
Professional Certificate in Social Change in Coaching

Facilitating Group Coaching

Active Listening – The practice of fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what speakers say.

Related terms: Empathy, Reflective Listening, Presence

Example: A facilitator repeats key points in the group's own words to confirm comprehension.

Practical application: Use paraphrasing and summarising after each participant shares to ensure clarity.

Challenges: Managing internal distractions and resisting the urge to formulate a response before the speaker finishes.

Agenda Setting – The process of defining topics, objectives, and time allocations for a coaching session.

Related terms: Session Planning, Prioritisation, Time Management

Example: Co-creating an agenda with participants at the start of a workshop on community advocacy.

Practical application: Use a collaborative whiteboard where members add agenda items and vote on importance.

Challenges: Balancing diverse priorities and preventing agenda creep.

Alignment – Ensuring that group goals, individual motivations, and organisational mission are mutually supportive.

Related terms: Visioning, Values, Strategic Fit

Example: Aligning a group's action plan with the broader social-change campaign of the host NGO.

Practical application: Conduct a quick "values check" where members map personal values to the group's purpose.

Challenges: Reconciling conflicting personal agendas and institutional constraints.

Assessment – The systematic collection of data to gauge group readiness, skill gaps, and contextual factors.

Related terms: Diagnostic, Baseline, Evaluation

Example: Administering a pre-session questionnaire to identify participants' experience with community organising.

Practical application: Use a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, interviews, and observation.

Challenges: Ensuring honest responses and avoiding assessment fatigue.

Bystander Effect – A social-psychological phenomenon where individuals are less likely to help when others are present.

Related terms: Diffusion of Responsibility, Group Inhibition

Example: In a large coaching circle, no one steps forward to mediate a conflict because each assumes someone else will.

Practical application: Assign rotating "guardian" roles to encourage proactive engagement.

Challenges: Overcoming cultural norms that discourage speaking up.

Co-creation – Joint development of knowledge, solutions, or resources by facilitator and participants.

Related terms: Participatory Design, Collaborative Innovation

Example: Designing a community outreach toolkit together with local activists during a coaching session.

Practical application: Use real-time collaborative documents to capture ideas as they emerge.

Challenges: Managing divergent creative visions and ensuring equitable contribution.

Collective Impact – A structured approach to solving complex social problems through cross-sector coordination.

Related terms: Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration, Common Agenda

Example: Aligning the efforts of youth groups, NGOs, and municipal agencies to reduce homelessness.

Practical application: Facilitate a shared measurement system where each group reports progress against common indicators.

Challenges: Sustaining long-term commitment and reconciling differing accountability standards.

Consensus Building – A decision-making method that seeks broad agreement rather than simple majority rule.

Related terms: Deliberative Process, Supermajority

Example: Reaching a consensus on the core values that will guide a grassroots campaign.

Practical application: Use “gradients of agreement” cards to capture the intensity of support.

Challenges: Time consumption and possible pressure on dissenting voices.

Conflict Management – Techniques for recognizing, addressing, and transforming interpersonal or group tensions.

Related terms: Mediation, Dialogue, De-Escalation

Example: Intervening when two participants clash over resource allocation strategies.

Practical application: Apply the “interest-based relational” approach to uncover underlying needs.

Challenges: Maintaining neutrality and preventing escalation.

Community Mapping – Visual representation of local assets, stakeholders, and power structures.

Related terms: Asset Mapping, Stakeholder Analysis

Example: Creating a map of community centres, schools, and informal gathering spots during a coaching workshop.

Practical application: Use post-its on a large sheet to plot resources and identify gaps.

Challenges: Ensuring comprehensive coverage and avoiding bias.

Coaching Cycle – The iterative sequence of goal setting, action planning, execution, review, and reflection.

Related terms: PDCA, Continuous Improvement

Example: A group sets a target to increase voter registration, implements outreach, reviews results, and refines tactics.

Practical application: Embed a “check-in” at the start of each session to revisit previous commitments.

Challenges: Keeping momentum across multiple cycles and avoiding “cycle fatigue”.

Coaching Ethics – Standards governing confidentiality, consent, boundaries, and professional conduct.

Related terms: Code of Conduct, Professional Integrity

Example: Obtaining informed consent before discussing sensitive community-level data.
Practical application: Provide a written ethics brief at the beginning of the certificate program.
Challenges: Navigating cultural differences in privacy expectations.

