

Minding Your Business

Coaching Your Staff and Building a Positive Work Environment Within a “COVID” Work Environment



This Resource Tool will provide:

- ❑ A quick look at best strategies for dealing with staff who may refuse work or become difficult or problematic related to working within your medical clinic
- ❑ Address some specific issues and propose some tips to assist staff related to working within a pandemic work environment
- ❑ Tips on best practice techniques to coach staff toward a changed in thinking or behavior

This self-learning resource will help you:

- ❑ Improve skills in conducting challenging conversations in order to increase likelihood of achieving successful, shared outcomes and improved results
- ❑ Provide tips for clinic owners to work effectively during times of uncertainty/change such as the “COVID pandemic”
- ❑ Develop skills in achieving commitment and buy-in rather than “compliance” from others



Stressors of Staff Related to COVID-19

- **Concerns for personal safety**
 - **Concerns for their families and their safety if one becomes positive via work, and**
 - **Concerns for patient mortality**
- Of these three concerns, “the safety of family was the biggest impact in reducing staff stress.” This means that one way to decrease the stress for medical staff is to have strict disease prevention protocols in place for employees to lower the odds of being infected with COVID-19 and spreading the disease to their family members.

Source: PSYCHOLOGY TODAY APRIL 14, 2020

Tips on Addressing Staff Concerns

In order to support the psychological health and safety of your employees, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) recommends employers consider the following six tips:

1. **Have a plan.** Let employees know that you are thinking and looking ahead, that you will stay well-informed and that you can answer the questions they already have: What if I get sick? How do I take time off work? What if my family member contracts the virus? etc.
2. **Communicate, share and be open.** Worry and fear grow in the absence of up-to-date information. Let your employees know that they can expect regular updates from you. Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

Tips on Addressing Staff Concerns

3. **Empathize.** Share that you know it's stressful. Recognize that it's okay to be anxious. Remind your employees of resources (EAP) that are available for those who are experiencing stress.
4. **Reassure — as best you can.** You can refer to reports indicating that most people who become infected with the virus will recover. Use data to reassure and inform staff!
5. **Understand.** Recognize when stress has become unmanageable for individual employees. Stress can lead to anxiety and even panic. Some employees may need mental health days and medical intervention in order to cope. Encourage employees to practice self-care activities on-the-job.

Tips on Addressing Staff Concerns

6. **Recognize this is not quite 'business as usual.'** Know that work will likely be impacted — work will slow down, necessary travel may be canceled. Reassure staff that expectations will shift accordingly, and that's ok. That by working together you will get through this!

The Right to Refuse Work

Workers have the right to refuse dangerous work and are protected from reprisal for exercising this right:

1. Workers must continue to be paid while a work refusal is being investigated
2. Employers must ensure workers understand the hazards at the workplace, know what needs to be reported and have the support to exercise their right
3. Employers must investigate the matter in cooperation with the joint work site health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if applicable
4. Employers cannot take or threaten discriminatory action against a worker for exercising their rights and duties under the legislation
5. Other workers may be assigned to the work if they are advised of the refusal, reason for it and are made aware of their own right to refuse work after the employer determines there is not a risk

Source: Canadian Mental Health, March 2020

The Right to Refuse Work

Employer Obligations

If you're an employer who has been notified that your worker is refusing work they think is unsafe, you're required by law to look into and eliminate the danger. If a worker refuses unsafe work, follow these steps:

1. Investigate and take action to eliminate the danger
2. Ensure that no other worker is assigned to the same work, or equipment, unless: the danger has been eliminated; the worker to be assigned is not exposed to the danger; the worker assigned is informed of the refusal, and the reasons for the refusal and their right to refuse work that presents a danger
3. You may temporarily assign the worker to another job, but at no loss of pay

The Right to Refuse Work

4. Document in writing: the worker's notification; your investigation findings; and what actions you took to remedy the situation

If you have questions about how to handle a worker's refusal to do work they think is unsafe, call the Alberta OHS Contact Centre.

