TCV Training - Coaching skills

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| 10.00 | Welcome and introductionsPairs – names, experience of coaching, what you’d like from the course today. (Note; try to be as specific as possible.) Aims, objectives, programme (PP)Housekeeping – food, fire, phones, toiletsGroundrules - confidentialityMention that people will have a chance to practice coaching each other this afternoon. This works best if you have something you’d like to be coached on such as a problem or an issue that you’d like help with. So please start to think about that.   | FC |
| 10.30 | What is coaching? Small groups – 5’ What do we mean by coaching? Try to come up with a definition. Ask each group to write their definition on the flip chart. ORSmall groups with FCP. On each FCP draw a grid with 4 squares each labelled one of coach, train, mentor or counsel. Ask groups to write down their thoughts about what is meant by each word and see what similarities and differences they identify.Each group feedback one box at a time. Then discuss sims & diffs.Tutor input – possibly better drawn as overlapping circles – the skills are the same for each but the focus is different. Train – tutor led on a specific topic, Mentor – career guidance from a trusted adviser,Counsel – linked to emotional difficulty, Coach – person led with coach as facilitator, usually work or performance oriented. But there is lots of overlap.Tutor input. Lao Tzu quote “…when the best leader’s work is done, the people say, ‘We did it ourselves.’”Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them. – John WhitmoreCoaching is the process which helps individuals come to their own conclusions about the best way to achieve improved performance at work. – Ann Baker & Louise ClareCoaching is the art and skill of facilitating the learning, development and performance of another person. – Caroline Barnett1 At one end of the spectrum coaching can be about direct skills transfer. You pass on your expertise in a one-to-one situation by explaining, demonstrating, asking questions and allowing for practice. This form of coaching is useful, for example, to* teach new volunteers the skills they need for the job
* enable volunteers to learn new tasks
* help rectify mistakes and problems

2 At the other end of the spectrum coaching is about asking the right questions to encourage the individual to decide what they should do about a particular situation. This helps them to further their own objectives in the context of the organisation.Whichever type of coaching activity you are involved in, a vital part of the process is to gain people’s commitment through action plans which are reviewed on a regular basis to improve motivation and maintain momentum. – Coaching, Ann Baker & Louise Clare | FC |
| 11.00 | Three aspects of coaching we need to look at todayThe skills involvedThe main elements or steps of a successful coaching sessionThe attitude or understanding with which you approach coachingStart with the latter. And I’d like to start by asking you to think about what YOU find helpful and unhelpful when it comes to your own progress and development.We’ll start with unhelpful. I’d like you to take a moment on your own and think of something inside that you’ve wanted to do, that you think would be really positive but you haven’t done it yet. And then I’d like you to try to answer the question What has stopped you? Ask people to share their thoughts about the barriers. Likely to include things such as Money, skills, determination and so on but at base always about self doubt and fear of failure or some variation on that theme.Now for the helpful side. Please think of a time when you wanted to do something that was challenging and possibly a bit risky and you went ahead and did it. Then see what answers you come up with to the question, What was different? What enabled you to act on that occasion? Ask people to share their thoughts. (Likely to include…I just did it. I didn’t think too much about it. I felt I needed to do it.)This is the essence of coaching – helping people to overcome the things that stop them and to make use of the things that get them moving.Traditional sports instruction was based around technique with a right and a wrong way to do things. Timothy Gallwey in The Inner Game of Tennis was one of the first people to suggest that the biggest obstacles to progress are internal – self-doubt, fear of failure and so on. He went on to claim that if a coach can help a player remove or reduce the internal obstacles to their performance, an unexpected natural ability will flow forth without much need for technical input from the coach. Coaching therefore includes an attitude of belief in people’s potential. Coaches see people’s potential not their performance.To get the best out of people we have to believe the best is there.The impact of our beliefs on other people’s performance has been well documented especially in the field of education. Story of American Elementary School and the Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition.Unless the manager believes that people possess more capability than they are currently expressing, s/he will not be able to help them express it. (This is why performance management is a continuous process – maintaining that belief in your volunteers that they can do better – expecting them to do better.)We all tend to make assumptions about what people can do so that people are put in performance boxes from which it is hard for them to escape, either in their own eyes or those of their managers.The single universal internal block is unfailingly the same and variously described as fear of failure, lack of confidence, self-doubt, lack of self-belief.Coaching is an intervention that has as its underlying and ever present goal the building of others’ self belief.And, since self-belief is key to performance and potential it is imperative to build a track record of success. Furthermore, people must know that their successes are due to their own efforts.* Coaching for performance, John Whitmore

