

# 17th ANNUAL COACHING & MENTORING RESEARCH CONFERENCE

## Programme

Thursday 14th January 2021

9:00	Virtual Coffee
9:30	Welcome - Professor Tatiana Bachkirova
9:35	Keynote Speech 1: Dr Gil Bozer - Workplace Coaching Research - Charted and Uncharted Territories
10:05	Presentation of Prizes – Representatives from APECS and EMCC

10:15 - Paper 1.1 - Reciprocal mentoring – the power of mutual exchange (JG)

**Sue Round (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (TB)**

The issue of women's progression into senior management positions continues to challenge organisations. Mentoring has been widely deployed to support women's progression, though in its traditional form, could be perpetuating the status quo by encouraging women to adapt. Reciprocal mentoring arguably has the potential to disrupt the traditional patterns of hierarchical mentoring relationships by creating a mutual exchange of perspectives. This qualitative case study sought to explore the experience of participating in a reciprocal mentoring programme between mixed gender pairs could influence shared understanding of women's career equality challenges. Dr Sue Round will present her main findings.

10:15 - Paper 1.2 - Is metaphor magic? Effective use of metaphor within coaching and mentoring (PJ)

**Russ Thompson (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (PJ)**

Metaphor has a magical quality seemingly able to resolve issues and situations concerning people and their problems. Metaphor plays a significant role in persuasion and developmental change processes; in relationship building; accessing, symbolising and challenging assumptions; and reframing – all particularly appropriate to effective coaching/mentoring. Using a critical realist-themed conceptual analysis, I suggest effective metaphor use has a significant potential impact on coaching outcomes via its impact on the development of a strong/enduring relationship between coach/client and through the creation of a figurative safe-space to explore issues constructively and creatively. Finally, I propose a model for metaphor-based coaching.

10:15 - Paper 1.3 - What do team coaches experience at the end of a client relationship? (AM)

**Rachael Hanley-Browne (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (JM)**

My study explored what is symbolic and meaningful at the end of a team coaching relationship. By developing this understanding, we move our attention beyond definitions, coaching outcomes, and effectiveness to focus on purpose. The emergent themes were centred around three aspects of the coaching relationship: the systemic relationship, the learning relationship, and the human relationship. My study highlighted that at the centre of the team coaching relationship is the human connection.

### 10:55 Coffee Break

11:15 Paper 2.1 - Exploring women's experience of identity work in career choices and transitions: implications for executive coaches (JG)

**Sarah Snape (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (JG)**

Career transitions are a frequent topic in executive coaching sessions. It has been established that career transitions involve identity and identity work, and can therefore be challenging. The identity work in career transitions can be more complex for women than for men, due to biology and gender among other factors. Yet coaching for career transitions very rarely appears in coaching curricula, and coaches are often unaware of what is involved in identity work in career transitions and what their clients might experience. This study adopts a constructivist, qualitative research approach using Conceptual Encounter methodology to explore women's experience of identity work in career choices and transitions, and the implications for coaching practice.

11:15 Paper 2.2 - How have workplace coaches experienced coaching during the Covid-19 pandemic? (PJ)

**Judy Irving (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (SC)**

This interpretive study addresses a research gap about coaching in challenging circumstances, examining practitioner perspective of workplace coaching during the exceptional disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thematic analysis of transcript and visual data from eleven semi-structured interviews yielded insights about practice at a time when abnormal stress amongst professionals was widespread. Findings revealed multiple environmental pressures as affecting both coaches and coachees, adding complexity to managing coaching interactions, driving intentional self-care on the part of coaches as well as multiple delivery-oriented innovations. Flexibility and adaptive capacity were found to be foundational for successful practice.

11:15 Paper 2.3 - What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching? A heuristic inquiry (AM)

**Gill Graves (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (TB)**

There has been a surge of interest in team coaching in recent years, however understanding of the process, based on the first-person perspective of team coaches, is lacking. A qualitative study was conducted using heuristic inquiry methodology, enhanced by the inclusion of three focus groups. The findings challenge concepts in the existing literature, add to existing knowledge as well as opening up new areas for debate.