Phone: [780-415-8690](tel:780-415-8690) (Edmonton)
Toll free: [1-866-415-8690](tel:1-866-415-8690)
TTY: [780-427-9999](tel:780-427-9999) (Edmonton)
TTY: [1-800-232-7215](tel:1-800-232-7215)

Source: Alberta Government Website

Using a Coaching Approach with Staff

- ❑ Consider a “coaching strategy/approach when dealing with staff who may be worried about working within your clinic
- ❑ There is both science and “art” to positively influence others — so you and another may work to a mutually agreed upon goal/outcome
- ❑ Coaching is different than “just telling” staff what to do and how to do it

NOTE: The skills or tips you will learn here can be used in your clinic all the time with your staff!

Why Consider Coaching?

- ❑ Coaching approaches have been proven to be more effective in getting “compliance” or “agreement” with staff
- ❑ **Employees** need to know when they are effective contributors. By providing this positive feedback, you are also letting the **employee** know the actions and contributions that you'd like to reinforce so that you see **more** of them



Being a Traditional Boss vs Coach

Old Style Supervisor

- Talks a lot
- Tells
- Presumes
- Seeks control
- Orders
- Works on
- Assigns blame
- Keeps distant

Being a Coach

- Listens a lot
- Asks
- Explores
- Seeks commitment
- Challenges
- Works with
- Takes responsibility
- Makes contact

Benefits of Using a Coaching Approach

- Improvement in individual's performance, targets and goals
- Increased openness to personal learning and development
- Increased ability to identify solutions to specific work-related issues
- Greater ownership and responsibility
- Development of self-awareness
- Improvement of specific skills or behavior
- Greater clarity in roles and objectives
- The opportunity to correct behavior/performance difficulties

Source: Agape International Coaching, December 2018

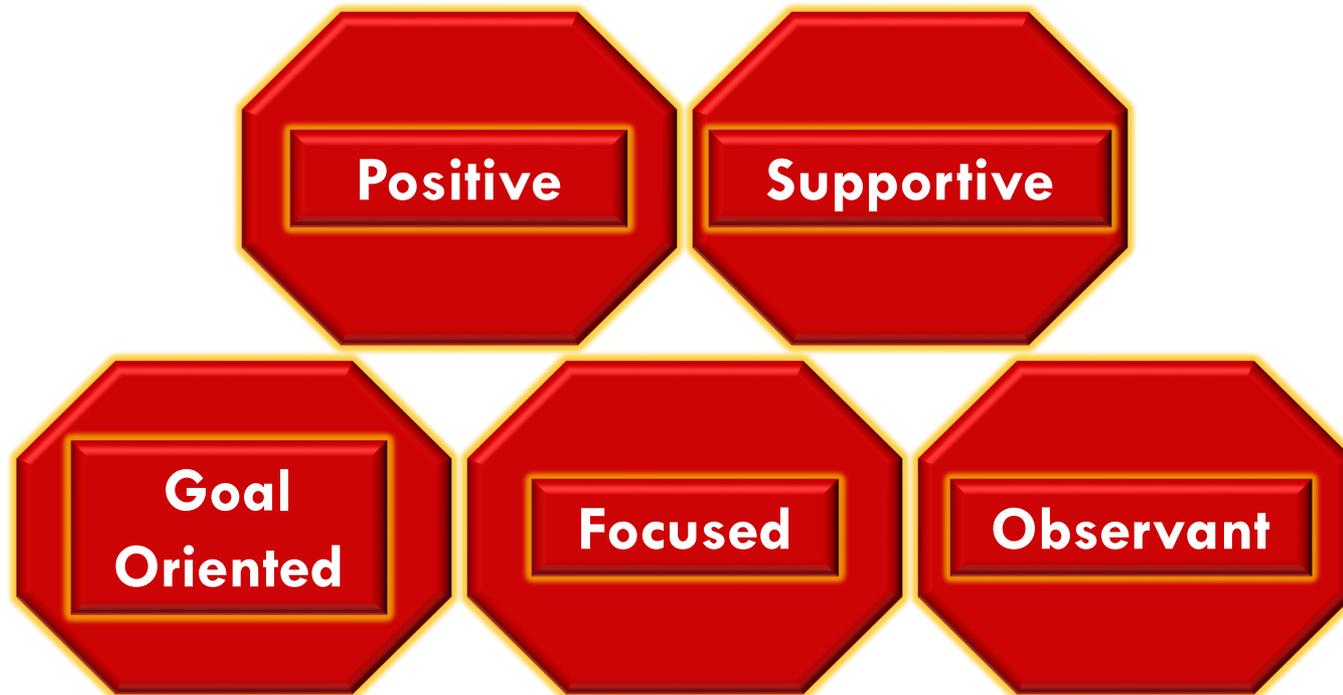
What is Effective or Constructive Feedback?

