Critical Reflection Sheet

This form captures two sessions that you do with a coachee and demonstrates you meet criteria for the Association for Coaching (see below).

The sessions can be at any stage of the coaching relationship. They do not need to be the first two sessions you have with a client. The sessions do not need to be consecutive. They could be the 5th and 9th session you have with a client. The sessions do not need to be with the same client.
This is about showing your own understanding of how to use theory to increase your own coaching skills and knowledge.

The first session you want to focus on:

You reflect on the first session you want to focus on, using the client's feedback and your reflection on theory that related to the session.
Please provide references when you quote or summarise other people's work. You can find out more about how to reference other people's work here: https://www5.open.ac.uk/library/referencing-and-plagiarism/quick-guide-to-harvard-referencing-cite-them-right
Decide what you will do differently in your next session as a result of this critical reflection.

The second session you want to focus on:

You can then undertake your second session with your coachee, doing things differently as you wrote about in your critical reflection. You can reflect again on this second session, notice what went well and what you would do differently in future.

Criteria:
This worksheet meets the following criteria for the Association for Coaching:
9c) Acts on own critical reflections and client feedback to improve coaching practice

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Date of session with client: 13/11/24

Feedback from client:
I have found the resources you shared with me last time helpful. They have helped me to lower my set point and feel more relaxed.

My reflection on a session I had with a client:
I felt cautious as the client was talking about their own perception of the link between their physical and mental health, almost blaming themselves for physical symptoms because of not having processed trauma. While this may have been true, their inner voice was incredibly critical of them and causing them more challenges with their physical health. They could not identity why they were so triggered, based on their past experiences. I felt I needed to challenge their perception of their physical symptoms in order to help release some of the tension that seemed to making their physical symptoms worse. I asked their permission which they gave. I used information they had provided in a previous session about a future event, that could have been triggering a stress response in the current moment. They had been looking in the past for triggers for their current stress response and giving themselves a hard time for not finding it. The future challenge on the horizon helped them to make sense of their current stress response along with ideas about how to reduce the potential stress in the future.

What theory this relates to:
In coactive coaching, there is a section on 'Taking Charge', in the chapter on 'Forwarding and Deepening' (p91, Coactive Coaching, Whitworth et al, 2007):
"In the coactive coaching model, we emphasise that clients have the answers and coaches are unattached; we emphasise that clients are in charge of the agenda. We do want to be crystal clear, however, that the coach is primarily responsible for forwarding and deepening. That's what it means to take charge in the coaching. Clients expect and depend on the coach to do this. You will dance with the answers that clients give and be willing to take the coaching in a new direction that will move them forward and deeper. Taking charge is not about being stubborn. Ultimately the coach takes charge for the client's movement."

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How the theory relates to my reflection and the coachee feedback:
Taking into account the client's feedback, I felt I had the rapport and relationship with the client to ask their permission to explore their challenge from a different perspective. Understanding that from a coactive coaching perspective, while I dance in the moment with the client's agenda, it is also my responsibility to take the coaching in a different direction in order to help the client move forward. We could have continued to look to the past for triggers, which was in line with the client's agenda, although she was not able to identify the challenge in the past.

What I plan to do differently to improve my coaching practice as a result of this critical reflection:
This was a helpful reminder to me about seeing the client wholistically, past present and future. I would like to be able to hold this wholistic view of the client in my mind more frequently, when looking for options for getting a different perspective.

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Date of next session with client: 20/11/24

Feedback from client:
Understanding I was afraid of [the future event] was really helpful. I just hadn't seen how scared I was. Being able to come up with criteria for making a wise decision feels like a really big thing I can use in other areas of my life.

My reflection on a session I had with a client:
The client has made significant progress since the previous session, with a reduction in their physical symptoms as a result of feeling less stressed and more in control. It was interesting that feeling less stressed had helped them to identify where they were stressed in other areas. By lowering their set point they were more able to see other areas of their life that were stressful, rather than everything feeling overwhelming. We explored a decision that was causing them challenge. I was reminded of the wholistic approach we used in the previous session and this time decided to help them to unpick what helped them to make a wise decision in the past. As we discussed the decision they had made before I made notes on the criteria they were using to make that decision. I identified 5 things that had helped them to make that decision. I then asked them to use these criteria to assess the decision they were currently struggling with. They became very emotional when they realised it was suddenly very clear to them which decision they needed to make in the present moment. They suddenly felt certain about their choice and had all the evidence they needed that they knew how to make a wise choice.

What theory this relates to:
Part of helping them to create criteria for making a healthy decision was to explore the values that they wanted to prioritise with the decision. This relates to 'Values and Decision Making' within the 'Client Fulfilment' chapter (p136, Coactive Coaching, Whitworth et al, 2007):
"A values conversation can be very useful at any decision point. As clients choose various action steps, their values become a litmus test for action: "Will this action move you closer to honouring your values or further away?" "If you make this decision, what values will you be living?" When the client is considering an important life decision, ask how this course of action will honour the top ten values and to what extent."

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How the theory relates to my reflection and the coachee feedback:
While the client was happy with the intervention, I do feel I could have done more explicit work around values by extending the discussion to explore her top ten values. This could have brought a richer understanding of herself and what was driving her.

What I plan to do differently to improve my coaching practice as a result of this critical reflection:
When I am exploring values-based decision making, I will go further than 2 or 3 values and extend that to 10 values to make sure we are exploring the wider foundations of the client's priorities.