



Coaching Skills For Leaders

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Acknowledgments

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Course Objectives

By the end of this workshop you will:

- Learn the coaching mindset (*"How attitude, openness, and the outlook create the right space for others' discovery and development"*)
- Build on your communications abilities through three key coaching skills (*"deeper/engaged listening," "inquiry," and "championing"*)
- Learn how coaching interrupts dominating behavior and builds power with others
- Learn how to bring these skills together into a coaching conversation
- Practice, Practice, Practice

Group Intentions

- Acknowledge you were raised with biases and that you are on a journey to liberate your heart and mind
- Center Black, Indigenous voices in the large group
- Use the chat if you prefer not to speak in the group
- Make space/Take space
- Notice your comfort zone and where you can stretch
- Find your own voice ("I" statements)
- Observe confidentiality (lessons belong to the listener, stories to the storyteller)

Session 1

- Build the learning community
- Coaching and uses of power in organizations
- What is coaching and how is it different from other ways of communicating
- Principle: The person closest to the challenge is closest to the solution
- Practice!

Why Coaching?

Coaching is a way of communicating that can transform power dynamics: from 'power *over*' to 'power *with*' and 'power *within*'. Coaching helps put into practice the idea that the people closest to the problem are closest to the solutions. When we coach each other, we center self-determination, create space for accountability, and unlock each other's gifts.

Patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism thrive when "solutions" are imposed on our bodies and our communities without our participation or consent. Coaching is one way to dismantle these interlocking systems of oppression in the workplace.



Reflect: Coaching Demonstration

Use the space provided below to reflect on one of the following questions:

- How was this approach different from other conversations you have?
- What did you notice the coach was doing?
- What was the impact of the coaching?

Reflection Space:

What Is Coaching?

Coaching is a set of specific skills, a mindset, and a facilitative process that helps others think forward. Coaching supports individuals to make more conscious decisions and take new action. It fosters new levels of reflection, awareness, communication, accountability, and engagement. It helps individuals identify and build on their strengths and internal resources.

- Process to make decisions more conscious
- Acknowledge needs, values, and emotions
- Identify core problems
- Surface solutions
- Next Steps
- Accountability

Coaching people you work with helps to:

- Create a space for reflection and learning that helps move others from awareness into action
- Engage others to solve their own problems or reach their own solutions.
- Increase responsibility and accountability in others.
- Identify and build upon an individual's internal resources and strengths.
- Build a partnership with those who work with and for you that allows for all of the above to happen.

When To Coach

Choosing when to coach depends on what the person you are working with needs based on their **stage of learning and development**.

Matching Style to Developmental Needs

There is no one best management style, but the best managers learn about the needs of their people and use a combination of direction and support; in essence, a leadership style that is both appropriate to the task and to the situation.

The goal is to match the appropriate management style to the individual's development level. Learning how to do this requires the ability to assess the individual's development level and choose and deliver the right style for the situation.



When you match your style to the individual's development level and competence, both motivation and confidence grow. On the other hand, over-supervising or under-supervising can have a negative impact on performance, confidence, and motivation.

- **Directing (Telling):** The manager tells the employee what, when, and how to accomplish the goal or task and provides frequent follow-up and feedback.
- **Coaching:** The manager directs but also incorporates praising, encouraging, and listening. In essence, the manager consults with the individual but retains control over decision-making and problem-solving.
- **Supporting:** The manager encourages and facilitates, drawing the employee out and soliciting their feedback and suggestions. The intention is for the manager to encourage employees to believe in themselves.
- **Delegating:** The manager empowers the individual to act independently with appropriate resources to get the job done. The intention is for the leader to provide minimal direction and support because the employee is a peak performer.

Opportunities To Coach

As a leader or influencer, your job is to help others move from point A, where they are now, to point B, where they need, want, or are required to be.

Informal Coaching

- Can be done informally in the hallway, on a phone call, or just before a meeting with funders.

Formal Coaching

- Can take place in a regular one-on-one meeting or quarterly development conversation.
- May take a few minutes, or you might be able to put aside an hour.
- Coaching may occur once or on an ongoing basis.
- As a part of performance management.

