The role of coaching in supporting organizations to address mental health issues

09

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This chapter will explore the contribution that coaching can make towards supporting organizations through the many challenges presented by mental health issues and potential triggers for these issues such as conflict and workplace change.

When addressing mental health issues, it's particularly important to respect professional boundaries, yet coaching in the workplace is often confounded by its lack of a clear definition and its use often confused with other interventions such as counselling, mentoring and training. At the same time, not all coaches have psychological underpinnings and may struggle to recognize when to refer on. In this chapter, we'll explore the impact of mental health issues at work, delineate coaching from mentoring and counselling, and offer pointers to coaches and coaching sponsors for how coaches can safely contribute in this arena.

The demands of a competitive business environment, the emergence of a more transformative approach to leadership, and the emphasis placed on employee empowerment, have all resulted in a growth in the use of coaching in workplaces worldwide. As Bartlett (2007, p91) stated, 'coaching is one of the fastest- growing techniques for human resource development'. Coaching has been utilized as an effective response to issues including leadership development, succession planning and executive 'burn-out' (International Coach Federation, 2013)

For most people, the workplace is significant as they spend a substantial proportion of their lives there and it offers meaning, structure and a sense of

belonging to many of them. Waddell and Burton's influential review 'Is work good for your health and wellbeing?' (2006) found that work is generally good for physical and mental health and wellbeing, and can be therapeutic for people with common mental health problems.

Workplace mental health

The premise that work has some inherently protective characteristics is not, however, the whole picture. It's also the case that work-related stress can result in mental health issues within the workplace, and that these can have negative impacts on individuals and fellow workers. Combining all those with a stress-related or mental health issue at work amounts to 14 per cent of the working population (Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, 2007), while as many as one in five employees have an existing or potential problem with alcohol or other drugs (Buon and Compton, 1994). Against such a backdrop, it's imperative that coaches have some understanding of mental health issues, and of when it is appropriate or inappropriate for them to offer support.

It's very apparent that stress and mental illness at work are significant when calculating the cost for business. The Centre for Mental Health (2010), for example, estimates that if you combine the total economic and social cost of mental health problems in the United Kingdom, it amounts to £105 billion per year that includes a significant human cost.

Work-related stress and situations where mental health issues aren't appropriately handled can be linked to declining work performance, an increase in accidents, lost quality, impaired problem-solving, absenteeism and presenteeism. Other impacts may include wasted management time, poor workplace relationships and the associated costs of retraining and recruitment when people leave.

Mental health conditions are well defined within the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Version V), which explains the criteria that psychiatrists and psychologists follow when diagnosing and classifying such conditions. However, mental health is better seen as a continuum from the severe end (schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder, psychosis) to the mild/moderate end ('stress', low mood, less severe forms of anxiety/depression). In terms of the workplace, it's the mild to moderate end of the continuum which produces the highest number of sickness absence cases and also provides the biggest challenge for organizations. The reason is that these health problems are most often multi-factorial, with work-related, social-domestic and

psychological factors all playing a part. To the line manager within an organization it can present quite a confusing situation to manage.

Given all these factors, there's an urgent need for organizations to address mental health issues within their workplaces and ample opportunity for coaches to contribute to this endeavour. Coaches can help individuals feel supported and able to deal with the challenges in today's organizational environment, assisting with areas such as helping clients extract significance and meaning out of the job, providing support through change and crisis, and assisting with and managing conflict at work. Weinberg and Cooper (2012) recognize that speaking with family or friends can be problematic and that having someone truly independent, such as a workplace coach, can be of real benefit in becoming more resilient during turbulent times. They conclude that:

> If we're facing uncertain or challenging situations insider or outside work, then seeking support and advice is particularly helpful, as otherwise we can feel alone in having to deal with such circumstances... even if we have doubts about our resilience in turbulent times, we need to recognize there are core parts of our psyche which are designed to adapt. Our mission – which as a species we have chosen to accept over tens of thousands of years – is to recognize our potential psychological strengths and deploy them to meet the challenge at hand (p 139).