Coaching Presence – The facilitator’s ability to be fully attentive, grounded, and authentic in the moment.
Related terms: Mindfulness, Attunement
Example: Maintaining eye contact and open body language while a participant shares a personal story.
Practical application: Begin each session with a brief grounding exercise.
Challenges: Managing personal stress and external interruptions.

Coaching Supervision – Structured support for facilitators to reflect on practice, receive feedback, and develop skills.
Related terms: Mentoring, Peer Review
Example: Monthly supervision meetings where facilitators discuss challenging group dynamics.
Practical application: Use a reflective journal template to document observations and questions.
Challenges: Allocating time and creating a safe supervisory environment.

Coaching Techniques – Specific methods such as questioning, reframing, and visualisation used to facilitate learning.
Related terms: Socratic Method, Appreciative Inquiry
Example: Employing the “3-Why” technique to uncover root motivations for a social-change goal.
Practical application: Keep a toolbox of techniques and select based on the group’s current need.
Challenges: Over-reliance on familiar techniques and neglecting contextual fit.

Collaboration – Joint effort among individuals or organisations to achieve shared outcomes.
Related terms: Partnership, Synergy
Example: A coaching cohort partners with a local university to research policy impact.
Practical application: Draft a collaboration charter that outlines roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols.
Challenges: Managing power imbalances and differing timelines.

Cultural Competence – Ability to understand, respect, and effectively work within diverse cultural contexts.
Related terms: Intercultural Sensitivity, Diversity
Example: Adapting coaching language to reflect Indigenous perspectives on stewardship.
Practical application: Conduct a cultural-awareness audit before each session.
Challenges: Avoiding tokenism and addressing unconscious biases.

Dialogue – An open, respectful exchange that encourages deeper listening and shared meaning.
Related terms: Conversation, Deliberation
Example: Facilitating a dialogue between youth activists and local officials on zoning laws.
Practical application: Use “talking circles” where each participant speaks without interruption.
Challenges: Keeping dialogue constructive and preventing domination by louder voices.

Empowerment – Process of increasing individuals’ or groups’ capacity to make choices and transform those

choices into actions.

Related terms: Agency, Self-Efficacy

Example: Coaching participants to design their own advocacy campaigns rather than following a preset template.

Practical application: Provide tools and resources that enable autonomous decision-making.

Challenges: Balancing guidance with over-directiveness.

Facilitator Role – The set of responsibilities a person assumes to guide, support, and structure group coaching.

Related terms: Coach, Moderator, Guide

Example: A facilitator curates activities, monitors time, and ensures psychological safety.

Practical application: Create a role-clarity checklist that outlines expectations for each session.

Challenges: Managing dual identities as expert and learner.

Feedback Loop – A cyclical process where information about performance is shared, interpreted, and acted upon.

Related terms: Feed-forward, Continuous Feedback

Example: After a role-play, peers give constructive feedback that the participant integrates into the next exercise.

Practical application: Use a “plus/delta” format to capture what went well and what could improve.

Challenges: Preventing feedback from becoming judgmental or demotivating.

Group Dynamics – The patterns of interaction, influence, and behaviour that emerge within a collective.

Related terms: Norms, Cohesion, Power Structures

Example: Observing a subgroup forming around a charismatic participant, affecting decision-making balance.

Practical application: Conduct regular “check-ins” to surface emerging dynamics.

Challenges: Detecting subtle power shifts and addressing them without alienating members.

Group Process – The sequence of stages a group typically passes through, from formation to dissolution.

Related terms: Tuckman’s Model, Stages of Development

Example: Guiding a newly formed activist team through “storming” to achieve productive “norming”.

Practical application: Map the current stage and select interventions appropriate to that phase.

Challenges: Misreading the stage and applying mismatched techniques.

Group Cohesion – The sense of belonging, trust, and mutual commitment among members.

Related terms: Bonding, Team Spirit

Example: A coaching cohort celebrates a collective milestone, strengthening unity.

Practical application: Incorporate shared rituals such as opening circles or collective affirmations.

Challenges: Over-cohesion leading to groupthink or exclusion of outsiders.

Group Norms – Explicit or implicit rules that govern acceptable behaviour within a group.

