Team Coaching Practitioner

SESSION 1 WORKBOOK: COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

Contents

Before you come to this workshop

We recommend that you prepare for the workshop by:

- Reflecting on your previous experience of being in teams, of leading teams, and, if relevant, of coaching teams. Use the space below to capture your thoughts
- Reading the articles and any course materials prior to the session

The more you can use the adult learning principles of reading, applying, reviewing and reflecting the more you will gain from the workshop. Please take a few moments to reflect and complete:

What are your expectations from this workshop?
What experience and knowledge do you bring?
What experience and knowledge of other participants will you find helpful?
What do you need to ask for in the group contract?

Reflection group instructions

The aim of reflection groups is to provide peer support both during team coach training and for the longer term. A reflection group usually consists of 6-8 people and emulates a team by taking collective responsibility for each other's learning and welfare. How frequently the group meets is up to the members, but the recommended frequency is between two and four weeks, with a duration of 60 to 90 minutes.

Other recommendations include:

- Plan your schedule of virtual meetings at least three months ahead
- Appoint one member of the group to be the co-ordinator
- Rotate the role of facilitator
- Appoint one member each time to capture the key learnings
- Respect each other's time by preparing for each session

A typical schedule might be:

1. Group check-in (how are we?)
2. Presentation of learning from individual reading
3. Presentation of issues and concerns arising from team coaching practice
4. Clarify questions to take to group supervision
5. Summary using the four I's (Issues, Ideas, Insights and Intentions)

Preparing for supervision as a team coach: a checklist

How did I help the team's reflection on the following?

- Their context
- Any defences or avoidance
- Their attributions or attitudes
- Their learning
- Their needs
- Their motivations
- Their responsibilities

What did I do that I think helped?

- What choices did I make?
- What did I learn?
- What concerns do I have?

How am I feeling?

- Inadequate or that I have "failed" the team or its leader?
- Is the team procrastinating constantly, leaving me frustrated?
- Do I feel too close (intimate), or too distant from the team and / or the leader?
- Do I have a sense that there are unidentified others in the room?
- Are conversations being repeated, with no sense of significant progress in the team's thinking or behaviour?
- Do I feel that I am "missing something important" in the conversation or the relationship?
- Was there a moment or longer, of disconnect in the conversation but I can't pin down what was occurring?

How was the mood and focus?

- What was the atmosphere: temperature, bright/dull, colour?
- When was I in flow?
- What was the pace, energy, direction, purposefulness?
- What changed or what foundations were laid for change?
- What was the level of openness - self-honesty, instinctive responses, body language?
- Did we touch on identity? What was the level of self-awareness, self-observation, awareness of perceptions by others?
- Ownership: coach directed, client directed, jointly owned, jointly disowned?
- What level of creative thinking was going on: multi-perspective, constrained/unconstrained?
- How well was I / we aware of nuance, unspoken meaning, unspoken communication, being "with" or "holding" the client? How well did I manage the shift of being inner and outer directed?
- Where was our focus: convex or concave (i.e., were we focusing in on a very specific theme or widening out and more discursive; or moving backwards and forwards between these foci?)

What was said?

- What words or phrases captured YOUR attention? Their attention?
- What words or phrases capture your attention now?
- Do these words or phrases echo those from previous coaching conversations with this team or its leader? (Or – often even more revealing – with another client?)
- What makes these significant for you?
- What makes them significant for the team and/or its leader?

Relationship with my co-coach

- Were we "in sync" all the time?
- Did we support each other sufficiently?
- Were we a role model of a high performing team?

My CPD

- What is my development plan?
- What team coaching skills do I most want to improve in? Or, what skills / tools or constructs do I want to add to my toolbox?
- How can I reduce my reliance on models, processes, tools and techniques?
- What can I do to increase the quantity and quality of the feedback/hold up the mirror on my team coaching?
- How can I extend my learning network (both vertically and horizontally?
- Who can I use as role models of good practice?
- What do I need from my professional supervisor?
- How can I build my reputation?
- How can I build my self-confidence as a team coach?

Finding teams to practice on – a guide for the inexperienced team coach

Just as new 1-2-1 coaches typically cut their teeth on pro bono volunteer clients, new team coaches can also build their confidence and competence working pro bono for teams. They may do this by:

- Finding an experienced team coach to shadow and support
- Finding teams that can't afford team coaching and agreeing to experiment and learn together

The latter teams tend to fall into two main groups:

- Leadership teams and Boards of not-for-profits – charities and NGOs; schools; sports bodies etc
- Small business leadership teams – particularly start-ups

Practical ways to connect with these include:

- *Networking through your existing clients and connections.* Many of them will either be connected with senior levels in charities; or non-executive directors of small companies.
- *Professional associations you are a member of.* Here you have the advantage that the leadership teams will put more trust into someone, who understands their business.
- *Associations representing sectors*. For example, bodies for charities or charity chief executives; trade associations. These are always looking to add value to their members.
- *Your local bank branch, accountants, or legal firm*. They will know a wide range of small businesses and other organisations locally and their relationship managers may be willing to establish connections for you.

Contracting with the pro bono client

It is important for both parties to recognise that this is a learning experience for each other as well as themselves. The contract should make it clear that:

- The coach is there to help the team achieve understanding about its internal and external dynamics; not to act as a consultant
- The team is responsible for its own decisions
- The team coach is receiving supervision and make seek confidential guidance from their supervisor and / or a more experienced team coach
- While there is no fee chargeable for the coaching, reasonable expenses, such as travel, will be covered by the client
- The assignment is for an agreed number of sessions; after which the client and the team coach may enter into a commercial arrangement
- Any individual coaching of team members will also be a commercial arrangement

GTCI Example Pro Bono Statement of Work

File can be downloaded from the Turner International student hub.

- Student hub location = session 1, step 4

GTCI: Guide to Finding a Team

File can be downloaded from the Turner International student hub.

- Student hub location = session 1, step 4

What do we mean by systemic team coaching?

Systemic team coaching has two aspects. One is to help teams understand the multiple systems they are part of or occur within the team. The other is to help the team develop practical ways to manage, monitor and review those systems.

Systems can be internal, external or boundary-crossing. Here are some examples of each.

Internal systems
- Sub-groups or alliances within the team. These can be based on shared experiences, shared interests or priorities, personality type and so on
- Communication systems – who keeps whom informed about what
- How the team inducts newcomers
- The leader-follower system between the team leader and the team

External systems
- Any other team this team interfaces with
- The priorities of the leader's boss and other influencers in the corporate hierarchy
- Fixed systems of financial reporting, hiring and firing, compliance with legal requirements

Boundary-crossing systems
- Negotiating for resources
- Project teams, in which members of this team take part
- How the team gathers information about customer requirements and perceptions

Identifying systems can be difficult, because they are not obvious. To make them evident, we can focus on three coaching questions:
1. What has to happen for us to succeed in our task?
2. How does that happen?
3. What influences whether it happens well or less well?

