

A photograph of football players at the line of scrimmage. A player in a green jersey is in the foreground, reaching for a football on the grass. Other players in red and white jerseys are visible in the background. The image is partially obscured by a white diagonal shape that separates it from the text.

# Group Coaching

# What is group coaching?

- The one-on-one nature of traditional coaching can make coaching resource-intensive to deliver.
- “Group coaching” refers to the practice of a coach working with multiple individuals simultaneously, regardless of whether the participants are working toward individual or common goals.
- Members of the group take turns being the focal client, while other participants serve as resources of support (Brown & Grant, 2010; Carter & Hawkins, 2013).
- “Team coaching” is the subset of group coaching in which the coach works with an existing group toward a common goal (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). A common example of team coaching involves coaching work units within a corporation as they carry out projects.
- Much of the research on group coaching has focused on the team coaching subset.

LESS of  
THIS



AND

MORE  
of THIS



# Grow in Group coaching

- Brown and Grant (2010) outlined a method to transform the one-on-one GROW model (goal, reality, options, way forward) to a multiple-client GROUP model (goal, reality, options, understanding others, perform).
- The latter model mirrors the former's process of establishing goals and creating a realistic plan to achieve those goals, but it does so in a group setting.
- The authors posit that the main difference between the two models is the “understanding others” phase, which is designed to generate group dialogue so clients can learn from one another.
- Across various scenarios, the group intervention appears to be more effective than a one-on-one intervention in facilitating behavior changes and other desired results.
- This may be due to the scope of feedback and views plus the emotional and social support that the group provides for each other and thus builds more trust and commitment (peer motivation). (Angelo Kehayas 2016).
- Increased frequency of sessions can lead to more commitment and accountability.

# Advantages of group coaching

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- This may be due to the scope of feedback and views plus the emotional and social support that the group provides for each other and thus builds more trust and commitment (peer motivation). (Angelo Kehayas 2016).
- Increased frequency of sessions can lead to more commitment and accountability (momentum).

# Advantages of group coaching

Other benefits include:

- Knowledge transfer
- Increased emotional intelligence
- Improved feedback on challenges (especially common ones) and progress
- Greater accountability and commitment
- Greater support = longer lasting commitment and thus behaviour change (positive)
- Increased alignment of individual goals, strengths, and values
- A sense of group gratification by helping others
- Peer coaching improves interpersonal skills of participants
- Group learning is different to individual learning
- Lower cost of intervention due to scale.

# Distinctions between Group and Team Coaching

## Group coaching

- Focus on individual development
- Agreements on how we work together as individuals within this group
- Responsibility individually
- Reflection on individual learning and observations on the learning within the group

## Team coaching

- Focus on team development
- Agreements on how we work together as a team
- Responsibility collectively for the shared purpose as a team
- Reflection on team's learning collectively and observations on individual learning

# Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is also an issue the coach must be aware of when initiating a group coaching program.
- Although some clients may be willing to reveal personal details in a group environment, establishing standards and expectations around confidentiality is crucial.
- The coach must ensure clients know what kinds of information, such as sensitive financial information, would be more appropriately discussed or reviewed in a one-on-one setting (Brown & Grant, 2010).



# Reflective Teams

# Group Coaching with Reflecting Team (RT)

The Figure below depicts the process of a coaching session with a reflecting team.

For a group coaching session to work using the reflecting team one of the group members has to “volunteer” as client. All other group members form members of the reflecting team, which requires that all of them have been introduced to the structure and rules of the reflecting team, which might necessitate a bit of practice.



# Steps of an RT session

1. The coach then performs a “normal” coaching session with the client.
2. The coach activates the reflecting team as part of the coaching & reflecting stage of the coaching session. The conversation of the reflecting team should be brief (5-10 minutes) to ensure that the handover back to the coach and the client happens at the peak of the RT-conversation.
3. Group transfer - After the coach and the client have wrapped-up the coaching session after the reflecting team is finished it is recommended to add an additional step to ensure the transfer of potential insights for all group members. This additional transfer step includes an individual reflection of every group member regarding potential learning which can – but do not have to – be shared with the rest of the group in a second step.

There are many variations on the RT. Some do not agree with the process above; in some the RT supports the coach, in others they participate directly.

# Rules for dialogue of RT

- Focus on the task – well defined task, outcome, purpose of RT
- Confidentiality
- Emphasizing strengths and resources, co-operation, helping attitude
- “Lifting”, appreciative, respectful, appropriate – respect other points of view. “that sounds interesting”, “that makes me think”
- Ideas as proposals / options / alternatives (“What if..“)
- Different approaches / perspectives – I, we, culture
- Time to speak and time to listen
- Adequate closure

# No - Nos

- Monologues
- Readymade patent remedies
- Problems, weaknesses, mistakes, ...
- “cuddle” feedback, bootlicking
- Communication with coach/supervisor and/or client/supervisee

# Some variations on RTs

- Silent observers – who focus on the process and then give feedback after the process has concluded.
- Dialogue focus – focusing on the dialogue and reflecting back on that only.
- Coach focus – focusing on the coach's approach, questions etc. looking for ways to assist the coach in identifying improvements.
- Coachee/ focus person focus – focus on trying to understand how the coachee feels.



# Solution Circle

# Group Coaching with Group Solution Circle

- The solution circle for group coaching sessions opens up the possibility to tackle an issue / problem in a much shorter time than group coaching with reflecting team or the community of inquiry described below.
- If followed through stringently the group solution circle process can be done in 30 minutes. However, an hour session usually ensures better results.
- For the purposes of this process the coach acts as “facilitator” of the solution-circle session making sure that the process steps are followed exactly and the rules for sharing ideas are adhered to.

