Example Of My Personal Coaching Approach

For the Accredited Certificate in Coach Training, you can either complete a personal coaching approach, similar to this example, or you can complete a written case study (see example). You do not need to do both.

Background

When I first heard about coaching in 1995, there were not many different coaching models available. I had learned about the work of Carl Rogers in an education context (Smith, 2014) and had been really influenced by his person-centred approach.

The first coaching model I became aware of and started to use was the GROW model, created by Sir John Whitmore in the 1980s and disseminated in his book 'Coaching for Performance (1992).

However, I felt my coaching skills and understanding were brough to a new level when I discovered Coactive Coaching (Whitworth, 1998) as part of a coaching course I undertook. I have developed my coaching approach using Coactive Coaching as my foundation, although I do use other models such as Clean Coaching from time to time. (AC 9.5)

Initial contact

When I first have contact with a coachee, I like to offer them information about my approach, an overview of what coaching is and what it isn't and the professional standards I adhere to. I also like to find out more about their situation and what they want to get out of the coaching. (AC 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5)

I do that by sharing the following documentation (please see examples attached):

- CS4U Coaching Approach
- What Is Coaching? Definitions
- Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors
- Pre-coaching questions

I ask the potential coachee to read the documentation in advance of our session if they want to, or we can discuss it in our first session. I ask if they would like to fill in the pre-coaching questions prior to our session, it is helpful for them to send them to me a couple of days before their first session.

Asking them to do this in advance gives me a lot of information about:

- how they respond to requests
- how comfortable they are with written materials
- if they prefer theory or discussion
- their level of interest in coaching
- their commitment to the process

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If they fill in the form, there is other information that I can gain about their priorities, their thought processes, their hopes and fears and what they would like to gain from coaching. (8.1)

The first session

I begin the coaching sessions with a grounding activity, to give a moment for the coachee and I to arrive in the room, leave the busyness of the day behind and get present to what we need to focus on today. See grounding activity worksheet attached.

The coachee and I talk about what coaching is and what it isn't, how it can work alongside therapy, the boundaries of working with me, such as my preference for using the coactive coaching approach (Whitworth et al, 2007) and interspersing it with other models such as Clean Coaching (Clean coaching, 2017). (AC 2.1)

I use the paperwork I have already forwarded to them, along with the following if they feel relevant:

- Terms we use
- Summary of relevant policies and details of where to find the full policies
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We look through or discuss the pre-coaching questions. I listen for what is being said and what is being avoided, along with clarifying their answers to particular questions. We discuss if coaching is suitable and if I am the right coach, making a referral to alternative provision if the fit is not right for any reason. (AC 1.6, 5.1, 6.1, 8.1)

We review the whole of the contract (see document x) and agree the number of sessions, cost, location, how we would work together in between sessions, agree confidentiality and when we would review. We explore what is relevant from the pre-coaching questions in terms of creating outcomes for the coaching programme. We discuss any adaptations that need to be made to the coaching process including different communication styles, learning styles, sensory processing differences and any other changes that could help to meet the client where they are, rather than expecting them to fit into a rigid structure. I confirm that using the coactive coaching approach includes the principle that the coaching agenda remains with the coachee, and explore their perspective of that. (AC 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.4, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 8.1)

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I ask how I can support the coachee most effectively through the coaching, and when and how we will evaluate (see evaluation paperwork).

My preference is to leave the person with at least one action point they can do between now and the next session. This could be anything from our discussion so far, or exploring how they could integrate reflection into their weekly routine, in order to get the most out of the coaching. It could be a coaching assessment tool, such as the 'Wheel of Life' or an accessibility assessment such as the sensory behaviour checklist or 6 human needs assessment. I find these initial assessments can encourage self-belief in the client as they show the person their strengths and how they can manage their vulnerabilities, which can be quite empowering. (AC 3.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3)

We also discuss how much somatic or kinaesthetic work they would like to be involved, and their perspective on inner child healing. This is because I have adapted my way of working to meet different people's needs in a fair and engaging way. However, this is not right for everyone, so it is good for me to know if this would be helpful at this stage. It may be that it becomes more relevant in future sessions, as we develop our coaching relationship. By discussing their individual preferences in ways they may not have before, I find this helps to build deep and lasting trust and rapport with the coachee. (AC 3.1, 3.3, 9.1)

We discuss on a scale of 1-10 how committed they are to the action, and what would make that into a level 10. (AC 8.6)

