

## The Academy at Harvard Medical School Medical Education Grand Rounds

The Art and Practice of Coaching in Medical Education, October 21, 2019

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**Overview:** A modern vision for education includes engaging concepts such as learner-centeredness, curiosity, the "growth mindset," self-efficacy, inclusivity, reflective practice, feedback-seeking behavior, and empowering students to take responsibility for their learning. What is less clear is how teaching faculty can translate these values into everyday practice.

Coaching principles and approaches offer teaching faculty a way forward. Coaching in medical education realigns the teaching and learning relationships to create a learner-centered form of dialogue. Coaching approaches are based on the premise that learners are resourceful, flexible, and resilient. Educators work in partnership with students, using coaching approaches to engage these student strengths and more effectively and dynamically facilitate learning.

Coaching is non-directive, incremental, and very different from advising. It takes advantage of the truth that people are **resourceful** and that the person(s) coached want(s) something to happen. It is person-centered and solution-focused.

Coaching conversations

- are structured (goal setting, exploration, generation of options, action planning)
- include generic questions rather than advice
- are future-focused
- are solution-focused
- involve a relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

***"Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them."*** –Sir John Whitmore (2002)



### GOAL

- SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound
- Stated in the positive: where do you want to be? (*How* we ask questions is essential. If you tell people to spend 30 seconds thinking about their evening but not to think about a pink elephant, they will inevitably think about that pink elephant)
- Owned by person setting the goal

### WILL

- does *not* mean willpower but what you will do.

Successful coaching leaves coached person with

- raised level of awareness
- choice of how to move forward
- responsibility of taking next steps

Coaching creates the foundation for collaborative conversations—a community of practice between faculty and students, among colleagues, etc. It helps develop leadership, teamwork, and management of conflict. It cultivates the human.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/about/leadership-and-strategy/vp-education/public/Talking-Teachers-Coaching-210119.pptx>

Typical Coaching Questions, in this sequence:

- What is the issue?
- What makes this an issue for you now?
- What do you want ideally?
- What is stopping you from achieving your ideal outcome?
- What part of the issue do you have control over?
- What is going right?
- Imagine that you are your own best friend. What do you say to yourself about this issue?
- What are your options?
- Which of these seems the most feasible?
- What is your next step?
- When will you take it?

*Notes by Anne Levy, PhD  
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