EXAMPLES

- *A staff member says they need support with thinking through an idea.*
- *Although you don't have authority over the team you've been asked to lead, you see that the group could do with more thinking about the program. The team needs support.*
- *A co-worker comes to you because they are having a hard time working with other team members.*

When are good times for you to use coaching?

What's a situation where you would want to be coached?



Let's Practice!

For this exercise, one partner, "speaker," will share a recent challenge (see below). The other partner, "coach," will use questions to help the partner with the challenge identify a new action or gain more perspective (see examples below).

Speaker will share their response to one of the following prompts...

- *"What is one challenge you are facing at work during this time?"*
- *"Name one goal you are working on where you are stuck."*

Coach will practice asking questions to help the speaker identify a new action or gain more perspective.

Sample coaching questions:

- What is a personal strength you have brought to this challenge?
- Is there a similar challenge that you have worked through before?
What did you do then?
- What is most important about ___?
- Where do you have the most clarity?
- How can you build momentum from there?
- What's next?

Session #2

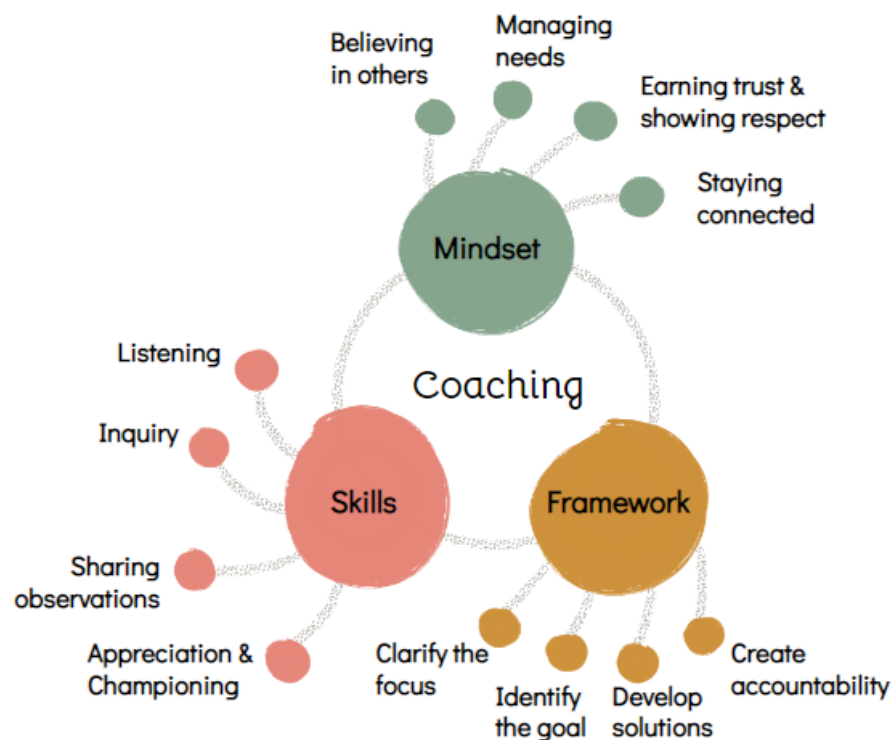
- Ground in the coaching mindset: Believing in Others
- Learn two key coaching skills (Listening & Inquiry)
- Practice!

The Coaching Model: An Overview

To become a coaching manager you need to master three key elements of how to coach:

- The coaching mindset – having the right attitude toward coaching and the person you are coaching
- The coaching skills – the foundational competencies
- The coaching framework - a four-step path to guide the coaching conversation

