

Coaching: Helping Staff Develop Skills

Coaching is a process that helps staff consolidate and apply knowledge and skills learned in training. Coaches work as partners with staff, celebrating what they are doing well, identifying further opportunities for growth, and supporting them as they work toward their goals. In this way, coaching improves both staff performance and outcomes for people on supervision.¹

Culture of Coaching

Creating a culture that is supportive of coaching is essential for positive outcomes.

This means ensuring that:

- Everyone in the agency understands the “why” of coaching
- Coaching is a collaborative process
- Staff are encouraged to ask questions, and questions are viewed as tools for understanding, not as signs of resistance
- Staff are encouraged to try new things, and their efforts, even when not completely successful, are viewed as brave and signs of professional growth
- Observation and feedback are considered opportunities for growth, not as punishment
- Everyone in the agency, including leadership, is working on goals and professional development

WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is job-embedded professional development based on daily practice characterized by a partnership approach where the coach collaborates with the officer as a mentor, guide, and thought partner.

Five Steps to Effective Coaching



¹ For more detailed information about coaching, see the *Coaching for Excellence in Community Supervision Toolkit* at <https://ccappoap.com/ebp-resources/ebp-stakeholder-resources>.

By following these five steps, coaches help create an environment marked by reflection, support, growth, and empowerment:



Establish Performance Expectations. Explain to staff the purpose and process of coaching; together, decide on an area of focus (e.g., professional alliance and communication skills, case planning, skill building, responding to positive and noncompliant behavior); discuss the specific items you will be considering; and explain how coaching reviews and feedback will be used.



Understand Officer Needs. Observe one-on-one appointments and review case plans, officer self-assessments, and surveys completed by people on supervision to understand staff's strengths and needs.



Prepare and Deliver Feedback. Provide specific feedback that focuses on skills or behaviors, not on the person. Include both strengths and opportunities for development.



Collaboratively Identify Goals. Support the officer in defining goals that help them build on their strengths and address areas of need.



Follow Up with Resources and Support. Meet routinely with the officer to discuss progress, navigate barriers, practice skills, and offer support.

TOOLS FOR COACHING

- **JOB AIDS** are brief, easy-to-use documents (e.g., checklists, step-by-step processes) that clarify expected skills or behaviors and that help staff know what success looks like.
- **OBSERVATION FORMS** list expected practices related to specific areas of focus and are used to identify both strengths and opportunities for development in these areas.
- **REVIEW FORMS** are used when reviewing paper or electronic files, documents, or data to identify strengths and opportunities for growth.
- **SELF-ASSESSMENTS** help staff identify their strengths and areas they might want to work on.
- **SUPERVISION SURVEYS** are designed to obtain feedback from people under supervision either after appointments or after they complete supervision.
- **GOAL DEVELOPMENT FORMS** are used to help staff write goals for areas that they would like to work on; SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) action steps for achieving those goals; and needed resources and support from their coach.
- **POST-COACHING SURVEYS** offer staff the opportunity to provide feedback after a coaching session and serve to further develop the coach and the coaching process.