

Handbook of Coaching Psychology

A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

SECOND EDITION

Edited by
Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow

“The *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is an essential guide to the theory and practice of coaching, across settings. Its strength lies in the wide range of contemporary approaches described and their application to a number of contexts. The book is underpinned by evidence-based practice and research, thereby emphasising the psychology of coaching practice. This excellent book, edited by Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow, has contributions from leading practitioners and should be essential reading for coaching trainees and practitioners alike.”

– **Professor Robert Bor**, Consultant Clinical & Aviation Psychologist,
Dynamic Change Consultants Ltd, London, UK

“I highly recommend this second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*. This enormously useful update is a rigorous and complete compilation of a wide-range of models and approaches by excellent experienced professionals. Including issues such as the impact of new technologies in psychology coaching and the importance of supervision, it provides a current guide to the state-of-the-art and the latest trends of psychology coaching within an international framework.”

– **Victòria Conesa**, Psychological Coach; Board of Directors of Psychology Coaching at the Official Psychology College of Catalonia; trainer and presenter on ‘The Culture of Healthy Companies’, ‘Well-being at work’ and ‘Stress Prevention’

“Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow have produced a seminal and very significant *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*. They have brought together leading figures in this growing and important field, highlighting the various forms of coaching and their impact. This is a ‘must buy’ for anybody interested in coaching psychology...it will become the coaching bible for the field.”

– **Professor Cary L. Cooper**, Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Lancaster University, UK

“This handbook offers a comprehensive and integrative perspective over the field of coaching psychology. This new edition has significantly increased the substance and the range of contributors and contributions. It provides an overview to coaching psychology key concepts and addresses important issues relating to evidence-based knowledge in the coaching field, training, supervision and the profession of coaching. The reader is introduced to various approaches to coaching psychology, derived from both traditional psychotherapy and modern approaches in psychotherapy. The applications of coaching psychology explore features of an effective coaching practice in various contexts. An excellent resource for both students and coaching professionals seeking to understand the psychology of coaching.”

– **Dr Oana A. David**, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the International Coaching Institute at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and President of the International Association of Cognitive Behavioral Coaching

“This is a unique publication both in terms of depth and breadth. Whether you are new to the field, or an experienced practitioner, this second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* gives you thorough guidance for an evidence-based practice, and inspiring examples to take your practice as a coach and coaching psychologist to the next level. Definitely a must-read to anyone interested in a field that only grows in both academia and industry, and that can do so much to ensure the continual development of individuals and teams in our contemporary society.”

– **Dr Gisele Dias** PhD CPsychol; Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King’s College London, UK

“Bringing together some of the world’s leading experts on coaching psychology this book provides a thorough and highly interesting exploration of the field as it stands today. Undoubtedly this is a book you must read if you’re interested in the subject and want to stay up to date with its latest developments.”

– **Per-Olof Eriksson**, licensed psychologist, Sweden. Honorary Vice President of ISfCP and initiator and chair of the Swedish Association for Coaching Psychologists

“Looking for a framework to update your coaching practice? The long-awaited second edition of this milestone book offers inspiring ideas on how to improve the scientific foundation and enhance quality development in coaching. It holds great promise as a guide for critical evaluation and development and shows ways on how to link existing knowledge bases. The contributors highlight psychological processes and discuss perspectives to integrate approaches and techniques. This book will advance our understanding of applications and professional topics such as sustainability questions in coaching.”

– **Dr Lisbeth Hurni**, certified Coaching Psychologist, Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology;
Honorary Vice President, International Society for Coaching Psychology

“The new edition is by far the most comprehensive and authoritative book on coaching psychology currently available. With 43 chapters written by prominent and respected experts in the field, the book provides rich insights and reports on new developments on different perspectives, approaches and applications in the field of coaching psychology. The book is indeed inspirational and an essential resource for both academic and coaching practitioners.”

– **Aletta Odendaal**, Professor in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa;
Past-President, Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa;
Founding Member, Interest Group of Coaching and Consulting Psychology

“Being intimately involved in the emergence and the development of the Coaching Psychology profession in Ireland, and also in the development and teaching of the First Masters in Coaching Psychology to be delivered in an Irish University (University College Cork), the first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* was ground-breaking and a necessary roadmap for teacher, scientist and practitioner. This second and more comprehensive edition is timely and will inform the ongoing and necessary conversation around the further development, teaching and practice of the subject area. I welcome that.”

– **Hugh O’Donovan** CPsychol., Ps.S.I, Coaching Psychologist and Author of *Mindful Walking*

“For anyone interested in the field of individual, team and organizational learning in contemporary business environments, the new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* presents some of the most exciting developments in contemporary psychology. The expanded edition now includes chapters which highlight the fastest growing fields of today’s coaching, such as team coaching, coaching culture and the role of technology in coaching. Readers will find probably the most comprehensive answers to the questions about the research-based evidence, plurality of psychological perspectives and application contexts related to coaching. Finally, the *Handbook* fulfills a mission to grow the coaching profession by connecting it to the cutting edge thinking in psychological science.”

– **Jelena Pavlovic**, PhD, senior research associate at the Institute of Educational Research,
founder of Koučing Centar, Serbia, and developer of ISCP recognized
and ICF accredited coach training programs

“The first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* provided a momentous and valuable resource for researchers, lecturers and practitioners. As the discipline has been growing expansively since 2008 we welcome this second edition with readiness and excitement. The increase in overall chapters plus the expansion of the approaches part into six sections highlights the range of potential ways that coaching psychologists can offer innovative and evidence-based methods in their coaching practices. We are seeing a focus on new areas for coaching such as neuroscience as well as separate chapters for ontological and somatic coaching. As a positive psychology coach I welcome additional chapters on mindfulness in coaching and compassion-focussed coaching. It is indeed the significant second edition we have been waiting for.”

– **Dr Ceri Sims**, CPsychol. Programme leader for Leadership and Coaching courses
and senior course lecturer on MSc Applied Positive Psychology, Buckinghamshire
New University, UK; Director, Positive Minds Alliance Ltd

“The *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* is an excellent resource of psychological theories and best practice for anybody interested in coaching psychology. The second edition of this fantastic book offers an extensive overview of the latest trends in coaching, psychology and management in a VUCA world. This is a must have for coaching psychologists, coaches and those working within related fields.”

– **Dr Anna Syrek-Kosowska**, Executive Coach, Coaching Supervisor (CSA) and Honorary VP of the ISCP, Poland

“As practitioner and teacher of coaching psychology I’m always looking for books that provide answer to the whys and hows of coaching. There are many “how to” coaching books on the market, but coaching psychologists deserve more. The second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is for us. It provides a clear overview of the most important psychological coaching theories and approaches. I’m especially enthusiastic about the pluralistic coaching approach. It gives new perspectives to the fundamental questions of coaching, including the boundaries between coaching and counselling and the success criteria of the coaching relationship. The second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is a must-have guide to being a coaching psychologist in today’s VUCA world, in which dealing with complexity and chaos is an unavoidable task and coaching goals could be achieved effectively when we consider bio-psycho-socio factors and their mutual interactions. The first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* was the main reference of my university course. Now the second edition will be the first on the reference list.”

– **Dr Vince Szekely**, PhD, coaching psychologist; President, Hungarian Association for Coaching Psychology

“With a clear and practice-focused approach, this book provides a comprehensive and robust foundation for coaching psychology. It is essential reading for new researchers and graduate students who are interested in coaching psychology, and those who want to base their professional practice on the coaching approach.”

– **Dr Qing Wang**, Associate Professor in Educational Psychology at School of Psychology and Cognitive Science, East China Normal University

“A rich and exciting new text for all who are interested in expanding their knowledge, skills and vision of coaching and coaching psychology. This new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* builds extensively and seamlessly on the original handbook. Retaining all that was excellent in the original it shares yet further breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of theory, research and practice. In addition, there is a section focussing on those often tricky professional and ethical issues faced by practitioners. I recommend this comprehensive handbook as a core text for practitioners, trainers and trainees.”

– **Professor Mary Watts**, PhD, CPsychol.; Emeritus Professor, City, University of London, UK; Director, Meyler Campbell Mastered (Business Coach) Programme



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Handbook of Coaching Psychology

The Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners provides a clear and extensive guide to the theory, research and practice of coaching psychology.

In this new and expanded edition, an international selection of leading coaching psychologists and coaches outlines recent developments from a broad spectrum of areas. Part One examines perspectives and research in coaching psychology, looking at both the past and the present as well as assessing future directions. Part Two presents a range of approaches to coaching psychology, including behavioural and cognitive behavioural, humanistic, existential, being-focused, constructive and systemic approaches. Part Three covers application, context and sustainability, focusing on themes including individual transitions in life and work, and complexity and system-level interventions. Finally, Part Four explores a range of topics within the professional and ethical practice of coaching psychology. The book also includes several appendices outlining the key professional bodies, publications, research centres and societies in coaching psychology, making this an indispensable resource.

Unique in its scope, this key text will be essential reading for coaching psychologists and coaches, academics and students of coaching psychology, coaching and mentoring and business psychology. It will be an important text for anyone seeking to understand the psychology underpinning their coaching practice, including human resource, learning and development and management professionals, and executives in a coaching role.

Stephen Palmer is a leading coaching psychologist and is president of the International Society for Coaching Psychology. He is professor of practice at the Wales Institute for Work Based Learning and was the first chair of the British Psychology Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology.

Alison Whybrow has been involved in the development of the coaching psychology profession since the early 2000s. A past chair of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology, Alison is now an honorary research fellow at the ISCP International Centre for Coaching Psychology Research. She runs her own coaching and consulting business.



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Second Edition

Edited by Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow

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To Josh, Sam, Harry, Aniket, Tejal and Maggie, of course. (SP)

To all those yet to dwell on this one beautiful earth. (AW)

To all who have supported and continue to support the development of the theory, research, practice and profession of coaching psychology around the world.
(AW and SP)



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Editors

Stephen Palmer

Professor Stephen Palmer, PhD, is founder director of the Centre for Coaching, London, UK. In 2004 he became the first chair of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP) and in 2005 he launched the Coaching Psychology Unit at City University, London (now City, University of London). In 2016 he became adjunct professor of coaching psychology at the Coaching Psychology Unit, Aalborg University, Denmark and in 2018, he became professor of practice at the Wales Institute for Work Based Learning, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. He is honorary consultant director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and co-ordinating director of the ISCP International Centre for Coaching Psychology Research. He is honorary president and fellow of both the International Society for Coaching Psychology and the International Stress Management Association. He has written or edited over 50 books on a range of topics and co-edits a number of journals in the field including the *European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*. In 2008 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award in Recognition of Distinguished Contribution to Coaching Psychology from the BPS SGCP. His interests include jazz, astronomy, coastal walking and art.

Alison Whybrow

Alison, together with colleagues in the UK and internationally, was at the forefront of the development of coaching psychology in the early 2000s. She has contributed papers, chapters and books on the subject of coaching psychology, led research into developing coaching culture and, for many years, directed accredited programmes in coaching practice with i-coach academy. As a consulting editor to coaching and coaching psychology journals and a contributor to the International Society for Coaching Psychology as well as university programmes across Europe, Alison maintains a keen focus on developments in the coaching psychology field whilst running a practice as a coach, consultant and coaching supervisor located in London, UK. Alison specialises in leadership coaching, senior team development and system change.

She holds a degree and PhD in psychology from the University of Liverpool and a number of professional qualifications related to her work as a coach and consultant. Alison works across sectors with both large and small organisations. As a coach and facilitator, Alison integrates a range of psychological and philosophical underpinnings, leadership frameworks and an ecological world view. Alison's interests continue to emerge as her family and community grow around her. She is deeply passionate about the possibilities for transforming our human-earth relationship.

