

Reflective Coaching Questions

Awareness

- What do you know?
- What have you tried?

Tell me about that.

Tell me more.

What else do you know/did you try?

Alternatives

- What ideas do you have?
- What do you need to know?
- What do you need to find out?
- What could you do/try?
- What can/will you do differently?

What else could you do?

What are other options/ideas?

What is missing?

Action

- What is your plan/decision?
- What do you plan to do?
- What is your first step?

What is your back-up plan?

When will you do this?

What supports will you need?

When do you think we should revisit this plan?

Analysis

- How (well) did/does that work?
- How (well) do you think that will work?
- How did you know to do that?
- How did/does that compare to what you want to happen?
- What would the ideal situation look like?
- How will you know?
- Why do you think that happened?
- What have you done in a similar situation?
- What do you think you *could* have done differently?
- What could/should happen?
- What do you think about that?
- What did *you* do to make that happen?
- What are your thoughts (do you think) about what I have shared?

Why?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of that idea?

What is or will be the most or least helpful?

Tips for Reflective Coaching Questions

- Ask only one reflective question at a time.
- Be comfortable with silence while waiting for the person to think about his/her response.
- Avoid asking “grand tour” questions to revisit the previous joint plan (i.e., “How are things going?”).
- An awareness, analysis, or alternatives question always precedes informative feedback.
- An analysis question always follows informative feedback (i.e., “What are your thoughts about that idea?” “How would that work for you?”).
- A self-attribution question is “What did *you* do to make that happen/cause that progress?”
- A yes/no question should only be used to ask permission or not make an assumption (i.e., “Would *you* like to try it?”).
- When you ask a reflective question and the person says, “I don’t know,”
 - rephrase the question to ensure he/she understands, or
 - provide affirmative feedback about an observation you made in the past that confirms he/she knows, or
 - provide informative feedback, and then ask the person an analysis question.
- When a person says, “Just tell me,”
 - assure the person that you have some ideas to share;
 - ask the person a few awareness questions to ensure that the information/idea you have matches the needs/priorities; and
 - provide informative feedback, and then ask the person an analysis question.
- Avoid asking questions with the answer embedded (i.e., “I wonder what would happen if...?” “What would you think about...?” “How about you try...?”).
- Avoid asking questions to get the person you are coaching to agree with what you are thinking (i.e., coaxing).