

# Coaching Case Study, March-October 2020

## 1. Introduction

I met my coachee Sophia at work. She comes across as relaxed, engaging, friendly, intelligent and humorous, and looked younger than her age of 49.

She told me there were two things that encouraged her to approach me for coaching and mentoring. One was the focus and attention I gave her in a work context where I was trying to get to the root of a problem we were facing, and the genuinely curious questions I asked her that she said forced her to think differently and take something seriously, instead of defaulting to her usual response of using humour as a protective mechanism. The second was a short talk I gave as part of a 'Women into Leadership' initiative in my workplace, where I spoke about how women often spend a lot of time investing into family and others and can struggle to find 'me' time and invest in themselves, and in which I encouraged everyone to approach someone they admired to be a mentor or coach. After this she sent me a message asking if I would mentor her.

Sophia's outward appearance conceals a life with many challenges. From the outset, she divulged very dark and difficult experiences, patterns and behaviours. This level of openness is critical to truly effective coaching, and I sought to make Sophia feel safe to share these difficult things, through maintaining consistently calm, warm and caring attention, and by demonstrating visibly and verbally my own strong sense of integrity. Despite some of the dark subject matter, the tone and pace of our conversations has often been surprisingly light, bouncy and upbeat. She did not hold back in sharing the realities of her experience, with one exception: her emotional life. Her descriptions were devoid of labels for her emotions and feelings. It didn't seem that she was deliberately concealing her emotions so much as lacking either awareness or language for them.

At this time I was also working full-time in an extremely demanding Director role in a local authority and experiencing intermittent health problems, which combined to make me tired, time-poor, and unable to devote much time to study. In my coaching of Sophia I therefore focussed on delivering the essential foundations of successful coaching to the very best of my ability: strong rapport and trust; attentive listening and presence; compassion and non-judgment; a client-led agenda; open questions loosely following the PRIDE framework; bringing awareness to assumptions, patterns and faulty thinking; verbal recognition of her abilities, achievements and resourcefulness; and reminding her of her ability to review options and consciously make choices about continuing or changing behaviour. I also held and showed my full and genuine emotional commitment to helping Sophia achieve her goals, which I think may be one of my most powerful attributes as a coach.

## 2. Contracting

After 8 months of around 8 sessions of workplace mentoring, through which we developed a strong rapport and an in-work friendship, I left the organisation. I told Sophia that I was training to be a coach and asked if she would like to be one of my clients. She expressed interest, so I emailed her my draft contracting document, and asked for her feedback on it. I very much had my experience of mentoring Sophia in my mind whilst writing this document, and made it really clear what each party would bring to the coaching experience so that she and any other clients would know that preparation was required and that I would not be offering her solutions, but rather guiding her to find her own.

Sophia expressed some concerns via email about embarking on coaching: "I worry that I have too many vague areas and no goals and not really aiming for any either" and "Don't know if there are professional boundaries to be kept outside of the sessions which means we can't have a casual natter occasionally?"

Re-contracting for the purpose of coaching was an important foundation and useful exercise in establishing appropriate boundaries. In my email response to Sophia I said: "It's totally ok to feel vague if you have a goal of wanting to feel less vague because coaching can help with that. If you are content with vagueness - which is also fine - then coaching isn't for you, because there's no place really to go with it. A coach will always move you towards action to achieve an outcome. A coach will help you figure out both the outcome you want and the action, but they can't put it in your head - it has to come from you. You could think about it for a few days?"

In response to personal vs professional boundaries I responded: "If I'm coaching you it will be hard to switch between that and just meeting up for fun - so think fun would need to be postponed unfortunately until your coaching reached an end!" This was a tough response to compose as I cared about Sophia and could tell she was eager to be my friend, so I didn't want to hurt her feelings regarding whether we would be friends.

