

## What is coaching?

Coaching is an approach that helps you to identify what you want, explore your current situation and options, and to identify the actions to help it.

Rather than giving advice or providing solutions, a coach actively listens, asks questions, and provides a sounding board, to help you find your own insight and solutions.

## Who can use coaching skills?

Coaching uses a set of skills and principles that anyone can draw upon in their everyday interactions with people, without being a trained coach!

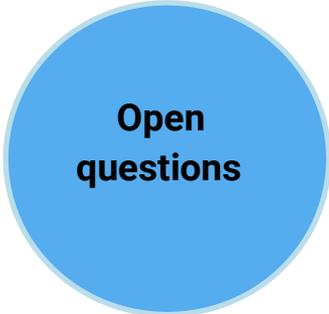
It's different from a normal conversation, because we're using these skills in a very focussed and intentional way, which is much deeper than in a normal conversation.

## Coaching skills and principles



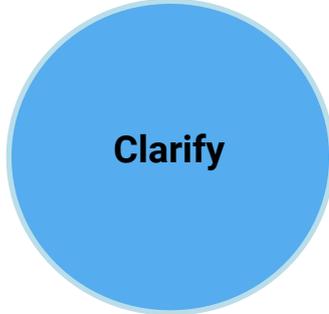
### Focused listening

This when you listen more than you speak and focus fully on what the other person is saying, rather than on what you'll say next.



### Open questions

Asking open questions supports the other person to explore their own perceptions and ideas, rather than leading them to a particular viewpoint.



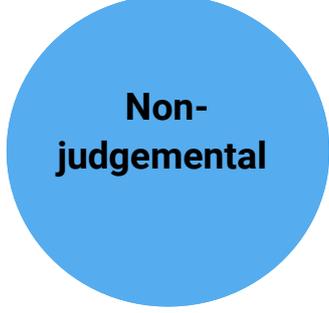
### Clarify

Check your understanding, by reflecting back what you're hearing.



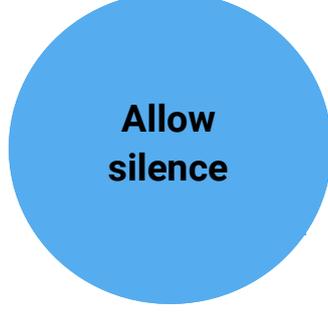
### Avoid advice

Don't offer advice but create a space for the individual to explore their options, ideas and solutions.



### Non-judgemental

Be open, empathetic and non-judgemental. Put yourself in the person's shoes.



### Allow silence

Be comfortable with silence. Allow time for reflection.

## Coaching, mentoring or therapy?

Coaching can often be confused with other approaches like mentoring and therapy. While they all use a similar skillset and principles, how they are applied is different.

