

HR DIVISION

Leadership, Education & Development



GUIDE TO COACHING

FOR POTENTIAL COACHES AND FOR POTENTIAL
COACHING CLIENTS



OCTOBER 2015

FOREWORD

Our corporate plan 2015-2017 sets out a framework on how we aim to improve the health service over the coming years. Goal 4 of our corporate plan focuses on the importance to engage, develop and value our workforce. For HR this means that we “provide professional HR services to transform the organisations capability to deliver safer better healthcare”. Our staff are at the core of the delivery of healthcare services and supporting them is crucial to our ongoing success as leaders in people services.

Coaching is one mechanism in providing immediate supports. Coaching as a practice has come of age, with this next period of growth moving it from being a young, emergent profession, to one that establishes itself on a global scale. The discipline of coaching is to provide the opportunity to develop a greater level of learning and understanding – as a coach or as a coachee. As the profession of coaching continues to define, shape and raise standards on a wider scale - research and contributions are being shared amongst the various coaching bodies, academic/training institutions, and practitioners alike, we are getting a much clearer picture of what makes up good coaching practice or both coach and coachee.

The healthy push coming from professional coaching associations is to promote excellence, ethics and quality standards and make coaching sustainable. As we roll-out coaching across the health services, we expect a greater measure of performance, consistency, and values.

As the demand and appetite for coaching permeates throughout the organisation, there is both a moral and ethical obligation to provide a collective group of professionals to ensure we are doing all we can to be our best, do the right thing, and protect those that we serve. In this regard we are aligning our coach practice by establishing coaching frameworks to ensure proper governance, accreditation standards, ethics, supervision to collectively produce supporting materials and guidelines - the design principles of that unpin professional bodies and ensure we meet industry standards.

This document is the first in a series of coaching and coachee supports. It has been prepared to provide a practical guide intended to meet the needs of two different audiences, coaches and clients. The intent is to outline basic principles and approaches used within this area so that readers can see the different perspectives and choose what is most suitable for their needs.

Many thanks to all the stakeholders who contributed to the process of developing this guide.

Rosarii Mannion,
National Director of Human Resources
October 2015

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WELCOME TO THIS GUIDE



If you are reading this Guide, it is probably because you are actively considering coaching, either being a coach to someone else or working with someone as a coach. If so, you are joining an ever-growing number of people across the world. Coaching is, in some ways, age-old and has been practised as long as people have been aware of the need for teaching and learning. In today's workplace, it is widespread and its popularity arises from its relevance and practicality as an approach to people development.

This Guide is intended to help you gain a much deeper understanding of coaching so that your choice to work in this way is as informed as possible.

1 - COACHING

COACHING PART 1 - OVERVIEW & DESCRIPTION

What is coaching?

Depending on the Coaching support required - Coaching is usually a face-to-face, one-to-one pairing of two people, one of whom – the client – has an outcome they are trying to achieve or a change they want to make. Coaching can be done effectively over the phone. An “as is” analysis of Coaching in the HSE currently indicates that Coaching is being completed over the phone by some Internal HSE Coach's. This has proven very cost efficient and lean (*contact your local HR Coach lead for further information*). Unlike therapy, coaching is future-focused: it is designed to help the client (or ‘coachee’) fulfil their potential, discover more about themselves, and achieve personal and/or professional success. Usually, people work with a coach because they have not been able, for whatever reason, to make whatever change they want to make ‘under their own steam’. Coaching provides them with the opportunity to develop their skills and increase and achieve higher levels of performance.

“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential, which is particularly important in today's uncertain and complex environment..”

International Coach Federation
definition of coaching
(www.coachfederation.org)

The coach works by being a sounding board, listening, asking questions to help the client gain awareness and insight, reflecting and feeding back to the client, and by providing models and theories to help the client make sense of what is going on and how they might change.

What are the benefits?

Coaching has the potential to be greatly beneficial to the client or coachee (and to the coach as well). Here are some of the benefits that can be accrued through coaching:

Benefits to the Coachee

- You will have a sounding board, someone who will listen to you as you think through different issues, someone who can help you make decisions and navigate the course towards your chosen destination.
- You will be working with someone to develop yourself in a process that is customised to your individual needs and circumstances, a process that can help you face even those issues that have no obvious solutions or precedents.
- You will have someone who is familiar with management and organisational theory as well as with how people behave, someone who can offer you tools including assessment inventories, models, theories, and tried-and-tested approaches to help you to discover yourself and plan for change.
- You will be working with someone to achieve your goals in practice, not just in theory. Coaching acknowledges that change happens in a complex web of circumstances and takes all the rational, political and emotional factors into account in supporting and challenging you to reach your goal.
- You will be working with someone who is absolutely on your side, ‘in your corner’, someone who will encourage and support you, including gently but persistently making you ‘account’ for your progress towards achieving your goal.
- You have someone who can give you straight, honest, experientially-based feedback –the kind of ‘no strings attached’ feedback that colleagues may not be able to give – this kind of reflection back is rarely available to us in our careers and so should be grabbed wherever it presents itself.
- Coaching gives people space to hear their own voice - to gain perspective and to become aware of beliefs, and attitudes that may be holding you back
- Working with a coach can give you confidence to and try new ways of doing things. When times are difficult, coaching offers emotional support, empathy and encouragement – the path can feel less lonely.
- Finally, coaching can accommodate support for improving specific interpersonal skills such as influencing, communication, delegation, managing conflict, etc.

Benefits to the Coach

For people within an organisation who add coaching to their repertoire of work practices, there are clear benefits too, benefits such as:

- You get a chance to work with people who are (usually) strongly motivated to grow and change
- You get an opportunity to make a difference by helping people to grow, reach their potential, and make a difference themselves
- There is great satisfaction to be gained from working with people in a developmental, future-oriented, problem-solving mode
- You can augment your normal management style with a much more facilitative and elicitive set of behaviours and attitudes which can transfer to other important relationships too
- There is something very precious in being able to 'walk with' someone through difficulty – solidarity with a client is in itself an enriching experience.

Benefits to the Organisation

There are many reasons why an organisation would engage external coaches or develop managers and HR specialists to provide internal coaching. In the past, coaching was often introduced to help organisations, especially those in the private sector with perhaps nervous shareholders, to deal with executives whose performance was less than what was required. This type of coaching has become much more rare.



Nowadays coaching is generally seen as a developmental process rather than a remedial one. One of the reasons for the success of coaching as a developmental process is that it can accommodate a whole-person perspective - although it is generally initiated to help the client look at some work-related issue, it can also be used to look at issues and circumstances in the client's personality/ personal life as well (these issues may be having a major impact on the client's performance).

How does Coaching work?

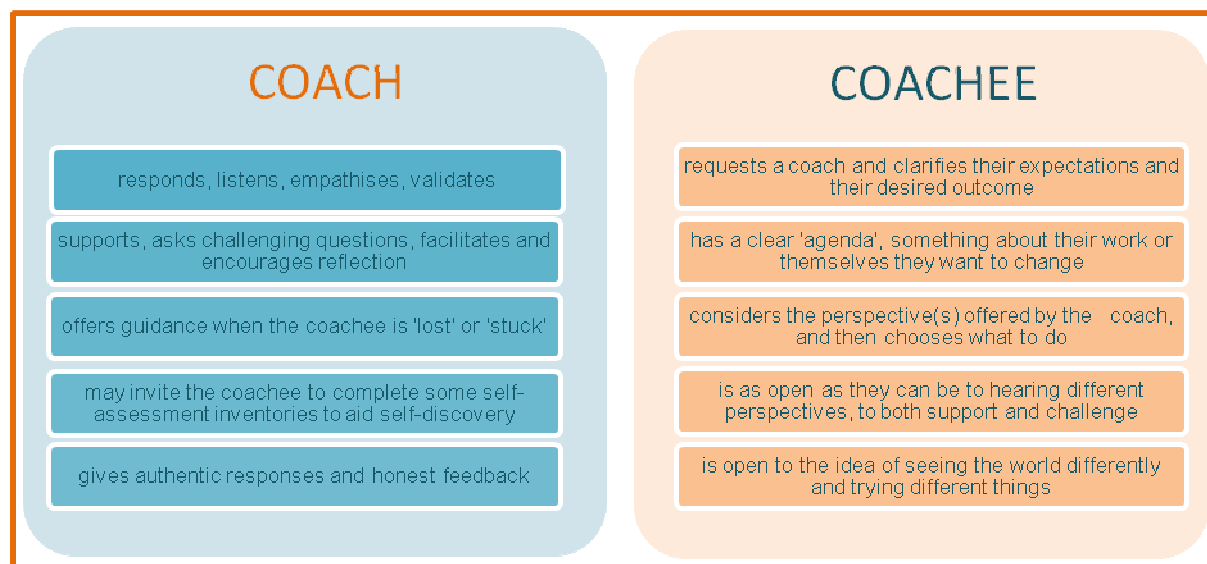
Coaching is largely about meeting, communicating, and jointly thinking through problems and opportunities. For this relationship to work, it must be based on a foundation of **mutual respect** and **willingness** to participate, and there must be a degree of **'the right chemistry'** between the two people. With these, and with good attention to confidentiality, trust will form and the ground will be ready for growth and development. As well as the right chemistry, two other ingredients were named as key to successful coaching, as identified in a large-scale study undertaken by Harvard researchers (Coutu & Kauffman (2009) - see box above for reference), were the client's 'fierce desire to learn and grow' and a 'strong commitment from top management'.

