

# GROUP COACHING: THERE IS POWER IN NUMBERS

## A SHORT GUIDE TO GET YOU STARTED

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**“Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life forever.”**

**Amy Poehler (American actress)**

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### What is group coaching?

Group coaching is an amazing way to bring people together and galvanise the power of the group. It is about connection, compassion, support, community and growing together. In my over 10 years' experience of group coaching, I have been amazed and humbled by the experience. Coaches looking to find new ways to support their clients and their practice would do well to consider group coaching as a potential offer.

### How to get started

If you want to explore group coaching as an offer for your clients, here are the key elements you need to consider:

### Types of coaching groups

There are three types of coaching groups:

- 1** Coaching groups set up in organisations to address developmental and/or wellbeing needs of members of staff. These are commissioned by human resources or organisation/talent development departments. They are usually scoped in partnership with the coach and it can be bespoke to the needs of the organisation.
- 2** Open coaching groups: these are groups you set up yourself; you recruit coachees as you would for your other coaching programmes.
- 3** Group coaching delivered on behalf of organisations. These are usually commissioned as complete programmes (already developed) and delivered to specific clients groups, for example, a health group coaching programme for cancer patients, commissioned by a charitable organisation supporting cancer patients.

## Overarching theme for the group coaching programme

Group coaching programmes are developed according to an overarching theme, usually related to the expertise of the coach as well as the needs of the clients and organisations which they serve. Some examples of group coaching topics are: wellbeing, health, leadership development, resilience, parents group, career, stress management, menopausal women, maternity/paternity, and so on. The theme is what brings people together, but each coachee will have their personal goals.

Once you have a theme, you need to consider:

- What is your approach to group coaching?
- What is the content of your coaching programme?
- Will you offer extra resources to your coachees, such as articles, videos, links to websites?

## Logistics of your group coaching programme

- What is the length of the programme?
- What size is your group? Although this may vary, coaching groups tend to have between 6 and 10 participants maximum.
- What is the frequency and length of sessions? The coaching theme, sponsor and coachees' needs may influence your decision on these points.
- Will the programme be delivered face to face or online? If the latter, which platform will you use?
- How are planning to keep coachees engaged?
- What kind of accountability tools will you use (if any)?
- Are you creating a group that will have a presence outside the sessions such as an online forum where they can exchange ideas? Will be facilitating this yourself or will the group be autonomous? What are the implications?
- What technology do you need – either to deliver the coaching online or to support the group outside coaching sessions?
- If running face to face sessions, which venue are you using? Is it accessible?
- If it is an open group, what is the price of the programme? Are coachees paying for the whole programme in advance?

## Getting coachees onboard

Regardless of whether you are recruiting people for an open group coaching programme or within/on behalf of an organisation, these are the things you need to consider:

- What is the overall group coaching programme offer?
- Who will be most suited to join the group coaching programme? Any exclusion criteria?
- How will you recruit them? Do you have some sort of communication explaining the offer to potential coachees? Do you have a recruitment/marketing plan?
- Will there be a 'chemistry session' with potential coachees before they are accepted into the programme?

## Contracting

Contracting is really important in coaching and in group coaching this is not different. You need to think about whether you will be sending a coaching agreement before the group starts to all participants and, if so, what it will cover. Depending on the nature of your group, you may decide to contract in the first session.

## Evaluation

What evaluation tools will you use for your group coaching programme? What might be useful information for you to gather as a professional and useful for further promoting your programmes?

Are they aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme? If you are working with organisations, the evaluation will need to be scoped and agreed in partnership with the sponsor. Other organisations, such as not-for-profits, may have their own evaluation needs, usually aligned to the requirements of funders.

## Professional development

Group coaching is an advanced skill set. Think about how you can develop your group coaching knowledge and skills, to improve your practice and ensure that you have appropriate supervision, which covers your group work.

I am Ana Paula Nacif, an experienced executive and group coach, consultant and facilitator, who works with individuals and organisations interested in improving wellbeing and leadership capabilities. My coaching career spans nearly 15 years, across the private, public and not-for-profit sector. I am an EMCC master coach and a coach supervisor. I have also completed a professional doctorate in coaching and mentoring, with a research focus on group coaching and wellbeing.



I have been running coaching groups for over a decade. I found group coaching to be a wonderful way to reach out to more clients and help them in a friendly and supportive environment. Over the years, I have shared my experience and knowledge of group coaching with other coaches who want to develop their practice.

I also lecturer at the Masters in Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology at the University of East London. I am heavily involved with and committed to the coaching community. I am a regular speaker at coaching events and I have contributed to various publications, including the **International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring**, **Coaching Perspectives** and **Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal**, among others.

If you are curious about group coaching or know that this is an area of interest to you and your business: you can reach me via LinkedIn, my website or via email.

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