

Coaching Case Study



Executive Summary

A six-month coaching programme, for 10 clinicians and one senior manager within a key service in the public sector. Andrea Goodridge acted as the programme lead, and lead coach; and was supported by a team of 5 coaches.



Challenges

The clinicians and senior manager shared their frustration around the existing culture, working practices and management processes within the service. This was impacting on the transformation of the service and the implementation of a new performance management framework.

A collation of the 11 clients' objectives were to:

- Build resilience
- Develop assertiveness and confidence in role
- Improve own communication style
- Develop skills and knowledge and build on strengths
- Improve delegation skills
- Increase contribution in meetings
- Improve own understanding of learning styles and coaching techniques
- Develop skills to deal with difficult situations / people without being affected emotionally
- Manage impact of others
- Improve strategies for team development and morale
- Build trust and openness in the team
- Improve own understanding of leadership skills / behaviours through self-assessment and feedback from others
- Understand more about the different approaches to leadership styles
- Build leadership capacity

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How coaching helped

Working in a supportive relationship, the coaching sessions included a blend of the following:

- Asking powerful questions so the clients could explore options and build their resourcefulness
- Encouraging self-reflection to help the clients develop their own thinking and personal insights
- Raising awareness of the client's behaviours and analysing the impact on others
- Developing an understanding of emotions, beliefs, strengths and challenges
- Challenging the clients to look beyond the obvious so they could unlock opportunities for improvements
- Encouraging the clients to create their own solutions, and own their actions to promote behavioural change

Becoming a more effective leader often requires changing behaviour and usually a precondition of behavioural change is the identification of some of the deepest 'below the surface' thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and beliefs. The clients revealed some of their emotional insecurities, which was uncomfortable for the clients; however there was a recognition and acknowledgement that a degree of discomfort was needed, to enable positive movement and change. Reassurance and encouragement was key in the sessions, where an emotional space without fear was created, enabling the clients to feel safe.

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Results

What have you learned from the coaching sessions?

- I have learned more about me as an individual. I have recognised the importance of work / life balance, and now accept that more hours doesn't always mean more productive
- I have learnt that I need to be more confident in myself. I need to be assertive and be confident in my decisions
- Further insight into my management style and options to manage areas that I considered required developing. The sessions focussed my thoughts on new strategies and different options that I could use in my leadership role
- I have found the coaching sessions useful in highlighting both areas of strengths and weakness and have learned new strategies to consolidate and improve on these
- The biggest learning point for me has been identifying my strengths and how I can work to those and recognise when I am over-doing them
- I have understood the importance of being clear about my expectations when delegating
- I have really enjoyed the sessions and I feel that it has given me more confidence to approach difficult issues/situations within my team in a more constructive way
- Reflection on the reason for carrying burdens that may not be relevant to self but have negative effect on self, overall

What have you gained / achieved from the coaching sessions?

- I have worked on achieving a far better approach to work/life balance which has given me greater job satisfaction and positivity which I hope has transferred to the team
- Over the course of the coaching session my confidence in my ability and skills both at work and generally has improved dramatically. I now have the confidence to tackle more difficult situations and think around situations
- I feel more confident in my role since having coaching sessions. At my first session I was feeling very negative about the role. I am still finding it difficult at times but I have felt more able to take control of the situation

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- I have gained a greater understanding of my management style and areas for improvement. I am now much clearer on the expectations of the leadership role
- I have raised my awareness of my strengths, and now feel more confident and better equipped to manage extreme behaviours and personalities
- How I could have used a different approach in handling issues to achieve a better outcome
- How to look at the positives in a situation and how to turn that into addressing the negatives in that same situation for an improved outcome
- Developing strengths to manage situations from my viewpoint that the service must not 'fail'
- It is alright to look after oneself in achieving a work life balance as ultimately the service will benefit from a more positive approach
- A view on team dynamics, and strategies to improve and reflect
- It has been useful to realise that I am not the only one who has encountered problems. The coaching has encouraged me to be more focussed regarding what I want to happen
- I have found the sessions really useful as it has allowed me some thinking time away from the service. I had ideas of what I wanted to achieve but felt like I was firefighting all the time so couldn't focus on the longer term goals
- It was useful to look at how different members of the team might need different support and tactics to deal with these differences, but also to know that it is normal to not be able to please everyone!
- Some techniques to maintain focus on objectives and not to lose energy / effort / concern on areas beyond own control and not in gift

What different behaviours have you implemented or experimented with?