Sometimes, coaching will include the completion of confidential assessment inventories (such as Myers Briggs and other well-known tests) – these inventories are designed to improve awareness and to give a common language to the coach and client so that they can talk about different aspects of management and relationship style.

"Of all the variables having an effect on outcome, by far the largest impact comes from the relationship itself rather than from any particular method or technique"

Critchley B. (2010) 'Relational Coaching' J. Mgt Devt 29(10)

It is worth elaborating a little more on the roles of the coach and client or coachee, so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not it might be for you. As mentioned before, the coaching relationship is typically based on one-to-one conversations between the coach and the client. These coaching conversations are described in more detail below. In general, the client will do more of the talking and the coach will do more of the listening. The following diagram summarises what the coach and coachee do during the work.



The Coaching Conversation

Conversation, communication and connection are at the heart of good coaching. The purpose of coaching conversations is to stimulate self-discovery, reflection, sense-making and growth by the client or coachee. For these to occur, the coach must bring some skills and attitudes to the table, including the ability to stay focused on the coachee whilst being able to attend to his/her own thoughts, feelings, motivations, etc.

There are a number of foundations of good coaching conversations. A recent book on the subject¹ identified five such foundation stones:

1. Committed Listening

Committed listening is about making a strong and intentional connection with your coachee. It's about paying exquisite attention to them rather than to yourself. As a coach, you notice how they are as well as what they say, their emotional state as well as their story. You give your coachee full attention, you respect and value them and their experience, and you engage in a dialogue with them to ensure that they feel both supported by you and 'seen' by you. This quality of attention is important to building trust and to encouraging the coachee to talk about subjects that may be difficult to name.

2. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is simply summarising or giving back a short statement of what the coachee says. It helps to ensure clarity, understanding and alignment between the two parties. It can happen quite informally at many stages with a conversation ("so, you gave your presentation but you now have some concerns about how it went, about what you might have done differently") – when we receive a paraphrase, especially if it is said in a way that is supportive rather than 'snappy', we feel heard, understood and validated in our experience. It also allows us to correct our description of events or to correct the listener if we have not been properly understood.

3. Presuming Good

Frequently, we come to relations in work with a degree of scepticism and critical judgement – this 'hard-nosedness' has probably been learned by us as a way of stopping us from making a fool of ourselves. But coaching requires us to suspend this attitude and even to replace it with a presumption that the other person is a good human being. One writer on coaching² explicitly calls on coaches to begin with a check on their own attitudes about people and about learning and ensuring that they come to coaching with a mindset that is positive and conducive to good coaching. For example, he challenges coaches to get rid of any beliefs that are, consciously or unconsciously, negative or defeatist, such as "leaders are born, not made" or "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" or "leopards don't change their spots" or "investing in people in this organisation is a waste of time – they'll never change".

So, coaching starts off with the coach intentionally conveying his or her support, compassion and even approval of the coachee to the coachee. This does not mean that the coach must accept everything that the coachee says or does (to do so would simply be colluding, not coaching). It simply means that there is trust by the coach of the coachee: the coach is essentially saying, from the outset, I trust you to do the right thing and, if you haven't always done so (who has?), I trust that there was some good reason for you doing as you did.

4. Asking Powerful Questions

Allied with this presumption of good comes a fourth set of skills, which is the skill of asking powerful questions. These are open-ended questions (questions which cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no') which are designed to help the coachee clarify their thinking and their learning, even from 'bad' situations. It is probably best to use the second of Kipling's 'six honest serving men' quite sparingly (see box) as starting a question with the word "why?..." can often provoke a defensive reaction in people (such questions can feel like implicit criticism).

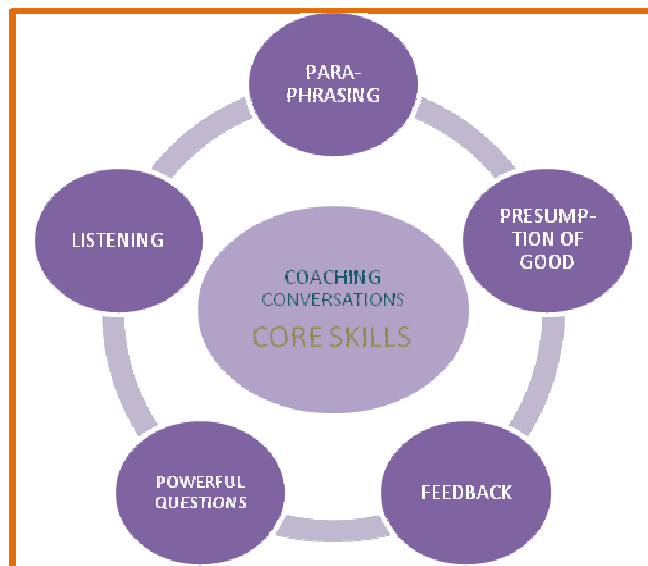
I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and
When And How and Where and Who...

Rudyard Kipling (1902) extract from "The Elephant's Child" ("Just So Stories")

5. Feeding back

The final essential coaching conversation skill is being able to give feedback. We all need feedback so that we can know ourselves better, grow, make decisions about changes we might like to make, and understand the effect we have on others. Clearly, feedback needs to be given in such a way that it can be heard and taken in: this means it must be given in such a way that it fully respects and preserves the relationship, even if the feedback is negative. It must be direct, clear, specific and based on the coach's actual experience of the person. Feedback can happen in many ways in coaching conversations.

There is the **immediate feedback** that can happen when the coach notices a change in the coachee ("when you said that, your face changed, it sort of lit up and it made me feel that this is something that you really want...?"). The coach should be careful, however, not to interpret what might be going on, so in-the-moment feedback should always be offered with a question at the end, rather than simply stated as fact.



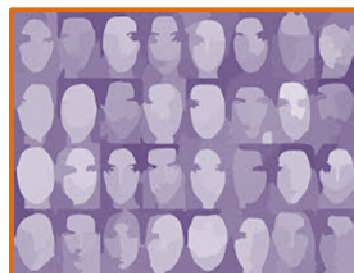
There is also more **structured feedback** from the coach to the client, for example, where the coachee has sought help generally with relationship-building, or inter-personal communication, or some such aspect of their work. The coach and coachee then may agree that there will be feedback at the end of three sessions whereby the coach can give feedback to the coachee on his/her observations about the coachee's relationship or communication behaviour.

And there can be **reflective feedback** which is a way in which the coach and coachee work together to reflect on something, to see the value in it, to understand the intent, and to see what conclusions might be drawn ('Would you like to look back at this issue and see if we can understand better what happened, what you wanted to happen, and what you can learn from it').

How do I Choose a Coach?

If you are thinking of engaging in a coaching process with someone other than your line manager, here are a few things you might take into account in making your choice of coach (in some regions coaches are allocated by the coaching lead, please verify the arrangement for your service area)

- Look at the background of the different coaches: are they coming from a discipline that is appropriate to your needs? Do they have the right balance of business understanding and psychological/relationship understanding? This is totally dependent on your needs as research has indicated that some of the best coaching is done by someone who knows nothing about your profession/role/position in the organisation (*if you are unclear, check with your HR coach lead*)
- Are they at the right general level for you? If you are already in a senior post, you might want someone who is used to dealing with people at your level or may want a coach has a totally different level? The main indicator for success is to ensure that your coach has the relevant background to meet your needs.
- Think about whether you want someone who already has 'deep smarts' about how your profession / industry / organisation works (formally and informally) or, perhaps, whether you might want someone from a completely different background who has the potential to offer you a very different perspective. It is important to remember that qualified accredited coaches possess the skills, competency and talent to engage with you and "dig deep" irrespective of their own professional background.
- Make sure your coach is someone that you can get physical access to for most of the time. Whereas coaching can be done virtually, it is usually better to meet in person if you can and certainly better to start out with face-to-face meetings.
- At the chemistry meeting (make sure your coach offers you one!), ask your coach about how they work, what approaches they use, whether they use assessment tools (which ones, how many, etc.), and what the 'typical' coaching process might consist of (how many sessions, how long are the sessions, etc.). It is important to get the balance right between goal-setting and working towards defined goals, with being open to a more emergent agenda – in many cases, people often have a sense that they want something to change, but some of the coaching work itself can be about helping coachees to figure out what they really want for themselves. In general, a coach should be able to offer relevant assessment tools and inventories, but these should really just be used to inform the agenda, to help you identify the areas where you may need support and the kinds of changes you're willing to contemplate.



