Association for Coaching

AC's Professional Reflective Practice Guidelines

A professional coach, as well as any leader, sees the essential need to reflect on their work. This enables them to perform at their best, in the service of others.

What is Reflective Practice?

- A process in which we learn from our experience.
- Increased understanding of self and others.
- At its best, it is safe, reassuring, challenging, informative.
- We pause and we notice – look again and find there is more to notice.
- It involves clarifying our intentions and interventions of everyday practice.
- Open to multiple/different perspectives.
- Embracing uncertainty and willing to be unsettled.
- To review through the different lens of past, present, and future.
- Querying and challenging our deepest assumptions.
- Critical reflexivity – being further aware of ourselves that influences how we think, feel and act.

"Reflection wakes us up to what we are doing. It acts as an irritant interrupting comfort stories of our practice and facilitating the creation of new stories." (Ryan 2004)

"Reflection is a mindful consideration of what has happened, is happening or will happen." (Hewson and Carroll 2014)

"The capacity to reflect critically and systematically on the work-self interface, fostering a personal awareness and resilience." (Gilmer and Markus 2003)

Association for Coaching

What are the benefits of reflective practice?

- Consolidate new learning into our practice.
- Innovation and vitality through - opening our mindsets to multiple perspectives.
- Increase our capacity abilities through feedback and clarification.
- Partnership – reflecting with a 'support team'.
- Tests out ideas, working with questions, for example:
    - "What obstacles prevent me from being effective with my client?"
    - "What is challenging or concerning me about this situation?"
- Processes our emotions.
- Supports us in managing the potential isolation of working on our own.
- Increase confidence and trust in our approach.
- Build and work with our 'muscles' for the new learning – conceptualise, commit, plan and embody the new learning.
- A regular touchpoint to ground our practice, a different perspective can increase and raise our awareness, creativity, and blind spots.

How does this support a Leader as Coach?

- Working with our intentions and assumptions can increase efficiency.
- Being aware of the key learning styles (Kolb) and enhancing our understanding of the context.
- It develops our ability to become self-aware about what we are doing, how we are intervening and its impact on the outcome.
- Using a systems perspective to focus on the fundamental forces promoting or impeding our work with clients.