

Coaching and Mentoring Portfolio

Sam Brinkworth

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Module: Coaching and Mentoring

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Critical reflection

Before joining the university, I had worked independently as a school librarian for around 15 years. Although I had previous experience of line management, I was apprehensive when I first took on responsibility for managing staff in my role. I questioned whether I would be effective, whether people would like me and how I could ensure that I was fair.

I had joined an organisation where career development, supportive management and regular communication were valued. This was very different from my previous experience. I had not had regular one-to-ones and had received little feedback. I recognise how important feedback is in helping people understand how they are performing. Armstrong (2025) shares that feedback reinforces effective behaviour and indicates where and how behaviour needs to change.

During my first year, I undertook development opportunities including coaching and mentoring and change management. These experiences increased my confidence as a line manager and encouraged me to explore coaching further. Undertaking this coaching module has allowed me to examine my own approach more critically and to apply what I have learned directly to my workplace.

One of the most important aspects of my development has been recognising how strongly my personal characteristics influence my coaching practice. My Insights profile (Insights profile, 2024) describes me as empathetic, sympathetic and considerate. It also identifies a tendency to talk and think quickly and extensively. This resonated with me because I recognise that my natural response when somebody is experiencing challenges is to empathise, engage and try to help. Initially, I saw this mainly as a strength. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, I recognised that helping people feel comfortable can support them in fulfilling their potential.

However, through coaching I have recognised that empathy can become a limitation if it leads me to occupy too much of the conversational space or attempt to solve a problem for the coachee. This has been particularly important when coaching somebody who is distressed. My instinct is to reassure the person or tell them that I understand how they feel. However, I have learned that this can unintentionally move the focus away from the coachee.

Reading *The Magic Is in the Silence*, Nice (2022) was particularly significant in developing my understanding of this. It helped me recognise that silence does not mean that I am failing to contribute as a coach. Instead, it can provide valuable thinking space for the coachee.

This became particularly relevant when working with coachee three. I knew this person had experienced the recent organisational restructure negatively and was unhappy with the outcome. I was also aware that other colleagues had found them challenging to work with. I therefore recognised that I needed to be particularly careful about my own assumptions and remain unbiased. I needed to avoid leading questions and resist the temptation to offer solutions.

The coachee became emotional during some sessions. Previously, I might have felt that I needed to make the situation better. Instead, I learned to remain with the discomfort and allow the coachee to work through their own response. This was challenging for me because of my naturally empathetic and positive communication style, but it became one of the most valuable learning experiences of the course. I learned that I do not need to fix difficult emotions. My role can be to provide a safe space in which the coachee can explore them.

I have coached three people in different circumstances, which has helped me understand that there is no single approach that will work equally well for everyone. Although I recognise that I generally adopt a coachee-led approach, I also recognise that both Whitmore's GROW model and Gilbert and Whittleworth's OSCAR model are helpful tools when working towards a specific goal. I intend to work through the OSCAR model with coachee three, as our sessions have indicated that she has a career change goal that she wishes to explore.

Coachee one responded positively to the organisational change and was successful in obtaining a role she wanted. Although she was positive about the change, she carried some concerns from her previous role, where she had sometimes felt that she was working in somebody else's shadow. Coaching gave her an opportunity to explore how she wanted to approach her new role with greater confidence.

I noticed the importance of non-verbal communication during one of these sessions. When she described no longer having supervisory responsibility, her body language changed noticeably and she appeared to sit taller. I commented on this, and she described the experience as being like removing a heavy coat. This helped shape the conversation towards what she wanted from her new role. This experience increased my awareness of the value of observing not only what a coachee says, but also how they communicate.

Coachee two presented a different situation. She was a friend from my home town and our sessions took place online. She was considering whether to accept a higher-grade, full-time role following a secondment. Unlike coachee one, she arrived with a specific decision that she wanted to explore. This required me to adapt my questioning and structure the session on the GROW framework. She experienced a close family bereavement during our coaching sessions. This deepened my understanding that a purely positive approach is not always appropriate. As a result coachee two assessed her values and took a different direction with her goal. Demonstrating that there is not always a linear pathway to the outcome.

