

Student ID – 2541612

BMPF7303D - Coaching and Mentoring

Component 2 – Portfolio

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Critical Reflection

My aim is to showcase my development and reflections in my journey as a new coach. I found it helpful to reflect straight after sessions and to review my reflective journal before new sessions. Reflective practice is considered vital for coaches to develop their skills and particularly for those who want to work towards 'mastery' in their coaching (Turner, Lucas and Whitaker, 2018). I found Driscoll's (1994) reflective model most useful in asking myself the questions "What?", "So What?" and "Now What?" to aid my development across sessions.

My approach to coaching, in part, comes from my experience of navigating the workplace as a neurodivergent person. I was diagnosed as autistic as an adult, while trying to navigate a new workplace. I felt it was useful disclosing my neurodivergence in the first introductory sessions with each coachee. This went well because it allowed me to explain my communication style but also let coachees know I can be accommodating and adaptable to their individual preferences too. While there is not much research specifically on coaches disclosing their neurodivergence to their coachees, Milton's Double Empathy Problem (2012) explains that people with a shared neurotype can better understand each other and form stronger connections. It may also be particularly relevant for autistic employees who often cite social demands, managing differences in personalities and masking their autistic traits as significant difficulties in the workplace (Hayward et al., 2020). Therefore, this suggests that a coach disclosing their own neurodivergence could help a coachee feel more comfortable to also disclose and to talk openly about their experiences.

I believe that my own lived experience of neurodivergence can help create a level of understanding, particularly when coaching other autistic women. This has been identified as a crucial aspect for fostering communication in a coaching relationship (Langford Watts, 2024). This was also echoed in feedback from Coachee 1, "I believe that her understanding of my need for verbal processing was even greater because of her own neurodivergence" (See Appendix 3, Coachee 1 Session 3).

GROW has been described as "a simple but powerful way of structuring a coaching session" (Whitmore, 2015, p.154) but also seen by some as too linear and simplistic to fit with the fact that "coaching is frequently an oscillating non-linear process" (Grant, 2011). In my view, GROW should not be adhered to so strictly that it prohibits coachees from expressing themselves in non-linear ways. I do, however, think it works to help focus sessions. This can be particularly important for neurodivergent individuals who often prefer structure and predictability.

It has also been suggested that although GROW seems to be linear, there is scope for it to be more cyclical, and it can be common for coachees to move backwards and

forwards between different stages of the process until they have clarity on their situation (Passmore, 2020). I explained to my coachees that we could use the GROW model as a framework if they found it helpful, but I was also clear in offering flexibility to change the structure of sessions to suit their needs. Overall, the structure of the sessions was well-received by coachees. Feedback from Coachee 1 specifically referenced the benefits of using GROW as a guide, while Coachee 2 stated that she found the structure of sessions worked well. Both coachees also gave feedback that I allowed them plenty of space to speak freely. In future, I would aim to keep this approach, letting coachees know of the option of using GROW in a non-linear way or to be flexible to allow different styles of processing and expression.

Coaches must adhere to strict ethical standards. I familiarised myself with ICF's Code of Ethics (2026) and made sure to discuss ethical considerations in my contract and with coachees in the introductory session. I paid particular attention to Section 3 as it addresses Professional Conduct and Conflict of Interest. With coaching a friend, I had to ensure not to bring assumptions about situations into the coaching dynamic. With a colleague, I had to be mindful of pre-existing opinions about dynamics in the workplace. Both situations required setting and communicating clear boundaries, for example not to discuss anything related to coaching outside of the coaching relationship. It also required ongoing reflection from myself to ensure consistency in managing dual relationships.

Active listening is regarded as one of the core elements of a coaching relationship (Passmore, 2020). One strength I felt I demonstrated across the sessions was active listening. I believe with both coachees I developed my listening skills with actions such as allowing them to speak without interruption, paraphrasing, echoing their language and using affirmative body language. This was evidenced in my recording of Coachee 1 and was also brought up in the feedback from multiple sessions with Coachee 1.

Both coachees commented that I allowed plenty of space to process and talk. I also offered the option to further reflect on a question after the session or to come back to it later rather than give an answer straight away. I did this consciously as I am aware that many autistic people process information in a bottom-up way (Ursino *et al.*, 2022). This generally means that autistic people take in more detail and need to filter more information before coming to a conclusion. In contrast, neurotypical coachees are more likely to process things in a faster 'top-down' way. Although I was aware that one of my coachees was neurodivergent, I did not know the other's neurotype. I still used this approach, regardless, as I feel that removing time pressure generally creates a more relaxed environment, not just for those who need extra time to process. This is an example of a way that universal design can be applied effectively in a coaching context (Doyle and McDowall, 2024) and something I aim to model in my approach.

One of my aims was to bring elements of a person-centred approach in the sense of being generally non-directive, while demonstrating empathy and unconditional positive regard (Joseph, 2014). I would argue that one of the most important features of a coaching relationship is creating a safe environment for coachees to speak openly without fear of judgement and this fits with that approach.