However, it's vital that the coach be able to recognize when to refer on to counsellors (and psychologists). This is outlined later in this chapter and some of the red flags to watch out for are set out in Table 9.1 further on. To be able to know when to refer on requires an appreciation of what coaching is and is not, which we look at next.

Delineating coaching from other interventions

There's often confusion and overlap in the use of the terms coaching, counselling, and mentoring in the workplace context. Given that these are all about personal change and self-development there's bound to be overlap both in terms of practitioner competencies and ways of working. While the coaching practitioner will have similar underpinning skills with counsellors and mentors, it's important to be clear about their different uses and roles within an organizational context. The next section will outline coaching before turning to mentoring and then counselling.

Workplace Coaching

Coaching is rapidly gaining respectability within organizations and one way of seeing its relevance is to hear from John Russell, Managing Director, Harley-Davidson Europe, who says:

> 'I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talents that were previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably find a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable' (quoted by Williams, 2008, p290).

Yet increasingly, when looking at who provides coaching at work there can be confusion due to who is carrying out the coaching. For instance, some coaches are counsellors who offer coaching services while some coaches appear to involve themselves in psychotherapy with coachees, whether or not they're qualified to do so. And there have been many debates in the coaching literature about potential boundaries between coaching and therapy (eg Horner, 2011). Also, some managers or supervisors claim they're coaching their team but have limited training (or insight into the coaching process), including within the psychological arena.

Then, when looking at how counselling/coaching is viewed more widely, some people (especially men) may prefer to disclose to others that they are seeing a 'coach' and shy away from using the term 'counsellor' or 'therapist' (Kinder and Boorman, 2010). This will, therefore, impact how programmes are communicated within the workplace and further confuse what is being delivered.

Although there's a lack of agreement among coaching professionals about definitions, there are some agreed characteristics that seem universal to workplace coaching (adapted from Schwenk and Kinder, 2012), and which may have implications for coaches deciding what falls outside of their professional boundaries (and vice versa):

1. Coaching is a skilled activity that should be delivered by appropriately trained and supervised professionals.
2. Coaches require advanced communication skills and specific coaching skills, which includes the principles of adult learning (pedagogy).
3. Individual coaching goals should be aligned with organizational goals and competences/skills development.
4. The individual receiving coaching should be psychologically well and not require counselling intervention.

5 Personal issues may be discussed if relevant to coaching goals, but the emphasis should be on work issues.

6 Follow-up and effective feedback should be part of any coaching plan.

Mentoring

The relationship between the mentor and mentee can be longer term than coaching and some view it as about more general life transitions. In the workplace, it can be seen to have a wider focus than coaching. Clutterbuck (2008) positions it as helping the mentee with their 'lifestreams' such as job, career, family, health and fitness, intellect and spiritual wellbeing. He also positions a mentor as someone who can help the mentee work out priorities in life, decide the amount of effort to expend to reach those priorities, manage guilt from making decisions around this, negotiate this with others and develop greater skills in developing an effective work-life balance (Clutterbuck, 2008). Increasingly, however, coaches will work in these areas too, although the length of time available can be based on the budget available, with mentors often internal with therefore less budget constraint.

Mentoring in the workplace is sometimes organized and formally conducted by the employer or individuals themselves may seek out their own 'independent' mentors who they feel have the requisite skills and experience at work – they have 'seen it and done it all before'. Like coaching, mentoring is aimed at complementing other learning and development activities such as formal training, short courses, self-study, career planning activities, secondments, etc.

More specifically, mentors can support their mentee with a number of strategies, including:

- assistance in constructing career development plans;
- guidance on the knowledge, skill and attitude necessary for a particular position;
- help with learning and development contracts;
- guidance on dealing with workplace politics;
- general guidance with formal and informal learning;
- assistance with specific personal development areas.