**11:55 Paper 3.1 - Coaching in the context of talent management: an ambivalent practice (JG)**

**Karine Mangion-Thornley, (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (JG)**

Little is known about coaching in the context of talent management, especially the views of talented employees on its role for their career progression and leadership development. This single case study offers a contextualised analysis of the role of coaching in four talent management programmes in a global bank. Drawing on social exchange theory and psychological contract, this qualitative study reveals that talent coaching is perceived as a pivotal career event, yet an ambivalent practice difficult to operationalise.

**11:55 Paper 3.2 - The Meaning Making Journey of Peer Assisted Learning Leaders (PJ)**

**Sarah Bailey (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (JM)**

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) schemes have been widely implemented in UK universities over the past two decades. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, this study investigates how higher year undergraduate students, who facilitate group study sessions and provide pastoral mentoring support to lower year students, make sense of their journey in becoming PAL Leaders. The study reveals three superordinate themes; social connectedness, self-development and self-efficacy and identifies implications for practice for higher education institutions, with recommendations to increase opportunities for PAL Leaders to share their personal journeys, engage in self-reflection and receive coaching support whilst settling into their new roles.

**11:55 Paper 3.3 - Exploring the experience of coaching in childless women (AM)**

**Sophia Andeh (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (II)**

Involuntary childlessness may affect a woman's well-being and sense of identity, and lead to feelings of loss and grief. There is no published research on coaching in childless women, despite indications from the literature of beneficial strategies which coaching could employ. This research used heuristic inquiry to explore the experience of coaching in childless women. The findings raise awareness of the potential utility of coaching in this setting amongst coaches and women considering coaching, and possible areas of future research.

## 12:30 - 13:30 Lunch break

**13:30 Paper 4.1 - The lived experiences of men diagnosed with prostate cancer receiving peer coaching during treatment decision-making (JG)**

**Aidan Adkins (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (SH)**

One in six UK men born after 1960 will get prostate cancer. When diagnosed, they must make a difficult and uncertain choice of treatment from a wide range of options that may result in negative life-changing consequences. This qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study provides understanding about the experience of men who had received peer coaching during their treatment decision-making and the implications for peer coaching in this context.

**13:30 Paper 4.2 - Coaching in a Digital Age (PJ)**

**Kevin Brush (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (II)**

Neighbouring fields of counselling and therapy in collaboration with technologists are designing artificial agents that appear to deliver successful outcomes for clients. Can these forms of agency apply to a coaching process? Using a mixed methods methodology approach, a longitudinal study recruited 48 volunteers to test a coaching chatbot that employed coaching processes. The QUAN and QUAL results were analysed initially, prior to being converged. Results suggest that despite no working alliance developing over the intervention between coachee and chatbot, a majority of participant's self-resilience improved. The presentation will conclude with a discussion on whether these innovations present a threat or an opportunity to the field of coaching?

**13:30 Paper 4.3 - How do coaches identify and work with clients showing signs of 'burnout'? A constructivist grounded theory study to inform coaching practice (AM)**

**Tony Geraghty (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (AM)**

This presentation explores approaches coaches are undertaking with 'burnout' clients using constructivist grounded theory, to address a paucity of coaching related literature. The study's findings are presented in an applicable framework emphasising supervision is central to the 'burnout' self-care of the coach and client. In addition, the way in which coaches are tailoring the coaching contract as they diagnose burnout. It is proposed that a coaching approach to burnout is respectful of professional boundaries and can complement counselling and/or psychotherapy.

**14:10 Paper 5.1 - What can we learn about coaching from the experiences of assigned and self-initiated expatriates? (JG)**

**Priscilla Fernandes de Araujo (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (TB)**

Cross-cultural coaching is now a recognized practice and a developing field of interest for conceptual and empirical studies. It can be conducted in any genre of coaching when coaches are able to notice the potential role culture may play in a coaching conversation. An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis study, incorporating visual methods of data collection, was carried out to explore the experience of coaching of expatriates. This presentation focuses on the methodological approach and key findings highlighting relevant contributions for current coaching practice.

**14:10 Paper 5.2 - A Team Coaching Model for Developing Criticality in Undergraduate Students (PJ)**

**Georgia (Gina) Kostoulis (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (EC)**

Three unconnected areas in higher education that of criticality, critical dialogue, and coaching are brought into a dynamic relationship under a theoretical, philosophical and educational framework of a team coaching model. Two action research cycles of implementing the team coaching model with student teams and tutor/coaches revealed that the proposed CTC model can support critical dialogue and provide a fertile ground for student-teams to explore answers to questions, discover knowledge for themselves and construct knowledge through a collective dialogic process.

