



Coaching style conversations through crisis and recovery

Resources and Tools for Managers

Leadership and Lifelong Learning South East

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NHS England and NHS Improvement



How coaching conversations provide support



Helping people to process events

To make sense of what happened, and their role within it

To appropriately debrief - support people to come to terms with their experiences

Ultimately, this is about helping people to effectively process, and move forward positively, after difficult events.

Moving forward positively

After a distressing or uncomfortable experience of significance, individuals often report three ways in which their psychological functioning can increase:



1. Our existing relationships are enhanced.

People describe that they come to value their friends and family more, feel an increased sense of compassion for others and a longing for more intimate relationships.



2. We change how we see ourselves.

Developing wisdom, personal strength and gratitude, perhaps coupled with a greater acceptance of their vulnerabilities and limitations.



3. Our life philosophy also changes.

Finding a fresh appreciation for each new day and re-evaluating their understanding of what really matters in life, becoming less materialistic and more able to live in the present.

The right conversation can help people tap into these positive aspects.

Joseph. S. (2012) What doesn't Kill Us The Psychologist, BPS. Vol 25 pp.816-819 online edition. Stephen Joseph, Professor at the University of Nottingham and Honorary Consultant in Nottinghamshire NHS Trust discusses the psychology of post-traumatic growth.

Preparing for Conversations



Developed by Rebekah Giffney (CPsychol) on behalf of Leadership and Lifelong Learning South East

Finding the time

It's easy to say we don't have enough time for 121s, but remember:

- A quick conversation can be powerful if delivered in the right way
- Take advantage of walking meetings (when you might be walking somewhere else)
- 15 minutes of truly dedicated attention, is better than an hour of distracted conversation

Think about asking just 3 powerful questions:

- What is on your mind that you want to tell me?
- What are you already doing about this?
- What do you need from me or others?

Getting into the right mindset

When having these conversations; it's important to go in with the right mindset.

A mindset that is:

- Focused on what the other person needs from you
- Ready and willing to listen openly, without judgement
- Accepting of where you can help and what you cannot control

You can help create this mindset by:

- *Taking 2-5 minutes before the conversation to reset, get focused, and prepare yourself. Don't rush from meeting to conversation – even taking a few seconds to think about what the conversation is about, and how you need to show up to get the most from it.*
- *Writing down: what do I need to park? What do I need to forget about or move aside temporarily, so that I can focus on the person? Perhaps it's your to do list, perhaps it's an email you need to get back to. Write it down and park it for the next 30 minutes.*
- *Thinking about how you want to show up: capture 3 words that a great manager would demonstrate in such a conversation. Think of a time when you demonstrated each of those characteristics.*

Levels of listening

When we are in the right mindset, it is easier to listen deeply and fully to the person. The levels of listening describe different ways we can listen – with varying degrees of impact on the other person. In these conversations, listening at Level 3 as much as possible is important.

Level 1: Listening to your inner voice

I am thinking about my 'stuff'; I might miss words – I have an internal dialogue too. This happens when I am too distracted with my own thoughts.

Level 2: Focused listening

I hear what you say (the words and facts). I am present in the conversation (not lost in my own thoughts).

Level 3: Listening with Empathy

I put myself into the other person's shoes, listening with full understanding of their perspective. I hear what you say and can imagine what the message may mean. I am so focused on the other person, I noticed what they say, how they say it, and recognise important emotion.

Having Coaching-Style Conversations



Using a coaching style

A **coaching style** is one that is characterised by:

- Powerful questions
- Reflection
- Not directly 'telling' or 'giving' the answer, but letting insights come from the individual wherever possible

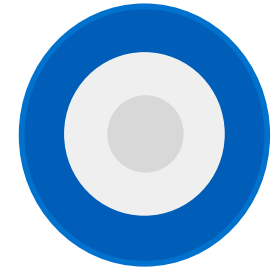
Coaching-style conversations are effective at being supportive whilst also encouraging learning and action to take place.

Using a coaching style



What's the best way to ensure I use a coaching style, and don't move into being overly directive?