Sophia replied confirming that she wasn't content with staying vague and that she wanted to try the coaching with me. She said: "This will not be a breeze for me - it's a challenge, but will take this opportunity and try for outcomes, if you think you can handle it as well!! It's the trust I have in you that has made me say yes to give the coaching a go."

I was really happy that Sophia trusted me and was willing to give this process a try, as she knew from experience that I would ask searching questions that she would struggle to answer.

We agreed that the first session would be at my house (pre lockdown). I was a little apprehensive about it, as I wanted to avoid blurring the personal-professional boundary, but the Covid19 pandemic had just begun and other venue options disappeared. I made sure that the space was clean, tidy and comfortable, and relatively neutral – i.e. nothing to invite questions about me as I knew Sophia was likely to do this. I believe holding the session with clear boundaries in place in my home, created a comfortable, informal, and safe space that further promoted Sophia's trust in me.

As set out in my contracting document, ahead of our first session I sent Sophia the questionnaire on drivers, which she quickly completed and returned - see Appendix A. She found her result surprising and commented that it wasn't the heading she would have chosen – 'Hurry Up' - but she did relate to the description provided beneath the label.

I then used two of the pre-coaching questionnaire templates provided to us in our Coaching Mastery pack, personalising it to my coaching offer, adding questions such as "How comfortable are you challenging yourself and being challenged by others you trust?". I expected Sophia would find it difficult to complete, as she does not come across as someone with a high degree of self-care or self-knowledge, so when I sent it to her I tried to reduce any anxiety or confidence loss by acknowledging she may find it hard and giving her more time to complete it. Sure enough Sophia said to me "That 2nd form is a nightmare - very hard, keep going down the questions and not answering them and starting at the top again." But Sophia was also true to her dominant driver 'Hurry Up' by submitting it a day earlier than the timescale I'd requested – see Appendix B.

I found it sad to read, as it conveyed such a low level of self-worth and self-awareness in Sophia. I was aware that when my own self-esteem has wavered through difficult relationships and experiences, it has been very painful, so I hate to see others experiencing that pain for any prolonged period. Sophia could only find 5 words to describe herself – "Nice, polite, helpful, over thinker, organised". And her response to the second question, 'What special knowledge and experience do you offer?', was: "Nothing special." I felt that a key success measure for me coaching Sophia would be raising her self-awareness, self-interest and self-care, but I was also daunted by what a big challenge this was going to be, conscious of my desire to rescue and fix, and aware that whilst a coaching connection can be powerful, it isn't a panacea.

I offered the first 1 hour session for free so that she could see if it was right for her. At the end of the first session Sophia confirmed that she would like to proceed, and pay for a course of coaching. In my contracting document I had set the fee at £30 per hour and stated that I can offer each of my clients 12 hours of coaching, and potentially more if required. Sophia chose to pay for 8 hours of coaching, and we arranged the date for our next session. Sophia felt that 90 minutes was the maximum time she could do, but in practice this didn't seem to be long enough and after a few times in which we contracted for an extra 30 minutes in-session, with her agreement I formalised future sessions as 2 hours.

As we came to the end of each pre-paid course of sessions, I asked her whether she wished to continue, and each time she said she did, and pre-paid for a further set of sessions.

After we'd passed 8 sessions with further sessions paid for, I was aware that this coaching engagement was starting to feel open-ended, and I didn't feel it was in Sophia's interests to curtail it. She was making so many positive changes and still had a long list of challenges she wanted to conquer in her pursuit of a better quality of life.

But after discussing it with my fellow coaches, I could see that establishing an end point would help Sophia to make the very best of her remaining time and also avoid her becoming overly dependent on me and make the ending harder for her. So after 10 sessions I suggested that we should draw the coaching to a close to enable her to practice her learning more independently. In total I provided Sophia with 25.5 hours of coaching across 13 sessions between March-October 2020.

