

TOOL: CASE FORMULATION

(Based on the work of Lane & Corrie, 2009)

Aim: Explanatory account of the issues affecting a client that can form the basis of a shared understanding in order to plan effective interventions.

Purpose

What purpose does your coaching serve (performance, developmental, growth, behavioural change)? Defining the purpose of the work comprises four essential elements:

1. Understanding the questions you wish to explore
 - Is a generic intent to explore an area sufficient to justify the journey – which may lead to an unknown destination?
 - Is there a problem to be solved or solution to be achieved that is recognised as appropriate by all stakeholders?
 - Is it possible to know in advance what an appropriate solution will look like (performance criteria)?
 - Is the question to be explored agreed between stakeholders? Do you need to work to obtain such agreement?
2. Understanding the expectations of key stakeholders
 - Intention, what you, the client, others/sponsor intend as the aim of the engagement – an objective for future achievement,
 - Outputs, what will the client be doing differently, what behavioural change will the client others/sponsor recognise
 - Results, what will be different as a result of the outputs
3. Clarifying the role of each stakeholder
 - Clarify role on individual, group and organisational level – that each stakeholder will play
 - The investment that each party will be expected to make in terms of time, energy, resources and their willingness and ability to do so
4. Appreciating the wider context that gives meaning to the *Purpose* and the way in which it has come to be defined
 - Competence of the coach
 - What type of client purpose is best served by your service context? Do you have a match or mismatch?

- What boundaries do you place on the purpose of the work that would require you to refer the client?

Perspective

What perspectives underpin that purpose (values, beliefs, models, evidence, science, ethics)? This includes the range of approaches with which your professional knowledge equips you and the limits of your competence.

- What perspectives are informing your and the clients approach?
- What are the beliefs (and prejudices) that you each bring to the conversation?
- Derived from diagnostic classification (psychometric instruments)
- Use data from multiple sources
- Formulation of the scientist-practitioner
- Theoretically driven formulation
- Strategic alignment
- Exploring frames of reference (business, individual needs, political and cultural)
- Perspectives on change

NOTE: Regardless of approach taken is it important to avoid squeezing the client into the perspective you prefer (single vs. meta models – limitations and the need for rigour must be respected).

Process

What process is appropriate to that purpose and perspectives (stages, connecting, contracting, relationship building, assessment, intervention, follow-up, reflection, evaluation)?

- There are many stepwise processes that assume linearity not complexity e.g. GROW Model. A better understanding of process will enhance practice efficacy and accelerates practice-based evidence.
- Broad process steps allows us to explore the state of ‘where we are now’ against ‘where do we want to be’ (action steps between current reality and desired future)
- Use of propriety models and manualised interventions (e.g. linking 360 degree feedback results to a specific intervention)

NOTE: Important to understand the *Purpose* and *Perspective* that underpin a powerful change *Process* if you are offering yourself as a facilitator of change.

Key elements in a Model of coaching effectiveness (Kilburg, 2001):

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| Clients commitment to progressive development | Client-coach relationship |
| Coach’s commitment to progressive development | Quality of coaching interventions |
| Characteristics of the client’s problems and issues | Anticipate coach’s resistance to change |
| Structure of the coaching conversation | Client’s and coach’s organisational context |