Start with their insights



If the **first** thing you do is share your insights, the likely response from the other person might be:

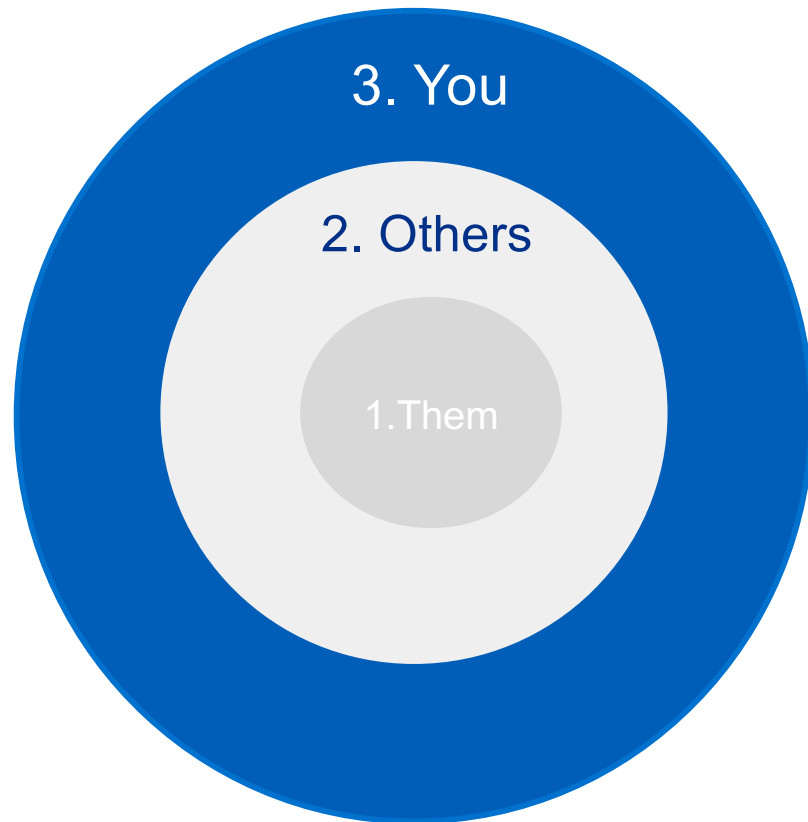
1. I better do that, because you (my line manager, colleague) said that was the answer
2. I am going to stop listening, because that won't work here

Often, you may find that people will respond with:

- “I tried that before”
- “That wouldn't work here”
- “Maybe, but ...”

The following is a useful model for building insights – *them, others, you.*

Them, Others, You Model



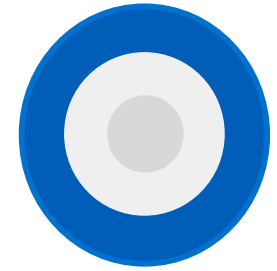
Start with their insights; at the centre will always be the other person, reflecting on their life, career and experiences.

Usually, actions and solutions will be most powerful if they come from the individual.

Explore using powerful questions to gain deeper awareness:

- *When have you done this well before?*
- *What would you do at your most resourceful?*
- *What advice would you give yourself?*

Them, Others, You Model



Phrases for understanding their insights:

- I'm happy to share my ideas / thoughts / experience...
But before we do that, let's discuss the thoughts you've had. Tell me....
 - What have you been thinking so far?
- What are the biggest factors in this decision?
- What else is important to you here? ...Etc.

Them, Others, You Model

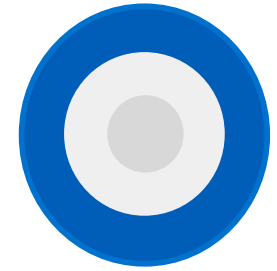


At the next level, you can bring in the knowledge and experience of other people the person knows

Questions like:

- Who else do you know who does this well?
- What did they do?
- What would they do in your situation?

Them, Others, You Model



Phrases for understanding how others could help them

- Who else have you spoken to?
- Who do you know with a similar experience?
- What else have you seen work well?

Them, Others, You Model



At the final level, there is the knowledge and experience that you have, and the advice you want to provide.

For example, you may have insight that the other person doesn't have that might be helpful in the situation.

Them, Others, You Model

Phrases for sharing your opinion or advice

- My view is
- I think you should also consider
 - I would recommend

A framework for processing

A series of questions, to help guide an individual to process and make sense of a situation or event can support a coaching-style conversation.

Guided Questioning:

1. How do you feel?

2. What did you notice?

3. What value are you taking away?

4. What did you learn?

5. What do you need to happen next?

Questions to support processing

1. How do you feel?

- Start by giving people a chance to notice their emotions.
- What's your reaction?
- Did anyone feel something else?

2. What did you notice?

- What stands out about what you saw or heard?
- What's ringing in your ears?
- What sits with you now?

3. What value are you taking away?

- Help them connect with what they value.
- What was important about this situation / experience?
- What value did you get from it?
- What shifts occurred / surprised you in your thinking?

4. What did you learn?

- Encourage them to share their insights.
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about others?
- What made the situation / experience meaningful?
- What metaphor would help you describe this?

5. How do you connect this situation / experience with your life?

- Transfer the learning to your life or practice.
- How can you apply your insights?
- How will you change your behaviour?
- What's next for you?

Creating habits

Small, positive actions, done often, can help make a big difference to our lives. A coaching-style conversation can help people to see how to build these new, helpful habits.

