

# Coaching and co-consulting skills

How to help others  
to produce  
excellent results and professional fulfilment

# Coaching and co-consulting

Are all processes where:

- One person “the coach” helps another “the client”, by active listening and other interventions, to develop professionally and personally
- It emphasises collaboration and active participation by the client and the coach
- It is a structured, but non-directive, process
- It is strictly confidential
- It is goal oriented and problem  $\Rightarrow$  solution focused
- It may be used to address a wide range of issues, covering organisational and individual goals

# Working one-to-one

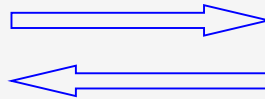
- ◉ Coaching
- ◉ Mentoring
- ◉ Co-consulting
  
- ◉ or any other relationship where one person - the consultant - helps another - the client
- ◉ to develop professionally and personally

# The person, the problem, and the relationship between them

***Problem***

***Perception***

***Person***



***The temptation is:***

- 1. Work on solutions to the ***problem******
- 2. Work on ***personal change*** to overcome the problem***

***The solution often involves working on how the person ***perceives*** the problem***

***Coaching and co-consulting may involve all three areas***

# The Support – Insight – Action framework

The coach / co-consultant tries to provide

- Support

- Attention, respect and interest

- Insight and learning

- Offer possible interpretations including challenge

- Possibilities for action

- Explore possible ways forward

# Support: attention, respect, interest

## ✓ **To show you are listening:**

body language matters – try to indicate receptivity and patience. Eg no folded arms, interruptions of the other person, glances at what is happening somewhere else. Yes to letting the other person finish what they are saying. Yes to a pause to let what they have said sink in before you reply.

## ✓ **To show respect:**

show empathy with what the other person is saying and feeling. Try to tune in to the other person's viewpoint. Showing empathy does not mean you agree with what the other person is saying, but you are prepared to listen carefully.

## ✓ **To show you are interested in what is being said:**

show enthusiasm and curiosity - reflect what you have heard, ask for clarification or to hear more. Ask open-ended questions, not questions that just require a yes or no answer, to draw people out further.

# The 1-2-1 coaching process

## ***Research evidence suggests:***

- Start by focusing on the problem the client brings, even if the focus changes later
- Open-ended questions, reflection and clarification are useful in building rapport, but don't improve outcomes much in themselves. They are a means to an end.
- Giving encouragement is safe, but doesn't improve outcomes by itself.
- Unless asked for, giving advice is usually unhelpful, sometimes harmful
- Talking about your own experiences has negative, as often as positive, results
- Tentatively suggesting interpretations (insight) and exploring possible solutions improves outcomes

# Co-consulting voices

- **Supporter** – showing genuine understanding, encouragement
- **Investigator** – asking questions to clarify situation, aims, possibilities
- **Reflector** – tentatively feeding back on what you are hearing / seeing
- **Interpreter** – offering possible meanings and insights
- **Challenger** – offering alternatives
- **Teacher** – offering expertise
- **Guide** – suggesting pathways

***Support***

***Insight***

***Action***

Adapted from The Mindful Coach, Silsbee, 2004



# Key co-consulting skills

- Be clear about confidentiality and any limits to it
- Focus on the problem the client brings, not your own views

## Research evidence suggests:

- Open-ended questions, reflection and clarification are safe but don't improve outcomes much.
- Giving encouragement is safe, but doesn't improve outcomes
- They are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.
- ✗ Giving advice is usually unhelpful, sometimes harmful – unless explicitly asked for
- ✗ Talking about your own experiences has negative, as often as positive, results
- ✓ Tentatively suggesting interpretations improves outcomes
- ✓ Exploring possible solutions improves outcomes
- ✓ Try to shift from problem-focus to solution-focus by the end

# What you need

- ◉ To be a successful one-to-one consultant you need:
  - ◉ Self-awareness
  - ◉ Empathy
  - ◉ The ability to work collaboratively and actively engage with the client
  - ◉ The willingness and ability to offer unconditional positive regard to the client
  - ◉ The ability to express yourself and to suggest interpretations of the client's situation
  - ◉ Specific skills, experience, and credibility relevant to the client's particular development needs
- ◉ The more you develop and practice your skills, the better the outcomes will be

# Persistence in the pursuit of excellence

- Go with what seems workable for you
- Don't overload yourself with strategies – start with one or two
- Pilot new approaches first in less stressful situations
- Give them time – expect short term loss for long term gain
- Rehearse the performance regularly using positive imaging
- Perform and practice repeatedly
- Expect improvement – but not overnight miracles
- Rehearse it not going to plan, and prepare a backup strategy
- Remember – joy, experimentation and persistent refinement are necessary for progress and perfection

Olympic and World Champion coach Terry Orlick, In pursuit of excellence, p 175

# Getting the best from a coach

- Help your coach to understand what works best for you and your performance
- Work to improve your own communication with your coach
- Be as honest as you can be with yourself and your coach
- Take personal responsibility to do what is best for you and your performance
- Draw on teammates and those closest to you for additional support

Adapted from Olympic and World Champion coach Terry Orlick, *In pursuit of excellence*, p 175

# Trios work – roles & guidelines

## Client:

Explore your own leadership development challenges, some goals you might set yourself, and how you might achieve them.

- ✓ Speak in the first person
- ✓ It's your time - take it in the direction you want
- ✓ Talk about your feelings where appropriate

## Coach / mentor / co-consultant:

Help your client to think this through and find possible ways forward

- ✓ Unconditional positive regard
- ✓ Empathy - draw out through reflection, clarification
- ✓ Client focus
- ✓ Self awareness

## Observer:

Notice how the client is able to talk about challenges and possible solutions

Notice how the consultant listens and is able to help the client find solutions

- ✓ Listen for motivation, avoidance, feelings
- ✓ Listen for what is helpful and not helpful
- ✓ Look for non-verbal behaviour