I gained significant coaching insight from working with coachee Three. She was experiencing the organisational restructure very differently and was unhappy with her new role. Working with her required me to be more conscious of my own behaviour, particularly my tendency to empathise and want to help. I needed to give her time to reflect rather than trying to move her towards a positive outcome.

Across all three experiences, I have seen that coachees often have more understanding of their situation than they initially believe. When given time and permission to think, they can identify what matters to them and what they want to do. This has changed my understanding of the coach's role. I previously thought that being helpful meant contributing something to the conversation. I now recognise that sometimes being helpful means creating enough space for the other person to

find their own answer. John Fisher's transition curve is a helpful tool alongside the GROW framework and has given me greater awareness of the coachee's emotional response to change.

My approach to preparation has also developed. Initially, having a structure, workbook and coaching contract helped me feel confident because I was new to coaching. The contract provided an opportunity to establish expectations and create a clear space for the coachee.

I have also become much more aware of the ethical responsibility involved in coaching. The coach occupies a position of influence, and therefore the way questions are phrased can have an impact on the coachee. This has made me more conscious of confidentiality, avoiding leading questions, maintaining appropriate boundaries and ensuring that the session belongs to the coachee. Reflecting on the ICF Core Competencies has reinforced the importance of cultivating trust and safety, maintaining presence, and demonstrating ethical practice throughout the coaching relationship (International Coaching Federation, 2025).

Listening back to my recorded coaching session was particularly useful. It allowed me to hear my own questioning and consider how I could have phrased questions differently. Rather than simply assessing whether the session had gone well, I could examine my own behaviour and identify opportunities for improvement.

The biggest change in my practice has been learning to stop and think before responding. I have learned to tolerate silence, to ask open questions without expecting a particular answer and to recognise that I do not need to fix problems for people.

I have also learned that coaching is highly individual. Two people can experience the same organisational change but respond to it completely differently. My experience has therefore challenged the idea that one coaching approach can be applied in the same way to everyone. I need to continue developing my ability to select and adapt appropriate approaches according to the individual, their circumstances and what they want from coaching.

Most importantly, I have learned that my empathy is both a strength and an area for continued development. I want to retain the warmth, care and genuine interest that I bring to conversations, while becoming more disciplined about allowing the coachee to own the space.

Watching somebody work something out for themselves has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the experience. I now understand that coaching is not about providing somebody with the answer. It is about creating the conditions in which they can develop their own understanding and decide what they want to do.

My future development will therefore focus on continuing to practice questioning and active listening, developing my confidence in using silence, reflecting on my coaching recordings and feedback, and continuing to use professional support and action learning. These areas will form the basis of my personal development plan.

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Appendix 1 – Coaching contract and ethical framework

Contract

I created a workbook style pack for the coachees that I worked with – the pack was adapted from materials developed by Public Service Management (www.academiwales.gov.wales/coaching+mentoring) alongside additional coaching resources such as the coaching wheel.

Section 3 – Ground Rules and Coaching Agreement

- Coaching conversations will remain confidential unless there is a safeguarding, wellbeing or professional concern that requires disclosure.
- Both coach and coachee agree to treat each other with respect.
- Sessions should begin and end on time where possible.
- If a session needs to be cancelled, as much notice as possible should be given.
- The coachee agrees to actively participate and reflect between sessions.
- The coach will support reflection, challenge and action planning but responsibility for decisions and actions remains with the coachee.
- Online sessions should take place in a private environment where confidentiality can be maintained.
- Either party may end the coaching relationship if the arrangement is no longer beneficial.

Coaching Agreement

We agree to work together in a collaborative and respectful coaching relationship.

We agree to meet for approximately three coaching sessions, following an introductory meeting and concluding with a review session.

The purpose of this coaching relationship is to support reflection, development and action planning around an agreed focus area.