THE COACHING MODEL



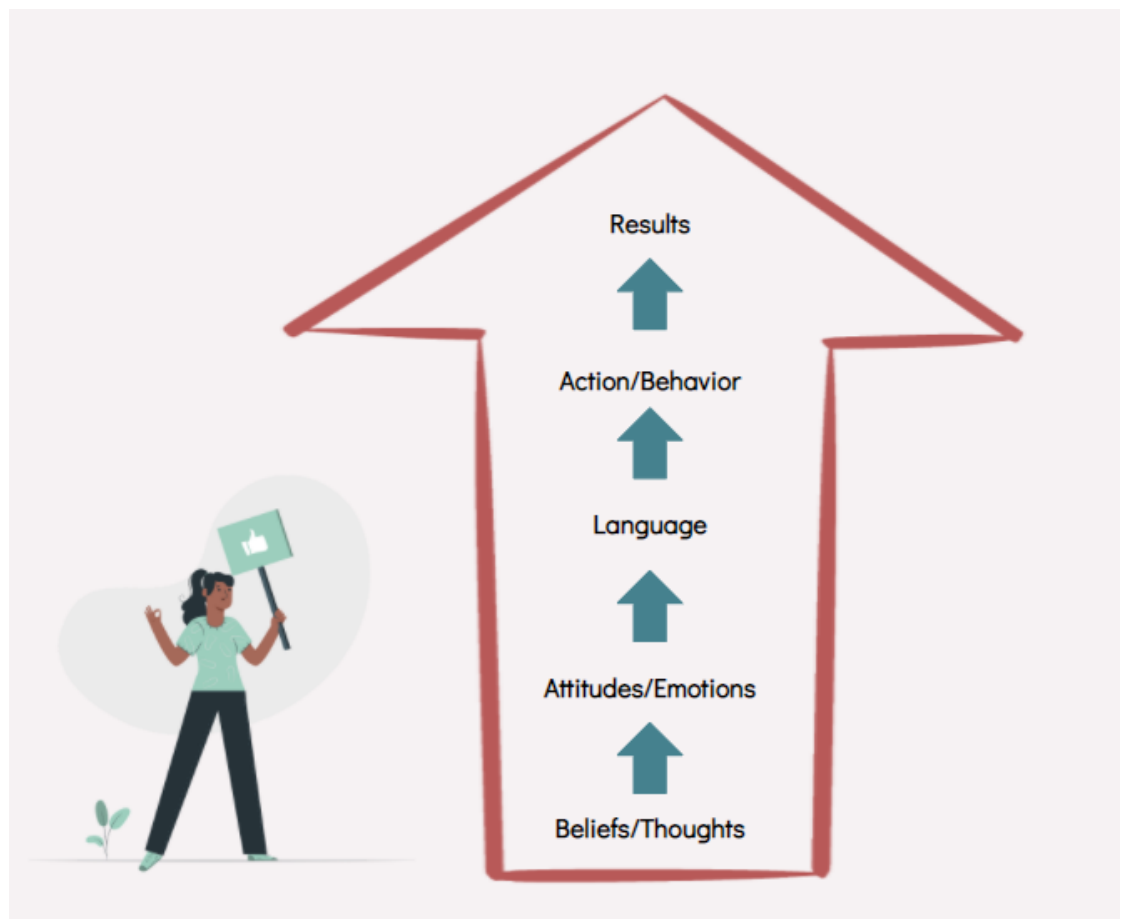
Coaching Mindset

OVERVIEW

The effectiveness of your coaching depends not only on your application of a coaching approach, but also your coaching mindset. Your coaching mindset impacts the coaching process.

Mindset Definition

The coaching mindset is your attitude, openness, and the outlook you bring to the coaching conversation, which is important for creating the right space for others' discovery and development.





Reflect: Being Believed In

Use the space provided below to reflect on one of the following questions.

Option 1: *Describe a time when someone expressed that they believed you had everything you needed inside you to succeed at something? Who was that person? What did they say or do? How did that feel to you?*

Option 2: *How do you communicate in words or actions that you believe in someone's capability and thinking around a task or project?*

Skill #1 - Listening

OVERVIEW

The goal of good coaching is to listen to what is being said and to what is not being said but needs to be heard.

- When we listen effectively to what is being communicated, we save time by not having someone needing to repeat what they said.
- Listening with intention to hear others out allows us to grasp the full understanding of what others are trying to get across and gives others a feeling that we care.
- Listening leaves the listener and the person being listened to with a full sense of integrity and respect.