### 3. Overall course of the coaching

When Sophia arrived for session 1, she seemed relaxed and upbeat, which I was pleased about, because via email she had said she was expecting this to be a difficult process for her. Whilst I knew that I had already earned Sophia's trust, we were embarking on a new exercise which was outside of the work context, and where she was seeking to improve her personal life, so I felt a big responsibility to do a good job for her and for her to feel that it was valuable enough to keep going beyond the first session.

The actual practice of coaching felt very natural and comfortable from the outset, because the values that underpin the coaching profession are already part of my personal values<sup>1</sup>. I had already established a strong rapport with Sophia, and I am also naturally extremely curious about the different maps of the world that people have, and people's stories.

Sophia's reason for being coached was to improve her quality of life. I suggested that we needed to find manageable goals that work towards that bigger goal, and I explored in the session what it was that she wanted to change.

From the first session, Sophia shared things she'd said she'd never shared before, difficult things in her life, things that could have felt embarrassing. She was extremely forthcoming, until she got stuck and unable to answer some of the questions I asked. I was fearful of this, feeling like it reflected badly on me, but I resisted my urge to speak and instead allowed the silence to continue, only asking another question when I was sure that she was truly stuck. I was proud that I did this!

The phrase that stuck with me and provoked a strong empathic response was: "I have just turned 50 and I can't bear the thought of spending another 10 years in the way I have spent the last 20". This was one of many things that Sophia said so casually over the course of our coaching relationship, but which for me was an emotionally affecting thing to hear, indicating a life in which there was more suffering than peace, and also making me conscious of my enormous responsibility to handle the conversations with great care. I am practiced at maintaining calm composure so that my emotions don't take over, and understand the importance of 'holding the space' for the sake of the coachee's learning. But I am a sensitive and empathetic person, and the mirroring involved in maintaining rapport can be particularly challenging when what I can see and feel is pain and suffering. Coaching feels like emotional labour, and so maintaining my own personal resilience is vital. Working through my thoughts and emotional responses with my supervisor and my peers was an important way for me to maintain my own mental stability.

As we neared the end of the hour of session 1, there had been no decisions or actions, and I asked Sophia whether there was anything she could do, and she responded very quickly with a suggestion. I asked if she had other ideas, and by the end to my surprise and relief she had come up with a number of ideas. I asked her to write them down in her notebook. One task had been on her mind for three weeks but she'd been unable to start it and I asked her tell me what the first step would be. She described measuring the books on each shelf. I asked her to explain how she would do this. After she'd done this she said - yes I can see myself doing this now. It was clear that the technique of asking her to describe the task was really effective at building her confidence in committing to the task, by creating a clear visualisation of her doing it.

After the session I assessed myself against the Association of Coaching competencies and realised I'd not asked Sophia what people or resources could support her to achieve her goals, so I made a note to address this in the next session.

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<sup>1</sup> Compassion; being non-judgemental; openness; believing vulnerability enables growth; believing people are the best architects of their own solutions (resourcefulness); believing that non-judgmental and compassionate listening, attention and challenge can be transformative gifts; strengths-based practice; 'towards thinking' rather than away from thinking

Sophia's feedback on this session was very positive and within 1 day she had already taken a number of the actions she gave herself in the first session. So it was a very rewarding experience and built my confidence and motivation to continue.

In session 2 Sophia talked about her self-destruct tendencies, exemplified by the gambling session she did on the evening of the first coaching session. We talked this through so that she could better understand why she had done it, the emotions it brought up, and how her practical voice is the moderator to her gambling urges. Sophia also talked about the many positive changes she'd made to her life after the first session and how she could maintain this positive momentum.

In session 3 Sophia talked about her extremely different personas in the different spheres of her life – home, work, family, friends, to try to understand what this meant and whether it was normal. She said that no-one knew the real her and that she did not see any value in sharing information about herself. We talked about the further ways that she had maintained positive changes in her life and she acknowledged that as her life had already changed dramatically for the better, anything is possible.

