

What's the Difference? Reflective Supervision and Coaching in Early Childhood Programs

18th Annual Birth to Three Institute

Nancy L. Seibel: Good morning, everybody and good morning to those who are joining us virtually. We have this exciting session in which we have all of you wide-awake, totally alert people here with us. I'm Nancy Seibel.

Heath Ouellette: And I'm Heath Ouellette.

Nancy: All right. And... We decided we'd start right on time, at 8:00. So, for those who are here in the room, people will be coming in and joining us. And we'll welcome them and let them sit beside us and all of that. And we will, as we go along, be wanting -- you know -- We set this up so that there would be time for us to engage and exchange and ask questions and disagree and do all those things. So, to facilitate everybody's participation, we are going to bring you a mic when you have something you want to say. And Melissa is going to help with that. Thank you, Melissa, for helping with that. We are going to take comments and questions from our virtual audience. So, I know that I saw the screen, and I see that you are already interacting and chatting with each other, those who are joining us online. So please continue to do that. And when you have questions you want to address to Heath and I or to your other participants in the audience, please type them in, and Donna will make sure that we hear your comments and questions. Anything? Okay.

So, as you are joining us, just find your seat. There is plenty up front. And we won't make you do anything unusual if you sit up front near us. How many here are presenters and who do trainings? Okay, so you are aware of this challenge that we have a long, narrow room for those who are not right here in the room, and that we were talking about it would be nice if we had an automatically swiveling platform that would help us turn and make eye contact with everyone. But we are all going to help each other, so that if, for some reason, my attention is in one direction or Heath's is in another, we don't see that you want to say something, please just help us out and let us point out that we need to pay attention to all sections of the room.

Okay, so let's go ahead and get started then. And I just wanted to start out with Heath and I giving a little bit more introductions, and then we have some quick show-of-hand questions for you. And I know, if you are joining us virtually, you can't exactly show your hand, but you can -- you can certainly type in "yes," and Donna can kind of let us know what the responses are if you are wanting to say "yes" as a virtual way of raising your hand. Okay, so, my name is Nancy Seibel, and I live near here. I live in Catonsville, Maryland, which is close to Baltimore. And I'm the owner and principal at Keys to Change, and that is a practice that offers consulting -- early childhood consulting to Early Head Start and other early care and education programs, as well as other early childhood programs. And I also offer coaching to human service professionals and small business owners. And prior to launching Keys to change about a year and a half ago, I was at Zero to Three for 14 years and did some other stuff before that. But my professional background is in counseling. And I've worked, for many years before joining Zero to Three, in programs serving young children and their families.

Heath: My name is Heath Ouellette. I'm currently the director of children's services at Community Concepts. Community Concepts is in Western Maine, and we cover much of the border of New Hampshire. And so, for those of you who are familiar with Maine, this is primarily the skiing areas Sunday River and Sugarloaf. In addition, I live in Portland, Maine. I've been with Community Concepts for just -- actually, just two years like probably yesterday. Prior to that, I worked for both NAEYC and for Zero to Three. And then, before that, I was working in a Head Start program. And I've done everything from a teacher to a family service advocate, site manager, and I was a program manager, as well, so... I want to welcome you all. And I hope that you find this session today fruitful.

Nancy: Okay, so, the questions I thought I would ask. We'll warm up with an easy one. So, how many here and how many who are joining us online are morning people? Good. I'm glad you are here. We need you. You are alert. You have energy. And if something starts to falter or get a little funny, you are gonna help us, right? Okay. So, great. How many are not so much morning people? Okay, unfortunately, I'm with this group. What are we hearing from the virtual audience, Donna? Any responses?

Donna: It looks like we have a lot of morning people.

Nancy: Okay, that's very good, too, because we know you are gonna stay on target and focused and help us with your comments and questions and insights. So I'm glad we have so many morning people. I get up pretty much every day around 6:00 or 6:30, but I think I really wake up fully around 10:00, which is a little after we are done today, so we'll see how this all goes. Okay, so, how many here are involved with supervision and reflective supervision in some way? Okay? All right. And in the audience in front of us, a great many people put up their hands. It looked like about two-thirds of the group, at least. And, Donna, what did we see from our online participants?

Donna: About half-and-half right now.

Nancy: Okay. All right. Very good. And how many are involved in some way in early childhood coaching? -- There is plenty of seats up here if you are just coming in. -- Okay, so, we have a little bit fewer, but still a significant number of people in this room are involved in coaching in some way. It looked like about half the room. And did it look that way, Donna, with our virtual audience?

Donna: I think they are still typing.

Nancy: Okay. Well, I know it takes a little longer to type a response in than it does to raise your hand. And so we'll get your feedback in a second. Okay. So, I have a couple of other questions. Still there is nothing hard here. Okay, so, how many, when you think about reflective supervision and early childhood coaching, think that they are kind of the same thing, we just happen to use different terms for them? Okay, so, no one put their hand up for that here. Oh, you did. Two. A few people did. It's hard when nobody else does, and you are thinking, "Well, maybe I think this." But you know what? We are really nice people in here, right? No one is gonna get all judgy on you if they don't agree with you, or, you know? So it's okay to say what you think, and it's okay to ask questions or disagree with anything Heath or I say, too, as long as you are nice about it. Okay. And... did anyone respond to that one, Donna, in the virtual group? Did you lose track?

Donna: Yeah.

Nancy: Okay. [Laughter] I talked too long.

Donna: I was reading the responses and forgot the question. [Laughter]

Nancy: I just was -- curious how many thought reflective supervision or early childhood coaching might be -- might possibly be the same thing.

Donna: No, they are definitely -- they know the difference.

Nancy: Okay, excellent. That's good, because it will be really interesting. We are certainly gonna be sharing some thoughts about that, and it will be really interesting to have those thoughts added to -- with your experiences and thoughts. And so how many, then... we can kind of guess what the response is going to be -- think that reflective supervision and early childhood coaching are pretty much distinct from each other, even though there may be some commonalities between them. Okay, and so we are getting -- You know, looks like close to half of the audience in the room here thinks that that's the case. And, Donna, did you see any response, or are people still working on?

Donna: They think it's different.

Nancy: Okay. And how many really aren't all that sure? And that's why you got up to come to this session? Okay. And that's all right. [Laughter] Actually, I'm glad, because that was the whole reason why we got up and came here too, is we kind of thought that there were some questions about that and that maybe a chance to talk together this morning would get us on the road to getting some of that clarified. So, we are gonna start from the places we are all in today and then see what we get by the end. We will certainly be working together to look at the distinctions between reflective supervision and early childhood coaching, as well as the commonalities. We will also look at what their central purpose is. And at least, we'll put out our thoughts about that, and we'll hear back what your thoughts are. I will foreshadow by saying that there is no one right, accepted answer to all these questions we have and there is no one right definition out there. So I didn't come with that magic, but I did come with some thoughts about it. And I think we'll get to a much clearer place by the end of the day today.

We are also going to talk about how to go about developing a shared understanding of reflective supervision and coaching, should you be in the position of implementing one or both of these approaches to supporting staff in your program. And I think you can use the ideas whether you are about to launch this process or whether you are already involved in it and would like to take a step back to look at that shared understanding. So, how we are going to go about this is, the first thing we are going to do is have what we thought we would call a press conference. And the press conference is going to be led by Heath and I. I'm going to ask him some questions, and he's going to use those questions to share his experiences and stories about implementing reflective supervision at his Early Head Start program. I've had the pleasure and opportunity to be able to be involved to some extent with that and helping support that activity, at Heath's invitation, so... he is going to share that and then take your questions and your comments.