- Supported individuals returning from long term sick leave to re-integrate as well as possible. Encouraged one member of staff to focus on themselves and their own priorities for their wellbeing
- Encouraging staff to explore why things happen – what can we improve to prevent the service running behind? Is there anything we do as a team that causes a bottleneck or delay?
- Encouraging staff to solve their own issues/problems by asking questions to raise awareness, thereby developing their own skills

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- Assignment of task to specific team member with an expected timeframe. Not to take back tasks that have been assigned to other team members when they haven't achieved them
- Finishing work day on time (ish)
- Reflect on situations and ask myself why?
- I have felt more confident in my own abilities so I think I have been able to implement change with more conviction than before. When I first started I was really enthusiastic to improve the service but met quite a bit of resistance and that affected my confidence but I feel that I have regained the courage to continue with the ideas I have for improvement whilst realising that I need to involve the team in the ideas / decision making
- Taken on different approaches to thinking through problems and challenging situations
- As my confidence has improved I have been able to trial different strategies for dealing with difficult conversations with staff. I have started to respond differently in meetings
- Being more assertive. Using my own initiative rather than asking for permission to do something
- I have started to look at alternative perspectives
- Use of some organisational behaviour tools and theory to maintain own aims and objectives and not be distracted or deflected. Meeting strategies

What has stood out for you in your coaching sessions?

- Discussion around combination of what is right for me and the service
- Friendliness of interaction, but with a purpose
- Perspective on my problems - coping strategies
- The sessions have encouraged me to reflect far more than I did before
- The sessions encouraged me to look at situations differently, find the positives not the negatives
- The encouragement I received that I was doing well was so uplifting
- My coach was genuinely interested in my problems and difficulties both at work and home and helping me to handle them in the best way
- The recurring theme has been that I am finding this job very difficult at times. I am now learning how to manage with limited resources

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- I feel that my sessions may have been quite negative but a lot of things that I am not happy about are not in my hands so I know I must learn to cope with this situation. I am aware that changes are in progress that may make things easier in the future
- I think the best part was having someone who you felt you could talk frankly to about the issues within the service and then using the tools you could find solutions to improve things
- Time to think and be provoked to consider boundaries and influences from others on own behaviour and if appropriate to allow that to happen. Review and badge what those feelings were – then reflect on appropriateness

Implementing the change programme, focused on leadership, engagement and changing the culture and professional behaviours, contributed to transforming the service into one that has a reputation for delivering strong, effective leadership, true team working, equitable workloads, robust performance management and high levels of job satisfaction.



Quotes

"That was amazing, you really pushed me ...I wish you were with me every day"

"You didn't interrupt me once, I didn't think I was going to share so much"

"You've really made me think about me. I've got so much from the coaching ...I've started to believe in myself. I now feel more 'in control' of me"

"I now realise, I need to challenge the process, not necessarily the person"

"I consider myself very lucky to have had a coach like you"

"You always sit and listen to me, and pay attention to who I am as an individual"

"That has to be the best session we've ever had ...thank you"

"The coaching has encouraged me to be more focussed regarding what I want to happen, be more assertive, and use my own initiative rather than asking for permission to do something"

"The time allocated to the sessions 'flew by' but the feeling I had at the end of them was positive in my drive to move forward. I would have been happy to continue for some further sessions if the opportunity had allowed"