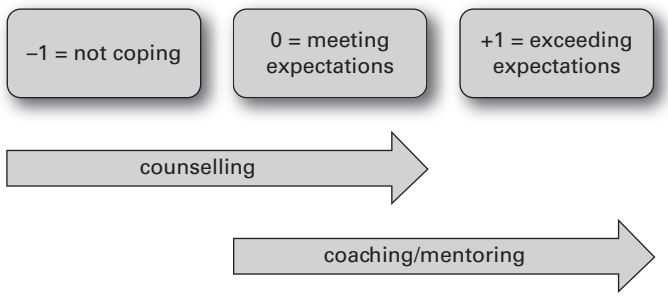
Depending on how the coaching is set up, these aspects can also be a focus for the external coach to explore with their client.

Workplace counselling

Workplace counselling, provided internally through staff support or externally through Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), is a hybrid form of counselling that is both therapeutic in the sense of traditional counselling yet sufficiently workplace focused to fit alongside the needs of the organization. This particular form of counselling is often time-limited, with a specific therapeutic focus and with an eye to the organizational impacts including work-life balance (Kinder *et al*, 2013).

So, one perspective on the differences between workplace counselling, coaching and mentoring within an organizational context is to think of an employee on a continuum (see Figure 9.1) between –1 (the employee is not coping and distressed) 0 (an employee is functioning at work, 'meeting expectations') and +1 (an employee is excelling, 'exceeding expectations'). Workplace counselling sits at the –1 end of the continuum and focuses on moving the employee from this point to 0. On the other hand, coaching or mentoring sits at the other end of the continuum and helps the employee change from 0 to +1. This also explains the overlaps at the 0 point.

FIGURE 9.1 Continuum of helping (Schwenk and Kinder, 2012)



The workplace counsellor will therefore often work with employees who have a common mild to moderate mental health condition which could result in sickness absence whereas the workplace coach/mentor will often work with employees who are at work but not particularly excelling or feel that they are stagnating. There may be times and scenarios in which experienced coaches do intervene with clients towards the '–1 to 0' end of the spectrum, and we are seeing more coaches becoming involved in wellbeing programmes which are targeted at stressed employees, but this needs to be done with caution, as we have stressed elsewhere.

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a proven strategy for assisting employees with many of the problems that affect their work performance. The International Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) defines an EAP as a workplace programme designed to assist: (1) work organizations in addressing productivity issues, and (2) employees in identifying and resolving personal concerns, including health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may affect job performance (EAPA, 2015).

An EAP is based on a concern for the high cost to industry and the community in both human and financial terms when these problems manifest themselves in the workplace in the form of absenteeism, accidents, turnover or poor productivity.

For an EAP to be effective it should include:

- A clear statement on confidentiality so that even though it is paid for by the employer, the employees who use it can rely on it being a completely independent and confidential service which provides offsite professional counselling and onward referral as required. Coaching may also be included (Kinder and Hughes, 2012).
- Access for supervisors and managers to professional support to discuss any staffing problems.
- Information and guidance on work-related issues affecting psychological aspects of occupational health and safety issues.

Table 9.1 sets out some of the differences between coaching, mentoring, and workplace counselling. We will then look briefly at some of the similarities.

TABLE 9.1 Comparing coaching, mentoring and counselling

Coaching	Mentoring	Workplace counselling
Focuses on the individual or team	Focuses on the individual	Focuses on the individual, but can involve others
Short-term relationship	Ongoing long-term relationship	Is often short but long term can be made available