So, let's talk about how to go ahead and ask some powerful questions which you can use when you are speaking with Heath and you can also use when you are back at your program and doing your supervision or coaching work, because I think powerful questions are useful in both of those instances. And for anyone who's just arriving, there are many seats. And, you know, please make yourself comfortable. You sit near us, we won't make you get up and present. It's okay. It's safe. And there are seats right in front of us, as well. So, let's just talk for a minute about what this idea of powerful questions is. "Powerful questions" is a term that comes from coaching, and it's sort of, you know, when someone asks you a question and you kind of | stop in your tracks and are like, "Oh, wow, that's a really good question. Hmm." They are the ones that make you stop and think like that. And powerful questions help us with our understanding, they help us learn, they help us generate alternatives, and they help us explore our thoughts and beliefs. And, as you might imagine, they tend to be open-ended questions. So, an example of a question that might help with clarifying could be -- You know, you might start with saying, "Let me see if I understand. Are you saying you think reflective supervision and early childhood coaching are different?" Okay, that could be an example of a clarifying question. When we want to use a question that promotes reflection on our actions or encourage learning, an example of a question we could use would be, "What did you try? What do you know now?" And these questions, with several examples, are in one of the handouts we uploaded, which I know you can all see this perfectly. It looks a lot like what's on the screen over there. And will allow you -- you know, just give you some ideas about how you might frame these kinds of questions.

To generate alternatives, you are really encouraging people to brainstorm. And you might ask things like, "well, let's see if we can think of five other ways to do that." Can you think of five other ways?" And just see, you know, where that leads. And then probing questions really get into what do we think and believe? So, "What's your current understanding of..." And that could prompt someone to explore those things. So I'm going to encourage you to use this guide to asking powerful questions if you are putting forth any questions today, but certainly after the press conference and also to take it back and use it in your practice. Okay? Any questions or comments? Okay. So, just another tip in this might be to think about, when you are asking powerful questions, where are you coming from. And using an attitude of... or having an attitude of curiosity, interest, openness sort of puts you in a place where the other person is going to feel very safe and very listened to, where there is very little struggle in making themselves clear. Using open-ended questions... And we probably all know what those are. Those are the questions you can't answer with one word or a "yes" or a "no," but really causes you to have to think, "Well, what do I really think about this, and what do I want to say?" So, with that, let's go ahead and start our press conference. Okay. I think we might have to share the mic, if you want me to ask you the questions.

Heath: I think that mic works on the podium.

Nancy: Oh.

Heath: Great.

Nancy: We have a mic here? Okay. Everyone can hear? Okay, now it's really hard to turn my head. [Laughter] Okay. All right, so, our first question, Heath, is, "What were the reasons that you had for wanting to implement reflective supervision and coaching in your program?"

Heath: Sure. So, let me just begin. I mentioned -- in the introduction that I've been with Community Concepts for two years. And I just want to tell you a little bit about our program first. We serve and work with about 600 children and families. So... in Maine, we are actually the largest Early Head Start and Head Start program. But, nationally, that's probably more on the average size of a program or on the low side. Out of the 600, we work with just over 200 infants and toddlers, and that's in the mix of center-based and home visiting. And then just under 400 preschool children, and we offer that through the combination option and the center-based option. And then we have a number of prekindergarten collaborations. So, when I came to Community Concepts, I had my own past experiences, particularly with reflective supervision, both when I began my career. I had the opportunity to be involved in a program who really practiced reflective supervision. And it's something that, personally, I really valued and bought into.

And when I joined Zero to Three, I also had an opportunity to have an amazing supervisor who really practiced true -- what I consider true reflective supervision with me. In addition, I have been involved in some work -- a pilot program for a literacy project around coaching. So, this was a coaching model that was very specific to this literacy program. And I had the opportunity to really see the impact that this had on our classroom teachers in particular. I saw how they gained in their skills and their knowledge, but, most importantly for me, what I saw is their passion for the work. They really had adopted the program and became advocates for the program that they were learning about through the coaching model. Specific for reflective supervision, one thing that I want to say is, our work is about relationships. It's about relationships with each other, relationships with families, relationships with children. And it's challenging, and it's hard. We all have our examples.

Just the other day, a home visitor came back from her first home visit with a family. We had learned, through the enrollment process, that dad was not living in the household and, actually, mom had a restraining order on dad. However, when she showed up to do her first home visit, dad was in the home. That's an example of the different difficult situations that we face. Or the family that, you visit their home and there is no furniture. Again, just the other day in my program, we had someone, a mom, who showed up at the center, who was exhibiting behavior and her breath smelled like she had been drinking. And our staff person had to try to refuse allowing her to take her child and to call someone else on the list. So, I don't share these examples to be a Debbie Downer, but I share them because this is real life. These are the experiences that we all face in the room, and it's what makes our work hard. And we also come to our work with our own experiences, our own past, whether that's about how we were brought up ourselves, whether that's about how we work with our own children, whether that's our past history that we bring to the table. And we can't just, all of a sudden, put that aside and show up and do our job. We bring those experiences to our work. And so, in true self-reflective supervision, you are able to explore these things. And that's what Nancy is going to talk about in a little bit.

The other thing, in particular with Community Concepts, they had a system for doing monthly supervision with each employee. But the system was really about checking the boxes. I was about, "Did you get this done, did you get that done, did you do this?" And what Nancy will describe in a little bit are really those administrative tasks around being a supervisor or being a supervisee. However, staff were really asking for a little bit more. They were saying, "We want to spend a little bit more time really

talking about what the work is really like. We really want to have an opportunity to explore this one-on-one with our supervisor." And so that was an important aspect for our program in really thinking about bringing reflective supervision to the program.

For coaching, I had done some work with NAEYC around -- We had done some focus groups. It was actually particularly in working -- It was focused on working with coaches in their own professional development. But, through that, there is a lot of research about the effectiveness of coaching, about how we can all attend a training. And the likelihood of us being able to go back and implement our learning is less likely, versus if we go to a training and then have coaching thereafter, we are more likely to implement the practices and the knowledge that we learned. Our program really spent some time thinking about how to move out of being constantly reactive and how to think about being proactive in our work. And so we had a management team who was primarily focused on being reactive. That was something that they identified.

And we talked a lot about how we wanted to promote leadership, we wanted to empower our staff, so that they can make decisions on their own while doing the work, so that the difficult situations that I just described, the staff didn't feel like they had to immediately call their supervisor and say, "What do I do in this situation? This mom is right in front of me." But versus really helping staff to build those skills, build their -- self-esteem, so that they can feel confident and feel like they know how to approach the work. And so, overall, our program, we felt like we were doing really well. We had passed federal reviews, we -- our C.L.A.S.S. scores for our preschool classrooms were in the middle range, but we really wanted to move ourselves up to the next level. And that's why we really thought about implementing coaching.

So, I noticed a lot of nods and responses as Heath was talking about his experiences, and particularly the experiences people have when they go out to work with families. And also these, you know, questions and challenges about how best to support staffs' learning and ability to handle the intense interpersonal nature of the work. So, did anyone have anything come up that you wanted to comment on or ask about at this point? And that's -- you know, Donna, if there is anything there, let us know, coming in from the virtual audience, okay?

Heath: Feel free to raise your hand so we can bring the mic to you.

Nancy: Which I know that's what you are looking forward to. [Laughter] But, absolutely, we are looking forward to your feedback. And I just want to take a second to pause to see if anyone had any now. And if not, we can certainly -- Oh, yes, we do. Okay. See? I needed your help. Thank you. And you are right close to me, too.

Woman: When you gave the example of talking about when the mother -- example of when the mother came into the program, and smelled as if she had been -- was intoxicated, I've had that similar experience and have staff that had to deal with that. How do you address it and keep your -- staff safe in the process of it? Because it can escalate when you approach that parent and your main concern is the safety of the child.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Woman: How do you -- How do you assure your staff that they are going to be okay and remind them that, "We are here for the safety of the children"?

Heath: So, fortunately, this is something that our program has talked about extensively when we developed our policy around releasing children. In the state of Maine, you cannot withhold releasing a child to their legal guardian or to their parent, but there are things that we can do to try to avoid that -- having a conversation with mom. Mom disagreed with the staff person's opinion, but the staff person remained calm and actually handled the situation professionally and asked if we could just call grandma in this situation. And mom was actually willing to do that, so I've been a part of a situation that hasn't gone quite so well. And in that situation, we really talk about staff keeping themselves safe, because they have other children to take care of, as well, at that time. And if they are involved in an escalation with a parent, then are they able to really care for the other children in the classroom, as well? And at that point, you know, 911 is available. And again, you can't refuse access to a parent, but you can certainly try to have a conversation with them and discuss alternatives.

