

Week 1: The Coaching Approach and Mindset - Summary

Coaching is a client centred process which supports client to identify their own reasons and strategies for change

A coaching session provides the client with space to step out of the busyness of life to take stock of their life, clarify what they really want and why it is important to them. A key goal of coaching is to help clients become independent – self-aware, self-motivated, self-responsible and possessing self-efficacy!

Health coaching:

Is Client Centred

A health coach supports clients to identify and realise self-determined goals. Behaviour change is more likely to be maintained when goals are self-determined as clients are both motivated to take action and are invested in the result.

Is a Partnership:

Health Coaching is a collaborative partnership. Coaches position themselves as a guide, an ally in a process that is client centred. They help a client to explore and discover their own answers, leaving them feeling empowered and excited about change

Respects the client as the expert:

Experiences and knowledge are honoured. Health Coaches believe the client has the answers and know best how they can successfully build change into their daily lives. Being involved in the consultation means they are more likely to take action afterwards.

Encourages self-responsibility (self-determination)

Self-determination is the ability or power to make decisions for yourself. Coaching encourages clients to take the driver's seat in responsibility for their health, their choices and come up with their own meaningful goals and strategies for the realistic actions they are willing to take to achieve their goals. Evidence shows that when visions, plans and behaviours come from the client they are more likely to be long lasting.

Allows autonomy

As the client takes the driver's seat in their health journey they develop autonomy in making behaviour choices. This freedom, independence and self-governing involves clients finding their own solutions and strategies.

Harnesses internal motivation

Coaching helps clients connect to internal motivation, providing more long lasting and committed behaviour change.

Promotes self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that one has the capability to initiate and sustain a desired behaviour (or that one can reach one's goals). Through achievement and identification of strengths and past success, client's grow their self-efficacy.

Encourages self-awareness

Rather than tell clients what to do, health coaches are expert question askers. The questions a coach asks encourages **self-awareness**, **self-reflection** and provide fresh insights to old problems and patterns. Clients learn to pay attention to their thoughts, feelings, behaviours and environments. They begin realise their strengths and resources available to them.

Explores new possibilities

Changing behaviour starts with thinking differently. Working with a coach brings awareness to habits and behaviours, and with awareness comes an opportunity to reflect on the impact of current choices.

A coach can help their clients shifts their focus from the obstacles to the solutions. Clients develop the mindset of generating new possibilities and perspectives which then lead to new outcomes.

Helps develop a curious and flexible mindset

Coaching provides a framework that encourages clients to develop a curious and flexible mindset as they guide clients towards their **self-determined goals**.

Coaching encourages a 'growth mindset' as opposed to a 'fixed mindset' - which is where everything is about the outcome, confidence decreases when mistakes are made as they are seen as lack of ability, and if attempts are not made failure can be avoided.

By contrast, a growth mindset is where the client believes that change is possible and feels that with practice and effort they can improve their abilities in any area they want to. The focus is on the process, rather than the end result. Setbacks are seen as learning opportunities, and effort and attitude determines everything.

Encourages trial and correction

There is no such thing as failure in coaching! Coaches encourage clients to experiment and take a take an 'trial and correction' attitude.

They invite clients to get curious about what works and why or why not, learning from past failures and successes and treating themselves with self-compassion when it doesn't work out the way the client had hoped.

As clients try out new behaviours they learn what works, how their strengths and values play a part, and become more confident in their abilities. They can then self-regulate, modifying their actions or strategy, trying out alternative paths that they may not have considered before.

Provides accountability

The coaching relationship provides built-in accountability as the coach checks in with the client on their progress and supports them to identify new approaches if they aren't making the progress they would like.

Without the accountability a coach brings to the process it is easy for clients to get stuck or revert to old thinking or behaviours. Coaching assists with keeping momentum high and getting back on track quickly so that lasting change can be made. Clients are also encouraged to find ways to be accountable so they are not relying on the coach or looking to the coach for approval.

Provides structure

Although focused on the client's agenda, coaches provide the structure and direction that guides clients to identify and set realistic goals, define their action plan and navigate through the obstacles to reach their goal.

The coaching approach vs the traditional approach

The traditional approach (sometimes called the Medical Model) is useful for assessing a problem, developing a diagnosis and then imparting knowledge or a prescription.

Traditionally, the health professional's role in assisting patients to change their unhealthy habits and adopt healthier lifelong behaviours has been to educate, warn, persuade and prescribe actions to reduce ill health.

The limitation of the medical model is that it is not designed to equip the client with behaviour change strategies to address the underlying lifestyle factors that are contributing to the development of the condition in the first place or empower the client in managing their own health. The practitioner decides the priorities, the best plan of action, and evaluates the client's progress based on outcomes such as biochemistry or physical indicators.

The health coaching approach is client centred, with the client choosing the agenda, priorities, goals and deciding the actions they are ready to take. The coach encourages autonomy while guiding the client, offers strategies to increase confidence and importance.

| Traditional Approach | Coaching approach |
|---|---|
| Practitioner is the health expert | Patient is respected as the expert in their own life |
| Practitioner provides advice and solutions | Practitioner offers information based on what the patient identifies as needed |
| Practitioner decides the health priority | Patient chooses the health goals, strategies and targets |
| Practitioner focus is on why the patient hasn't made the required changes | Practitioner looks for positives and affirms client |
| Practitioner assumes client is ready to change | Practitioner identifies client readiness and offers strategies to increase confidence and importance. |
| Health practitioner focuses on achievement & compliance | Health practitioner focuses on progress made, learnings, shifts in behaviour and mindset |
| Practitioner provides solutions for barriers/obstacles or tries to encourage/educate for motivation | Health practitioner views obstacles and setbacks as learning opportunities and helps patient to see them this way |

The coaching mindset

We should always approach a coaching conversation with a curious and non-judgmental mindset and attitude.

As you coach your clients check in with yourself:

- Am I present?
- Am I judging or assuming I know this client's perspective?
- What can I learn about this client?
- Where are they at right now?
- Am I treating this client with unconditional positive regard?
- Where are they coming from?
- Do I understand the client's perspective and concerns?
- Why do they feel this way?
- How can I best support them?
- What do they need from me?

The client's mindset for change

We can help clients create the mindsets that are more likely to support successful health behaviour change:

- *View health as a priority*
- *Connect health to values*
- *Learning, growth and humility*
- *Trial, error and correction - accept mistakes/errors as learning opportunities*
- *Accept the ups and downs*
- *Consistency, no matter how small*
- *Self-compassion and kindness*

Week 1 Reflection and Challenges

In your consultations this week reflect on....

Who talks more? You or client/patient?

Who decides the health priorities?

Who provides the solutions and strategies?

Who is the expert in the room?

Who is responsible for change?

How do you respond when a client doesn't achieve their goals?

Client Centred Questions

- Tell me more
- What is important about changing this for you? Why is this change important?
- What would it look like if you did change?
- What would be possible if you made this change?
- How would you feel if you did make the change?
- What barriers are in the way? How could you remove them?
- What type of change feels possible?
- How could you make that happen?

Bring your observations to next Tuesday's webinar!