

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL

SECTION 14

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SECTION 14. COACHING FRAMEWORKS & ONGOING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

“As coaches, we help turn the vision into reality, the dream into an achievement and the goal into an accomplishment.”

- International Coach Academy

A. WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching¹ is a method of interacting and supporting that helps others:

- Focus on self-discovery
- Articulate their goals
- Learn how to problem solve
- Safely make mistakes and learn from them
- Develop healthy patterns
- Achieve personal growth
- Achieve incremental progress toward their goals
- Ultimately achieve long term life goals

B. THE BENEFITS OF COACHING

Coaching can provide a multitude of benefits including helping a person articulate their goals, focus on self-discovery, and learn how to problem solve. This should be done in a safe, caring environment.

When coaching is done with intentionality and focus, coaching can:

- Build self-awareness, empower choice, and lead to change.
- Supports a person in becoming who they want to be.
- Helps a person achieve their personal best and to produce the results they want in their lives.
- Help people set S.M.A.R.T. goals and follow through with their goals.
- Increase hope, focus, and self-esteem.

Creating a warm, engaging culture centered around a coaching framework is critical to program success. It will also help with staff retention and youth engagement, as both staff and young people need to feel connected to the program and its culture.

Some of the most effective Coaches in the work are the ones that are self-aware, have an understanding of who they are and value learning about the WHY and the WHAT of each of their young people.

WHY is my youth making the choices they make?

WHY are they struggling in school?

WHY are they struggling with work?

WHAT are their dreams and aspirations?

WHAT motivates them?

Great Coaches are constantly working to understand their own WHY and WHAT.

WHY am I being triggered?

WHY do I carry this bias or judgment?

WHY Am I Talking (W.A.I.T.), when I could do more listening?

WHAT can I do to be a better Coach?

WHAT more can I do to be a support in this young person's life?

¹From *Disability and Rehabilitation*, an international, multi-disciplinary journal, “Client-centered coaching in the pediatric health professions: a critical scoping review,” October 7, 2014, “The International Coach Federation (ICF) provides the following definition: coaching is “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (ICF webpage). This definition of coaching is quite open to interpretation, but it does highlight four key components that are deemed necessary to coaching. According to this definition from the ICF, coaching consists of a client-centered partnership, where the client and the coach work collaboratively. The definition highlights the need for creativity and self-discovery (reflective), and it focuses on future growth and development (capacity) of the client's potential.

C. THE 4 CORE COMPONENTS OF COACHING

In Coaching there are 4 core components. In each of these components you will find the 4 P's to help you remember how to show up your best when in your coaching conversations:

#1. Establish Understanding & Purpose

- Clearly communicate what coaching, and your coaching program, is and isn't. The Coaching Agreement helps with this.
- Refer to other support professionals when out of your scope of practice. *For example: a therapist, medical professional, Case Planner*

#2. Establish a Trusting Relationship - Understand the past, focus on the present and have a future-oriented mindset

- Be present and flexible.
- Show genuine concern.
- Admit when you don't know something.
- Champion new behaviors, be aware of light bulb moments.

#3. Facilitate the Learning

- Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals & Plans: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.
 - The Goals & Step framework is comprised of all S.M.A.R.T Goals!
- Celebrate successes and growth. Acknowledge what has been accomplished.
- Provide gentle accountability.

#4. Communicate Effectively – Stay focused on changing needs and goals.

- Use active listening to understand the meaning of what is being said.
- Ask open-ended questions that promote discovery, action and insight.
- Remind the youth of their goals and objectives.

REMEMBER THE 4 P'S

- Maintain your coaching **P**resence
- Practice **P**ower Listening
- Ask **P**owerful Questions
- Practice coaching as much as possible

The four key components of Coaching and the 4 P's are reviewed in the [Fair Futures training](#) in greater detail.