Our program also -- excuse me, not our program, my past program that I worked for, we offered to get a taxi, because we were in a community that had taxis available. Where my program is now, in Western Maine, we don't have taxis available on five minutes' notice. You know, and what I'll share is, unfortunately for this mom and what we found out thereafter, the next day, when grandma came to pick up again, Mom had actually been arrested the night before because she was drinking and driving, and the child was in the car. And this is real life. This is what we face.

Nancy: And those are the kinds of things that we are asked, right? And I think it's a great example. Thank you for that question, because it's a great example of how reflective supervision can really make a difference. It's a place to come to when you've had that experience and also a place to help you prepare, should it come up. Because I know one of the big things in any kind of crisis like that -- I don't know what happens to you, but my heart starts to pound, and you know, I'm not so sure I can think clearly. But if I've had a chance to prepare ahead of time, I have something to go to and even maybe have learned some strategies, how to self-calm and self-regulate in that difficult situation. So that's a great question. Thanks.

Heath: Nancy, I'll just add that, you know, these are the -- these are the things that we face every day that we need to spend some time debriefing. We need to spend some time thinking about, "Okay, what is it that I bring to the table in this situation?"

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: "Do I have a past experience?" Maybe I grew up in an alcoholic household. Maybe I have my own experiences with alcohol. Whatever it might be, these are the things that we bring to the work that make it often challenging.

Nancy: That's right, that's right. So, Donna, were there any questions or comments that you wanted us to know of?

Donna: Not at this time. We are just carrying on a conversation about resources in different states.

Nancy: That's excellent. So, I'm really glad that the chat feature is available to help people connect who are connecting with us virtually. And just want to reassure you, we also want to hear directly from you, should you have questions specific to the entire group or to Heath or I. So, let's go on to our next question. I think that really provided us with, you know, some thinking behind why we might want to introduce either reflective supervision or coaching or, as in Heath's case, both to our programs and things that we all really could connect to and resonate to. So, the next question is, "What was the -- "what was the implementation and design process like as you moved forward with this?"

Heath: Sure. So, as I mentioned, our team, primarily, our management team, really spent a lot of time really thinking about, "How can we move from being reactive 100 percent of the time," which is how our team felt, "to being more proactive?" And what we did is we made the decision to shift some resources. And so I mentioned that each of -- primarily, all the program managers had some responsibility to supervision. And what we did is we almost split the team in half and dedicated half of our team to really supporting staff in the supervision model and in the work. And the other half of our management team, we decided that they would really primarily focus on the systems development, as well as coaching. So that was one of the first steps that we took. Initially, we thought we could get up and running, primarily with our coaching model, within three months.

I'll share a little bit that if you are gonna adopt a coaching model, you may want to take a little bit more time in your planning. But we began determining where we were, where we wanted to be. Nancy has worked with us and really actually began with us by an activity of thinking about where we were a year ago, where we were in the moment, and where we wanted to be as a program down the road. And that really helped us think about how did we want to get to the place that we wanted to be. We spent a lot of time talking about the differences between supervision, reflective supervision, coaching, as well as providing technical assistance and/or training support to our staff -- or with our staff. And we actually came to a place of making... defining those, because, as a full management team, we wanted to be on the same page and we wanted to be able to share the information with our teachers, with our home visitors, with our family service advocates about what we believed the differences were.

We used and looked up many different definitions that are out there and pulled from each of them to come to some consensus around what we believed the differences were, so, again, so that we could all be on the same page. We spent some time really thinking about documentation, how we wanted to document both our reflective-supervision practices, as well as coaching, so that we had something that we could reflect upon in our work, as well as that teachers or home visitors had something that they could also reflect upon in writing.

The other couple of things that we spent a lot of time on was thinking about boundaries, thinking about the different relationships that would be formed between a supervisee and a supervisor, as well as between a coach and a coachee, and really talking about what the boundaries might be. We talked about, would the coach communicate with the supervisor directly or not, because we wanted to share that information up front, and vice versa, and came to some decisions that we thought would really apply to us. And one of the important ones was that we would not set up a system where the coach and supervisor always kept in contact with each other, that we'd actually encourage the employee to be

sharing the information and put -- and empower them to be the party who could share their experiences with their coach, with their supervisor.

And if they wanted to share their experiences with their supervisor, that they were having with their supervisor, that they would be the party to share that with their coach. And in that model, we really wanted to empower the teachers, the home visitor, et cetera. And then the next phase was to begin a pilot. And that's where we are at. We are getting ready to start the new year and looking forward to full implementation.

Nancy: Okay. I'm gonna ask Heath one more question. And after that one, we'll stop to see what your thoughts and comments are. So, you just described having the supervisor and the coach and having them make some decisions about how each of them gets information and who brings that information to them. And it kind of brings up the question, did you think about having the supervisors also be the coaches? Or how did you come up with this -- this arrangement?

Heath: So, I want to start off by saying there is not a right answer to this question. And... And in the field, there is actually many different beliefs -- or philosophical beliefs -- about this. I've talked with people who really believe strongly that they should be separate roles, that the person providing supervision and reflective supervision should be very different than the person who is providing coaching support. And then there are other people who really believe that you can blend them and that that works, as well. Personally, for me and for our program, we really talked about the concept of "Could one day you really be -- wear, you know, the green hat and be the supervisor, and the next day, could you wear the brown hat and be the coach?" And we really talked about that as a -- as a management team. We weren't sure that we could really wear the multiple hats and be as effective as possible. But, again, there is no right answer. There are some programs that I learned about that have been rather successful, that the supervisor can also be that coach or that mentor. And then there are other programs who really believe they should be separated.

Nancy: Good. So, any thoughts or questions? Yes, there is a question right behind you, Melissa. There may have been questions here. See, I had my head turned this way this time, but you'll get your chance.

Woman: Good morning.

Nancy: Good morning.

Woman: I wanted to know, when you're looking at coaching and supervising, do you have to do both, or can you just do one or the other -- reflective supervision or coaching -- or do you have to do both?

Heath: You certainly do not have to do both, as Nancy will share in a few minutes, really thinking about the different priorities of doing one or the other. And, actually, in my "Lessons Learned," I'll share that our experience was we probably should not have tried to start both reflective supervision and coaching at the same time, that it was taking on a bit too much, and it actually was confusing our field staff about, "Wait a minute here, what's happening? It's so much change, and who's doing what now?" and that we would have been better off at least starting with one, getting that established, getting the routine happening before we started the second. But you do not have to.

Nancy: Okay. Thank you for that question. There is one right here.

Woman: Thank you. I was just curious if you can talk to us a little bit about how it would look if it would be the same person doing the coaching and the supervising. I'm curious how that would work.

Heath: So, I will honestly say that I don't have experience in this -- in this area, where the person is doing both roles, but I've asked a lot of questions of people who are doing it. And what they really talk about is having an open relationship with their employee. In a true self-reflective model, you are not necessarily judging the employee. You are really helping them to self-reflect on the work. And in a coaching model, you are really trying to lift them up and promote their knowledge or their skills, which sometimes, as a supervisor, we are focusing in on that, as well.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: And they really figure out how to blend the two, but I don't have personal experience in that area. For me, what I'll say is, at the end of the day, the supervisor is the one who is evaluating the employee. They are the party who is going to write that appraisal. And that was another thing that we personally talked about, why we wanted to keep it separate from the coaching, because there is something about... for many, when we talked with many of our teachers, home visitors, that they wanted somebody that they could talk to in an open way that, at the end of the day, would not be writing their evaluation.

Nancy: Mm-hmm. Donna?

Donna: Yes, I have two questions, and I believe they are both for Heath. One is that she's curious, did managers providing reflective supervision receive reflective supervision?