Related terms: Ground Rules, Code of Conduct

Example: Establishing a norm that phones are silenced during reflective discussions.

Practical application: Co-create a “norms charter” at the start of the program.

Challenges: Norm violations and the need for enforcement mechanisms.

Group Reflection – Structured contemplation where members collectively examine experiences, learning, and emotions.

Related terms: Debrief, After-Action Review

Example: After a community outreach, the group reflects on what resonated with residents.

Practical application: Use a “What? So What? Now What?” framework to guide reflection.

Challenges: Encouraging honest sharing while managing emotional intensity.

Group Visioning – Collaborative creation of a vivid, shared picture of a desired future state.

Related terms: Future-Casting, Dreaming

Example: The group paints a mural depicting a city free of food insecurity.

Practical application: Facilitate a “vision board” activity using images and words.

Challenges: Aligning diverse aspirations into a coherent vision.

Icebreaker – An activity designed to ease tension, build rapport, and stimulate interaction at the start of a session.

Related terms: Warm-up, Energizer

Example: “Two Truths and a Lie” where participants share personal facts to discover commonalities.

Practical application: Choose icebreakers that reflect the cultural context and session objectives.

Challenges: Selecting activities that are inclusive and not overly frivolous.

Inclusivity – Ensuring that all participants, regardless of background, can fully engage and benefit.

Related terms: Accessibility, Equity

Example: Providing translation services for non-English speaking community members.

Practical application: Conduct an inclusion audit of venue, materials, and facilitation style.

Challenges: Identifying hidden barriers and allocating resources to address them.

Intervention – A purposeful action taken by the facilitator to shift the group’s trajectory toward desired outcomes.

Related terms: Prompt, Catalyst

Example: Introducing a role-play to surface hidden assumptions about power dynamics.

Practical application: Use a decision-tree to select interventions based on observed needs.

Challenges: Timing the intervention appropriately and avoiding over-control.

Learning Contract – A mutually agreed statement outlining what participants intend to learn and how they will demonstrate it.

Related terms: Commitment Sheet, Goal Agreement

Example: A participant commits to delivering a community presentation by the end of the module.

Practical application: Review contracts at each session to track progress and adjust support.

Challenges: Ensuring contracts are realistic and not overly prescriptive.

Learning Objectives – Specific, measurable statements describing desired knowledge, skills, or attitudes

after a session.

Related terms: Outcomes, Competencies

Example: "Participants will be able to map stakeholder influence using a power-interest grid."

Practical application: Align activities, assessments, and feedback to each objective.

Challenges: Over-generalising objectives, leading to vague outcomes.

Leadership – The ability to influence, inspire, and guide individuals or groups toward a common purpose.

Related terms: Servant Leadership, Distributed Leadership

Example: A facilitator models collaborative leadership by inviting co-facilitation.

Practical application: Rotate facilitation responsibilities to develop emerging leaders.

Challenges: Managing ego and ensuring leadership does not become hierarchical.

Mentoring – A developmental relationship where an experienced individual supports the growth of a less experienced person.

Related terms: Coaching, Sponsorship

Example: A senior activist mentors a newcomer on effective lobbying techniques.

Practical application: Pair participants in a mentorship matrix based on complementary skills.

Challenges: Maintaining boundaries and avoiding dependency.

Nonviolent Communication – A communication framework that emphasizes observation, feeling, need, and request to foster empathy.

Related terms: Compassionate Dialogue, Conflict Resolution

Example: Reframing a critique as "I notice... I feel... because I value... would you consider...?"

Practical application: Teach the NVC template and practice it in role-plays.

Challenges: Habitual language patterns may resist change.

Participatory Evaluation – An evaluation approach that actively involves stakeholders in defining criteria, collecting data, and interpreting results.

Related terms: Co-evaluation, Stakeholder Involvement

Example: Group members design the survey questions used to assess a community garden project.

Practical application: Conduct a "reflection circle" after each milestone to gather evaluative insights.

Challenges: Balancing methodological rigour with inclusive participation.

Power Dynamics – The distribution and exercise of authority, influence, and control within a group.

Related terms: Hierarchy, Dominance

Example: Recognising that a local politician's presence may suppress dissenting voices.

Practical application: Use anonymous voting to level power imbalances during decision-making.