- ❑ The concept of “constructive feedback” refers to relaying to someone, in a helpful way, the impact of his or her behavior in a particular situation
- ❑ It is important as a feedback “giver” you realize you don’t always have all the information necessary to give feedback. The “receiver” may actually have information that may not agree or could change the perceptions of the feedback giver

What is Effective or Constructive Feedback?

- ❑ Without being open to new information you run the risk of being viewed as judgmental and controlling and your feedback will less likely be accepted
- ❑ Effective feedback is a mutual exchange of information — each has information to give and information to receive

Characteristics of Good Coaching



Source: The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center 521: Supervisor Training Series

Characteristics of Good Coaching



- Your job is not correcting mistakes, finding fault and assessing blame
- Instead, your function is achieving productivity goals by coaching your staff to peak performance

Characteristics of Good Coaching



Positive

Example:

Clinic Manager, Ken knows he is supposed to get certain reports in by the tenth of the month, but he never gets them done until the fourteenth or fifteenth. You have talked to him about the problem several times, but Ken still does not get the reports in on time.

Try the positive approach. It is the difference between saying, "Get those reports in by the tenth" and asking, "What do you need to do differently to get your monthly reports in by the tenth?"

The first statement reaps resentment and excuses -- but no improvement in performance. The supervisor continues thinking of Ken as a problem; Ken goes on thinking of the supervisor as a jerk.

The second approach can get the agency what it wants -- the reports turned in on time. And the supervisor has a shot at winning the bonus prize -- a worker with a more cooperative attitude and improved time management skills to apply to the next task.

Characteristics of Good Coaching



- Your job as coach is to get workers what they need to do their job well, including tools, time, instruction, answers to questions and protection from outside interference
- Be aware that you are not out to “prove” the legitimacy of your views but instead be open to learning all the facts and being viewed as supportive

Characteristics of Good Coaching



- Base your assignments on clear, definable goals (explain the “why”)
- Tie specific tasks to those goals
- Communicate those goals to the people who actually have to do the work

For example, if a staff member leaves your office pondering "Why does he/she want me to do that?" after you explained an assignment or request, you have only done half the job. You gave the "what" but not the "why."

Characteristics of Good Coaching



- Effective communication is specific and focused (deals with particulars)
- Focus on those things that the person can actually control or have an impact on
- You are far more likely to get action if that employee leaves your office focused on resolving the issue at hand

Characteristics of Good Coaching



- Being observant means more than just keeping your eyes and ears open
- You need to be aware of what isn't said as well as what is. If you are paying attention, you won't have to wait for somebody to tell you about a problem
- Also be observant of your own bias and your own reactions- are other unrelated things impacting your own reaction?

Some Things to Keep in mind...

- ❑ Always explicitly state your intent — a mutual exchange of information and viewpoints about a particular situation
- ❑ Be specific — not general or global
- ❑ Present information as your perceptions and reactions — not as proven facts
- ❑ Be alert to and considerate about things over which a person has little or no control
- ❑ Once you have shared your perspective, shift your focus and solicit the other person's perceptions of the situation. This is the time to use silence as an effective tool.

Some Cautionary Words...

- Pay close attention to your words and any “attitudes” behind them. Avoid loaded terms and watch your body language. Is it consistent with your words? Avoid being judgmental — verbally or non-verbally (e.g., eye-ball rolling, sighing heavily, etc.)
- If the receiver is being emotional and defensive — try to remember yourself in the same “shoes”. Don’t be emotional in return.
- Work hard at not becoming defensive yourself. Be alert to warning signs like trying to convince, reason or “prove” your point.