Coach Signature: _____ Sam brinkworth

Date: _____ 19.8.26 _____

Coachee Signature: _____ Coachee 3

Date: _____ 19.8.26 _____

Section 1 – Welcome to Coaching

This coaching partnership is intended to provide a supportive and reflective space to explore goals, challenges, ideas and development opportunities.

Coaching is a collaborative process. The role of the coach is not to provide all the answers, but to support reflection, questioning, challenge and action planning.

To help make the most of our time together, it may be useful to identify one area, goal or challenge that could realistically be explored over approximately three coaching sessions.

Sessions may take place face-to-face or online and will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed.

Section 2- Before we begin ...

What would you like to gain from coaching?

What prompted you to explore coaching now?

What does success look like to you?

What type of support or challenge helps you most?

What would help you feel comfortable during coaching?

What topic, challenge or goal would you like to focus on during these sessions?

How committed do you feel to the coaching process?

Appendix 2 – Coaching and mentoring log

Coachee	Session	Date	Duration	Notes
Coachee 1	Introduction	21 May	1 hour	Introduction and coaching contract
Coachee 1	1	11 June	1 hour	Session 1
Coachee 1	2	25 June	1 hour	Session 2
Coachee 1	3	8 July	1 hour	Session 3- wheel
Coachee 1	4 / final review	24 August	1 hour	Final session and review
Coachee 2	Introduction	17 May	45 minutes	Introduction and coaching contract
Coachee 2	1	27 May	1 hour	Session 1
Coachee 2	2	17 June	1 hour	Session 2
Coachee 2	—	24 June	—	Missed session
Coachee 2	3 / final review	11 September	1 hour	Final session and review
Coachee 3	Introduction	19 August	30 minutes	Introduction and coaching contract
Coachee 3	1	20 August	1 hour	Session 1
Coachee 3	2	24 August	1 hour	Session 2
Coachee 3	3	7 September	1 hour	Session 3

Minimum required: 6 hours

Appendix 3 – Reflective journal and coaching evidence

Coachee 1 – original handwritten evidence

The following photographs are retained as the original visual evidence.

Coachee one- 21st May notes

21st May 2026 NOTES

4.1 COACHEE REFLECTION – SESSION 1

What stood out most from this session?

How comfortable I felt being able to talk, openly & honestly.

What insights or reflections did you have?

I was ~~was~~ surprised by how low + tired + drained I had actually been feeling & how I needed time to reflect.

What actions or next steps will you take before the next session?

Spend some time thinking about my personal goals + what I would like to achieve

What challenges or barriers may affect progress?

Finding the time, having a suitable work space & managing worries around the restrictive

What support do you need moving forward?

Time + Space to reflect & encouragement to focus on myself.

How useful did you find this session?

Really useful. It was good to take some time for myself, talk to Sam & open up.

Any additional thoughts or reflections?

I appreciated having the opportunity to reflect & discuss things openly in a supportive environment.

Coachee one- 11th June notes

Additional notes:

Coachee Reflection - Session 2

11th June -

What stood out most from this session?

I was really impressed by the coach's questioning techniques. I felt genuinely listened to, & it meant a lot that the coach remembered things I had shared in previous sessions.

What insights or reflections did you have?

This helped me feel valued & The more I talk & reflect, the more I realise what I have been through in my personal life & ongoing restructuring. I have started to recognise how resilient

What actions or next steps will you take before the next session?