After each session I asked Sophia to answer a short standard set of questions to lock in her learning, positive intentions for action and topic for the next session. This also built up a record of her progress, which she enjoyed looking back through ahead of our final session.

Within sessions, I never shied away from asking difficult questions or providing challenge, but one thing I did not do, was to give Sophia in-the-moment feedback when she appeared unwilling to change her behaviour, reminding her that willingness to change behaviour is a core principle that we contracted for. This would have been uncomfortable for both of us, but it might well have unblocked something in her. On the other hand, it may have disrupted her sense of safety with me, or engendered defensiveness, or encouraged her to tell me what I wanted to hear rather than what was true.

## 4. Supervision

I spoke to my supervisor and fellow trainee coaches about a number of different themes with regard to coaching Sophia:

- Her lack of self-worth, which felt to me an essential foundation for making any positive change, had led me to feel she needed much more specialist psychological and therapeutic help and question whether it was feasible to coach someone when they appear to be carrying deep held personal trauma and exhibiting chronic depressive behaviour patterns. Some direct quotes from Sophia include: "I don't know why I do anything really. When I come home I think thank god I survived that" and "I never message people or phone them up. I think – why would they want to speak to me?" My supervisor reassured me that it was appropriate to coach her, as what I was offering was clear and transparent from my contracting, but that I could also offer her an observation that other forms of therapy could equally be valuable to her. I did suggest this to Sophia. Her response was that she had been to therapy before after being referred by her GP, and she very deliberately lied and told the therapist only what they wanted to hear.
- The challenge of appearing to be the only person Sophia had ever opened up to about how she feels about herself and her life, and so entering quite an overwhelming labyrinth of personal challenges and experiences. It brought up tremendous sympathy and empathy in me, and the urge to rescue. My supervisor reassured me that we coach for shift not fix.
- I felt that simply listening non-judgmentally was one of the greatest gifts I could give her without pushing her to commit to significant changes but it challenged my definition of coaching and urge to push her to action planning and commitments.
- Her inability to describe her feelings towards her family members, and generally her lack of emotional literacy or willingness to experience difficult emotions or allow anyone in her life to witness these emotions or assist her in processing difficult things.
- That her patterns, whilst not serving her, are clung to tightly after years and years of practice, and often felt impossible to dislodge.
- That she focused on her deficits not her assets, and despite having made enormous progress over the course of the coaching engagement, she still said she felt like she was incapable and failing at life.

- My feeling like there was a lifetime of coaching work to be done with Sophia and therefore impossible to see an end point and finding it difficult to create one, anticipating guilt of leaving her adrift and alone again with her thoughts. This was coupled with a parallel fear of Sophia becoming overly dependent on me, as she seemed to me to be deeply lonely and isolated, and not knowing quite how I would navigate the closure of coaching when I knew from her that she wanted us to be friends and see each other socially.
- Noticing how frequently I shared with her an example in my own life or the lives of others close to me that I thought could help her, and fearing that I did it too often. I always did it with the intent of serving Sophia's goals and Sophia's story, and to loosen Sophia's sense of herself as abnormal by illustrating that many of her experiences are normal. I believe that it served its intended purpose and I was always able to steer the conversation to her options in the light of the evidence that she was not alone in feeling the way she did, rather than instigating conversation about myself or others. My supervisor felt it was ok to do as long as I was careful and conscious to return to my coachee's reality. I knew to keep the focus on Sophia and not on me.