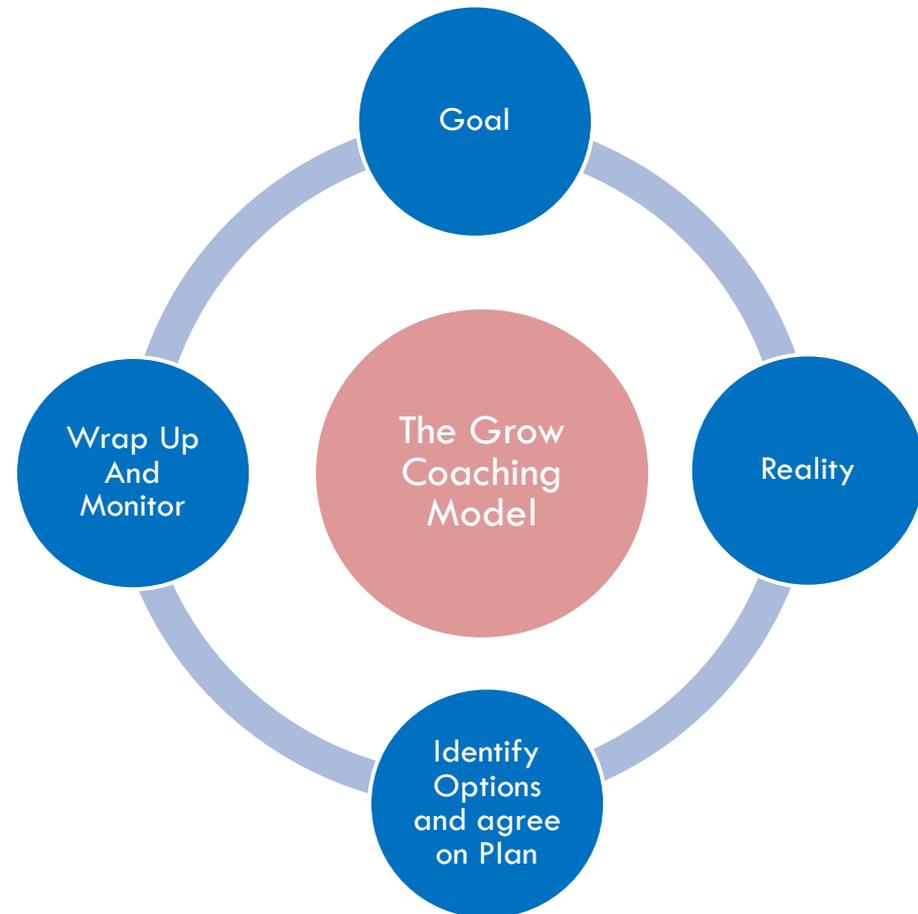
A Good Coaching Model (GROW Model)

GROW Coaching Model

Probably the most widely known and used model is the GROW coaching model, originally identified by Sir John Whitmore, which is introduced in many coach training programmes and mentioned in many coaching books.

GROW represents four stages in the coaching conversation:

- **G**oal
- **R**eality
- **O**ptions
- **W**rap Up



A Good Coaching Model (GROW Model)

Identify the Goal

- ❑ The Goal is the end point, it is where you want your staff member to be.
- ❑ The goal has to be defined in such a way that it is very clear to the person you are coaching when they have achieved it.

A Good Coaching Model (GROW Model)



Reality

- The Current Reality is where your staff member is now on the issue you are addressing.
- What are the issues, the challenges, how far are they away from their goal?

A Good Coaching Model (GROW Model)

Develop Options and Agree on Plan

- What obstacles toward reaching the goal exist? How could they be removed?
- What options can you and your staff member generate?
- What ideas do you have to help the staff member meet the challenge?
- What are the pros and cons of each option? What offers the optimal solution?
- Can you build on any past successes?

A Good Coaching Model (GROW Model)

**“Way-
Forward”
Wrap-Up and
Ongoing
Monitor**

- Seek formal agreement on the way forward
- What specific actions steps have been agreed to?
- What possible future obstacles could arise? How would you overcome them?
- Agree on support required and how you will monitor success has been achieved
- Follow-up, Follow-up and follow-up

GROW Model: Possible Questions to Use

The following 10 questions can help people gain clarity about their **goals**:

1. What do you want to achieve from this coaching session?
2. What goal do you want to achieve?
3. What would you like to happen with _____?
4. What do you *really* want?
5. What would you like to accomplish?
6. What result are you trying to achieve?
7. What outcome would be ideal?
8. What do you want to change?
9. *Why* are you hoping to achieve this goal?
10. What would the benefits be if you achieved this goal?

