

Session 21: Creating a safe space to work together

CHARLIE MITCHELL



Today we are exploring

- ✓ Creating a safe space for working together, what safety means and how we do that
- ✓ Using contracting to increase safety in the coaching relationship
- ✓ What is confidentiality?
- ✓ What we can do when things don't go to plan: signposting, support from other coaches, supervision
- ✓ Links to Coactive coaching
- ✓ What this means for you personally
- ✓ The importance in a parenting context

What does safe space mean to you?

- ✓ Where is your safe space?
- ✓ What makes it safe?
- ✓ How does safety feel in your body?
- ✓ What could make it even more safe?
- ✓ Safe to do, be or have what?
- ✓ What helps you to create a safe space with someone else?
- ✓ How do you know it is safe?
- ✓ What do you do if it stops feeling safe?
- ✓ What else do you notice?

Definition of safe space

"a place or environment in which a person or category of people can **feel confident** that they will **not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm**." (Oxford Dictionary definition)

Discrimination:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Using contracting to create a safe space

- ✓ **Have certain key things in every contract:**
  - ✓ such as confidentiality and permission to stim / fidget / pace / remove shoes – bring all of you!
- ✓ **Adapt the contract to meet the needs of the coachee:**
  - ✓ if they are already having counselling, how will you keep this safe specifically focused on the coaching
- ✓ **Notice if there is something that needs adding to the contracting during the process to keep the safe space:**
  - ✓ The coachee discloses they are dyslexic during one of the sessions. Does anything need adapting to meet their needs?
- ✓ **Recognise the importance of the physical space:**
  - ✓ Where are you meeting?
  - ✓ Any sensory experiences to consider? Heat, light, sudden / repetitive noise, smell
  - ✓ Can the discussion be overheard?
  - ✓ Will someone barge into the room unannounced?

What is confidentiality?

Agreement not to disclose unless required to do so or not doing so could cause harm to self or others

"Confidentiality refers to the coach's duty to not disclose any information obtained during the course of the coaching relationship without the express permission of the client.

The right to confidentiality belongs to the client, not to you as a coach.

Therefore, your client can set the boundaries of confidentiality; however, it is your obligation as the coach to ensure that these limits are clearly agreed upon in either a verbal or written agreement with the client and any sponsors.

Remember that even with a clear agreement, there is still a conscious practice that needs to take place by you as the coach. Impulsive behavior, as well as insensitivity—lacking empathy and compassion for your client's needs—can lead to unethical conduct including breach of confidentiality."

✓**Private and confidential: Ethical Implications –** Examples of cases where a coach has breached confidentiality: https://coachingfederation.org/blog/private-and-confidential

Global Code of Ethics

- ✓ Mention confidentiality in the contracting section 2.3 Before starting work with a client, members will explain and strive to ensure that the client and sponsor know and fully understand… **confidentiality arrangements**.
- ✓ Mention confidentiality in the section on ending the relationship 2.29: Maintenance of agreed confidentiality of all information relating to clients and sponsors

Confidentiality

2.13 When working with clients, members will maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless the release of information is required by law.

2.14 Members will have a clear agreement with clients and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality will not be maintained (e.g., illegal activity, danger to self or others) and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality where possible unless the release of information is required by law.

2.15 Members will keep, store and dispose of all data and records of their client work including digital files and communications, in a manner that ensures confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in their client's country regarding data protection and privacy.

