

Welcome to your Coaching Programme

FAQs

1. What does this programme set out to do?

The programme's intention is to be of service in a way that's tangible, professional and sustainable to NHS, social care, and hospice sector staff who have been in the past - or are continuing to be – significantly impacted by COVID-19. The intention behind the programme is for staff to be equipped to feel and be more resourceful for themselves and others, and able to attend to their own health and wellbeing as they work through the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. What is coaching?

Coaching is a process of conversation and reflection that's intended to inspire greater release of an individual's potential, delivered through one-to-one confidential conversations.

Its aim is to enable learning that's entirely tailored to your needs and what you're interested in working on. It can release more of what you're capable of (we're all capable of more than we're currently doing!) and it can enable change in the way you resource yourself, the way you think, or the way you respond to situations, so that you can enhance your own and others' wellbeing and your own and others' effectiveness.

Coaching offers you a chance to pause, step back and reflect – and learn and create new ways of addressing your challenges. It can be an oasis.

3. What is not within the bounds of coaching?

Coaching is not:

- Mentoring, whereby a more experienced individual offers guidance, and sharing of professional advice and/or experiences to support development within an organisation
- Consulting, where a consultant uses their own experience and offers advice to resolve organisational issues and challenges
- Training, where a trainer is directive in transferring knowledge, skills, techniques and tools to others
- Counselling or therapy to support individuals to work through past events and feelings in order to bring about healing. This is offered by trained and qualified counsellors and therapists

- The treatment of mental health challenges.

Note, however, that our coaches are equipped to work with people who have mental health challenges in the sense that the coaching can help facilitate a coachee to flourish by taking account of those challenges, rather than because the coach can, or sets out to, treat mental health challenges as a mental health specialist would. We encourage coachees to be transparent with their coaches in this respect so that together they can make appropriate judgments about how the coachee's needs can best be served.

Coaching through COVID coaches know the limitations of what they can work with, and can recognise when a coachee needs support that is beyond their expertise. They are also equipped to signpost coachees, as appropriate, to further sources of support, including counselling and therapy.

Equally, this coaching programme is not intended to address issues such as progressing up the career ladder or bedding into a new role following a restructure.

4. How is coaching different from counselling, therapy or psychology?

Although it may call on techniques typically used by these disciplines, coaching is different from counselling or therapy in its intent and scope, since counselling and therapy set out to heal. People who have experienced coaching may incidentally find it therapeutic, and healing in the broadest sense, but there may be some conditions that the coach may choose not to work with, such as PTSD or acute depression.

With coaching, there is an assumption that those being coached are well enough to solve their own problems, albeit with coaching support at first. Coaching seeks to facilitate you to create or find new resources, to learn, to develop and to change by gaining fresh perspectives and a new sense of what you're capable of. It's also different from psychology in intent, although again, coaching often calls on psychological approaches.

Psychology typically sets out to describe, predict and change or influence an individual's psychology (including psychological problems) and behaviour.

5. What is mindfulness?

You may find that your coach introduces you to the concept of mindfulness, which is a form of mind training. It's about paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. In recent years corporates including Google, McKinsey and Transport for London have increasingly recognised mindfulness as a significant way in which to enable greater resilience, creativity, emotional regulation and focus, and an effective route to diminishing stress.

6. Why does the coaching relationship matter?

At the heart of coaching is the quality of the relationship between you and your coach, in which you will be deeply heard but not judged, and which allows the coaching to relate to what matters to *you* and to have an impact for *you*. For some people coaching can be simply a listening ear. Others want to achieve or change something specific. Your coach will be there for both, and for everything in between. He or she has no vested interest in the outcomes you achieve, but they care very much that you achieve or change what you want to.

7. Confidentiality

Your coaching relationship is one of trust, openness and honesty, within the container of confidentiality, including patient confidentiality. While your coach will be invited by Coaching through COVID to feed back themes they're coming across amongst the people they coach on this programme, they will only reveal the content of the coaching under three circumstances:

- 1) In the interests of quality: supervision helps the coach ensure they're behaving ethically, helps ensure safety for both them and their coachees, and provides them with an opportunity to learn from their own coaching how they might have done things differently or better. With their supervisor your coach anonymises the stories they bring and does not release any identifying detail, although general themes may be gathered for the purposes of organisational development (and may be shared with your trust's organisational development, and learning and development, functions) and for understanding the needs that the programme is serving. We anticipate that this information will be gathered in coaches' reflective practice sessions and possibly in occasional surveys of coaches which can provide anonymity around coach names
- 2) For legal purposes: for suspected breaches of the law and/or if instructed by a court of law
- 3) In relation to the coach's duty of care, i.e. if the coach has good reason to believe that you are in danger of harming yourself or someone else.

