakeholders about how the results of any assessments might be interpreted and used. They also need to be aware of maintaining confidentiality and manage the data in accordance with legal requirements.

Managing boundaries with other practices

Managing boundaries is a complex ethical endeavour, which might be more or less problematic in relation to different practices. For example, coaches might find themselves giving advice or providing mentoring or consultancy services rather than coaching. They also need to create a coherent rationale for the coaching model as it is often postulated that a wider goal of coaching is to encourage the self-resourcefulness of the coachee.

Managing boundaries is more complex however in the case of addressing issues which might more effectively or need to be managed in counselling or psychotherapy. Those who become registered as “coaching psychologists” may not have the same theoretical knowledge or experience as counsellors and psychotherapists unless they have first qualified as counselling or clinical psychologists or have otherwise followed a recognised training programme to work as psychotherapists and/or counsellors. There is the possibility that coaching psychologists might unknowingly stray into therapeutic practices in their attempts to transpose their learning into their coaching. Boundaries can become blurred particularly when coaches are working developmentally with their coachees (Bachkirova & Baker, 2019).

Recent research has shown that identifying boundaries in practice is particularly confusing for novice coaches (Eniola, 2017). Novice coaches might be tempted to use techniques they don't fully understand. In their eagerness to support their coachee, and influenced by their own unconscious needs, they may exceed their competence, thereby putting both their self and their coachee at risk. Awareness of boundaries is fundamental to ethical practice as all practitioners need to be aware of working within their capabilities even when the identification of such boundaries is a complex affair (Bachkirova & Kauffman, 2009). For instance, if a coach did not have the skills or training to help a coachee with an identified problem, with the coachee's consent, it would be ethical to refer the coachee to a professional who was qualified to assist them with their issue.

At the same time, through extensive psychological training, coaching psychologists are in a relatively strong position to apply theories developed in psychotherapy and counselling in coaching for the benefit of coachees and their organizations. Working with psychological blocks and emotions is essential for long-term change (Bachkirova & Cox, 2005) and coaches without substantive psychological education and training might be afraid or ill-prepared for working with complex human emotions and issues.

It has been a well-recognised concern that coaches might fail to recognise mental health difficulties (Bachkirova & Baker, 2018; Cavanagh, 2005; Cavanagh & Buckley, 2014; Eniola, 2017) and underestimate the possibility of working with coachees with mental health conditions. McManus, Bebbington, Jenkins and Brugha (2016) report that 1 in 6 people in England have a common mental health disorder while a figure of 1 in 5 has been reported in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). McManus et al. (2016) estimated that 20% of the UK population experience suicidal thoughts at some point in their lifetime (p.301). Maxwell (2009) found that coaching coachees could be just as vulnerable

emotionally as clients in therapy but concealed their difficulties. Griffiths and Campbell (2008) argued that coachees tended to fall on a continuum between coaching and therapy.

The knowledge base of coaching psychologists is likely to help them more readily identify mental health difficulties and to work within their boundaries of competence than coaches who are not trained to be psychologically mindful. Such training and awareness of many potential issues and blind spots should also be supported by the expectation that coaching psychologists will adhere to professional codes of ethics and practice and engage in on-going supervision and continued professional development. This is in effect a systemic approach for dealing with the complexity of coaching engagements and builds more conscious competence of psychological issues which will arise in coaching and an understanding of how to manage them.

Good Practice in the Digital Age

Working digitally is becoming increasingly common in coaching practice and is often described as “e-coaching” (Boyce & Clutterbuck, 2010). Ribbers and Waringa (2012) define E-coaching as

a non-hierarchical developmental partnership between two parties separated by a geographical distance, in which the learning and reflection process is conducted via both analogue and virtual means. (p.6)

Boyce and Clutterbuck (2010) refer to “blended coaching, distant coaching, online coaching, telecoaching or virtual coaching” as synonyms.

The 14th Annual Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey (Sasha Corporation, 2019) reports that 35% of coaching is now delivered online through both low and high definition webcam technologies. This is an increase from 15% in 2012. The survey refers to the continued use of email, chat and text at 8% of total coaching services. E-coaching seems a natural evolution of coaching practice reducing costs and travel time and is consistent with the increased use of digital technologies in everyday life (Ghods and Boyce, 2012). It is considered an effective intervention although recent research suggests that it is best used alongside face to face coaching (Geissler, Hasenbein, Kanatouri, & Wegener, 2014).