I was also drawn to using elements of Cognitive Behavioural Coaching in my approach to encouraging coachees to question assumptions and their underlying 'cognitive and emotional barriers to goal attainment' (Williams, Palmer and Edgerton, 2014, p.35). There are some tensions between these two coaching styles, in the fact that person-centred tends to be non-directive, while CBC is more directive on the coach's part. I feel that the general flow of most sessions followed a non-directive style but still allowed for moments of intervention with CBC style questions. I feel the Reality and Options stages of the GROW model can work particularly well with CBC in identifying potential unhelpful narratives and considering options in a realistic way while challenging self-limiting beliefs. This is particularly important for neurodivergent people who may have multiple examples of negative interactions in the workplace which can affect their self-perception. This was evidenced in my approach with Coachee 1 when we discussed her challenges around neurodivergence, identity, and self-worth.

One of the most powerful tools for my reflection was listening to the recorded session. Although it can be uncomfortable to do so, it was useful for me to notice areas for improvement. While listening back to the recorded session with Coachee 1, I noticed that I said "that's positive" as a response. Although it came from wanting to seem supportive, on reflection I should not be evaluating things in that way. By doing so, it may risk influencing the coachee and be seen as a form of authority or validation. In future, I would aim to ask an open question about how they view the situation themselves rather than give my own thoughts. This was a recurring theme, as I noticed I also said: "You say you haven't actioned it, but that does sound like you have..." This was intended as a comment to challenge Coachee 1's narrative that she hadn't completed an action from the previous session. I feel I could have phrased that differently, in a more neutral way. For example, I could have asked a question, which would have been less directive, and given her a chance to share her insight into how she may have worked on the action in a different way.

Gathering feedback is seen as another valuable tool for reflection and self-improvement. According to a study by Burt *et al.* (2024) feedback from coachees can spark opportunities for development through simple questions such as "how did I do?". One thing I have reflected on since gathering feedback is the difference in the depth and detail in responses between both coachees (See Appendix 3). After consideration, perhaps my feedback questions were too structured. Coachee 1 answered them comprehensively and Coachee 2 gave much shorter less detailed answers. Both were

valid in the way they chose to respond but this perhaps shows the approach could be changed or adapted. I had already reflected on allowing flexibility for differences in communication and processing styles and in future I could offer options to allow people to give feedback in a way that suits them better.

Some of the development needs shown in my PDP link directly to coachee feedback (see Appendix 5). I have also identified areas for improvement from my own reflections and a desire to continue learning and growing as a coach and a manager. I feel I have begun to develop my own approaches which are tailored to the individual coachee and as I aim to be neuroinclusive this fits with the notion that standard approaches need to be adapted significantly (Blaney and Hannell, 2025).

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Coaching Contract

This agreement sets out the basis of the coaching relationship and will be discussed during the introductory session to ensure mutual understanding.

Coaching Approach

The coachee's agenda is at the centre of a coaching relationship and will be worked on jointly by both coach and coachee. The coach will support, challenge and facilitate reflection to help the coachee identify solutions and actions. The coach does not guarantee answers or results. The purpose of coaching is to support and enhance the coachee's personal and/or professional development over an agreed period. The coachee accepts responsibility for working towards agreed goals and completing actions between sessions.

Name of Coach.....

Name of Coachee.....

We agree to meet every weeks for sessions.

Each session will last approximately 1 hour.

Our first session will be on:

Date: Time: Location:

If for any reason a session is cancelled, we will meet again at the next mutually convenient date. The person who has cancelled the session has the responsibility to re-arrange the session.

Responsibilities

The coachee agrees to:

- Attend sessions punctually.
- Prepare for each session.
- Participate actively and honestly.
- Complete agreed actions within agreed timescales where possible.

The coach agrees to:

- Provide a supportive, respectful and confidential environment.
- Maintain professional boundaries and ethical practice.
- Support the coachee's learning, reflection and development.

Everything discussed during coaching will remain confidential unless both parties agree that information may be shared, or where disclosure is required by law or safeguarding obligations.

The coachee will be asked to provide brief feedback after each session and a final evaluation at the conclusion of the coaching relationship.

Changes in circumstances may require this agreement to be reviewed and revised.

Either party may request a termination of the agreement if:

- The coaching relationship has broken down.
- There is insufficient commitment to the process or lack of progress.
- Coaching is no longer meeting its intended purpose.

Agreement

I have read and agree to the terms of this coaching agreement

Coachee Signature: Date:

Coach Signature: Date:

Appendix 2 - Coaching Log

Name	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Total
Coachee 1	03/07/26 30 min	07/07/26 1 hour	15/07/26 1 hour	21/07/26 1 hour	3.5 hrs
Coachee 2	13/07/26 30 min	20/07/26 50 min	27/07/26 40 min	05/08/26 35 min	2.5 hrs

Appendix 3 - Reflective Journal

Session structure

Session 1 was an introductory meeting where I shared the coaching contract, and we spoke about the expectations of the coaching sessions. Coachee 1's sessions were all online due to being in different locations and Coachee 2's sessions were in-person in the workplace. Some forms were sent to coachees to fill in or to use for their own self-reflection (see appendix 5) but I did not ask them to share them with me.

Coachee 1

Session 1

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)
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Coachee 1 - Session 1. 03/07/26. 30 min Online.