Ultimately, coaching works through relationship. No amount of background research can substitute for meeting your prospective coach and making up your own mind about whether this person might be right for you. Be prepared to take a chance and risk on working with someone who will take you out of your comfort zone, but make sure too that you feel psychologically 'safe' with the person, that this is someone with whom you can possibly be vulnerable in the knowledge that s/he will be able to 'hold' this.

Who is a Coach? Could I be One?

As has been mentioned, coaches come in two main forms, external and internal. The HSE offers two streams to coaching

1: HSE Internal Coaching

Internal coaches are becoming increasingly common in organisations, including the HSE. The HSE internal coaching frameworks each with a Coaching Lead from the 4 former regions, plus 1 Corporate and 1 Nursing. The establishment of a HSE Coaching Register aligning the frameworks will ensure proper governance¹³, accreditation standards, ethics, supervision¹¹ to collectively produce supporting materials and guidelines - the design principles of that unpin professional bodies and ensure industry standards are met.

Working as a collective group of internal coaching professionals to build on current excellent practices will safeguard the quality of coaching. This includes adherence to supervision in coaching, ethics, continuous professional development for the coach and coaches, and expanding the way potential coachees can self select their coach's' through on-line (*HSELand*).

Internal coaches are people who are employed by an organisation to coach fellow employees – in other words, they are usually learning and development professionals or managers who ring-fence a certain amount of time to coach employees in another part of the organisation. They are trained/accredited coaches. They are not to be confused with mentors who are usually more seasoned managers or staff who, whilst remaining in their day-to-day role, provide support and assistance to younger colleagues (see separate guide).

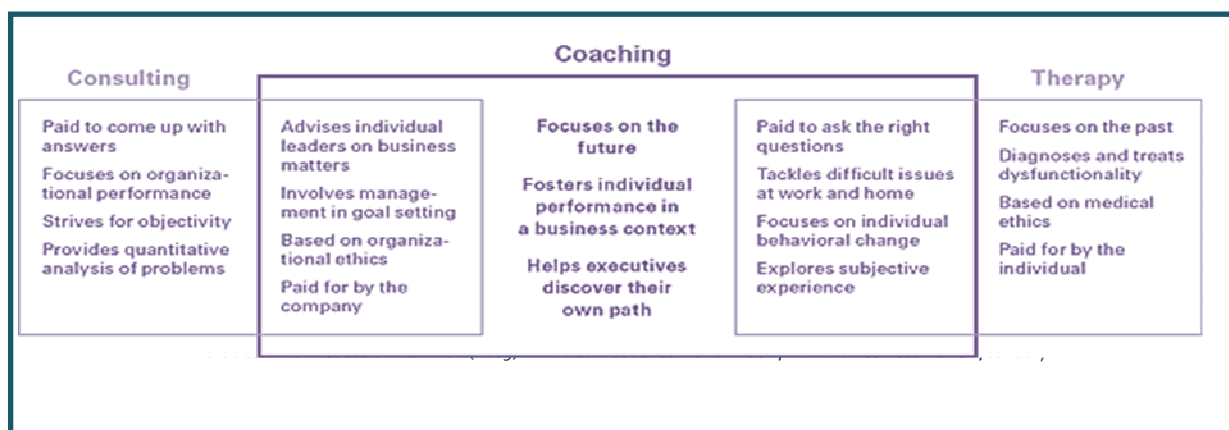
Many organisations choose to use internal coaches as a way of getting a better return on investment (they cost, on average, just 10% of what external coaches cost³), and because internal coaches have 'insider knowledge' of the organisation. This shared knowledge or the organisational culture and context makes internal coaching a lot easier in many respects as the coachee does not have to explain the structures and practices of the organisation when telling their story.

However, the role of internal coach can be challenging. The internal coach must guard against collusion with the coachee, must check that they are not working on shared assumptions, and must ensure that they have very clear boundaries with the coachee (covering, for example, what happens if coach and coachee meet at the Christmas party, if the coachee can seek a reference from the coach if applying for a job, etc.). These ethical issues should be covered as part of the coach training process.

A coaching process flow chart (former HSE Dublin North East) provides a very clear illustration of different stages of the coaching engagement from coaching referral to CPD coaching network learning forums (see page 25)

If you require further clarification about coach training, supervision or accessing HSE coaching supports, or you wish to find out how you could join that panel, please contact Catherine Kavanagh in Leadership, Education and Development @ catherine.kavanagh@hse.ie

As the diagram below suggests, coaching, consulting and therapy have much in common.



2: HSE External Executive Coaching.

There is a panel of external executive coaches (appointed through HSE procurement). These coaches are paid professionals with qualifications in one or more of the disciplines of human resources, consultancy, business or psychotherapy.

Professional coaches have usually undertaken additional training to enable them to act as coaches. This Guide could not possibly cover everything that is entailed in becoming a professional coaching specialist – those wishing to take up coaching as a career should undertake accredited training towards this end. As yet (2015), the coaching profession is not independently regulated in any part of the world. If you are interested in seeking accreditation from one of the established self-regulatory bodies (Association of Coaching AC¹³, The International Coach Federation ICF¹³, European Mentoring and Coaching Council EMCC¹³ – which are being currently amalgamated under the Universal Coaching Scheme 2014 to ensure industry standards¹³) it is worth comparing different training programmes to ensure that they meet the criteria for recognition. The HSE is a Corporate Member of the Association for Coaching (AC) & the International Coach Federation (ICF).

Coaching as a management style

By far the most common way of providing internal coaching to staff is to train leaders and line managers in the use of a coaching style in their real-time management of people. Coaching people in this way can be a win: win – the person being coached gets to achieve their own development goals quicker, and the manager gets better results. The downside? It can often take longer to invest in people in this way than it can to simply direct them or do it ourselves.

If you are a manager who wants to add more of a coaching style to your people management, be aware that you may already have developed the skills necessary in so far as you have:

- acted as a sounding board to someone, inside or outside work
- helped someone reflect on or analyse why things went well or badly
- offered alternative ways of looking at an issue or seeing a problem
- helped someone reach higher, set more challenging standards for themselves
- helped someone set realistic learning objectives
- offered feedback to people about their behaviour in a sensitive but constructive manner
- helped someone assess their own progress and plan their own career/future.

Coaching leaders help people to identify their unique strengths and weaknesses and to tie them to their personal and career goals.

Daniel Goleman (2000) *Leadership that Gets Results* Harvard Business Review, March-April

If you think you would be a good coach-manager, start by asking yourself a number of frank questions:

- are you prepared to enter into a way of leading that would be demanding on your time?
- do you know what you are looking to achieve for yourself from this approach, or what you might acquire from this experience? Coaching can be very rewarding for the coach but it is important to bear in mind that it is fundamentally about investing in the coachee and thereby getting results, not the other way around.
- are you prepared to offer your coachees/employees the necessary balance of both support and challenge that is required to help them grow and learn? Is there enough mutual respect in the relationship to allow for direct feedback and the possibility of mistakes?
- are you 'coachable' yourself, i.e. are you open to reflection, to introspection, to receiving feedback, to looking at your own mind-set and assumptions, etc. If you are not, you are likely to come across as an inauthentic coach.

COACHING PART 2 – SOME CORE SKILLS AND PROCESSES

Core Qualities of Coaches

There are a number of core skills and qualities that are associated with good coaching. If you've read this far, you'll appreciate that many of these core skills and qualities relate to communication and interpersonal relating.