In the context of e-therapy, alluding to Corey, Corey, and Callanan (2007), Kotsopoulou, Melis, Koutsompou and Karasarlidou (2015) highlight a range of ethical considerations including “competence, credentialing, informed consent, exceptions to confidentiality, as well as privacy and security limits” (p.492). The authors cite examples of familiar web-based technologies which provide free computer voice and video chat programs, but which do (or did not at the time of writing) meet prevailing, local regulatory requirements in the USA. They also refer to different national legal and regulatory measures in the use of technologies which can be problematic when working across international boundaries (p.494).

The field of e-coaching is evolving. Kamphorst (2017, p.627) refers to “e-coaching systems” which are based on human-computer interaction and which raise a range of ethical issues including privacy (ownership of the data), fairness considerations (access to the systems), personal autonomy (risk of manipulation) and the availability of knowledge about a person’s behaviours. The backdrop to Kamphorst’s paper is healthcare. A range of similar ethical issues in healthcare have been raised by Niezen, Adams, Purtova, and Vedder (2016) including legal implications.

The changing landscape of coaching practice requires sensitivity and regular adjustments from responsible practitioners. The BPS publishes guidance on working in the Digital Age in

their Practice Guidelines. These guidelines highlight how psychologists and coaches are making increased use of the internet and audio-visual technology when working with coachees. The guidelines state that it is a responsibility of psychologists to ensure “that the network used is as secure as reasonably possible and, as far as is feasible, assures privacy to their clients” (British Psychological Society 2017, p.19). The Guidelines raise awareness of a range of ethical challenges that need to be addressed when working in the Digital Age:

- There can be no guarantee of security when using the internet, and voice over internet protocol (VOIP) services such as ‘Skype’ or ‘FaceTime’ are no different, as they use the same data infrastructure as the rest of the internet
- Only fit-for-purpose VOIP systems are used, and that public networks, such as Social Media sites, are avoided for VOIP communications

The UK Guidelines direct psychologists to the Health and Care Professions Council who offer specific advice about how to use computer-based media (Health and Care Professions Council, 2017). Advice includes being mindful of the following:

- Written communications which can be read by others
- Privacy settings which cannot guarantee privacy
- Professional barriers that need to be maintained and professional considerations which need to be taken about what is communicated
- The need to seek advice.

UK readers are advised to refer to the Practice Guidelines. Readers outside of the UK are encouraged to review local legislation. The American Psychological Association (APA) provides specific guidelines for “the Practice of Telepsychology”; this includes “for psychologists to be cognizant and compliant with laws and regulations that govern independent practice within jurisdictions and across jurisdictional and international borders”. The APA guidelines are useful in how they highlight the appropriateness of this medium, particularly in the context of client vulnerability (American Psychological Association, 2019).

Continued Professional Development (CPD)

The HCPC define Continued Professional Development (CPD) as

a range of learning activities through which health professionals maintain and develop throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practise safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice.
(Health and Care Professions Council, 2012, p.1)

CPD is an inherent element of good practice for professionals. In the UK, CPD is a “standard that HCPC registrants must meet” (Health and Care Professions Council, 2019) while the BPS refer to how CPD “is both a professional expectation and a personal responsibility for psychologists” (British Psychological Society, 2019).

CPD can be achieved through a broad range of learning activities, including but not limited to participation in workshops, experiential and classroom-based learning, attendance at specialist talks or master classes, personal development including the reading of peer-reviewed journals and continuing further education. It could include training to become a coaching psychologist or taking a Masters or doctoral degree in coaching which will likely expose candidates to a breadth of psychology and encourage critical reflexivity (Bachkirova et al., 2017, p.44). Coaching supervision is also CPD.

Defining the content of CPD implies considering the question about what areas of knowledge, personal attributes, skills and behaviours coaching psychologists might seek to acquire as part of this process. The Standards Framework for Coaching Psychology (Special Group in Coaching Psychology, 2008) provides a list of generic competencies which include professional practice skills, assessment skills, self-awareness, confidence and presence as well as artistic and creative skills.