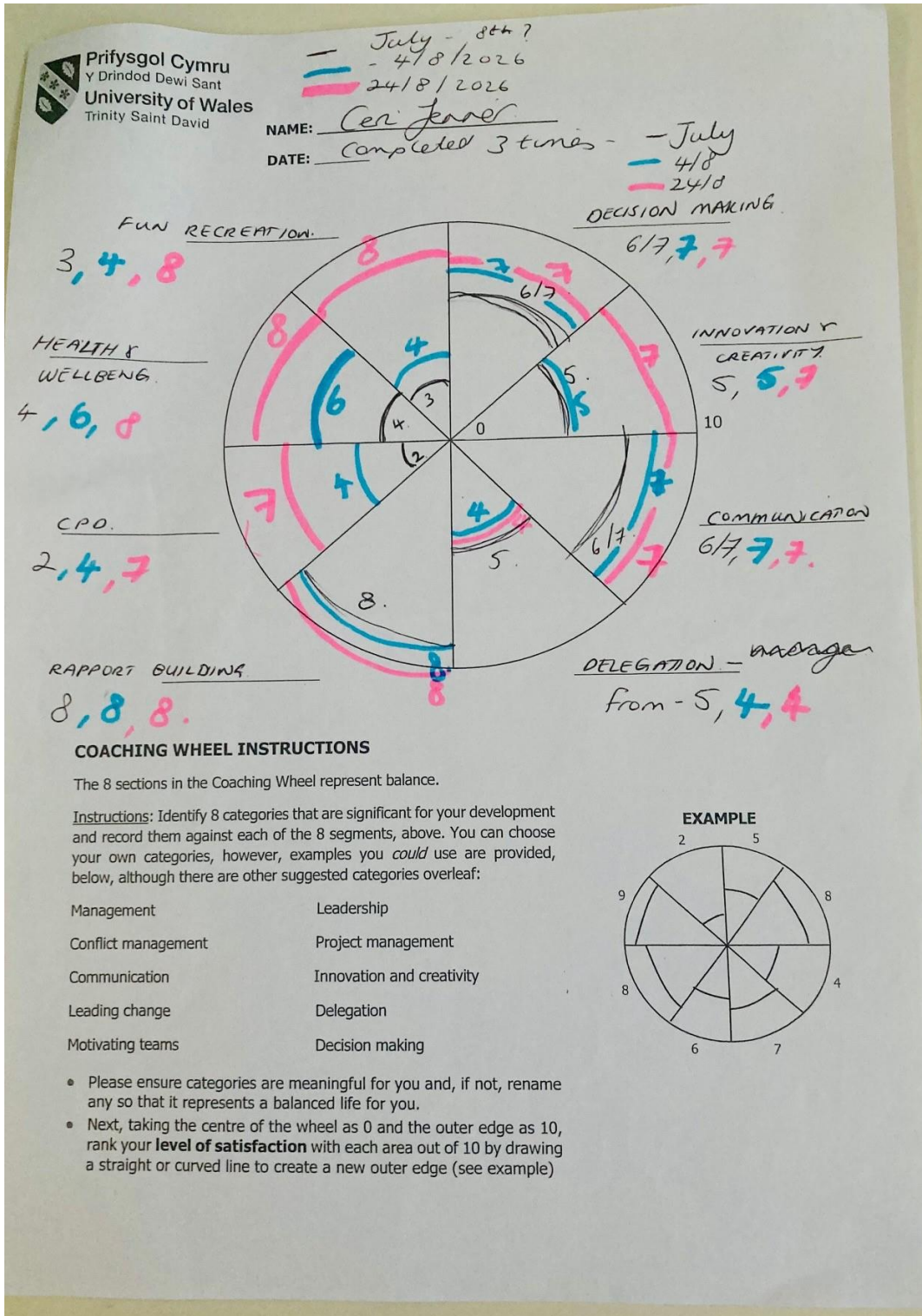
I will continue to reflect on my personal growth & strengths, & I am finding these sessions valuable.

I am which has surprised me, & I am beginning to see that I am stronger than what I think.

C

Coachee one- 8th July notes

Coaching wheel completed by coachee one on 8th July, 4th August and 24th August



24th August - Session 5

7 SECTION 5 - FINAL REFLECTION AND REVIEW

What have you gained from coaching?

Coaching has helped me focus on my personal growth & take time for myself. I have started to reconnect with who I am as a person. It has given me space to

What changes or actions have you taken? I reflect, build confidence, & prioritise myself. I have pushed myself out of my comfort zone & been more open to opportunities. I have taken a greater interest in myself & engaged in cpd to support my new role.

What have you learned about yourself?