These questions typically identify two kinds of system. *Task systems* are about what the team does and how it uses its resources. *Relational systems* are about how people work together – how supportive they are, how they combine and recombine in subgroups to achieve individual and collective agendas.

Systems mapping provides a visual representation of the system. For task systems, you can use different shapes (circles, squares, triangles etc) to represent different categories of event, such as an action, a decision, and consultation. By working through several accounts of what happens in a system, we can rapidly recognise where things are not working as well as they should. For example, key people may be left out of the information loop, or there may be insufficient clarity about responsibilities. Redesigning the system may require a few tweaks or a complete overhaul.

For relational systems, socio-mapping measures how everyone relates to everyone else. For example, a map might represent the perceived quality and frequency of the communication between team members and the quality and frequency they need from each other.

The bottom line is that you don't know there is a system, or don't know how it works, you can't improve it!

Team coaching: a complex adaptive systems approach

The advent of standards for team coaching from professional bodies, such as EMCC and APECS (with others in development) is a sign that the coaching profession is taking team coaching seriously – as are the corporate purchasers of coaching services. This movement arises from the juxtaposition of several trends, among them:

- The recognition that the traditional focus on individual development and recognition is unhelpful in an environment, where performance depends increasingly on collective endeavour
- The redefinition of the role of leader from one of command and control to enabler – creating the conditions where people can manage themselves
- In a VUCA world, the necessity to react to change with greater alacrity
- Growing debate about the nature of "performance" – in particular, the recognition that an improvement in valued outputs from one part of the system may have deleterious effects on other parts of the system. As the fundamental structures within organisations, teams at all levels in an organization are where awareness of wider systems must begin – with those systems encompassing the organization overall, the key stakeholders and the wider eco-system.

We read much about the need for systemic thinking in business and in coaching (e.g., Hawkins, 2014). The difference between linear and systemic thinking is neatly summed up in the table below.

Table 1 Linear v systemic thinking

Linear	**Systemic**
Fix the problem	Understand the context
Maintain control	Enable, liberate, empower
Discreet solutions	Interconnected solutions
Predicted outcomes	Emergent and evolving outcomes
Static processes and procedures	Evolving processes
Hierarchical communication	Unbounded communication
Seeking certainty	Living with uncertainty

Systemic thinking in a team context requires the team to be aware both of its own, internal systems (how they work together), but also of the external systems of their stakeholders and the boundary-crossing systems that relate to both the team and its stakeholders. Complex, adaptive systems thinking takes this approach further still, by incorporating the interdependencies between all the systems that affect or are influenced by the team. Take a simple example. A linear approach to planning future investment and resource allocation would assume that the team will continue to do what it has done thus far, with appropriate adjustments for predicted market change and new technology – and project into the future. A systemic approach would start in the future with an exploration of what the stakeholders, which the team services, will require of it. A complex, adaptive systems approach will take the additional perspective of mapping the future potential interactions between stakeholders and the potential to influence the whole system of systems. A key question is "What is our potential role in helping the entire system of stakeholders create greater collective value?"

An underlying truism here is that a collection of high performing individuals do not necessarily make a high performing team; a collection of high performing teams do not make a high preforming organization; and a collection of high performing organizations so not necessarily add value to the societies they inhabit.

The literature on teams tends to focus either on causes of dysfunction (e.g., Lencioni, 2002) or on traits observed in "high performing teams". In both cases, the evidence for cause and effect is generally poor and one reason for this may be that it represents linear thinking – if you cure this problem in a team or develop those behaviours, it will become more successful.

One of the core principles of complex, adaptive systems is that every part of the system influences every other part. So how can we represent the multiple elements of the team system in a way that allows the team to change the system as a whole, rather than single elements? The result of 20 years study, extensive literature searches and focus group research in one of the world's top five technology companies was the refinement of relatively simple factors that interact with each other to influence every aspect of a team's functioning both internally and with its external environment. Like fractals or the patterns that emerge in a kaleidoscope, they are multi-dimensionally interdependent. (Clutterbuck, 2020)

These elements are:

- Purpose and motivation
- Externally facing processes
- Relationships
- Internally facing processes
- Learning processes
- Leadership processes

Purpose and motivation

Purpose is about what the team is there to do. It is the mission in Hawkins' commissioning. The team purpose may be a subset of a wider organisational purpose or one generated from within. From purpose flows the collective energy that makes "the whole greater than the sum of the parts". Indicators include clarity of shared vision, goals and priorities.

External processes, systems and structures
These are about how the team interrelates with its multiple stakeholders – customers, suppliers, shareholders, other teams within the organisation, more senior levels of management and so on. Indicators include reputation, performance against targets, environmental awareness (evolving markets, technology, competition etc.). They also cover the team's access to resources, such as information and finance.

Relationships
These are about how people work together – whether they enjoy each other's company, respect each other's ability, are honest towards each other and so on. Indicators include the level of psychological safety.

Internal processes, systems and structures
This is the internal mirror to the external and includes how the team manages workflow, supports each other, and maintains high quality of communication (both task-related and affective). Indicators include role clarity and decision-making quality.

Learning
This relates to the team's ability to respond to its changing environment and maintain continuous improvement and growth. Indicators include whether it is ahead or behind the curve in terms of change in its environment and the clarity and relevance of members' learning objectives.

Leadership
Not to be confused with "being a leader", leadership is a role that can be exercised by any or all of the team members, depending on circumstance. One study identifies 15 functions of leadership (Morgeson et al, 2009). In many workshops with teams and with coaches, only two of these functions are not readily distributable within the team.

The diagram illustrates ways in which these six interact to affect team performance (light grey) and dysfunction (dark grey). The white boxes indicate the moderating effect of leadership qualities and behaviours (LQB).

PERILL: The interacting and interdependent determinants of team performance and dysfunction

LQB	Purpose & Motivation	Externally facing processes	Relationships	Internally facing processes	Learning
Purpose & Motivation	LQB	Alignment of values between the team and its key stakeholders	Working enthusiastically together towards shared goals	Clarity of priorities; putting collective priorities before personal	Actively seeking ways to leverage and expand team strengths
Externally facing processes	Stakeholders unclear what you stand for	LQB	Strong collaborative relationships with stakeholders	Rapid and effective response to quality issues	Rapid product and service innovation
Relationships	People pursue their own agendas	Conflict with stakeholders; disrespect for stakeholders	LQB	High level of psychological safety leads to constant questioning of what we do	People take active responsibility for supporting each other's development
Internally facing processes	Duplication and waste of effort	Quality issues not acknowledged or addressed	People avoid "interfering" in each other's territory. Large "elephants in the room".	LQB	Culture of continuous process improvement
Learning	Learning focused on the individual not the collective	Slow to innovate	People "hoard" knowledge and expertise	Resistance to change	LQB

The descriptions in the boxes are examples of the positive and negative outcomes that arise as a result of interactions between elements. For example, if the team is not aligned about its purpose, then it will be less able to share this with its key stakeholders, including those who provide it with the necessary resources to do the job. If these resources are not forthcoming, there may be competition in the team for the resources that are available. This in turn is likely to lead to conflict and sub-optimal working processes. Strong leadership can bring about positive change not by addressing each issue separately, but by engaging the whole team (and its stakeholders) in changing the system.