So, the key things to be learning today are1 What helps people overcome barriers2 what helps people to act |  |
| 11.20 | Tea |  |
| 11.40 | The skills of coaching**Questioning**The art of coaching is in letting the individual take the lead and following them, while using questions to help them see more clearly what it is they are looking at. That is raising awareness.An analogy would be the act of looking at a square of carpet. The act of focusing attention would reveal aspects in the pattern and the material that would ordinarily be ignored. Use a magnifying glass andanother level of interest is sparked. Use a micoscope and a whole new world of shape and fibre and possibly living organisms is opened up. Open questions such as Who, Where, What, When and How much tend to work best. Why tends to make people feel defensive. Try instead, What factors lead you to do such and such? How tends to lead into analysis rather than observation.Closed questions can be used to establish some of the detail. Can you be more specific? Are you saying that…?Sometimes, people’s track can tend to wander. A polite, How is this relevant to…? should serve to clarify. |  |
|  | **Listening**Ask the group – What do you understand by the term active listening?List answers to FCWe are listening actively when we do the following:* Hear everything that is being said, not what we want to hear
* Look for messages beyond the actual words
* Have strong powers of concentration and are not easily distracted
* Use visual communication to show we are interested and listening
* Are non-judgemental
* Can analyse information in order to respond in an appropriate way
* Don’t interrupt
* Don’t make assumptions about the person, based on the way they look or sound
* Are not influenced by personal feelings about the other person

It may be helpful to think of the three Ds of listening* Detail
* Disposition
* Determination

Exercise. Pairs talk for four minutes about something you feel strongly about. Partner listen without asking any questions and at end of four minutes summarise what you heard using 3 Ds – the detail or content of what was said, the person’s disposition or how they seem to feel about the subject and their determination – the sense you get about their readiness to do something about the subject.Some common barriers to listening include:* Thinking about the implications of what is being said
* Evaluating - does this fit in with my values?
* Disagreeing with the content of what is being said
* Rehearsing - how am I going to reply?
* Anticipating what they will say next
* Hurrying on to the next thing
* Listening to someone/something else
* Withdrawing by simply going blank
* Talking over the speaker
* Interrupting before the person has finished speaking

Thinking a lot quicker than we speak means we have spare time to focus on other things than what we’re hearing. Common things to focus on other than the speakers message include:* Being and remaining preoccupied and not listening.
* Being so interested (and focused on your own desire to speak) in what you have to say that you listen mainly to find an opening to get the floor.
* Formulating and listening (preparing your argument) to your own rebuttal to what the speaker is saying.
* Listening to your own personal beliefs about what is being said.
* Evaluating and making judgments about the speaker or the message.
* Not asking for clarification when you know that you do not understand

Part of active listening is reflecting back to the individual a summary of what they have said. This has the effect of confirming for the person that they are in fact being heard, which in turn makes them feel valued and more relaxed.You may find it helpful sometimes to add a positive reframe to some of the statements you hear. For example, if someone says that they can’t get over their fear of public speaking, you could summarise that as, “…and you haven’t managed to overcome your fear of public speaking yet”. |  |
| 12.10 | So, how can we approach coaching someone in a way that is effective Introduce the GROW modelG - Goals - (for session and for issue) What do you want to achieve?), R - Reality - What is happening now? What’s the current situation)O – Options - What could you do?, W – Will - What will you do?, S – Summary - Let’s check we both have the same understanding!Note the similarity to common elements of problem solving and planning. In the coaching context you’re using the same approach to help someone else. Also a similarity to Egan’s Where are we now, where do we want to be how do we get there? |  |
| 12.20 | Start with goalsWhat sorts of questions would you ask to help someone establish what they want to achieve. Both for the session and for whatever it is they want to be coached about.Ask for volunteer to scribe.* What is the subject matter or the issue you’d like to work on?
* What would you like to have achieved at the end of this session?
* What would you want to achieve in the long-term? What’s your time frame?
* How should we describe your objective?
* Is it realistic?
* How would you recognise that you were performing better?
* Is it challenging?
* Can you measure it?
* On a scale of 1 to 10 where are you now? Where do you want to be?
* What is the time-scale you could achieve it in?
* Are shorter-term goals needed to reach the end goal?
* What would you like to achieve by tomorrow / the end of next week?