The Four Listening Modes

Distracted Listening

I'm trying to listen to you without much attention, most of my attention is being drawn to other thoughts and needs. *multitasking means I am not focused on you*

Self-Referential Listening

I'm listening to you, but I hear only what relates to me. So now it becomes all about me.

Fix-it Listening

I'm listening to you and I want to solve your problem or figure this out. In this situation, it's still really all about me, in relation to you.

Focused Listening

I'm listening to you to understand better who you are and what this experience is like for you. In this situation, it's all about you. I want you to be fully heard.



Practice: Take Turns Listening

Practice in Pairs (6 min ea.)

Speaker:

Option 1: *"When was a time someone expressed that they believed you had everything you needed inside you to succeed at something? What did they say or do? How did that feel to you?"*

Option 2: *"How do you communicate in words or actions that you believe in someone's capability and thinking around a task or project?"*

Coach: Practice listening at the deepest level (Focused Listening)



Reflect: Listening

Additional question to ask yourself to help you master the skill of listening

- Are there some people I listen to more attentively than others?
- Who do I listen to least?
- Who do I need to listen to more?
- How comfortable am I being silent on occasion?
- What does it take to give my full attention to someone?
- What will I need to do to improve the quality of my focussed listening?
- What do you need to do to listen better while on a video call?
- How might power, race, privilege be impacting my listening?

Key takeaways

- _____
- _____
- _____

Skill #2 – Inquiry

OVERVIEW

Inquiry is the core of the coaching approach. Inquiring, or being curious when you are coaching, helps others deepen their learning as they unfold the answers for themselves. Staying curious when a person is telling their story will encourage them to tell the whole story.

Inquiry Definition

The skill of inquiry is the ability to ask useful questions and pull forth the brilliance from the other person. Inquiry involves asking stimulating questions for their sake, rather than for yours.

Hold Your Advice

When you give advice and solve the problem, you own the issue and outcome. When you allow others to think through their own solutions with your support, they own the issue and the outcome.

Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions lead to deeper answers and more reflective and expansive thinking by both parties, and generally start with:

- What
- How
- Who
- When
- Where
- Which

Closed-ended questions

Closed-ended questions elicit a yes or no answer. Open up your closed-ended questions unless you are simply clarifying what is being said. Closed-ended questions do not forward the person's thinking, and generally start with:

- Do/did
- Can/could
- Are/Is
- Will/would
- Have
- Should



Practice: Inquiry

Take turns sharing a mood, and having the other person 'try out' questions.

1 person shares their current mood...

"I'm feeling stuck about..."

"I'm feeling energized about... "

"I'm tired of... "

"I'm curious about... "

The other person tries out different questions as the person shares more...

- What does your heart tell you about this?
- What do you want to see happen?
- What can you stop doing so that you can make room for what's important?
- What can you stop tolerating?
- What is the wisdom your feeling is telling you?
- If you only focused on one thing, what would that be?
- What are the voices that you prevent you from...?
- What is within your power to address this situation?
- What is another way to think about this challenge?
- What is the benefit of confronting this challenge?
- What feels most important to focus on right now?
- When you're at your best, what would you be seeing or doing?
- What do you know in your gut?
- What might you do differently next time?

Sample questions to try on for various coaching needs

Goal-setting

What do you want to see happen?

What's important about that?

What would success look like to you?

What feels most important to focus on right now?

Approach

Have you ever done this before? What worked then?

How could you make it even more _____?

What action would really make a difference?

If you knew you'd succeed, what else would you do?

On challenges

What is challenging about this situation/person?

What are the real barriers? What are the ones that may not be real?

What is within your power to address this situation?

What is another way to think about this challenge?

What is the benefit of confronting this challenge?

What would happen if you walked away from the challenge?

Work relationship

Why is this relationship important?

How is this issue important?

How would [the other party] describe this issue?

What is your role in this situation?

What might the person/situation be teaching you?

If you were viewing this situation as an interested observer, what would you be seeing?

Reducing Overwhelm

What can you stop doing so that you can make room for what's important?

What can you stop tolerating?

If you only focused on one thing, what would that be?

What are the voices that prevent you from...?

Eliciting Wisdom

When you're at your best, what would you be seeing or doing?

What do you know in your gut?