Contributors

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Richard Bryant-Jefferies has worked as a primary care alcohol counsellor and counselling supervisor, managed substance misuse services and managed equality and diversity at a large NHS trust in London. He has written over 20 books on counselling themes including two novels, written in a style that draws the reader into the counselling experience.

Michael Carroll PhD, has worked as a Counselling Psychologist, an Executive Coach and a Supervisor of Executive Coaches. He was Visiting Industrial Professor in the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol and the winner of the 2001 British Psychological Society Award for Distinguished Contributions to Professional Psychology. He is now retired.

Lloyd Chapman DProf, specializes in executive coaching, He has coached Executives and executive teams in Europe and Africa. For his doctoral thesis he developed and researched the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. He lectures at the Stellenbosch Graduate Schools of Business in Coaching and on their Executive Development Program. Email: lachapman@lantic.net

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Foreword

The new millennium in coaching psychology

I am really pleased to see in this volume the massive growth and development of the field of coaching psychology. In the first edition of this book there were only 22 chapters, setting out the newly created field of coaching psychology, whereas in this volume we have 43 chapters which now reflect the further development of concepts and research that has matured this important discipline. We now have a full range of coaching psychology approaches, from cognitive behavioural techniques to humanistic ones (e.g. person-centred therapy), from existential approaches (e.g. gestalt coaching, mindfulness) to constructive techniques (e.g. NLP coaching, personal construct psychology) and systemic approaches (e.g. Transactional Analysis, psychodynamic coaching).

In addition, there is a section on ‘the profession and ethical practice of coaching psychology’, which explores issues of the boundaries between coaching and counselling, the use of psychometrics in coaching, the role of technology, coaching psychology supervision and diversity issues. In developing a new field, these are fundamental issues that need to be articulated, debated and consolidated in creating a vision and understanding of the field.

This new edition has further solidified and defined the field of coaching psychology and provided a strengthened platform for helping people with their personal, work and relationship difficulties. Hopefully, this will help society resolve the issue laid out by Henry David Thoreau in 1853: “How prompt we are to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our bodies; how slow to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our souls”.

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Preface and acknowledgements

Why has it been necessary to publish a second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*? After the comprehensive first edition was published back in 2007 and became a key text on many coaching and coaching psychology programmes, is this revision valid and necessary?

Between 2000, when Dr Anthony Grant announced that coaching psychology had come of age, and 2007, when the first edition of this handbook was published, the frameworks establishing coaching psychology as a psychological sub-discipline had rapidly emerged in the UK and in Australia. Since 2007, the pace of development within the field of coaching psychology has been maintained. These frameworks include: coaching psychology professional bodies; subgroups in the national representative professional psychology bodies; conferences; university programmes offering coaching psychology in undergraduate programmes through to PhD programmes of study; peer-reviewed publications; and professional practice qualifications and accredited status for coaching psychologists. There have been more countries establishing coaching psychology as a sub-discipline within their national frameworks. As a result of this continued focus on coaching psychology, the depth and breadth of coaching psychology programmes, practice and research has continued to grow with benefits for individual coachees and wider client stakeholders.

The coaching and coaching psychology professions continue to inform each other and co-evolve, occupying similar and yet different aspects of the landscape. Although the questions of what is the same and what is different between these areas of the wider profession are less frequently a concern as both are more established and grounded in their own fields.

The International Society for Coaching Psychology and the International Congress for Coaching Psychology forum have emerged as useful collaborative vehicles, connecting researchers, students, practitioners, academics and many national coaching psychology bodies in this ever-emerging global field.

Some considerable thought has gone into the framework of this edition, the structure of each section and the content and flow of each chapter. The book is in four parts that cover a broad range of aspects and approaches that relate to the development of a professional area of practice such as this. They include: Perspectives and research in coaching psychology; Coaching psychology approaches; Application, context and sustainability; and The profession and ethical practice of coaching psychology. Each part is broken into relevant sections, grouping themes that sit together in the landscape of practice. Additionally, each chapter follows a clear flow to enable comparison across different approaches and frameworks. We have very specifically used the word 'client' to indicate organizational clients and 'coachee' to indicate the individual being coached.

A book of this breadth and depth is the result of significant collaboration from colleagues across the globe, our clients and coachees and our publisher, each of whom had a pivotal role in enabling this volume to become a reality. We would like to thank each of our contributors for their inspirational partnership and the incredible work that they do that enables them to make the contributions that they have.

Preface and acknowledgements

We would like to thank our contributors and our publisher for their patience in the production of this volume. In addition, this book would be nothing without the clients and coachees who have brought the practices to life through their stories and the sharing of applications in order that others, too, may learn and benefit from their insights. Finally, we would like to thank the ISCP for coming on board as a partner in placing this book as one of the way stations on the unfolding journey of coaching psychology on the international stage.

International Society for Coaching Psychology

Foreword

The International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) strives to further the discipline and profession of coaching psychology around the world. This includes encouraging the development of the theory, research and practice in coaching psychology and supporting coaching psychologists in their work. Thus, the opportunity to collaborate with this seminal publication aligns and resonates with our key objectives and strategy.

In this second edition, the scope and diversity of topics now available in the 43 chapters of this timely contribution will not disappoint. The structure reflects what's topical and of interest, the evidence base and practice base and the general patterns of coaching psychology observed internationally by the ISCP in the course of our activities such as publications, social media, events and conferences.

Providing a significant contribution to the field, this second edition offers value, whether you are a qualified psychologist, coaching psychologist, coach, student or perhaps someone with a broader interest in the field. The areas covered set out coaching psychology perspectives and research as well as coaching approaches and explore more systemic interventions, professional aspects and ethical practice.

Looking back to the emergence of the field of coaching psychology, I am left with a reflection that we might have thought at the time that many of the goals coaching psychology has actually achieved in recent years were aspirational, if not impossible. This new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* symbolically represents the many milestones achieved during the development of the profession. The future is exciting, and we can now look forward to the potential influence of coaching psychology on the wider psychological profession.

Siobhain O'Riordan
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Part 1

Perspectives and research
in coaching psychology



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Introduction

In Part 1 the context is set with an overview from the editors of this handbook; 'Past, present and future' takes a view of the history, current state and future potential of the profession of coaching psychology. The wealth of development in the field of coaching and coaching psychology over the last decade and a half has been significant. Building forward, we see that coaching and coaching psychology is well placed as areas of practice challenge existing assumptions about how the world is and offer a full range of evidence-based methodologies to support the emergence of new narratives and ways of being as leaders, teams and whole organisations across the for-profit and not-for-profit landscape. This first part continues with a look at some of the more recent developments in the field of coaching psychology. We explore neuroscience (Chapter 2) and how that body of work might be used in coaching practice. In 'Coaching and neuroscience', Patricia Riddell explores how much we might need to know about the brain in order to contribute to an understanding of how coaching works, and how we might apply this with our coachees and clients. Diana Aguiar Vieira and Stephen Palmer take us into a more established area of psychological understanding in their chapter, 'Self-efficacy within coaching and coaching psychology: an integrated Self-efficacy Coaching Model' (Chapter 3). They note that the construct of self-efficacy has been capable of explaining and predicting human behaviour and/or change in several domains and that coaching psychology is not an exception. Goal-focused coaching, a mainstay of coaching practice for both coaches and coaching psychologists, is explored by Anthony Grant in 'Goals and coaching: an integrated evidence-based model of goal-focused coaching and coaching psychology' (Chapter 4). Considered by some as the forefather of modern-day coaching psychology, Anthony notes that although coaching is inherently a goal-focused activity, it is only of late that there has been interest in applying the considerable body of literature on goals and goal setting in the psychological literature to coaching practice. Through this chapter he aims to add further impetus to that trend. The growth and development of positive psychology has paralleled that of coaching psychology and has been an important influence in the growth and practice of coaching and coaching psychology. Positive psychology forms a significant thread in so many coaches' practice. In their chapter 'From positive psychology to the development of positive psychology coaching' (Chapter 5), Sheila Panchal, Stephen Palmer and Suzy Green bring together this rich framework and explore its application as a coaching approach.

The final part of Part 1 is dedicated to understanding the research base underpinning practice, and how to evaluate emerging research to understand its application in practice. The attention to what works, with whom, and in what context is an ongoing quest for coaching psychology research as it is with other

Introduction

branches of psychological practice. This focus is also important in the wider coaching world. Whilst an exhaustive illustration is neither possible nor the goal of these two chapters, they do illuminate some key aspects and some ways of making sense of the current research landscape. In 'Research and the practitioner: getting a perspective on evidence as a coaching psychologist', Annette Fillery-Travis and Sarah Corrie bring to the fore the importance of the research evidence to facilitate the provision of excellent, sustainable and individually tailored services to coachees and their organisations (Chapter 6). Building on those principles, Yi-Ling Lai and Stephen Palmer (Chapter 7) bring us up to date with the evidence base of coaching psychology in 'Understanding evidence-based coaching through the analysis of coaching psychology research methodology'.

Past, present and future

Alison Whybrow and Stephen Palmer

When we first edited this handbook in 2007, the world was a very different place. The global financial crash in 2008, the shift in global power, the Arab spring, the centrality of the digital world, Big Data, the imminent rise of machines, the changing nature of war, diabetes as a fully fledged global health crisis – these events had yet to happen. Prior to these changes, coaching and coaching psychology were flourishing. Now a decade later, we find that coaching and coaching psychology are still flourishing. Increasing complexity in the global landscape, future uncertainty and greater ambiguity mean the need for deeper self-awareness, psychological flexibility, deep collaboration, curious conversations and co-creation is growing. The need for coaching and the skills of coaches and coaching psychologists is certainly not diminishing, but it is changing. There is a maturity and confidence in the field that is reflected in the growth of coaching, its depth and its breadth in particular, moving coaching from a primarily 1:1 focus to a much more holistic and systems focus. A profession, however, is not merely defined by practice. Other aspects have also matured. The development of professional frameworks and standards, an evidence base to underpin practice and take us into new areas of thinking and robust learning and development pathways, including advanced degrees and doctorates, all combine to build the foundations of the professions of coaching and coaching psychology.

Whilst coaching and coaching psychology maintain distinctions, their paths are aligned; walking together rather than divergently, each learns from and is informed by the other. And whilst a particular practitioner may have a preferred professional ‘home’, clients and coachees themselves benefit from a rich collaboration of which this handbook is an example.

In this chapter we build from the first edition, sharing the historical roots of coaching psychology, key aspects of the current state of play and some exploration of the trends of the last decade with a view to useful assumptions we might make at this point in the evolution of this sub-discipline of psychological practice.

From Socrates to the twenty-first century

It could be argued that Socrates’ dialectic method of inquiry, the Socratic method, was an early account of what we would now call a coaching technique being used. This method, stimulating critical thinking through logical questioning, has been used in different professions, including psychology and therapy, for

many years. In essence, psychologists have been practising coaching for decades (Filippi, 1968). If we look back, it was in the 1920s that the father of sports psychology in the United States, Coleman R. Griffith, associate professor of educational psychology at the Laboratory for Research in Athletics, University of Illinois, wrote his groundbreaking book, *The Psychology of Coaching: A Study of Coaching Methods from the Point of View of Psychology* (Griffith, 1926).