I have learnt that I have spent so much time caring & supporting others that I forgot take care of myself. Coaching has helped me to understand the importance of

What will you continue working on? Putting some focus back to me + my own needs. I will continue to focus on wellbeing, personal development + confidence. I want to maintain a better balance + make time for me + to grow.

Would you use coaching again? Why or why not?

Yes. Absolutely. I have found these sessions incredibly valuable. It has helped me to gain perspective, build self-awareness + make positive changes, which I wouldn't have

What aspects of the coaching process were most useful? Made

Being able to talk things through in a safe environment. The questioning techniques encouraged me to reflect deeply + feeling genuinely listened to helped me feel valued, relaxed & able to explore my feelings openly.

Any additional reflections or feedback?

I would like to praise the coach for their excellent listening skills, & thoughtful questioning. Their ability to remember what was said previously & gently challenge my thinking helped me to gain strengths in myself that I was over-looking.

The coaching experience has been extremely positive & has made a real difference to my well-being + personal



Coach

Samantha Brinkworth

Hello, thank you for being an amazing coach. I have really appreciated these sessions with you. It has helped me so much to evaluate and acknowledge where I was, and helped me to make positive changes. It has been excellent. Thank you. :)

From Ceri Jenner

Coachee 1 Coaching notes and reflections

Coaching reflections summarised from post session voice recorded notes-

Main topic discussed	21st May- coaching sessions structure, current work situation, confidence issues. 11th June- emotional response to transitional challenges, moving into new role, letting go of the previous supervisory role and a previous challenging working relationship. 25th- June- coping with change, personal and professional values, resilience and self-awareness 8th July- Coaching wheel- health and well-being, making herself a priority 24th-August- review the coaching sessions and looking forward
Key reflections/insights	21st May- committed to coaching sessions, good rapport established. 11th June- She was optimistic for new job role, wanted to avoid bringing negative feelings into it. I recognised that I need to listen more and talk less and to structure my questions more effectively. The sessions were positive, with some reflection on the past but she remained focused on moving forward. 25th-June- my questioning was more focused. I noticed changes in body language changes which prompted useful reflection. The coachee engaged with the change process within the restructure and responded positively to the coaching. 8th-July-The coaching wheel was a useful reflective tool. As she had recently started her new role we agreed to allow some time before meeting again so that she could reflect further. 24th August- positive experience as a coach in seeing the change that had taken place
Actions agreed before next session	21st May- think about what she would like focus on in the sessions. 11th June- Think through how she might handle requests relating to her previous role to avoid becoming overwhelmed. 25th June- complete coaching wheel 8th July- revisiting coaching wheel as it is a helpful reflective tool 24th August- keep up with the self-reflection

Additional notes/points	21st May-contract and guidelines completed 11th June- A positive approach is nature for this coachee 25th June- 8th July- 24th August- agreed to meet again in 6 months to reflect and review
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Coachee 2 feedback and reflections

Submitted in her own words rather than the booklet.

Main focus topic discussed- my opportunity to change roles after a 4 month secondment at work. Originally, I was positive that it was what I wanted to do and felt like I had the best chance to progress in this role/ Now was my time to think about me and my career goals.

Key reflections and insights- Due to an unexpected turn of events within my immediate family I have decided to hold back from taking up this opportunity. Now is not the right time as I need to be mentally strong and available for my family. I haven't given up on taking this forward but my values are always has been my family comes first. The coaching has given me time and space to think more deeply and consider my options more thoroughly than I would have done. I found the open-ended questions particularly helpful to challenge and assess what I wanted. Through the sessions I felt listened to and I benefited from time out of my day to reflect.

Coach reflections or session notes if available.