This session lasted 30 minutes and was an introductory session where we discussed the coaching contract and the role of a coach/coachee. We also started discussing a potential topic that she might want to focus on in future sessions.

What 3 words best describe the session?

New, neuroaffirming, communication.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I already knew the coachee as a friend outside of the coaching, so it was interesting and quite strange initially to try to switch to a different kind of relationship. She had already disclosed her neurodivergence to me, so it is something I also mentioned about myself at the start of the session to help create a safe environment for her and to let her know about flexibility options in our coaching sessions. I talked through the coaching contract with her and set out the expectations of a coach/coachee relationship.

What went really well?

I think the session worked well as an introduction and setting out how the future sessions might go. Coachee 1 stated that she felt comfortable having a neuroaffirming coach and felt it would be a safe space to discuss things openly with me.

Did you do anything completely new?

This was my first session as a coach, so it was all relatively new to me. Although I had learnt about coaching theories and had practiced coaching scenarios with others on my course, it felt different to be doing an actual session with someone.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

I surprised myself with how quickly I became more comfortable throughout the session. As I mentioned previously, it was quite strange already knowing the coachee and it being my first time coaching. I was nervous to begin with but as we went through the session, I started feeling more confident. I am glad I waited to arrange my first session after I had already learnt some theory and been able to practice techniques in class sessions. It was still challenging but feel it has given me some confidence going into future sessions.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

Initially, it was challenging to try to switch to a different dynamic with someone I already knew in a different context. It felt somewhat unnatural, and this was probably exacerbated by it being my first session as a coach, in general. There were points where I felt I wanted to respond as a friend would but had to remind myself not to.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

After we talked through the contract and expectations of the sessions, I asked if there was anything she had in mind as a topic for discussion. She identified two possible areas we could explore, and I mentioned that there was a potential thread linking both issues so we might be able to address both in some way. This received good feedback in the moment, she said it was well-spotted and she hadn't considered the connection until then.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

In future, I feel it would be beneficial to send some information before the introductory session so that coachees have a chance to reflect on things and not have to think so much on the spot. This was something that became clear when I first asked her if she had an idea of a topic or issue she wanted to discuss. She asked for an example of the type of thing that people would normally want to discuss. As a very inexperienced coach, this initially caught me off guard. I didn't have any examples that came to mind and I didn't want to give examples that might lead her in a certain direction, as I was aiming to be non-directive. I think particularly, for neurodivergent people it can be helpful to have examples to give context and help ease worries about misunderstandings. She stated that she prefers to be given a certain amount of information in advance to give her time to process. In future, it might be helpful to prepare some general examples or share some further information before the session about the nature of workplace coaching to give more time for coachees to prepare. This time, I followed up by email afterwards with the optional forms for her reflection but with my first session with Coachee 2, I plan to send them beforehand.

Any other general reflections?

There was positive feedback given during the session about how ‘powerful’ it felt to hear her own words echoed back to her by me. This was a technique I had learnt about and knowing it worked well with this coachee was a satisfying moment. This is something I will aim to do when appropriate but also be aware that it may not be as powerful for other coachees.

*Session 2***Coach Reflective Log:****Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)**

Coachee 1 - Session 2. 07/07/26. 1 hour. Online.

This session was what felt like the first ‘proper’ session after the introduction last week. One of the main themes was difficulty drawing attention to herself in the workplace.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Assumptions, identity, pause.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I began the session by saying that when I ask questions, there is no need for her to have a definitive answer straight away and it’s fine if she needs to take a pause or to talk through her thought process. I also said if there’s a delay in her processing and she wants to return to something said earlier at a later point then that’s fine too. She said it was helpful to know that, and she would feel less pressure to have to answer any questions on the spot.

What went really well?

When talking about some of her difficulties in the workplace, she mentioned the word ‘assumption’ a couple of times. I asked if we could explore the kinds of assumptions she might be making and she said it was helpful to talk through some of those and reframe some of her assumptions about people’s reactions. She then went on to talk about the narratives she might be creating so I felt that was a useful point that I brought up which led to her challenging herself a little bit.

Did you do anything completely new?

She mentioned that she was familiar with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy so I brought up CBC and how we might be using some of those techniques in our session. As she mentioned previously liking to research topics to understand them fully, I offered to send her information on CBC after the session which she said she would find helpful.

This felt like a good example of adapting my approach to suit the learning style of the coachee.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

There was a point about halfway through the session where I felt it could have ended but then I thought of some of the things she had said earlier in the session and asked some follow up, exploratory questions. I think this surprised me as I was worried I wouldn't be able to keep a session going for an hour, after a slight pause I was able to link back to something said previously and keep the conversation going. I feel that has given me more confidence going into future sessions, knowing I was able to think on my feet a little bit.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

There were a few moments where I had to pause to think about my next question. It felt uncomfortable but the pauses either allowed the coachee to continue talking or gave me time to consider what to ask. I think in general, moments of silence can be uncomfortable, but they are often very effective for reflection.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

I felt a bit more prepared for this session than the first introductory session. It was satisfying when I felt I asked good questions that allowed her to process things verbally with me. During the session, some actions naturally came up that would be useful to work on by next week. The fact that she seemed motivated to complete these actions and was engaging well with the session was also satisfying.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

One of the things that she identified as finding difficult was knowing how 'deeply' to talk about some of her past experiences and how they have shaped the way she navigates the workplace. I reassured her that she could share what she felt comfortable with. Perhaps this suggests that I didn't communicate that well enough in the previous session and in future I should make that point clearer.