Bibliography

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Hawkins, P (2014) Leadership Team Coaching: Developing Collective Transformational Leadership, Kogan Page, London

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Morgeson, F. P., Derue, D. S., & Karam, E. P. (2009). Leadership in Teams: A Functional Approach to Understanding Leadership Structures and Processes. Journal of Management, 36(1), 5-39. doi: 10.1177/0149206309347376

Reviewing the basics

Defining a team

A small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals and shared approach for which they hold each other mutually accountable. The common approach includes ways of effectively meeting and communicating that raise morale and alignment, effectively engaging with all the team's key stakeholder groups and ways that individuals and the team can continually learn and develop. (Katzenbach added to by Hawkins)

- Shared purpose
- Usually part of some social structure
- Communications are more structured
- Acknowledged processes and ways or working
- Accept personal discomfort or disadvantage for the collective benefit
- Support one another
- People are adaptable in the roles they play
- People are accountable to one another

Understanding teams

List below at least one team to use as an example, which has particularly impressed you (as good, bad, or simply interesting). Capture why and what learning you have taken from the experience. You could have been a member or a team coach of; which you have led or observed.

Describe the team and its context (e.g. sports or work team/ project team or production team)	What positive or negative (or simply interesting) aspects of this team stick in your memory?	What lessons did you learn at the time and what can you learn as you look back?

Is this a team?

As a team coach, one of the first challenges is to establish whether the people you are about to work with are really a team or a group. Here is a questionnaire you can use with teams, to gain a self-report. You will need to take into account that teams tend to be more optimistic in their answers than is justified, so seek collaborating evidence in the form of multiple examples for positive responses.

Experiment with the questionnaire by applying it now to one of the teams defined above.

Is this a real team?

1. We have a clear and shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve together.
2. We have a clear and shared understanding of the priorities.
3. We frequently put collective priorities ahead of individual priorities.
4. We have confidence in each other's competence in their role.
5. We have a strong store of goodwill towards each other.
6. We have genuinely open dialogue about difficult topics.
7. We have well-understood norms of behaviour to manage conflict.
8. We challenge our assumptions regularly.
9. We have a high degree of interdependency.
10. We are mutually accountable for the team's performance.
11. We are very clear about who is in the team and who is not.
12. We derive a sense of value from our collective achievements.
13. We allow leadership to shift in line with individual expertise.
14. We measure progress against collective goals.
15. We take responsibility for both our own and each other's continuous development.

Using the same team, answer the following three key questions:

1. What can the team do together that it can't do (as well) apart?
2. What does the team need or what do they want to achieve that requires them to be more than the sum of their parts?
3. What is the nature of their interdependency?

From one to one coach to team coach

Article for Aecop (EMCC Spain) magazine
As (if) coaches mature in their practice, they become increasingly aware that it is impossible – other than in the context of simple, short-term problems – to coach the individual without coaching the systems, of which they are a part. People in organizations rarely operate in isolation. Their successes and failures and their ability to bring about change internally and externally, are heavily dependent on other people – on how they think and what they do.

As one-to-one coaches, we can help clients think through how they will bring about sustainable change by influencing the people and systems around them, to become supportive of those changes. But the potential to do this is limited. It's a bit like trying to paint a portrait, when the subject is behind a screen.

Team coaching provides a practical way to address the system as a whole. The client becomes the team, not the individual manager. There is still the problem of how this team interacts with others, but just as individuals can learn to manage better the systems around them, so can teams.

Teams are the most practical unit to integrate the individual and systemic perspectives and to manage the complexity of co-working. It's not surprising then, that team coaching has emerged as a growing practice.

There are at least three ways, in which team coaching is different in context from one-to-one coaching. Specifically:

- Confidentiality: even with a high degree of psychological safety, team members may be reluctant to disclose to a group of colleagues, or to admit weaknesses to their boss.
- Pace of thinking and deciding: some members of the team may reach a conclusion faster than others. Where the coach in a one-to-one relationship can adjust pace to the speed of the coachee's mental processing, the team coach needs to be able to hold the attention and interest of the vanguard, while ensuring the rear guard are able to catch up at their own pace.
- Scope of topic: team coaching can only deal effectively with issues, in which all the team members have a stake. Sometimes this involves helping team members recognize the mutual benefits and value of supporting a colleague.

Where team coaching helps

Team coaching can be applied in a wide range of circumstances, including:

- When a new team is being created and needs to hit the ground running
- When an existing group of leaders needs to evolve into a team
- When an existing team isn't performing as well as it could
- When a team wants to reinvent itself to meet challenges in its environment
- When the team acquires a new leader or changes membership significantly
- When a team is currently highly effective and successful and wants to keep ahead of the game.

The great majority of team coaching interventions appear to be at leadership team level (though this has not been validated by research). Next most common are project teams, particularly those concerned with major product launches or large-scale technological or cultural change. However, there is no reason – other than cost -- why it cannot be equally helpful at any level.

So, what does a team coach actually do? The roles described here come from dozens of interviews and workshops with practising team coaches around the world.

Help the team become honest with itself.
At the very basic level, this is about helping them recognise how much of a team they really are. Many leadership teams are only teams in name – a bunch of feisty individuals, who have divergent agendas, little interchangeability of roles and little dependency on each other. Establishing where they need to be a team and when provides clarity and the basis for more effective working together. Team coaching helps the team – as both individuals and collectively – become more self-aware and authentic. As one manager put it: "It's about helping us to have the courage to see ourselves as we are -- and to behave as who we are, rather than feel we have to put on an act."

Defining the team purpose and priorities
It's unfortunate that mission statements and other strategic paraphernalia can give a gloss of purposefulness, while underneath there is at best an uneasy consensus. In one public sector leadership team I worked with, everyone had signed up to a strategy document that was about to go public. However, the chief executive was far from sure they were actually aligned as a team in how they interpreted the words. Team coaching helped them open up sufficiently to bring these differences into the open and to gain a much deeper level of agreement about the priorities for each of them personally and for their departments.

Understanding the environment
Much of the work of team coaches relates to helping the team understand internal and external systems. For example, who are the hidden influencers and stakeholders? Managing team reputation is a common theme here. So too is helping the team face up to threats it has avoided acknowledging.

