

Peer Coaching Groups

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What is a Peer Coaching Group?

Peer Coaching Groups will help the individual focus on the relationship between reflection and action with the structured attention and support of the group. The focus is on the issues that individuals bring. Through coaching by peers, they choose an action on which to follow through and report into the group in the next session.

A major advantage of this sort of group learning is that members will be able to look at the real problems which concern them, and they will be responsible for the selection of the topic(s)/problem(s) discussed.

A Peer Coaching Group:

- Gives members the opportunity to learn from each other and engage in shared learning;
- Enhances the opportunities to learn more about other services and their practices;
- Supports innovation;
- Allows time for reflection on current practice - but encourages action;
- Allows members to highlight problems/areas where they have special interest, strength or weakness;
- Enables members to deal with the kind of management or leadership problems which cannot easily be resolved through class or workshop environments;
- Gives enough time to build up strong relationships and networks.

A Peer Coaching Group is a group of usually 4-7 people who get together (on a regular basis) to discuss issues of personal or mutual importance. They are designed to deal with the specific needs of the group members and require agreed action by the end of each meeting. Groups will start with a facilitator who will be with the Group for the first three sessions and following this, the group will become self-facilitated.

Peer Coaching Groups can enable members to make commitments to action which they would not necessarily be in a position to do after having engaged in a more formal learning setting, or as an individual working in isolation. There are usually three stages: identifying and clarifying the problem; listing possible actions; and selecting which specific action to take.

How will the Peer Coaching Group sessions be organised?

- Groups will be formed on an ad hoc basis in conjunction with service/team managers and may be useful to support in instances such as (but not limited to):
 - Mary Seacole programme
 - Change programmes (such as Community Redesign)

- Preceptorship programme
- OT rotational programme
- Groups will be facilitated for the first three sessions and will be self-managed thereafter
- Sessions will focus on members bringing a real issue or problem to the group. Due to time constraints each member will be restricted to 30 minutes.
- The facilitator will help the group to set up explicit spirit in which you will work as a group
- The whole group will look at each issue in turn
- The person who has described the issue will decide on their action points to address.

To be effective in your peer coaching group

- Treat the session as a priority
- Come with the expectation that this could be a great learning experience

When you are coaching

- Stay tuned to what your peer member is saying and how they are describing his/her reality
- Listen well and show that you are doing so
- Stay aware of your own biases as you listen to the story
- Challenge and support in amounts right for your peer
- Don't pretend you have the answers or know all there is to know about the topic or issues that is being brought – ask questions to help clarity. It will not only help you but also your peer as s/he externalises thoughts
- Help your peer explore where other support may be obtained
- You are not in the group to criticise the ideas of your peers but to demonstrate respect and develop trust by listening and asking questions to help explore perspectives
- Only offer ideas to show your acceptance of your peer and not to create a focus on you

When you are being coached

- Come prepared with a topic that you would value exploring; this may be something you have had coaching on and is ripe for the next stage of exploration, or something new.
- Ensure that you are happy with the agreement about the “Spirit in which we will work as a Peer Coaching Group” so that trust will flourish

- Share with the group what challenge and support look like for you and how much you would like of each from the group

The Role of Facilitator

The facilitator will help to develop the “Spirit in which we will work” for the group. In the first instance the facilitator will also help the group in deciding the practicalities including allocation of time. The facilitator will lead a review after the third session for the group to decide who they would like in the role of facilitator and their options going forward.

Key Questions

Each member of the group is trying to answer six key questions:

What am I trying to do?

What is stopping me from doing it?

What can I do about it?

Who knows what I am trying to do?

Who can do anything to help?

A Peer Coaching Group uses coaching skills to help you get the answers. You may wish to use these to help you review the effectiveness of the group and your own progress in taking action and learning.

The facilitation role, however it is covered, is critical to the success of a group. It is not possible in these notes to look at group dynamics, but it is important not to underestimate the skills involved in successful facilitation if/when it becomes your turn in the role.

If you are interested in implementing Peer Coaching within your team/service, please contact us at od.lypft@nhs.net

Learning Log

You are invited to maintain a log, to support your reflective practice on your experiences. The log is designed for individuals to use specific experiences or incidents at work as the basis for learning.

Peer Coaching Group Date:	
Members Present:	
Facilitator:	
Content:	
Evaluation: <i>comment on your immediate learning from experiencing the group</i>	
Action Plan: <i>note the actions you will take in the work place to report back on at the following group</i>	