The qualities of a good coach tend to be these:

- **Good communicators** – coaches should be excellent listeners. It can be hard for people to talk to strangers and the coach must be able, through the quality of their attending and listening, to put the coachee at ease so that he or she can talk about what is going on. Coaches should also be good questioners and be able to ask a variety of types of question to help clarify and/or help to illuminate an issue. They should also be able to reflect back what the coachee is saying (this can encourage the coachee to say more as well as validating what they are saying) and summarise accurately. (Further guidance on communication skills is included below.)
- **People** – coaches are usually emotionally intelligent, able to establish trust and rapport and, generally, are good with people. They are often introverts, with a preference for 1:1 work rather than large group work. They are not afraid of emotion and, understanding that emotion can be a catalyst for change, they are good at helping coachees to access and experience their own emotions. Coaches can also use their own emotional reactions to inform how they empathise and respond to the coachee's experience. They have good insight into the vagaries of human behaviour. They understand that motivation and reactions can be complex phenomena and that people can resist change for a number of reasons.
- **Not judgemental, neutral and accepting** - coaches are expected to have good judgement but to be non-judgemental. Good judgement is having a degree of wisdom and awareness of the interconnectedness of things to be able to make sense of something in context. To be *judgemental* is to draw (usually quick and negative) conclusions about people, and is the opposite of being understanding or compassionate. Coaches stay neutral and impartial. They understand that good people can get caught up in bad situations.
- **Stay in 'adult' mode** – coaches understand that rescuing or colluding with their clients is, essentially, infantilising them. Of course the coachee will want to feel understood and supported when they are feeling lost or vulnerable, and of course it is appropriate for the coach to offer empathy at this point. But the coach does not try to solve the coachee's problems for them, either explicitly or implicitly, and nor does the coach give advice or relieve the coachee of his/her responsibility to make the changes they are looking for in their own work or life. If anything, coaching is predicated on an assumption that the coachee is response-able, resourceful, and capable of choice. Any hint of 'victim mentality' is challenged, if it occurs, as it blinkers the coachee's perception of their room to move.
- **Helicopter view** – coaches should be capable of seeing the bigger picture of the organisation and its environment, as well as appreciating where their coachee is located within that big picture. Coaches are able to shift their perspective from micro (focus on the coachee only) to more macro (see the coachee in the context of her key human networks, both in and out of work).

TEN TRAPS TO AVOID IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN RAPPORT AND TRUST

1. Too much fear/self-doubt by the coach
2. Overwhelming need to be liked
3. Believing you already know ("I've heard all this type of stuff before")
4. Judgement and prejudice about clients ("oh, no, not another estate agent!")
5. Imposing a 'right way of being' on the client within the work (e.g. only letting them talk about their vulnerabilities, not their achievements)
6. Interpreting and attributing inappropriately ("oh, you think like that because of what happened when...")
7. Too much theorising
8. Wanting to reform the client (i.e. help them stop an unhealthy habit)
9. Being too preoccupied with other things (coach has too much on his/her mind)
10. Lack of self-awareness and mismatch with client's pace, energy, etc.

Rogers, J. (2012) *Coaching Skills: A Handbook*. Third edition, Open University/McGraw Hill

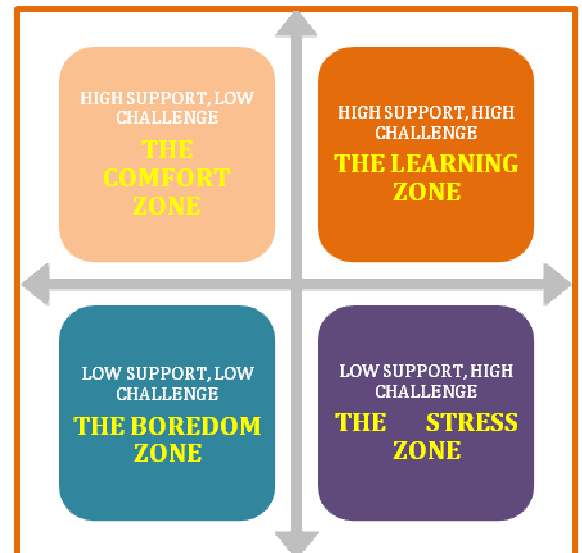
Core Skills of Coaches

As well as general ways of being and general attributes, coaches also have to be able to **do** certain things very well. This Guide cannot be a comprehensive guide to all of the skills of coaching, but here are some of the key ones.

Getting the Right Balance: Support and Challenge

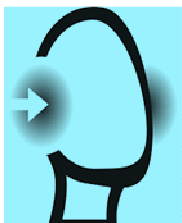
Getting the balance right between support and challenge is key to creating the right climate for learning to flourish (see diagram). Working one-to-one with someone is a great opportunity to be able to alter this balance according to what the other person needs at any given time. At times, you will need to add support and, at other times, you will need to add challenge. Some ways of communicating can feel supportive (e.g. listening, reflecting back) and some can feel challenging (e.g. questioning). Other things you can do to enhance support and challenge are:

- Preface your question, especially if you're not sure if the client is ready for the challenge, with a warning shot, something like "I hope you don't find this too challenging, but I'm wondering if..."
- Challenge does not have to be direct (e.g. "why did you do that?") – it can also be offered through inviting the client to consider the issue from the perspective of other stakeholders.
- Challenge can also come from inviting people to reflect on the part *they* may have played in bringing this situation about and how the situation is impacting on them directly or indirectly. Use this challenge sparingly, though, as it can feel like a strong challenge.
- Support can be expressed directly through validation ("hmmm, that really sounds like it must have been difficult"), and through empathy ("I'm getting a sense myself of how stressful this feels").
- Support can also be offered non-verbally through appropriate body language (facing the person but not head-on, making good eye contact, nodding, smiling, conveying emotion through facial expression, etc.).
- Support is also demonstrated through tolerance and acceptance of others' emotions – as a coach, you may occasionally need to allow your client to be emotional without needing to 'fix' or 'rescue' them.



Communication Skills – Listening and Questioning

As has been mentioned, coaches must be good at listening and good at questioning. Listening and questioning are central to the coach's ability to support and challenge, with listening being largely about support and understanding, and questioning largely about challenge as well as deepening and ensuring understanding.



The skill of **active listening** is relatively simple to understand, but can be hard to put into practice. It requires giving complete attention to the other person as they speak, including noticing what they're not saying, what they are saying with the body as well as with their words, and – most critically – not thinking or analysing while they are speaking but waiting till they have finished before making sense of what they say.

One of the most difficult parts of active listening can be anxiety on the part of coach. If you are worried about how you are doing ("am I getting this right?", "do we have good rapport?", "do they think I'm up to it?", "what good question can I ask here?"), this can be a real impediment to your ability to listen actively. If you are worried about your performance as a coach, keep a journal of these sorts of worries and, if appropriate, check them out with a peer or a supervisor. In the one-to-one session, your work is about the other person and you need to 'park your own stuff' until the session is over.

Appendix 1 contains a more detailed summary of active listening, should you want to refresh your skill.



Listening can be improved even further when it is accompanied by **reflecting back** key words, which can really reinforce the message of what someone is saying (for example, someone may be talking about an event which they found challenging or distressing, and simply repeating back one of their key words (e.g. "distressing") can help them appreciate the impact the event had). Reflecting back can also help to check for understanding ("so, what you're saying is that..."). **Summarising** is another skill that is useful, especially when trying to bring a particular piece of work to a close ("so, before we move on, let's just capture in brief what you've said...").

Questioning and enquiry are core to engaging people in further thought and help to deepen clarity and understanding. Coaching includes inviting people to reflect, to become more curious about why things are as they are, and to test assumptions that may not even have been in their awareness. In general, closed questions are used to clarify and make discussion narrower, and open questions are used when trying to broaden a discussion and explore something from different perspectives.

Questions can be a powerful tool. Like any such tool, they need to be used with caution. Too much questioning can leave the other person feeling interrogated, pinned down, and in need of self-protection. This is especially true of 'why?' questions which often make us



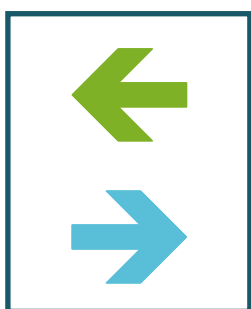
feel accused somehow, and so invite defensiveness and intellectualisation. Unskilled questioning can lead to the respondent just telling us what we want to hear, giving us the answer they think we're waiting for. So avoid the '20 Questions' trap, and stay away from questions that are leading ("so, would you agree that this was a mistake?") or really just advice in disguise ("have you thought about doing ...?").

Here are some "magic" questions that are recommended for coaches (Rogers, J. (2012), p. 84⁴). It's interesting to note that these short questions require no knowledge on the part of the coach of the client's situation, context, organisation, etc., and they work in a natural progression from problem identification to action identification. This progression is important and, as a coach, you may find that some coaching clients begin with action identification and your job is to help them explore the problem more fully.

- **What's going on, what is the issue?**
- **What makes this an issue right now?**
- **Who owns this issue/problem?**
- **How important is it, on a 1-10 scale?**
- **How much energy do you have for addressing this issue, on a 1-10 scale?** (If the answer is low, you can follow up with a question about what might help to bring this level up)
- **What are the implications of doing nothing?**
- **What have you already tried?**
- **Imagine this problem has been solved. What would you see, hear, feel?**
- **What's getting in the way of that?**
- **What's your own responsibility for what's been happening?**
- **If you were magically given an injection of insight and courage, what would you do about this?**
- **What are the options here?**
- **How will you select from amongst these options?**
- **How would you know if things were getting better?**
- **What's the next or first thing you'll do?**

Appendix 1 contains more questions too, questions to help with clarifying and focusing, questions to help you to probe and enquire further, and questions that are designed to be more solution-oriented.