The laboratory was established in order to look at three key areas which clearly reflected psychological principles: “a) toward the discovery of pure psychological fact and theory, b) toward the discovery of facts about human behaviour that have a bearing upon athletic skill and athletic mindedness, and c) toward increasing the effectiveness of coaching methods” (Griffith, 1930, p. vii). Griffith’s work focused on the psychology of coaching in the sports field. Griffith believed a coach was more than an instructor. “He is a teacher, in the ancient sense of the word . . . a character-builder; he molds personalities” (1926, p. 2). Griffith believed that the coach should be an athlete, a physiologist and a psychologist. In his book *The Psychology of Coaching* (Griffith, 1926), Griffith covered aspects of coaching such as handling spectators, sports stars and ‘jinxed’ players, the problems of over-coaching teams and the laws and principles of learning. Griffith was very productive academically. His publications and work in the field were rediscovered by the sports psychology fraternity in the 1960s as proponents attempted to establish sports psychology as a discipline of psychology in America. Griffith’s use of psychological theories emphasising the importance of psychology in coaching, which informed coaching practice based on his research, can be considered the springboard to coaching psychology many years later.

Grant (2005, 2006) reviewed papers from the behavioural sciences and scholarly business databases, focusing on executive, workplace and life coaching papers. An early scholarly paper was by Gorby (1937), who described how newer employees were coached by older employees to reduce waste and thereby increase profits, which would maximise profit-sharing programme bonuses. Grant noted the exponential escalation in peer-reviewed research and studies from 1995 to 2005, indicating an emerging body of empirical support for the effectiveness of workplace and life coaching. The impact and effectiveness of psychological principles in coaching and coach training has not always been clearly considered. Some coach training courses may have been based on psychological principles, but more implicitly than explicitly (Linley & Harrington, 2007). Additionally, some proprietary models and frameworks developed by early coach training providers were not subject to rigorous research. Grant (2007) suggests influences on the emergence of coaching psychology as we know it today include: humanistic psychology (e.g. Maslow, 1968), the 1960s human potential movement (HPM) and, more latterly, the positive psychology movement (e.g. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The turn of the twenty-first century marked a pivotal period in the development of coaching psychology. The positive psychology paradigm, with its focus on well-being (rather than ill health) underpinned by research, provided psychologists who coached from a scientist practitioner background with an alternative perspective, differing at that time from clinical, counselling and organisational psychology. By 2005, there were coaching psychology interest groups established within the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

A global movement

We can now say that the development of coaching psychology theory and practice is global. There are at least 21 formal interest groups including those in the APS and BPS (see Table 1.1). In some countries, a separate coaching psychology group has not been formally developed, yet the interest exists within psychological bodies. For example, in the US, the American Psychological Association’s Division 13 has become actively involved in coaching psychology, although it currently does not have a specific interest group.

The collaborative development of coaching psychology around the world has been intentional. In 2009, Peter Zarris (chair IGCP) and Stephen Palmer (past chair, SGCP), in conversation with colleagues, developed

Table 1.1 Coaching psychology interest groups around the globe

The Australian Psychological Society, Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (APS IGCP)	Australia 2002
British Psychological Society, Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP)	United Kingdom 2004
Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology (SSCP)	Switzerland 2006
Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa, Interest Group in Coaching and Consulting Psychology (SIOPSA IGCCP)	South Africa 2006
Danish Psychological Association, Society for Evidence-based Coaching (SEBC)	Denmark 2007
International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) (Prior to 2011 known as Society for Coaching Psychology)	2008
Collegi Oficial de Psicologia de Catalunya, Section of Work and Organisational Psychology, Working Group in Coaching (COPC CGCOP WG) (The Psychology Coaching Section was formalised in 2012.)	Spain 2008
Psychological Society of Ireland, Division of Work and Organisational Psychology, Coaching Psychology Group (PSI DWOP CPG)	Ireland 2008
Hungarian Association for Coaching Psychology	Hungary 2008
International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP, Independent). Became 'International' in 2011	2008
New Zealand Psychological Society, Coaching Psychology Special Interest Group (CPSIG)	New Zealand 2009
Association of Coaching Psychologists* (Swedish Psych. Assoc. affiliated, 2018)	Sweden 2009
Israel Association for Coaching Psychology (IACP)	Israel 2010
Dutch Psychological Association, Work and Organisation Section, Coaching Psychology Group (DPA WO CPG) (The CPG ceased in 2015.)	Netherlands 2010–2015
Japan Society of Coaching Psychology (JCPA, Independent)	Japan 2011
Society for Coaching Psychology Italy (SCP, Independent)	Italy 2011
Korean Coaching Psychological Association (KCPA), Korean Psychological Association (KPA)	South Korea 2011
Society of Consulting Psychology (Division 13), American Psychological Association (APA)	USA 2012
Hungarian Psychological Association, Coaching Psychology Division	Hungary 2014
Coaching Psychology Special Interest Groups, Singapore Psychological Society.	Singapore 2016
Serbian Association for Coaching Psychology (Independent)	Serbia 2018

a proposal focusing on how coaching psychology could be further developed internationally. The International Congress of Coaching Psychology (ICCP, 2010) was set up to:

- promote the development of the coaching psychology profession around the world;
- bring together the coaching psychology community;
- share within the psychology community the theory, research and practice of coaching and coaching psychology;
- engage all professionals interested in coaching and coaching psychology.

This collaboration has had a positive impact. Chapter 43 builds a rich picture of the development of coaching psychology around the globe.

Regulatory landscape

The development of coaching psychology has been influenced by regulation of the practice of psychology and the legal use of the term ‘psychologist’ around the world, with the use of the term limited to those appropriately registered, licensed, accredited or chartered, depending on the country of practice. In the UK, there are nine protected psychology titles; in the US the situation is more complex as licensing differs between different states. In some countries there is no legislation over who can call themselves a ‘psychologist’. Coaching is not a legally defined profession, so whilst coaching professional bodies hold standards of practice for coaches, the term ‘coaching’ is not restricted. This situation has positive impacts as well as challenges for both coaches and coaching psychologists.

The regulatory landscape for psychology has had a useful impact on the development of coaching psychology professional bodies. It is not possible for one professional body to govern at a global level; instead, collaborative development providing a holding global framework with local differentiation has been designed into the profession from the beginning. In this context, the International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) has become a touch point for most coaching psychology groups around the globe, but it does not replace or otherwise overshadow any one professional group. This is a systemic difference between the professions of coaching and coaching psychology that is interesting to observe.

Defining coaching psychology

There is no one definition of coaching psychology. Similar to consulting psychology, counselling psychology and clinical psychology, the definition of coaching psychology was developed by each national professional body based on its general policies, committees and expert input and with reference to the legislation relevant to psychologists in that context.

The APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology was established in 2002. Its definition highlights a link between positive psychology and coaching psychology: *Coaching Psychology; as an applied positive psychology, draws on and develops established psychological approaches, and can be understood as being the systematic application of behavioural science in the enhancement of life experience, work performance and well-being for individuals, groups and organisations who do not have clinically significant mental health (sic) or abnormal levels of distress* (APS, 2016). Not all coaching psychology groups make the link with positive psychology so explicitly. Key themes to note include: psychological approaches, enhancement of life experience, work performance and well-being. In addition, the focus is on working with coachees who *do not* have clinically significant mental health problems. However, in practice a coachee may be suffering from a disorder such as panic attacks, and the coaching psychologist or coach may still be assisting the coachee through the coaching process to, for example, update their CV and seek a new job. The coachee may be seeing a therapist or medical consultant in parallel for treatment of a mental health problem. Case by case consideration of such circumstances is important.

The BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) was launched in December 2004. The definition of coaching psychology, based on and adapted from the work of Grant and Palmer (2002), became: *Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches* (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006, p. 8). The key themes relating to psychological approaches, enhanced well-being and performance are similar to the APS IGCP definition. The intention to be inclusive and to encourage membership from across the spectrum of psychological practice meant positive psychology was not explicitly stated in the definition by the BPS SGCP, although aspects of positive psychology informed the definition.

From 2005, more coaching psychology groups were established (see Table 1.1), their definitions reflecting their interpretations of coaching psychology in their particular context. For example, the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology (SIOPSA), Interest Group in Coaching and Consulting Psychology (IGCCP), South Africa, defines coaching psychology, practiced by a registered practitioner, as: *a conversational process of facilitating positive development and change towards optimal functioning, well-being and increased performance in the work and personal life domains, in the absence of clinically significant mental health issues, through the application of a*

wide range of psychological theories and principles. The intervention is action-orientated with measureable outcomes, and is also reflective towards creating greater self-awareness and meaning, and is directed at individuals, groups, organisations and communities within a culturally specific context (SIOPSA, IGCCP, 2016, p. 8). Comparing coaching psychology as defined by psychological professional bodies and coaching as defined by coaching professional bodies, the difference is the more likely the inclusion of psychology or psychological approaches on the one hand, and their absence on the other. This diversity of definitions of coaching psychology offers a richness to the field.

Research – shaping factors

Coaching and coaching psychology research has flourished, with an increase in studies using randomised control trials (RCTs) and most research continuing to use a mix of qualitative and less stringent quantitative methodologies.

Coaching research has increasingly started to unpack some of the mechanisms by which coaching is effective, providing insight, for example, into the nature of the working alliance that might be more important in a coaching relationship. Whilst certain psychological frameworks have been demonstrated to impact positively (e.g. Green, Oades, & Grant 2006), the working alliance is considered a key component in the effectiveness of coaching as it is in therapeutic settings. Interestingly, emerging research into the qualities of the relationship indicates an important distinction: the strength of the bond or emotional rapport appears more important in a therapeutic setting (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003), whilst those aspects of the relationship that are associated with the goal and task appear more powerful in coaching settings (de Haan, Grant, Burger, & Eriksson, 2016). It seems that the working alliance or coaching relationship offers insight into how coaching techniques are transformed into effective interventions according to those most closely involved, yet it is by no means the whole story. Current research trends and themes are discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

The practice of coaches and coaching psychologists

During 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006/2007, annual surveys were undertaken in the UK to explore the views and experiences of coaching psychologists as this fledging area of practice emerged (see Whybrow & Palmer, 2006a, 2006b). The early surveys were published, and, ongoing surveys by Whybrow and Palmer looking at the trends in practices have been undertaken on a regular basis over the past two decades. In the first edition of this handbook, Palmer and Whybrow (2007) reported more than 28 different psychological approaches used by coaching psychologists, of which 23 were used by at least 10% of those surveyed. A recent global survey of coaching psychologists (Palmer & Whybrow, 2017) identified more than 38 psychologically based approaches and ways of integrating approaches, 26 of which were reported used by more than 10% of coaching psychologists surveyed (see 1.2 below). Additionally, in a parallel survey, coaches (rather than coaching psychologists specifically) also reported using these psychological approaches in their practices. The prevalence of the different approaches among coaching and coaching psychology survey participants is shown in Table 1.2.

Interestingly, the six most frequently used approaches were the same for both coaching psychologists and coaches in this survey, with positive psychology at the top of that list for both sets of practitioners. This reaffirms the links between positive psychology and coaching psychology; however, that link is not explicit for everyone. Compared with a similar type of survey a decade ago, mindfulness approaches have become much more mainstream in both coaching psychology (48%) and coaching (46%) practice.

