

Invest in People: The Use of Coaching in Professional Development and Continuous Learning
Track D7 – Management and Professional Development
17th Annual Virtual Birth to Three Institute

Operator: Good day and welcome to the Virtual Birth to Three Institute, "Invest in People: The Use of Coaching in Professional Development and Continuous Learning" conference call. Today's call is being recorded. At this time, I'd like to turn the conference over to Kelly Claire. Please go ahead.

Kelly Claire: Hello, everyone, and welcome to today's conference. Before we get started, just a few housekeeping items. For today's session, we will be taking questions via the private chat. If you look down towards the lower left, you will see a public and a private tab; click private and send all questions to leaders and assistants. We will be collecting questions throughout today's session and be taking those at the end. So don't wait till the end, please put your questions in there as the session is going on.

We'll also be fielding any technical questions you might have in there as well, so please, again, choose private tab and leaders and assistants and we'll take care of the questions there. With that, I would like to turn the conference over to Linda. Linda, go ahead.

Linda Gillespie: Greetings. I'm Linda Gillespie and I'm the director of program operations for the Early Head Start National Resource Center. I am delighted to be the moderator of this session, titled, "Invest in People: The Use of Coaching in Professional Development and Continuous Learning." I'm thrilled to have you all join us for the next 90 minutes.

Before our presenters introduce themselves, I want to give you a quick overview of today's session. This session will begin with the definition of coaching and its relationship to professional development and adult learning. Next, the role of reflection in the context of coaching will be explored. Additionally, the presenters will share information about who can be a coach, as well as the qualities, competencies, and skills that are necessary to be successful in this role. The webinar will end with a role play that will allow the participants to witness the coaching process in action and identify important skills the presenters will be using.

There are two polling opportunities for you, one at the beginning and one at the end, so be ready. I encourage you to use your viewer's guide to follow along and note questions as they arise. We will address as many questions as possible at the end of the session. We have a large group, and to make sure we can all hear well, I'm going to keep the phones on mute.

Now for the first polling question. Kelly? Okay. So, I want you to mark one of these responses. If you're – as an attendant, are you basically a program leader or supervisor, a direct service staff? Are you a consultant? Are you a coach? I know many of you wear many hats, so we want you to choose the best one that describes you: infant mental health specialist, trainer/educator, or other. So we're just going to take a few minutes while people can mark their choices and we can see who we have on the line with us today. I know we have a lot of you, so it will take a few minutes for this to show up.

So, Kelly, have you seen any results yet? We are watching. I don't see them – we'll see them shortly. All right, I hope everybody is having a chance to mark this. I see some results up here. So here is what we've got so far: About 33 percent are program leaders or supervisors; we have eight percent of direct service

staff; another six is consultants; three percent of you are already coaches; one percent are infant mental health specialists; 15 percent are trainers and educators; and nine percent are others. So that's great. So, Kelly, you can close that poll now.

So now that we've seen who you are and we know who's kind of joining us today, I'm going to let our presenters introduce them – introduce themselves. And we're going to start first with Dathan. Dathan, you want to take it away?

Dathan Rush: Sure. Thanks, Linda. Greetings, everyone. It's so nice to have you join us. We're so pleased that you're taking this time out of your day to be with us as we talk about coaching as it relates to professional development. To give you a little bit of background information about myself, I'm the associate director of the Family, Infant, and Preschool Program in Morganton, North Carolina. We refer to our program as FIPP, and we're an early childhood and family support program for children from birth to age 5 and their families.

In terms of coaching, I've been studying and providing coaching for about the past 20 years. And that includes training and technical assistance at the local, the state, and the national levels. I've had the opportunity to work with Head Start and Early Head Start programs for about the past 10 years. And I live in a small, rural community in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with my wife, as you can see on the slide, and our dog. And I enjoy traveling, antiques, and reading in my spare time. Nancy.

Nancy Seibel: Thanks, Dathan. Hello, everybody. I'll just quickly introduce myself as well. I live near Baltimore, Maryland with my boyfriend and our dog, and not too far from my two adult sons, which is very nice. From the images you see here, you can see that some of my personal interests include bicycle touring, knitting. And you can't see it here, but I also like reading mystery novels.

I worked for Zero to Three for 14 years in a variety of positions, all of them focused on professional development for people serving infants, toddlers, and their families. I'm especially interested in infant mental health, reflective supervision, and relationship-based early childhood coaching, as well as preventing child maltreatment and promoting their well-being. Recently, I've established my own early childhood consulting and life coaching practice, and I'm really fortunate to continue to be associated with Zero to Three and the Early Head Start NRC.

So that's a little bit about me. And you can probably see from what I told you about my interests why I'm so excited to get to participate in this webinar. And I'm really excited to know that so many of you are also interested in coaching in programs serving young children and their families.

So as we were preparing for this webinar, Dathan and I talked a little bit about the fact that while coaching has become an increasingly popular professional development approach, we don't always have a whole lot of clarity on how we define coaching. And I bet if you read five different books on the topic or clicked on five different Web links, you'd find as many different definitions and sources. So, Dathan, you have some really clear ideas on how to define coaching, and I think it would really be great for us to be able to hear them.

Dathan: Alright. Let me start by saying that I've been working in the field of early childhood and early intervention for quite a few years now and have been doing home visits since about the late 1980s. Now don't anybody start calculating and trying to figure out how old I am, but let's just say I've been doing this for a while now. And one of the things that I found, especially when I started going into families'

homes, was that working with the child – and I started out as a speech language pathologist – and working with the child didn't always produce all the outcomes that the parents and that I wanted to have happen because it just wasn't enough.