Understanding team processes
Once a team have been together for a while, it's inevitable that routines develop and gradually these become so ingrained in the thinking and behaviour of the team, that they are never questioned seriously. Team coaching shines a light on how the team functions, on its unwritten rules and behavioural norms, and hence creates opportunities to bring about conscious change.

Identifying and tackling barriers to performance
One of the classic dilemmas for teams is that recognition and reward tend to be based on individual performance, but that a lot of great individual performances can add up to relatively poor collective performance. Groupthink, lack of key skills, dysfunctional behaviours that no-one is prepared to confront – the list of barriers is endless. Team coaching again encourages the honest conversation that allows the team to identify and challenge its performance barriers.

Building the capacity to manage conflict positively
Conflict about task and process can be destructive or productive, depending on how it is managed. Relationship conflict is always destructive. Team coaching not only surfaces and, where possible, defuses hidden conflict. It also equips the team with the tools and skills to use conflict to generate dialogue and hence improve performance.

Building the team learning plan
The team learning plan defines what the team and its individual members need and want to learn, how this will contribute to the business purpose and the responsibilities, each holds to the others in helping achieve the learning goals. It is as important a document as the business plan, because it underpins targets and goals with practical ways of developing capability and capacity.

Building team trust and collective self-belief
High levels of mutual trust and collective self-belief are hallmarks of a high performing team. Neither happen overnight. Team coaching helps people articulate and align their personal values with the team values. It also helps them develop more effective habits of collegial supportiveness.

Enabling the team to coach itself
Whereas facilitation or consultancy tends to focus on solving a specific problem, some forms of team coaching aim to leave the team significantly better equipped to solve future problems without external intervention. A challenge here for the team coach is not to let the team become dependent on them.

Skills of team coaches

Team coaches need to have a strong grounding in one-to-one coaching and to be at least at level three of the coaching maturity model (refer page 28). They require a good understanding not just of coaching basics, but of team dynamics and team psychology, of collective decision making, of systems theory and a variety of other topics not needed in one-to-one coaching. They also need supervision, though there are relatively few qualified coaching supervisors, who also have sufficient experience in team dynamics.

20 questions to assess your motiviation to become a team coach

1. How does your role as a coach align with your life purpose?
2. What is the difference you want to make as a coach and why?
3. How much (and what) are you still learning as a 1-2-1 coach?
4. What are your top three personal learning goals?
5. To what extent do you like to learn by being "Thrown in at the deep end"?
6. How much do you enjoy working with complexity?
7. How comfortable are you with letting go of control?
8. Do you get greater satisfaction from solving problems or from supporting someone else in solving problems? (Be honest!)
9. To what extent would letting go of control more make you a better coach overall?
10. Are you motivated to coach more by a sense of altruism or more by a desire for learning?
11. How pure are your motives for helping others?
12. How important is it to you that clients develop successful solutions in their coaching sessions with you?
13. What do you still have to prove and who to?
14. Is coaching more about what you do, or about who you are?
15. What is the *dark side* of your coaching?
16. If you were not a coach, what other occupation would give you the same fulfilment?
17. Do you prefer working on your own or as part of a team?
18. Who are your positive and negative role models as coaches?
19. What for you lies beyond coaching?
20. If you were coaching yourself right now, what else would you ask yourself?

Competencies of a team coach

As we saw in the section on the differences between team and one-to-one coaching, team coaching requires an additional portfolio of skills. Most of these relate to the difference in context between individual conversations and group dynamics. To recap:

- *Managing varying paces of learning.* In team coaching, it is common for some members of the team to come to conclusions about the way forward, while others are still at the early stages of thinking it through. The team coach has to have processes that prevent this difference in pace from becoming a cause of conflict and use it constructively to help the team come to better decisions overall.
- *Managing sub-groups.* Many teams divide into sub-groups. These sub-groups can sometimes vary according to the topics under discussion, or the nature of perceived threats; and they are not always obvious. Being aware of these sub-groups and preventing them from hijacking the coaching conversation requires an understanding of group dynamics and how allegiances change. In order for the coach to make the team aware of these behaviours (so they can consciously seek to change them) the coach has to be hypersensitive to them first!
- *Confidentiality.* What gets said one-to-one often isn't appropriate to say in front of the whole group. Yet the coach will typically be privy to a number of individual confidences from members of the team. Managing this takes delicate judgement and skill.
- *Facilitation.* While the role of team coach is not the same as that of a facilitator (one of the key differences being between solving a problem and building capability), he or she does need a good grasp of facilitation skills and a toolkit of team facilitation techniques and methods.

Many of the standard approaches and qualities of one-to-one coaching are also essential in team coaching, but they tend to demand a higher level of skill. For example:

- *Listening* is a core competence for all coaches. However, the team coach needs to listen both to the person talking and to everyone else in the room. Being aware of their silent conversations, through observing body language and intuiting the mood of the listeners, isn't easy – especially if the speaker is particularly passionate or persuasive
- *Using silence* effectively is a sign of a confident and mature coach. But creating silence in a group situation, especially when the team is composed mainly of activists, is much more challenging.
- *Powerful questions* are often at the core of coaching. In one-to-one coaching, the emphasis is usually on the coach finding the right question at the right time to stimulate learning in the client. In team coaching, the emphasis is more firmly on helping the team find its own powerful questions. Coaches help individual clients to articulate, reflect upon and learn from their own story. The same principle applies to team coaching – but everyone has a slightly different (and sometimes radically different) perception of the story. The team coach has to help them accept and integrate each other's version of the team story into a narrative that helps make coherent and compatible future choices.
- *Identity*. Coaches help individuals articulate and understand their own identity. Achieving this awareness as a team tends to be more complex.
- *Conflict management.* The one-to-one coach frequently helps clients to work out strategies for dealing with conflict in the workplace (or elsewhere). Those strategies are "opaque", in the sense that they are known only to the coach and the client. In team coaching, conflict management strategies usually have to be transparent, because all the

players are in the room and part of the conversation. Handling the emotional energy in such situations is a skilled task!

Peter Hawkins outlines eight key competences for a team coach:

- Contracting
- Rapport building
- Listening and observing
- Diagnose team culture and dynamics
- Feedback information
- Questioning, facilitation and coaching tools
- Enable shift to collective new behaviours
- Regular reviews with team leader, team and stakeholders

- Based on these different perspectives and your own experience, what are your views on the competencies of a team coach? Which, if any, do you personally have most concerns about? What are the implications for your development as a team coach?

Your thoughts

Core roles of team coaches

Here are six core roles for a team coach:

- Define team purpose and priorities
- Understand its environment
- Identify and tackle barriers to performance
- Build the team learning plan
- Help the team grow confidence in themselves and their leader
- Develop the systems, skills and behaviours to internalise coaching

Consider:

- What, if anything, would you add?
- What are the key challenges for the team and for a team coach in fulfilling these roles?