From this first session, even if we do not continue with the coaching, the coachee can become the subject of my own coaching supervision sessions. I use these sessions to help me gain awareness of my own blind spots, and to help me process things the coachees have said to me, so that I can be the best coach I can be. (see supervision documentation including reflections for further details) (AC 9.2, 9.4)

Second session onwards

After a grounding activity to get fully present with the coachee, I check in with them to find out how the time has been for them since we last met. I often recommend limiting this to a 5 min check in, so that we have plenty of time for the coaching. (AC 4.1, 4.3)

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I then ask about the focus for the session, and what they would like to be different by the end. I often use the processes and tools outlined (see examples attached) in the Coactive Coaching Menu (see attached) or the Clean Coaching Menu (see attached), knowing that these approaches are grounded in good practice and will lead the client to an outcome including change in perspective in the time available. These menus have a number of different activities and tools to help the client generate new options. (see attached reflection sheets for examples of these menus and tools in action) (AC 4.2, 4.5, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3, 8.2)

My personal integrity is really important to me. I want to act professionally, with the needs and interests of the coachee at the heart of the process. It is also important that I act honestly and openly, in line with my values and priorities. For this to be possible I have to understand my own values and also be able to communicate them with coachees. Part of being true to myself, is being able to share my own personal experiences, only when doing so would be of value to the coachee. This can be challenging for me, and potentially for them, as I have had a set of challenging experiences with my children, including neurodivergence, cancer and anorexia. I do my best to judge what to share and when, as part of my observational feedback to support their process. I also need to be clear when I disagree with a client, to avoid colluding with them. I do not want to support actions that could be self-destructive or unethical. (AC 3.5, 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 6.5)

I often explore how certain aspects of the process feel in the coachee's body, if they are comfortable with that, as this gives us both a great deal of information about what is working and what we need to adapt in real time. (AC 4.5, 8.7)

We finish with a commitment check in and grounding activity, along with a question about what would make the coaching have even more of an impact next time. (AC 8.6, 9.1)

I use the standard refection sheet after each session as it helps me to identify what I can improve during my next session. See example reflection sheets attached. (AC 9.2)

I use the coaching diary and critical reflection worksheets when I have a coaching session that has been more complicated or requires a deeper level of reflection. These both help me to link theory to my practice and are useful resources to take with me to supervision. (AC 9.3)

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About half way through the coaching, or session 3 or 4
I do a review of the coaching programme with the coachee. We explore what has been working well, what has not gone so well and what could be different. We explore this in terms of the coaching approach and process including reviewing confidentiality, along with exploring the coachee's changes in behaviour. We use this information to inform the way we both proceed in our future sessions. (AC 3.6, 7.5, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7)
(See example reflections) (AC 9.2)

The final session
At the end of the coaching programme, I use the final session to explore our progress, to celebrate successes and help the coachee to take that step into independence by making commitments, and finding other ways to remain accountable to those commitments. This could involve checking in with other friends or family, or finding a supportive group where these things can be discussed. (AC 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.5, 8.6)

We explore the Kirkpatrick evaluation, paying attention to the different ways the coaching process has impacted on the individual, their learning, their behaviour change and the impact on their family. I take note of any other things that can help me to develop my own personal practice and write these in my personal development action plan at the end of my session. (see personal development action plan) (AC 8.7)

I confirm whether or not they give me permission to use the information they have given me in any publicity, and I make a decision about how to do this appropriately after the session.

We agree if we will have any further contact, if the person wants to find out about my other offerings and if they would like to stay on my mailing list.
We agree how we will both celebrate the ending of the relationship.
I regularly take part in CPD activities to keep my coaching skills and knowledge up to date. Please see my action plan for further details. (AC 9.5)

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1 Smith, M (2014) Carl Rogers, core conditions and education Available at: https://infed.org/mobi/carl-rogers-core-conditions-and-education/ Date accessed: 2/12/2024
2 Whitmore (1992), Coaching for Performance: A practical guide to growing your own skills. London, Nicholas Brealey Publishing
3 Whitworth et al (1998) Coactive Coaching: New skills for coaching people towards success in work and life CA,USA: Davies-Black Publishing
4 Dunbar, A (2017) Clean coaching: The insider guide to making change happen Oxen, UK: Routledge
5 Whitworth et al (2007) Coactive Coaching: New skills for coaching people towards success in work and life CA,USA: Davies-Black Publishing
6 Dunbar, A (2017) Clean coaching: The insider guide to making change happen Oxen, UK: Routledge