D. CREATING A COACHING AGREEMENT

The Coaching Agreement allows the Coach and Coachee to come to an understanding of what the partnership will look like. It also helps a Coach, and the Coaching program, know what bounds or parameters they are working in.

According to the International Coach Federation a Coaching Agreement can help with the following:

1. The Coach helps the Coachee identify, or reconfirm, what s/he wants to accomplish in a coaching session.
2. The Coach helps the Coachee to define or reconfirm measures of success for what s/he wants to accomplish in the session.
3. The Coach explores what is important or meaningful to the Coachee about what s/he wants to accomplish in the session.
4. The Coach helps the Coachee define what they need to address or resolve in order to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session.
5. The Coach continues the conversation in direction of Coachee's desired outcome unless Coachee indicates otherwise.

To see a sample Coaching Agreement please see [Appendix C6 Sample Coaching Agreement](#).

E. COACHING FRAMEWORKS

The ability to guide young people through the process of goal achievement requires working within a coaching framework. While there are numerous coaching frameworks in existence, the **G.R.O.W. Model** is one simple yet powerful framework for structuring coaching sessions. For another coaching script please see [Appendix C7 Sample Coaching Script](#).

The acronym **G.R.O.W.** is as follows. It is accompanied by sample questions that can be used in a coaching session:

G

GOAL

What goal, or goals, do you want to achieve?
Why is this important?
What do you want to get out of your time in this Coaching program?
What would you like to work on?
What are the benefits of you achieving this goal?

R

CURRENT REALITY

Where are you now in relation to your goals?
What steps have you already taken, if any?
What challenges have you faced in trying to reach your goals?

O

OPTIONS

What are your options?
What would you like your first step to be?
What is the first step you'd like to take?
Who in your life is supporting you?

W

WILL, OR WAY FORWARD

When will you start?
What support do you need?
When would like to get started?
How will you know when you've been successful?
How committed to this goal are you on a scale from 1-10?

Sometimes, young people may not know what their academic or career development goals are. They may not know any adults who attended a post-secondary setting or know of what career pathways are available to them. **A Coach's role is to help them explore their interests, inform them of different pathways, expose them to opportunities, and ultimately help them build a series of academic/career experiences that are in line with their interests.**

Other times, young people may have goals that may seem counter-productive to their longer-term success (e.g., a young person may have a goal of dropping out of high school to get a job) or may not seem feasible (e.g., becoming a famous sports athlete or rapper). A Coach's role is not to critique/dismiss their goals - **Coaches should meet youth where they are, try to understand the drivers of their goals/interests and any considerations, and help connect them to opportunities in line with their interests.** [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 20](#) provides a detailed example of how to coach a young person who is disconnected from high school and does not want to re-enroll.

The Goals & Steps framework allows Coaches to track young people's progress towards their goals (see [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 15](#)).

ADDITIONAL COACHING TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Different structured models can be used to train and support coaching techniques. These include but are not limited to:

Motivational Interviewing:

This includes specific engagement strategies for maximizing the chances that individuals will choose adaptive behavior change. MI takes advantage of the natural tendency of human beings to choose what is best for them in the long run by working collaboratively to identify individuals' desire for change within apparently destructive behaviors. ACS' Motivational Interviewing is a required course.

Collaborative Problem Solving:

This is a behavior management model that focuses on a central philosophy that people want to meet expectations and do well. A primary goal of the model is to build staff/adult empathy by helping them understand the root of what can get in the way of people meeting expectations and being successful.

F. PROVIDING ONGOING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

CONSTANCY & CONSISTENCY

To reiterate - young people in foster care have experienced trauma and instability, and their relationships with adults have often been inconsistent and/or abruptly disrupted. To begin to heal from trauma and trust others, young people need to experience consistency and constancy in their relationships. It is the role of the Coach to provide that consistency and constancy, even if the young person does not initially engage or always respond. By calling them on the same day or repeatedly showing up, the young person will begin to realize that they can trust their Coach. This may happen immediately, or it may take weeks or months.