When forced to choose just one model as a core underpinning, 35 different psychologically based approaches and ways of integrating approaches were noted as core across the coaching psychologists who responded, with most respondents noting cognitive behavioural approaches (20%). Solution-focused cognitive behavioural (10%), positive psychology (8%) and solution-focused approaches (8%) were the next three most frequently cited core underpinnings. For coaches, 32 different approaches were noted as core, with solution focused (10%), cognitive behavioural approaches (9%) and positive psychology (9%) most frequently cited as the core model. Choosing one approach was not easy for everyone as this respondent

Table 1.2 Percentage of coaching psychologists and coaches who use different psychologically based coaching approaches

<i>Approach</i>	<i>% Coaching Psychologists</i>	<i>% Coaches</i>
Positive Psychology	63	57
Cognitive Behavioural	57	46
Mindfulness	48	46
Solution Focused	43	42
Strengths Based	42	48
Goal Focused	42	49
Adult Learning	40	32
Behavioural	37	40
Cognitive	31	21
Solution Focused Cognitive Behavioural	29	21
Person-centred	28	41
Humanistic	28	28
Action Focused	27	30
Motivational Interviewing	27	22
Developmental	22	31
Narrative	22	17
Systemic	19	17
Existential	16	11
Transactional Analysis	15	25
Co-active	14	25
Neurolinguistic Programming	14	30
Problem Focused	14	15
Psychodynamic	13	10
Rational Emotive Behaviour	12	7
Gestalt Approaches	12	17
Compassion Focused	11	13

noted when asked to select just one underpinning: “Almost impossible to say, since it depends on the person, the role and the organisation as a whole”. These results are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

What we can see is coaching psychologists and coaches alike have diverse underpinnings to their work and integrate a range of psychological approaches into their practice.

Whilst this survey tells us how people choose to categorise their own practice, and that there may be more similarities than differences between the coaches and coaching psychologists who completed the survey, regardless of qualifications, what is not clear is what this apparent diversity means in practice. What practical impact does this diversity have for coachees and clients? Are the categorisations used by practitioners applied consistently? For example, what are people categorising as positive psychology or as mindfulness? Both of these are very broad terms. How do coaches and coaching psychologists construct their coaching practice? To explore these questions, an in-depth qualitative approach is required.

What of the future?

This handbook details 24 of the 41 psychological approaches and ways of integrating approaches mentioned in the survey, providing a further step forward in sharing how to apply many of the approaches in

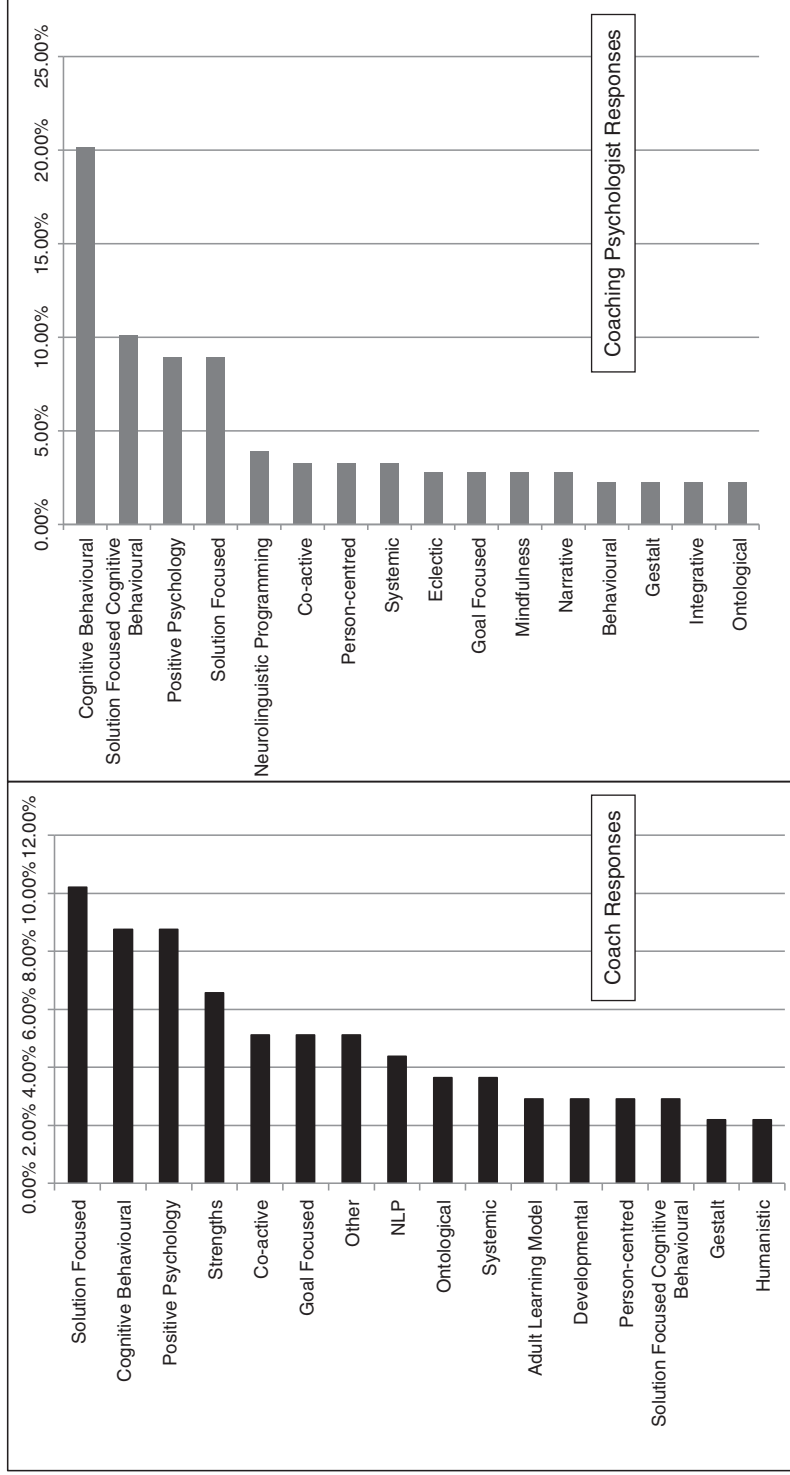


Figure 1.1 Showing the top 16 responses to the question: Which approach do you most use in your coaching/coaching psychology practice? Choose ONLY one.

coaching practice. In this edition of the handbook, we have consciously chosen to include approaches that can be applied to situations of growing complexity, strengthening the systemic awareness of practitioners, enabling hidden patterns to emerge with coachees and with clients. As a subset of wider psychological practice, coaching psychologists often arrive on their journey of coaching practice with systemic underpinnings, whether that is working with organisations, working as environmental psychologists, with forensic systems, or elsewhere; a wider lens and understanding of systems and system dynamics brings advantages.

This attention to the detailed impact of specific approaches, together with holding emerging uncertainty in a complex world, offers something of a paradox to coaching psychologists. Whilst RCTs offer a specific type of evidence of impact that is useful, the in-the-moment reality of unfolding emergence in a coaching session, working with what is uncertain and complex to find a healthy way forward, requires awareness of robust techniques in general and personal and professional ways of knowing that go far beyond those techniques.

As our way of living and working as a species on an earth with finite resources and a new age of human activity impacting earth's evolution (the Anthropocene) comes into central focus, approaches that allow us to let go of what we have assumed to be true and allow hidden or ignored patterns to emerge, approaches that consider not just the individual coachee but explicitly consider the system that they are part of, are required. This brings with it some interesting questions: are we, as coaches or coaching psychologists, simply present to meet a coachee's needs and expectations? What about the wider system stakeholders? How can we stretch the focus so that we are looking beyond what is immediate? What kind of leaders, community, society, businesses and life does the world need, and how are we stepping up to that bigger challenge as coaching psychologists? If coaching and coaching psychology were part of the rebalancing of the human-earth relationship, what research would we be commissioning? What questions would we be exploring? How would we be framing our intent? How can we enable coaching to achieve its potential as a positive component in the evolution of a healthy future?

Holding that tension and still being able to dance is perhaps what we're aiming for.

As a reader of this handbook, you may be starting off on your journey to becoming a coach or a leader-as-coach, or you may have been working in this field for a significant number of years – whatever your starting point, our intention is that this handbook provides you with a challenge about the coach or coaching psychologist you are becoming. What do you need to stretch, what do you need to unlearn in order to move forward? How do you need to develop your skills in order to be able to hold your clients and facilitate their path to growth, greater psychological mindedness and systems awareness? What do you need to do to grow the 'thinking space' that your coachees think into?

Discussion points

- 1 How do you define both coaching and coaching psychology?
- 2 In your experience, is the working alliance a key component in the effectiveness of coaching?
- 3 How do you see the profession of coaching psychology progressing over the next decade?
- 4 Is there any real difference between the practice of coaching and coaching psychology?

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Coaching and neuroscience

Patricia Riddell

Our brains are the basis of every thought, emotion, action and behaviour that we experience. Since the essence of coaching involves changing thoughts, emotions, actions and behaviours, it is self-evident that coaching must depend on changes in networks of neurons in the brain. It might therefore follow that a greater understanding of the neural systems that are involved in our day-to-day behaviour, and how these can be changed, would provide useful insights into how coaching works. Further, since, coaching does not always create as much change as an individual might hope, a better understanding of the human brain might also provide a means to make behavioural change easier to obtain and more reliable to sustain. In this way, the promise of neuroscience is substantial and a goal worthy of pursuit.

The unresolved question is, “how much do we need to know about the brain in order to contribute to an understanding of how coaching works?”. There are a wide range of views in the literature about the degree to which our current knowledge of neuroscience is sufficient, from those that are highly sceptical (Jarrett, 2014) to those that believe that the field is sufficiently advanced to provide useful information for coaches (Bossos, Riddell, and Sartain, 2015; Boyatzis, 2012; Boyatzis, Passarelli, Koenig, Lowe, Blessy, Stoller, and Phillips, 2012; Brann, 2014). As with most dilemmas of this kind, the answer to whether we know enough is probably somewhere in the middle – there are areas in which our current knowledge of neuroscience provides useful clues to indicate why some coaching techniques are successful, but we are a long way from a full understanding either of how the brain works or of how coaching works.

The field of coaching is diverse and therefore it is important to start with a working definition for this chapter. Here, since we will be discussing coaching in relation to neuroscience, the definition that will be used is that coaching psychology is used to enhance well-being and performance both in personal life and work domains and is underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches.

In this chapter, a differentiation is made between evidence which provides suggestions for what might work in coaching based on our increasing understanding of the brain (evidence-supported coaching), and evidence which provides support for a particular coaching intervention based on research which has been designed specifically to test that intervention (evidence-based coaching: Stober, Wildflower, and Drake, 2006). By discriminating between these types of evidence, it will become clear that, while neuroscience has the potential to contribute to evidence-based coaching in the future, currently the evidence to support the efficacy of coaching interventions is extremely sparse. Considerable care is therefore required in interpreting the supporting neuroscience evidence that is available since this has not been designed to directly test

the efficacy of coaching. Ways in which the reader can become more aware of the limitations of research through differentiating evidence from interpretation are discussed. Finally, some indications of directions for future research are also provided

Neuroscience

Neuro-science

Neuroscience is a general term which encompasses any or all of the sciences, such as neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, neurophysiology and experimental psychology, which deal with the structure and/or function of the brain and nervous system. Here, we will mainly be referring to neuroscience in terms of understanding the patterns of electrical activation that are associated with particular behaviours and that occur in systems (connected areas) within the brain. While this field is expanding exponentially, it is still in its relative infancy and is constrained by the techniques currently available to measure neural activity. None of these are perfect. For instance, we have techniques which provide excellent information on the timing of neural activity in relation to behaviour (electroencephalography: EEG; event related potentials: ERP; magnetoencephalography: MEG). These techniques can be used to test the order in which particular areas of the brain are activated to produce specific behaviours; however, they lack the ability to determine precisely where in the brain this activation arises. In contrast, we have techniques which are able to provide relatively accurate information about where in the brain activity is found (positron emission tomography: PET; functional magnetic resonance imaging: fMRI), but these techniques provide less accuracy in the timing of events. Therefore all imaging data is constrained in some manner. The most recent neural imaging combines two of these techniques (e.g. EEG and fMRI) to attempt to maximise information on both the timing and place of events in the brain.

