

# Coaching Conversations



Midlothian Council Educational Psychology Service



## Opening the Door to Coaching Conversations

### What is coaching?

Coaching is a solution and action focused process which develops skills that can be applied in many different contexts, on both a professional and personal level. The main aim of coaching is to allow individuals to explore situations, identify limiting factors to enable the best chance of success, ascertain the next steps and how to take them forward.

As a situation is being explored, potential interference is discussed. This provides an opportunity for the “coachee” to propose different ways in which challenges could be confronted and with support from the coach, effectively identifying potential solutions to address these barriers. By empowering the individual, they can reflect and gain personal insight.

Establishing and maintaining effective coaching relationships requires committed listening, opportunity to reflect on thinking and sharing of relevant information.

“Coaching involves unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their performance. It’s about helping them learn rather than teaching them”

-Sir John Whitmore

### What does a coaching conversation look like?

Coaching conversations differ from standard, spontaneous conversations in that they are intentional and structured. The focus is on the other person, concentrating on their strengths, the challenges they may face and attributes they possess which can be utilised to support action.

The purpose of coaching conversations is to encourage thinking, support growth, and promote change that leads to action.

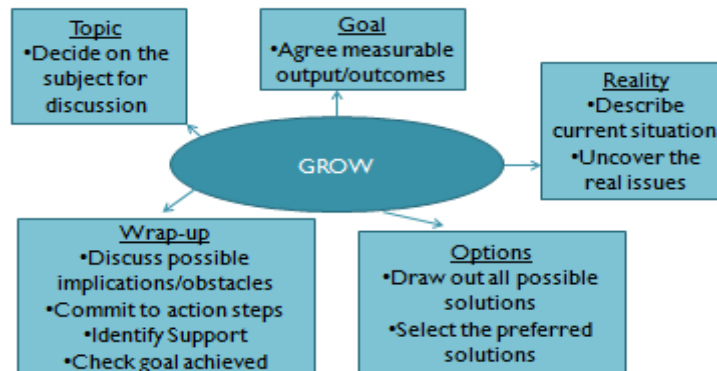
Rather than approaching a conversation by asking questions that have the potential to only require limited response, open-ended enquiring questioning is used. This opens up opportunity to reflect on thinking and provide purposeful and reflective feedback.

The two most important skills for a coach are the ability to ask good questions and the ability to listen effectively.

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## Coaching and the GROW Model

The GROW Model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring coaching sessions.



In its traditional application, the GROW Model assumes that the coach is not an expert in the current situation. This means that the coach must act as a facilitator, helping the “coachee” to select the best options for them, rather than advising or directing.

**Goal** - Within this step, the “coachee” needs to look at the behavior that they want to change, and then structure this change as a goal that they want to achieve. This should be something that is attainable and realistic.

**Reality** - This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they are missing some information that they need in order to reach their goal effectively.

**Options** – At this point, the aim is to determine what is possible and decide on an option to take forward.

**Wrap-up** - The final step is for the “coachee” to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards the goal.

### Coaching in Midlothian

All of the educational psychologists working in Midlothian are trained in Coaching Skills. We can provide coaching for individuals or groups to support staff in achieving professional or school improvement goals. For example, this approach can support professional development as school staff members find their way in applying new research from the fields of visible learning or nurture into practice in a supportive, non-judgmental and confidential environment.

If you are interested in developing your own coaching skills then the coaching course is run regularly in Midlothian as a professional development opportunity for teachers, schools, and council employees. Elaine Napier (Education Support Officer) is the course co-ordinator ([elaine.napier@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.napier@midlothian.gov.uk))

“Our quality of listening determines the quality of the conversation we inspire”

-SuperCoaching