Because of the consistency and constancy that a Coach models, is not uncommon for the Coach to be the first adult in a long time - or perhaps ever - that the young person trusts.

Once the Coach and the young person have established a trusting relationship, a primary role of the Coach is to continue to provide emotional support, as needed, through the critical junctures and transitions in their lives, and also the day-to-day issues that arise. It is important that the Coach not only be in touch with the young person to discuss progress towards their goals, but also be there to discuss their relationships, fears, concerns, interests, dreams, and challenges. It is also often the social-emotional challenges young people face that can inhibit the progress they make towards their goals! Also, if there is a genuine personal connection, the young person will be more likely to allow the Coach to help them progress. They will also be more likely to turn to their Coach for guidance and support when a challenge arises (and therefore possibly help prevent a situation from escalating further).

Some other important tips:

- It is important that Coaches continue to be reliable – if they say they are going to show up, they show up. If they speak to a young person every week, they should not go two weeks without being in touch.
- If the Coach is going on vacation and for some reason cannot be in touch, they should communicate this to the young person in advance and provide them with their Supervisor's contact information.

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS

Coaches should reach out to **all young people on their coachload at least once a week** - even if it is just to send an encouraging/supportive text message.

Beyond that, the frequency of contact between the Coach and the young person should be **driven mostly by making progress towards their Goals and Steps, providing ongoing emotional support, and addressing any issues that may arise.**

TIP! A best practice is a minimum of 2x in person each month, with weekly contact by phone/social media. Some young people may require weekly in-person meetings, or more, during critical transitions or crises.

The Coach should be flexible with the frequency of engagement, but also draw appropriate boundaries, when needed.

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

It can take time before a young person starts to realize their potential, and how their hard work is paying off and changing their life. Therefore, it is important for Coaches (and the program) to celebrate a young person's success, praise their effort, and encourage them to reflect on how their actions are helping THEM make progress towards their goals.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH CRISIS SITUATIONS

With a crisis situation arises, the Coach may be the first person the young person contacts, before his/her Case Planner, due to their relationship with the young person. It is the Coach's responsibility to follow agency protocol and inform both their Supervisor and the Case Planner of the situation, and to work together as a team to address the issue. A Critical Incident Report should be filled out.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH, HEALTH, OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE CHALLENGES

While Coaches do not provide clinical/mental health services, Coaches can help facilitate access to needed services and follow-through. Coaches also provide social-emotional support over a long period of time, which can be healing.

As Coaches build strong relationships with young people, they are often become aware (or informed) of any mental health, health, or substance abuse challenge, as these often get in the way of academic and career development progress. Coaches can help ensure young people are connected to the services/supports they need. Coaches will continue to provide social/emotional support to young people and stick with them, no matter what.

If a young person's situation is severe, the Coach can hold off on helping the young person with their Goals until they are in a better state to proceed. The support they receive from a Coach during this period could help speed up that process.

SELF-REGULATION & SHIFTING BELIEFS

Supporting young people – or people in general – can be challenging at times. It is important to practice self-care and to be able to debrief with your Supervisor.

It is important for Coaches and all Fair Futures staff to be aware of their body language and how they are feeling, and to gauge where they are on this spectrum (and try, whenever possible, to work from the left side).



It can also difficult at times to understand why our young people are making the decisions they make, but it is important that we do not place our own belief system on them. Be intentional about shifting and changing language to remove judgment, spark curiosity about the young person and gain understanding. Here are some examples:

OLD JUDGMENTS

She lied about...

He was angry so he...

She doesn't seem motivated to...

She is not interested so she missed the appointment....

He says one thing and does another...

NEW BELIEFS

I will work to gain her trust.

I will acknowledge his past and learn how it impacts him today.

I will seek to understand what drives her.

I will be curious about her dreams and aspirations.

I will be patient while walking this path with him.