Any other general reflections?

I felt I was able to draw from multiple coaching models/theories during this session. I continued to use the GROW framework while also allowing for more freedom if the coachee wanted to deviate from the structure. I also felt I brought elements of the CBC approach which suited the need for challenging assumptions and potentially unhelpful narratives. Although the CBC style questions in a session tend to be me intervening in a more directive way, I generally feel I am person-centred in my approach to allowing the coachee to lead the direction of the session. In future sessions, I hope to build on that

foundation by carefully choosing my questions and timing, so I don't accidentally direct the flow of the session before the coachee is ready.

Coachee Feedback:

1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?

I found the session extremely useful. It helped me identify where I am creating barriers for myself – but this was done in a supportive and compassionate space, with me taking the lead and no judgement. Working with a neuro-affirming coach is particularly helpful because I felt able to discuss the challenges I feel around encouraging myself to make changes whilst also giving myself grace and compassion as an ND person.

2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?

I found it very helpful when my exact language was repeated back to me. This made me feel listened to, of course, but also gave me real clarity on my internal narratives in certain areas. It was very powerful to hear my own phrases back!

Exploring my fears really helped me reflect on why I am responding to certain things in work the way that I do.

3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?

The structure was very flexible. We booked an hour but I felt able to stop at any point. I appreciate that I was given the GROW model in advance, so it didn't feel too open and unclear... and that I was given time and space to reflect and process things, in silence or out loud. We also came back to things several times, but looked at them in more detail and new ways – which was really helpful. I liked the clarity around what to expect of the session at the start and going over what we'd covered and what I could do for next time at the end.

4. Any other points or comments?

I felt understood and safe, particularly as you have disclosed. I appreciate the discussion around theoretical ideas and that you have sent me some further reading. This suits my personality and learning style, so is really appreciated.

Session 3

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)

Coachee 1 - Session 3. 15/07/26. 1 hour. Online.

The focus of this session switched slightly from previous sessions due to a workplace issue that had happened between sessions that she wanted to talk through.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Values, fairness, reality.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

Coachee 1 had already identified herself as someone who processes things verbally. There was an issue that had happened with her manager between sessions that she wanted to talk about, so I allowed her plenty of time and space to talk freely without interruption.

What went really well?

After giving her plenty of space to talk about her issue I gently challenged her by asking about some of the assumptions she might be making. Even though it was an incident with strong emotions attached and that went against some of her core values around fairness and equity, she was still able to pause and reflect on where she might be assuming the worst of certain scenarios. This appeared to be useful in allowing her to look at things from a more objective perspective.

Did you do anything completely new?

There was a point where I validated a comment she made about her strong sense of justice which she feels is part of her identity as a neurodivergent person. I mentioned that I understood where she was coming from, being neurodivergent myself. I don't think it's always appropriate to share personal reflections or experiences but at the same time, feeling misunderstood is common with autistic and ADHD people so I felt it made sense to validate that. However, it may also have been because we are friends outside of the coaching and I slipped into a habit of how I would usually speak to her. I can see both the positives and negatives of doing this, so it's something I will be mindful of in future.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

I wasn't necessarily expecting an issue to have happened between sessions that affected her so much, but it was a good example of when priorities change for a coachee and when it is necessary for people to vent and feel listened to.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

There were some moments where she got visibly emotional and at one point started crying. It was challenging to see her get upset and often the instinct is to comfort someone and offer solutions, but I felt I empathised well. I reassured her it was fine and allowed her space without rushing her to continue.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

I found the session still flowed well. After having time to process her workplace challenge, we were still able to reflect on previous sessions and some of the actions she had worked on. It all tied together with what she had been talking about without it feeling like I was overly directing the session.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

One thing that can be difficult is striking a balance between validating someone's experience while also challenging some of their behaviours. I think it's particularly challenging with neurodivergent people who may react more emotionally to certain situations. It's difficult to recognise when someone can change their behaviour without asking them to change themselves to fit a neurotypical mould. I think I managed to challenge by asking about assumptions but perhaps I could investigate other kinds of questions to ask in this scenario in future.

Any other general reflections?

As a neurodivergent person myself and someone with multiple chronic illnesses, I hadn't considered my own energy levels and capacity much. I'd spoken openly to coachees about how we can be flexible if they need to re-arrange or if any accommodations were needed but had thought less about my own disabilities and how that could affect my role as a coach. It isn't something I stated in the coaching contract but perhaps in future I should or at least discuss it in the introductory session with coachees.

Coachee Feedback:

1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?

I found this session extremely helpful. With Gwen's support I was able to process my thoughts and feelings around some challenging situations that have happened to me recently at work, to step back from the situations and to feel empowered to make positive changes in the areas that are in my control.

2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?