TABLE 9.1 *continued*

Coaching	Mentoring	Workplace counselling
Structured (although can be informal)	Informal	Generally structured
Focus can be on specific skills development but also on career and personal development, depending on 'contract'	Focus is on career and personal development	Focus is on personal development and/or healing
Can be direct manager or colleague, sometimes a professional coach	Normally not a direct manager but may be a colleague	Counselling should not be done by line manager or a colleague (though they may refer to counselling)
Focused on present and future	Focused on future	Focused on past, present and future depending on the model
Agenda set by client, the individual and usually the manager too	Agenda set by mentee	Agenda mutually discussed
Usually does not advise	Can provide advice	Does not advise
Often related to work performance issues although can be developmental	Normally does not address work performance issues	Can focus on work performance issues
Uses advanced communication skills and additional training if professional coach	Uses advanced communication skills	Uses advanced communication skills with additional therapy training

TABLE 9.1 *continued*

Coaching	Mentoring	Workplace counselling
May discuss stress management issues if disclosed and their impact on work but needs to refer on to others for mental health	May discuss stress management issues if disclosed and their impact on work but needs to refer on to others for mental health	Can treat or assist with mental health issues
Confidentiality important but exact nature depends on who provides the coaching and the 'contract'	Confidentiality important	Highly confidential
Other people often involved	Does not normally involve others	Rarely involves others (exceptions group, couples or family therapies)

The similarities between coaching, mentoring and counselling

All three helping professions provide the client with a safe, boundaried place in which to carry out an aspect of personal development. Although there are differences in terms of the focus for each profession, when viewed more widely they share a greater number of skills and approaches:

- **Therapeutic relationship** – this is central to all activities.
- **Providing a safe and non-judgemental space** – this reduces the defences that the client has and enables them to open up and set realistic goals.
- **Reflective practice** – observing how the client responds to questioning, assessments, agreed tasks or 'homework' can help identify further development objectives.

- **Creativity** – energy and change often come from thinking and behaving differently.
- **Review** – this involves evaluation and reflection on the effectiveness of the support provided and to ensure goals set are achieved.
- **Limits of competence** – practitioners need to know the boundaries of their competence and know how to and whom to refer on.
- **Thinking systemically** – this is an important aspect within the workplace so that the individual and the organization are considered (Schwenk and Kinder, 2012).

Personal problems

When an employee's personal problems affect their performance or that of the work group, the manager must intervene; referral to professional counselling may be appropriate. Counselling may be offered internally by a professional counsellor or externally, perhaps by an EAP. Table 9.2 sets out some scenarios and behaviours which might require referring on.

Rather than offering internal support, some organizations try to get around this by using local community services from a company referral directory. However, this requires the manager or coach to diagnose the employee's problems (eg is this employee drug dependent or do they have marital problems?), something they may not be qualified nor entitled to do. In addition, trying to keep such a directory updated is difficult and time-consuming.

TABLE 9.2 Examples of behaviours or situations where the coach should consider referring on to a mental health practitioner

History	• Past attempts at suicide or self-harm • Past psychiatric history including severe and enduring mental health conditions • Current suicidal ideation • Sense of hopelessness and helplessness • Symptoms of traumatic stress including flashbacks to an incident, intense emotions feelings and avoidance • Psychological distress which is impacting social and economic status • Taking (prescribed, herbal, self-prescribed) medication for anxiety, depression or other mental health issues

TABLE 9.2 *continued*

Behaviours	• Increased or uncontrollable use of alcohol or other drugs (illegal, legal and/or prescription) • Physical behaviours such as shaking, slurring of words, unable to sit still, being in a highly agitated state • Obsessional checking and elaborate rituals/routines • Dramatic deterioration in personal hygiene • Workplace violence • Difficulty performing familiar work tasks • Excessive withdrawal from others • A significant loss of interest in work or projects and significant (out-of-character) apathy • Dramatic changes in sleep patterns (too much or too little) • Significant weight loss or gain, appetite loss, or overeating • Increased risk-taking behaviour • Uncharacteristic, 'strange' behaviour • Excessive social withdrawal
Thoughts	• Hearing voices • Catastrophic thinking • Incoherence and not being able to follow thought processes/irrational • Uncharacteristic disclosure of personal or intimate information • Problems with logical/critical thought and speech that cannot be explained • Difficulty concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions • Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about being able to control other people or specific situations • Uncharacteristically pessimistic or dark thoughts shared with others
Emotions	• Sudden outbursts of emotions without any obvious trigger and appearing out of control

NOTE: Having one or even a few of these symptoms does not indicate a mental illness. But a person experiencing several together that are causing them problems in the home and/or worklife should be assessed by a qualified mental health professional.