GROW Model: Possible Questions to Use

The following example questions can help people gain clarity about the **reality**:

1. What is happening now (what, who, when and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
2. Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
3. How would you describe what you did?
4. Where are you now in relation to your goal?
5. What has contributed to your success so far?
6. What progress have you made so far?
7. What is working well right now?
8. What is required of you?
9. Why haven't you reached that goal already?
10. What do you think is stopping you?

GROW Model: Possible Questions to Use

The following example questions can help people understand **obstacles** and **develop options**:

1. What do you think you need to do next?
2. What could be your first step? What prevents you from that first step?
3. What do you think you need to do to get a better result (or closer to your goal)?
4. What else could you do? Who else might be able to help?
5. What would happen if you did nothing?
6. What has worked for you already? How could you do more of that?
7. What would happen if you did that?
8. What's the best/worst thing about that option?
9. Which option do you feel ready to act on?
10. How have you tackled this/a similar situation before?

GROW Model: Possible Questions to Use

The following example questions can help people develop the **way forward**:

1. How are going to go about it?
2. What do you think you need to do right now? Tell me how you're going to do that.
3. How will you know when you have done it?
4. Is there anything else you can do?
5. On a scale of one to 10, what is the likelihood of your plan succeeding? What would it take to make it a 10?
6. What roadblocks do you expect or require planning?
7. What resources can help you? Is there anything missing?
8. When are you going to start?
9. How will you know you have been successful?
10. What support do you need to get that done?

Let's explore a possible situation...



The Situation:

Sue has advised you that she knows another medical receptionist that recently was found positive with COVID-19 and that she is worried to come into your clinic for fear of a similar fate.

A possible approach to take...

You: Sue...do you mind if we chat a minute? (go into a closed door quiet location)

Sue: okay...

You: I understand you have concerns about working in our clinic and fear you might catch the virus through work. I want to chat with you about this as you are an important resource we rely on to make our clinic function well.
(Identify the goal that she will continue to come into work.)

Sue: Yes...I have a friend who works in a clinic and now is positive. I would prefer not come to work for the next while.

You: I appreciate your concerns and would love to explore with you your specific concerns and issues. I would also like to share with you the measures we have taken to make our clinic safe for everyone. **(Discuss the reality!)**

A possible approach to take...

Sue: Okay...one of my biggest worries is infecting my family and that concerns me the most.

You: That is a legitimate concern. But lets explore all the steps we have in place to keep you safe. (This is where you can list the protocols in place, all the PPE measures, etc. You can also share any data of risk of contracting the virus within a clinic that takes all precautionary measures.)

Sue: Yes...but I am still very worried...

You: What else could we do to help support you and enhance the measures to improve safety for our staff? **(Explore Obstacles and develop any possible options.)**

A possible approach to take...



Sue: Okay...well...I am most worried about working in the front and greeting all patients not knowing their status...Etc. etc. I would feel better if we installed some plexiglass like we see in grocery stores.

You: Okay...that makes sense. We are in fact exploring that right now and expect to have something installed within the next few days. **(Way-forward and Agreement on a Plan of Action)**

A possible approach to take...



Sue: This makes me feel a lot better...I just still feel worried...

You: What else could we do to help support you in any way? Would it help if we had a staff meeting each week to discuss concerns and work together on plans to resolve issues or address concerns?

(Way-forward and Ongoing Monitoring)

TIPS WHEN CHATTING WITH STAFF

DON'Ts

- Don't allow yourself to get distracted
- Don't prepare your response in your head while the person is speaking
- Don't feel the need to talk when you don't have to
- Don't ignore the feelings underlying what one says
- Don't give "you" messages or interpretations
- Don't provide premature or false reassurance
- Don't just emphasize the negative

DOs

- Listen and be truly "present"
- Accept your job is to also learn
- Find a quiet, non-distracting place for the discussion
- Watch non-verbal behavior
- Do talk about the feelings experienced by the receiver
- Use SBI- it works!
- Challenge the individual
- Encourage and support risk-taking and effort
- Use silence as a secret tool!

Summary of what you learned:

- ❑ Hopefully you now have some tips and learned some skills in conducting challenging conversations in order to increase likelihood of achieving successful, shared outcomes and improved results
- ❑ Understand some DO's and DON'Ts to work effectively during times of uncertainty/change such as the “COVID pandemic”
- ❑ Increased your awareness and knowledge on some useful HR skills that can be used for multiple situations