



# Coaching through crisis and recovery

Resources and tools for Coaches

Leadership and Lifelong Learning South East

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# The role of coaching during crisis




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Coaching can play an important role during some of the most difficult periods of a person's life. (Hall 2015b)

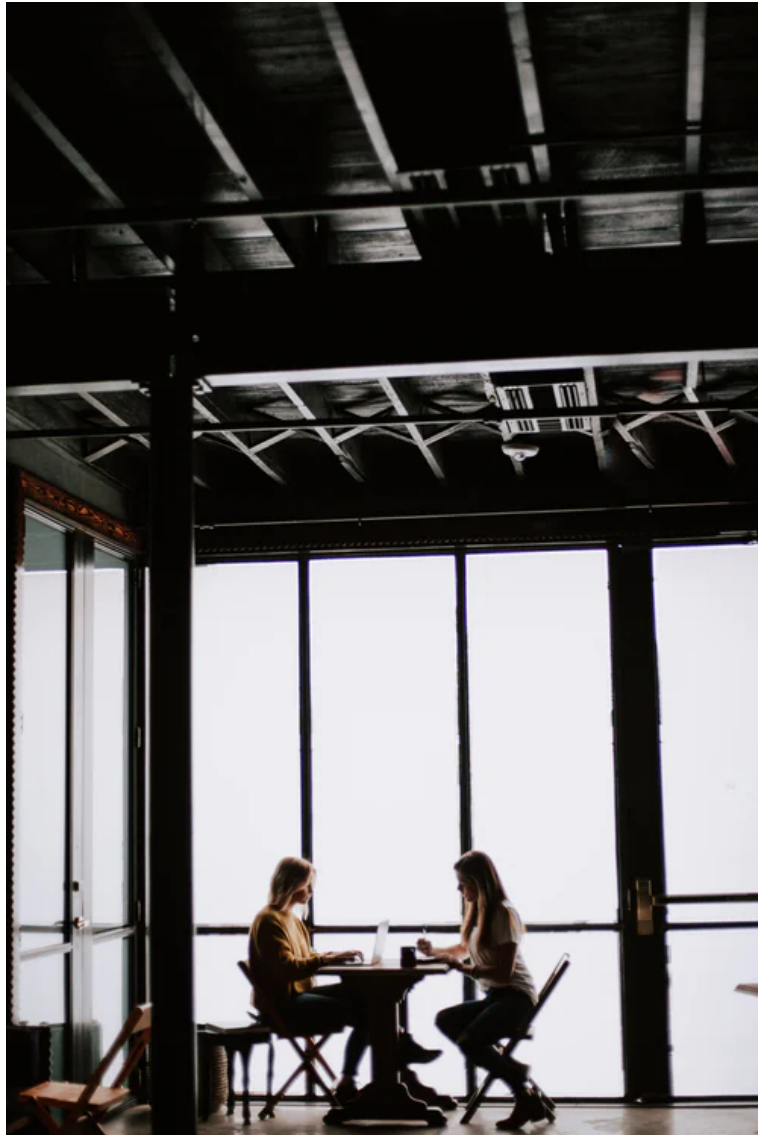
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Coaching people through, or after, these difficult periods is described as coaching for post-event growth or post-traumatic growth. (Spencer & Joseph 2012)

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The Covid-19 pandemic is one such example where post-traumatic growth coaching may be useful for those tackling the crisis.

# What does coaching during crisis entail?



**A. Processing events** - through exploring an individual's emotions, experiences and thoughts.

**B. Sensemaking** - how events and circumstances distort or challenge their sense of self and how they fit into the world and context post their experiences.

**C. Debriefing** - to support people to come to terms with their experiences and their identity / role within it.

# Covid-19: Coaching context

It is possible that a significant number of NHS staff and other health and social care providers will experience **sub-acute trauma** during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.



# What is sub-acute trauma?

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Sub-acute trauma relates to “*distressing, uncomfortable experiences that have significance to people*” and have had a marked impact on them. (Spencer & Joseph 2016)

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If left unsupported there is a risk that people can suffer from an “*insidious degradation of psychological health in the medium to short term*”. (Spencer & Joseph 2016)

# What is post-traumatic growth?

After experiencing a traumatic event, people often report three ways in which their psychological functioning increases:



**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.

*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.*

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

# The foundations

For coaches to be both ethical in practice and effective in their delivery and execution of coaching within this context, several key coaching components are required.



**Boundaries and expectations** - establish clear boundaries from the outset, review and maintain the agreed boundaries throughout the sessions. Acute trauma work is ruled out of bounds for coaching.