What might you do differently next time?

What does your heart tell you about this?

As we've talked about this, what is new that is emerging?

What is the meaning you are making of the situation?

Aligning to Personal Values

What is most important to you about how you live your life now?

What are core values for you?

What is the wisdom your annoyance is telling you?

Where do those values come from?

How are you living in alignment with those values now? What might you need to adjust?

What do you want to create in your life in the next year? 2 years? 5 years?

How are you living your life now towards that future?

Getting to Action

What are you motivated to do in the next week?

What are your next steps?

How do you plan to achieve that?

How can you break that down into smaller steps?

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

What do you have the power to do and how can you tap into it?

What talents or strengths can you call upon to tackle this?

What resources are available to you?

Imagine a point in the future where your issue is resolved. How did you get there?

Accountability

What is one step you can take this week to take on this challenge?

What is one thing you can do to shift this challenge by 1%?

Who can you go to for support?

What can you do if you run into another barrier?

When will you take these steps?

How can I reinforce your commitment to action?

What can you do to build in some reward for taking action for accomplishing your goal?

Homework: between now and Session 3 ...

Practice Focused Listening and Inquiry with someone who is willing to share an issue, goal, or challenge with you.

- Get consent!
- It's good to clarify that you will be supporting them just by asking questions and listening, and that you will not be giving your opinion or advice.
- It's good to agree on the amount of time (try at least 10 minutes; 20 minutes is a good amount of time to get to some actions or ideas).
- Afterwards, ask "What was useful to you about what we did?" and thank them for letting you practice!

Read & Reflect before session 3:

Read [The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture](#) and notice how coaching practices and mindset can be different from the habits described in the reading.

Session #3

- Coaching builds “Power With, Not Power Over”
- “Organizational characteristics of white supremacy”
- Skill: Full Appreciation
- Practice, Practice, Practice

“The challenge, as you will read in one of my stories, is that most of our institutions and professions have defined success based on these characteristics (of White Supremacy Culture). As a result, a “good professional” is someone who is perfectionistic and individualistic, insists their way is the right way because they are the “expert,” complies with and requires a certain kind of writing, defends against criticism, thinks that to make a mistake is to be a mistake. As someone who struggled in school, I understand (or at least I think I do) the effort so many of us have made to fit into the professional characteristics that we’ve been told are critical to our ability to thrive in our fields. I no longer believe these characteristics reflect our actual genius and brilliance; I believe they are designed to at best contain and at worst distort us.

Our relationship to the idea of professionalism is shaped by race, class, gender, and how institutions have welcomed us or barred us or required us to assimilate or refused (and often continue to refuse) to acknowledge us. My desire here is that we redefine professionalism (or my preference would be to reject it altogether) so that we define the expectations we have of ourselves and each other.

Tema Okun, from White Supremacy Culture Characteristics.

Antidote to Perfectionism & Only One Right Way Thinking

Perfectionism: Perfectionism is the conditioned belief and attitude that we can be perfect based on a standard or set of rules that we did not create and that we are led to believe will prove our value. Perfectionism is the conditioned belief and attitude that we can determine whether others are showing up as perfect and demand or expect that they do so. White supremacy culture uses perfectionism to preserve power and the status quo.

Antidotes to Perfectionism, that coaching reinforces:

Coaching mindset: *People are Resourceful, Creative and Whole. "Acorns" have everything they need inside of them.*

Inquiries: *When was a time when you.... How can you approach this challenge now... Who can support you as you... What can you tell your inner critic right now...What would your ancestors say at this moment?*

Coaching approach: Supporting people to discover their strengths, their power and inner resources.

- Create curiosity & learning from mistakes; the person may have made the mistake but they are not the mistake.
- Questions expand the possibilities of learning from mistakes; solutions and approaches to a challenge.

Another word about perfectionism: There is no relationship between perfectionism and excellence. Perfectionism is the belief that we can be perfect or perform perfectly. The question has to be asked: according to who? Who decides what perfect is?

Tema Okun, from White Supremacy Culture- Still Here.



Reflect: Mistakes

Use the space provided below to *reflect on one* of the following questions.