Role	**Key challenges for the team**	**Key challenges for the team coach**
Define team purpose and priorities		
Understand its environment		
Identify and tackle barriers to performance		

Build the team learning plan		
Help the team grow confidence in themselves and their leader		
Develop systems, skills and behaviours to internalise coaching		
Other		

Team efficacy

The questionnaire below is a simple template for exploring some of the issues of team efficacy. Based on a team you know well, what picture would emerge from addressing these issues? How would you help the team decide which to focus on?

A simple team effectiveness diagnostic

A. Task

- What are our three critical priorities? (The things we have to deliver?)
- How will we know if we've succeeded or failed?
- Do we know who our customers are? (internal and external)
- Do we know what they want and need from us? (And do they know?)
- What's the quality of what we deliver? (Is it what they want/ need?)
- What reputation/ brand do we have with them?
- What do we do now that reinforces or undermines our reputation/ the quality of our work?
- Do we know specifically what needs to improve and how?
- Do we know what we are going to do to deliver those improvements?
    - Resources
    - Skills + competencies
    - Processes
    - Communication
    - Behaviours
- Do we understand the difference between efficiency and effectiveness? (What are we doing efficiently that is hindering our performance?)
- Are we clear about which influences on our performance are within our control / influence; and which are not? How can we move the latter, so we can influence them?
- What have we not considered that might affect our performance next year?

B. Behaviour

- Do we communicate openly and effectively within the team?
- Do we communicate openly and effectively to people outside the team?
- Do we have a high level of trust?
- Do we support each other?
- Do we give recognition and praise when appropriate?
- Are we flexible in our routines and processes?
- Do we "go the extra mile" when needed?
- Do we give each other sufficient honest feedback?
- Do we have high expectations of our own and each other's behaviour?

C. Learning

- Do we take time to review our activities and reflect upon practice?
- Do team members report back on learning from courses?
- Are individual development plans linked into a team development plan?
- Do we take these development plans seriously?
- Do team members receive coaching or mentoring when they need it?

- Do we learn from our mistakes?
- Do we actively seek ideas from elsewhere?
- Do we innovate in both what we do and how we do it?

Agreeing with the team leader how to manage the team coaching session

It's easy to forget how much the team leader has to make a leap of faith in trusting a team coach to work with his or her team. Among the (very rational) fears the leader may have are:

- Will the team coach usurp my authority?
- Is the session going to become a gripe session against me?
- Will the conversation bring into the open issues I'm not ready to discuss openly?

It is essential to have a pre-conversation with the team leader to prepare for how you will work together to make the coaching a success. Ideally, the role of the leader is to:

- Observe and learn
- Let the team do as much of the talking as possible
- Intervene in ways that will support co-learning (i.e., be careful not to close open conversation down)

On the agenda should be:

- Who will facilitate the conversation, at which points?
- Who will open the session and outline its purpose?
- How will the coach signal the leader, when his or her interventions are unhelpful? (If the team coach does nothing, the team members will feel less safe and become less open. If he or she puts down the leader, everyone is embarrassed and it will take time to recover.)
- How will the leader signal the coach, if he or she feels the conversation is going in the wrong direction?
- How will the leader role model the behaviours that make for good co-learning and co-coaching?
- What are the "no-no" actions for the leader to avoid? These include:
    - Talking too much
    - Closing down team members' when they speak
    - Seizing control of the flip chart (and hence re-establishing who is in charge)
    - Setting a poor example, such as checking their i-phone while others are talking

Regular breaks for tea or coffee provide an opportunity to review with the leader, how he or she is feeling and where to steer the conversation next.

Looking for leadership bias

Open-minded as we like to think we are, all leaders are subject to bias that affects their judgement. As coaches, we too have biases. Among the most common biases are:

- **What makes an effective leader**. They tend to overvalue action and undervalue reflection and are more likely to see leadership potential in people who are like themselves.
- **The causes of good and poor performance**. They underestimate how much they contribute to the poor performance of others and over-estimate how much they contribute to their good performance. This can lead them to seek scapegoats – and other team members often unconsciously adopt the same biases.
- **How well they are monitoring their environment**. In two studies of US managers' perceptions about sales growth, sales fluctuations and industry trends, two US academics found that more than half of the executives made grossly inaccurate statements about sales in their very own business units and about relative quality.
- **How good they and their team are compared to rivals**. They tend to overestimate their own team's relative creativity and potential to implement innovation, their industriousness and intelligence, and ethicality. (This kind of myopia is common to all kinds of people -- one study shows that most prisoners in jail perceive themselves as more than averagely moral!)

It is important for team coaches to contract with the team to how to offer feedback when these biases arise and with your co-coach as you see yours and theirs arise. As a team coach, how would you identify these and other leadership biases? Professional coaching supervision can be a great support for understanding your biases and elegantly working with them in the room.

Your thoughts

The team as a system or part of multiple systems

Whether at the level of an individual or a team, coaching fundamentally works by helping people better understand their internal context and their external context – then to have structured conversations about how those two contexts interact, with the view to improving both decisions and how they act upon them. Individual coaching often fails because it addresses only the individual, and not the systems around them. Systems theory says very clearly that, when we attempt to change one part of a system, the rest of the system works hard to re-establish the equilibrium – that is, to restore things to the way they were before.

Every team is a system and contains other systems within itself. It also interacts with and is part of a wide variety of external systems, many of which can affect its performance.

Reflecting on a team, with which you are familiar, attempt to define some of its key systems – for example, for:

- Making important decisions
- Keeping people in the team informed
- Keeping people outside the team informed
- Listening to customers
- Surfacing technical problems
- Surfacing behavioural problems
- Distributing tasks and responsibilities
- Planning

Classify them as:

- Internal
- External
- Partly internal, partly external

Consider the following questions about each system (or one or two selected systems):

- *What is this system intended to achieve? (What is it there for?)*
- *How does that purpose support the team's vision, priorities and performance?*
- *To what extent and how is this system dependent upon, or has influence upon other systems?*
- *What has changed in the environment surrounding this system?*
- *When does this system function at its best?*
- *When does it function poorly?*
- *How might we improve this system to make it more consistently effective?*

Systemic team coaching

Systemic team coaching has two aspects. One is to help teams understand the multiple systems they are part of or occur within the team. The other is to help the team develop practical ways to manage, monitor and review those systems.

Systems can be internal, external or boundary-crossing. Here are some examples of each.