I was able to reach important moments of realisation because Gwen gave me the space to process and monologue my thoughts and reactions to these situations. I process my complex thoughts and feelings verbally and may go round and round, trying for different language and ideas and narratives until I find where I stand and where I want to be. This process can be highly repetitive but it is different to rumination, in my opinion. It is like verbal problem solving. Gwen created a safe environment for me to do this for myself. She gave me useful prompts and reflections but also gave a huge amount of space. I did not feel rushed and I was never interrupted. I was also given time to pause when I had moments of feeling emotional. I think Gwen's active listening was exceptional. I believe that her understanding of my need for verbal processing was even greater because of her own neurodivergence.

We also spoke about challenges around my neurodivergence including identity, self-worth and in particular a strong sense of justice (which was relevant to the work challenges we'd discussed). Gwen still helped me constructively challenge my behaviours around holding grudges after feelings of injustice - but with compassion and understanding that a strong sense of justice and fairness is not something I can just completely switch off, as I believe it is part of my wiring.

3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?

There is honestly nothing I would change about the structure of the session. It was quite free flowing as I did a lot of verbal processing, as discussed. We did bring things back to the GROW model which was helpful and made me feel like I had a direction & structure anchoring me. Gwen was very clear that we could use that model if I find it helpful (which I do) but that we could be flexible. Gwen helped me to focus my thoughts at the end of the session, clearly summarising what we had covered (and giving me opportunity to correct any of her understandings of what I'd said) and helping me set clear goals to work on ahead of the last session.

4. How well did today connect with our last session?

Very well. Gwen was very clear at the start of the session and gave a useful summary of what we'd done before and gave me the chance to reflect on my actions after the second session – which meant that things connected well in my brain and I could see a clear thread tying the sessions together.

5. Any other points or comments?

It might be interesting for Gwen to highlight any blind spots that I might be showing in my own behaviours. I appreciate that this may be challenging as we are close friends outside of the coaching relationship!

This is not a criticism however, as we did still discuss areas where I can improve my behaviours – so it's not that she was being too soft as a coach in my opinion. Also I was quite upset at points, so this was not necessarily the best session for these to be raised anyway!

Session 4

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)
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Session 4. 21/07/26. 1 hour. Online

This session was our final one together, we had discussed this last week, and she felt happy bringing things to conclusion based on progress she had made overall.
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What 3 words best describe the session?
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Balance, accessible, conclusion.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I feel I've built a good rapport with the coachee over the sessions. Even though we are friends outside of the coaching, we had to build a different kind of rapport between coach/coachee. I'm glad I knew their communication style, which helped me with allowing them plenty of time to answer questions and speak freely without interruption.

What went really well?

I felt the fact that I gave the coachee plenty of space to talk and verbally process went well again. This has been a theme over the course of the sessions, and I think is an example of how the coachee's communication style can shape the structure of sessions.

Did you do anything completely new?

As this was the final session, it was new to sum up everything we had done over the previous sessions and ask which things she would be taking forward after the coaching.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

I feel I have learnt a great deal over the course of the sessions and am surprised with how well they went considering I didn't have any previous experience. While reflecting on my progress, I feel I have grown in confidence since the first session and am eager to keep developing my skills.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

This was the session that I recorded for the portfolio which added an element of pressure to my performance as a coach. I felt very aware I was being recorded and felt more self-conscious than in previous sessions. I recorded the first half of the session and once the recording stopped, I felt much more at ease again while we continued with the end of the session.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

It was satisfying to hear that the coachee has taken a lot of positives away from the coaching sessions that she will be continuing to work on. As it was the last session, it felt like a good conclusion and was great to look back at the progress made since the first session.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

One of the feedback points from the coachee was that I maybe didn't challenge her 'blind spots' enough. I was aware of this going into the session, but it still didn't feel like an appropriate thing for me to do. I felt I did gently challenge at times by asking questions, but we also discussed knowing how much to push yourself and when to understand you need rest. I think this is something that will always be a challenge when considering neurodivergence and the potential for burnout in the workplace. I'm not sure if I would do anything differently but it's something I would need to consider on an individual basis with any future coachees.

Any other general reflections?

As this session was recorded, I felt aware that I wasn't speaking much to demonstrate my skills as a coach. However, the fact that the coachee led the talking throughout the session fits with my intended person-centred approach while also bringing in directive questions when I feel it's appropriate. I feel that we used the GROW framework throughout most of the sessions together.

Coachee Feedback:**1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?**

The session was really useful. I was able to reflect on what we had discussed previously and what I'd achieved throughout the coaching and come to some personal revelations about how I see myself and behave at work.

2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?

Gwen helped me to reflect on what I had managed to achieve, set myself ongoing goals for the future and to realise that additional coaching would help me. I had been unsure before taking part in coaching whether it would work for my brain but working with

someone neuroaffirming helped so much. I am now planning to look into coaching at my workplace.

3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?

The structure was really helpful. Gwen gave me space to reflect on what has been going on in my current role, reflect on past roles & how they've impacted me and think about what I can do in the future. She gave me space to monologue again and was flexible when I changed direction in the conversation several times. But she also helped me fit the session into the coaching overall and reflect on what I'd achieved during the coaching.

4. How well did today connect with our last session?

Gwen brought things back to what we had discussed in the last session and goals that had been set. This showed me that she was really listening and engaged with the previous session and also helped me to focus on what I had achieved.