Neuro-science

Science is the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment. Scientists use existing evidence to create hypotheses about the world and then test these by designing experiments. Importantly, it is clearly understood in science that it is impossible to prove that something is true – a hypothesis is only a possible interpretation of the evidence to date, and the hypothesis is valid only until the first piece of evidence that proves it wrong. For this reason, scientists design experiments with the aim of disproving their hypotheses. They seek evidence that conclusively demonstrates that their ideas are wrong rather than providing evidence that can only continue to support the hypothesis without ever proving it. If a study which has been carefully designed to prove a hypothesis incorrect does not prove it wrong, the results provide some support for the hypothesis. It is therefore reasonable to think of science as an advanced form of metaphor – scientists provide their best guess at what is true about the world using the latest understanding. What makes science different from other types of metaphor is that the current metaphor is always being challenged and improved to reflect the latest research evidence.

It is important to understand that there is no precise scientific truth about the way the brain works – only the scientists' best guess based on evidence to date. So, when you read that scientists have "proved that . . .", you can instantly imply that this is not a scientist's viewpoint! This can act as a warning to be particularly sceptical about what follows. Additionally, any one theory reflects one scientist's opinion of the current state at a single point in time. There are likely to be several interpretations of the evidence in a given field, any of which might be proven wrong. Reading widely in the literature can limit the tendency to treat opinion as definitive or one theory as truth.

In addition, an unintended consequence of the scientific approach is that it results in many negative findings where scientists do not find evidence to disprove a particular theory but also do not provide conclusive evidence to support it either. Scientific journals accept papers that are conclusive in one direction or another,

but they are reluctant to publish papers that are inconclusive. This results in what scientists call “the file drawer” phenomenon in which data that neither fully support nor disprove a theory, and therefore cannot be published, pile up awaiting some additional research that will make the data publishable (Rosenthal, 1979). As a result, what is in the literature is not a complete version of research findings. It is important therefore for coaches and coaching psychologists to be conservative in interpreting research findings that have not been replicated since this might be because the next study which was designed to test a particular finding was inconclusive. For these reasons, the best people to interpret neuroscience evidence are the neuroscientists themselves. When looking for reading material in this field, consider the credentials of the author(s) and choose to read articles and books that have been written by people who have a training in neuroscience rather than those who are interpreting the field from a non-neuroscientific point of view. It is always important to approach new ideas with a sceptical curiosity and to be aware of the difference between descriptions that are based on good research evidence and those that are based primarily on opinion. Be alert for where the neuroscience has come from (who is the expert) and what evidence has been provided to support the case (what research papers are being cited). The important question to ask is whether there is original data being cited from a peer-reviewed publication that you could read if you wanted to check the veracity of the claims being made. If not, then the strategy might be based more on opinion than on research. For further reading, see Dias, Palmer, O’Riordan, de Freitas, Habib, do Nascimento Bevilaqua, and Nardi (2015).

How can neuroscience be useful in coaching?

Coaches can bring their expert knowledge to a coaching situation when the knowledge of the coach is greater than that of the coachee and the knowledge base is relevant to the coachee’s goals (Stober and Grant, 2006). It could therefore be argued that having expertise in how the brain works might be considered an appropriate form of expert knowledge for a coach. This expertise would certainly include knowledge of the areas of the brain and their function (see Table 2.1 for a brief summary of the function of some important brain areas).

There are some excellent free apps which can be downloaded which provide easy access to this information (e.g. The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 3D Brain app).

One way in which anatomical information could be used would be to provide an explanation for behaviour at the level of activation within the brain. For instance, neuroscience might be used to indicate that the level of activation of the amygdala is increased when we become aware of, and respond to, threats in our environment (Whalen and Phelps, 2009). To relate this to coaching, consider the increase in activity in the amygdala of a coachee who has a particularly negative reaction to a particular person in their workplace. This increased arousal might be sufficient to interfere with their ability to perform their job well. However, neuroscience also shows that the level of activation of the amygdala is reduced when the threat is re-evaluated and that this involves increased activation of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (Urry *et al.*, 2006). While the amygdala treats all threats equally, the ventromedial prefrontal cortex can take context into account and therefore reduces the response in the amygdala when the threat is considered as part of a bigger picture. The coaching intervention might help them to understand their negative reaction, noting that it arises from evaluation of threat which increases activation of their amygdala. By providing them with choices about possible alternative behaviours, activity in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex can be increased thus decreasing amygdala activation and therefore the sense of threat. In this case, what neuroscience has added is a description of the changes in neural activity that would occur as a result of creating new options for their behaviour. Descriptions of this sort, however, only change the level at which the explanation is provided (from behavioural to neural) without necessarily providing any additional information that might enhance the coaching intervention per se. It does not provide any information on how to increase activation in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. Put like this, neuroscience could almost be viewed as advanced phrenology (measuring the human skull to infer personality) – we are using neuroimaging techniques to describe the parts of the brain that are active from the inside of the head, rather than just from the bumps

Table 2.1 Summary of parts of the brain with their function

<i>Brain Area</i>	<i>Function</i>
Frontal Cortex	Executive Function: Including Working Memory, Attention, Inhibition, Decision Making
Parietal Cortex	Association between Senses, Spatial Awareness
Temporal Cortex	Hearing and Memory
Occipital Cortex	Vision
Cingulate Cortex	Regulation of Emotions and Pain
Hippocampus	Long-term Memory
Insula	Integration of Visceral Information (heart rate, breathing rate, etc.) That Signals Emotional Response
Basal Ganglia	Habit Formation (substantia nigra) Threat Processing (amygdala) Motivation and Reward (ventral striatum, nucleus accumbens)
Thalamus	Sensory Perception and Attention
Hypothalamus	Hormone Control and Production
Pituitary	
Tectum	Visual and Auditory Maps of the World
Pons	Sleep, Body Functions, Sensation and Posture
Cerebellum	Movement Control, Motor Learning
Brain Stem	Breathing, Heart Rate, Blood Pressure

on the outside of our heads. Therefore, just knowing which parts of the brain drive our behaviour does not advance our understanding of coaching to any great extent.

Displaying knowledge of the parts of the brain in this way can only be used in order to provide credibility to the field. Sometimes, coaches are more prepared to try a new way of thinking when they are provided with an understanding of how their brain is currently processing information and the new ways of processing that can be developed. As part of a deeper understanding of the neural mechanisms involved in the threat response and how these can be altered, it can have benefit. However, it is important to notice when neuroscience appears, as in this case, to stand as a proxy for expert knowledge without adding greater understanding (Weisberg, Keil, Goodstein, Rawson, and Gray, 2008). One reason to be cautious of explanations at this level is that they can sometimes result in too much credence being placed on the efficacy of any coaching strategy that is described in terms of activation of the brain. If neuroscience explanations go no further than to name the parts of the brain involved, there is the possibility that neuroscience might lose its credibility. It is important that we identify when neuroscientific terms are being used inappropriately by individuals who do not have a thorough understanding of the field, the complexities of the research techniques used to study it, the evidence that each technique can and cannot provide and the interpretation of the evidence. Use of neuroscience in this way can lead to neuro-myths which are sustained by being passed along in blogs and articles. Examples of these include that we only use 10% of our brains, that there are left brain and right brain people, or that the reptilian brain controls our emotional responses. There is very good evidence that each of these statements is false (e.g. Jarrett, 2014; della Chiesa, 2006). Communication between neuroscientists and the public is essential to dispel such myths and to keep neuroscience in the public arena up to date and accurate.

The lack of any regulatory framework to determine who can claim to be a neuroscientist within the coaching field has the potential to lead to overuse of the term by unqualified practitioners. Thus, while it is not necessary for everyone who uses neuroscientific explanations in their practice to have

a PhD in neuroscience, it is important that there is some distinction made between people who have real expert knowledge in this area and those who have a more superficial understanding. One way that this might be improved is through the introduction of courses that are carefully regulated. There are some coaching qualifications that are delivered by trained neuroscientists, but this is still extremely rare.

With all of these caveats in place, it is now possible to consider what our current understanding of the brain might add to coaching practice.

Using neuroscience to support coaching interventions

Understanding neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity is the ability of the brain to change over time. In order to be able to change behaviour, beliefs and thoughts quickly and efficiently, there needs to be some component in the brain that can change at the same rate. Thus, every time a new behaviour is generated, something needs to change in the brain in order for that new information to be stored (even temporarily). One component of the brain that is able to change rapidly is the connections between our neurones (Nowakowski, 1987). Neurones in the brain connect with thousands of other neurones at junctions called synapses. When we learn something new, new synapses between appropriate neurones are created to store this information. It might be tempting to think that once a synapse is created, it is permanent – so long as the connection between the two neurones is used sufficiently. However, this is not quite the case. Synapses appear to be more like skin cells – they are continually lost and replaced over time. Indeed, it has been estimated that 20% of synapses can change in a 24-hour period (Purves, Voyvodic, Magrassi, and Yawo, 1987). So, while the strength of a connection between two neurones can remain relatively constant over time, the actual synapses creating this connection will change regularly.

Creating and destroying synapses is an energy-consuming process, but it is crucial to the function of the brain since this gives the brain its huge capacity for change or plasticity (Purves, White, and Riddle, 1996). If the brain made synapses but did not unmake them, we would have no means to unlearn facts or behaviours which are no longer useful to us. For instance, behaviours that we might have learnt as a toddler are unlikely to be as useful to us as adults, or we may have learnt a fact that was untrue (or that has been replaced by more recent evidence). Changing our representations of knowledge and behaviour in real time requires us both to build new synapses and remove outdated synapses. This requires a means to determine which information is still current and which is no longer needed. The synapses which connect two neurones are retained if the information represented is repeated or is marked as important (by emotional intensity, for instance). Connections between neurones which are inactive for some time are removed. This ability to build and remove synapses confers a fundamental evolutionary benefit since it provides us with a means of learning in new environments.

We not only create new synapses, but it is now known that we can also create new neurones in some parts of the brain (e.g. hippocampus: e.g. Gross, 2000; Van Praag, Kemperman, and Gage, 2000). As our understanding of the creation of new neurones has increased, we have discovered contexts in which we make more neurones than average and contexts in which we make fewer. We make fewer new neurones when we are depressed or anxious, and we create more new neurones when we exercise and when we are in enriched environments (Van Praag, Kemperman, and Gage, 2000).

Importantly, evidence suggests that more new neurones are created as we exercise than are lost through depression or anxiety. Indeed, evidence suggests that poorer mental health is related to lower neuroplasticity while increased cognitive flexibility is related to higher neuroplasticity (Kays, Hurley, and Taber, 2012). In addition, neuroplasticity, while greater in infancy, is evident across the lifespan and continues to be found in ageing populations (Gutchess, 2014). Thus our brains are created for a lifetime of learning, and learning keeps us mentally healthy and cognitively flexible.

Implications for coaching

One belief that can undermine motivation to engage with coaching interventions is if the coachee believes that they are unable to change for some reason. This might take the form of being too old, too stupid, too inexperienced or other similar limiting beliefs. In these cases, it is possible that an understanding of the fundamental nature of the human brain and the mechanism by which it creates new learning can help to overcome such beliefs.