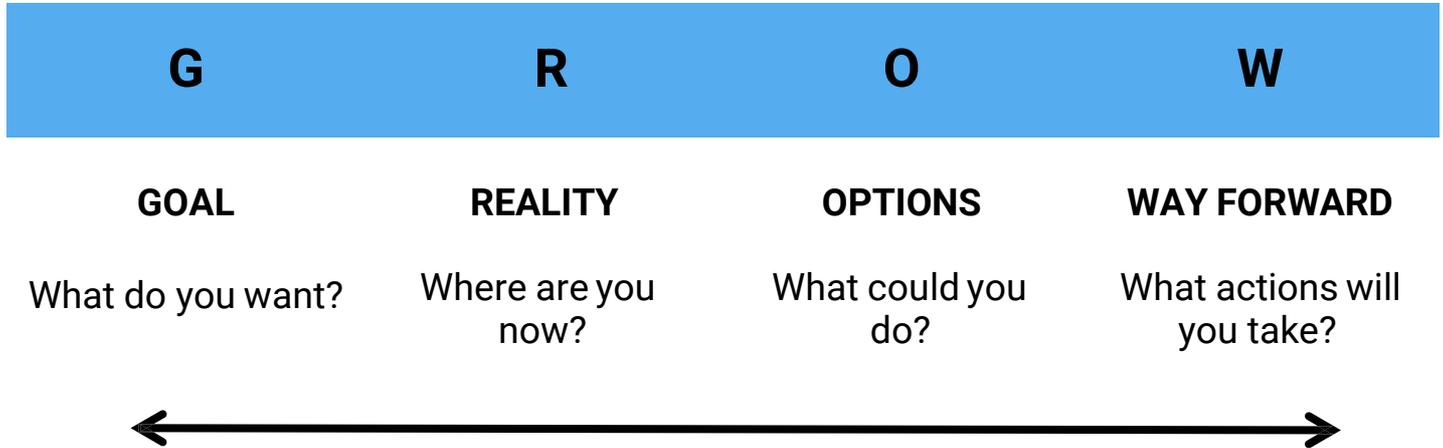
Coaching	Mentoring	Therapy
Future focussed and action orientated, and about exploring possibility.	Future focussed and action orientated, often on specific skills or knowledge.	Tends to focus on the past, something causing distress, or a mental health condition.
Working together to enable the other person to explore their goals, own ideas and solutions, without the coach's advice.	Working together to enable the other person to explore their goals and ideas, with the mentor sharing their expertise, experience and ideas.	Working together to enable the person to explore issues. The therapist may offer their expertise to support the other person.
A coach doesn't need experience in your area of work to help you.	A mentor needs experience or skills in the area of work/ support.	The therapist needs expertise and experience in the area of support.
All approaches use focussed listening, questioning techniques, reflecting back what you're hearing and offering observations.		

## Asking great questions

- An **open question** is any question that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. They usually start with '*what, how, when, where, who*':  
*What would you like to happen? How do you feel? What do you want?*
- Use '**why**' questions with caution. It can be perceived that a justification is needed for how the person feels. Rephrasing, it can help: '*What was it that made you feel this way?*'
- **Closed questions** are used to clarify rather than to explore a topic further: '*Was it on Monday or Friday?*', '*Is that correct?*', or '*Are you ok to move on now?*'
- **Leading or biased questions** are framed around leading someone to a certain response. Sometimes they are advice, or an instruction, disguised as a question. We like to give advice more than we like to receive it: '*Why don't you do X?*'; '*Have you thought of doing Y?*'

## The GROW Model

It can be helpful to use a structured, but flexible approach when using coaching style questions, like the GROW model, which is a method to remember different types of useful questions to explore goals and what someone wants, the current situation, different options and actions.



Here are some example questions to have handy, that you can use in your everyday conversations to explore something further.

<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>Leads to clarity and focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you want to achieve?</li> <li>• What would you like to happen?</li> <li>• Where do you want to be?</li> <li>• What would success look and feel like?</li> <li>• What would it look like if there were no constraints?</li> <li>• How will you know when you have got there?</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflecting back</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From what I hearing it sounds like your goal is X, is that correct?</li> <li>• Can you tell me more?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reality</b></p> <p>Leads to understanding the situation and different perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's happening at the moment?</li> <li>• What strengths do you have that may help?</li> <li>• What's holding you back?</li> <li>• How are you feeling about this?</li> <li>• What is within your control?</li> <li>• What assumptions might you be making?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Options</b></p> <p>Leads to a greater sense of control over the situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your options?</li> <li>• What have you seen others do?</li> <li>• What can you influence?</li> <li>• Who else might help/ be good to speak to?</li> <li>• How will that work?</li> <li>• How do you feel about that option?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Way forward</b></p> <p>Leads to commitment and action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What steps will you take?</li> <li>• What are you going to do first?</li> <li>• When will you do it by?</li> <li>• What support will you need?</li> <li>• What do you need from me?</li> </ul> <p><b>Summarising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you summarise your next steps?</li> <li>• How could you make that action SMART?</li> </ul>