Coachee 1 Overall Feedback

1. How has the coaching process been overall?

The coaching has been very rewarding. Even in just a few sessions I feel that positive and practical changes were made and I have tools and ideas to come back to in the future and outside of the coaching.

2. What stands out most, looking back across all the sessions?

Gwen's understanding of my neurodivergence is what stands out the most. Her understanding on how this impacts my relationships at work, impact of past workplace bullying, my focus on fairness, rigid thinking sometimes and need to go over and process situations. Especially Gwen's good balance of giving the sessions structure so that they didn't feel too open-ended, whilst also giving me space to monologue and change directions in conversation.

3. Is there anything I could improve about my coaching style or approach?

Gwen helped me to find alternative viewpoints and ways of looking at things, which is really useful when I become rigid and take assumptions as facts. As I mentioned previously, maybe she could have challenged me more in some instances where I am maybe holding myself back. But I understand that in short amount of time and with the focus of the sessions being around low confidence in my team this might not have been appropriate and maybe could have been addressed in a longer coaching relationship.

4. Any other points or comments? n/a

Coachee 2

Session 1

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)

Coachee 2 Session 1. 13/07/26. 30 min. In-person meeting.

This was an introductory session similar to my first session with Coachee 1. She spoke about some general frustrations in the workplace but hadn't decided on a specific topic to discuss yet.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Frustration, thinking, goals.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I began by talking through the coaching contract and discussing the role of a coach. I disclosed my neurodivergence as a way to mention flexibility in communication style and that I was aiming to be a neuroaffirming coach that tailored the approach to an individual. She said she appreciated that and would let me know if she wanted to change anything. Due to the feedback after Session 1 with Coachee 1, I sent the coaching contract for her to read before the session, as well as some optional forms for her to reflect on. She stated that this was useful to be given in preparation for the first session.

What went really well?

I think it went well as a short introductory session. We didn't get into a specific topic or issue for her to bring to sessions, but an action was for her to think about it by next session.

Did you do anything completely new?

This was my first time conducting a session in-person rather than online which brought a different dynamic. I also think it was clear that the coachees had a very different communication style, so it was new for me to adapt the way I led a session based on that. I think it will be interesting going forward to see the different approaches I might take with different personalities.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

I found myself struggling more this session to think of questions on the spot. I know I prefer to have prompts to glance at while I am still so inexperienced. I think doing the session in-person meant I couldn't have visual prompts near me as I did with the online session. I found the difference in a face-to-face session more challenging than I expected. I believe this is also partly due to my neurodivergence and being more aware of my own body language while coaching in-person compared to online. I feel this is something that will become more comfortable to me with experience.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

It was more difficult for me to keep the conversation going and at times I felt myself having to be more directive than I'd hoped. This was due to the coachee giving shorter answers to my questions. On reflection, perhaps it was due to me not asking the best questions! I think it will be interesting to see how the sessions go in future when we get into a specific topic.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

It was satisfying to be able to offer a space for her to think about and reflect on some of the issues she finds in the workplace. She had identified a broad goal about wanting to move on to a role with more responsibilities in the future. She said this felt like too big of a goal so it would be helpful to think of smaller steps towards that goal in the shorter term. She said she would work on that as an action, so it felt satisfying to be able to offer a way of looking towards her main goal.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

There were a couple of times it was quite difficult because we work in the same department which has been going through a restructure. I perhaps knew details about certain scenarios she was talking about without her directly saying them, I had to be careful not to bring my own thoughts and feelings into the session.

Any other general reflections?

In general, I think my approach was similar to Coachee 1, in giving her space to talk freely. I feel I will need to think of good questions to get her to reflect and talk more in-depth in future sessions. However, it may also be down to communication style. Just because someone isn't saying a lot doesn't mean they aren't reflecting and processing things internally. This has given me something to reflect on going forward.

Session 2

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)

Coachee 2 Session 2. 20/07/26. 50 min. In-person.

This session focused on difficulties and uncertainties in the workplace but also in the small ways she would be able to make positive changes.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Autonomy, control, trust.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I think allowing time for her to pause and think about questions before answering hopefully made her feel less pressured to think of responses straight away. I felt I gave her plenty of time to talk about any frustrations. I also think beginning the session by recapping some of the things she said in the previous session and asking if those issues still felt relevant meant she felt listened to.

What went really well?

I felt more confident in this session in timing questions to keep the conversation going. I also felt more comfortable sitting in silence for a moment to allow her time to process before moving on without feeling the need to jump into another question.

Did you do anything completely new?