An important part of the coaching relationship is that both coach and coachee respect each other's time. Coaching with Coaching through COVID is provided by high-quality coaches who take time out from earning their living through their own businesses in order to volunteer on the programme. For this reason, please do your very best to keep commitments that you make regarding appointments for coaching sessions, and to make as few short notice changes or cancellations of sessions as possible.

8. What can I expect from coaching?

If you've never had coaching before, you'll probably find that the learning process is very different from any learning you've done before: the learning you will gain in coaching is more about opening up fresh perspectives in your thinking, gaining awareness, and discovering realisations and insights that you can convert into change. Your coach is impartial, non-judgmental and committed to what matters for you. They'll prioritise your wellbeing and how you can best resource yourself, they'll build on your strengths, and they'll respect and engage with who you really are.

9. What sort of things can I talk about?

As it's holistic you can bring anything at all to your coaching, both personal and professional, within the boundaries set out under 3 above. Topics that coachees typically bring include:

- building health, wellbeing and resilience – for self and others
- work-life balance
- coming to terms with distressing situations
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling anxious or uncertain
- addressing dilemmas, challenges, and tough decisions
- creating influence
- leading a team
- making a success of unfamiliar situations and transitions
- dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity
- establishing and nurturing effective working relationships
- feeling stuck
- feeling frustrated
- knowing something needs to change, but not knowing what or how

10. What outcomes do people typically achieve?

Outcomes achieved by coachees cover a very broad range in terms of benefits to the individual, benefits for their behaviour and approach, and benefits for their team, their department, their organisation and sometimes for their family. They can include:

- greater resilience and capability to manage stress
- a focus on wellbeing and improved wellbeing overall
- a more positive outlook
- a greater sense of motivation
- greater focus and clarity

- how to manage constantly changing work patterns
- working relationships that function more effectively
- increased enthusiasm
- increased self-confidence
- better prioritisation; sorting out what's important
- a more strategic approach

11. What do I need to prepare for my coaching sessions?

People sometimes wonder ‘*Will coaching be just another task on my already overloaded list and brain?*’ You won’t need to prepare for your sessions: just arrive. However, if you can create the opportunity for a few minutes’ thought before your session about what you’d like to address, you’ll be able to maximise the benefit of your time with your coach. The sessions are for you to talk about whatever you want. Your coach is there in the first instance as a totally impartial listening ear, however you are and however you feel, and you don’t in any way need to achieve anything or ‘perform’ in the sessions.

If you don’t really know what you want to bring to coaching, your coach can help you clarify what’s important to you and what would represent a good use of your time together. Many people discover what they want to explore just by talking to someone who’s a skilled listener. Your coach is by your side as a learning partner: they won’t give you solutions, advice or answers, but they will help enable you to work through the topics you bring so that you create your own solutions.

A mindful compassionate approach underpins the coaching and can also be used explicitly as a practice to bring a more resourced, calm and creative way of thinking.

Most coaches aren’t trained or qualified therapists or counsellors, although a small number are. However, your coach will be psychologically-minded, will be aware of his or her own professional boundaries, and will signpost you to other sources of help if it emerges that your needs relate to another professional field.

12. How can I get the most out of my coaching?

The most important criterion for the success you make of your coaching is to be up for learning and committed to the relationship. People often find that it takes a session or two to experience what that really means, so just go with it and enjoy the space and the opportunity to learn and reflect in a new way!

13. How's the programme structured?

Very simply, the plan is to provide coaching sessions to healthcare, social care and hospice workers who request them, at whatever intervals they wish, whenever they wish (excluding nights). Under the programme, as a participant you will have a 'chemistry session' with your coach to check that you'd like to go ahead with working together. This takes place before your coaching programme starts. If you do want to go ahead, you can then have as many or as few sessions as you wish, up to a maximum of 12, agreed between coach and coachee.