**Psychological safety** - provide the time and space needed to help them bring new meaning to their experiences.



**Client-centred coaching** - honour the autonomy of the client.



**Validation** – support in the validation of their abilities to build and engender a strong sense of hope and future.



**Experience** – coaching within the current context will require experienced, qualified coaches that may have a mix of professional skills and experiences related to therapy services and clinical / behavioural psychology.



**Coaching methods** – use of specific coaching methods and models that have been found to be particularly relevant to undertaking coaching within the context of adversity, stress and heightened emotions.

# Coaching in crisis: threat vs. reward



# Helping clients do their best thinking

When clients are experiencing a crisis or some degree of trauma, it is likely that their ability to think clearly will also be impaired.

This is due to our innate threat vs. reward activation in our limbic system in the brain.

# Threat vs. reward thinking



## **Move away from thinking:**

- Close down
- Tunnel vision
- Protect and save



## **Move towards thinking:**

- Open
- Possibilities
- Clarity of thoughts

# Common threat experiences

- Many modern-day threats are social (did they like me, did I do the right thing by that person, etc.) The threat comes not from the task but from the thinking we do around it.
- Social pain is experienced in exactly the same part of the brain as physical pain – the impact on us is the same.
- During humanitarian crises, it is no surprise that individuals feel a high degree of social threat and social pain.



# How we experience threat - SCARF

Rock's (2008) SCARF model is used to describe 5 common ways that we may feel threatened in our day to day:

**S** – Status. Being valued, not being seen as less than others.

**C** – Certainty. Feeling that I can predict and commit to outcomes or events.

**A** – Autonomy. Feeling that I have control, that I have options and choices.

**R** – Relatedness. Feeling part of something, feel close to and connected to others.

**F** – Fairness. Perception that we are treated equitably. Seeing others being treated unfairly can also raise this threat response.

Rock, D. (2008) SCARF: A Brain-Based Model of Collaborating with and Influencing Others

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

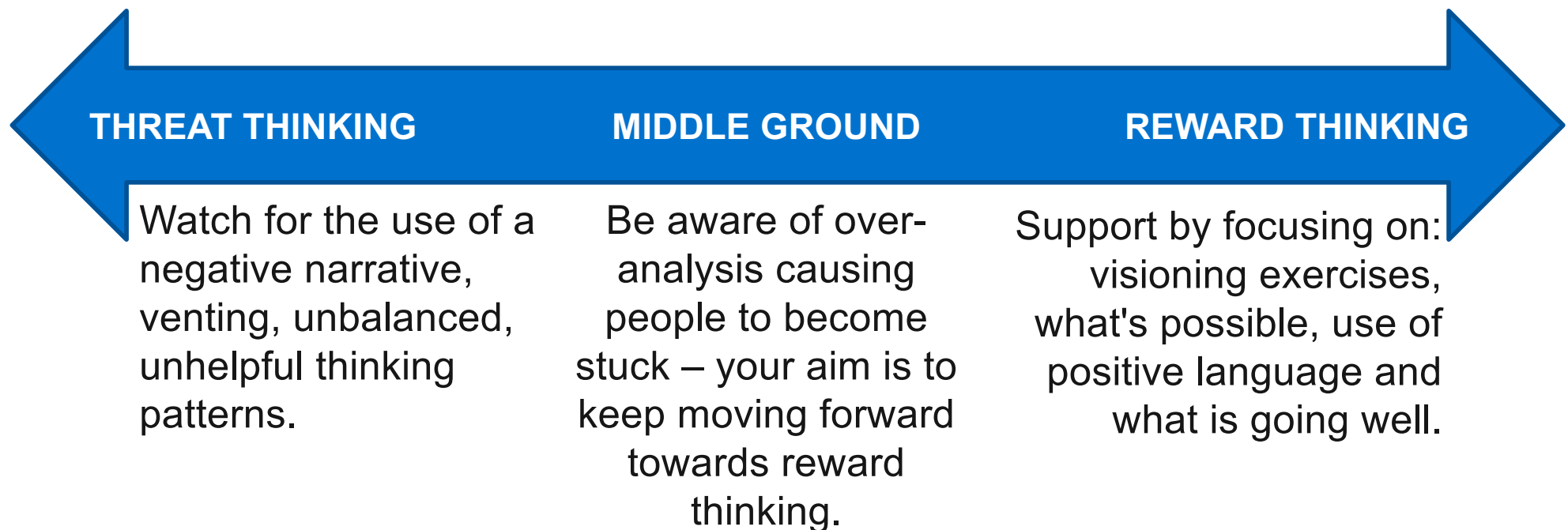
# What can Coaches do?

Help people to move towards, or stay in, reward thinking and away from threat.