Neuroplasticity and learning

Individual differences have been found in the degree to which people believe that intelligence and personality can develop (incremental theory) compared to believing that intelligence and personality are fixed properties (entity theory: Dweck, 2006). A considerable body of research has demonstrated that children and adolescents have greater motivation to learn, and less fear of failure, if they hold the belief that intelligence (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck, 2007) and personality (Yeager, Johnson, Spitzer, Trzesniewski, Powers, and Dweck, 2014) can change over time rather than being fixed. For instance, neuroimaging studies have demonstrated that beliefs about intelligence can affect how we process positive and negative feedback in learning situations (Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good, and Dweck, 2006). Individuals who believed that intelligence is fixed showed greater activation in the frontal cortex to negative feedback than those who believed it can be developed. The size of this activation was positively related to their concern that errors in answering questions would make them look foolish in the eyes of others. This suggests that, in individuals with a belief that intelligence is fixed, the potential to feel foolish interferes with the processing information that might prevent future failure. In comparison, individuals who believe that intelligence can develop showed longer activation in brain areas associated with memory and so were better able to remember the correct responses when re-tested.

If beliefs about whether intelligence is fixed or not can influence the way that we learn, it might be possible to increase motivation for, and approach to, learning by changing this belief. There is some evidence that this is possible. Yeager and Dweck (2012) taught students that intelligence and personality is not fixed but that it can change over time. In a series of studies, they demonstrated that this had a positive impact on academic achievement in maths and that it lowered aggressive responses and stress in situations in which students were being bullied. The authors concluded that learning how intelligence can develop can increase resilience in adolescents and young adults.

In a related study, Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck (2007) taught secondary schools students about the structure of the brain followed by learning about either memory (control group) or about neuroplasticity (experimental group). There was a significant difference in maths grades between groups, with the experimental group scoring higher than the control group when tested after the intervention. This effect was mediated by change in motivation with significantly more children in the experimental group showing a positive change in motivation following the intervention. Teachers' comments included that:

M was [performing] far below grade level. During the past few weeks she has voluntarily asked for help during her lunch period in order to improve her test taking performance. Her grades drastically improved from a failing grade to an 84 in her recent exam.

(Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck, 2007, p 256)

This research suggests that motivation is influenced by the belief that intelligence and personality are not fixed; this belief can be installed through an understanding of neuroplasticity and of how the brain learns. From this, it would be tempting to speculate that whether individuals have an incremental or entity focus on intelligence and personality would impact on their willingness to engage in coaching and the effectiveness of coaching interventions.

Implications for coaching

This is an example of where the neuroscience literature can provide evidence which can be interpreted to give possible insights into how to increase the effectiveness of coaching. Knowing about the ability of the brain to change and the reasons that it has evolved this way can help to induce a growth mindset, thus increasing motivation and willingness to change. One way this can be used is by reminding coachees that the brain is sculpted through experience. New connections form in the areas of the brain that are being used for a new task. By seeking new experiences which provide opportunity to practice, over time, the brain will create the necessary pathways in order to make the new behaviour automatic. Neuroscience helps us to understand that learning is limited not by the ability to learn but by the lack of motivation to seek out relevant opportunities to practice new skills.

While the research outlined here would suggest that helping coachees to understand how the brain learns should increase the belief that change is possible, to date, there is no research examining whether this knowledge can directly influence the outcome of coaching interventions. Further practitioner-based research is required to demonstrate that the benefits of coaching are increased when combined with an understanding of the synaptic mechanisms through which the brain learns and the degree of neuroplasticity that this engenders in the human brain.

Neuroscience of engagement

Another way in which neuroscience might provide insights that are useful in coaching is when it can be used to reach conclusions that in some way extend, or are counter-intuitive to, our current beliefs. There are some things that we know and that appear intuitively true about how we engage with other people. For instance, at an individual level, imitation of behaviours through observation has long been known to be a mechanism used for learning – even in early childhood, as demonstrated in the classic experiments of Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963). In these experiments, children observed the aggressive behaviour of adults after which they were given an opportunity to imitate this behaviour. Children were found to copy what the adults did after observing their behavior, but they did not produce aggressive behaviours of this sort if they had not observed them. From this research, we have learnt that imitation is a powerful learning tool for children and adults alike. One important system involved in imitating others is the mirror neuron system. Neurons in this system are active both when we observe someone else performing an action and when we perform the same action, thus enabling conversion of observed behaviour to action (Iacoboni, 2009).

In addition to imitating behaviours, another recently evolved skill that enables social interaction in humans is the ability to read other people's minds and to guess what they might be thinking or why they might be behaving in a certain way (also known as theory of mind: Frith and Frith, 2012). Children in the Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) study were more likely to imitate an aggressive act after seeing an adult rewarded and less likely to imitate after seeing an adult punished, suggesting that the children were able to hypothesise about the likely consequence of their own actions based on evidence from other people. Similarly, we can easily imagine the facial expressions, posture, tone of voice and even some of the thoughts of someone who has recently been promoted, and we can contrast this with the patterns we might expect for someone who has recently split up with their partner. When mind reading, we can use people's behaviour to predict their emotional responses, and we also can use people's emotional responses to predict their behaviour. The ability to predict other people's behaviours develops in stages during childhood. As infants and younger children, we learn to understand our own physical and emotional responses to our environment. These experiences are then used to interpret other people's responses to the environment by imagining what we would think, feel and do in the same situation and by noticing similar outward signs of these responses in others (Carpendale and Lewis, 2004). So, if we imagine that we would smile when we heard we had been promoted, and then we see someone else smile in the same situation, we hypothesise that they are feeling what we would feel. The process of imagining this experience can result in emotional contagion – we begin

to feel what we imagine they feel (Decety and Svetlova, 2011). Studies have demonstrated using social networking data that emotions spread not only between individuals but also across wider networks (Fowler & Christakis, 2008). People who are friends with happy people are more likely to be happy in the future. Analysis showed that this was the result not just of happy people mixing with other happy people but that happiness actively spread across a network of people over time and distance. Thus, emotional contagion is not limited to individuals in close proximity but is a collective phenomenon.

Later in childhood and as adults, we learn to understand people's behaviours, and at this point, we no longer automatically feel the same emotions as they do (Decety and Svetlova, 2011). Emotional understanding allows separation of other people's emotional responses from our own – an important ability when coaching people through difficult situations. Whether we use emotional contagion or emotional understanding to predict another person's emotional response, if we guess correctly, the resulting shared experience can create a sense of rapport between individuals. It is worth noting here that our mind reading is not always correct. While we might feel excitement and pride when offered a promotion, another individual might feel anxiety that they might not have the skill set for the job, or they might feel loss since they will be moving away from a team of people with whom they have enjoyed working. It is important to check our predictions about other people's emotional responses. These should be treated as working hypotheses only.

Our social brain therefore allows us to imitate behaviours and to predict emotional responses in other individuals. A whole network of areas in the brain is activated in these abilities, including systems that control attention, interpretation and expression of emotions, and recognition of faces (Decety and Jackson, 2004). All of this happens subconsciously in our brains (Lakin and Chartrand, 2003). The effect of activation of this system can be observed when a group of close friends are talking – often their posture, emotions and voice tone become similar – they are acting in rapport by matching each other. This similarity is used as a measure of whether an individual is to be trusted as an in-group member or not, and so subconscious matching leads to greater trust between individuals (Singer, Seymour, O'Doherty, Stephan, Dolan, and Frith, 2006; Xu, Zuo, Wang, and Han, 2009). This trust helps to build co-operation between people in social groups. For instance, Jonas, Martens, Kayser, Fritsche, Sullivan, and Greenberg (2008) showed that witnessing someone else helping another person caused participants to engage in more helping behaviour in a subsequent task. The feeling that people can be trusted to behave well can be transmitted from one situation to another. This is easy to see in real life. If you are a driver, think about a time when someone has stopped to let you out of a turning, and consider how this affects your behaviour if you see another driver who is having trouble joining the road from a turning.

While rapport can help to develop trust between individuals, there is also evidence to suggest that trust can operate at a cultural level. To show how prosocial contagion develops in networks of people, Fowler and Christakis (2010) reported the results of studies in which individuals played a series of rounds of a game with a new set of four participants each time. In each round, participants were asked to choose how much of their pot of money to share with the group. Results demonstrated that participants who were the recipients of generosity in one round increased their giving in the next round. Thus, a new set of participants were the beneficiaries of previous generosity. Effects were seen across three degrees of separation so that generosity in round one was still seen to benefit the new participants in round three. This suggests that differences in the level of prosocial behaviour within a culture can be contagious even across contexts. Recent imaging data has demonstrated that working together can activate the reward centres in the brain, providing strong motivation for co-operative behaviour (Krill and Platek, 2012).

Beyond building a culture of trust, there is also research that suggests that gratitude for the generous behaviour of an individual in our group increases the likelihood that the group will share and therefore work towards the same goals within an organisational context (Jia, Tong, and Lee, 2014). This accumulated research supports the idea that prosocial contagion can form an important “glue” within social structures.

An important group of prosocial emotions are those that are “other-praising”, including elevation (our response to moral excellence), gratitude and admiration. It is therefore of interest to determine how these emotions are represented in the brain. This might help us to better understand their effect on prosocial

behaviour. Brain activity in response to stories eliciting admiration and compassion (Immordino-Yang, McColl, Damasio, and Damasio, 2009) and elevation and admiration (Englander, Haidt, and Morris, 2012) has been measured. These emotions are similar in that they all share the ability to produce a heightened sense of self-awareness, which creates a drive to be more virtuous ourselves. In both studies, participants read stories about the actions of real people which induced feelings of elevation, admiration or compassion. All of the stories resulted in appropriate emotional responses including increases in heart rate and respiration rate that would be expected for such emotional responses. Stories about elevation, admiration and compassion resulted in increases in activity in areas of the brain associated with determining our sense of self (e.g. ventromedial and medial prefrontal cortex).

While common sense might predict that societies are held together by rewarding prosocial actions, our response to other-praising emotions is more counter-intuitive. What is being suggested by the neural activation is that when we feel elevation, admiration or compassion for *others*, we feel an increased sense of *self*. The shared emotional response, which might include an increased sense of pride, fulfilment, social engagement or self-worth, points us to potentially rewarding ways of acting. Thus, positive emotional contagion resulting from generosity can drive us to act in similar ways in the future, increasing the overall level of prosocial behaviour within the culture.

Implications for coaching

When coaching, encouraging others to think of situations that evoke other-praising emotions has the potential to allow them to reflect on how they might improve their own behaviour while providing a sense of reward and activation of their sense of self-worth.

This research also suggests that coaching as an activity will have its own rewards since assisting people to be the best version of themselves is likely to elicit “self-praising” emotions in us as coaches. No wonder coaching is so rewarding.

Which coachees benefit most

A neuroscientific approach to coaching can be particularly beneficial when working with coachees who have a need for a clear understanding of *why* things work. Understanding that coaching is based on sound research evidence that demonstrates the ways in which the brain processes information can decrease resistance to suggested techniques.

Neuroscientific approaches are also of potential benefit to coachees who have a strong need for autonomy. By providing an understanding of the way that their brain works, and the changes that they can elicit through new behaviours, the coach can provide a coachee with a choice over whether they want to change their brain in this way. The sense of potential loss that is associated with not taking action, and therefore not making these changes in neural processing, can provide the final incentive to commit to new behaviours.

Discussion points

- 1 If you have been using ideas from neuroscience in your coaching, you might choose to reflect on the sources of the information that you cite to be sure that these are up to date and credible.
- 2 When coaching, consider whether particular coachees might become less resistant to new ideas if they had a better understanding of the ways in which our brains are designed for change.
- 3 Think about how you might use emotional contagion as a coach to help your coachees to be in the most resourceful state for coaching.
- 4 Reflect on the effect of other-praising emotions both in the benefits these might have for your coachees and also in the benefits that your work as a coach might have in your own life.