Main topic discussed	17th May- coaching sessions structure, contract and ongoing theme for sessions 27th May-main focus was the theme of the sessions which is to focus on whether the she wants to take up a full time higher graded position which she has been doing as a secondment. 17th June-topics included having time to focus on her own goals, address her pros and cons for the decisions and who she can go to for support if she makes this change and how she will feel if she doesn't take the new role 24th June- due to a close family bereavement, coaching sessions were paused. 11th Sept- review of the outcome, she is very happy with her decision to not take the higher graded full time job, she has looked closely at her core values to help reach a decision that sits peacefully with her. She is happy to consider other future opportunity.
Key reflections/insights	17th May- She seems positively engaged in the coaching concept and is keen to have some time for herself. As I know this coachee personally it was really good to go through the guideline and contract in a professional way. 27th May-using the GROW model alongside a positive coaching approach is working well as coachee has a clear goal and direction. 17th June-Happy with my questioning techniques to dig deeper into what she wanted to achieve and how she would decided on her own resolution. 24th June- missed session due to close family bereavement

	11th Sept- really pleased to be able to meet up and hear her decision outcome. She decided not to take the job after reflecting on her values, she commented that she was glad she had the sessions so she is happy with the outcome as she took the time to deep deeper into the options.
Actions agreed before next session	17th May- signed paperwork and think about theme or goal for the sessions 27th May- values exercise 17th June- 24th June- 11th Sept- feedback and review
Additional notes/points	17th May- happy to see that coaching a close friend can still be a professional coaching relationship 27th May- open ended questioning went well 17th June- 24th June- missed session 11th Sept- interesting to reflect that the goal you start with, once fully explored, may change direction. Although GROW was a good framework for these sessions the family bereavement showed that a consistent positive approach would not have been appropriate communication style.

Coachee 3 Evidence and notes

Section 2 – Before We Begin

What would you like to gain from coaching?

I would like the coaching session to help me gain some clarity and perspective on my current situation, particularly around my career and next steps. I would like to explore my strengths, skills and areas for development, and identify what I would like to achieve moving forward. I would also like to build my confidence; understand what options are available to me and leave the session with some practical and achievable actions that I can work towards.

What prompted you to explore coaching now?

Having listened to colleagues who have gone through these sessions and the valuable help, guidance and support they have given them, I thought it was the right time for me to try this.

What does success look like for you?

Success for me would be coming away from the coaching sessions with a clearer sense of direction and confidence in myself and my abilities. I would like to feel that I have moved forward from a period of uncertainty and have a better understanding of what I want for my future. I would like to recognise the skills and experience I already have, identify where I may need to develop further, and feel confident about taking the next steps towards something that is rewarding and right for me.

What type of support or challenge helps you most?

I respond well to a supportive but honest approach. I find it helpful when someone listens without judgement but also challenges me to look at things differently and consider possibilities, I may not have thought of myself. I appreciate constructive feedback, encouragement, and practical suggestions, particularly when they help me build confidence and turn my thoughts into achievable actions.

What would help you feel comfortable during coaching?

I feel most comfortable when I feel that I can be myself and speak openly without being judged. It would help me to have a relaxed and supportive conversation where I can take my time to think about my answers and explore things honestly. I would like the sessions to feel like a safe space where I can be honest about my thoughts and concerns but also be encouraged to look positively at my options and what I could achieve.

What topic, challenge or goal would you like to focus on during these sessions?

My experience during the restructure most recently in the workplace and how it has made me feel.

How committed do you feel to the coaching process?

I feel very committed to the coaching process. I want to make the most of the opportunity and am willing to be open, honest, and reflective throughout the sessions. I am prepared to take on constructive challenges and put the things we discuss into practice. I don't expect you to have all the answers for me; I want to actively take responsibility for my own progress and use the sessions to help me move forward with more confidence and direction.

Coachee Reflection – Session 1

What stood out most from this session?

Being listened to by the Coach and the coach showing empathy in what I was discussing. It gave me the chance to evaluate where I am at and how I feel about my personal circumstances and what was being discussed.

What insights or reflections did you have?

I reflected on what I would encourage people to do and the support I would give and realised I could turn that on its head and encourage myself and give myself advice like I would to others.

What actions or next steps will you take before the next session?

Reflecting on the conversations we had and trying to think about a way forward and next steps to help deal with the situation I am in.