Challenges: Uncovering hidden power structures and addressing them without alienating key allies.

Reflection – The intentional process of thinking about experiences, emotions, and learning to derive meaning.

Related terms: Metacognition, Insight

Example: Participants journal about how their personal values align with the campaign's mission.

Practical application: Allocate five minutes at the end of each session for silent reflection.

Challenges: Facilitating depth without causing overwhelm.

Resilience – The capacity to recover, adapt, and thrive in the face of adversity or change.

Related terms: Grit, Adaptive Capacity

Example: A community group rebounds after a policy setback by revising tactics.

Practical application: Incorporate resilience-building exercises such as scenario planning.

Challenges: Avoiding “burnout” while encouraging perseverance.

Scaling – The process of expanding an initiative’s reach, impact, or size while maintaining effectiveness.

Related terms: Replication, Diffusion

Example: Adapting a successful youth mentorship model from one city to several others.

Practical application: Develop a “scaling kit” that includes guidelines, templates, and training modules.

Challenges: Preserving core values and quality during rapid growth.

Shared Decision-Making – A collaborative approach where all members have input and influence over choices that affect the group.

Related terms: Consensus, Participatory Governance

Example: Using a “dot-vote” to select the next community project focus.

Practical application: Establish clear decision-making protocols at the outset.

Challenges: Managing lengthy deliberations and potential deadlocks.

Stakeholder Engagement – The systematic involvement of individuals or groups who have an interest in the outcome.

Related terms: Outreach, Consultation

Example: Conducting focus groups with local residents before launching a public-space redesign.

Practical application: Create a stakeholder map and schedule regular check-ins.

Challenges: Balancing competing stakeholder priorities and expectations.

Synergy – The enhanced result that occurs when combined efforts produce outcomes greater than the sum of individual contributions.

Related terms: Collaboration Effect, Multiplicative Impact

Example: When a legal aid team and a health advocacy group co-author a policy brief, the influence is amplified.

Practical application: Facilitate joint brainstorming sessions to surface intersecting expertise.

Challenges: Preventing “groupthink” that can diminish creative tension.

Systemic Thinking – An analytical approach that views problems as part of interrelated systems rather than isolated events.

Related terms: Holistic View, Feedback Loops

Example: Understanding how housing policy, employment, and education intersect to affect homelessness.

Practical application: Use causal-loop diagrams during coaching to map system relationships.

Challenges: Managing complexity and avoiding analysis paralysis.

Transformation – Deep, lasting change in attitudes, behaviours, structures, or societal norms.

Related terms: Change Management, Paradigm Shift

Example: Shifting community perceptions from seeing waste as a problem to viewing it as a resource.

Practical application: Set long-term milestones that track shifts in cultural narratives.

Challenges: Measuring intangible changes and maintaining momentum.

Values Alignment – The process of ensuring that personal, group, and organisational values are congruent.

Related terms: Ethical Fit, Mission Consistency

Example: Verifying that a partner NGO's commitment to gender equity aligns with the group's core values.

Practical application: Conduct a values-mapping exercise at the beginning of the program.

Challenges: Addressing hidden value conflicts that surface later.

Visioning – The intentional act of imagining and articulating a compelling future scenario.

Related terms: Dreaming, Future-Mapping

Example: Crafting a narrative of a city where all residents have equitable access to clean water.

Practical application: Guide participants through a guided imagery exercise to surface vivid images.

Challenges: Preventing vision from becoming overly abstract without actionable steps.

Wishes – Expressed hopes or desires that can serve as a starting point for goal-setting and planning.

Related terms: Aspirations, Intentions

Example: Participants write down three wishes they have for their community's future.

Practical application: Cluster wishes into thematic areas to identify priority focus zones.

Challenges: Translating wishes into realistic, measurable objectives.

Action Planning – The development of concrete steps, responsibilities, timelines, and resources needed to achieve goals.

Related terms: Implementation Plan, Roadmap

Example: A group outlines tasks, assigns leads, and sets deadlines for a voter-education campaign.

Practical application: Use a "SMART" template to ensure actions are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Challenges: Over-ambitious planning and insufficient monitoring.

Facilitative Questioning – The use of open-ended, purposeful questions to stimulate reflection, insight, and ownership.