Suggested reading

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Jarrett, C. (2014). *Great Myths of the Brain*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Download the 3D Brain App (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory) onto your tablet or smartphone.

Sign up to Mindhacks.com for interesting blogs on the latest findings in Neuroscience.

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Self-efficacy within coaching and coaching psychology

An integrated Self-efficacy Coaching Model

Diana Aguiar Vieira and Stephen Palmer

Introduction

Derived from the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997), self-efficacy may be defined as the perceived capability to be successful in performing certain actions. This psychological and prospective construct has been capable of explaining and predicting human behavior and/or change in several domains, and we propose that coaching psychology is not an exception. Subsequently, grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, the Self-efficacy Coaching Model (SEC) presented in this chapter aims to gather the coaching literature that apply the concept of self-efficacy and integrate it with the Social Cognitive Theory in order to provide an integrated model that contributes to explain and predict different self-efficacy angles within coaching and coaching psychology. The SEC model is focused on the self-efficacy beliefs of the coach relating to their skills to act as a coach, its determinants and consequences, the latter including the coachee's perspective both in terms of benefits and evaluation of the coach's skills. Finally, applications of the Self-efficacy Coaching Model to practice and research are discussed.

Development of the Self-efficacy Coaching Model

Albert Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy referring to a person's belief in their ability to achieve in a particular area. This perceived self-efficacy is "based on performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states" (Bandura, 1977:195). In addition to these sources, Bandura also explained the consequences of self-efficacy beliefs since they determine how much effort one will expend and how long one will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences (Bandura, 1982). In 1986, Bandura incorporated the self-efficacy theory and his social learning theory in the Social Cognitive Theory. Since then, a great amount of research about this theory has been made in several domains of human action (Bandura, 2004).

As far as we can ascertain, Popper and Lipshitz (1992) were the first authors to relate the work of Bandura (1977) to coaching (not sport-related), specifically in the area of leadership development. Since this first theoretical endeavor, several authors in coaching literature have explored the role of self-efficacy in coaching, mainly as an output variable (e.g. Baron & Morin, 2009, 2010; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006; Grant, 2014; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2014; McDowall, Freeman, & Marshall, 2014; Moen & Allgood, 2009; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, & Kerrin, 2008; Wakkee, Elfring, & Monaghan, 2010). A first

attempt to aggregate this knowledge into an integrated theoretical model was presented by Vieira (2013). Based on that previous endeavor, in this chapter we propose the Self-efficacy Coaching Model.

Theory and basic concepts

Within Social Cognitive Theory, human functioning is the product of the interplay of three determinants: intrapersonal influences (e.g. cognitive internal states and emotional and physical attributes), environmental determinants (e.g. external and contextual factors), and behavior individuals engage in (Bandura, 2012).

The Social Cognitive Theory postulates “an agentic perspective to self-development, adaptation and change” (Bandura, 2001:9) in which an individual is a contributor to her/his life circumstances and not just a product of them. Indeed, it is through one’s actions that an individual influences the situations that affect his/her thoughts, feelings and subsequent behavior (Bandura, 1982). In the light of this theory, individuals set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts (Bandura, 2005), contributing to their self-regulatory capabilities.

Self-efficacy

Albert Bandura defined perceived self-efficacy “as people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994:71). The author postulated that self-efficacy beliefs help determine how an individual feels, thinks, motivates themselves and behaves, producing effects through cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. Perceived self-efficacy is related to judgments of how well one can execute actions required to deal with prospective situations. In short, “perceived self-efficacy is concerned not with the number of skills you have, but with what you believe you can do with what you have under a variety of circumstances” (Bandura, 1997:37).

For Bandura (1986, 1997), self-efficacy beliefs are the main mechanism in human agency. A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being which contributes to maintain the performance even in situations that offer a high probability of rejection or failure (Bandura, 1986). In contrast, individuals who have weak self-efficacy beliefs and doubt their capabilities usually avoid difficult tasks which they view as personal threats, showing low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue (Bandura, 1994). The Social Cognitive Theory suggests that self-efficacy beliefs that slightly exceed one’s current level of competence facilitate skills development (Bandura, 1986) because the individual feels encouraged to engage and commit to challenging tasks, promoting skills development. However, if the beliefs of self-efficacy are located too high above the current level of competence of the individual, they may provide failure.

Sources of self-efficacy

According to the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997), individuals’ beliefs about their efficacy can be developed by four main sources: 1) mastery experiences/successful past performance (which serve as capacity indicators); 2) vicarious experiences provided by social models; 3) verbal persuasion (and other social influences that inform the individual about the perception that others have of their abilities); and 4) psycho-physiological and emotional states (from which one infers his/her ability, strength and vulnerability to failure).

Bandura (1994) postulates that the most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences because they are the source that provides authentic evidence about one’s ability to master – or not – what is needed to produce the expected results. Successes build a robust belief in one’s personal efficacy, while failures undermine it, especially when they occur before a firmly based sense of efficacy. Nevertheless, if individuals experience only easy successes, they will expect quick results, getting easily discouraged by failure. To develop efficacy, one must overcome obstacles through a perseverant effort;

difficulties provide opportunities to learn how to turn failures into successes and how to persevere in face of adversity (Bandura, 1997).

Vicarious experiences provided by social models are another way of strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Observing individuals similar to oneself succeed raises the observer's self-efficacy beliefs to master identical activities, but watching them fail lowers the observer's judgments of their own efficacy. The impact of modeling on perceived self-efficacy is influenced by perceived similarity to the models, i.e. the greater the assumed similarity, the more persuasive are the model's successes and failures (Bandura, 1994).

Social persuasion and verbal encouragement may also have an important effect on self-efficacy beliefs. Individuals who are verbally persuaded that they possess the capabilities to master difficult situations are likely to mobilize a greater effort to succeed than those who don't receive any social encouragement (Bandura, 1977). However, individuals who have been persuaded that they lack capabilities tend to avoid challenging activities and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. To raise perceived self-efficacy takes more than a compliment; it is necessary to develop activities that lead to success and avoid putting individuals in situations where they may experience failure (Bandura, 1997). Nevertheless, efficacy expectations induced by verbal encouragement are likely to be weaker than those arising from one's own accomplishments since they do not provide an authentic experiential base for them (Bandura, 1994).

Psycho-physiological and emotional states also influence perceived self-efficacy, since individuals interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance while positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). For example, indicators of anxiety or fatigue during the performance of an activity may decrease the perceived self-efficacy, while feelings of calm or excitement may increase the perceived proficiency of the task (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). The emotional state also "affects the judgment of events, the way the emotion is linked to the events, and how it is interpreted, organized cognitively and retained in memory" (Bandura, 1997:111).

Consequences of self-efficacy

Self-efficacy beliefs have clear consequences on one's behavior. The level and the persistence of one's motivation, and one's affective states, are affected by efficacy beliefs, contributing to different types of performance. People who doubt their capabilities in certain fields of activity turn away from difficult tasks in these same fields, finding it difficult to motivate themselves and giving up quickly in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1997).

Individuals who have strong beliefs about their capabilities usually approach difficult tasks as challenges that must be mastered rather than threats to avoid, increasing the interest and engagement in the activities. They set for themselves challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to them, investing a high level of effort in what they do and increasing their efforts in the face of failures or setbacks (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs influence human self-development and change, having a pivotal role in self-motivation and perseverance in the face of difficulties through the goals people set for themselves and their outcome expectations. People's beliefs in their coping capabilities also play a key role in their emotional self-regulation, affecting the quality of their emotional life and their vulnerability to stress and depression. Finally, self-efficacy affects the choices people make by influencing the range of options people consider on decisional points of their lives. As stated by Bandura, "by their choices of activities and environments, people set the course of their life paths and what they become" (2012:13).

Social Cognitive Theory also acknowledges that quality of performance is one of self-efficacy's consequences, and a large body of research corroborates this idea in a wide range of performance areas such as work-related task performance (Bandura, 1997; Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Zhang, 2011; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), team performance (e.g. Chen, Kanfer, DeShon, Mathieu, & Kozlowski, 2009) and academic achievement (Caprara, Vecchione, Alessandri, Gerbino, & Barbaranelli, 2011; Robbins, Lauver, Le, Davis, Langley, & Carlstron, 2004).

Goals and outcome expectations

Along with self-efficacy, goals and outcome expectations are central self-referent variables within Social Cognitive Theory. Self-efficacy refers to “Am I able to do it?” Goals refer to “What do I want to do or achieve?” In fact, goals refer to one’s determination to engage in a given activity or to effect a particular outcome, such as completing a difficult task or getting a particular job (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1999).

By setting goals, one organizes and directs one’s behavior, keeping behavioral efforts over long periods of time even in the absence of external incentives, increasing the probability of the desired outcome. Goal-setting is a critical mechanism through which people exercise personal control or agency (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), operating primarily through the individual’s ability to symbolically represent desired outcomes and to react in a self-evaluative way of one’s own behavior, based on internal performance standards.

The Social Cognitive Theory identifies some properties of the goals that affect their likelihood to be implemented. Goals act as powerful guidelines for the behavior when they are clear, specific, subdivided into tasks, temporally close to the action to be developed, publicly established and maintained with a strong commitment (Bandura, 1986).

When an individual asks, “If I do this, what will happen?”, the person is questioning themselves about their outcome expectations about something. That is, outcome expectations concern the consequences (i.e. outcomes) of behavioral efforts, and these can be positive (serving as incentives) or negative (acting as discouraging of certain behavior). Outcome expectations may influence behavior through results anticipation and can be distinguished in several classes: physical (e.g. sensory experiences of pleasure or physical discomfort), social (e.g. approval, recognition, monetary compensation) and self-evaluative (e.g. self-satisfaction, pride) (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

Together with self-efficacy, both goals and outcome expectations have been found to play an important role in actually entering upon specific activities (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006).

The Self-efficacy Coaching Model

Self-efficacy is one of the most researched psychological constructs and, in our opinion, its unique constellation of features are a key contributory factor. First, self-efficacy is not a personality trait; it consists of self-judgements that focus on perceived capabilities to perform an activity such as “how well I can do this?” rather than on static personality characteristics such as “I am like this” (Zimmerman, 1995). Consequently, self-efficacy is domain specific since people vary in the way they evaluate their personal capability in regard to different activities and/or performance areas. For instance, one may perceive oneself as very capable to do sports but much less capable in regard to speaking foreign languages. This means that the self-efficacy concept can be applied to almost infinite areas of human functioning.

Second, self-efficacy beliefs have a proactive impact on performance since they are typically assessed prior to engaging in a particular task or activity, being conceptualized as a forethought process (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Together with a clear definition of its sources and of the processes by which perceived self-efficacy is built on, this psychological construct, embedded in Social Cognitive Theory, not only allows the understanding of human functioning in several domains but also provides clues to intervene in ways to enhance perceived self-efficacy and, consequently, people’s performance and/or well-being.

Finally, Social Cognitive Theory provides the explanation of self-efficacy’s relationship with other self-referent variables that are important to coaching, such as goals and outcome expectations.