Heath: So, that's something that we are working on. We actually brought in Nancy to train all of our staff on the concept of reflective supervision and what it is that we are really talking about when we talk about reflective supervision and the difference between administrative supervision and reflective supervision. And our management team, we've spent a lot of time really talking about what this looks like -- what this looks like for ourselves -- because it's exactly like... You know, I think, where the question is coming from is, we need to model what we are going to practice with our staff. And it's something that, in the day-to-day busy work, you can easily get caught up in those, "Did we check that check box? Did we get this done? Oh, here is what's coming up next." And if we truly value being more proactive than reactive, we, as a management team, also needed to practice that within our -- within our group.

Donna: Thank you. And the second question is: When you responded to the woman who asked about a situation with a parent who is under the influence, you offered advice on how your program handled the situation. Could you demonstrate how you would coach someone or offer reflective supervision around this or another issue?"

Heath: So, if we could, hold on to that question, because towards the end of our presentation, Nancy and I actually have a role-play scenario that we want to talk about with all of you.

Nancy: Okay. And thank you for both comments and questions. And there is one more, and then we'll move on to our next question for Heath that I have. Okay.

Woman: In your program, do the coaches also do monitoring tools, such as the C.L.A.S.S. and ECERS, or do you have someone else who does that role?

Heath: So, as far as monitoring goes overall, it's generally not the coaching role to do the monitoring. We... Primarily, it's the supervisor's responsibility to do monitoring, although we are overall a small program, and when you have to do the C.L.A.S.S. score in over 24 classrooms, sometimes our coaches do get pulled in primarily to do C.L.A.S.S. But, otherwise, we really try to keep our monitoring with the supervision.

Nancy: Okay, great questions.

Woman: Can I ask one more?

Nancy: Sure.

Woman: Can I ask what your structure is? Who is it that's doing the coaching, and who is doing the supervision? And are supervisors coaching someone else that they don't supervise, or what's that structure?

Heath: Right. So, we really keep them separate. So, for instance, we have a program manager for education and early intervention. She primarily focuses on our systems development, our forms, our policies, and she oversees and supervises a coach. Last year, we were having her try to do some coaching, and we really figured out that she could not. It was too much. And so, for this coming year, we've hired a separate person to do coaching. And then, on the flip side, we have a program manager who's also a program manager for early-intervention education, but she oversees several of our sites. And we have that within all of our component areas, where we have someone who's more on the systems-coaching side and someone who's more on the services-supervision side.

Nancy: Okay. So, how did everyone react to all of this? This was a lot.

Heath: It was a lot. We really tried to approach it with an open mind. And one thing that I'll share in the "Lessons Learned" is we really figured out that it was -- it was a lot for staff.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: And staff were really hesitant, in particular about the coaching. We did not say coaching was about a particular project. Like, we did not say coaching was about coaching for C.L.A.S.S. or coaching was about this literacy program. We really wanted to approach coaching from a professional-development standpoint and have the employees, through the professional-development plan, identify coaching as one of the resources. But what we discovered is that staff, they themselves, we hadn't spent enough time really talking with staff about what was coaching, what would it be like. And so there was a lot of hesitancy, at first. Like I said, we are through our first pilot, and we are really approaching this new year with full implementation and we are looking forward to seeing how it works out this year.

Nancy: So we'll come back and tell you. Okay. All right. And so Heath has been mentioning lessons learned, and I'd like to hear about those.

Heath: Sure.

Nancy: Okay.

Heath: Great.

Nancy: Should I go ahead with this one?

Heath: So, some lessons learned -- creating buy-in. Creating buy-in with, not only with the management team, but with teachers, with home visitors, about what are the benefits of having reflective supervision. Why do I want to move from checking the boxes to really opening myself up and exploring and being reflective upon the work and what I bring to the work? Why would I want to work with a coach? So, really spending some time creating that buy-in. Give yourself some time both to get the programs up and working, or the models up and working, as well as to market it to your staff. And like I said, we thought we could get things up and going in three months. And really, you should at least plan, in my opinion, at least a year before you can really think about getting that pilot up and going.

Another thing is, is that not implementing both at the same time. So, we've gone at them both at the same time and have found that it's really pulled us in different directions and that, in hindsight, we would have preferred to have started one first and practiced and used those skills and that model for a couple of years before we started the second. For us, we learned that it was best if coaches were not gonna be assigned to other tasks. Again, it pulls you, right? The work demands, the -- that reactive work can always pull you. And in the coming year, primarily our coach for classrooms and for working around education is going to be a standalone person, and that will be their only role. Plan for support for coaches.

So, coaching, in itself, is not easy, just like being a supervisor is not easy. And we can list all the situations, all the circumstances that we'll face. And we really have learned that we needed to spend some time really helping our coaches prepare themselves for the work that they were going to be doing. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to work with Nancy, or Nancy worked with our coaches to really think through and spent some time coaching our coaches on what it would be like to do the work. Nancy, I don't know if we are on to the next slide or not, or if you are following, so I want to make sure that we...

Nancy: I'm still on the same one, and it says, "Link coaching to employee..."

Heath: Great. So... So, yes, here, this was our model that we took away that we really wanted staff to identify that coaching was one of those supports that they wanted for their own professional development. So, in the coming year, as staff are developing their professional-development plans, we are going to really promote that coaching is one of the options, one of the resources that they could list for whatever it might be that they want to work on as an employee.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: Moving on, just a couple other things. So, Early Head Start. So, there is a lot of tools for Head Start. We focus on C.L.A.S.S. We are in the process of releasing through what it is that we want to use, both with our home visitors, as well as with our Early Head Start classrooms. There are a variety of tools out there. And that's something that, when you can have a tool like C.L.A.S.S., it's helpful and it's concrete. And both supervisors, supervisees, coachees, coaches have really said, "Hey, we would like a tool or a model to work off of." A couple other things that we learned is that the max that you really want to match a coach to a coachee, if you're gonna really fully implement coaching, is 8 to 10 staff people. And that's the max that we have taken away from and that we are adopting for this coming year, is that one coach will work with 8 to 10 people in the coming year at any given time. And I just want to comment that we are not saying coaching has to be on a weekly basis. We are saying we want it to be at least one time per month. And what we are suggesting is at least two times per month, with -- that there is interaction between the coach and the coachee at least two times per month. On the reflective-supervision side, what I'll say is, we practice one time a month, but if your program has the ability to at least do two times a month, my experience from past... working in a past program is that's a better model.

A couple other things are determining the paperwork and the documentation. So, you want to document the work that you are completing. And these were things that we spent some time really thinking through how did we want to document it in a way that would feel safe but would allow all parties to reflect back on the work. The communication chain. So, I talked about this. What would -- what would the communication be between the employee, the supervisor, and the coach? And for our program, we chose to really empower the employee to take on communicating what was happening for them in their work with their supervisor and with their coach. And although the supervisor and the coach will talk with each other, they try to avoid being the one who shares the immediate information, and empower the employee to share the information. Pilot. So, if you can pilot both self-reflective supervision, as well as coaching, with a few key staff, and then you can have the opportunity to learn how that worked before you implement program-wide. And lastly, I talked about this already, but give yourself more planning and startup time.

Nancy: Okay. Well, we've already learned a lot, haven't we? And probably thinking about a lot. Let's see if we have time maybe for one or two questions, at this point, before we move forward to taking a closer look at the commonalities and distinctions between reflective supervision and coaching. So, any questions here? Yes, I see hands, and the mic is on its way.

Heath: So, what -- So, what Nancy is not telling you is we are a little behind time, so that's why we'll take one or two, and then maybe Nancy has a lot of information that we want her to be able to share, as well, and some of your questions may be answered through that, as well.

Woman: Could you discuss what kind of documentation was determined to feel safe? What was your conclusion?

Heath: Yeah, so, we talked about, primarily in supervision, that you didn't have to document everything that was said between the employee and the supervisor, but that you would document action steps in particular -- the takeaways. "Here is what we are agreeing, as two people, is gonna happen next or

moving forward or the lessons learned." Those takeaway items that would be important to be able to reflect back on.

For coaching, similarly, that we actually wanted to empower employees to really be the ones to direct their own professional development and to say, "Yes, here is what I want to be working on. Yes, here is what I'm agreeing to be working on in the next two weeks before you come back and observe me in the classroom again."

Nancy: So, we have a number of questions over here, and then I think Donna has one, too. Yeah, we'll give you a turn, Donna, okay?