At session 6 you and your coach are invited to feel free to recontract for 6 more pro-bono sessions if this is what you want. However, if at Session 1 the coach feels that as coachee you have not been *significantly impacted by COVID-19* we invite coaches to:

- Use their judgement and feel free to contract for an appropriate number of sessions. It could be a total of 1 or 2 sessions
- Be transparent with their coachee about their reasoning. If you are bringing something outside our intended remit (support in climbing the career ladder, for example) we wouldn't match you to another coach.

We expect sessions to be typically between 60 and 90 minutes each. Sessions need to take place in a private space in order to preserve confidentiality and ensure no interruptions. They will take place online (Skype or Zoom videoconferencing, for example) or, if videoconferencing isn't possible, by phone.

Feedback from users is very important in order to build learning, and as a participant in the early stages of this novel programme you will be asked to provide brief but above all honest feedback at various stages. If you'd like to continue your coaching after the first session, please do so, either with the coach you've started with, or by requesting a different coach.

14. What if I feel my coach isn't right for me, or my coach doesn't feel there's a fit?

Coaching is in support of you as a coachee. If you feel your coach isn't right for you, please discuss it with them – or if you would rather not, please know that there's absolutely no need to persevere. This is perfectly normal in a coaching scenario: the relationship with your coach is the most important factor for the success of your coaching. If you decide not to go forward with your current coach, please agree that with them, or, if you haven't been able to discuss it in person, please drop them a line to say you won't be taking coaching any further with them. Please also inform us at info@coachingthroughcovid.org. Another coach can be arranged for you with no problem, and there will be no repercussions.

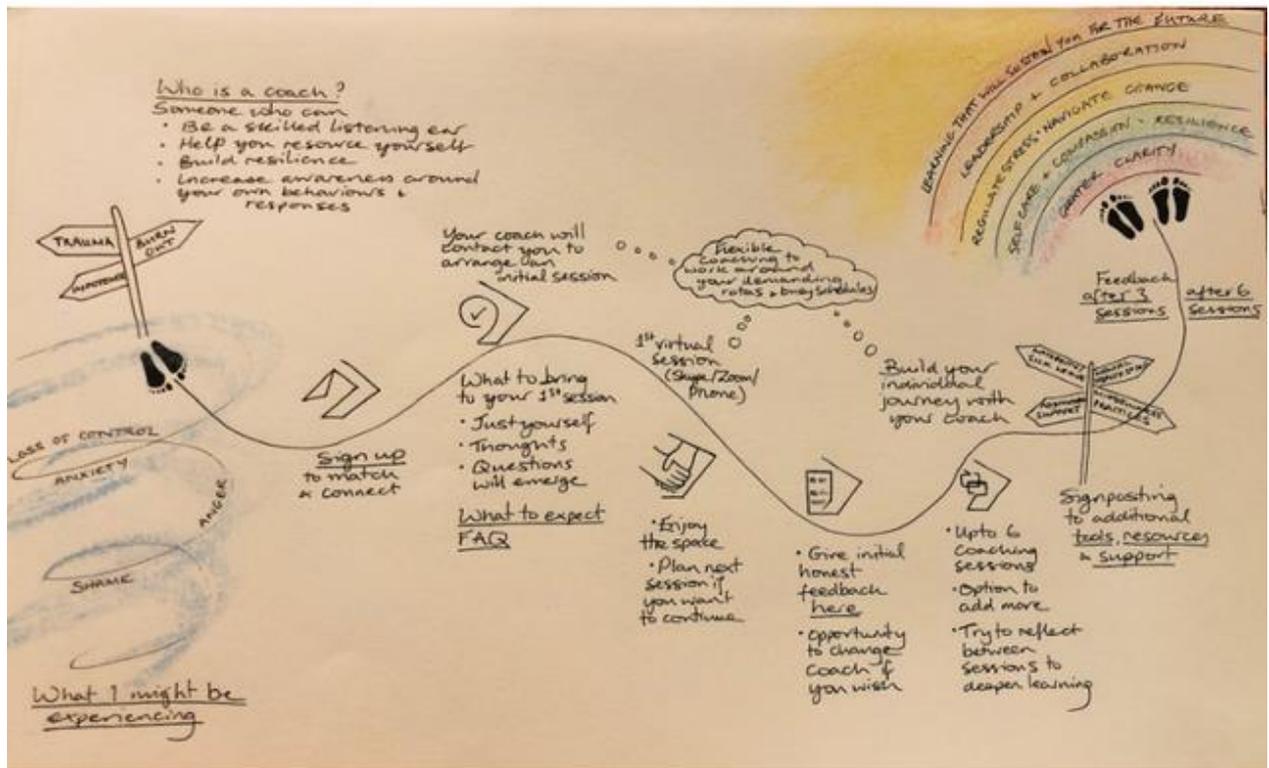
Equally, your coach may feel that the fit between you both isn't right, perhaps because they may sense that what you need falls outside their area of expertise, or because the

connection with you may encompass, or overlap with, another relationship they have (family, friends, work contact etc). If the right boundaries aren't in place, it means your coach may have been given information or opinions about you which come from other sources than you alone, which could get in the way of your confidential coaching relationship. In this case they will share this with you and you can agree the way forward together.