It is easy to envisage how much valuable time is wasted by managers or coaches trying to deal with something they are neither trained for, nor competent to handle. The legal ramifications of the manager's action can also be called into question, as the manager has a duty of care to prevent damage to the employee resulting from their 'support' (Buon, 1992).

Duty of care

Duty of care is a legal concept which states that a person who suffers harm as a result of the actions (or inactions) of someone who has a duty of care towards them may be able to take action against that person (and their employer) for negligence (Buon, 2005). If a manager or a coach is engaged in an activity that any reasonable person would realize calls for care to prevent damage to an employee, then that manager or coach has a duty of care to the employee who may rely on their claimed knowledge and skill. It could be suggested that if a high level of skill is required when dealing with complex issues such as mental health (such as with counselling), then a greater duty of care is demanded.

Therefore in the case where an employee follows the advice of the manager or coach and this results in the employee suffering harm or loss as a consequence, the manager or coach and the organization could face legal action. Even if the manager or coach is strictly within the legal requirements for duty of care, they may still be outside the ethical standard of duty of care. It's worth noting that professional counsellors carry malpractice insurance whereas managers, internal coaches (and HR professionals) often do not (Buon, 2005). However, many coaches do abide by the ethical codes set out by the professional coaching bodies they belong to, which an organization providing coaching should ensure are fully in place.

A further problem is that the manager or workplace coach can lose focus as they get involved in the employee's complex personal or mental health problems; their focus moves from the performance decline to the employee's problems which may not be the job they are paid to carry out. It is important that professional coaches receive supervision, and that coaching buyers enquire about this when selecting external coaches and/or ensure internal coaches get supervision.

Since the passing of the Health and Safety at Work Act in 1974 in the United Kingdom, for example (and subsequent legislation from the European Union), employers have had a clear statutory duty of care, and generally, employers all over the world have a duty of care from an ethical stance. The United Kingdom's legislation, for example, requires workers' health and

safety to be protected 'as far as reasonably practicable' and is reinforced by additional regulations that require employers to be proactive in identifying and reducing risks. These duties extend beyond physical issues of risks and include issues of a psychosocial nature including mental health issues (Kinder, 2004).

The United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends a five-step risk assessment process, supported by management standards to identify stress hazards, and this can be used by coaches too to help them assess risk, potentially nipping problems in the bud and tackling them appropriately:

- identify hazards;
- decide who might be harmed and how;
- evaluate the risk and take action to avoid or reduce;
- record the action plan;
- monitor and review to ensure remains effective.

The HSE approach seeks to reduce the likelihood of workplace stressors causing work-related illness that include common mild to moderate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. However, as has been highlighted, distress within the workplace is not uncommon and the costs already highlighted make it worthwhile for organizations to invest in and ensure access to effective employee support services which include coaching/counselling interventions (see Boorman, 2008). In addition, workplace coaches need to have an awareness of where their interventions fit within the overall organizational system and how they can raise concerns about the prevalent organizational culture which may be impacting upon the employees they are trying to help.

Workplace conflict

There are many individual and organizational precursors or contributing factors in the development of workplace conflict. Any given conflict situation may have been caused by one or a combination of these factors and so the nature of that conflict situation may be straightforward or more complex. A summary of the most frequently reported precursors or factors can be seen in Table 9.3 below.

