

Coaching Resources

What coaching conversations are and what they're not?

What they are

- A space to think
- A guided conversation
- A way to help a colleague tap into what they already know, their inner knowledge
- A way to motivate and help a colleague feel more resourceful
- A way to help a colleague overcome what is holding them back
- Focused on individual & organisation
- Action oriented

What they're not

- A cosy unfocussed chat
- Telling, instructing, teaching
- Managing or assessing
- Imposing your agenda
- A way to get people to do what you want
- Passive
- Counselling or therapy

Coaching Conversation Skills:

Active Listening - which means that you will often spend a high percentage of the time silent while the colleague is speaking in a coaching conversation

Acting as a catalyst - encouraging the colleague to see different perspectives and solutions through skilful questioning and reframing situations

“What might someone else do in your situation?”

Observing themes and patterns - helping to illuminate links and connections between problems and the organisational context - seeing the big picture

“You mention that saying no is a problem for you, tell me about the last time you were able to say no? How does your organisation support you to manage your workload?”

Reflecting back - giving reflective feedback to a colleague after a tense meeting "Sometimes when you get anxious you sound aggressive, when really you are worried, but it gets misinterpreted and the others get defensive"

Self-awareness - when coaching, the manager needs to be aware of their own strengths, preferences and assumptions. "Have you noticed how you get on great with the marketing team but struggle to communicate to the finance team? Why do you think this is?"

Building rapport - the ability to build a strong relationship with your colleague, so that you both feel able to bring up real issues. Some times you may feel that it is appropriate to disclose something about yourself that your colleague didn't know. "Yes, I had a similar experience with a previous manager and it made me feel...." This can help to build rapport, trust and common ground.

Being truly present - whole heartedly there for your colleague in a supporting and accepting way. Don't focus on writing notes, or be distracted by what is going on outside, your sole focus should be on your colleague.

A Coaching Model

One model to use as a framework for coaching is GROW, this is a good place for the novice coach to start.

GROW was created by Sir John Whitmore (1992); its origins are from Sports coaching

- G for Goal - firstly you ask your colleague what their goal is for this coaching conversation, e.g. "What is your ultimate goal or target?"
- R for Reality - next you ask for a description of what the current situation is around the I issue, e.g. "What is the situation exactly?"
- O for Options - then you ask what different options are available to your colleague to resolve the issue, e.g. "What are the different ways that you could approach this issue?"
- W for Will - lastly you explore your colleague's decision and the strength of their conviction to see it through, e.g. "What help do you need and how are you going to get it?"

The use of probing open questions

http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/Socratic_questions.htm is very important for this approach.

More detail on GROW can be found in Whitmore, J (2002) Coaching for Performance, Brearley <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Coaching-Performance-Growing-People-Purpose/dp/1857883039>

There are many other approaches which are underpinned by different psychological theories, such as Analytic, Person-centred and Behaviourist approaches to coaching.