Woman: Considering that our programs are grant-funded and are in -- you know, it's never for sure that our money is coming in. Where are you guys finding the resources to come up with the money to hire coaches? For some programs, we might need to hire three or four. For larger programs, you are looking at a large number of coaches. So, how are you getting the resources? And why would a home visitor or a teacher say, "Yes, we should hire coaches rather than, maybe, giving ourselves a raise," or something like that?

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Woman: It just seems like a poor time... or a poor use of money to me.

Heath: So, as I mentioned, for us, we really spent a lot of time thinking about how we were constantly being reactive, and we wanted to shift some of our resources into being proactive. And the goal is, is that, in five years, if our employees could have the opportunity to really explore their work and to gain more knowledge and to gain more skill and to gain more confidence in working with children and working with families, then we wouldn't -- hopefully, the goal is, is that we are able to use less -- or have to have less resources in supervision and in checking those check boxes -- checking those boxes -- And that we could really think about lifting our employees up. And our employees have said, "We want the support. We need the help. This work is difficult." So, for us, it did mean assigning more supervisors to one supervisee, because we took those resources and put it into coaching. I don't have the results of that yet. We'll see where we are at in a couple of years, to see if our goal is really achieved.

But, like I said, our staff are really saying, "We want some additional help, we want some additional support, and we really want to -- we really want to do better at our work." And from my perspective, I really wanted employees to feel confident and comfortable in doing their work, that they didn't immediately need to feel like they had to call their supervisor to work through a situation, that they felt confident and skilled and that they had the knowledge to move forward and to take on the work themselves.

Nancy: So, really, an important question for us all to think about. I am going to take Donna so that -- in a second so that we can hear from others who are participating with us. But, you know, those strategic decisions are tough decisions, as you're pointing out with your question. Donna?

Donna: The question is, "How are teachers identified for coaching?" They are wondering if, in your program, Heath, the preschool program, do the teacher assistants also have the opportunity to receive coaching, or do coaches work with coaching teams? And then how often is the coaching done?

Nancy: That's a lot of questions. Okay. [Laughter]

Donna: Trying to get them all in.

Nancy: I know. Good. Thank you.

Heath: So, one thing I also want to comment on, in the prior question, is we have not had the resources that everyone can have a coach. Everyone does have a supervisor, but we don't have the resources that everyone has a coach. And our model is that, right now, in the coming year, we have one coach who's gonna work with 8 to 10 people. Now, that's not going to be a relationship that goes on forever. And so the goal is that, over the course of five years, with that one coach, we may be able to reach as many as 50 of our employees. So, to answer some of your questions, Donna, or from the folks who are online... So, can you repeat them? I'm sorry.

Donna: Okay, how -- How are teachers identified for coaching, and do the teacher assistants in your preschool program have the opportunity to receive? I think you answered that part. And how often is the coaching done?

Heath: Sure. So, right now, the identification of coaching is primarily through the professional-development plan. So, when a supervisee and a supervisor sit down and develop that professional-development plan, if they are working on a particular goal that they really want additional help from a coach, then they are identifying that. Now, what I'll say is, if we have 20 employees who identified that they want a coach in this coming year, but I only have one coach, we are gonna have to take some steps to really think through how we might prioritize that. And we've really thought about readiness of the employee to take on the work, because it's a commitment and it's agreement -- it's an agreement on behalf of the teacher, the home visitor that they really want this and they really want to move forward. We are trying to adopt the model of at least once a month that the coach and the coachee meet, that there is some time for some observation -- the coach to observe the coachee -- and that they have some time one-on-one at least once a month. But our preference, moving forward, is preferably two times a month.

Nancy: Okay. We have had -- Every question has been excellent. And I see that there is another one. Is it okay? Can we move on? It's a burning question? Okay.

Woman: It's just that I wanted to share that we are doing the coaching, and it's something new for us. And it's like a pilot, like you said.

Nancy: Okay.

Woman: It's like a pilot. And I've been with the program 15 years, and at the time, my title is quality-assurance coordinator. Well, this year, when we started the season, they said, "Now you are going to be also coaches". Something brand-new. And it's kind of hard. I've been a supervisor, but, like I said, I'm a

quality coordinator. So it's been kind of hard, because I was used to monitoring and mentoring. And then to come into a classroom and sort of put the -- put the shades here so that I don't see anything except what the teacher is doing, but it's an experience. And I'm enjoying it, but I want to learn more about it. That's why I'm here. But, no, they didn't give us extra pay for that. [Laughter]

Heath: That's a -- That's a... Absolutely. That's an excellent lead-in to our next section, where Nancy is really going to explore a bit further about reflective supervision and coaching.

Nancy: Yeah. So, I know that there are lots of questions and discussion. I saw a lot of hands. I'm excited about that. And for any that feel like, "Boy, we got to the whole end and we didn't get a chance to bring up our question," we'll be here for anyone who wants to stop for a few minutes afterwards. And you do, in those slides, whether you already downloaded them or you are going to later, our contact information is there so you can get in touch. So, that would be very welcome. And I just wanted to say a word about the slides. If you did download them or you've got them up on your screen, you are going to find that we've subtracted a few out because we realized there might be quite a bit of discussion, and wanted to leave as much time as we can for that. So, if you notice, you have a slide, and haven't put it up on the screen, and we are not talking about it. Nothing went wrong. And there is even some elaboration of each of those slides in the handout that looks like a chart with some orange bars at the top. And so -- And there are additional resources listed in that handout. And I know only a few people can even see what I am holding, but it is your second handout in the packet of handouts.

Okay, so, let's start looking at some of these questions that can come up about who is doing what and what is the difference between reflective supervision and coaching. We came in as a group, both those who are listening and watching from a distance and those who are here, pretty clear that there are differences and distinctions. And that's a great starting place for this conversation. Let's look first at some of the commonalities between the two. I think that both -- and I think this is of very fundamental importance -- are relationship-based approaches to supporting staff. And so they share a commitment to the principles of relationship-based work, and I'll just quickly say what these are. And these are based on the work of Judith Bertacchi, who wrote an article on relationship-based organizations in 1996, that I think is still a wonderful reference. And so those principles include the idea of collaboration, working together to identify goals.

And we heard Heath talking about that when he was talking about developing buy-in and the importance of taking time for everybody to grapple with the questions and understand the meaning of making this change to them and their work. Okay? And coming up with mutual definitions to work from, because those aren't just definitions, right? They help us make decisions about who is getting what kind of support and when, and what we are trying to do. Communication is important in terms of everyone is free to share their thoughts and ideas. It's safe, and it doesn't matter where you are in the hierarchy. That's not it. You are a person. You have a point of view. You have things to share and experiences that are important. So, open communication, being aware of context.

All of those things -- context is a great big idea -- all of those things that affect how we feel, how we act, what we think -- that can have to do with what we bring with us, as Heath described really well, that can cause us to have particular reactions. It can have to do with our physical surroundings and

circumstances, where we work, where we are finding ourselves, what the culture of our organization is, the influences that come from our communities, from society, from who we are in our societies, and the interactive experiences we have, based on -- oh, I don't know -- our racial background, our own cultural background, our sexual orientation -- all those things that can make a difference in how people respond to us and the experiences we have. We want to -- We can't know everything about all of that for each person, but we can be aware those things have influences. Respect for the varied perspectives and points of views and value systems that people bring. A commitment to ongoing learning and growth.

So, this is sort of bringing echoes of what Heath was saying, as I talk about this, to doing our best, to always improving. A commitment to reflective practice, to carving out the time, as hard as it is to do, to slow down, to step back a little bit, and to think together with somebody else about the work and what we are learning from it, and to high professional standards. And those high professional standards can be everything from maintaining ethical standards to the standards of the professions we are members of, and to just doing a darn good job, doing the best we can all the time.

Heath: Nancy, I just want to add to the commitment. One thing that we practice is, if someone says, "Oh, I don't have time for supervision this month, I'm just too busy," that's usually a key indicator that it is time to slow down, and maybe not in that moment. And you might want to honor the employee to say, "Okay, let's reschedule, but let's reschedule for soon, not next month, but for the next day or, at a minimum, the next week," because it is an indicator that it is time to stop and really think about what's happening and how we can reflect upon the work that's happening.