Option 1: When you are in coaching mode, what questions could you offer someone who is sharing a mistake they made or is feeling very negative about themselves?

Option 2: What does my own “inner critic” tell me, but no longer serves me? (ie, negative self-talk)

Skill #3 - Appreciation

Everyone wants to know how well they are doing. Spend time reinforcing what you want someone to do more of; spend less time talking about what they are not doing.

One of the primary antidotes to White supremacy is appreciation. Appreciation is a core coaching skill. In a culture steeped in critique, changing our orientation to center what IS working, reflecting back STRENGTHS, and expressing positive observations out-loud is like a salve to White supremacy. When you take a coach approach, feedback is centered on reflecting back strengths.

Appreciating: helping clients see, and take in, things they may not see about their strengths.

Example: *"You have showed such vulnerability in asking for what you want from your boss"*

Instead of:

"You were great in that meeting, thanks."

Try:

"What you presented in yesterday's team meeting really helped the group get more clear about our working from home plans. You gave us several options to consider and a fun way to work through them. I can tell you really cared that people participated and voiced their opinions. Thank you!"

(optional coaching question) "What was the experience of preparing for the meeting like for you?"



Practice: Appreciative Feedback Preparation Worksheet

1. What did you observe?	
2. What was the positive impact that you saw, and what did it mean to you or other people?	
3. What qualities, skills in the person do you see?	
4. Personal statement of gratitude or appreciation.	
5. If you will coach post-feedback to boost strengths, actions, or behaviors, write down your questions.	

Session #4

- Championing & Making Observations
- Review of Sessions 1-3
- Your strengths and your learning edge
- Practice the Coaching Framework

Skill #4 - Championing

When you offer a team member a challenge from the coaching mindset of believing in them, you invite them to connect with their power within. Championing is a coaching skill to use when you have some knowledge of your team members' strengths, experience, values and goals—not right off the start!

You can use past information to call forth this person's full power within and their ability to partner in powerful alliance with others.

Once we are connected to our power within, we choose to act in ways that are beneficial to us and the larger world. A challenge could be worded in a direct statement or a question:

Statements:

- Imagine asking for what you really want.
- Imagine yourself moving in that direction.
- Put your focus on what matters most.

Inquiries:

- What if you trusted yourself fully right now?
- What does your heart say about this?
- What do you know in your gut to be true?

Example:

"Jose, When you took on the new campaign last year it was a huge challenge, and you delivered making about 25% more contacts than expected. I saw you building new relationships, reaching out for help when you needed it, and sharing what you were learning with others. I believe in your ability to handle this new project equally well. I can even see you surprising us all with where you want to take it."



Reflect: Championing

Use the space provided below to reflect on the following prompt.

Think of a challenge or big goal in the past that you would have wanted someone you trusted to champion you. What would you want to hear from them? What would remind you to value and honor yourself as you face a challenge or aspire to accomplish something?



Practice: Championing

Practice in pairs, each taking a turn to share, and listen:

Speaker: Share your challenge, and what resource/strength you want someone to call forth in you.

Listener: By using Focussed Listening when your partner is sharing, what statements or questions could a “champion” offer?

Skill #5 - Sharing an Observation without Judgment

Sharing an observation	Observation with judgment
"You've canceled our meetings three times in the past month... Can you tell me what's going on for you?"	"You keep canceling our meetings. What are you worried we will talk about?"
"You sighed just now..."	"What a sigh of relief!"

Practicing objective observation is an amazing discipline. It teaches you to know when you are seeing without judgment and when you are interpreting. There is a big difference, and many people confuse the two.

For instance, what you think is unprofessional and what someone else thinks is unprofessional can differ. One person may think talking nonstop for two minutes is too much, while someone else may consider it perfectly fine to go on for a good ten minutes before the line is crossed. Interpretation can lead to misunderstanding, yet most can agree on objective observations: what we saw and what we heard. So how can you observe and accurately capture what someone is saying or doing, without evaluating?

Spend a few minutes simply paying attention to what you see and hear.