The decision about which skills or capabilities are needed to be improved is usually left to practitioners themselves. This may lead to vicious circles that perpetuate existing blind spots. The importance of supervision in this case is difficult to overestimate. For example, the clarity and certainty that are often important for beginners requires a shift toward recognition of the complexity and uncertainty of coaching practice. Cavanagh and Grant (2006) argue that the scientist-practitioner model should be understood in the context of the “unique, dynamic adaptive nature of the system formed in coaching relationships” (p.155) and used flexibly.

Within the coaching engagement, the coach needs also to apply the scientific mindset as part of the reflective process. This involves an ability to observe data, form hypotheses, and critically test them in the coaching session. It also involves an ability to select, evaluate and appropriately interpret psychometric assessment tools. (p.156)

The need to understand the practice of coaches as a complex adaptive system has been raised elsewhere in the literature. Bachkirova and Lawton Smith (2015) argue that coaches need to develop a broad range of capabilities rather than a specific set of competences.

A capabilities approach implies an approach to coach training and education that allows the development of the coach in congruence with the individual’s characteristics and values, who they are as a person and not only as an opportunity to assimilate a repertoire of competencies. (p.131)

De Haan (2008) also stresses the challenges of dealing with complexity:

a hidden paradox inherent in the ideal of continuing professional development (CPD) for executive coaches, stemming from the fact that the coach wishes to retain or preserve the freshness and openness of a “beginner”, whilst also acquiring greater robustness and resilience in the face of difficult assignments. (p.526)

This paradox might be resolved through “robustness in the face of their instrumental and existential doubts, and vulnerability when it comes to their relational doubts” (p.526). The key notion is that coaches will always need to address doubts which will arise in their practice and this is a key of focus in their CPD. The complex nature of the learning process also highlights the importance of supervision and robust training which are well aligned to the psychological training in becoming a coaching psychologist.

Supervision

In the UK, coaching psychologists are expected to understand and engage in supervision as an integral part of their CPD (Special Group in Coaching Psychology, 2008). The ISCP also requires that Accredited members have supervision. A global focus on the importance of reflective practice, is further evident when coaching psychologists are members of nationally (or regionally based) recognised professional psychology bodies and are attending to their associated protocols of good practice.

Coaching supervision is defined as

a formal process of professional support which ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of his/her coaching practice through interactive reflection, interpretative evaluation and the sharing of expertise (Bachkirova, Stevens & Willis, 2005).

It is an element of practice that is well recognised in other helping professions, but sometimes misunderstood and therefore tends to be underused in some coaching circles (Bachkirova, 2011; Salter, 2008). At the same time, with growing understanding of the nature of coaching, many professional bodies of coaching and organisational buyers of coaching recognise the importance of supervision and it is becoming an essential requirement for coaches in order to be contracted by large organisations (Hawkins & Turner, 2017). There is also now a reasonable body of literature devoted to research (e.g., Grant, 2012; Sheppard, 2017) and the conceptual understanding of coaching supervision (e.g. Bachkirova, Jackson, & Clutterbuck, 2011; Carroll, 2014; de Haan, 2012; Hawkins & Smith, 2013).

The three main functions of coaching supervision can indicate the value this process can provide for good practice for coaching psychologists. These functions of supervision are usually described as normative, formative/developmental, and restorative (Bachkirova, Jackson, & Clutterbuck, 2011; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Proctor, 1994).

The normative function is closely related to quality and ethics of coaching practice. It emphasises the value of identifying ethical issues that may not have been attended to by the coach. It also implies that coaches can explore their specific concerns occurring in complex coaching process. Coaches can improve their practice using a different lens for exploring their interventions with access to feedback that is usually limited, unsystematic and infrequent (Bachkirova, 2011). This is done in a spirit of collaborative inquiry rather than catching wrongdoing. Coaches can also discuss more nuanced situations and issues exploring specific cases in their actual complex contexts, including determining boundary issues and when it makes sense to refer coachees.

