

D16. Using Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and Mentoring provide ways of developing individuals to their full potential.

In today's NHS many highly educated and highly professional individuals are finding themselves without the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviours to meet the challenges and changing demands of working life. Coaching and Mentoring can help by supporting the individual employee and, through them, helping the organisation to realise its potential.

Simply put, coaching and mentoring concentrate on where individuals are today and what they are willing to do, to get where they want to be tomorrow.

What is Coaching?

Coaching at its most basic is, in the instructional format, on a one to one basis. This is used to give individuals information and facts, and to show them the skills that they need which can then be enhanced by using a less directive coaching approach. A basic coaching programme to cover these skills could be accessed by individuals who have the responsibility for inducting new starters using the 'sitting next to Nellie' approach or attending training courses.

At the other end of the spectrum there is the Purist Coach who is generally external to the organisation and is paid to undertake the role.

S/he does not need to be experienced in the area of work of the individual but does need to be trained and experienced as a Coach. S/he will use questioning techniques to encourage the individual to think out the answers for him/herself. S/he will not have her own agenda of outcomes that are required for the service, and will remain unbiased.

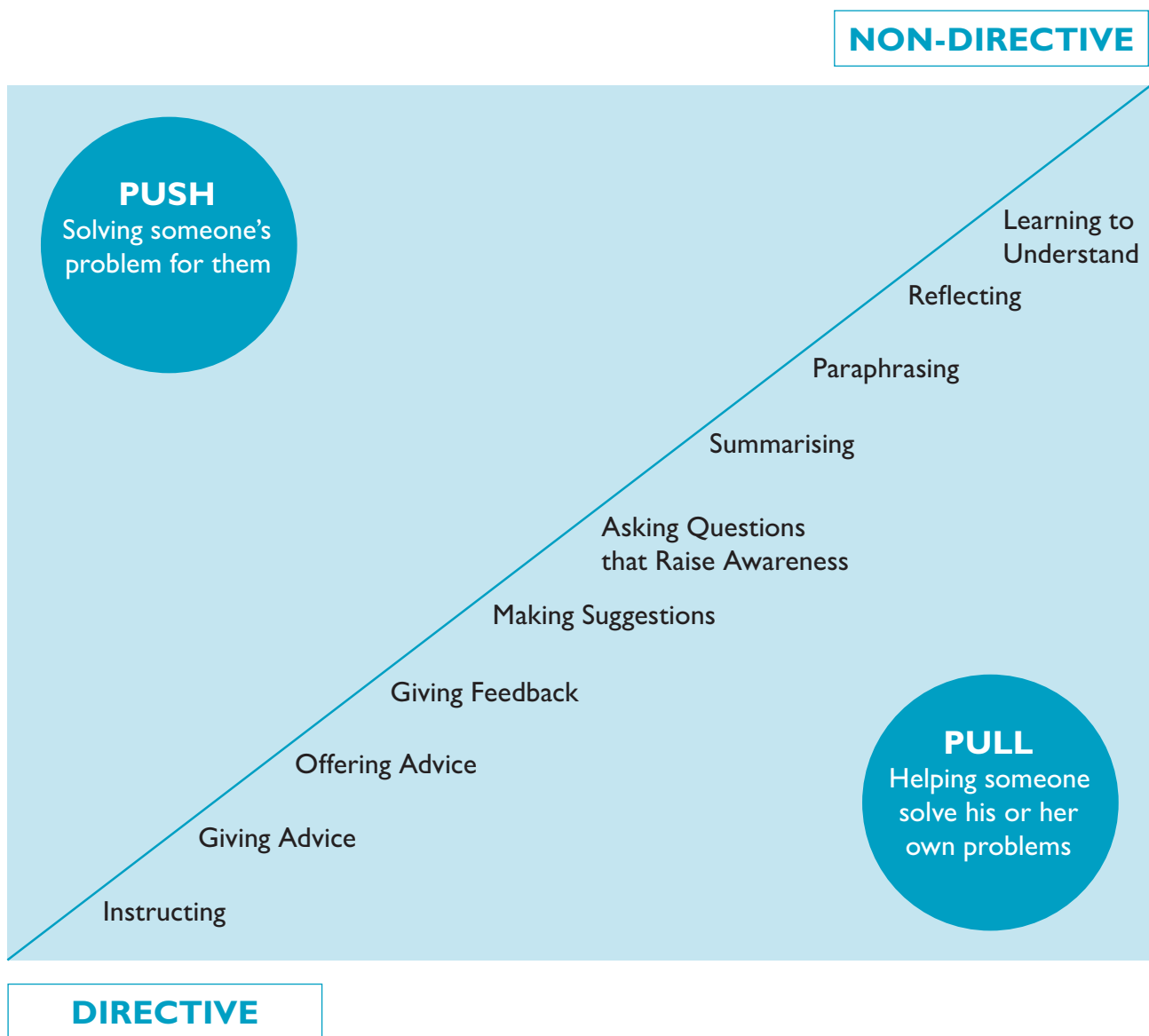
Traditionally managers have tended to use the more Directive approach with transactional management styles. However, modern day management gurus are continually showing that the more transformational approach to management develops individuals and produces better services within organisations. The coaching approach by managers plays a major role in this style of management.

Peter Hill (2004) uses The Coaching Spectrum by Myles Downey (fig.1 below) to illustrate the range from Directive to Non-Directive. He states

"there is no doubt that the most effective end of the spectrum to work at is the non-directive as you are working with the client's own map and reality and their understanding of procedures and processes."

He acknowledges that it is easier to tell than to find out what is in their minds but recognises that it is the non-directive approach that has the most effect.

FIGURE 1: The Coaching Spectrum



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What is Mentoring?

The role of a mentor is often confused with the role of a coach. David Clutterbuck (2004) gives the definition *'off-line help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking'*.

He explains this definition as *"someone outside the area of authority of the mentee who has relevant experience in the field of work and is able to help in accordance with the mentee's needs. The mentor is able to share his/her own experience in helping the development of the mentee but will also endeavour to encourage the mentee to develop his/her own thinking through questioning and listening techniques that are also used in coaching."*

How to do Coaching and Mentoring well?

Whilst many people undertake the roles of Coaching and Mentoring informally using their own personal style, to do them well does require some degree of understanding of the tools and techniques that can be used and the effects on the individual.

In Coaching – Guidelines for developing a coaching strategy (AWTDG and NLIH 2007) there is guidance on the levels of understanding of coaching skills together with the appropriate qualifications that can be accessed.

Individuals need to consider how they will be using coaching and mentoring to ascertain the level of training and development they require. It may be that they will need an introduction to coaching as a management approach, or they may wish to extend their skills into a formal Coaching and Mentoring qualification.

The Way forward:

The All Wales Training and Development Managers Group together with NLIAH have produced 'Coaching – Guidelines for developing a Coaching Strategy', and Public Services Management Wales (PSMW) is now looking to produce further guidance to encourage all Public Sector organisations to make full use of Coaching and Mentoring across sectors.

Useful References

Whitmore, J. *Coaching for performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey, 2002

Clutterbuck, D. *Everyone needs a mentor: fostering talent in your organisation*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2004

Hill, P. *Concepts of coaching: a guide for managers*. London: Institute of Leadership and Management, 2004

National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare and All Wales Training and Development Group. *Coaching: guidelines for developing a coaching strategy*. Llanharan: NLIAH, 2007

Public Service Management Wales. *Coaching and mentoring*. Cardiff: PSMW, 2007

For advice and guidance on locating references please contact the NLIAH Learning Laboratory on 01443 233333.

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