

The Similarities and Differences between Counselling and Coaching

What is Counselling?

“Counselling is a contractual arrangement when a counsellor meets a client in privacy and confidence to explore a difficulty, distress they may be experiencing, perhaps their dissatisfaction with life or loss of a sense of direction or purpose.”

British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

What is Coaching?

“Coaching is establishing with the client what their reality is today. Then clearly defining what are the client's aims or intentions for the future. The Coach works with the client to produce a plan of action that the client can follow with confidence”

Coaching & Mentoring International (CMI)

Similarities

Both Coaching and Counselling are “talking” therapies.

There are similarities between Coaching and Counselling in as much that the process relies heavily on the relationship between the counsellor/coach and client and the need for the Counsellor or Coach to be empathic, congruent and non-judgemental in their work with clients. Both require enhanced listening skills, an ability to reflect, provide feedback, demonstrate honesty and gain trust.

COACHING	COUNSELLING
Action and progress driven	Process driven
Future oriented	Here and now or past focus
Focus on future goals	Focus on problem
Focus on inner resources to develop new competencies	Explores patterns of behaviour and causes in order to find understanding and solution

Issues for Coaching and Counselling

COACHING	COUNSELLING
Life assessment	Persistent Anger
Career management and Progression	Relationship problems
Work/Life Balance	Unhealthy Stress
Relationship development	Bereavement
Business Development	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Confidence	Sexual Issues
Time Management	Suicidal
Decision Making	Addictions
Assertiveness	Self Harm
Change Management	Mental health Issues

What is Coaching?

Coaching addresses personal growth, development and effectiveness issues. According to one definition (Downey, 1999) coaching is "... the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another". Now an established 'discipline', coaching is a relative newcomer to the field of personal change, although it has roots in the personal growth / human potential movement of the 1960s, on the one hand, and sports and music coaching on the other. It also has strong links with the (largely American) field of executive development exemplified in such popular books as Stephen Covey's 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People'.

Coaching can be stretching, stimulating and supportive. It provides a confidential space in which clients can talk about what's on their mind, share insights, think the unthinkable, come up with alternatives and rehearse their next steps. It's an enjoyable, rewarding and enriching experience, giving the client an opportunity to share new ideas or problem solve with an outside party who understands them and their business.

Coaching can help clients:

- Fine tune interpersonal, confidence and advanced communication skills.
- Be an outstanding and inspirational leader.
- Motivate and build productive teams.
- Improve their internal political savvy.
- Discuss questions and concerns about how to handle situations that they can't discuss with others in their work area.
- Confide in someone who understands what they're facing.
- Develop as a person, as a leader and take their team on to the next level.

- Be able to step back and look at their work area from a different perspective.
- Manage stress, change, conflict and crisis.
- Enhance their personal impact and performance.

In addition to addressing personal issues the organisation benefits from:

- Greater commitment from directors and senior managers.
- Retention of key people who feel valued.
- More creative outlook in business planning.
- Improved management of other staff.

Ultimately, coaching aims to bring out the best in an individual to enable the team to work better as a whole. Executive coaching works best when used to help individuals address specific professional development issues or to assist when taking on a particularly challenging work role or project. Executive coaching services provide professional and personal development that is particularly appropriate for those in senior positions who have little time and for whom loneliness can be a common experience.