Internal systems

- Sub-groups or alliances within the team. These can be based on shared experiences, shared interests or priorities, personality type and so on
- Communication systems – who keeps whom informed about what
- How the team inducts newcomers
- The leader-follower system between the team leader and the team

External systems

- Any other team this team interfaces with
- The priorities of the leader's boss and other influencers in the corporate hierarchy
- Fixed systems of financial reporting, hiring and firing, compliance with legal requirements

Boundary-crossing systems

- Negotiating for resources
- Project teams, in which members of this team take part
- How the team gathers information about customer requirements and perceptions

Identifying systems can be difficult, because they are not obvious. To make them evident, we can focus on three coaching questions:

1. What has to happen for us to succeed in our task?
2. How does that happen?
3. What influences whether it happens well or less well?

These questions typically identify two kinds of system. Task systems are about what the team does and how it uses its resources. Relational systems are about how people work together – how supportive they are, how they combine and recombine in subgroups to achieve individual and collective agendas.

Systems mapping provides a visual representation of the system. For task systems, you can use different shapes (circles, squares, triangles etc) to represent different categories of event, such as an action, a decision, and consultation. By working through several accounts of what happens in a system, we can rapidly recognise where things are not working as well as they should. For example, key people may be left out of the information loop, or there may be insufficient clarity about responsibilities. Redesigning the system may require a few tweaks or a complete overhaul.

For relational systems, socio-mapping measures how everyone relates to everyone else. For example, a map might represent the perceived quality and frequency of the communication between team members and the quality and frequency they need from each other.

The bottom line is that you don't know there is a system, or don't know how it works, you can't improve it!

Your thoughts

Team coaching virtual teams

Virtual teams have a number of differences compared with co-located teams. On the plus side, their geographical dispersion means that they can draw upon a wider and more diverse pool of talent. It is also easier to maintain 24-hour oversight of issues, if people are in multiple time zones. There is also some evidence that power distance (people's inclination to defer to someone with greater rank or authority) reduces when using distance media.

On the downside:

- There is more likely to be conflict within the team – and this may be exacerbated if the team is culturally diverse
- There are more difficulties in sharing information. "Out of sight, out of mind" means that it doesn't occur to us to include a colleague unless we communicate with them very regularly on different levels. Virtual teams need string and effective mechanisms to remind everyone to appraise virtual colleagues about technical, tactical and customer information – indeed to put more effort into communicating with them than with co-located colleagues, because the latter pick up a great amount of information through informal conversations. One of the immediate impacts of team coaching is to raise team members' awareness of the interests and strengths of each of their virtual colleagues.
- People are more likely to feel isolated. This sense of being left out can be reinforced in virtual meetings, when not everyone shares experiences, or relates to metaphors and mental models, which other members of the team use as conversational shorthand.
- If some of the team are located at HQ, others may feel that these people's opinion counts for more than their own and that they are less likely to be listened to – so are less likely to voice opinions.

Preparing a virtual team for coaching

All the normal aspects of contracting with the team, which apply to co-located teams, also apply to virtual team coaching – plus a few more. These include:

- It's important to have ground-rules about being fully present in the team coaching sessions. Being on mute is useful to preserve sound quality for those who are speaking, but it allows people to carry on distracting tasks, which would not normally be possible in a face-to-face meeting. The contract should reinforce understanding that listening is more than just politeness to colleagues – it is essential in maintaining the pace and depth of the reflective conversation.
- Gain agreement on how contrarian ideas will be surfaced and engaged with. The mechanisms, by which constructive dissent is stifled, may differ between co-located teams and virtual teams. In many cultures, for example, it is inappropriate to be the one who usually gets their ideas in first. If a consensus appears to be developing, cultural inhibitors may make people reluctant to push back against it. The technology may promote groupthink, if people are swayed by the first comments in the chat room, so the team and the team coach need to establish clear methods to challenge emerging consensus.
- Help the team manage the tendency to avoid emotional data, because it is too time consuming and often more difficult to recognise emotional subtexts in a virtual environment. It's important to establish the expectation that everyone will be open with their emotions as well as their rational analysis. One of the reasons for this is the significant role our emotional brain takes in "rational decisions".

- Initiate open discussion about where reflection takes place. In co-located teams, it is generally easier to engage in reflection together, not least because these coaching sessions will have a fair amount of time allocated to them. In virtual team coaching, every minute counts, so most of the reflection has to take place before and after team coaching. This is a fundamental difference in the structure of the team coaching process and the team needs to become comfortable with reflecting on their own then combining their thoughts either during team coaching or in online discussions outside the team coaching session.
- Encourage the team to agree when would be an equitable time to hold meetings, to avoid some people always having to attend at unsocial hours
- Newcomers to a virtual team need to feel valued from day one. One-to-one virtual meetings with the rest of the team members, before team coaching, are an essential part of their induction.

Managing the virtual team coaching session

While it is possible to run a virtual team coaching session using email only, it is extremely difficult to make it work! The only plus point is that it can be asynchronous – people can contribute at different times, dipping in and out over a day or more, at their convenience and to fit in with their time zones. There have been no significant studies comparing this approach with having people together at the same time, but the consensus amongst team coaches is overwhelmingly that the whole team needs to be present and interacting in real time.
Some ground-rules include:

- Keep sessions short and focused – 90 minutes absolute maximum. This makes it even more important than with co-located teams to dispense with standard meeting formalities, such as minutes of the last meeting, or matters arising. Everything that can be done by email beforehand should be, along with any matter that concerns only some of the team. Given that you have such a short time, it is essential that everyone should feel engaged all through.
- Encourage social sharing before the coaching session. A short email from everyone, sharing personal highlights at work and outside work, is all it takes.
- Use the technology to its full. Make sure everyone is visually present, unless bandwidth problems prevent this. Encourage chat room conversations alongside spoken conversations. Run quick, impromptu polls to support the conversation. For example:
    - How energised are we today?
    - How positive do we feel about this?
    - How confident are we in these forecasts?
    - What should be said that no-one has yet said?
    - What are our priorities with regard to this issue?
    - What do you think are the top three risks?
- Set clear norms about preparation, promptness, interrupting, being in a quiet place, where background noise won't intrude and so on.
- Don't get trapped into PowerPoint presentations that take up valuable time.
- Do have a clear protocol for decision-making. Check through a poll or the chat room that everyone agrees:
    - That a decision has been made
    - Precisely what it is
    - Who is responsible for what
    - When it is to be implemented
    - When and how it is to be reviewed

- People who waffle can be a nuisance. Agree with the team how they will manage this. If you try to control this person, you will find that the team keeps looking to you to take charge – exactly the opposite of what you are trying to achieve. An effective intervention, if no-one in the team takes responsibility, is to say "Can I just remind you what you contracted to each other about trying to be succinct?" This emphasises the team's responsibility for managing the situation, while dropping an obvious hint to the offending team member!
- Agree a clear protocol for other issues that arise in the coaching session. Put these in a "parking lot" and take a few minutes at the end of the session to discuss how they can start the process of thinking about some or all of them before the next session. Ask them "What is the critical question you want to reflect upon with regard to this issue?" (You can always suggest a question at this stage, if they struggle – or perhaps the homework is to identify that question).

