



TOOL FOR APPLYING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN COACHING

COACHEE AND CONTEXT

Assess the coachee's ability and readiness to change

Get to know the coachee (e.g. goals, challenges, needs, preferences, beliefs, resources etc.); display empathic understanding

Ensure the needs of the coachee are fulfilled (e.g. autonomy, competence and relatedness)

Identify what it will take for the coachee to reach his/her goals (information, motivation, skills, effort, etc.); choose your models and techniques based on that

Adapt your coaching (e.g. language, interventions, etc.) based on the context and whatever works for the coachee; be flexible and responsive (what you do should depend on how the coachee responds – the opposite of “one size fits all”)

Help the coachee take ownership (support autonomy); demand commitment; hold the coachee accountable

Help the coachee mobilize his/her resources (i.e. strengths, relations and contextual factors)

Give homework assignments (e.g. assessments, positive interventions; provide handouts, send articles, recommend books, websites, videos, etc.)

Help the coachee stay engaged in working towards his/her goal(s) (i.e. stay on task, invest time, put in effort, be gritty, etc.)

Ask the coachee for feedback on his/her outcomes (e.g. using ORS and goal attainment scales)

COACH

Try to help (*the* most important principle; everything else is secondary); refer to other professionals if you cannot help

Pay full attention while listening (requires automatic skills)

Use your expertise (especially your informed intuition) when making decisions; accept the inevitable uncertainty; guesstimate and do what you believe might be helpful

Become knowledgeable (e.g. read the research, attend training courses, conferences, study groups, etc.)



Attend coaching training; train the things that are associated with positive outcomes; engage in deliberate practice

Take your own medicine (e.g. try the positive interventions that you use, get a coach, etc.)

Do what works for you; use your strengths (be authentic); do things your way (develop your own style); become good at whatever you do

ALLIANCE

Be friendly; show compassion (~ unconditional positive regard)

Create trust and a safe environment

Establish a meaningful relationship

Elicit collaboration

Agree on the goals and means for the coaching

Create a shared understanding of goals and challenges, etc. (e.g. a case conceptualization)

Act as a role model (because of social contagion)

Ask the coachee for feedback on the alliance (e.g. using SRS)

MODELS AND TECHNIQUES

Focus on the coachee and his/her outcomes – not on your toolbox (and especially not on a rigid, predefined process); adjust the process based on the coachee's feedback

Integrate positive psychology into your preexisting way of working (e.g. your favorite coaching approach)

Follow guiding principles from positive psychology and coaching (e.g. have a dialogue, be goal oriented, focus on the positive, use your intuition, experiment, etc.)

Draw on the best available knowledge from research and practice

Explain the rationales for why you do what you do (introduce and explain results from research, models, theoretical concepts and principles, assessments, interventions – e.g. coaching questions); think out loud in the sessions

Follow some kind of procedure (e.g. a coaching model – it creates structure and predictability)

Use evidence-based positive psychology assessments and interventions in the sessions and in between sessions

Build your own evidence-based toolbox; create your own tools informed by the research you know



EXPECTATIONS AND ALLEGIANCE

Ask the coachee about his/her hopes and expectations
Heighten hope, positive success expectancies and self-efficacy
Share successful experiences from other coachees you have worked with
Do what you believe is right (allegiance to your theories and methods)
Give compliments about what is going well (what is right with you, progress, etc.)

*Examples based on *The Heart and Soul of Change*, *The Heroic Client*, a literature review of positive psychology and coaching, and qualitative interviews on the application of positive psychology in coaching*