The restorative function of supervision is about providing support to coaches when their work affects them personally. Supervisors help coaches process their concerns and emotions in order to regain a balanced perspective from which the situation can be used as learning material for self-understanding and improvement as a professional. This can be very important when coaching psychologists need to address ethical issues and work with their own emotions in challenging ethical and emotional contexts (Bachkirova and Baker, 2019).

The third and probably the most important function of supervision is the *developmental* one. It is concerned with identifying themes for the development of coaches and facilitating their professional growth. For example, this function may focus on enhancing the coach's ability to take multiple perspectives on coachees' issues and the coaching process. The importance of this function follows a position on coaching that advocates that it is a coach who is the main *instrument* of coaching (Bachkirova, 2016) rather than a set of techniques. What follows from this view is that the development of the coach becomes closely connected with the quality of their work. Therefore, supervision aims for a coach to enhance their self-understanding, to find out their values and principles of change and development in order to build an approach to practice that is congruent with whom they are.

Conclusion

The focus of this Chapter has been on the importance of boundaries and best practices in coaching psychology. While the text has focused specifically on conceptualisations of coaching psychology and coaching psychologists, the Chapter has made a case for the importance of rigorous training, foundational knowledge and continuous professional development, including on-going supervision to maintain the high standards of practice and professionalism which are expected of coaching psychologists and coaches alike. The Chapter should therefore be useful to coaches generally who are urged to increase their knowledge of the principles of psychology, adhere to rigorous codes of ethics and practice and to engage in continued professional development and supervision.

Discussion questions:

- What is the difference between being guided by ethical principles and ethical behaviours?
- What is the main indicator for referring the coachee to a different specialist?
- How can you increase the value of your supervision arrangements?

Further reading:

- Bachkirova, T., Spence, G., & Drake, D. (Eds.). (2017). *The SAGE Handbook of Coaching*. London: Sage
- Cox, E., Bachkirova, T., & Clutterbuck, D. (Eds.). (2018). (3rd ed.) *The Complete Handbook of Coaching*. London: Sage
- Iordanou, I., Hawley, R., & Iordanou, C. (2017). *Values and Ethics in Coaching*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Palmer, S., & Whybrow, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge

References

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Guidelines for the practice of telepsychology: Standards of care in the delivery of telepsychology services*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/telepsychology>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *Mental health services in Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-contents/summary/prevalence-and-policies>

Bachkirova, T. (2011). *Developmental Coaching: Working with the Self*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Bachkirova, T. (2016). The self of the coach: Conceptualization, issues, and opportunities for practitioner development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(2), 143-156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000055>

Bachkirova, T., & Baker, S. (2019). Revisiting the issue of boundaries between coaching and counselling. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow. *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A guide for practitioners* (2nd edn.). London: Routledge. Submitted.

Bachkirova, T., & Borrington, S. (2019). Old wine in new bottles: Exploring pragmatism as a philosophical framework for the discipline of coaching. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, (18)3, 337-360.

Bachkirova, T., & Cox, E. (2005). A bridge over troubled water: bringing together coaching and counselling, *International Journal of Coaching and Mentoring*, 2(2), p.2-9.

Bachkirova, T., Jackson, P. & Clutterbuck, D. (Eds), (2011) *Supervision in Coaching and Mentoring: Theory and Practice*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Bachkirova, T., Jackson, P., Gannon, J., Iordanou, I., & Myers, A. (2017). Reconceptualising coach education from the perspectives of pragmatism and constructivism. *Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal*, 2(2), 29-50. Retrieved from <https://philosophyofcoaching.org/>

Bachkirova, T., & Kauffman, C. (2009). The blind men and the elephant: Using criteria of universality and uniqueness in evaluating our attempts to define coaching. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(2), 95-105.
doi:10.1080/17521880903102381

Bachkirova, T., & Lawton Smith, C. (2015). From competencies to capabilities in the assessment and accreditation of coaches. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 13(2), 123-140.

Bachkirova, T., Willis, P. & Stevens, P. (2005). *Coaching supervision* [Panel discussion at Oxford Brookes Coaching and Mentoring Society]. Oxford Brookes University. Spring.