Related terms: Socratic Method, Probing

Example: Asking "What possibilities emerge if you remove this constraint?" to expand thinking.

Practical application: Keep a question bank and select prompts aligned with session objectives.

Challenges: Avoiding leading questions that limit participant agency.

Group Contract – A mutually agreed set of expectations regarding participation, confidentiality, and responsibilities.

Related terms: Norms Agreement, Charter

Example: Participants sign a contract committing to respectful dialogue and timely attendance.

Practical application: Review the contract at the start of each module to reinforce commitments.

Challenges: Enforcing the contract without creating a punitive atmosphere.

Power Mapping – A visual tool that identifies individuals or organisations with influence over a specific issue.

Related terms: Stakeholder Analysis, Influence Grid

Example: Plotting local council members, media outlets, and community leaders on a power-interest matrix.

Practical application: Use coloured stickers to denote levels of influence and interest.

Challenges: Accurately assessing informal power structures.

Reflective Supervision – A supervisory approach that focuses on the facilitator’s inner experience, emotions, and professional growth.

Related terms: Clinical Supervision, Reflective Practice

Example: A facilitator explores feelings of frustration after a difficult group session with a supervisor.

Practical application: Schedule regular reflective supervision sessions with guided prompts.

Challenges: Balancing reflective depth with practical problem-solving.

Social-Justice Lens – An analytical perspective that foregrounds equity, rights, and systemic oppression in decision-making.

Related terms: Equity Framework, Critical Praxis

Example: Evaluating a program’s impact on marginalized populations before scaling.

Practical application: Incorporate equity checkpoints into each phase of the coaching cycle.

Challenges: Navigating resistance from stakeholders unfamiliar with justice-oriented approaches.

Storytelling – The use of narrative to convey experiences, values, and visions in a compelling manner.

Related terms: Narrative Coaching, Oral History

Example: Participants share personal anecdotes that illustrate the impact of community policing reforms.

Practical application: Allocate time for “story circles” where each member narrates a pivotal moment.

Challenges: Ensuring stories are authentic and not overly dramatized.

Systems Change – The deliberate effort to alter the underlying structures, policies, and cultural norms that sustain social problems.

Related terms: Structural Reform, Policy Advocacy

Example: Campaigning to modify zoning laws that perpetuate segregation.

Practical application: Map the system, identify leverage points, and design interventions targeting those points.

Challenges: Long time horizons and resistance from entrenched interests.

Team Building – Activities and processes aimed at strengthening interpersonal relationships, trust, and collaborative capacity.

Related terms: Cohesion Activities, Trust Exercises

Example: A “human knot” exercise that requires participants to untangle themselves without speaking.

Practical application: Debrief after each activity to link experiences to group objectives.

Challenges: Cultural appropriateness and varying comfort levels with physical activities.

Transformational Coaching – A coaching approach that seeks profound inner change, aligning personal purpose with collective action.

Related terms: Deep Coaching, Purpose-Driven Coaching

Example: Guiding participants to uncover personal narratives that fuel their commitment to climate justice.

Practical application: Use powerful questions that tap into identity, meaning, and values.

Challenges: Managing emotional intensity and ensuring safe boundaries.

Vision Alignment – The process of synchronising individual aspirations with the group’s collective vision.

Related terms: Goal Congruence, Shared Purpose

Example: Aligning a participant’s desire to develop digital media skills with the group’s plan to launch an online campaign.

Practical application: Conduct a “vision-fit” exercise where each member maps personal goals onto the group vision.

Challenges: Reconciling divergent personal ambitions with limited resources.

Watch-Dog Role – A designated participant who monitors adherence to group norms, ethics, and time-keeping.

Related terms: Timekeeper, Ethics Guardian

Example: A member signals when discussion exceeds the allotted time, prompting a gentle reminder.

Practical application: Rotate the watch-dog role each session to share responsibility.

Challenges: Avoiding perception of policing or power struggles.

Zero-Based Planning – A budgeting and planning method that starts each cycle from a “zero” baseline, justifying all activities anew.

Related terms: Budget Review, Resource Allocation

Example: Re-evaluating all planned activities for a community health initiative before each quarter.

Practical application: Require each team to present a cost-benefit analysis for each proposed action.

Challenges: Time-intensive and potential resistance from those accustomed to incremental budgeting.