My supervisor provided me with many practical tips for coaching Sophia more effectively, including:

- Using pebbles or buttons to represent her family members so she could talk about family dynamics
- Using a set of toy building blocks as a visual aid to help her see and believe the positive foundations she had laid that were factual and present now in her lived experience
- Use of the Nancy Kline technique to uncover "false assumptions lived as true" and applying the "Is it true that..." question

Sophia requested that our penultimate coaching session was dedicated to sleep. This took place in between lockdowns and so we were able to have this session in my home. She had told me that every night she'd spend many hours in bed unable to sleep, only ending up getting 3-4 hours' sleep. It was an extremely challenging session because whilst Sophia was willing and able to talk about the subject at length, she was unwilling or unable to describe her desired outcome or goal, other than 'understanding it'. Whilst it is a core purpose of a coaching to bring awareness and insight, the aim is that the coachee can then use that insight to choose behaviour change that leads to a better outcome, and as with so many previous sessions, Sophia's tight grip on well-worn patterns of behaviour that had an undesirable impact on her was an obstacle to making progress. Towards the end of the session I asked her to imagine a scenario in which she went to asleep and awoke fully rested – how would she feel about this? Sophia's emotional response was not a positive one, and when I explored further, she said her fear was that if she was able to sleep better, and she still found life so challenging, she would no longer have that problem to partially attribute it to. I therefore learned that the positive intent behind the behaviour of not fixing her sleep was to avoid confronting other painful truths about her life.

By the end of the session Sophia had identified some actions, but I was not convinced that these were actions she was truly committed to. Sophia's written feedback after this session is presented in full below.

**What insight did you gain in the coaching session that you would like to retain?**

My sleep pattern is not the "norm" but is embedded in to my routine. The importance of good sleep and what benefit I could gain from it. Needing to understand the thought process behind sleeping and acceptance to change. Requires effort and work. This is the start of the process.

**What action steps did you choose for yourself?**

Research and discussions and take the issue on

**What will you do to support yourself to be successful in these steps?**

Be open to ideas and support and advice

**How did today's coaching session move you further toward your overall goal(s) for coaching?**

It covered a topic I haven't given any in depth thought to and had accepted the situation. With the coaching received if I can change this, it could benefit me greatly.

**What do you want to cover in our next coaching session?**

Final session – review and to make the changes last and cope without coaching as a motivation

For me the most telling word in this feedback is the word “if”. “If I can change this...”. Sophia did not believe she could change the situation, and I fear this belief was left largely intact at the end of the coaching session.

My supervisor listened to an audio recording of this particular session and offered a wealth of observations and advice. These included:

- Avoid projecting my own personal sleep values onto her. I used language that risked catastrophising the problem and observed that she was not setting a high aspiration for her sleep. My intent was to validate Sophia’s choice of sleep as a topic and disrupt her acceptance of it as inevitable and not worth trying to change. I also wanted her to align her goals to what science deems a healthy amount of sleep. However I recognise that change had to be Sophia’s own choice and be aligned with her own mental map of the world for her to make progress, and I was at risk of making her feel more fear about both the problem and the solution, and therefore reduce her resourcefulness in tackling it. I also needed to avoid Sophia providing answers to please my definition of progress rather than defining her own progress. This dynamic was one I wrestled with throughout the coaching engagement with Sophia, because Sophia’s default position often presented as “I am dysfunctional, unhappy, it’s who I am, and I’m not worth anything”. Were I operating as a friend to Sophia, I know that I would have slid quickly into a role of rescuer, telling her what to think about herself and what to do for herself, with the intent of trying to build her self-worth. For the most part I was able to consciously avoid this role and stay in adult-to-adult mode, but I did often repeat to her “you deserve to feel better”, as I could see her lack of self-worth as a fundamental obstacle to making positive change in her life.
- Challenging her untrue assumptions lived as true. When Sophia gave examples of falling asleep in the day, I could have used this as evidence that her baseline assumption of “I can’t sleep” was not true, and therefore explore what possibilities this could open up for her.
- Exploring what the positive intent from staying awake might be, which could then be examined to see if the intent that was still relevant or useful.
- Assisting Sophia to gain a greater understanding of the expert evidence and advice regarding sleep, when it became apparent that she did not know any of this information. I was afraid to move away from being an ‘equal’ into being a teacher with superior knowledge. However, we could have used internet resources as the guide, and for future I will build into my ‘toolbox’ some well-sourced facts about sleep hygiene to bring out for clients when needed.