Nancy: I think that's really important. Thank you. And you know, there are some shared competencies. And that might get to that last comment we heard that there are some shared competencies among people who provide reflective supervision and people who provide coaching. Being able to sit back and wait a bit for the other to find their own solutions is one of them. You know, it's easy to want to jump in and fix or give advice or start teaching. And sometimes people gain more when we can give that time. Being a good listener, really being able to hear the spoken and unspoken messages and be active about it, clarifying, using the powerful questions that we gave the guide to, to help in the listening process.

Being self-aware -- "What's coming up in me, and why? Where is that coming from, and how am I impacting other people?" Being aware of others' feelings, being able to empathize with those feelings, even when we haven't shared the exact same experiences. Being able to encourage reflection and being able to build a relationship in which people feel safe, because whether you are exploring what's going on inside you or the impact of your past and what's getting triggered as a result, or whether you are opening up and saying, "There is something here I don't know, I need to learn more about," and being able to say that and make yourself vulnerable, requires a relationship that supports you and that you feel okay in.

Heath was talking before about checking the boxes and that that can be a real function of supervision. Supervisors have a pretty broad role, don't they? And this is where we are gonna start getting into some of the distinctions between the two roles. And, maybe, this will be helpful for those that are moving one role into another or adopting new responsibilities. But supervisors have these three broad areas that I think about that they are responsible for, over time, with all the people they supervise. Administrative

things, making sure policies, procedures, and practices are being followed as they should, and taking care of needed paperwork, and reporting. Those kinds of things are administrative responsibilities. And then there is what can be called clinical responsibilities. And that might have to do with just all those routines that we follow to make sure that the things that are supposed to be happening for children and families indeed are. So, that might have to do with making assessments, coming up with curriculum to respond or family-service plans to respond, making sure referrals getting made and followed up as needed -- those sorts of things. And there may be some teaching and guiding that happens in the course of helping assure that all these client and case-management things are happening. And then there is the reflective aspect that I think we heard about and, you know, has to do really with understanding how one relationship influences another, and learning to use that in order to purposely work toward the outcomes you want to get for children and for families.

So, that reflective-supervision relationship in itself can be a model and an example of the kind of relationship we are encouraging our staff members to establish with children and their families. And so the relationship and understanding it being a part of it, that's very central to reflective supervision. Now, in reality, you don't sit down with someone and say, "Okay, let's do administrative supervision now, and now let's do reflective supervision." In reality, I think we integrate all these things, because actually if something is not happening according to policies or rules that we all know are part -- like, you have to show up for work on time -- if something -- there may be something to reflect on to understand what's happening that's getting in the way. And there may be something to reflect on even when you are implementing an approach to correcting a difficulty in somebody's performance. Okay? Making sense? Okay.

So, broad scope of responsibilities and delivering a support, in terms of reflective supervision, that you get from the day you walk in the door to the day you leave. It's not about how expert or experienced you are. Our interpersonal issues still resonate with us, and dealing -- recognizing them, being aware of them, improving our ability to regulate our behavior in a deep way that's related to changes in us, as we are developing and growing ourselves, is an ongoing need. Coaching can be thought of also as having three aspects, and they are all focused around the function of learning, okay? So, coaching can be implemented to help with transfer of learning. Heath mentioned that. There is research that says, if you go to a class or a workshop, you are going to get a lot more benefit from it, in terms of tangible changes in behavior, if somebody can coach you in addressing the real-life issues that come up as you work to implement it. Just-in-time learning can be a part of coaching, too, when just somebody runs into a, "Wow, I have a kid that, like, throws tantrums all day long in the classroom, and I'm so tied up at trying to attend to him, but nothing is helping. I need help with this." Just-in-time help. And then fidelity to standards.

So, suppose you are implementing an evidence-based model like C.L.A.S.S. You might need some help with someone standing by your side, helping you implement the practices as intended. So that would be an example. So, a coach might do all these things, or coaching might be put in place in order to help with one of these things, okay? Very much more focused and very much more focused on the learning and skill-building aspects. And while a relationship is important, the importance of it here, I think, is to

support that learning and skill-building and increase in competence and confidence. Make sense? Questions? Any questions about this or comments?

Donna: We have a question requesting more information about the clinical.

Nancy: Okay.

Donna: There is no specifics. They just asked for more about it.

Nancy: Okay. Well, I'll say a couple things and hope it gets at your question. And if somehow it didn't, I do invite you to e-mail with any further questions or clarifications. So, there is a range of things, in terms of clinical responsibilities, we want to pay attention to. And some of the words on this slide might relate more to mental health programs and some might relate a little more to programs that are delivering early childhood education and care services. So, there might be the idea, for example, that when someone comes in, one of the first things that happens is you get to know them and their strengths and their needs. So we want to make sure that that assessment happens with every child and with every parent in whatever way you do that in your program. There might be, then, developing how you respond to supporting those strengths and building on them and addressing areas of need that are identified, so that could be the intervention, although that might not be the term you are using in your program at all.

It might be more like, "Well, what's going to be the curriculum for this infant?" Okay? "How are we individualizing? Where are they developmentally? What's the next step we want to scaffold?" Okay, so, that would be a clinical... you know, a part of the clinical service to the child. For the family, it might be, "We have a family where they've acknowledged that sometimes things get scary between the partners and they want to get some help and counseling and maybe make sure that nothing violent happens." So, how are we gonna help them get connected with the supports that will help? So, those are some examples. And so you have a plan, and you spend some time reviewing that plan and seeing what kind of progress is being made or if any changes need to be made. When do you go back and assess again? Okay? That might happen at routine times. So, those are some examples of the clinical aspects of the work. And, hopefully, that is helpful with that question. And, again, if there is further questions, I don't know if we'll get to all of that right now, but very much welcome, using the e-mail address you have to ask further questions. Anything else?

Heath: Nancy, I just want to add that some programs have a model of case conferencing.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: And so, in our program, we case-conference on every single child, every family two times a year. And this is an opportunity to really look at the individual and to think about individualization for what's happening in the classroom for the child and/or what's the learning that's happening and what's happening for the family and the child's health, as well. So, that's one model that some programs use to ensure that you are really focusing on the clinical aspect.

Nancy: Mm-hmm. And that's a way, too, to assure some program-wide consistency in thinking and approaches. So that's a great example.

Woman: Thank you. Heath, can I ask you a clarifying question, please? Does -- Do all of staff have an administrative supervisor and a reflective supervisor, and just some have a coach?

Heath: Yes. I just want to make clear that the administrative supervisor is the same as the reflective supervisor, so we are really blending that -- those responsibilities that are up on the screen. And then, yes, at this point, we have one coach for education or early intervention, who's gonna work with 8 to 10 people, and then we have a part-time coach who's working on the family services side, so really thinking about our work with families, and that person is part-time right now, so will probably work with 4 to 5 people, on the average.

Nancy: Okay. Let's take another question here. Our mic was temporarily outside the room.

Man: How long does it take for someone to be trained to offer reflective supervision? And is there a certain background that's better fitted to be in reflective supervision?

Nancy: Boy, that's a really good question. I don't know that I could give you how long does it take, because it kind of depends on the starting point. But when people are newly learning it and getting ready to implement it, when I've worked with them, it's been a process taking place over at least a year, combining training and individual consultation. You can certainly provide workshop and initial -- And people who are reflective supervisors here probably could find you afterwards and talk about some of their experiences with how they learned.

Sometimes people will even learn on the job from the experience of being supervised by someone who knows reflective supervision and who purposely shares the strategies and how they decide what they are doing. So, there probably aren't courses. Or, at least, if there are, I haven't really seen courses people sign up for -- this. And can anybody do it? I think that you need to look for certain characteristics, like we were talking about these competencies. You know, are they -- are they there? These are examples, because there are other competencies, as well. But are they there, or are they there strongly enough that they can be built upon and expanded upon? Is it a matter of what kind of degree you have? I think, no, because I think, at its heart, reflective supervision is a relationship in which one person slows down to be there and to be present for the other and, without fear, will open up areas to discuss.

