

Coaching for Competence and Confidence

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Key Findings

- ***Coaching is a critical driver of implementation that increases the likelihood that practitioners will deliver practices with fidelity.*** Training alone cannot transfer skills from a practice protocol to applied use. Practitioners instead must acquire skills and subsequent guidance and support (i.e., coaching) as they apply newly learned strategies in real-world settings where conditions stray widely from training exemplars.
- ***Coaching builds a bridge between (research-informed) training and everyday use (practice)*** through purposeful and data driven iterative cycles of prompting, scaffolded practice, and performance feedback.
- ***Coaching advances training efforts as it supports newly learned skills or change efforts used outside the training venue.*** However, careful selection and training of practitioners before coaching is critical. For example, selection criteria aligned with needs of the practice or change effort can identify ideal candidates for training. Coaching advances training efforts as it supports newly learned skills or change efforts used outside the training venue.

Essential Components of Coaching

Implementation research has clarified the critical role of coaching: practitioners who have the support of coaches are far more likely to use effective innovations in practice. The Joyce and Showers (2002) meta-analysis found an improvement from 5% for training-only to 95% for training-and-coaching. Schoenwald, Sheidow, and Letourneau (2004) found that high fidelity coaching was associated with high fidelity use of the evidence-based program and had a significant impact on program outcomes. Thus, coaching is not a title but a set of skills that support best practices and behavior change efforts (Joyce & Showers, 1988; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Stollar et al., 2008).

Critical Components of Coaching

Five core components rise to the top when coaching is operationalized: prompting, scaffolding, delivering performance feedback, using data, and creating an enabling and collaborative context (see Figure 1). Specific examples of coaching behavior related to these essential components are described by Saldana, Chamberlain, and Chapman (2016).

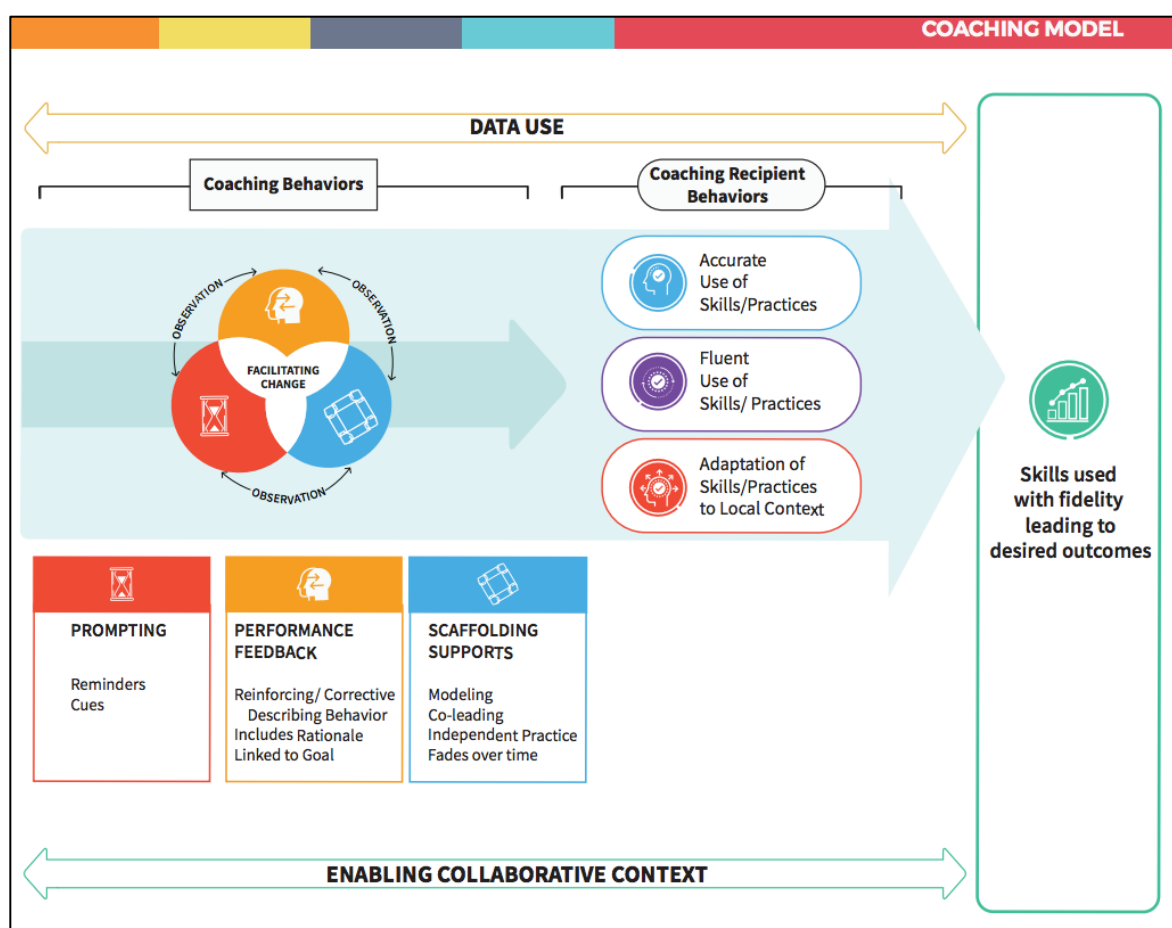
Prompting. Prompting or a reminder that is delivered before a targeted skill or response is needed increases use of a practice with fidelity (Freeman et al., 2017; Joseph, Alber-Morgan, & Neef, 2016; Massar, 2017). These prompts or cues can take the form of a brief conversation, nonverbal cue elicited by the coach (e.g., hand signal), or visual aid (e.g., *Post-it-Note*, flash card) set up ahead of time by the coaching recipient.