Giving Feedback



Coaching can offer a benefit to clients that is often very rare in organisations - they afford people an opportunity to see themselves reflected in the mirror of a trusted other, someone who can help us to see ourselves as others see us. This is particularly true of those who are quite senior in organisations as, the higher a person's position, the less likely they may be to receive honest feedback.

All of us like to know how we are experienced and how we are doing. There is some evidence that 'Generation X' employees (those in the forties and fifties now) and 'Generation Y' employees are said to actively seek out frequent and consistent feedback as an input to their future development (McCarthy (2014), p. 49⁵). Coaches are in a unique position to give feedback to their clients and to challenge their clients when challenge appears to be required. Feedback and challenge must, of course, be given respectfully and sensitively.

Obviously, any feedback that is offered to the coaching client should be given sensitively and skilfully. If you are in doubt as to how to do this, see Appendix 1.

Exploring Feelings

Many clients come to coaching not because they are lacking in intelligence or rationality – many of them know well what the "right answer" is to their problem. They may even begin with expressing frustration such as "I know I should be handling this better but I just can't seem to..." or "I know the answer to my lack of time is to prioritise better, but..." Usually, what clients have not grasped is that it is emotion that is clouding the way. This is especially true of clients who have been able to rely on thinking and reasoning to achieve success and can suddenly find themselves stumped by problems. The job of the coach is to help these clients to explore their feelings and to address their feelings.



Helping clients to do this is not especially difficult. Often, it is simply about holding the client at this point with questions such as "I'm wondering what might be underlying this reluctance, why you might [for example] not be good at prioritising...?". If the client is held safely at this point, they will usually be able to give you an answer ("I actually like the novelty of letting my day unfold organically" or "if I prioritise certain jobs, I'll have to attend to them and I'm afraid I might fail at them").

However, many clients will give you a 'heady' response, thoughts rather than feelings. Some clients may not even know that there is a difference between thinking and feeling. Any client who tells you that "I feel that..." is telling you a thought – an emotion has no 'that' after it, it is self sufficient (I feel excited, I feel bored, I feel afraid, etc.). Because many people have learned that emotions somehow imply weakness, they have

buried them under layers of thought and headiness and you may have to help uncover them with questions such as “how do you feel now as you are talking about this incident?” or “tell me how you felt then” or “what is this like for you?” or “how does novelty [or failure] make you feel?”, etc. Of course, body language can be a good guide to emotion too – if you see the coachee’s face change, or shoulders drop, or breathe more heavily, gently bring this to their attention and ask them if they know what that shift was about (avoid interpreting it for them).

Recent research and developments within the field of neuroscience have led one researcher to identify five especially strong triggers for emotional reaction, and these five are all to be found in organisational life. We are, apparently, hard-wired to respond to these social triggers in the same way as we respond to physical pain (our brain treats them the same). Thus, we move away from any threat arising in these five areas and move towards reward. The five triggers are: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness (SCARF⁶). We can have unconscious emotional reactions in any of these areas and we may not even be aware of why we are reacting. They can come into the coaching relationship too so it is worth getting to know them a little so that you can help your client make sense of what is going on for them in the world, and so that their effect can be minimized within the coaching relationship.

- **Status** is about relative importance to others. If I perceive that my status is diminished or is rising, relative to others, it will trigger an emotional response. This response can be triggered by anything that I think can pose a threat to my status, including others’ promotion, being told what to do, or even feedback (coaches take note!). I can feel good about my status through validation and through achieving my goals, as well as through moving past or beyond others.
- **Certainty** concerns being able to predict the future. It can be threatened by not being able to foresee what happens next or how to proceed with something. Ambiguity can also threaten it as we’re not sure how to ‘read the signals’ say, if someone is saying one thing but appearing another. Conversely, being given a sense of what to expect will make us feel safer and turn down our emotional response. This is why clients may ask about what they can expect from the coaching process.
- **Autonomy** provides a sense of our control over events. Being micromanaged or a change to reporting relationships can trigger this response. Being given more of a say in how we do our work will trigger a positive emotional response (as long as it doesn’t take us too far into uncertainty – see above). It can be important, within the coaching relationship, to have explicit discussion of who is in control – in general, the client will be in control of the content but, especially in the beginning, the coach will be more in control of the process.
- **Relatedness** is a sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe. This is important in so many aspects of work where people are often working in teams, working remotely, working to virtual managers, working with people they like or don’t like. Very few of us get to choose our colleagues and yet we must find a way of getting on with them at least enough to enable us to work together. Relatedness threats will come from any sense of unsafety, arising from being excluded, being bullied, being mocked and even more benign threats such as working with people from different cultures or different parts of the organisation. Coaching, per se, is supposed to offer relatedness reward which is why, as in many one-to-one professional relationships, it is often said that ‘the healing is the relating’.
- **Fairness** is a perception of fair exchanges between people and of being treated fairly. This can be triggered by many different things in work, including a sense of different rules for different people (favoritism), or ‘A teams and B teams’, or unequal access to opportunity, etc. Fairness can be enhanced through transparency and ground-rules.



Of course, some of us will be more sensitive than others to one or more of these triggers. The SCARF mnemonic is, nonetheless, a quick-and-easy way of helping coaching clients to understand what emotions might be underlying some of their non-rational objections or resistances to change.

The two times when it is particularly useful to explore feelings with a client are at the exploration phase of a problem and at the point where a client has decided what to do and they are readying themselves for implementation.

Structure and Process in Coaching

In general, coaching is a process that is unique to each coaching client. Each client will bring their own issues and challenges and each client’s path to self-discovery will be different. But this does not mean that there are not standard or relatively generic processes that can be expected.

If only for practical purposes, both coach and client need to have some idea of what they are committing to in terms of the number of timing of sessions. Again, this can differ from client to client but most coaching programmes will assume a process of, for example, six sessions over six months. Of course, if things are more urgent than this, these sessions can take place much more closely in time. It is best not to allow too much time to elapse between sessions as this can lead to a loss of momentum. A session is usually of about one to two hours duration but, again, this is not written in stone and some coaches/clients may prefer or need longer or shorter sessions.

In general, because the relationship is so central to the process of coaching, most coaches will prefer to meet face-to-face rather than remotely. However, for practical reasons, internet-based sessions can take place using, for example, Skype or FaceTime. These ‘remote’ coaching sessions are more suitable later in the coaching relationship and where there is very specific issue to be addressed (for example, a client might be preparing for an interview or rehearsing for an important intervention with their team).

These six sessions will be prefaced, usually, by a ‘chemistry meeting’ which is where coach and coachee or client meet each other and judge whether the chemistry is right and whether they want to proceed. There will also be a review at the end of the agreed number of sessions – amongst other things, this review will check whether the client wants/needs further sessions (if follow-on sessions are necessary, it should be clear how these are negotiated).

The following is a generic scheduling of a six-session coaching arrangement.

Month 0	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7
chemistry meeting (<1 hour)							
	Session 1 (2 hours)	Session 2 (2 hours)	Session 3 (2 hours)	Session 4 (2 hours)	Session 5 (2 hours)	Session 6 (2 hours)	
			inc. mini-review			inc. review	formal evaluation

Many coaches like to have a model as a guide in a coaching conversation to across the coaching conversations as a whole. There are many models available, including the GROW model and CLEAR model, both of which suggest a useful structuring of the coaching process. GROW stands for Goal, Reality, Options and Will or Wrap-Up (Whitmore, 2009⁷). Some coaches have questioned whether it is always possible or appropriate to start with goal-setting and, of course, they are right – this model, like so many others, should not be mechanically applied but rather just used a general guide. It does provide a good structure and a reminder that, for coaching to be worthwhile, it does have to lead to change and change will not happen without clarity of purpose (or goal), without taking account of the current reality (helps and hindrances), without exploration of and a choice of an option for achieving that goal, and without the willingness to give it a go.

The CLEAR model is a similar guide to structuring the coaching process. It stands for: Contract, Listen, Explore, Action and Review (Harper and Smith, 2006⁸).

C	Contract	Helping the coachee to establish what outcome they want to achieve as a result of coaching, opening up the discussion, establishing the scope of the coaching and setting ground rules for working together.
L	Listen	Actively listening to the coachee and listening with empathy to help them to gain an understanding of their situation and personal insight.
E	Explore	Helping the coachee to understand the personal impact the situation is having on themselves. Challenging the coachee to think through possibilities for future action in resolving the situation.
A	Action	Supporting the coachee to choose a way ahead and decide the next step.
R	Review	Closing the session, reinforcing the ground that has covered, the decisions made and checking in with the coachee to ensure they are ready for change.