Building your systemic thinking ability

When we look at the complexity of working with systems and systems of systems, it can be daunting. The key to simplification lies in viewing a situation or issue from multiple perspectives. It's like walking round a complex structure and seeing it from different perspectives – from all four points of the compass, from above, from far above, and perhaps even from below. Making sense of each perspective allows us to integrate perspectives into a more accurate representation of the whole.

Complex, adaptive systems theory often describes systems as "nested" in the way that Russian dolls are encased within each other. Whatever system we identify is contained within other systems, which are in turn encompassed by yet further systems. Trying to work with all these systems simultaneously is beyond human capability, even with the aid of artificial intelligence – but we can explore each nested layer.

In the context of a team, the team system is made up of individuals and how they interact with each other. However, the interactions between these colleagues are just one system, to which they belong. Each of them will be part of multiple other systems, including for example family, friends, university alumni or generation.

Looking inside the nest – individuals and sub-teams as systems

The simplest of systems within a team conflict between two individuals. A systemic approach clarifies and compares the perspectives each of those individuals brings to the situation – and the impact this has on the team as a whole. We can break these perspectives down into four themes:

- Intentions – what is each of them trying to achieve and on whose behalf?
- Motivations – what values are they trying to live out? What personal needs are they trying to fulfil?
- Assumptions – what narrative are they telling themselves about themselves and about the other person?
- Norms – what habitual responses is each subject to? What does each regard as appropriate behaviour in this context?

Changing the system so that they are able to work positively together requires them to understand the other person's perspective and refocus on how they collaborate and support each other in achieving the team's shared purpose.

At the next layer of complexity, we can explore how the wider system affects each of the protagonists. So, for example:

- Intentions – for example, what requests are other stakeholders inside or outside the team asking or demanding of them?
- Motivations – for example, how do the social groups, to which they belong, shape their priorities? (Prime motivators may change dramatically with parenthood, for example.)
- Assumptions -- for example, the assumptions of two marketeers from different generations about the nature and purpose of technology in marketing may diverge radically according to their professional networks.
- Norms – for example, while in some cultures avoiding another person's gaze is seen as rude, in others it is seen as a sign of respect.

Or, we can look at the team as a system that influences both parties. For example:

- Is lack of shared purpose stimulating or reinforcing interpersonal conflict?
- Does the reward system emphasise individual or collective targets and rewards?
- Does the team genuinely embrace and value diversity?
- Do team norms encourage individual working or collaboration?

Looking inside the nest – the team as a whole

At this level we start to see how all the individuals within a team interact to achieve common purpose. The conflict between two members is just one sub-system within the larger system. PERILL provides a pragmatic framework for identifying how each part of this system influences and is influenced by the others. The role of a coach is to help the team unravel the strands of these interconnections, so that it can knit them together into more productive patterns.

Looking outside the nest – contiguous influences on the team

A further layer of complexity might involve the influence on the team of yet larger systems – for example, customers and the organization, of which the team and the individuals within it are a part. Is the organizational culture one that values authenticity and openness? Or a "performance culture" that emphasises achieving stretch targets and ruthlessly discards poor performers? Do customers want a partnership with the organization, or a relationship in which the supplier is subordinate? Competitors also form part of this complex ecosystem. Are they open to co-opetition?

Looking outside the nest – the broader eco-system

Beyond this layer of complexity is the broad scope of "fuzzy-boundaried" systems relating to social, economic, technological and environmental change.

When we look at these factors as a system of systems, systemic thinking allows us to work from the outside in. Starting, for example, with technological change, we can explore:

- How predicted evolutions in technology may affect the industry the organization is in
- How these changes may affect the organization (both directly, through how it responds and indirectly, through how its competitors respond)
- How the technological and organizational changes will affect the team and the function it is in
- How the changes in the team will affect current and future team members.

This approach also allows us to achieve insights into the interactions *between* systems. So, for example, climate change is driving technology development, which is changing how people work, which is changing organizational structures…. And ultimately what happens in teams and the nature of the relationships required between team members.

We can also look at how the team might become the catalyst for radical change rather than the victim. Useful questions here include:

- What would this team have to do differently to make a real difference to our customers [or any other one of the contiguous systems]
- How could we create greater value as the catalyst for change between other parts of the system or between systems?

An example of the latter would be to enable more open conversation between the leaders of an organization and its customers. What typically happens is that leaders engage with the marketing and sales functions, who carry out market research. Messages get distorted or diluted, compared with when leaders engage directly with customers. (As a comparison, in a study two decades ago of how the employee communications function created value for organizations, we learned that none of the measures the function used to assess its contribution had significant impact. What did have impact was their success in enabling open conversation between leaders and employees!)

Using PERILL to explore systems

PERILL is a complex, adaptive systems approach to understanding team dynamics. But it can also be used with any part of a system, or with the system of systems. Taking our initial example of two team members in conflict, a coach can help them explore:

- How do we both view the shared purpose of the team?
- What are we hearing from our stakeholders? What responsibilities are we using on the team's behalf with regard to our stakeholders?
- What relationship does the team and its stakeholders need us to have?
- What's happening in the internal systems that is helping or hindering our collaboration?
- What do we both want and need to learn about each other?
- How can we both show leadership in resolving the issue between us?

In the same way, the coach can help the team become a catalyst between other elements in the wider system, asking questions such as:

- What purposes and ambitions do we share?
- What stakeholders do we have in common and what is their perspective on the issues we share?
- How can we listen to each other better?
- How can we better align the way we work?
- What learning and innovation would support both of us to achieve our purposes?
- How can we show greater leadership to the wider system?

Summary

With practice, it becomes habitual to respond to any situation with curiosity, based on the premise that things are rarely as simple as they appear at first sight. Having a structured approach – such as PERILL or the four perspectives described here – gives the coach a practical way to map the complexity. This, in turn, creates insights that allow us to help the team generate ways forward that work with the complexity and are therefore more sustainable and adaptable than typical linear solutions.

Factors to consider regarding team's readiness for team coaching

One of purposes of the Discovery and Preparation phase is to determine, at an early stage of the engagement, how ready the team is for team coaching and if team coaching is indeed the appropriate form of team development.

Below are some of the key questions to consider before you formally engage in team coaching. One can never discover or know everything but the factors and questions below will help you in your considerations.

How ready is this team for coaching?