It was also extremely helpful and reassuring to be told by my supervisor that Sophia was a challenging coachee!

## 5. Final Reflections

It seemed to me from exploring Sophia’s history and approach to relationships that her attachment style was fearful-avoidant. She had only lived with her mother and on her own. Coaching helped Sophia to recognise that she enjoys life best when she is with other people. It gave her confidence to let go of the identity she had created for herself as someone who doesn’t need or want to spend time with others – but she still hasn’t got the confidence to reach out to others, and seemingly had no desire to develop this confidence. It was a deeply held belief that this was not something she could or should do. She was unable to explain why she couldn’t do it. I re-framed the act of reaching out away from it being something that would meet her needs, which she had a deep aversion to, towards meeting the needs of others by making them feel valued and worthy, as this was a core value and source of identity and pride for Sophia. However, reaching out made her feel far too vulnerable – my observation rather than her own - and was a frontier she was not prepared to cross.

Nonetheless, from the very first session to the last, I witnessed the coaching process enable Sophia to make some profound changes in her life, and I know from catching up with her on a couple of occasions since that these changes were sustained. For some people these changes may not seem big, but for Sophia they were transformational. These included:

- In her words “not giving up on the day” – which was going to bed at the end of a work day and not getting up in the evening. After a few sessions she had changed her pattern and giving up became an exception not the norm.
- Eliminating the 30-45 minutes of agonising rumination on whether or not to leave the house for short local trips, saving herself considerable stress
- Going walking alone in her local area – sometimes for miles – despite strong anxiety about this

- Creating a separate and comfortable work space in her house, distinct from her relaxation space, and for the first time since she'd moved in, investing effort in making her home a more pleasant and comfortable space
- Sorting through rooms full of memorabilia, some of which evoked painful emotions
- Buying herself the equipment to make herself a cup of tea at home and building this into her routine, having previously not thought herself worth making a cup of tea for
- Subscribing to a meal delivery service, so that she was occasionally eating nutritionally balanced meals instead of junk food
- Doing online Pilates classes and on one occasion agreeing to be the teacher's example student, so she was on video whilst other students were watching and copying
- Starting 'High Intensity Training' classes and hired a personal trainer
- Opening up to some of her friends about some of her personal struggles; talking to her friend about memories of her mum who died suddenly and left a big hole in life; making more effort to keep in touch with friends via social media, and more effort to keep in touch with her team at work
- Organising a care plan for her Dad, reducing the burden of care on herself
- Completing a 6-session course of online group coaching, which I recommended to her after we had finished our course, and pushed her very deeply out of her comfort zone.

I regret that I did not develop sufficient familiarity and confidence with using any models with Sophia other than the PRIDE model, but I have subsequently used models with other clients. I used elements of the well-formed outcome model without following the script precisely. Sophia struggled to answer many of my questions as it was, and described the coaching experience as very challenging and intense, so my sense was that she would have struggled even more with being asked to follow a fixed process and it might have knocked her confidence. My feeling from this is that models will work with clients who have a solid foundation of self-worth, and a reasonable degree of self-confidence and flexibility, which Sophia lacked. The gift I gave Sophia was a safe space in which to examine long ignored thoughts and feelings, permission to be her true self and to do things for herself, and the belief and support that she could dissolve old mental barriers and entrenched patterns, which she ultimately did. The most powerful questions that I asked were probably the most fundamental ones: What do you want? What is important to you? What brings you joy on a day-to-day basis? What is holding you back? Is it true?

I also benefitted enormously from this coaching experience – developing my authentic intuitive style and confidence in it as I observed its life-changing results. I am extremely proud of the breakthroughs that Sophia made in her life and it convinced me of the power of coaching and my desire to continue.