Of course, the content of each session will depend on the overall agreed goals for the coaching process. The following is a description of a process that can be used to guide each session:

1. Re-establishing rapport, checking in with each other, catching up with what has happened since the last meeting.
2. Hearing about how things are now – what is working well, what is not working so well, what challenges and opportunities are presenting themselves.
3. Establishing what the client would like to work on, their goal for the session.
4. Identifying the change that the client/coachee is seeking, and working with them to prepare them, in as far as it is possible at this time, to make the change or get themselves more ready for it.
5. Clarifying when and how the coachee might begin to put that change into practice in the real world.
6. Reflecting on how the session has been – how was it for the client to explore this issue and their desire for change and to grapple with identifying how to change. It is also an opportunity to gauge the client's readiness and confidence levels (change is not easy!).

Making Contact and the Chemistry Meeting

The precise details of how to engage with a coach may vary from time to time and from place to place, so it is best to contact LED in your area to check how to proceed. However, things usually begin with the client identifying his or her interest in working with a coach and then LED matching them with a coach, internal or external. This matching can often be based on the prospective coachee reviewing the coach profile of a number of coaches from a panel. Contact details are then usually exchanged and arrangements put in place between the two parties to have a chemistry meeting.

Contact HR Leadership,
Education & Development
to find out more about
how you express your
interest in coaching and
how the matching
process works

Different coaches and clients have different approaches to the chemistry meeting. The simplest approach is that a meeting takes place, usually of less than an hour's duration, between prospective coach and client. There may be an exchange of information prior to that – for example, there may have been an exchange of Coach Profiles through email, LinkedIn or one of the social media platforms. Sometimes, prospective clients prefer to withhold any sensitive information about themselves until they have met the coach and have satisfied themselves that they can work with him/her. The chemistry meeting is not a coaching session, so the client does not have to say much about what brings them to consider coaching, but it can be useful if they are able to say a little about what they are hoping to achieve. This can make it easier for the coach to explain how he or she works or might work. It is also a time for the client to ask any questions they have about the process and especially to seek reassurances about how the coach might handle any challenges to, for example, confidentiality, or scheduling, or working outside office hours, etc. There is also likely to be a discussion of what coaching is (and isn't), so as to make sure that both parties have the same general understanding of the process.



The chemistry meeting is also an opportunity for the coach to decide if s/he can work with this client. There may be many reasons why it is better to withdraw from a prospective coaching relationship than risk damaging the client in any way – for example, conflict of interest, threat to confidentiality, or mismatch between client need and coach competence (for example, if the client insists that his/her coach is from the same industry or discipline as him/herself and trust will not be established unless this criterion is met).

The First Coaching Session

If both parties are happy to go ahead with the coaching relationship, the first proper coaching session can be arranged. This meeting should be used for both parties to get to know each other in more depth, share information about each other, identify and explore expectations, explore the overall aims and objectives and, of course, discuss the practical arrangements regarding when and where to meet. The following is a list of things that you can expect to be discussed at the first meeting:

- The coaching client should be prepared to talk about themselves and disclose something about what has sparked their interest in coaching at this point (in response to questions such as “tell me a bit about yourself and your career to date...” or “so what brings you to coaching right now?”);
- There will be further exploration and agreement on issues such as:
 - Ground-rules, including confidentiality, commitment of both parties and statutory obligation on the part of the coach in relation to Trust in Care, Protected Disclosures etc.
 - Expectations and boundaries of the coaching process
 - Roles and responsibilities of both
 - Helping the coachee to clarify what it is she or he is looking for (goals and objectives)
 - Discussion of the coaching contract.

Many coaching clients will, in this first session, take a deep dive into the issue or problem that has brought them to coaching. They may have been waiting to talk about it for some time and be relieved to start the conversation with someone who can help. Other coaching clients can be much more tentative – this may be the first time they have ever really spoken with anyone, let alone a stranger, about these things. Even for cautious clients, it can be very useful to use the first session to explore some current issue that they are dealing with, if only to get a feel for how the coach might work with them. This experience of mutual exploration will give the client a sense of what they can expect in future sessions and can help them be clear about the kind of support they might need from their coach.

Subsequent Sessions

Later coaching sessions are likely to be more ‘problem-focused’ or ‘development-focused’, often centred on exploring the coachee’s hopes and concerns, goals and objectives, both professional and sometimes personal.

Coaching sessions are a ‘safe space’ for coachees to explore really difficult issues, such as ethical concerns they may have an aspect of the work or service, or dealing with very politically sensitive issues, or trying to influence policy and practice in environments which may feel hostile to change. As the relationship develops, the agenda might deepen and the relationship will probably deepen too. Clients will find it easier to explore difficult issues, to disclose vulnerability, to ask for and receive help.

The relationship will get regular attention too, with the coach checking in with the client as to how they are and how they are experiencing the process. This checking-in can happen within the session and/or the coach will raise it explicitly usually a mid-point and at the end of the six session process. There will be an organic to-and-fro in the process so that both parties feel an ownership of it.

Towards the end of each session, the coach will usually signal that the time is drawing to a close – this is to give the client time to close down the discussion and ready themselves for resuming normal work/life again. There may be a concluding agreement on what the coachee is undertaking to try out or do before the next meeting, as well as how s/he might access additional support.

Finally, the meetings can finish with a quick check-in, which can cover how the coachee found the meeting, how useful the discussion was, how they are feeling in the coaching relationship, and anything that they might like the coach to do differently in future sessions.

Evaluation

There is likely to be a written **evaluation** of the coaching process by the client at the end of the series of sessions. This evaluation will not cover any reference to content (this remains confidential) but the client will be asked to comment on how they experienced the process and how useful it was in helping them meet their goals/make the changes they wanted to make. Evaluation is of interest to the organisation (which needs to make sure that it is getting value for money) and for the coach (who will also want to assure him/herself as to the value of their work). It may be that you are asked to engage in separate, usually short, evaluations (one by HR and one by the coach) as they may be trying to learn different things about your experience of the process.

The Coaching Contract and Other Arrangements

A simple template for a contract between the coach and the client is given as Appendix 2 to this document. The purpose of the contract is to ensure that both parties are clear as to what they can reasonably expect from each other in terms of logistics (managing meetings and inter-meeting contact) and core ground-rules, and encourages the client to clarify what it is they want from the process.

Of course, as the relationship deepens and both parties grow in their roles, this contract can be revisited and revised.

PART 3 – APPENDICES

Active Listening – A Five-Step Guide

1. pay attention

- Make a mental effort to switch off your own thoughts, and to tune into/give the speaker your undivided attention. Acknowledge what they are saying.
- Non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly. Notice the speaker's body language and check it out if there is any discrepancy between what they are saying and how they look.
- Avoid environmental distraction such as competing sounds or interruptions.

2. show you're listening

- Use your own body language and gestures to show that you are paying them attention.
 - for example, nod occasionally for emphasis
 - make comfortable eye contact and smile / use appropriate facial expressions.
 - sit in a way that makes it seem that you are open to the other person.
 - encourage the speaker to continue with verbal reinforcements like 'yes', and 'mmh'.

3. show you understand

- Your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to check back with the other person, and to reflect back and offer mini-summaries along the way. This will both validate the other person and avoid the kind of distortion that can come from our own beliefs, assumptions, etc.
 - reflect what has been said by paraphrasing, e.g. "What I'm hearing is," and "So, you're saying that....".
 - ask questions to clarify certain points, e.g., "are you saying that...?" - Summarise the speaker's comments periodically.

4. don't interrupt

- Let the other person finish at their own pace. Interrupting is usually counter-productive.
 - allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions. You don't want to curtail their talking by an untimely intrusion.

5. respond

- Good communication is two-way. Active listening allows for respect and understanding. Let the other person know that you have heard them by giving an appropriate response.
 - be open and honest in your response.
 - assert your thoughts and feelings respectfully.
 - treat the other person sensitively and appropriately.