TABLE 9.3 Individual and organizational precursors in the development of workplace conflict

Individual factors	Organizational factors
Physical or mental health problems	Inappropriate management/leadership style
Poor communication skills	Flexible working practices
Lack of negotiation and/or assertiveness skills	Lack of performance management systems
Diversity and differences	Poor or lack of delegation
Competing needs and goals	Lack of team leadership
Misperceptions and misunderstandings	Office politics/power issues
Inappropriate use of personal or group power	Ineffective conflict resolution processes
Underdeveloped emotional competencies	Over-reliance on e-mail communication
Internal emotional states	Blame and shame workplace culture
Personal problems outside of work	Overly competitive workplace culture
Lack of job satisfaction	Physical environment
Low self-esteem	Poor decision-making practices
Alcohol or other drug-related problems	Lack of organizational due process
Relationship problems	Scarce resources
Language difficulties	Poor morale

SOURCE: Buon (2008: 251)

An employee's experience of workplace conflict can be both negative and positive, and the factors that contribute to whether it is one or the other or a mixed experience are complex and multifaceted. In any conflict situation, there will be elements of both unmet human needs and the material or negotiable issues. As a conflict becomes more intensely felt over time the challenge in creating a resolution is to assess these elements as accurately as possible and then adopt the most appropriate approach that addresses both of these aspects (Buon, 2008: p254).

Where conflict isn't responded to in a timely and effective way or where it has escalated over time or has become entrenched it becomes dysfunctional rather than functional. As a result, a whole range of negative effects can be experienced at an individual and/or organizational level.

At an individual level, unresolved conflict can result in a loss of commitment to the job or the organization; frustration, stress, anxiety or depression including physiological symptoms; strained or dysfunctional working relationships; increased use of prescribed medication or alcohol and other drugs; and a decrease in personal work performance (Buon, 2008).

At an organizational level, where conflict isn't responded to appropriately the impact on the organization can be significant. Buon (2008: p257) has suggested this can include:

- employee turnover;
- reduced productivity and performance;
- absenteeism and presenteeism;
- increased formal grievances and investigations or claims;
- acts of sabotage or revenge;
- increased injuries and accidents;
- increased occupational health claims;
- loss of creativity and innovation;
- employee relations problems;
- loss of management time;
- customer/client dissatisfaction.

Responding to workplace conflict

An individual's or organization's capacity to respond effectively and positively to conflict is dependent upon the internal personal and organizational resources available to create and support that response. Clearly there is no

one correct way to respond to all workplace conflict as each conflict situation will present its own unique set of issues and challenges. There must then be an ability to be flexible and adaptable if our responses and interventions are going to be consistently effective.

The following list (Buon, 2014) provides a brief overview of some of the key resources that are utilized in response to workplace conflict:

1. **Self-Awareness:** An understanding of self and personal 'triggers' can be a very valuable resource in understanding conflict and its impact.
2. **Resilience:** Some of the factors that contribute to resilience are a positive attitude, optimism and the ability to regulate emotions.
3. **Social and interpersonal skills:** Active listening skills and the ability to remove barriers to communication can all assist in resolving conflict.
4. **Leader/manager intervention:** The employment relationship has an inherent power imbalance and so all employees need to know that natural justice is enshrined in an organization's policies, procedures and management behaviour.
5. **Policies and procedures:** It is essential to have in place a robust and meaningful set of complaint or grievance handling procedures.
6. **Employee assistance or welfare support:** As conflict can be rooted in personal problems (or can cause personal problems) it is important to have an EAP available.
7. **Mediation schemes:** Mediation is the intervention into a conflict situation by a third party. This person usually has no decision-making powers but simply assists the parties in conflict to resolve the issues they are facing. These schemes (both internal teams and the use of external mediators) are becoming increasingly common in the workplace and are reporting impressive success rates (Roberts, 2013).