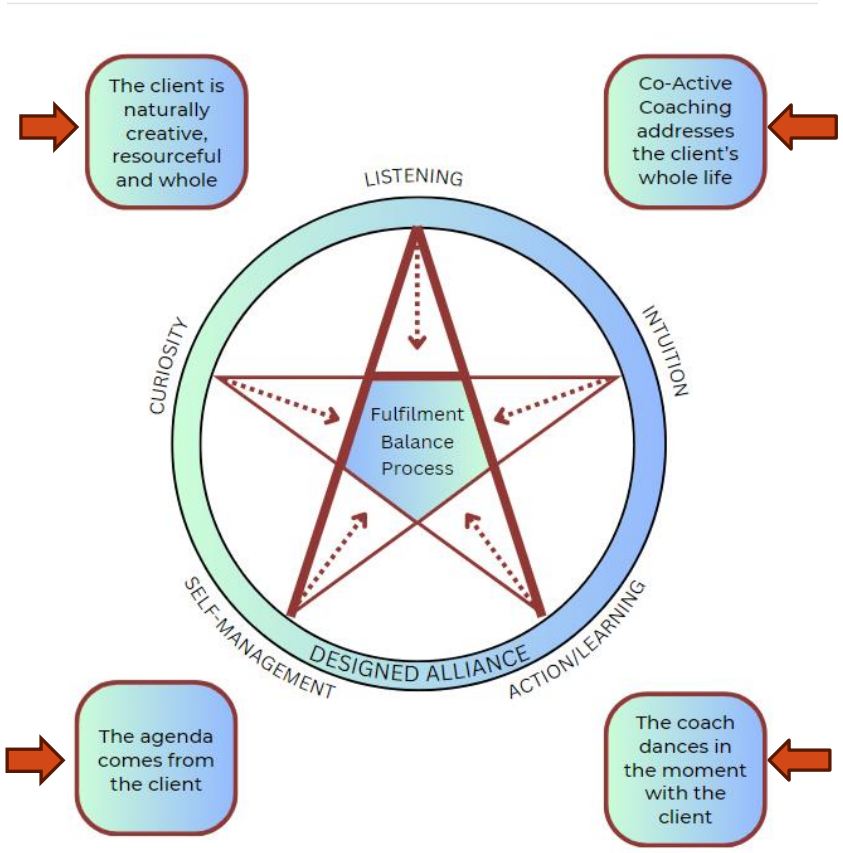
2.16 Members will inform clients that they are receiving supervision and identify that the client may be referred to anonymously in this context. The client should be assured that the supervision relationship is itself confidential.

2.17 If the client is a child or a vulnerable adult, members will make arrangements with the client's sponsors or guardian to ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality in the best interests of the client, whilst also complying with all relevant legislation and safeguarding practices.

What to do when things don't go to plan

- ✓ Discuss it with the coachee – what would help them to feel safe? Unless it is not safe to do so because of a confidentiality / safety issue – contact safeguarding or coach supervisor if not sure
- ✓ Signpost them to specific support from another source if that is helpful
- ✓ Get support from other coaches within the coaching community:
  - ✓ What would they do differently?
  - ✓ Do they have any suggestions about how to move forward?
- ✓ Discuss during coaching supervision:
  - ✓ What was the situation?
  - ✓ What went well?
  - ✓ What could have been done differently?
  - ✓ How will you take it forward to maintain coachee safety in future?
- ✓ When Confidentiality needs to be broken: https://coachingstudies.org/resources/articles/break-coaching-confidentiality/

Safety in coactive coaching



- ✓ The coachee is naturally creative, resourceful and whole, so what ways would they like to set up the safety in the relationship?
- ✓ Be specific that it can be about other aspects of their life, not just what they are bringing to the coaching
- ✓ The agenda comes from them and so does their sense of safety. It will be different for different people and may change over time
- ✓ When dancing in the moment the coach might sense something that could support the safety of the relationship – it can be explicitly spoken about

What this means for you personally

- ✓ Reflect on your own sense of safety – what helps you to feel safe in a coaching relationship
- ✓ Use the questions at the start of this session to help you reflect
- ✓ Identify 3 areas you want to practice at the moment – with awareness that you can explore other aspects another time
- ✓ Plan what you will do over the next month to practice creating safety
- ✓ Look through the lens of how these skills are helping you as a parent
- ✓ Consider how creating safety can help other parents

The importance in a parenting context

- ✓ The ability to create safe spaces for people will naturally influence your parenting, whether you focus on it or not
- ✓ You can share this ability with coachees, both formally by showing and explaining, and informally by modelling the approaches in your sessions
- ✓ You can cheery pick the knowledge, skill or behaviour that feels relevant in the context:
  - ✓ What helps the coachee's child to feel safe?
  - ✓ How does the child feel in their body when they are safe?
  - ✓ How can the coachee check in with the child and develop that sense of safety futher?
  - ✓ What can the coachee do to move the sense of safety from the house to other places?
  - ✓ How can the coachee negotiate with others to ensure the child's safety is maintained?