Some Useful Questions for Coaches

Some examples of good questions are below:

Clarifying and Focusing Sample Questions	Probing and Enquiring Sample Questions	Solution-Oriented Sample Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's happening? • How do you see it? • What makes you say that...? • What else could explain the situation...? • Can you say more about how you felt? • What is happening for you right now? • Who will be affected if you do nothing? • Who might help you? • What obstacles or barriers do you envisage? • What the most important (or most difficult) aspect of this for you? • What would you most like to know for, at work? • What gives you most pleasure in your working week? • If you had a magic wand and you could change anything about your current job, what would it be? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the difference between things now and things as you want them? • Who else cares about this, as well as you? Who else is affected by it? • Can you explain more about...? • Who benefits from this now? • Can you give an example? • What happened... and...? • Who are 'they'? • How do you feel? • If you were asked by a judge 'where's the evidence for this?', what could you say? • What assumptions are you making? • Can you tell me how you know that? • What would tell you if things were getting worse or better? • How do you know that...? • Are there times when things go differently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would success look like here? • If all decisions rested on you, what would you do? • What are your options now? • Which option might appeal most to X or Y? • Is there anything about this that you couldn't live with? • What other possibilities exist? • Where could you find out more about this? • Who else might have an interest, could get in your way or could help you? • What are you going to do between now and when we next meet? • What are you going to do in the next three hours, days, three weeks? • What's the first step you can take?

Questions to Aid Reflection

These questions are suggested as a process for guiding reflection on incidents. These incidents might be incidents that have occurred in work and which are of significance to the client because, for example, they caused problems or the client is left with a sense of 'unfinished business'.

The questions and also be sued to help reflection on anything that happens within the coaching process, especially incidents that seem charged or significant for either the coach or the client. They are based on theories of adult learning and are designed to help us reflect on and learn from a variety of aspects of a single instance.

What happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the facts of the situation. • What was the context? • Why is this (session, incident, etc.) significant to you?
What were you thinking and feeling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tease out and separate your thoughts and feelings about what happened. • What were you thinking about <i>during</i> the incident? ☐ • What were you feeling <i>during</i> the incident? ☐ • What were you thinking about <i>after</i> the incident? ☐ • What were you feeling <i>after</i> the incident? ☐ • What are your thoughts and feelings <i>now</i> about the incident? ☐

What was good or bad about the experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What went well - what did you do well and what did others do well? ☐ • What didn't go so well? ☐ • What impact did the incident have on you and others? ☐ • What did you or others do that could be different? ☐
What sense can you make of the situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your understanding of what happened? Notice how there can be different views on the incident. ☐ • Are there other ways of seeing it? Other perspectives? ☐ • What sense or meaning can you make of it all now? • What conclusions are you drawing about what happened? ☐
What else could you have done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In hindsight, what alternatives or options were open to you? ☐ • How could these have been useful? ☐☐ • What other skills or resources would have been helpful? ☐ • What do you need to do to get these? ☐
What would you do if it arose again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on your reflection, if a similar incident happens again what will you do? ☐Will you do anything differently? ☐ • How will you know if this is any better? ☐ • What learning happened as a result of your reflection? ☐ • Are there any changes that need to happen as a result of your reflection? ☐

Giving Feedback



When giving feedback, the simple **BOOST** model is a useful guide to doing it well:

- **B**alanced: feedback should focus both on strengths and on areas for development.
- **O**bserved: feedback should be based only on behaviours that are observable and witnessed by you (not third-hand testimony).
- **O**bjective: relate your feedback to the observed behaviours, not to the person's personality traits.
- **S**pecific: back up your comments with specific examples of the observed behaviour.
- **T**imely: give feedback soon after the activity, but not in the 'heat of the moment' if the person has just done something that was difficult or very exciting (there's a good chance they won't be able to hear the feedback if they are very emotional)

TIPS FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

do...

- ask for permission ("would you like some feedback right now about X?") – this respects the person's right to be in control and prepares them for the feedback to come
- stick to what you have directly observed or experienced – leave the interpretation of why it happened to the client
- back up your comments with specific examples of the observed behaviour
- give feedback as close in time as possible to the observed behaviour, except if the person is very emotional (high levels of emotion can make it difficult for us to 'hear' feedback)
- invite the client to identify the aspects of their behaviour that they would like to hear back about – this way, they can set the agenda
- start with what worked, what went well, and then move to the areas for development or concern
- invite the client to self-assess first ("so, how do you think it went?") – this makes it easier for you to follow up and to 'correct' the client if they are overly self-critical
- follow up with goal-setting (or 'feed forward') by helping the client to identify what change they would like now to make

don't...

- just focus on the negative (people can learn from both good and bad experiences!).
- blame or label the person (focus instead just on the behaviour)
- over generalise ("you always do X")
- use words that can be ambiguous – organisational behaviour is full of words (like "communication" or "motivation" or "professional") that mean different things to different people – better to say exactly what you mean in the form of "when you did X, I noticed Y".
- overload the person – focus on one thing at a time in order to give the person time to process and learn about one thing they might change right now
- dress opinion up as fact – it can be fine to give feedback based on your opinion or your intuition as long as it is labelled as such and as long as it is contestable by the client
- push too hard – if someone is deeply resistant to hearing a message, there's probably a good reason why they have learnt to defend themselves in this way

COACHING AGREEMENT (SAMPLE)

This contract is between: _____ (*name of coach*) and
_____ (*name of client*)

The coach and client agree to commit to working together in this relationship so that the client can be helped to achieve his/her expressed goals and developmental ambition. The coach and client have discussed these goals and both are happy that the client's goals are appropriate material for this relationship.

If the coach or client finds the working relationship unproductive, they should make efforts to resolve any issues that may arise between them.

Either party can seek to terminate this contract.

Arrangements: Meetings will take place face-to-face, at times and places agreed between the coach and the client. Communication by email is acceptable to both parties. Contact details and preferred email addresses have been exchanged. Both parties should aim to respond to email or phone messages within 2 working days.

Both parties commit to this relationship for a period of _____ months and, during that time, they will meet approximately every _____ weeks for _____ minutes.

Both parties will do as much as they can to attend the meetings. In the event that one party has to cancel, they will aim to give as much notice as possible.

Review Meetings: These will be held at the mid-point and at the end of the contract. The purpose of the mid-point review is to change anything that needs to be changed within the relationship. The purpose of the final review is for the client to summarise what progress s/he has made towards achievement of the goals s/he identified at the outset or any other goals that were agreed in the course of the relationship.

Confidentiality: The content of the meetings will be treated with strictest confidence, unless the client gives permission for a defined breach of confidentiality. Any notes made by the client, and all email and other written communications in relation to this relationship, will also be treated confidentially.

If the coach believes that professional ethical principles or laws are being broken by the individual he/she will first bring this to the individual's attention and advise them of any action he/she will take as a result before breaching this code of confidentiality.

We, the undersigned, have read and agreed to the above.

_____ (*name of coach*) _____ (*date*)

_____ (*name of client*) _____ (*date*)

Questions Clients (Prospective Coachees) Might Ask

How do I sign up or apply for a coach? This will depend on the organisation,

Contact HR LED to see if there is a coaching scheme in place for you. If there is, there will be information available as to how to apply for a coach and how to proceed from there.

If you particularly want a coach, and there is no scheme in place, there is nothing to stop you from approaching someone you admire and respect and asking them to be your coach.

What if I think we might not be a good match?

If your coach is not reasonably well known to you already, think about having a 'chemistry meeting' before you commit to the relationship. This is a pre-commitment meeting where you can both get a feel for what it might be like to work with each other. It is an opportunity to 'try before you buy'. If you feel that there might be too much of a gulf in values, perspectives, approaches or personality between you and your potential coach, this is the time to back out and to see if you can find someone more suitable. There is no point in investing time in coaching meetings if you don't feel you can work with this person.

What if I don't like my coach but I only find this out later?

There is little point in trying to bridge a gap that is too big. If it only emerges later in the series of meetings that you are not a good match, you can raise this issue with your coach and let them know that the relationship isn't working for you. You should, if possible, give them some inkling as to why this is the case, especially if this news is likely to come as a surprise (for example, you haven't indicated before now that there is any problem).

I think this coaching relationship has run its course – how do I sign off?

It is not unnatural for clients to outgrow their need for coaches, given that we always choose coaches to meet a particular set of needs identified at a particular time. If you have had a series of meetings with your coach and you have decided that you want to move on and bring this relationship to an end, you can raise this issue with your coach and let them know. You should, if possible, give them some inkling as to why this is the case, especially if this news is likely to come as a surprise (for example, you haven't indicated before now that your coaching needs have been met).

My role has changed and my coach is now in my line of management – do I have to stop with my coach?

This needs to be handled by both parties with a degree of maturity and openness. Most coaching arrangements work best when they're outside of the day-to-day line management relationship between people. It can be hard to be coached by a line manager as it makes it more difficult to admit to development needs to someone who may have a say in your future promotion! It can be difficult for coaches to treat coachees in the same way as they would treat anyone else who reports to them. A very good coaching relationship with a line manager can also be seen as giving the coachee an unfair advantage over their peers and this can lead to suspicions of favoritism.