1. Do the team members have positive experience and expectations of coaching?
2. Does the team see team coaching as both urgent and important?
3. Does the team have an appropriate mix of complementary skills, relevant to its expected outcomes?
4. Are the team members genuinely committed to becoming a high performing team?
5. Are the team members – including the leader -- committed to open and honest dialogue?
6. Are they – including the leader – willing to challenge themselves and each other?
7. Are the team leader's motivations for introducing team coaching transparent and accepted by the team members?
8. Is it clear who is in the team and why?
9. Is team membership likely to change during the period of the team coaching?
10. Is the team willing to address and review its purpose and priorities?
11. Do team members genuinely want to collaborate rather than work in silos?
12. Does the team meet at least monthly?
13. Do team members accept responsibility for their own and their colleagues' learning and development?
14. Is the team adequately resourced (in terms of money, time, information, etc) to achieve its goals?
15. Is the team prepared to invest time into coaching sessions and into implementing necessary changes?
16. Is the team willing to address internal conflict?
17. Is the team prepared to address poor performance by individual members?
18. Is the team manager prepared to undertake personal change, to better support team performance?
19. Is team coaching supported by key stakeholders outside the team?
20. Are there any other significant barriers to making team coaching work?

Additional reading

Becoming a Systemic Team Coach | Competency Framework

This framework is offered as a resource for you to examine your own practice and skill as a team coach and to stimulate thinking.

1. Self-Awareness, Presence and Expression of Self

E.g.
Integrates insights derived from extensive exploration of theoretical models into a coherent model of team coaching practice.
Can articulate the rationale behind interventions made in their practice.
Continuously reflects on own practice and the impact of interventions.
Understands and behaves in a way that is true to own values and beliefs.
Able to retain rapport with the team whilst offering challenge / different perspectives.
Is comfortable with 'not knowing', i.e., able to be open about own uncertainty without 'having to be in control'.
Able to be bold and to 'name' what is observed in the team.
Offers models and frameworks as part of a collaborative process with the team (as opposed to advising, leading or taking charge of the team).
Judges when it is appropriate to intervene in the team and when it is more appropriate for the team to 'work it through' themselves.
Invites feedback on practice from peers and clients.
Is confident working with strong emotions without becoming overpowered or 'colluding' with the team.
Able to handle multiple perspectives/agendas, whilst seeing them in the context of an overall collective agenda.
Encourages the team to acknowledge and deal with changes (e.g., in team membership / leadership) that occur during the program.

2. Managing the contracting and re-contracting

E.g.
Establishes an ethically-based contract that is developed with team leader, team members and sponsor(s).
Manages the complexities of confidentiality within the team and between the team and its environment.
Re-contracts as appropriate, e.g., as new information emerges or to coach on sensitive / personal issues etc.
Establishes how he/she will work to be of most value to the team.
Is clear about the boundary of team coaching and consulting.
Draws on appropriate diagnostic methods for gathering data that will help clarify the scope of the coaching contract.

3. Facilitating effective connections between the team and the wider organization

E.g.
Holds the wider organisational agenda as a context for the work with a particular team.
Invites the team to explore the wider organisational agenda i.e., the needs that the team exists to serve.
Encourages the team to clarify their own objectives within the context of the wider strategic objectives.
Encourages the team to seek feedback on how they are seen by key stakeholders.
Invites the team to evaluate how effectively they are engaging with their wider stakeholder system (e.g., upwards, downwards, sideways).
Draws on appropriate exercises / activities to help the team see themselves from the viewpoint of their stakeholders.
Helps the team to make decisions about what connections need to be built / strengthened.

4. Facilitating effective functioning and learning within the team

E.g.
Engages the team in enquiring into the requirements of its stakeholders.
Helps the team to clarify the 'collective endeavor' / outcome(s) that they are committed to achieve together to meet stakeholder requirements.
Supports the team to clarify how it needs to function in order to deliver its required outcomes.
Helps the team clarify its vision of success / core values as appropriate.
Helps team members identify what they already do well collectively and what they want to change.
Works with the team to link the various perspectives and views of team members into a collective understanding that advances their joint thinking.
Helps the team create plans / objectives that are appropriate to achievement of their desired outcome(s).
Pays attention to patterns / non-verbal signals / energy flow and offers feedback that leads to learning.
Is clear, open and honest in giving feedback to the team.
Facilitates raising awareness of what is 'not being expressed' (unspoken feelings and concerns) within the team.
Encourages clear, direct and honest dialogue between team members.
Uses appropriate experiments/exercises/activities to extend or deepen awareness of team effectiveness.
Encourages the team to take collective responsibility for the learning and development of team members.
Regularly invites the team to reflect on what and how they are learning.
Encourages each team member to give and receive feedback from others in the team.
Helps the team decide how they will continue to support and challenge each other after the coaching program has ended.
Challenges the team if they are not taking collective responsibility for progress towards desired outcomes.

Separating out the team coach's "stuff" from the team's "stuff"

It is a dilemma all coaches encounter frequently: how helpful should I be? And it's equal present in both one-to-one and team coaching. One the one hand, we want the team to succeed in solving its problems and making good decisions. On the other hand, we want to avoid creating dependency.

If we see ourselves as a change agent, the probability of slipping into consultant mode is higher than if we focus on helping the team become its own change agent. So, it is advisable from time to time to check – and to take to supervision, if appropriate – where we are in the team system versus and the implications of this for hidden dependency.

Some useful questions here include:

- How clearly do you differentiate between success for you and success for the team?
- Where they overlap, how do you ensure you take "just enough" ownership?
- To what extent does the team rely upon you to:
    - Keep their conversations on track?
    - Point out the "elephant in the room"?
    - Be the team's conscience?
    - Provide structure to its thinking?
    - Provide psychological safety?
- How clearly distinguished are your role and the role of the leader?
    - In your mind?
    - In the leader's mind?
    - To the team?
- What role(s) are you playing for this team that they could or should be doing for themselves?©
- When might you have been complicit in their avoidance of certain issues? (What does this say about how much you have become part of the team's systems?)
- What might you consciously or unconsciously be protecting the team from?
- What default behaviours or routines do you drop into frequently with this team? (Whose needs are you addressing most when this happens?)

It is yet another argument for having two coaches that you (theoretically at least) double the chances of detecting dependency-inducing entanglements and behaviours. Whether you review as a pair, alone, or with a supervisor, you can gain insight by:

- Mapping the team's systems and exploring where you sit in relation to them. You may be outside, looking in; part inside and part outside; or fully inside. Where you are can have a significant impact on your ability to remain objective. Consider, for example:
    - How does this position affect my ability to support the team in taking responsibility for its own issues?
    - How much of my own "stuff" am I bringing into the coaching conversation when I am in each position?
    - How much empathy is appropriate in each position?
- Contracting with the team for a higher level of experimentation – What are the experiments we want to undertake together, to learn together? Exploring issues from a perspective of joint curiosity makes us more open to questioning our own roles and assumptions.

- Comparing what happens in different teams you coach: How much are repeated patterns the result of similar issues arising in different teams and how much are they generated by you?

Just as raising the team's awareness of its dynamics helps it make better decisions and build its skills of self-coaching, these reflections help the team coach clarify his or her role and build their skills of self-supervision.