Now, we all have our limits, right? And we have to operate within them. So if I feel like someone is starting to share something with me and I am at a loss where to go with it, and that can happen. I mean, I can be fairly comfortable, with my counseling background. People can bring up things and it's stuff I know what to do with. And I am not providing therapy in supervision, by the way, but we can talk about this issue and how it's impacting their work. But something could come up that you feel overwhelmed by, right? And to be able to say, "That's really important. I'm actually not sure how best to help you with that, but let's see if we can figure out where you can get help." So, to know when you want to ask someone to find another source of help, I think, is an important competency. Given that, I think everyone can learn how to use powerful questions, how to establish a safe and trusting relationship, and how to help people increase their self-awareness and their empathy with others. And so, you supervise, I think, from who you are and what your competencies are. And so how Heath delivers reflective

supervision and how I deliver it might look a little different in some ways, and yet be based on the same practices and principles.

Heath: Nancy, I just want to comment. I, too, don't think there is a magic number. I think, though, the best experiences that I've had have been when it's been modeled, or role-modeled, for me. And so when I've had a supervisor who has truly been able to offer self-reflection and ask those questions, in those moments, that's when I'm saying, "You know what, I'm going to put that -- I'm going to -- I want to answer them and I want to think through my experience, but that's -- that's a question I want to be able to ask someone when I get asked a very similar question from a supervisee." And you know, I've been practicing reflective supervision, both as a supervisee and a supervisor, for over 15 years, and I'm still learning every day. It's not perfect. Sometimes I might not ask the best questions. Sometimes I may be having a bad day on my own. But it's constant learning, and I'm self-improvement. And I feel like, each day, I'm trying to become a better supervisor, but I'm not sure there is a number to say, "Yep, after 15 years, you are gonna truly get this."

Nancy: So, in some ways, it is a process, just as being the best practitioner is a process, too. And so these are some definitions I'm just putting forward for consideration. And I think one of the importances of this is to clarify the distinctions even if one person is delivering both. You kind of know what you are doing and why and what strategies you are using, is why reflective supervision, I think, most importantly, revolving around that relationship building that happens and the learning that happens and the understanding that what happens in one relationship can powerfully influence others. Heath kind of talked about the importance, at the organizational level, of having relationships that are the kind we want our supervisors to build with our staff -- right? -- and that we want our staff to build with our families. So, the commitment to reflective supervision begins at the leadership level and is implemented by staff. And coaching revolves around the idea of helping people learn and do their best and gain confidence and skills not only for applying to the problem or question at hand but for carrying a process forward to help with learning when new problems arise, including recognizing when to ask for help.

Heath: Nancy, I just want to comment on the supervision aspect in that it takes buy-in and it's not something that a supervisor does to a supervisee.

Nancy: That's right.

Heath: ...and that it really takes buy-in both of both parties to come to the table and a willingness to really reflect upon the work. And I can remember, when you came and did our training with our staff, there was a young teacher who stood up and said, "I'm not too sure about this. You are asking me to do something I'm not sure I'm really comfortable with, and I've never done this before, and I'm not even sure I want to do this with someone." And I commended her for having an openness to even just expressing herself and her feelings, because that's the first step, is being able to share, "Here's where I'm at." Now, in the end, she may decide that this is not for her, and she may find herself in a place of saying, "Okay, I'm no longer a match for this organization if this is the value of the organization." But there is an opportunity for her to figure out, "Is this something I really want." And I'm hopeful that she, through the process, is able to say, "This is of value to me, moving forward, and it is something I really want to have as a part of my work experience."

Nancy: And I would say, too, then that when you talk about... you know, that kind of highlights the collaboration idea in relationship-based work and also points out that the starting place has to do with where the supervisee is and where the coachee is, as well, for coaching. So, if there is not much trust yet, and not so, you know, "I don't know, why would I want you in my business? You know, I don't know about this," that you may spend a good amount of time establishing trust before you are able to go deeper, and that would be one of the skills of a reflective supervisor and could be also an important skill for a coach. And I think that we've talked about the central purpose in terms of building capacity and competence through coaching and improving practice. So, that's a broad, overall central purpose, very much focused on abilities to manage what comes at us through these intense relationships we are involved in. And coaching's central purpose focuses on learning competency building and knowledge building. Okay? We can think of key elements in reflective supervision. Well, reflection is one. They call it reflective supervision. So how about that? So, the time to look at and learn from experience and the encouragement and support to do it, working together in a mutual way and meeting regularly. Okay? As regularly as possible.

Coaching involves the elements of joint planning, working together to identify a goal, and then decide who's going to do what in furtherance of that goal between each session. And observation. Heath talked about using observation of a coachee. The coachee might want to observe the coach at times, too, to get an idea of how something is done. Reflection -- and here we are talking not so much about reflection on relationships and what's going on inside me, but reflection on what I did, what happened, how it worked, and anything I might want to change or add. Okay? And taking action and then providing feedback, whether it's affirming and just saying, "Yes, I heard you, I understand," or whether it's positive, "Look how well that worked, I'm so excited about this." So, providing feedback to support the efforts to move forward. So, we talked about providing a bit of demonstration. Somebody asked for that from our participating audience.

We have 10 minutes remaining. We can't stay for another hour, huh? So... [Laughter] Okay. I think what we'll be able to demonstrate is just the very opening, how we might begin to open up the conversation and how that might look a little bit different, opening up a coaching conversation, and how that might look -- well, how it might look there and how supervision might look a little different. Okay? So, are we ready for that? Heath, are we ready?

Heath: I was gonna ask, are we going to do Example 1 or 2?

Nancy: Example 1 is the biting one?

Heath: Yes.

Nancy: We can do... What do you prefer?

Heath: Doesn't matter.

Nancy: Okay, quick reflection. Okay, why don't we use example... the home-visiting example? I think people really resonated when we brought those up.

Heath: Okay.

Nancy: Okay.

Heath: Okay, so, in this role model, I'm going to be the home visitor and Nancy, at the moment, is going to be the supervisor.

Nancy: Oh, thanks.

Heath: And so I am sharing with...

Nancy: It's okay to do? Okay.

Heath: Thank you. So, Nancy, I was on a home visit the other day, and I was mortified. I walked into the building, and it smelled like urine. There was trash in the entryway. And I'm not really sure if I need to make a report here to Child Protective or not. But then, when I knocked on the door, to my surprise, mom answered the door very friendly. And her apartment is really clean and organized and very different than the entryway. And I don't know how I can help support this mom in this situation, because they have to walk through that every day.

Nancy: So, this experience really just stirred up a lot?

Heath: Yeah, I -- feel really uncomfortable with it. I mean, I can't imagine having to walk through that every day to get to my apartment.

Nancy: Mm-hmm. So, it left you... It sounds like it left you really thinking about this and wondering, putting yourself in the place of that mother and thinking, "What if I had to come home to this every day?"

Heath: Yeah, and, like, can I ask her about it? Should I not ask her about it? What do you think?

Nancy: Okay. So, I'm going to stop at this point. I'm actually dying to go on. I hate to stop. But you can see that what we began doing here -- okay? -- had to do with what happened to Heath when he got in this situation? He had a powerful experience. That could be an overwhelming experience. Okay? And actually, it was based on, we were sharing stories with each other yesterday, actually, in getting ready, and it was based on something I went through, where my kids were the same age as this mother's. And when I went home, I kept flashing back. You know, I'd look at my kids and picture them walking through that building, or "What if it was me, every day, having to try to protect my children and keep them safe in that environment?" So it rocked me. It really did. Okay, so, that was a supervisory demo. Let's...

Heath: One thing I just want to reflect upon is, if you notice, it could have been easy for Nancy to provide judgment. "Oh, my God. I can't believe that." It could have been easy for her to say, "Yeah, we should make a report to..." -- immediately jump to those places, but she didn't. She stopped and she really spent some time really trying to focus on how it felt for me, what it was like for me as the employee, what am I experiencing, going through that, to really reflect upon my own feelings of the situation?