- 1. Focus on creating short periods of peak performance.** It is possible to be creative, collaborate, be in reward thinking – but not for long in this context.
- 2. Break down big challenges into smaller chunks.** Help people move from *‘this is so huge I don’t know where to begin’* to, *‘ok the first small thing I could do is X. It wouldn’t solve the problem but it would help me a little’*.
- 3. Help the client stay in the right level of focus.**

# Maintaining positive focus

Be aware of where your clients thinking is along the thinking continuum:



# Coaching tools to stay in reward-based thinking

Time projection and coping imagery exercises: *Imagine, 12 months from now – what will you say to yourself about how you coped and what you learned?* (Palmer & Cooper, 2013: 93-103)

Reframing: *What have you learned from this? How could your learning / experience be useful to you in future?*

Positive psychology-based interventions: *when you consider your recent experience – can you identify 5 things you are grateful for? How does that make you feel?* (based on Emmons & McCullough, 2003)

*Can you identify 3 things that went well during your recent experience and explain why they went well?* (Seligman, Rashid & Parks, 2006)

# SCARF – Coach's role

**S** – Status. *Support client in re-establishing status and building self-value. Acknowledge contribution, thank people for their time.*

**C** – Certainty. *Help client see where they can create predictability, certainty or routine. Which parts of their life are not going to change?*

**A** – Autonomy. *Support client in exploring their sense of control, provide options or choices during the sessions. Be guided, don't lead. Let them come up with the insights.*

**R** – Relatedness. *Facilitate client in thinking about their sense of belonging; get people to reflect on the roles they hold in their groups.*

**F** – Fairness. *Create and follow a fair process. Help people see where they can create equity for others.*

# Coaching in crisis: managing emotion



# Tools for helping clients work with emotion

## Labelling

- *Simply stating the emotion we feel. One word. No analysis, as this moves us into detail and threat thinking.*

## Reappraisal

- *Help clients to see an emotion differently; fear becomes love for those around us, exhaustion becomes passion and determination. (Similar to CBT processes)*

## Stay with direct experience rather than narrative

- *Focus on what is happening, and what you are feeling right now. What can you see, hear. What do you notice. Use mindfulness practices.*

# Coaching in crisis: approaches



# THRIVE Model

## Joseph's (2011) 6-Step THRIVE model

A number of recovery-orientated coaching models use elements of the THRIVE 6 Step approach. However, the THRIVE model provides a useful starting position for coaching by focusing on the aftermath of adversity.



**Taking Stock.**



**Harvesting Hope.**



**Re-authoring.**



**Identifying change**



**Valuing change.**



**Expressing change in action.**

Joseph. S (2011) What doesn't kill us: The new Psychology of posttraumatic growth. New York: Basic Books

# THRIVE Model



**Taking stock.** Tuning in to one's psychological, physical and social realities, and gathering resources that serve the person and help to stabilise functioning.



**Harvesting hope.** Developing habits of mind that help to glimpse opportunities for growth.



**Re-authoring.** Construction of new personal narratives, that include past traumatic events, and build new networks of beliefs about self, others and the world.



**Identifying change.** Involves spotting moments where desired changes are present (e.g. using a diary) or strengths are being displayed.



**Valuing change.** Involves placing some personal significance to the change being pursued (i.e. why it matters), which can also help to evoke the new narrative.



**Expressing change in action.** Involves the articulation of actions into concrete terms, which can help to make the growth real.

# A framework for processing

A guided **processing and sensemaking conversation** might also prove useful to employ during the coaching session.

Guided Processing Conversation:

1. How do you feel?

2. What did you notice?

3. What value are you taking away?

4. What did you learn?

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

# A framework for 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 client 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 client to share their insights.
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about others?
- What made the situation / experience meaningful?
- What metaphor 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?

# OSKAR Model

The OSKAR coaching model is useful because it is primarily solutions focused; it helps clients to stay in their reward-level thinking:

**O – Outcome.** What is our desired outcome from this session?

**S – Scale.** Rank or scale the situation from 1, as bad as could be, to 10, as good as could be. Once ranked, explore why that number was given and not something higher or more importantly, not something lower. Focus on identifying ways to make the score one point higher.

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

**A – Affirm & action.** Support coachee to evaluate what actions are possible / meaningful. Create space for decision-making and identification of small, impactful actions.

