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Session 4.5 Using Coaching to Improve Your Management Style

[ ] University of Southampton

**Activity -** What do you feel is your biggest management challenge?

What is coaching?

More universities are trying coaching in order to develop their staff, however there is confusion as to how it differs from mentoring and training. Effective coaching empowers staff.

“Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It’s helping them to learn, rather than teaching them.” Sir John Whitmore, ‘Coaching for Performance’

Principles of coaching,

* Forward looking - looking at where they want to go and how they can get there.
* Empowering them to set their own goals.
* Treating them as the expert - coaching is not about giving advice, it’s about empowering people to find their own solutions. It’s non-directive.
* Private and confidential.
* Non-judgemental.
* Trust.

Empowering beliefs,

* Individual has all the resources they need to be successful - internal resources such as resilience, rather than budget. A coach believes they have everything to succeed, they may just need a little push.
* Not being afraid to take risks, learning when things don’t go as planned.
* Belief in the person you are coaching.

Coaching is not,

* Counselling or therapy - focussing on the past, coaching is forward-looking.
* Mentoring - mentoring is about learning from someone experienced. You are not giving advice as a mentor.
* Training - teaching a skill eg IT system, this is not coaching.
* Consultancy.

How can it be used?

* Find a solution - help a member of your team to thrash out a problem.
* Develop a skill such as presenting.
* Effect personal growth - encouraging self-awareness.
* Change a behaviour/attitude – they want to develop in a particular area such as resilience.
* Identify and unlock barriers - what is stopping people from doing things and how do they move forward?

What makes a good coach,

* Build rapport - who do you have a good rapport with? Start trying out coaching with them.
* Actively listening - asking questions, repeating some of the things they’ve said.
* Reflect and feed back.
* Question effectively.
* Offer challenge - enquire further, why can’t they do something, what obstacles do they see.

Today’s session will focus on active listening and effective questioning

**Activity** - in pairs one person discusses their management problem from the beginning, the other just listens, then both switch. How did everyone find it?

- difficult to not speak

- could have been an awkward silence, but the ‘enforced’ talking meant that some opportunities and ideas opened up

- difficult to not try to help

- can be uncomfortable

- someone who usually works with people may find this much easier than someone in an environment where they don’t speak that much

- not being able to speak highlights how much we try to talk about themselves. If you interrupt then it’s a conversation about you rather than them

- asking questions can sometimes make the person lose their train of thought

Reflect on your own practice, individually and also as a group. Silence is ok. Allowing the person a few moments to think things through. How do you ensure you create sufficient time for colleagues to think things through?

The GROW model

* Goal-setting - what does the person you are coaching want to achieve?
* Reality checking - what have they done so far, exploring the facts around it at the moment and how are they feeling about it.
* Options - what could they do.
* Will/Way forward - what will they do and when, what is the way forward for them.

“You have to move away from the mindset of telling, to the mindset of asking.”

Question: any advice for active listening, without focussing on having to ask good questions?

Answer: It should flow in a real setting, practice and getting used to using this format will help.