**Coaching and Mentoring FAQ & Resources**

There is an increasing movement to professionalise mentoring within the NHS to support and develop our staff. Across other sectors mentoring and coaching has become the norm for leaders and managers and is a recognised tool to validate, grow, support and empower employees. The evidence is grounded in clinical psychology and recognises that supported individuals are more likely to attain goals, have reduced anxiety, depression and stress scores and become more insightful.

While there are more opportunities for NHS staff to access formalised coaching and mentoring as we emerge from 2 years of pandemic restrictions many feel we should look for any opportunistic chances to engage in these discussions. Annual appraisal, often with the same GP Appraiser for 3 years, offers an informal opportunity to deploy some coaching/mentoring techniques to help our GPs.

In our recent survey of Wessex Appraisers, 67.5% of respondents stated they had no formal qualification however nearly 60% felt confident to coach appraisees. 16.2% stated they never use coaching techniques in appraisal.

The results suggest that:

* Vocabulary is vital: appraisers don’t recognise they are providing coaching despite most GPs use coaching/mentoring most of the time and we want to encourage more to recognise what they are providing in appraisal includes coaching
* Words that imply ***needing*** qualifications may inhibit confidence
* Providing frameworks, structure & bitesize opportunity will grow these skills
* Even in Wessex the majority of the appraisers are not using coaching/mentoring skills all the time despite the leadership team recognising the value of such intervention
* Coaching is an invaluable skill at periods of transition – retirement, career dilemmas, changing work patterns
* Expert appraisers have a fluidity between coaching, mentoring and quality assurance allowing for a more sophisticated interaction

Following this we decided a FAQ to provide some ideas to our appraisers would be helpful.

**FAQs**

*What is the difference between coaching and mentoring?*

These definitions can feel confusing. This is probably because the skills of a coach/mentor overlap and both support an individual’s development.

The general view is that:

* *Coaching* relates to performance improvement in specific skills within a specific time period. The coachee has ownership of the goal, the coach has ownership of the process. Coaches do not necessarily have to have experience of the coaching context.
* *Mentoring* relates to nurturing the potential of the whole person. Often the mentor is an individual with more experience within the mentee’s field and can contextualise experience and knowledge to support their mentee. The mentee has ownership of the goals and process but the mentor is there to guide them. Often a mentoring relationship is longer-term.

See <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/resources/coaching-register/> for more information.

*What brief interventions can I use?*

Appraisal offers an opportunity to deploy coaching skills and often we will do this without even realising as the General Practice consultation provides a superb foundation for organically growing such skills. In fact, a reflection on our recent survey is that words implying that qualifications are needed for appraisers to coach or mentor may in fact inhibit confidence.

Typically, opportunities are best presented in periods of transition in an appraisee’s career.

Key elements include establishing a relationship with the appraisee and setting goals (PDP discussion is a perfect opportunity for this).

* Appraisers are best placed to establish rapport with their appraisee by the fact we are used to meeting a diverse group of GPs.
* The GROW model can help in discussion about PDPs which in turn can help appraisees navigate periods of transition - **G**oals, **R**ealities, **O**utcomes and **W**ill
* The **urgent/important matrix** can aid conversations about prioritisation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | URGENT | NOT URGENT |
| IMPORTANT | *DO it now* | *DECIDE when to do it* |
| NOT IMPORTANT | *DELEGATE to someone* | *DELETE this task* |

