Exercise 1: What is coaching and mentoring?

*"Tell me and I forget.*

*Show me and I remember.*

*Involve me and I understand”*

Coaching and mentoring are valuable skills that can be used to support young and inexperienced individuals to become effective and confident members of your team.  
  
It can be applied to any member of staff who:

* takes on new responsibilities
* is a new employee
* is a young apprentice gaining new skills

Exercise: Thinking about your experiences of mentoring, write a definition that best describes what coaching and mentoring means to you.

Coaching and mentoring is:

Compare your definition with others; list the common themes that come from the different sources.

* a one-to-one relationship over a period of time between a less experienced person (mentee) and an established professional (mentor), which provides consistent support, guidance and practical help
* a process by which an experienced professional shares their personal skills, knowledge and experience with another person
* a means of enabling a less experienced person to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to perform at a higher level
* an opportunity for a less experienced person to gain access to impartial, non-judgmental guidance and support
* a process of working together to achieve predetermined goals and objectives
* a two-way process through which both parties derive satisfaction from the progress, and success is attained through working together.

Coaching and mentoring is a special relationship, normally between two individuals, that:

* Encourages learning and experimentation in a protected environment to help individuals achieve their full potential
* Enables staff to learn from the experience of more senior and experienced colleagues
* Produces results in terms of real improvements in competence rather than simply a general increase in knowledge of subjects covered
* Offers an advantage over other forms of development activity because it focuses on real learning needs on a specific and personal level
* Increases the motivation / satisfaction of more senior staff by helping them continue their learning in a rewarding but challenging way
* Provides excellent value for money, as although time input is great, the financial cost is relatively small.

Mentors can help mentees to acclimatise to a new job or role; to reflect on their abilities and progress; to remove any perceived 'barriers' to their development; and to improve their performance.

How do coaching and coaching and mentoring compare with other services?

Consider the following

What is the difference between?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Training |  |
| Coaching |  |
| Mentoring |  |
| Counselling |  |

**Traditional forms of training**

* Wholesale transfer of new skills, e.g. change in procedures, new systems (e.g. software application training), new job function.
* Programmes are mostly generic and not tailored to individual needs. Delegates generally have to complete standard modules, so there is little room for tailoring the programme to account for existing knowledge, skills or preferences.
* Not always sufficiently similar to the ‘live’ working environment to ensure effective skills transfer.
* Best suited to transfer of knowledge and certain skills rather then the development of personal qualities or competencies

**Coaching / Mentoring**

* Actively untaps potential.
* Fine-tunes and develops skills.
* Development activities are designed to suit client’s personal needs and learning styles.
* Eliminates specific performance problems.
* Can focus on interpersonal skills, which cannot be readily or effectively transferred in a traditional training environment.
* Provides client with contacts and networks to assist with furthering their career or life aspirations.
* Performed in the ‘live’ environment
* Highly effective when used as a means of supporting training initiatives to ensure that key skills are transferred to the ‘live’ environment.
* Coaches and mentors transfer the skills to the client rather than doing the job for them

**Counselling**

* Explore personal issues and problems through discussion in order to increase understanding or develop greater self – awareness.
* The aim of counselling is to lead the client toward self – directed actions to achieve their goals.

**Consultancy**

* Focus is on developing organisational practices, processes and structure.
* Role generally more strategic and often used to instigate and design broad ranging change programmes
* Consultancy frequently involves expert advice about specific issues and organisational processes.
* Consultants are often brought in to provide specific ‘solutions’ to business problems and needs
* Consultant does the job for the organisation, rather than the employee/client becoming up-skilled to do the job themselves.

The Benefits of coaching and mentoring

What do you see as the benefits of coaching and mentoring to:

The Organisation

The Learner

The Coach/ Mentor

For the organisation, coaching and mentoring offers:

* a means of supporting succession planning, and the maximising of human potential
* better staff retention levels and recruitment prospects
* improved communication and a means of acclimatising employees to the organisation's culture
* a cost-effective way of providing personalised development.

For the coach/ mentor coaching and mentoring offers:

* increased job satisfaction, sense of value and status
* the opportunity to help and guide others in their career development
* an opportunity to develop managerial and leadership skills
* opportunity to learn – it’s a two way process

For the learner coaching and mentoring offers:

* Ready and planned access to senior people as part of their personal development
* Support and challenge in formulating a clear sense of personal direction
* Career enhancement in terms of professional advice
* Learning, understanding and working with organisational politics
* A role model who can be observed closely as well as from a distance to develop skills in a practical hands-on way.
* a visible demonstration of how the organisation values them
* an objective, supportive, non-threatening source of help and support in the development of new skills and directions
* access to someone with an understanding of the organisation's culture and ways of working.