

My Coaching Agenda

Coaching is one of a wide range of learning and development tools available to assist your personal development. So, how do you know if coaching is the right solution for you right now?

Firstly, it might help to understand what coaching is and is not? Our information/resources pages and frequently asked questions (FAQ) should help to fill in any gaps.

Next, you need to have a clear focus on your own development needs and what you want to achieve. It also helps if you understand how you learn and develop, as well as what support you need to make that learning most effective. You can use the **Is Coaching Right for Me?** questionnaire to help to clarify your thoughts and what you want to get out of coaching.

Ideally, you will have had an opportunity to talk through some of these things with your line manager so that you are both clear about how your personal development will help to support the needs of your organisation.

Coaching is not a substitute for the input of your line manager into your development. We accept that there are situations where the support from your line manager may not be forthcoming, but it is still important that someone else in your organisation acts as a sponsor to discuss and support your personal development.

Coaching works best when it is part of a personal development plan linked to your organisations broader learning and development processes, through a performance appraisal or development review process.

If you have identified a need to develop your technical or professional knowledge or skills, then it may be that coaching is not the best way to address these. It may be that a more formal training process, or a period of training, or experience may be more helpful.

Reading, attending seminars and courses, self directed learning, job shadowing and observations all offer alternative means of addressing these issues. Mentoring from a more experienced colleague may also be helpful.

If you prefer to be given clear instructions or answers and to use a practical approach to problem solving following accepted methods and approaches, then coaching might be more challenging for you.

If you have found it difficult to reflect on your own experiences in life and learning and to discuss those experiences with others, then again, coaching might be more challenging for you.

If there are things in your personal life which are currently getting in the way of your personal development, then it may not be the right time to start coaching.

The essence of coaching is that you reflect on your knowledge and experience and use that to address the issues and objectives you face. The coach will not give you the answers. S/he will ask you difficult and searching questions to enable you to find those answers inside yourself. In doing so, you will find yourself being stretched to do things that sometimes might seem beyond you, but by making progress towards their achievement, you will learn and grow in confidence about your own abilities.

Coaching is not an easy option and is not always comfortable. So, if you are not prepared to be challenged and stretched in the process of personal growth and development, you may need to consider some of the alternative learning options set out above.

If you still feel that coaching is the right approach for you, don't forget that you can use the **Is Coaching Right for Me?** questionnaire to help you clarify your own coaching objectives before you complete the application form for the Coaching Network.