I am particularly proud as I coached Sophia through the Covid19 pandemic, one of the most challenging periods of world history, which placed new strains on everyone, and meant that 11 of our 13 sessions were conducted by video.

Coaching Sophia was a fascinating privilege from which I learned so much and will continue to serve me as I move forward as a coach.

## 6. Assessing myself against the Coaching Competency Framework of the Association for Coaching

1. Meeting ethical, legal and professional guidelines	I clearly communicated my ethical and professional approach in my coaching document, explaining how coaching is different from other helping professions and also talked about the coaching process – what it is and what it is not – many times in sessions. I made it clear that I was a coach-in-training and that I had a supervisor. I also suggested to Sophia that she could benefit from professional psychotherapy.
2. Establishing the coaching agreement and outcomes	I set out very clearly what the coaching process was in my coaching document and in each session re-contracted for the outcomes that Sophia wanted to pursue, as well as the timing and logistics of all sessions. Halfway through the coaching engagement I introduced a reflection form that Sophia completed after each session, to acknowledge the insights and progress she had made, set her intention for further actions, and identify what she wanted to discuss in the next session.

3. Establishing a trust-based relationship with the client	Sophia may have trusted me more than anyone she's ever trusted before, and that this was due to the acceptance, belief and optimism I conveyed at all times, and my consistently attentive and compassionate presence.
4. Managing self and maintaining coaching presence	I was an extremely steady and consistent presence for Sophia, as she explored her deepest fears and challenges. The only breaks in my focus were caused by coaching in my home, where I couldn't always stop intrusions such as a parcel delivery or my dog barking, but I never failed to return to Sophia and the specifics of the conversation with my full attention.
5. Communicating effectively	I communicate effectively, but I also regularly played back to Sophia what I understood from her to check if it was correct. I also did this after offering an observation or some information or a hypothesis, and sometimes observed Sophia's confused expression and so found a different way to explain something, often giving practical examples.
6. Raising awareness and insight	Sophia's coaching experience was very much a journey of self-discovery and I have no doubt that the questions I asked and feedback I offered were effective in challenging her assumptions, eliciting new insights, raising self-awareness and gaining learning. This included pointing out the gaps in her logic, or where she seemed to be acting on the basis of a fear that she eventually agreed she had no evidence for.
7. Designing strategies and actions	I kept Sophia focussed on the actions that would move her closer to her overall goal. I inspired Sophia to read and listen to podcasts on a range of topics that she would never have embraced previously, which helped her to understand herself better and to place her experience in a broader context. I encouraged Sophia to take positive actions for herself, which she did but I also set her homework occasionally such as writing out the list of activities that she enjoys. I encouraged her to use her trusted friends as resources and she reported back to me on occasions where she had done this. I also inspired her to try out a number of different techniques to maintain her positive progress, such as journaling, positive mantras, reading some books on managing anxiety, and enrol in a group coaching course a few months after our sessions had ended.
8. Maintaining forward momentum and evaluation	Sophia's desired outcome was huge: a better quality of life, and I regularly checked in with her on the progress she was making and celebrated her successes. Introducing the reflection form was a really effective way at helping Sophia to recognise her own progress. Sophia's reflection form on our final session is included as Appendix C.
9. Undertaking continuous coach development	I regularly asked Sophia for feedback in the session and afterwards via the reflection forms, and re-read these forms to plan my approach in the next session. I also spoke to my supervisor and fellow coaching trainees to reflect on the blocks that I was observing and different techniques that might help. Throughout I was attending the structured Coaching Mastery modules, learning more about the coaching process, practising techniques and studying. After a session in which I had talked about certain concepts with Sophia such as 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs' I would then research them thoroughly to ensure I had conveyed them correctly in the session and would then send her resources to deepen her own understanding.