**14:10 Paper 5.3 - What is the role of coaching in an elite athlete's transition to a second career? A grounded theory study (AM)**

**Anna Edwards (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (JM)**

The one truth all athletes share is that at some point their playing career will come to an end, often well before retirement age. Setting out to consider the role of 'life' or 'career' coaching in supporting an elite athlete's transition to a second career, this study used constructivist grounded theory to build an evidence-based model from the coaches' point of view. This presentation discusses the method used, as well as the findings of my research and contributions to the field.

## 14:50 Virtual coffee break

## 15:10 Keynote Speech 2: Dr Angela Passarelli - High-tech or High-touch? Behind the Scenes of Coaching Outcomes Research

**15:40 Paper 6.1 - An exploration of the role of coaching in supporting non-traditional students in Higher Education (HE) in the UK (JG)**

**Dionne Spencer (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (TB)**

Despite relatively successful policies and strategies to increase and retain the number of non-traditional students accessing and participating in HE, the discrepancy in numbers between non-traditional and traditional student groups still exists. Little empirical research has been conducted to explore how coaching supports non-traditional students in the UK. This research study used heuristic inquiry to explore the students' experience of coaching and the role of coaching in supporting non-traditional students during their undergraduate studies.

**16:20 Paper 7.1 - Something old, something new; a study of the experience within inter-generational workplace reverse mentoring relationships (JG)**

**Ian Browne (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (JG)**

Unprecedented generational changes are taking place in the UK workplace. The 2020s will be the first decade to witness four generations simultaneously active in the workplace. Reverse Mentoring (RM) has been popularly described as "teaching old dogs new tricks". My research examines the fragile nature of RM relationships, how value is created and sustained. It offers insight for companies and HR Directors and scheme organisers wishing to use RM to positively impact inter-generational workplace relationships and create unique learning opportunities for established and prospective leaders alike.

**15:40 Paper 6.2 - Rediscovering *The Maestro* (PJ)**

**Andrew Armour (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (JM)**

This Case Study identifies a 'modern-maestro' mentoring relationship during the supervision of final year undergraduates at a London music school. The tutors' use of direct and sometimes challenging interventions is seen to facilitate students to autonomously manage their work and this reflects the deep engagement and self-motivation, students will then require, to become successful professional musicians. The study adopts a critical realist stance and uses pre-determined and structural coding of research interviews to identify and discuss the important aspects of mentoring, coaching and supervision taking place within the supervision.

**16:20 Paper 7.2 - The Experience of Coaching Professional Footballers: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (PJ)**

**Marc Rams (MA Coaching and Mentoring Practice) (II)**

This qualitative study explored how coaches make sense of their experience of coaching professional footballers. Specifically, the study fills a research gap in a coaching literature that has largely explored the phenomenon in youth football through quantitative methodologies and unidirectional theoretical frameworks. This presentation focuses on the challenges of using an IPA methodology in professional football and on the main research findings. It also highlights potential implications and opportunities for the football coaching practice.

**15:40 Paper 6.3 - BeWell: a group coaching model to support wellbeing in individuals (AM)**

**Ana Nacif (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (II)**

Wellbeing has become increasingly important in our every day lives in a number of contexts, from individuals, families and communities, to organisations and institutions. Group coaching can be one of the tools used to support wellbeing. This presentation will discuss multi-methods study that explored two under researched fields in the coaching literature: group coaching and coaching for wellbeing. A model was developed and implemented over two case studies. This presentation will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the model and the recommendations for practice and further research.

**16:20 Paper 7.3 - How do coaches and clients create and experience a critical thinking environment? (AM)**

**Donna Johnstone (Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring) (EC)**

Critical thinking has been described as a core competency and skill that is needed in today's leaders in organisations where there is constant and rapid change. A deficiency in critical thinking skills in coaches, in turn creates consequences for individuals as well as organisations themselves, as a deficiency of critical thinking skills transforms into a lack of ability to lead others. The findings from this empirical research show a framework that is original and will guide coaches as well as business leaders to experience and create a critical thinking environment in coaching.

**16:50 Concluding Remarks (II)**