# Group solution circle process – hot seating

1. **Client selection** - One group member is chosen as “the client” of the session bringing forward an issue/topic
2. **Facts summary** - The coach (= facilitator) opens the session by inviting the client to summarise only the salient information regarding the problem that all other group members have to know in order to be helpful.
3. **Question posing** - The client now poses exactly ONE question regarding the presented problem to which he/she wants input from the other group members. It is important at that stage that the coach (= facilitator) ensures that really only one question is stated. The coach (= facilitator) should furthermore write down the question so that it can be repeated at any later stage of the session.
4. **Circle 1** - All group members are now allowed to ask questions for clarification purposes or to obtain additional facts they feel they need in order to give input. The coach (= facilitator) ensures a clock-wise and sequential order of the group members in which they ask their clarification questions.
5. **Circle 2** - In a clock-wise order the group members provide their input in the form of ideas, perspectives, compliments and experiences. Before the start of these input-circles it is often necessary for the coach (=facilitator) to repeat the client’s ONE question again. The following rules have to be adhered for the presentation of this input: The circles go on until none of the group members (including the facilitator) have more ideas, perspectives, compliments or experiences to share. During that phase the client only listens to the input of the group members
6. **Clarification questions** - The client is now invited to ask questions for clarification purposes regarding any of the input brought forward during the circles 2-n. The questions are answered immediately by the group member responsible for that particular input. The coach (= facilitator) ensures that the process does not slip into long discussion around one little detail.
7. **Résumé and closure** - The client is given the possibility to comment on his impressions - but does not have to – before the coach (= facilitator) closes the session. As for all presented group coaching processes it is now the time for an individual reflection of all group members what personal learning they can draw from the session. Highlights of this reflection may be shared in the group.

# Rules for solution circles

<b>DO's for solution circle input</b>	<b>NO-NO's for solution circle input</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respectful and appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monologues (more than one input at a time)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One input per circle (you can repeat the exercise)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ignoring the circular order of input</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ideas as options - subjunctively ("What if,...")</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advice, recommendations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As many different alternatives ! perspectives as possible – effectively brainstorming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment of options ! alternatives</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Questions of the client</li> </ul>



# Community of Inquiry

# Group Coaching with Community of Inquiry

- The purpose of this process is again not to provide advice or direction, or to “fix” people, but to help them to tap into their own resources and to deal with their problems and issues in the way that is most appropriate for them.
- The coach acts as the “facilitator” of the inquiry-session making sure that the rules and guidelines for the conversation are being followed (see do’s and no-no’s for open, honest questions and mirroring) and ensuring that the session is closed at the agreed time.

# Steps in a community of enquiry

1. **Step 1: Select focus person** - A person with topic/issue/problem for the (next) session has to be identified = “focus person”.
2. **Step 2: Select recorder** - A group member is chosen to act as recorder. He/she takes notes for the focus person and hands them over at the end of the session.
3. **Step 3: Summarise background factors** - The focus person summarises the relevant background factors that all other group members need to know in order to be helpful. If the focus person has already been chosen during the previous group coaching session he/she should even write up a concise statement summarising the background information as well as any hunches the focus person has about the problem.
4. **Step 4: Session start** - At the start of the actual session the coach (= facilitator) calls for a time of silence inviting the focus person to break the silence when he/she is ready to give a brief oral summary of the issue.
5. **Step 5: Open, honest questions** - As soon as the focus person is finished the rest of the group (= committee members) will ask OPEN, HONEST questions.
6. **Step 6: Mirroring** - Shortly before the end the coach (= facilitator) stops the questions and asks the focus person if he/she would like committee members to mirror back what they have heard. If the focus person agrees, mirroring starts alongside more questions.
  - **Step 7: Affirmation** - The facilitator invites the committee members to affirm the focus person by complementing him/her on her strengths and resources. (This is important because the focus person has spent a long time being vulnerable).
  - **Step 8: Session closure** - The recorder hands over the notes. The focus person is allowed to (briefly) wrap-up his/her impressions before the coach (= facilitator) closes the session.

# Dos for honest questions

- Ask questions which you could not possibly know the answer to ahead of time (e.g.: “Do you know of anyone who might have dealt with a similar issue and how he/she handled it?”)
- Trust your intuition in asking questions ask “strange” questions (“What shape does the problem have, and what shape would a solution to the problem have?”).
- Ask questions that encourage reflection.
- Allow silence (silence might mean emergence of new insights or that deep thinking is going on).
- Total focus on the focus person.

# No Nos for open honest questions

- Give **advice** (e.g.: “Why don’t you...?”)
- Give **examples** (e.g.: “that happened to so and so and this is what he did...”)
- Give recommendations of **self-help** (e.g.: “I know a good book model, coach, consultant who could help you...”)
- **Disguise advocacy** (e.g.: “have you ever thought that it might be...”)
- **Cross examine** the focus person by asking questions too fast.
- **Chit- Chat**, joking to break the tension.
- **Responding to other committee members questions or commenting on the focus person’s answers.**
- **Comforting or reassuring** of the focus person.

# Group coaching competencies (coach)



Creating a Shared Focus and Shared Expectations (process)



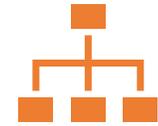
Setting Goals



Creating accountability



Clear and concise communication



Supporting the group process, including enforcing the rules

# Other processes

- Understanding that you can use group coaching to apply most 1-1 techniques, think of other possibilities.

# Hot-Seating

**Your task is to challenge the person who is in the hot-seat**

- **Work with a partner.**
- **Together, come up with four really taxing questions connected to the session.**
- **Make sure that you know what the answers are!**

# References and credits

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