Boyce, L. A., & Clutterbuck, D. (2010). E-coaching: Accept it; it's here, and it's evolving! In G. Hernez-Broome, L. A. Boyce & A. I. Kraut (Eds.), *Advancing executive coaching: Setting the course for successful leadership coaching* (pp.285-315). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons

British Psychological Society. (2019). *Professional development*. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/our-members/professional-development>

British Psychological Society. (2018). *Code of ethics and conduct*. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

British Psychological Society. (2017). *Practice Guidelines* (3rd ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/practice-guidelines>

British Psychological Society. (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics*. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>

British Psychological Society. (2009). *Code of ethics and conduct*. Retrieved from [https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20\(2009\).pdf](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20(2009).pdf)

Carroll, M. (2014). *Effective supervision for the helping professions* (2nd ed.). London: Sage

Carroll, M. (2011). Ethical maturity: Compasses for life and work decisions-Part I [online]. *Psychotherapy in Australia*, (17)3, 34-44. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f61b/0111c3321bde2439954e4d6fbf650ab8d98e.pdf?_ga=2.117389377.633815327.1571233562-917878099.1571233562

- Canvanagh, M. (2005). Mental-Health Issues and Challenging Clients in Executive Coaching. In M. Cavanagh, A.M. Grant & T. Kemp (Eds), *Evidence-Based Coaching, Vol. 1 Theory, research and practice from the behavioural science* (pp.21-36). Brisbane: Australian Academic Press.
- Cavanagh, M. & Buckley, A. (2014). Coaching and Mental Health. In E. Cox, T. Bachkirova & D. Clutterbuck (Eds), *The Complete Handbook of Coaching* (2nd ed.) (pp.405-417). London: Sage.
- Cavanagh, M.J., & Grant, A.M. (2006). Coaching psychology and the scientist-practitioner model. In D.A. Lane & S. Corrie (Eds.), *The modern scientist-practitioner: A guide to practice in psychology* (pp.146–157). Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.
- de Haan, E. (2012). *Supervision in Action: A relational approach to coaching and consulting supervision*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.
- de Haan, E. (2008). Becoming simultaneously thicker and thinner skinned. *Personnel Review*, 37(5), 526-542. doi:10.1108/00483480810891664
- Diochon, P., & Nizet, J. (2015). Ethical codes and executive coaches: One size does not fit all. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 51(2), 277-301. doi:10.1177/0021886315576190
- Doel, M., Allmark, P., Conway, P., Cowburn, M., Flynn, M., Nelson, P., & Tod, A. (2010). Professional Boundaries: Crossing a Line or Entering the Shadows? *The British Journal of Social Work*, 40 (6), 1866–1889.
- Duffy, M., & Passmore, J. (2010). Ethics in coaching: An ethical decision-making framework for coaching psychologists. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(2), 140-151.
- Dyer A.R. (1985). Ethics, advertising and the definition of a profession. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 11(2), 72-78.
- Eniola, A. (2017). How do novice business coaches identify the boundary between coaching and counselling?, *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* (S11), 84-100. Retrieved from <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/984448ad-df3f-4b1d-ac63-39dd0edf3acf/1/>
- Geissler, H., Hasenbein, M., Kanatouri, S., & Wegener, R. (2014). E-coaching: Conceptual and empirical findings of a virtual coaching programme [online]. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, (12)2, 165-187. Retrieved from: <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=706758416429391;res=IELBUS>ISSN:1741-8305>.
- Ghods, N., & Boyce, C. (2012). Virtual coaching & mentoring. In J. Passmore, D. Peterson, & T. Freire (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of the psychology of coaching and mentoring* (pp. 501–523). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
- Grant, A. M. (2012). Australian coaches' views on coaching supervision: A study with implications for Australian coach education, training and practice. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 10(2), 17-33.
- Griffiths, K., & Campbell, M. A. (2008). Semantics or substance? Preliminary evidence in the debate between life coaching and counselling. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 1(2), 164-175. doi:10.1080/17521880802328095