Based on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997) in general and on the self-efficacy concept along with its determinants and consequences in particular, we propose the Self-efficacy Coaching Model (SEC). This model is focused on the self-efficacy perceptions of the coach relating to their skills as a coach, its determinants and consequences, the latter including the coachee’s perspective both in terms of benefits and evaluation of the coach’s skills. The SEC model aims to: 1) contribute to the understanding of the way a person develops his/her skills as a coach; 2) acknowledge the predictor role of self-efficacy in terms of

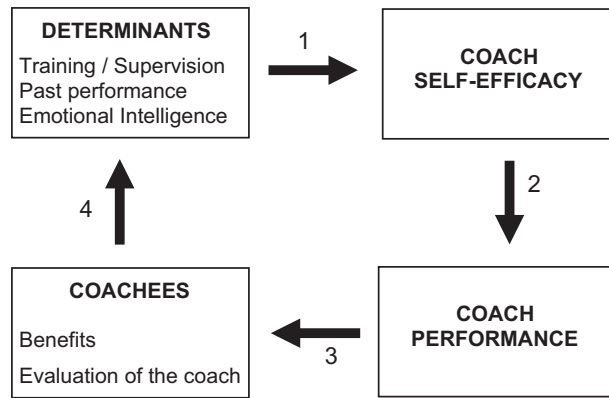


Figure 3.1 Self-efficacy Coaching Model

the coach performance; 3) provide a way to evaluate the quality of coaching courses; 4) provide guidelines/strategies to improve the preparation/training and professional development of the coach. Additionally, the SEC model also addresses the benefits obtained by coachees as a result of the coaching process as well as the coachees' evaluation of the coach's skills.

The Self-Efficacy Coaching (SEC) model is presented in Figure 3.1. The SEC model is composed of four elements: the coach's self-efficacy, its determinants, the coach's performance in coaching sessions and the coachee. The relationships amongst these four elements are represented by numbered arrows. Arrow 1 represents the determinants of the coach's self-efficacy, which include the training and supervision received by the coach, his/her past experience as a coach and his/her emotional intelligence. As previously stated by Bandura (1986), past experience, observation of others, verbal encouragement and physiological and emotional states are self-efficacy sources. Consequently, in the SEC model training and supervision received by the coach are identified as two main sources of his/her self-efficacy. Coach training courses usually include exposure to experienced coaches (the trainers) as well as the opportunity to experiment and practice the coach role. Less structured learning experiences such as watching videos, reading books and/or discussing coaching practices with colleagues may also play a role in enhancing self-efficacy. Moreover, supervision context commonly includes verbal encouragement from the supervisor as well as social support towards the coach that is benefiting from supervision. Successful mastery experiences as a coach are represented in the SEC model as past experiences, representing another source of the coach's self-efficacy. Although it has been suggested that coaching also has significant benefits to the coach (Rider, 2002; Sweeney, 2007), consideration of the process of coaching as an experience that may improve coaches' levels of self-efficacy has not received extensive consideration within coaching literature. Indeed, from our literature review, only one study explored the possibility of coaches' self-efficacy developing in this way (Leonard-Cross, 2010). In this study, the majority of the individuals who had undertaken a coaching role during the previous two years reported a perceived increase in personal self-efficacy. Finally, although emotional intelligence is a much broader concept than the physiological and emotional states identified as a source of self-efficacy by Bandura (1986), given the context of coaching and the importance of a clear understanding by the coach of their own and others' emotions (e.g. Day, de Haan, Sills, Bertie, & Blass, 2008), emotional intelligence is proposed in the SEC model as an important source of coach self-efficacy. In this regard it is important to clarify that emotional intelligence in this model refers to Mayer and Salovey's theorization (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), in which it is composed by four different skills: 1) the ability to perceive emotions in oneself and in others, 2) the ability to use emotion to facilitate thought, 3) the ability to understand emotions, and 4) the ability to manage emotions (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

Arrow 2 represents the impact that a coach's self-efficacy has on their performance during coaching sessions. A coach's self-efficacy is the perceived capability the coach has in their ability in regard to the skills that characterize the coach role (Vieira & Palmer, 2012). The relationship between the coach's self-efficacy and their performance is based not only on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) but also upon a body of research that highlights the influence of self-efficacy on performance in several areas of human functioning (e.g. Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott, & Rich, 2007; Raub & Liao, 2012). Within coaching literature there has been a lack of research on coaches' self-efficacy. One study found that the coach's self-efficacy in facilitating learning and results is a facilitator of the working alliance (Baron & Morin, 2009). In another study, a coach's self-efficacy in coaching skills was related to the quality of the coach's performance, the latter measured by the coachee's reports about these skills at the end of the coaching process (Vieira, 2013).

In Figure 3.1, Arrow 3 represents the influence of coach's performance during coaching sessions on the coachees, who may be considered both as individuals or groups. This influence is expected to be in terms of benefits achieved by the coachee, and these may assume a wide range of content, depending also on the coachee's goal for the coaching intervention. However, improvements in job performance or in psychological well-being have been reported in several studies (e.g. Crabb, 2011; Outhwaite & Bettridge, 2009). In the coaching literature, the most common reference to self-efficacy relates to the coachee, whether as an outcome from coaching (e.g. Baron & Morin, 2009, 2010; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006; Grant, 2014; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2014; McDowall, Freeman, & Marshall, 2014; Leonard-Cross, 2010; Moen & Allgood, 2009; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, & Kerrin, 2008; Wakkee, Elfring, & Monaghan, 2010) or as a previous coachee's characteristic that may influence the coaching process (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, & Kerrin, 2008). On the other hand, the way the coachee evaluates the coach's coaching skills may also be considered a direct result from the coach performance itself.

The benefits obtained by the coachee and their evaluation of the coach will work as determinants of the coach's self-efficacy (Arrow 4). Coachees' evaluation about coach's skills provides indirect information about the coach's performance, and this information may help coaches further develop their skills, for instance, within a supervision context. This kind of information may work as important feedback not only to coaches themselves but also to the lead coach in case of corporate coaching offered by an organization.

Finally, it is important to highlight the dynamic nature of the Self-efficacy Coaching Model since it represents an on-going process through which coaches' self-efficacy, its determinants, coaches' performance and coachees interact in an articulated manner.

Application of the Self-efficacy Model to practice and research

As stated by Bandura, "the value of a psychological theory is judged not only by its explanatory and predictive power, but also ultimately by its operative power to promote changes in human functioning" (2005:12). Consequently, we start this section by illustrating how the Self-efficacy Coaching (SEC) Model may be useful to coaching practice.

One implication for practice derived from the SEC model has to do with the coach's self-efficacy and its determinants. Given the link between self-efficacy and performance, the coach's self-efficacy in regard to coaching skills itself should be taken into consideration in training, supervision and mentoring contexts. Specifically, these contexts should be planned and structured in order to maximize the opportunities to work on self-efficacy sources. This implies that coaches-in-training should be exposed to modeling, should experience the coach's role, should receive verbal incentives and should develop their emotional intelligence, at least as far as identifying one's own and others' emotions is concerned. Moreover, the evaluation of coaches' self-efficacy in regard to coaching skills may be used to evaluate the quality of training and/or of supervision. Finally, although not explicitly shown in the SEC model, the coach should also have theoretical knowledge about self-efficacy, given its implications to coaching are straightforward since self-efficacy governs

the “translation of thought into performance” (Bandura, 2005:12). Smither and Reilly (2001) assert that the coach’s efforts to enhance the coachee’s self-efficacy beliefs are critical for implementation of behavioral changes. Additionally, Malone (2001) suggests that executive coaching allows enhancement of self-efficacy because it naturally uses techniques aimed at its determinants – that is, self-thought, mastery experiences, modeling, social persuasion and psychological state management.

During coaching sessions coachees have the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences, both before and after achievement, while the coach is expected to improve the coachees’ ability to be realistic and constructive in this process. When coachees are exploring and analysing the task in focus, coaches should give special attention to the way coachees evaluate their own competence related to the task. This awareness by the coach enables, for instance, the coach to persuade coachees that the task is attainable in cases where this is relevant for coachees’ progress. Additionally, as goal-setting is an important coaching task, evaluating coachees’ self-efficacy in regard to goals is essential since low levels of self-efficacy may be blocking the coachees from setting goals that may be valued by them. As mastery experiences are the most robust source of self-efficacy, in order to enhance the coachees’ growth, the coach should encourage coachees to start from tasks that are within the limit of their capacity. By breaking a large task down into manageable sub-goals, the coach or coaching psychologist increases the coachees’ chances of experiencing success.

Moen and Allgood (2009) explain the processes by which a coach may enhance a coachee’s self-efficacy, although this was within an executive coaching context. In our opinion, in order to be effective, it is important for the coach to be aware of the impact of self-efficacy on a coachee’s thought and behavior. Additionally, grounded in self-efficacy sources, the coach should act in order to enhance a coachee’s probability of strengthening his/her self-efficacy beliefs, regardless of the type of coaching.

Other implications of the SEC model to practice relate to a coach’s performance during coaching sessions and the coachees who receive coaching interventions. Given the confidentiality involved in coaching sessions, it may be difficult to evaluate the coach’s performance directly, although audio and video recordings may be an option. However, without being intrusive to coaching sessions, the SEC model provides two ways for evaluating a coach’s performance: one relates to the benefits coachees obtained at the end of the coaching process, and the other has to do with the coachees’ evaluation of the coach’s skills. Although the former should be linked to the achievement of goals defined by the coachee in the beginning of the coaching process, the latter translates the coachees’ perceptions about the coach’s coaching skills. By their turn, both kinds of coachee-related information may be useful to the coaches by allowing access to feedback information important for their professional development as coaches, whether reflection upon this information is done by themselves or in supervision or mentoring contexts. Additionally, in cases where an institution provides coaching services to organizations using teams of coaches, the person responsible for the teams can also benefit from the information about each coach performance provided by evaluations made by the coachees who participated in coaching sessions.

As for the research value of the Self-efficacy Coaching Model, we believe it offers several straightforward hypotheses to be investigated based on the four relationships represented by arrows. However, as stated by Bandura (1997), the predictive power of self-efficacy is enhanced when specific measures of the human domain under study are used. In that sense, we developed and validated the Coaching Skills Self-efficacy Scale (CSSES) (Vieira, 2011; Vieira & Palmer, 2012; Tokuyoshi, Iwasaki, Vieira, & Palmer, 2014) in order to evaluate a coach’s self-efficacy. In a previous study we tested the following hypothesis derived from Arrow 1 of the SEC model: “Training in coaching is a determinant of coaching self-efficacy”. We found that training in coaching enhances coaching skills self-efficacy in participants who attended those courses (Vieira, 2013).

In a recent study, we adapted the CSSES items in order to construct an instrument that allows a coachee’s evaluation of the coach’s skills (CECSS – Coachee’s Evaluation of Coach Skills Scale; Vieira, 2013). The CECSS’s items are similar in nature to the content of the CSSES but were reworded to fit with the coachee’s perspective. Although further validation studies are needed, we believe that these two instruments may facilitate further investigation about the Self-efficacy Coaching Model.

In conclusion, self-efficacy is key to achieving professional growth and development and ultimately improving performance, both for the coach and coachee. Theory, research and practice are all parts of the same cycle that only makes sense when regarded in an articulated manner. We hope that the Self-efficacy Coaching Model may be useful to guide future research and to the understanding – both in theoretical and in practical terms – of the application of self-efficacy in the field of coaching and coaching psychology.

Discussion points

- 1 How can the Self-efficacy Coaching (SEC) Model inform coaching training?
- 2 The Self-efficacy Coaching (SEC) Model facilitates the development of research about coaching. Discuss.
- 3 In what ways can the coach's knowledge about self-efficacy and its sources be useful to the coaching process?
- 4 Coaching supervision or mentoring can enhance coach self-efficacy. Discuss.

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