One way to do this is by using an 'If, then' framework. These are very easy steps that people can refer to in the moment without too much thinking. In time, these responses become automatic – new habits are formed.

E.g. *If this happens, then I will....*

If I feel myself being irritated, I will count to 10.

A model for coaching-style conversations

The OSKAR coaching model is useful because it is primarily solutions focused; it helps people to come up with small, positive actions that over time build helpful habits. You don't need to use all the steps in order to make it valuable – whatever feels right in your conversation.

O – Outcome. What is our desired outcome from this conversation? Where do we need to get to? What is important for us to discuss today?

S – Scale. Rank or scale the situation from 1, as bad as could be, to 10, as good as could be. Once scored, explore why that number was given and not something higher or more importantly, not something lower. This tells you what is already happening that is working. Then, focus on identifying ways to make the score one point higher (if we're at a 4 now, what one thing could you do to make it a 5?)

K – Knowledge & Resources. What do you know, past experiences, resources, help from others – that could help you?

A – Affirm & Action. Provide positive, authentic feedback, reaffirm what is possible. Decide on a small action.

R – Review. What was covered; how does the person feel about the action? You may also review at a follow up conversation – how did that action go?

Conversations on Resilience & Recovery

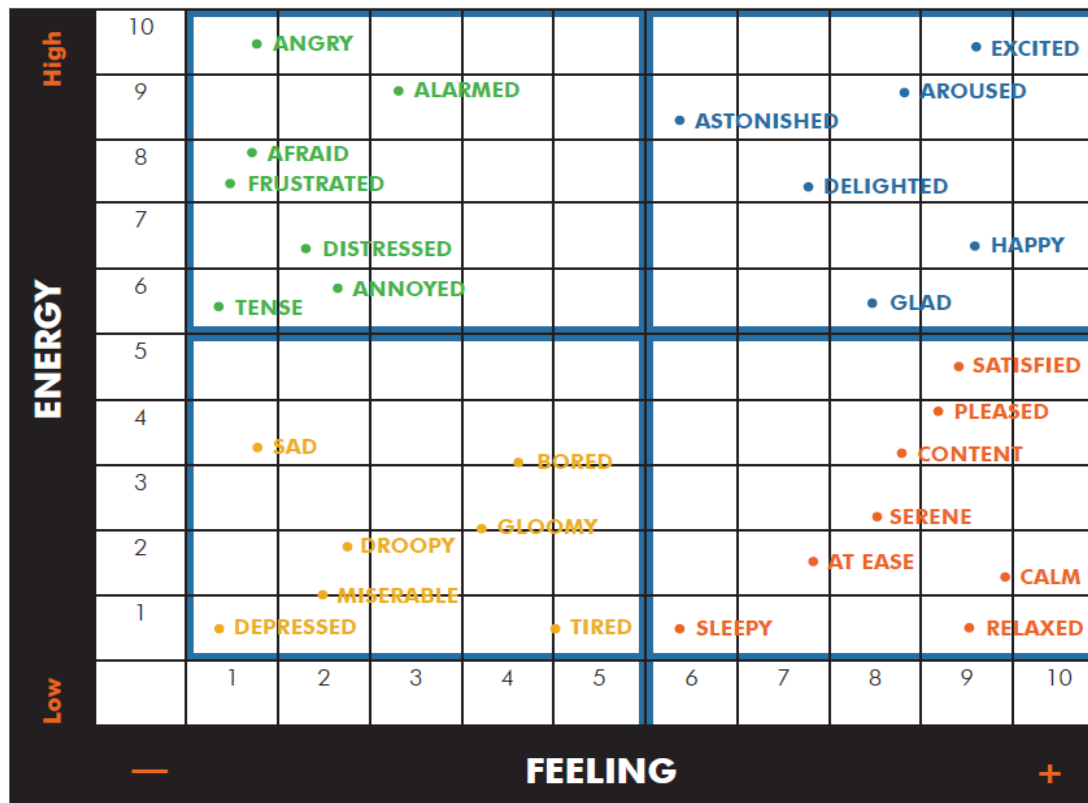


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Conversations on resilience

At times of crisis people are likely to find that their resilience is being stretched. It can be helpful to remind people about the ways that they can rebuild, or manage, their resilience levels.

The Loehr & Schwartz Energy Quadrants are a useful tool for explaining different types of energy. It is normal and natural for everyone to spend time in each of the four zones; what matters is how long you are spending in each area.