- Hawkins, P., & Smith, N. (2013). *Coaching, mentoring and organizational consultancy: Supervision, skills and development* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Hawkins, P. & Turner, E. (2017). The rise of coaching supervision 2006-2014. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, (10),2, 102-114. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17521882.2016.1266002>
- Health and Care Professions Council. (2019). *Guidance on the use of social media*. Retrieved from <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/meeting-our-standards/guidance-on-use-of-social-media/>
- Health and Care Professions Council. (2017). *Practice Guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Practice%20Guidelines%20%28Third%20Edition%29.pdf>
- Health and Care Professions Council. (2015). *Standards of Proficiency*. Retrieved from <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/standards/standards-of-proficiency---practitioner-psychologists.pdf>
- Health and Care Professions Council (2012). *Your guide to our standards for continuing professional development*. Retrieved from <https://www.ibms.org/resources/documents/hcpc-standards-cpd/>
- Interest Group in Coaching Psychology. (2019a). *Coaching Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://groups.psychology.org.au/igcp/>International Society for Coaching Psychology. (2019a). *What is coaching psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www.isfcp.net/>
- International Society for Coaching Psychology. (2019b). *Ethics*. Retrieved from <https://www.isfcp.info/ethics/>
- Iordanou, I. & Williams, P. (2017). Developing ethical capabilities of coaches. In T. Bachkirova, G. Spence, & D. Drake, (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of coaching* (p.696-712). London: Sage
- Kamphorst, B. (2017). E-coaching systems. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, 21(4), 625-632.
- Kotsopoulou, A., Melis, A., Koutsompou, V., & Karasarlidou, C. (2015). E-therapy: The ethics behind the process. *Procedia Computer Science*, 65, 492-499.
- Maxwell, A. (2009). How do business coaches experience the boundary between coaching and therapy/counselling? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(2), 149-162. doi:10.1080/17521880902930311
- McManus, S., Bebbington, P., Jenkins, R., & Brugha, T. (eds.) (2016). *Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult psychiatric morbidity survey 2014*. Leeds: NHS digital. Retrieved from <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey-survey-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-england-2014>
- Nelson, A. (2014). Best practice in nursing: A concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 51(11), 1507-1516. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2014.05.003
- Niezen, M., Adams, S., Purtova, N., & Vedder, A. (2016). *Socially robust eCoaching: Dealing with the ethical and legal preconditions for eCoaching acceptance*. Tilburg: TILT, Tilburg

University. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299455962_Socially_Robust_eCoaching_Dealing_with_the_ethical_and_legal_preconditions_for_eCoaching_acceptance

O’Riordan, S. & Palmer, S. (2019). Global activity in the education and practice of coaching psychology. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds), *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* (2nd ed.) (pp.573-583). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Passmore, J., Stopforth, M., & Yi-Ling Lai. (2018). Defining coaching psychology: Debating coaching and coaching psychology definitions. *Coaching Psychologist*, 14(2), 120–123.

Peterson, D.B. (2010). Executive coaching: A critical review and recommendations for advancing the practice. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 527–566). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Proctor, B. (1994). Supervision--competence, confidence, accountability. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 22(3), 309-18.

Ribbers, A. & Waringa, A. (2015). *E-coaching: Theory and Practice for a new online approach to coaching*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Rosenkoetter, M.M., & Milstead, J.A. (2010). A code of ethics for nurse educators: revised. *Nursing Ethics*, 17(1), 137–139.

Salter, T. (2008). Exploring current thinking within the field of coaching on the role of supervision. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 2, 27-39.

Sasha Corporation (2019). *The 2019 Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey*. Cincinnati, OH: Sasha Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.sherpacoaching.com/pdf_files/2019_Executive_Coaching_Survey_Summary_Report.pdf

Sheppard, L. (2017). How coaching supervisees help and hinder their supervision. S11, 111-122.

Special Group in Coaching Psychology. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/special-group-coaching-psychology> (2019)

Special Group in Coaching Psychology. (2008). Standards Framework for Coaching Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Member%20Networks/Special%20Groups/SGCP/Members/Standards%20Framework%20for%20Coaching%20Psychology.pdf>

Stober, D. R., & Grant, A. M. (2010). *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology. (2019) Retrieved from <https://www.coaching-psychologie.ch/en/weiterbildung/fachtitel>

van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2017). *An introduction to coaching skills: A practical guide* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.

Wicks, A., & Freeman, R. (1998). Organization studies and the new pragmatism: Positivism, anti-positivism, and the search for ethics. *Organization Science*, 9(2), 123-140.