What challenges or barriers may affect progress?

Finding time to reflect and think wisely about choices I need to make for my future and having the confidence to do something about it.

What support do you need moving forward?

It would be useful to have some hints/tips on how to manage and deal with what happened to me during the restructure and have the support to take the next steps.

How useful did you find this session?

Very useful as I haven't sat down with anybody and talk through things with since what happened to me during the restructure.

Any additional thoughts or reflections?

It was nice to have time away from a busy office and just think about myself and discuss my feelings, options, etc.

Coachee Reflection – Session 2

What stood out most from this session?

Talking about my values and where I take it from – being in a supervisory position before restructuring. Also, what my future could be and weighing up options of jobs whether it be within the University or elsewhere.

What insights or reflections did you have?

I reflected on my values and what I believe in. I am trying to make sure these values and what I stand for never go away and will only help me in my future employment/career path.

What actions or next steps will you take before the next session?

Relect on what was discussed and how I can

What challenges or barriers may affect progress?

If every day work situations don't improve and still have a low mood about the workplace and my new role within the department.

What support do you need moving forward?

To still have somebody to talk to in confidence to give me that reassurance and useful advice on how to move on, the skills and the person I am, and advice on how to deal with my next steps.

How useful did you find this session?

Very useful indeed and having somebody to talk to in confidence when the person knows the background to an individual and offers support in a realistic and useful way

Coachee 3- coach reflections

Main topic discussed	19th August- coaching sessions structure, contract and ongoing theme for sessions. 20th August- lack of confidence following restructure and she is needing support 24th August- values and career path following change to her role including her loss of supervisory responsibilities 7th Sept- what is in coachee control
Key reflections/insights	19th August- positive approach may not be useful yet 20th August- great to see her reflect that she could give herself the same support she would give others, mentioned career direction, emotional in session 24th August- seeing her start to see solutions for herself, I management my empathy for her much better in this session 7th Sept- happy for more sessions and I think it could more into a clearer GROW model
Actions agreed before next session	19th August- guideline and contract completed 20th August- focus on theme and goal for the sessions 24th August- explore professional values and how they can been shown in her her role 7th Sept- agreed more sessions are needed as she would like to explore the topics in more detail
Additional notes/points	19th August- has previously been offered coaching but didn't engage with it 20th August- emotional in the session, sitting with her in this is more helpful that offering my solutions 24th August- open ending questions are working well to challenge her 7th Sept- explore future use of MAGIC resources and bridge concept getting from A to B

Appendix 4 – Recorded coaching session

The latest coaching log identifies the final Coachee 1 session on 24 August as the final session, recording and review. The recording itself should be supplied in the University's required format or attached separately if Turnitin does not accept the media within the main document.

- Coachee: Coachee 1
- Date: 24 August
- Duration recorded in log: 30 mins
- Purpose: final session, recording and review
- Recording: attach separately

Appendix 5 – Personal development plan

Development need	Development activity	Support/resources	Measure of success	Review date
Questioning and use of silence	Self reflection and self awareness within sessions	Reflection tools after the sessions I coach to see where I can make improvements	Longer and more comfortable pauses in the sessions	3-6 months
Managing empathy/sympathy and boundaries	Self reflection and self awareness within sessions	Reflection tools after the sessions I coach to see where I can make improvements	Better control of boundaries	3-6 months
Adapting coaching to different coachees	Continue to work on reflective work and questioning techniques I have offered coaching sessions to my team and I have asked if I can offer this to the whole new team following the restructure.	Feedback from coachees I have support from my line manager to continue to practice my coaching techniques and this approach of building new connections has been written into our new action plan.	Successful coaching outcomes for coachees Gaining new coachees	Ongoing Ongoing

Reflective practice and professional support	Action learning sets-regular meetings	Allow time in working week- approved and supported by line manager	Growing more knowledgeable and confident in my coaching session	6 months
	I have reached out to a professional full time coach for some support and potential mentoring	Investigating mentoring	Feedback from mentor	3 months