What Is Coaching?

Asher Tulsky, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Department of Medicine
Boston University School of Medicine
My Coaching Journey
Objectives

1. Describe the coaching process and how it differs from mentoring, sponsoring or advising
2. Appreciate the value of coaching in professional and personal development
3. Utilize one or two coaching skills on your own
How is coaching relevant to clinicians?
Coaching Defined

• “Involves partnering with clients in a thought provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential”

• International Coach Federation. Code of Ethics
Coach

**Goal: Enhance Performance**

- Non-hierarchical
- Listens and observes
- Nonjudgmental
- Inquiry-based
  - *Ask questions*; believes you have the answers
  - *Reflects back* what is heard
  - Reexamine fixed beliefs
- Process oriented
  - Identify specific goals and break them down into baby steps
- Build motivation to achieve change
What is Mentoring?
Mentor

Goal: Career Development

• Hierarchical
  • ‘Guides, teaches, develops novice’

• Achieved goals mentee wishes to achieve

• Focus on professional advancement
  • Day to day: manuscript editing, curriculum; fellowship
  • Big picture: Career planning; job hunt
  • Develop content-related acumen

• Inspires others to be like them

• Offers advice and wisdom

• Share their stories

Coaching Vs Mentoring

• Dialogue
  • Who’s asking the questions
  • Who’s driving the plan
Lets Talk About Positive Psychology

But first, let’s try something out
Coaching Exercise #1
The Positive Introduction

POSITIVITY
IS THE
Jump right in!

Scan over the past week and find a moment when you were at your best

Coaches:
Ask “Tell me about a time when were you at your best?”
• Then LISTEN, do not speak.

SWITCH ROLES AFTER 2 MINUTES
Debrief – what was that like?
Positive Psychology 101

Core Features

- Positive Emotions
- Engagement
- Meaning

Flourishing

Harvard Institute of Coaching/Seligman
Positive Emotions

Broaden and Build

Broaden-and-Build Theory
Positive Emotions Create Upward Spirals

BROADEN
Positive Emotions
- Joy, Love, Contentment, Interest, Happiness

BUILD
Expands Inventory of Thoughts and Action
Develops Physical, Mental and Social Resources

TRANSFORM
Advances Personal Growth and Creates More Positive Emotions

Barbara Frederickson
Velcro v. Teflon
What a Coach Does

• STEP 1: Gets curious

• STEP 2: Builds confidence and motivation

• STEP 3: Creates accountability
What a Coach Does

• **STEP 1: Getting curious**
  • **Listening** with empathy and presence
  • **Reflecting and challenging**
  • **Asking** how and what, expanding options
Coaching Helps to Reframe

Reactive

Problem description
Limitations
Mistakes
Causes

Past

Proactive

Outcomes and Awareness
Strengths
Barriers with bridges
Actions

Future

Hicks R, McCracken J. PEJ Jan 2010

Staff Coaching & Mentoring Program

Cleveland Clinic
Exercise 2: Practicing specific questions

Reactive

• How long have you...?
• Why?
• What prevents you from...?
• Have you had bad experiences when...in the past?
• What other reasons are you ...?

Asset-Based

• What would you like to see in the future?
• How is that important to you?
• When have you been successful in this before?
• What made you successful before?
• How can you do more of that now/going forward?
The Most Powerful Questions

• Ask open-ended:
  • *How*
  • *What*

• Avoid:
  • Closed-ended
  • *Why*
Expanding a Coachee’s options

• What else did you notice?
• Tell me more.
• What more is there to that?
• If you could wave a magic wand and get what you want...
  • What would it feel like?
  • What would that look like?
  • What would you be doing differently?
Expanding a Coachee’s options

Where the magic happens

What else?

Your comfort zone
Steps for Coaching

• STEP 1: Get curious
  • Listen with presence/ empathy
  • Reflect and challenge

• STEP 2: Build confidence and motivation
  • Emphasize strengths

• STEP 3: Create accountability
  • Narrow and commit
Strength Signature

• Focus future achievement on the basis of past success
• Build on who they are at their strongest and what they do well
• What strengths have gotten them this far?
• Drawing on positive experiences broadens our creativity and mental flexibility
Coaching Exercise: Strengths Bridge

• Pair up with the person next to you
• Coach asks coachee to explain a current challenge (personal, professional, or other)
• Ask coachee for top 5 strengths
• Ask coachee how they can use 1 or more of those strengths to address their challenge
• Practice “what else” and “how” questions!
Steps for Coaching

• **STEP 1:** Get curious
  • Listen with presence/empathy
  • Reflect and challenge

• **STEP 2:** Build confidence and motivation
  • Emphasize strengths

• **STEP 3:** Create accountability
  • Narrow and commit
Coaching Exercise

Coaching by Numbers
Coach by numbers – in pairs

• Coaches – ask your partner to pick an area of their life or work that they want to focus on

• ASK:
  • If time or money were no object, what would this part of your life look like if it were a 10 out of 10
  • Where would you rate yourself now?
  • What can you do in the next 6 weeks to raise yourself up one half of a point (e.g. from a 6 to a 6.5)
  • How would you know if you did it?
  • From 0 – 100%, how likely are you to do it?
What Coaches Do

• Get curious:
  • Listen with presence and empathy
  • Reflect and challenge
  • Change why to how and what
  • Asset based questions

• Build confidence and motivation
  • Strengths signature & bridge

• Create accountability
  • Narrow and commit