Scaffolding of Supports. Effective coaching is driven by purposeful and data-driven scaffolding of supports. When skills are new, practice including the

coach modeling use of skills, partnering or co-leading use of the practice, or observing the recipient's independent practice of skills is essential (Browder et al., 2012; Coyne, Kame'enui, & Carnine, 2011; Myers et al., 2017). In use, dosage and/or more direct delivery of supports (e.g., consistent prompting, modeling) and more frequent and immediate feedback are required when recipients' skills are in the acquisition phase (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Myers et al., 2017). These supports are then faded (e.g., natural prompts are used, independent practice rather than co-leading, delayed feedback) as fidelity increases (Coyne et al., 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Myers et al., 2017). Importantly, if authentic opportunities occur infrequently, behavior rehearsals or practice scenarios should be generated and scaffolded.

Performance feedback. Intimately tied with scaffolding support is performance feedback, which is based on data gleaned during observation, review of products, or other data sources (Cavanaugh, 2013; Freeman et al., 2017; Massar, 2017; Sprick et al., 2010). Performance feedback (verbal or written) must be data-driven, specific, and describe aspects of targeted skills/practices that increase quality of use. Feedback also must address directionality of change (corrective or reinforcing) and context (defining what, when, and where), and include a rationale for its importance. Used together with scaffolding supports, feedback defines how and why behaviors should change.

Figure 1. Essential Components of Coaching



Using Data. Notably, prompting, scaffolding, and performance feedback are driven by data drawn from *observation* of the practice or behaviors. Observation is essential for coaches to see what did happen and what should have happened but didn't. Omissions are more frequent in the beginning of learning a new skill and that is when coaching is most important. Observation and data (e.g., fidelity data) identify target behaviors, monitor their application, guide intensity and dosages of prompting, personalize performance feedback, and clarify scaffolding support needs. Importantly, cycles of data collection are ongoing throughout the coaching process.

Creating an Enabling and Collaborating Context.

Coaching is not a one-way, didactic experience, but a dynamic partnership between the coach and recipient that guides behavior change as it navigates through challenges and dissonance encountered between training and real-world application. Critical to this partnership is recognition of the importance of creating an enabling context within which coaching can flourish. To sustain behavior change, a collaborative partnership must exist between the coach and coaching recipient(s). This relationship is described as being trusting, bi-directional, and collaborative (Blase et al., 2015; Fixsen et al., 2013). Coaching also must reflect needs of coaching recipient(s) that acknowledges complexities of the environment (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Knight, 2009; Trotter, 2006). search-informed) training and everyday use (practice). Coaching serves as a critical driver of implementation that increases the likelihood that practitioners will deliver practices with fidelity. Careful selection and training of practitioners before coaching is critical (Fixsen et al., 2005; Karlin & Cross, 2013). For example, selection criteria aligned with needs of the practice or change effort can

Importantly, coaches must monitor all factors that impact use of practices (e.g., system demands that hinder use of skills, limited access to resources, conflicting initiatives) and the coaching relationship (e.g., trust, listening, efficacy at supporting skill use). Notably, the relationship between targeted practices, desired outcomes, and staff performance must also be addressed to counter inertia that lures practitioners back to previous (ineffective) practices (Bean & Esenberg, 2009; Curtis et al., 2008; Macallair & Males, 2004). When coaching supports both external (behavior) and internal (affective) dimensions, reductions in staff burnout are noted (Aarons et al., 2009; Marsh et al., 2008).

Summary

From a larger picture, effective practices can only achieve optimal outcomes if they are used as intended (Naleppa & Cagle, 2010; Schoenwald & Garland, 2013). Training alone cannot transfer skills from a practice protocol to applied use (Buston, Wight, Hart, & Scott, 2002; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2001). Practitioners instead must acquire skills and subsequent guidance and support (i.e., coaching) as they apply newly learned strategies in real-world settings where conditions stray widely from training exemplars. Through purposeful and data driven iterative cycles of prompting, scaffolded practice, and performance feedback, coaching builds a bridge between (re-identify ideal candidates for training. Coupled with selection, well-designed training that addresses critical knowledge and skills is used to develop the targeted repertoire of effective behaviors. Coaching advances training efforts as it supports newly learned skills or change efforts used outside the training venue.

To Learn More:

Interactive “learn coaching” module

http://modules.fpg.unc.edu/sisep/coaching_overview/index.html

Coaching description

https://unc-fpg-cdi.adobeconnect.com/_a992899727/ai-lesson5/

<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-2/coaching>

Coaching Service Delivery Plan

https://unc-fpg-cdi.adobeconnect.com/_a992899727/ailesson8/

Coaching Service Delivery Plan and Template

<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/coaching-system-delivery-plan-template>

Coaching in the Drivers context

<http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-drivers>

Coaching quick introduction

https://unc-fpg-cdi.adobeconnect.com/_a992899727/drivers-ed-coaching/

A podcast on coaching essentials

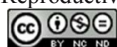
<https://soundcloud.com/user-460972041/lessons-learned-in-coaching-karen-blase/s-ocMkw>

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We would like to acknowledge the support of the WHO Collaborating Center for Research Evidence for Sexual and Reproductive Health.



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