Nancy: So, good. That's pointing out that we are going to get to that clinical or case-management part, because that's an important issue, would not be ignored, but it's not necessarily the starting place,

Okay? So, let's just see if we can approach this really challenging situation from a coaching perspective, where the coach's role is very different. Isn't it? And suppose Heath just described the same thing to me. Okay, so, I am going to give this a shot. And those of you who are coaches may have a couple of ideas to share about where you might go with it. There is probably 100 right ways or at least more than one. And so let's just see. Is it okay if we proceed? We know the story, and we just start with the coaching? Okay. So – so, this is your second time meeting with this mother. Can you... Sort of, let's think together about, again, about the goals that you established with her for working together.

Heath: So, in my first meeting with mom, I learned that she just started a new job, and her goal is to really be able to get to work on time. And she is concerned about that because she has to be to work at 8:15, but her childcare provider only opens the door at 8:00. And for her, she is nervous about the -- that timeframe. And so her goal is to get to work on time.

Nancy: Okay. Okay, so, do you see that as a goal that you and she can approach at this point? Is it one that you feel you saw her able to start taking some steps about? Were you able to take any steps from last time to this time?

Heath: So, we brainstormed several different options.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Heath: And mom really wanted to take some time to think about some different options. So, for instance, one of the options that we talked about is she has a neighbor who uses the same childcare provider, and was there an ability for them to share roles, where one could drop off the children and one could pick up the children at the end of the day. That was something that mom thought of on her own. The other is, she thought about talking with her employer to find out -- you know, to explain the situation and to find out what are the requirements and what happens if she doesn't show up till 8:20, so that it's open -- that's she is open -- being open and honest with her employer from the beginning.

Nancy: So, I guess I have two thoughts. I mean, I'm excited to hear that she made that much progress already. What a great start, yeah.

Heath: She's very open to really thinking through it and trying to think through some of the challenges, as well as some of the solutions.

Nancy: So, so many competencies that I'm sure you pointed out to her, you know, that she did a lot there and showed a lot of ability.

Heath: Not sure I did, actually.

Nancy: Oh, okay. So that's something to think about, too. And I can see, you know, from what you said, how much was going on and how it might have been hard to remember to do that. So, in terms of you and I thinking about your goals for next time, maybe we can identify some of those things you can do to keep supporting the mother's strengths. I also want to say, I really noticed what you said about how hard it was to go into that building and what you encountered there. And probably in coaching isn't the

best place to really get into that, but I'm wondering who you have that you can talk with here about what all that felt like and how it affected you, because I think that's really important.

Heath: Well, I've reached out to one of my coworkers who's been a mentor of mine, to ask her if she's ever encountered this same situation. And I'm really thinking about talking to my supervisor about that, as well.

Nancy: And so maybe those two steps could be part of the goals and the action steps that we put in place in your plan as having some identified things you can do when something really powerfully affects you like that and is important to be able to talk about. That sounds great. Okay.

So, we have about 5 minutes left. I'm just saying that so everyone knows that if we start talking twice as fast, there is a reason. But I just wanted to see if that helped sort of bring to life some of those distinctions we were talking about. Did it leave you... Did you think, "Oh, my God. What is she doing?" Do you disagree with anything that happened? Anyone have a suggestion or comment? It's okay to have that, even though we are near the end. Yes? I need to bring you a mic, though. Suddenly realized I can't ask someone else to do that, because I'm holding -- we are holding both of them.

Woman: I've been a coach and a mentor. And sometimes it would help, in this situation, for me, is to write my questions ahead of time, because that would lead me to the goal or the action steps. So, while I was listening to both of you, I was just -- just for me and my scripts at the back of my head, I might want to ask, "What I'm hearing, you see, is that, mom already has other options for her to get to her job on time. What do you think would be the next step for her?" I mean, for me to clarify it with my mentee, it would be a little bit shorter, because the answer I might want to be getting for myself for documentation purposes is something short, too.

Nancy: That's beautiful. That was a good addition. And I bet you, many of you who work in coaching or supervision have some additional places that you would go. Actually, I was almost in just... You know, you can't tell what people are thinking when you are watching them, but I had, like, "Oh, my God. Which way should I go here? I have about 2 minutes." Thank you so much for sharing that. That's an excellent strategy.

Heath: Nancy, what I think is important in the coaching is to bring it back to the goal. And so here I was, talking about this particular situation, but you -- pointed out that we didn't say this from the beginning, but the goal here in this relationship is to really work on me, as the employee, how am I supporting families and pointing out their strengths. And you really brought it back to that, as well as said, "Okay, but here's the boundary, and I noticed these other things, but here's -- where are you going to take that to, where are you going to get that support for your feelings around this?"

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Woman: Just want to add, too, it's a self-reflection on my part, too, because I am becoming to know my adult learning style myself, so I think that's where I'm leading to, and sometimes it kind of helps me to go back and pause a little bit and see, "Okay, this is not my style, but let me go this way."

Nancy: Okay. So, that kind of writing and thinking about "What is it, and where am I going?" is good for self-awareness, self-reflection, and your own growth in your role. Donna?

Donna: These are wrap-up questions, I think. One of them is, "Do you have any research showing the impact on staff turnover? Have you done any digging to see if there is any research on that?"

Nancy: That's very hard to find in the nonprofit arena. I have found it. There is research documenting some of this in the for-profit sector, in terms of increased staff engagement and decreased turnover and also better outcomes in that arena, which translates, in the end, to profits made. So there is some researching demonstrating supportive supervision makes a really big difference. And this is something our field is working on taking up. And there are efforts connected with Zero to Three to help move that research forward and is something we very much need. So if anyone is looking for a project. Thank you for the question. Is there another one?

Donna: There is.

Nancy: We have about one more minute.

Donna: "How are the coaches and supervisors chosen? Are they self-selected to influence buy-in, or are they assigned?"

Heath: So, like I said, we have one coach for education and early intervention. So, in our situation, it's not, but I do think that you really have to think about the right match and the right fit between two people. And that's -- the same thing goes for a supervisor-supervisee relationship, and we often talk about that, particularly if we are going to change supervisors or do any sort of restructuring. I also -- Oh, sorry, I'm just spacing exactly what you just said before. Oh, the research. The agency I worked for before I went to Zero to Three, one of the top things that employees valued about the agency was reflective supervision. And so that was something that came out in surveys. So it's not necessarily research-based, but, every year, we did an annual survey about employee satisfaction of their job, and that was one of the -- always the top-rated thing that employees valued about the work.

Nancy: So, in closing, we had a couple of comments and some discussion about getting buy-in. We've provided you with a couple of tools to help you with that if that's a process that you would like to take up in your work. One is this empathy map, which actually can be used for many, many purposes. But one can be for gathering people -- let's say, a team that's planning implementation -- to say, "Let's see if we can kind of put ourselves in the place of our staff members and identify what kinds of things they think about, they see, they do, they feel, they hear every day." To use those to help us think about, "How are they likely to react and respond?" So, this is a reflective activity and discussion that you can lead with your team to help in planning, "How are we going to introduce this, how are we going to open up the discussions?" To follow that up, we've provided a discussion guide that you can download that lists a number of questions to open up the thinking about, "Well, what do we mean here by 'supervision' and 'reflective supervision?' "What do we mean by coaching? What could we expect it to do? What questions do we have?" So, there is a good number of discussion questions.

It's not a process for implementation that we gave you, because we believe you could use this to surface the kinds of things that would help you decide upon your process. We think using this could be part of -- These two tools could be part of that year of preparation that Heath was talking about. And it seems amazing to think about taking that long to introduce something new, but, you know, when you think about the organization using a reflective and relationship-based process to introduce these supports, it makes total sense. So -- whew -- we did a lot, right? Deep breath, everybody. First thing in the morning, we jumped in and really got going. And that's really all due to everybody who is participating -- our virtual audience, our in-person audience -- and your great comments and questions. Would have loved to get to every single one of them. So, very happy to have you approach us here or to get in touch with us later. Thank you so much. And go on to have a great closing of the conference and a great trip home.

Heath: Thank you, everyone.

Nancy: Okay. [Applause]