Some coaching programmes do allow for coaches to be line managers. For example, smaller organisations may not have sufficient potential coaches to allow for a complete separation between coaching and line management. If this is the case, there should be a good deal of transparency about the relationship, and that the coach/line manager ensures that people know when they are acting as a coach, rather than as a manager.

Are discussions between the coach and the coachee confidential?

Yes, they are.

I'm working really well with my coach and want to continue past the agreed time – can I do this?

Yes, as long as both you and your coach are in agreement and as long as you have authorisation from HR LED if the coach is being paid for the service.

Questions Coaches Might Ask

Am I a suitable to be a coach?

Coaching is, in many ways, inherent in managing and even in teamwork. You may already have developed the skills necessary for effective coaching in so far as you have already:

- helped someone structure ideas about how to tackle opportunities/problems
- helped someone reflect on or analyse why things went well or badly
- acted as a sounding board to someone, inside or outside work
- offered alternative ways of looking at an issue or seeing a problem
- helped someone reach higher, set more challenging standards for themselves
- helped someone set realistic learning objectives
- helped someone assess their own progress and plan their own career/future.

Internal coaches will have undertaken a specific accredited course in coaching.

How much time will be involved in a coaching relationship?

It is suggested that coaches meet their coachees 6 times over the course of a six-month period. Each meeting will last 2 hours or so. However, specific arrangements for meetings are left to the discretion of the individual pair and more meetings may take place if it is mutually felt to be necessary.

Are discussions between the coach and the coachee confidential?

Yes, they are.

What if I don't like my potential coachee or think we might not be a good match?

If your client (coachee) is not reasonably well known to you already, think about having a 'chemistry meeting' before you commit to the relationship. This is a pre-commitment meeting where you can both get a feel for what it might be like to work with each other. It is an opportunity to 'try before you buy'. If you feel that there might be too much of a gulf in values, perspectives, approaches or personality between you and your potential client, this is the time to back out and reserve your time for someone else. There is no point in investing time in coaching meetings if you don't feel you can work with this person.

Will there be any supervision of the clients?

There will be no formal supervision.

Can I get in touch with the coachees line manager, if I think it appropriate?

No. You should only do this with express permission of the client. The client may not have even shared the news of the existence of this relationship with his/her line manager.

My client wants to extend the agreed duration of our coaching agreement – can they do this?

Yes, as long as both you are in agreement. This cannot, for obvious reasons, be a unilateral decision. HR LED may also need to authorize it if there is any payment involved.

APPENDIX 4 – HSE INTERNAL COACHING FRAMEWORK – COACH LEAD CONTACT DETAILS

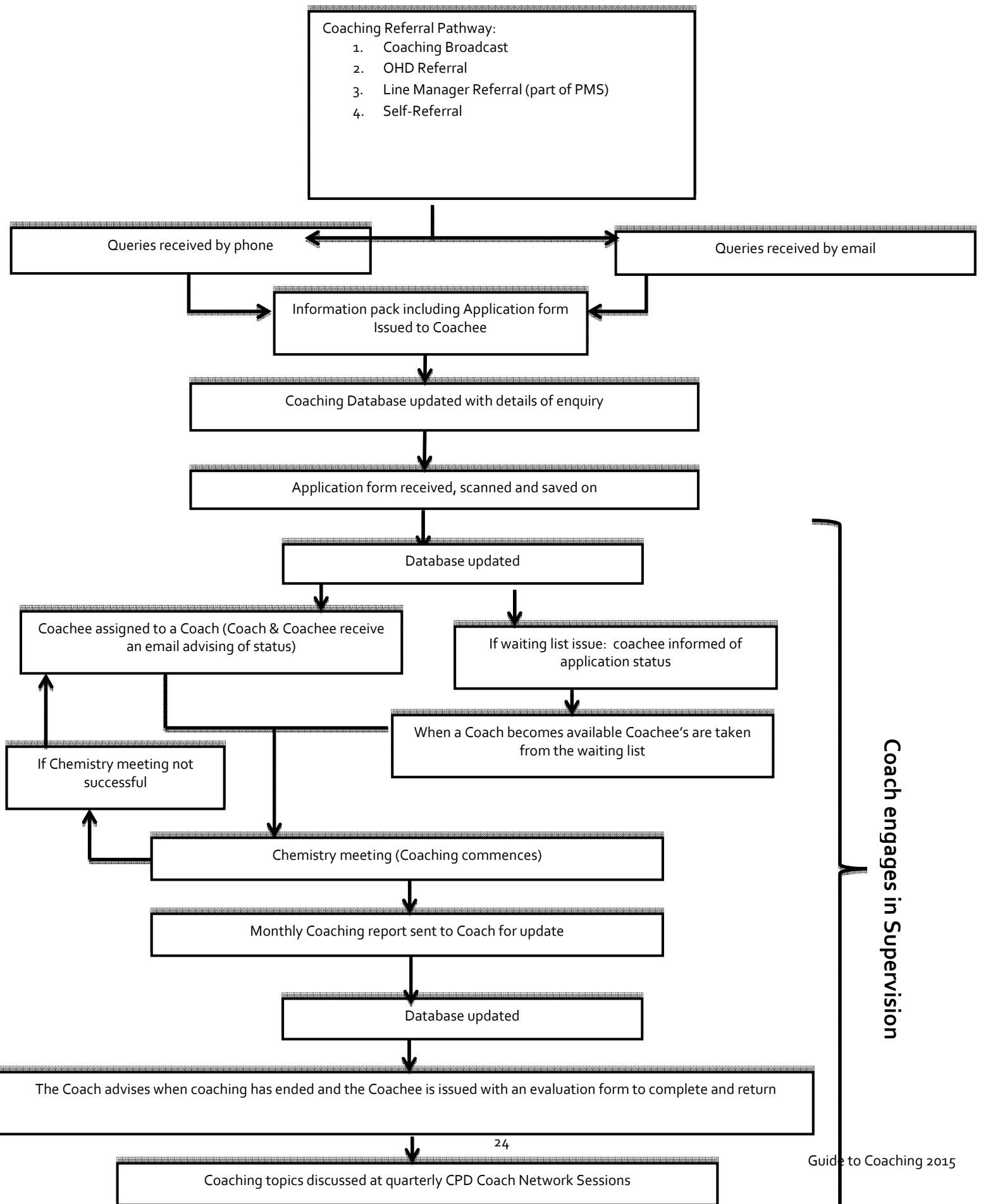
HSE Coaching Frameworks: Internal Executive Coaching Panel Leads

1. CHO Area 1 & 2 + SAOLTA Hospital Group (Partnering Francis Rogers HR AND)
Marie O’Haire (Coaching Lead), Performance & Development Department, Merlin Park, Galway - Marie.OHaire@hse.ie
2. CHO Area 6 & 7 + Ireland East Hospital Group, Dublin Midlands Hospital Group, Children’s Hospital Group (Partnering Mary Gorry HR AND)
Jennifer Garry, Performance & Development Department, Unit 8a, Burlington Business Park, Sragh Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly - jennifer.garry@hse.ie
3. CHO Area 4 & 5 + South/South West (Partnering Tess O’ Donovan HR AND)
Michele Bermingham, Performance & Development Manager, Health Service Community Healthcare Organisation Areas 4 & 5 & South/SouthWest Hospital Group – Michele.bermingham1@hse.ie (Partnering Tess O’ Donovan HR AND)
4. CHO Area 8 & 9 + Dublin North East, RCSI Hospital Group (Partnering HR AND Francis Rogers)
Niall Gogarty, Change Manager | Human Resources Department | Bective Street | Kells | Co. Meath - niall.gogarty@hse.ie
5. CHO Area 8 & 9 + Dublin North East, RCSI Hospital Group.
Eithne Cusack, Director of Nursing & Midwifery Planning and Development, HSE Dublin North, Clinical Strategy and Programmes Division, Swords Business Campus. Balheary Road, Swords, Co. Dublin. Eithne.cusack@hse.ie
6. HSE Corporate
Declan Hynes, General Manager, Leadership, Education and Development, 20-23 Merchant Quay Dublin 8. Declan.hynes@hse.ie

If you are require further clarification about coach training, supervision or accessing HSE coaching supports, or you wish to finding out how you could join that panel, please contact Catherine Kavanagh in Leadership, Education and Development @ catherine.kavanagh@hse.ie

1. APPENDIX 5 – COACHING PROCESS FLOW CHART – CHO Area 8 & 9 + Dublin North East, RCSI Hospital Group.

7. SAMPLE OF COACHING PROCESS FLOW CHART (CHO Area 8 & 9 + Dublin North East, RCSI Hospital Group)



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- ¹³ International Coaching Federation, Reproduced from ICF website www.coachfederation.org **CAWT Connect Coaching Framework, Governance Arrangements** Version 11 (June 2014).