## APPENDIX A – Sophia’s driver questionnaire results

Column	Driver Statement	Score
ONE	Be perfect	2.5
TWO	Please (others)	3.5
THREE	Hurry up	5
FOUR	Be strong	3
FIVE	Try Hard	3

## APPENDIX B – Sophia’s pre-coaching questionnaire response

In the near future we will start our coaching work together. In our first meeting, we will work to define clearly what you want to accomplish from your coaching. This is a very important step in the coaching process and will ensure that we start with a solid foundation.

To help gain this clarity, please take the time to answer the following questions. Some of the questions are quite broad - the intention here is to understand the wider context in which your coaching will take place as this will ensure better results. If you find any question too hard to answer that’s fine – just say this as your answer and we can pick this up during our first meeting.

Best wishes,

Kari

**Your name:** Sophia (redacted)

**Today’s date:** 19.3.20

**Role & employer:** (redacted)

**Contact method preference:** text / email / whatsapp message (if you use that)

### 1. Describing yourself

a. How would you describe yourself?

Nice, polite, helpful, over thinker, organised

b. What special knowledge and experience do you offer?

Nothing special

c. What things have you done that have brought you positive results in the past?

Tried to do things instead of not bothering or giving up – eg theatre trips

d. What do you normally do to get unstuck?

Think about it or go to bed

e. Is there anything else you want to let me know here?

### 2. What do you want for yourself in your life?

a. If you could have anything that you wanted professionally or personally, what would you choose?

Health – living with IBS everything needs risk assessment

b. What's important to you about the work you do?

That I do it properly and give an excellent service and support and help others

c. What do you want from your job?

To be listened to

d. What skills, knowledge or capabilities do you want to develop?

e. How do your job goals support your personal goals?

Not really – quite different between work and personal

f. Is there anything else you want to let me know here?

### 3. What is your recent history?

a. What are you happiest about achieving in the last 12 months?

That I have managed to book things and actually go to them without backing out

b. What did you not achieve that you would have liked to?

Peace of mind – and recognising the achievements but instead I just reset of the same worry and panic

c. Is there anything else you want to let me know here?

Takes a lot of self talking to function and battles to decide if I go or don't

### 4. What are your coaching objectives?

a. What outcomes do you want to achieve from coaching?

A new thought process achieving things in daily life and future that isn't centred around work

b. What areas will we be working on to specifically to support your objectives, in your opinion?

Motivation for me – will do anything for others, but not for me – but when I do stuff for me – do I enjoy it?

c. What are the challenges for you in reaching these outcomes?

Me and giving up

d. What do you expect from the coaching you are about to receive?

Challenge and thinking points for actions

e. What is it about you as a person that will support this to happen?

understanding that i know that I am not motivated to change by myself

f. How comfortable are you challenging yourself and being challenged by others you trust?

Challenge every day – sometimes it works sometimes I hibernate – challenge from others is fine if it gives a different thought process or view point which then makes sense to me

g. Is there anything else you want to let me know?

## APPENDIX C - Sophia's final reflection form

### What insight did you gain in the coaching session that you would like to retain?

The positives that have been achieved:

Not giving up on the day

Changing the surroundings – sorting, tidy, cleaning, organising work space

Think more about little bite size tasks to achieve

Walking

Organised and change plan for Dad

Group HIIT sessions / live Pilates

Personal trainer

Actively keeping in touch with the team

Trying to keep in touch with friends via social media

Alexa – the thing that can talk to you

No thought process when walking up the road (e.g. not having second thoughts or self-doubt)

### What action steps did you choose for yourself?

Continue to breakdown the issues in to smaller achievable goals

Think about work / life balance and what changes I can make so work is not dominant or affecting my thoughts on non-work days

Have taken time off work to get breaks away and time to think or do something

### What will you do to support yourself to be successful in these steps?

Continue to test my ability to do things on my own

Be aware of the self-destruct and try and to dull it down

### How did today's coaching session move you further toward your overall goal(s) for coaching?

Try and talk to friends about work topics for advice

Confidence that I can do things without the need to report on them