* Ask **“*Is this the goal/PDP you really want?”*** to avoid “appraisal submission” when an appraisee may agree to a goal potentially imposed by others even though they have no emotional buy in to the process.
* **Career pathing** is a technique to seek clarification about past decision points that could aid transitions, e.g. “*should I move to* *x practice”.* Asking the appraisee to write down a time line and consider what choices/external factors have influenced them along the way will allow you to ask questions about the projected paths to help them clarify their goals
* The **circle of influence** is a useful discussion tool when an appraisee is facing conflict. With 3 enlarging circles ask the appraisee what they have control of (e.g. their behaviour, mood, words etc), what they can influence (e.g. relationships, family, close friends etc.) and then what they can not influence (e.g. covid restrictions, environmental, political decisions to an extent etc)
* The **consequences matrix** can help crystallise decision making in an appraisee’s path, e.g. *“Should I retire now”*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What will happen if I do it: | What will happen if I don’t do it: |
| What will not happen if I do it: | What will not happen if I don’t do it: |

* Ask **open and searching questions** to provide an opportunity to stretch your appraisee. This may be their only conversation with a peer which is centred entirely on their needs. Indulge them!

*Where can I signpost appraisees for more opportunities for their development?*

The above list is nowhere near an exhaustive list but a few tools that appraisers can use in conversation with their appraisee. Annual appraisal is not a forum for formal mentoring and coaching and you may wish to signpost appraisees elsewhere. Here are a few other resources:

1. Looking after you too provides free coaching for anyone working in primary care: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/looking-after-you-confidential-coaching-and-support-for-the-primary-care-workforce/looking-after-you-too/>
2. The NHS Leadership academy has coaching opportunities across England listed here: <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/resources/coaching-register/>
3. The Royal College of GPs offers coaching signposting support to members and non-members: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/primary-care-development/gps-and-practice-team-members.aspx>
4. The Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management offers a network of coaches across the country: <https://www.fmlm.ac.uk/programme-services/individual-support/coaching>
5. The Medical Forum offers structured career reflection, the opportunity to confidentially discuss career planning and support for those considering a change in career direction: <https://www.medicalforum.com/>
6. BMA opportunities for support: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/gp-workforce-initiatives/general-practice-workforce-initiatives>
7. Wessex LMCs has a Support and Development Scheme for GPs and there is a coaching/mentoring offer: <https://www.wessexlmcs.com/gpsd>
8. Private opportunities: <https://www.medcoaches.uk/> and <https://www.joyfuldoctor.com/>

*Where can I get more experience for myself?*

A lot of appraisers already have the skills but our survey showed 86.5% of respondents wanted formal training so here are a few opportunities/resources:

1. <https://emccuk.org/>
The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) is the largest global professional body for coaching and mentoring. Founded in 1992, it has a developed and widely accepted Code of Ethics in coaching and mentoring, guidelines on supervision, a diversity policy and a complaints procedure.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council’s European Individual Accreditation (EIA) award demonstrates that an individual coach or mentor has an appropriate level of knowledge and the ability to apply it effectively in their practice. As a coach or mentor becomes more expert, the level of competence expected of them increases: from Foundation, Practitioner, Senior Practitioner to Master Practitioner. EIA courses can be delivered from a variety of places.
2. <https://coachingfederation.org/> International Coach Federation has information on how to become a coach.
3. Understanding self-test to explore you own preferences and personality traits to help enrich the possibility of your interactions including how you might lead, influence, collaborate and communicate. <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>
4. Interested in why coaches help – a TED talk:
*Atul Gawande – Want to get great at something? Get a coach* <https://www.ted.com/talks/atul_gawande_want_to_get_great_at_something_get_a_coach?language=en>
5. Are you already a trained Mentor? There is more opportunity here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/the-best-place-to-work/supporting-mentors-scheme/>
6. A reading list for those wanting to explore this more:

Neuropsychology for Coaches - Paul and Virginia Brown
Coaching for Performance - John Whitmore
The Tao of Coaching - Max Landsberg
The Coaching Manual - Julie Starr
Time to Think - Nancy Kline
Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring – Lancer, Clutterbuck and Megginson

*“The key to getting formative and supportive appraisals right is seeing how a once-a-year intervention is predicated on superb coaching and mentoring skills without the frequency of touch points of a formal coaching or mentoring relationship.”*

Appraiser commenting in our survey