At one point she referred to her 'colour' (Insights Discovery) and that she felt she was a different colour energy to others in her team. I felt this was interesting so tried to explore that a bit more with her around her values and the energy she would like to convey in the workplace. She identified that some of the frustrations in the workplace came from the different colour personalities but how she might be able to find ways of working more with her colour. This isn't something I have explored with my other coachee, but it felt like it struck a chord in this session.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

It was a surprise that Insights Discovery naturally came up in the session, and it felt like a good moment to practice some of the theory I had been learning around that. I know not all coachees will be familiar with this and it won't be appropriate for everyone, but it felt like something that resonated with Coachee 2. It was good to see her demeanour

shift a bit positively when discussing how she could bring more aspects of that identity to her work.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

Coachee 2 spoke a lot about the amount of uncertainty and how much was out of her control in the workplace, so I asked her to consider what things were in her control to change. She responded by saying she was unsure which in the moment felt challenging as if I'd asked the wrong question. However, I stated it was something she could go away and think about if it would be helpful and she set it as an action by the next session. I also reassured her it was fine if it still felt like too big of a question to answer but it could be helpful to consider.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

It was great that she had thought about the action from the previous session, to think about some smaller goals. She identified areas in her role where she felt she had some freedom which was satisfying as one of the main frustrations had been around the lack of autonomy.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

I still felt at times that it was harder to keep the session flowing. However, I understand that the coaching approach might be to allow her time to reflect on things after a session to bring back in the next session. I had set aside an hour for the session and felt a bit pressured to keep the session going for the whole duration. At around 45 minutes it felt like it was naturally coming to an end. I asked if she would be happy to end it there and I began to bring things to a close. I think this is another example of adapting the structure of sessions to match the processing and communication style of the coachee. In future, I would be clearer about the flexibility in the duration of sessions and that they don't all need to be the same length.

Any other general reflections?

It is interesting to be bringing different elements of coaching theory that I've been learning and I feel I am becoming more confident in adapting to things in the moment.

Coachee Feedback:

1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?

It was good to talk out thought processes and have a change of perspective

2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?

Change in perspective of focusing on what you can control rather than everything you can't

3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?

I really liked how it was paced and structured. I like the mix of being asked questions and being given the opportunity to talk (or ramble on). I found the questions very helpful in prompting a thought process/discussion.

4. How well did today connect with our last session?

Really good, I feel like it naturally developed on from last week and that was really helpful.

5. Any other points or comments?

That I'm really enjoying the sessions.

Session 3

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)

Coachee 2 Session 3. 27/07/26. 40 min. In-person.

The focus of this session changed slightly as she revealed she had taken VS. She was able to link her decision back to some of the things she had previously discussed around her uncertainties, frustrations and what was now in her control.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Surprising, direction, future.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

I think similarly to previous sessions. I recapped what we had talked about previously and asked how she felt about things currently.

What went really well?

There was a noticeable shift in her demeanour in this session. She spoke about her decision to leave the organisation and how this felt like something positive and in her control.

Did you do anything completely new?

I had noticed a change in her demeanour from the last session, and I asked her whether she felt any different having made her decision. This prompted her to

Speak quite positively and share her feelings about making the right decision. I think this question worked well.

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

I surprised myself with my ability to think on my feet with the surprising news she shared. The session still felt useful and we were still able to loosely use the GROW framework with a focus on her goals in her time left at the organisation and realistic actions to prepare for her next steps.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

The change in her focus was initially challenging as it was unexpected. However, it still felt like it tied in with what we had discussed in previous sessions and there was a logical thread linking things.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

It felt satisfying that she was still engaged with the process of coaching despite deciding to leave her role. She had still taken the time to work on the actions from the previous session, and it still seemed like having a space to talk things through was helpful.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

It was difficult to have to process her decision which felt like it was going to make the sessions no longer relevant. However, I felt happy that I still linked things back to previous sessions and she was happy to still discuss things openly and look at goals for the future. This has given me some confidence going forward to deal with unexpected decisions or sudden shifts in coachee's circumstances.

Any other general reflections?

It was interesting to see a shift in the coachee's priorities but how it still linked well with what we had been discussing previously and still felt relevant moving forward with the session.

Coachee Feedback:

1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?

Very

2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?

That while there is change and uncertainty both in my current role and in going into a new role/VS, the future option feels more positive which makes me feel reassured that I've made the right choice.

3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?

I found the session worked really well.

4. How well did today connect with our last session?

Very well as despite throwing a curve ball into the session by having been accepted for VS, you still managed to link it to what was discussed last week.

5. Any other points or comments?

That I'm really enjoying the sessions and finding them very helpful.

Session 4

Coach Reflective Log:

Session information (duration, issue, theme etc.)

Coachee 2 Session 4. 05/08/26. 35 min. In-person meeting.

What 3 words best describe the session?

Positive, perspective, change.

How did you build a rapport with the coachee?

This was the final session, and it felt like we had built a good rapport over the course of the sessions. It was an opportunity to sum things up, so I recapped some of what we had spoken about over the sessions and gave her space to talk about her future goals.

What went really well?

Coachee 2 still seemed positive about her decision to leave the organisation. She spoke about uncertainties in her current role but how the future uncertainty of moving elsewhere felt more like an opportunity.

Did you do anything completely new?

n/a

Did anything surprise you? (For example, about something you discovered about yourself, working with others, the way you reacted to anything that

happened etc.) Is there anything you know now that you didn't know before this session?

As this was my last session, I reflected afterwards on how I had found the whole experience of coaching. I was surprised by how much I had enjoyed them and learnt in the process. It was very daunting to me initially, but I felt I developed new skills as I went through the sessions.

Did you find anything challenging? Why?

A similar challenge to previous sessions with Coachee 2. Knowing some of the people she was talking about and the dynamics of the workplace, I had to remind myself not to share any of my own thoughts or opinions. This is particularly challenging considering the difficulties that have been in my team recently due to the restructure.