Energy Zones:

- High performance (high energy and positive feeling)
- Survival (high energy and negative feeling).
- Burnout (low energy and negative feeling)
- Recovery (low energy and positive feeling)

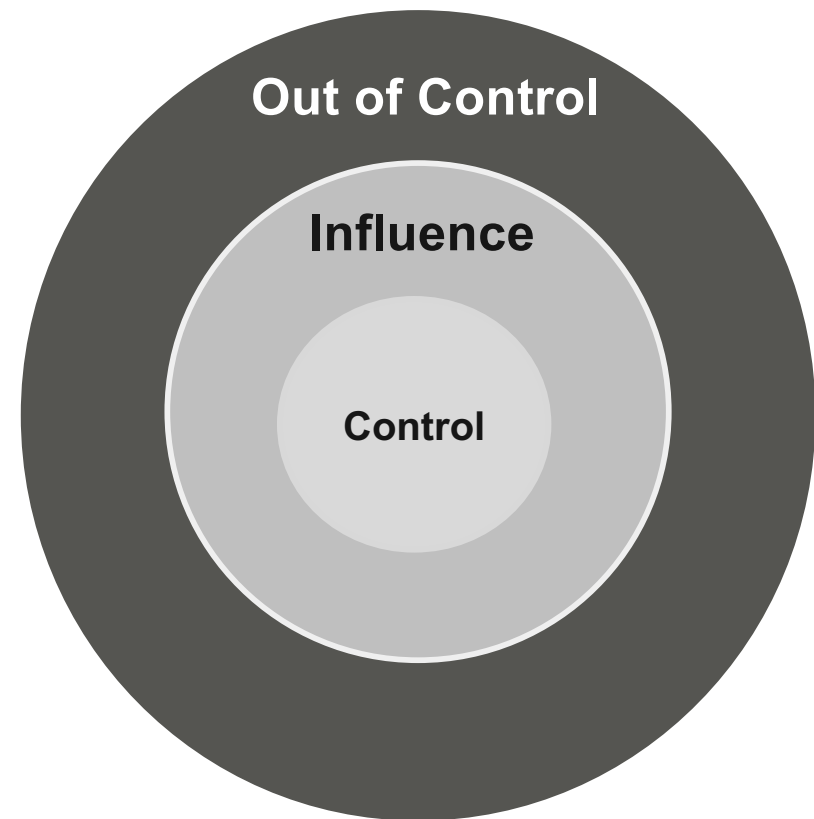
Using energy quadrants in conversation

Ask powerful questions to explore where the individual is spending their time, how they know they are moving between the zones (what are their triggers or symptoms of moving out of high performance?), and what recovery looks like for them.

- Which emotions do you experience most often?
- In which zone are you spending most of your time?
- What does recovery look like for you?
- How much recovery are you getting? What could you do to improve that?
- How do you know you are about to move into a new zone? What are the triggers for you? What are the signs?

Sphere of influence

- A useful exercise to help others identify areas of concern, worries and issues involves inviting people to note down or share with you things they are concerned about.
- During your conversation you can talk through whether their concerns are things they can control, influence or whether at the present time they are things that are out of their control.
- Supporting people to mentally 'let go' of things they can't presently control can be a beneficial exercise to do with others.



Additional Resources



Powerful questions for managers and clinicians to use with their teams

CONNECTING:

- How are you really doing/feeling today?
- On a scale of 1-10 where are you today? What factors are influencing your rating?
- Is there anything I can do more of, to support you?
- What are your main concerns at the moment?
- How are you balancing your time and energy?
- What can you do outside of work to recharge / recover / build your resilience?

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

Difficulties communicating with colleagues when people are tired and fearful are more likely to happen.

- Which of your values is driving your feelings about this / their behaviour or action?
- What unintended messages might you be communicating?
- What do you think you might be doing that would cause negative behaviour in other people?
- What would you have liked the other person to say? What prevented them?
- What are the primary motivations and values of your closest colleagues? How do you know?

IF A TEAM MEMBER FEELS DISCOURAGED

- What is the specific task or goal that feels unmanageable or unreachable ?
- Which talent or strength do you possess that has the most natural connection to your goal or desired outcome ?
- What specific action can you take in light of your strengths and talents ?

Resources

Harvard Business Review (HBR) – all current COVID-19 articles are free to access without subscription.

- <https://hbr.org/2020/03/are-you-leading-through-the-crisis-or-managing-the-response>

Resilience – Resources

- <https://www.robertsoncooper.com/finding-your-way-back-to-good-days-at-work-resources-and-recommendations/>

Thank you

If you would like to discuss coaching support or other available from NHS South East Leadership & Lifelong Learning Team (previously Leadership Academy), please contact Kerry Moody, **Senior Leadership Development Lead** at kerry.moody@leadershipacademy.nhs.uk

If you would like to discuss any of the exercises or materials covered in this resource pack, please contact Rebekah Giffney at Rebekah@rebekahgiffney.com