15. What will happen next?

Once you've signed up (which you can do at [NHS Participant Confirmation](#)), you will be contacted by your coach and you will be able to arrange your first session at a time convenient to you both.

Your Coachee Journey



Coachee feedback and testimonials

'The coaching has become increasingly useful with each session, as I have got used to the process and relaxed in to it. I am finding it is giving me great clarity amid the rollercoaster of emotions. I feel calmer in my approach to the pressures of the present time.'

'I find myself more aware of my internal tendencies and responses to things, and feel I have more ability to notice them and choose a response rather than simply react.'

'I've gained a sense of clarity around my priorities. Tuning into my voice and gaining confidence in trusting that. Feeling the benefits and joy in listening and acting on my voice. Feeling like I can be a more authentic member of my department and the teams I am working in'.

'Resilience coaching is priceless in the time of crisis. I am sure you have already thanked the coaches on behalf of ITU but please let them know how grateful we are'

'A very useful and easily accessible resource'

'An absolutely brilliant idea to set this up and I am sure it will be hugely appreciated by many people who have been thinking about their life path recentl'y

'I had my first coaching session yesterday morning. It was a bit slow at the start, but essentially I found it very helpful and think that it will be more so after a few sessions. Initially when I met my coach I was sceptical, but he came up with some good ideas and thoughts, and essentially I ended up telling him quite a lot about my background and life, which was unexpected!'

'I would advise other people doing it that you have to be willing to be open with your coach (almost a bit like therapy!) and to actively listen to suggestions.'

'Just wanted to highly recommend this programme. I've just had my 2nd session with my coach and all the misconceptions that I had about coaching have disappeared. I've found the programme really helpful so far and it has definitely helped me find order in the chaos!'

'Having had my second coaching session yesterday, I am amazed by what the programme offers. Pure life changer and I'm so pleased I signed up. Suddenly, I can identify resources already available to me that I can utilise to build resilience.'

'Just wanted to say I had my first coaching session last week and it was great! Wasn't sure what to expect but felt so positive about the experience'

'Just wanted to say that I feel like I've really struck gold with my coach. Had my second session yesterday and felt so much better afterwards. Thank you for everything you are doing'

‘And now, I truly think it is the incredible and proactive support we’ve been receiving that is keeping us going through this crisis. Definitely agree that the coaching is really good for identifying signs we need to respond to, which we may otherwise ignore and perhaps could have got through if times were a little different.’

‘I am so pleased I am enrolled in the coaching programme. I think it really helps us to identify earlier when we might need to give ourselves a bit of a break.’

‘I had my first one yesterday and it was amazing!’

‘These sessions are absolutely fantastic!’

‘The coaching has been fantastic and literally life changing (sounds cliché but true and also presumably the purpose)’

‘The coaching is an absolutely outstanding initiative’

‘Have found my coaching sessions to be a real oasis of calm honest reflection, and I have felt the clarity really reaches in to the rest of the week and other projects I am working on.’

‘Excellent coaching. Really amazing to have had this’

‘I am better at dealing with anxiety’

‘I’ve gained insights into managing and regulating emotions’

‘I found the COVID rota and work very difficult and sometimes I would feel overwhelmed due to being over-stimulated, particularly in the anaesthetic office / coffee room, but I developed resilience through the coaching sessions, and now always intentionally take some quiet time in work away from the offices / coffee rooms (even if 10min) to focus on my breathing and recharging myself.’

‘It has allowed me to see situations in a more comprehensive way rather than micromanaging/controlling smaller events, and also draw on my own resources for self-care at all times.’

Process – in brief



Confirm availability



Match coach & coachee



Coach connects



Initial engagement



Opportunity to change if needed



Feedback / check in - tbc



Coaching sessions



Feedback From both



Full review