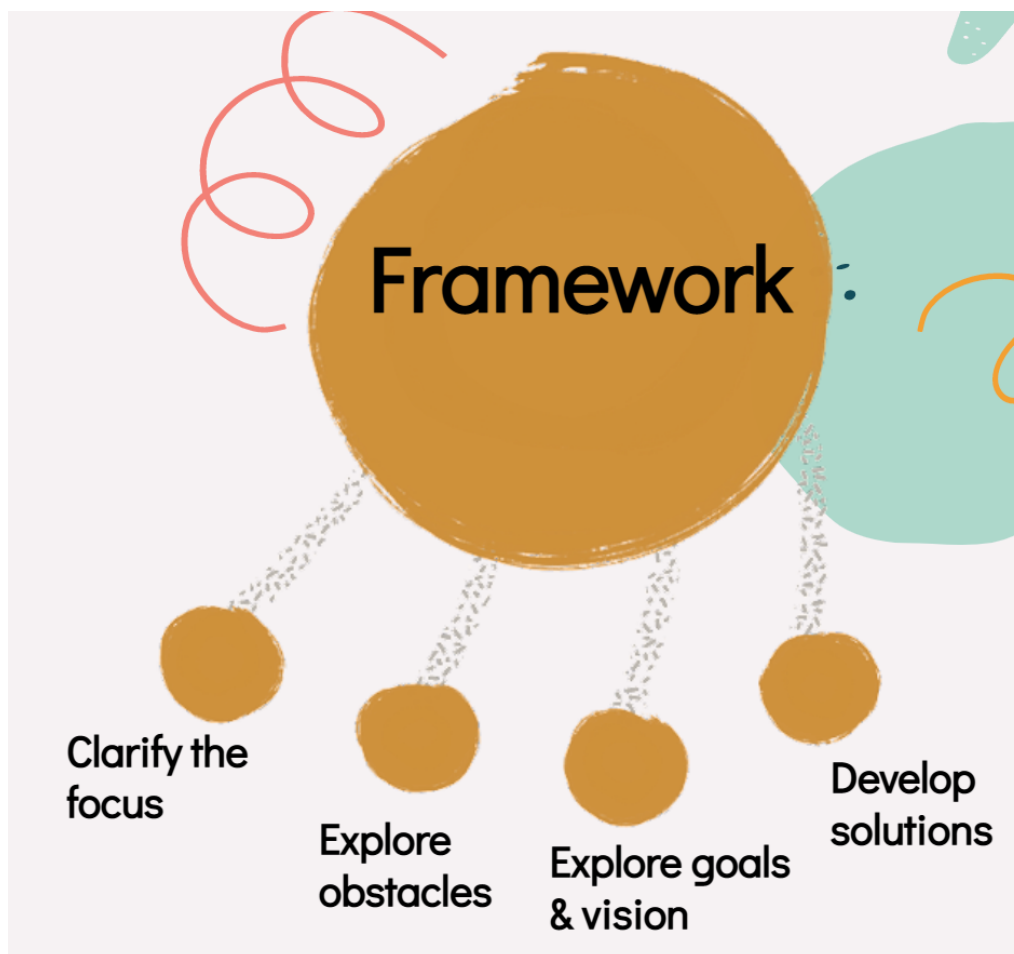
- Focus on the person's behavior.
- What did you actually see or hear?
- Ask yourself: "Would other people see or hear what I saw or heard?"
- Get specific: note exactly what the person did or said.
- Say what you observed without judgment.
- Avoid labeling ("unprofessional," "lazy," "eager," "smart")
- Be aware of your language ("you never," "you always")

The Coaching Framework

OVERVIEW

The coaching framework gives you the necessary structure for an effective coaching conversation.

- It will change the way you start, develop, and end your conversations.
- Use it as a template for any conversation toward new learning or action.
- You'll notice how you demonstrate a deeper sense of caring.
- Conversations become more efficient and effective.



Coaching Framework & Sample Questions

Clarify the Focus:

- What do you want to focus this coaching session on?
- How do you want to feel differently at the end?

Explore the Obstacles:

- What is important to you about this?
- Where do you feel stuck?
- What is at the heart of this matter?