A workplace coach should be aware of the key resources listed above and introduced where appropriate. The coach can then discuss with the client the implications, advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

However, in the first instance it is always best to try informal problem-solving processes. Most company grievance procedures will contain an informal stage, but most organizations do not indicate how this informal stage should work (Buon, 2008). The most effective way of preventing the incidence and escalation of conflict, and of empowering employees to find their own solutions is to develop and utilize good informal and

problem-solving processes and interpersonal process skills; very much the territory of coaching, of course. We need to get past the fears of 'walking on eggshells' with respect to our differences from each other at work and of making a mistake as managers, accepting that responding well to conflict means being open to learning about ourselves and our organizations (Buon, 2008). A coach can be invaluable in this approach.

Workplace change

Change is a fact of life in all organizations. There are different levels of change, which range all the way from a minor change in a work procedure to a major revamping of the organization structure. Most people would suggest that significant or dramatic changes are the most complicated to handle but experience shows that even the apparently simplest of changes can produce complex and sometimes costly consequences (Buon, 2014).

Change can come in many and varied forms from, at one extreme, cataclysmic world events to, at the other extreme, a simple adjustment to a filing system. However, no matter how large or small the change is, the same dynamics are present and the impacts can be seen on individuals (Buon, 2014).

In spite of the good intentions of employers, the majority of change initiatives fail because of the failure by an organization to address properly the people factors. In the long run, these factors can be critical to the success or failure of such initiatives. Research indicates that too much attention is given to process issues, such as changing structures and systems, at the expense of the people factors (Buon, 2014). Elsewhere in this book, models and frameworks for understanding and working with change and transition are explored.

The failure to communicate the need, or make the case for change, can result in employees not fully understanding why the change is necessary or even in suspicion or lack of trust, to the extent that employees may believe that information is deliberately being withheld or distorted. Further, organizations often fail to take account of individual differences; for example, some people can cope with change and others find it more difficult.

Workplace coaching (as well as mentoring or counselling through EAPs) can assist individuals through the change process and support the overall change initiative. While developing a coherent strategy and having decided on an effective approach to change are essential components of the process of managing change, neglecting the people issues can be a recipe for disaster (Buon, 2014).

To illustrate this, Williams (2008) outlines that 'people today need connection with a mentor/coach/guide more than ever before due to the rapid pace of change, difficulty in creating sustainable relationships, desire to live one's life purpose, and many other reasons' (p287). He predicted that workplace coaching had a unique contribution to make to helping employees manage change, as well as other organizational issues:

We are on the verge of a fundamental shift in how the workplace ensures employee retention, team cohesiveness, sales and production increases, and overall employee effectiveness and satisfaction. Coaching is on its way to becoming bigger and more successful than any other form of organizational investment in the future (Williams, 2008 p289).

Conclusion

We started off this chapter highlighting the relevance of the workplace to most of us given that we spend a lot of our waking hours at work and suggested it's necessary to differentiate coaching, mentoring and counselling from one another, particularly where addressing mental health issues is concerned. While the coaching practitioner may possess similar skills with workplace counsellors and mentors, it's important to be clear about their different roles within an organizational context including some of the pitfalls of overstepping boundaries.

We outlined how the workplace coach has an important contribution to make to improve employee and organizational wellbeing alongside mentors and workplace counsellors. However, this contribution should be made with a deep understanding of the complexity of the workplace environment. The workplace coach faces many of the issues that the first workplace counsellors experienced when entering the workplace. These include the need for an understanding of organizational development, employee relations, power structures and the challenges of the 'dual-client' relationship (Grange, 2005).

Mental health, stress at work, conflict and change are all common within organizations and they can cause real problems for managers who try to 'bury their heads' and deny that they exist. However, there is a growing appreciation among more balanced and progressive organisations that there are benefits to facing these real issues and to investing in programmes that include workplace coaching.

Taking a world view, coaching has established itself as a useful learning and development tool, which can improve employee performance, embed skills and empower employees, and also has a part to play in boosting

employee wellbeing and tackling stress in the workplace. However there remain some confusion and contradictions in the coaching field that are potentially damaging the full adoption of coaching into organizations, and coaches and those purchasing coaching need to be aware of boundaries.

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