Did you find anything satisfying? Why?

Towards the end of the session, she told me how useful she had found the sessions overall and that I make a 'fantastic' coach. It felt great to hear that feedback and I was grateful of her openness. It was good to reflect on the progress made since the first session.

Were there any difficulties? How did you resolve them? If you were faced with the same issue again, would you do anything differently?

It didn't feel like there were any major difficulties because it was summing up what we had covered in earlier sessions and felt like a natural conclusion.

Any other general reflections?

In general, I feel the sessions with Coachee 2 have gone very well. It was a very different experience to the session with Coachee 1. I felt able to demonstrate techniques from the person-centred approach I was aiming for, but I did need to be more directive at times with Coachee 2. This has given me some good insight into how to be flexible and adapt coaching style to match individuals.

Coachee Feedback:

1. **How useful did you find today's session, and why?** Very helpful
2. **Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?** Talking through thought processes and feeling reassured about my decision to take VS and the options ahead of me
3. **Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?** I found the pace and structure really good as I like the combination of questions/prompts and talking.
4. **How well did today connect with our last session?** Really well

Coachee 2 Overall Feedback:

1. **How has the coaching process been overall?**

I have found it really helpful and I definitely will be taking with me lot of this experience into my next workplace and general life

2. **What stands out most, looking back across all the sessions?**

The change in perspective it has provided me

3. **Is there anything I could improve about my coaching style or approach?**

I found your coaching style and approach really worked for me. I liked the mix of prompts and talking as well as taking home a 'task' or something to think about and bringing that with me into the next session, using that as a starting point for the following session. This helped make the sessions flow into each other nicely

4. **Any other points or comments?**

You're an excellent coach and thank-you for spending the time with me to help me see a different perspective and use this to change how I approach situations to a more positive way

Appendix 4 - Recorded Coaching Session

(Coachee 1, Session 4) With permission from Coachee 1, part of this session was recorded. The audio file has been submitted separately via Turnitin.

Appendix 5 - Forms Sent to Coachees

How appropriate is coaching for me?

The following questions are designed to assist identification of development needs and whether coaching is the most appropriate tool. Use the questions as guidelines to help identify characteristics of an Ideal coach and develop awareness of own objectives and goals in having a coach.

How could I benefit from having a Coach?

What can I gain from coaching that is different from another development option?

What are my objectives?

How can I best use the skills of my Coach?

How supportive or challenging do I need my Coach to be?

What skills do I have that can make me a successful Coachee?

How: Positive minded?
Flexible and resourceful?
Self-aware?
Non-defensive?

....am I?

Feedback questions

The following questions were sent to coachees after each session (apart from the first introductory session):

1. How useful did you find today's session, and why?
2. Was there a specific moment or question that helped you?
3. Was there anything about the structure or the pace of the session that worked well or that you would prefer to do differently?
4. How well did today connect with our last session?
5. Any other points or comments?

The following questions were sent to coachees after the last session:

1. How has the coaching process been overall?
2. What stands out most, looking back across all the sessions?
3. Is there anything I could improve about my coaching style or approach?

GROW Framework

I sent the following sheet to let coachees know of the structure we could use for sessions. I was clear that we could be flexible, but this would be helpful to keep us on track if necessary.

G	Useful Questions	Notes
<i>Goal</i> Agree topic for discussion Agree specific objective of session Set any longer term aims	What are you hoping to achieve from the session? How will you know when you have achieved your goal? How will you know when the problem is solved?	
R		
<i>Reality</i> Invite self assessment Offer specific examples of feedback Avoid or check assumptions Discard irrelevant history	What is happening now? What, who, when? How often? What is the result/effect of that? What evidence do you have of that?	

O		
Options Cover the full range of options Invite suggestions from coachee Ensure choices are made	What else can you do? What else could you do? Are there constraints?/Is this within your control? What if that constraint was removed? Who can make this happen? How can they do that? What are the benefits downsides? (of each option)	
W		
Way Forward/Wrap Up Coachee commits to action Identifies possible obstacles Makes steps specific Agree support needed Commitment to actions	So what will you do now, and when? What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this? Will this address your goal? How likely is this option to succeed (scale 1-10) What else will you do? Who can help you achieve your goals?	

Appendix 6 - Personal Development Plan

Development Need	Action	Resources and Support	Success Criteria	Timescale
Continue developing a coach mindset in new management role.	Further reading on coaching-style management. Apply coaching techniques to conversations in one-to-one meetings.	Books e.g. The Little Book of Big Coaching Models: 76 ways to help managers get the best out of people.	Identifying instances of applying coaching approach in management scenario.	6 months in new role and ongoing.
Reduce evaluative or leading comments. Use more open questions instead.	Practice this in one-to-one conversations or feedback discussions.	Reflective log after these types of meetings or conversations.	Identifying specific moments where I used open, non-directive language.	6 months in new role and ongoing.
Continue developing practical coaching skills.	Seek potential opportunities for further coaching with new coachees.	Possible coaching networks. Build on reflections from this portfolio.	Completing more coaching sessions.	Ongoing, based on when opportunities arise.