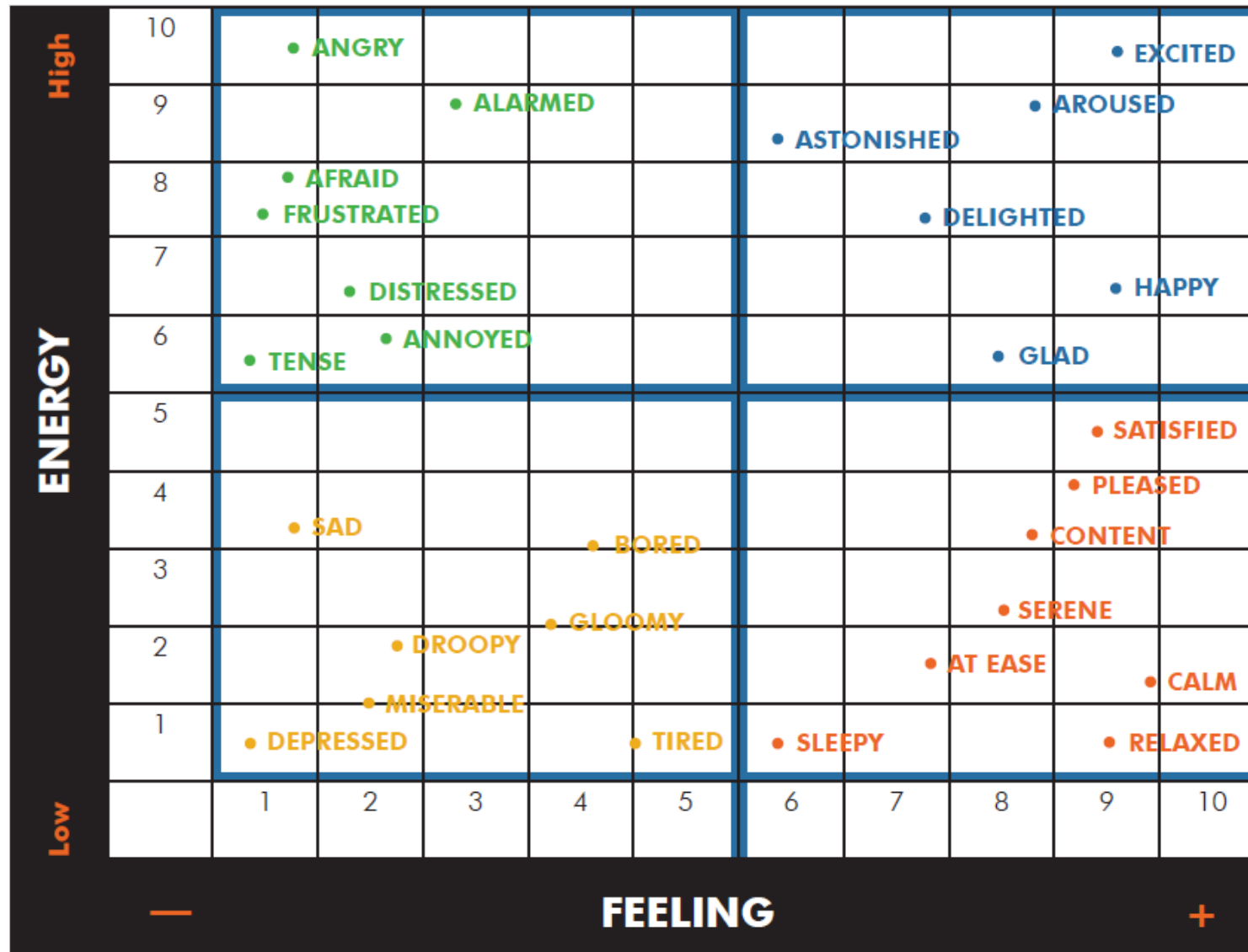
**R – Review.** What was covered, how does the person feel about the action? Used in follow up session.

Whittleworth, K. and Gilbert (2002)

# Additional tools



# Energy quadrants: Loehr & Schwartz



# Using energy quadrants in coaching

- Which emotions do you experience the 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 (use OSKAR scale approach)? What could you do to improve that score by 1 point?

# Creating habits

Part of the coach's role is to help people create new habits. Positive, small actions, that make a difference over time to our lives.

Using an 'If, then' framework can help people identify new habits.

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

# Resources

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/>
- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Coaching-Times-Crisis-Transformation-Organizations/dp/0749468300>

## Video resources also available

- WebEx 1 (Part 1) - Coaching Through Crisis and Recovery. *Exploring Post-Event Growth Coaching.*
- WebEx 1 (Part 2) - Coaching Through Crisis and Recovery. *Example coaching session role play.*
- WebEx 2 Coaching Through Crisis and Recovery. *Additional resources and tools for coaches.*
- WebEx 3 - Coaching Style Conversations Through Crisis and Recovery. *You don't need to be a coach to have a coaching style conversation.*

# Contact

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](mailto: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](mailto:Rebekah@rebekahgiffney.com)