Explore the Vision and Goals:

- What do you want to happen?
- What's important about that?
- What would success look like to you?
- What feels most important to focus on right now?

Develop Solutions:

- Have you experienced anything like this before? What did you do?
- Imagine a point in the future where your issue is resolved. How did you get there? How do you plan to achieve that?
- How can you break that down into smaller steps?
- If you could change one thing, what would it be?
- What talents or strengths can you call upon to tackle this?
- Who are your allies?
- What resources are available to you?

Create Accountability: Gain commitment and ownership

- What is one thing you can do to shift this challenge by 1%?
- Who can you go to for support?
- What can you do if you run into another barrier?
- What is the benefit of taking these steps?
- What is one step you can take this week to take on this challenge?



Practice: COACHING!!

1. Begin the coaching process. Each person has the same amount of time to coach and be coached.

- **When you are the coach**, simply start by asking the person:
What do you want coaching on?
- **When you are coached**, pick a specific goal or issue, **or** start with *I am feeling stuck about _____*

2. END the practice when your time is up!

3. Take a few minutes to offer appreciative feedback:

- Person **doing the coaching** - self reflects:
 - What did I do well?
 - What could I have done differently or improve on?
 - What could I have done with more time?
- Person who **received the coaching** - gives feedback to the coach on their coaching experience:
 - What did the coach do well?
 - What could the coach have done differently or improved on?
 - What could the coach have done with more time?

4. Thank each other for trying out the coaching framework!



Reflection and Action

What is the most important thing you learned in this workshop?

Three things I will do differently, practice, try, or share with my coworkers:

1.

2.

3.

Additional Learning

The Coaching Agenda

The Coaching agenda is the main focus of the coaching conversation. The agenda contains key points to be discussed or issues to be resolved. The coaching agenda is brought to the conversation most often by the person receiving the coaching or sometimes by the coaching manager.

The agenda of those you manage:

They bring a desire or issue to you that you can help them think through by using the coaching approach.

- Be honest about the time you have available and schedule more time if necessary
- Listen clearly to what they are really saying.
- Use Coaching Framework and Skills sections in this workbook
- Clarify your role by asking: How can I be of the most use to you in this conversation?

Your management agenda:

You bring attention to a need, task, issue, or opportunity, which will help meet the needs of the program and services that support the organizational mission. You use the coaching approach to help them think through, create a plan, solve a problem, and take accountability.

Prepare for your conversation:

Make sure you know what the focus of the conversation will be about before you meet to coach others.

Set the agenda upfront in the conversation by saying the following:

- This is important for us to focus on.
- This is how it links to the bigger picture.
- What's most important to you?
- Let's think about this together.

When You have a Coaching Agenda and Want to Prepare...

Think about a real opportunity you have to coach someone back on the job. Plan your conversation:

What is the situation? Name "Point A", where the person is at in their goal or challenge.

What is the goal of the conversation?

Describe "Point B", where the person needs/wants to get to.

How will you set the context for the conversation?

What will you say next?

Plan to Coach (cont'd)

Is there any specific feedback you need to prepare? If so, what is it?

What questions do you need to ask?

What support do you need to make this conversation successful?

When will you have this conversation?

Additional Books/Articles of Interest:

Coaching Skills for Nonprofit Managers and Leaders

Judith Wilson & Michelle Gislason, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, Josey Bass (2010)

Coaching for Transformation: Pathways to Ignite Personal and Social Change

Martha Lasley, Virginia Kellogg, Richard Michaels, and Sharon Brown, Discover Press (2011)

“Dealing With Those Inner Voices: How Can Coaching Help?” by Elizabeth Ayala

<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/dealing-those-inner-voices-how-can-coaching-help>

“Five Ways Peer Coaching Can Support Fundraisers of Color” by CompassPoint

<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/5-ways-peer-coaching-supports-fundraisers>

“Pushing Back Against the Habits of White Supremacy” by Kad Smith

<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/pushing-back-against-habits-white-supremacy-during-crisis>

“In Conversations About Race, ‘Safe Space’ is a Cop Out” by Rebecca Aced-Molina

<https://rebecca-acedmolina.com/safe-space-brave-space/>

