

Coaching Skills Workshop

What is coaching?

Put simply, coaching is a conversation, or series of conversations, that one person has with another. What makes the conversation different from others is the impact the conversation has on the person being coached (the coachee). An effective coaching conversation influences someone's understanding, learning, behaviour, and progress. Coaching conversations can happen over different timeframes and in different environments. For example, you might have a coaching conversation during a face-to-face session that last two hours, or alternatively you could have a ten-minute telephone call which might also constitute coaching.

This is because coaching is more defined by the impact of your conversation than they duration of it.

Most often, the best person to judge if a conversation was a coaching conversation (or not) is the person being coached. If someone finds the following to be true after a conversation, then they would probably accept that it was coaching:

- The focus of the conversation was primarily on them and their situation.
- Their thinking, actions and learning benefited notably from the conversation.
- If the conversation had not happened, they were unlikely to have had those benefits in thinking or learning within that timeframe.

How does coaching happen?

In a coaching relationship, the coach facilitates a process of enquiry and discussion by listening, questioning, and offering summaries, observations, and feedback. Through this distinct focus on them and their situation, the person being coached gains increased clarity regarding a situation or topic which enables them to make progress in some way. A coach will also support an individual to decide on ways forward, for example, by facilitating their decision-making process or by encouraging them to get into action and make change happen. In addition to tackling immediate challenges and opportunities, over time the individual will often experience broader benefits, such as improved confidence, resourcefulness, and emotional maturity.

Other coaching conversations might easily happen outside of a formal coaching relationship. For example, a casual chat between two team members, around a challenge, issue or goal might create a conversation which an individual views as having had a coaching impact upon them, such as 'He really made me think' or 'I'm really clear on what I need to do now'. You have probably experienced this type of conversation yourself, where an informal discussion on a topic gave you unexpected insight or learning which helped you in some way.