Note – all about establishing SMART goals – and as you recall from goal-setting theory, goals are something that get people moving. |  |
| 12.35 | It’s important to be able to recognise a SMART objective when you see one.Draw a table on the FC with three columns one each for the acronym SMART and what the letters stand for, then one for what does that mean exactly? And one for why is that bit important to have in an objective?Exercise with objectives – How SMART are they?What if someone can’t come up with a goal? That itself then becomes the goal.What if someone’s goal is completely unrealistic? I want to become an astronaut even though I’m 45 years old, unfit and have no qualifications, for example.It’s vital not to denigrate someone’s goals or tell them they can’t do something. The coach’s job isn’t to set limits, it’s to help someone realize their potential. And, who’s to say what’s possible and what isn’t. The Czech poet Milan Kundera wrote a book entitled ‘In dreams begin responsibilities’ |  |
| 12.50 | Lunch |  |
| 13.50 | Reality – What is the current situation?Group again – what sorts of questions would you ask to establish the current situation?Note: all about Who, where, when, what, how much ? (avoid why and how? Why tends to be associated with blame and can put people on the defensive)* What is happening now? What is the present situation in more detail?
* What and how great is your concern about it?
* Who does this issue affect other than you?
* Who knows about your desire to do something about it?
* How much control do you personally have over the outcome?
* Who else has some control over it and how much?
* What do you already know / do about this issue?
* What has stopped you doing more?
* What experience have you got that might help you?
* How do you handle…?
* Is there a particular issue?
* How often? Who? By whom? etc (NB avoid Why?)

Note: very strong temptation to leap from objective to solution. But first you need to explore the problem, to raise awareness in a calm detached way, to gather information to truly understand and so the person knows they are being listened to. If you jump to conclusions, the chances of them being wrong are very high. At this point active listening skills are paramount. Also, be careful not to dwell too long in this stage especially if there’s a lot of negativity. You don’t want to encourage the person to sink into depression! |  |
| 14.10 | Options – What COULD you do to resolve the issue?About encouraging the person to think of as many possibilities as they can. Whatever comes into their mind could carry the germ of a solution that might be more apparent later. Can be helpful for the coach to make notes.Usual barriers are assumptions about how things should or shouldn’t or could or couldn’t be done. NINE DOT exercise – join up all the dots withoubt the pencil leaving the paper using four lines (then try three then two then one). What assumptions are you making about what can and can’t be done? How would you encourage someone to generate a number of options?Exercise in threes – Coachee – your problem is how to get people in your office to keep the kitchen clean and tidyCoach – Help the coachee to think of 20 different optionsNote if you say as many as you can, people are likely to be less successful than with a clear goal – lesson from goal setting.Observer – Make a note of what the coach says that is helpful – what questions they ask plus anything else they say. Feedback – questions to flip chartNote. Temptation to suggest ideas? Ask the coachee if they would like a suggestion from you. |  |
| 14.30 | Coaching practiceAsk people to work in pairs and take it in turns to coach each other. Follow each sesion wit h a review. 30 mins per session. |  |
| 15.30 | Tea |  |
| 15.50 | Group review of coaching practiceDiscussion of situations in which you could coach volunteers and how you could adapt the skills to those situations.Summarise the dayCourse feedback |  |
| 16.20 | Finish |  |