

Coaching Skills One

Coaching is a skill used to encourage the other person to think through a problem or situation. It uses facilitation and questioning to encourage the individual to come up with ideas for themselves.

It is different to the following:

- **Advising** – this is giving someone advice from a personal or professional perspective. The advice may or may not be taken
- **Instructing** – this is giving instruction, typical step-by-step to teach or show someone how to do something. It is quite directive
- **Counselling** – this is very similar to coaching as it is encouraging someone to ‘own’ a situation and uses a similar technique. It is different as counselling is always about the past and coaching is about the future
- **Supervising** – this is observing and guiding someone when appropriate which may be in a specific action or more generally
- **Mentoring** – uses a range of these skills to help, advise and guide someone who may be more junior or new to a role or situation

It is important to understand which technique to use in helping people. When we instruct people, we are not encouraging them to think for themselves. When we give advice, we are expecting someone else to do what we think is best – which may not be best for the individual.

Coaching is best used in situation where the individual needs to take ownership and begin thinking for themselves. It is a facilitative process that empowers and motivates an individual.

Activity

For each of these skills, can you identify situations when you may use the different techniques?	
Advising	
Instructing	
Counselling	
Supervising	
Coaching	
Mentoring	

Rules of Coaching

- Ask a lot of open questions
- Listen more than you talk
- Praise and don't be too judgmental
- Be led and do not lead. Do not 'tell', simply 'guide'
- Never share confidential information or pry into personal problems
- Try not to solve their problems, just provide support and encouragement

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Skills used in Coaching

Coaching uses the following skills:

- **Building Rapport** – putting the other person at ease through appropriate use of body language, eye contact and small talk. Building rapport is about being approachable and friendly so the other person feels comfortable talking to you and sharing information
- **Empathising** – understanding how the other person may be feeling and showing understanding
- **Active Listening** – active listening skills to hear what the other person is saying, to feel and understand what they may not be saying or the ‘hidden’ message
- **Reflective Listening** – to reflect back to the other person what they have said and to demonstrate understanding
- **Questioning** – using a range of different questions

Types of Question with examples:

- **Closed** – expects a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response
Example: “have you visited France?”
- **Open** – gives more information
Example: “where did you go on holiday?”
- **Probing** – focuses on specific information and probes deeper
Example: “What did you enjoy doing when you went to France?”
- **Funnelling** – picks up on information given and questions further
Example: “So you really enjoyed the art galleries, what in particular did you like?”
- **Reflective** – encourages someone to think or feel
Example: “How did you feel when you went abseiling?”
- **Rhetorical** – encourage someone to think and pay attention but do not expect an answer
Example: “Who wouldn’t want to go abseiling?”
- **Leading** – leads the listener to a certain type of answer
Example: “So you had a good day at work today?”

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Activity

For each type of question, consider one question you could ask:	
Closed	
Open	
Probing	
Funnelling	
Reflective	
Rhetorical	
Leading	