I needed a way to be able to provide more support or engage people in the child's environment to provide more support to have longer lasting effects. And so, I figured out after a while – it took me a little bit, but I figured out after a while, I needed to have a way of engaging the family members – the parents and the other family members. And so, I started by just telling the parents what it was that I wanted them to do. And a few parents would do that, but by and large, people don't really like to be just told what to do.

So, I found out that sometimes they may think my ideas are dumb ideas or they may be things that they've already tried before. And so, I sure didn't want to put parents through that, so I had to figure out a way to engage families in this whole process of supporting their children's learning. And about this time, the literature was starting to come up with the term coaching – started to appear in the literature.

So, my colleague M'Lisa Shelden and I started looking at the literature and we started looking at the research because, just as Nancy said, there were all these different definitions of early – of coaching, but not necessarily specific to early childhood. What would coaching look like for all of us? And I was also starting to do some training at that time back in Oklahoma when I was living there, and I was finding that no matter how much stand-up training idea and no matter how good it was, it didn't always reflect in their practices. So, it didn't always transfer from the classroom or workshop environment to the real-life setting.

So I started digging, digging into the research. And what I found was that coaching is really a type of an adult learning strategy – and there is quite a bit of research related to that – and it's a relationship-based process. So when we think about coaching and the type of work that all of us do, it really comes to the fact that it's to build the knowledge, the skills, and the abilities of the other person – the person that we're working with to be able to think about – and we call that reflecting – so to be able to reflect on what it is that he or she already knows, or maybe it's what they're already doing, and to think about how that's working and how that is getting them to the outcome or the goal or the plan that they want to have happen both in the current situation, right now, as we're working and talking with them, but also in future situations.

And that's really a key concept about coaching. When we are coaching, we don't want it to just last in the moment, but we want to prepare the person that we're coaching, whether it's a parent, whether it's a colleague, or someone else, for those future situations. And that's called capacity building. And so, we want to make sure that we help the coachee know what to do or where to find the resources so that he or she doesn't always have to rely on the coach, because coaching should be capacity building versus dependency creating.

I don't want to create dependence on a person I'm coaching so he always has to run back to me to get the answer. I ultimately want that person to be able to reflect and think upon and identify the resources that he or she has and realize that he or she can access those resources without having to rely on me all the time. Nancy, what would you add about the importance of a consistent definition?

Nancy: Well, I think that this definition is so great in that it highlights all the key things that I think are so important about what coaching provides and how it provides it. And what I think is important about

having a shared definition is that it really helps us in our practice as we train professionals who are going to serve as coaches and also as we develop expectations and goals for them in their roles, and also for the results of their work. So we have a shared base we're working from to do those things. Now, that's what really helps those who are participating in coaching to understand what they can expect and what is expected of them.

The other piece that really helps us is to continue building the evidence base so that the research community can ask the right question and we can continue understanding what works best and for whom. So thank you for sharing this. I think it provides a wonderful basis for us to continue with the webinar.

Dathan: Great. So let's go a little bit deeper in our thinking about coaching and coaching as a means for professional development. You know, coaching is a strategy for – for supporting the learning of the adults to do what they want to need to accomplish, whether that's related to helping a parent help her child be able to learn or an Early Head Start staff member assisting a parent to find reliable transportation, for example.

Our focus today is going to be on how we can use coaching as part of our professional development activities in Early Head Start. And when we think about coaching in professional development, there are three different ways to think about it. And you can see those up on the screen.

The first way we talk about coaching as professional development is when we use coaching or program leadership or professional developers or coordinators and supervisors use it following a training, and we call that transfer of training or transfer of learning from the training environment to the real life situation, the classroom, the home. And we do that to help them to be able to operationalize the content within the classroom setting, within a group socialization perhaps, or as they're helping the family find resources, promote their child's learning about a particular topic or so forth.

The second type of coaching as professional development that we might do is called just-in-time learning, and that's when coaching is used in the moment to support a newly learned skill or new knowledge. So for example, a manager may help a staff member learn to use a new assessment tool during a home visit.

We – my colleague and – again, M'Lisa Sheldon and I, we were working in the state of Maine a number of years ago on an Early Reading First project. And we were training the staff there about how to use coaching with teachers in the classroom related to early literacy. And we had lots and lots of extended conversations about this notion of coaching in the moment. And they coined a term that I still like to use to this day, and they called it coaching on the fly. And it's just that. It's you are in the moment and you see this issue come up or you see an opportunity to apply something that you just learned and then you're supporting that person in being able to use that practice right there in the moment as you're coaching on the fly.

A third type of coaching for professional development is used to ensure that we're working with the children and families and perhaps following our curriculum in the way our program requires us to do. And we call this fidelity to practice standards so that we can say that we're doing what it is that we're supposed to be doing and so we do what we say we're doing. And so, this may be when a supervisor or a program manager is supporting us.

It could be, let's say an observation of a teacher by a coach with a discussion to follow based on how she's applying the Early Head Start practice standards. It might be something like following the child's lead or maybe showing interest in what the children are interested in in that moment and modifying an activity so it builds around and sustains the children's interest, or draws out their interest into something new that they're going to be learning about that.

So let's go a little bit deeper and talk about what we know from the research about coaching and professional development. And this research that I'm going to be referring to now was done by Joyce and Showers over a many year period, and it was published in a book that they wrote in 2002. And what we're looking at is the percentage of participants who obtain the training outcomes.

So let's walk through this together. So if our training is focused just on theory – so we go to a training and we just hear a theory or research or conceptual frameworks about a practice, about 10 percent of the participants are going to obtain knowledge related to that. Five percent may develop new skills related to what they learned from the theory. When we add demonstration by instructors – so if the instructors do some kind of a role play or they show you how to use the knowledge or the new skills, about 30 percent of the people will walk away with new knowledge that they may apply. Twenty percent will walk away with new skills.

Now look what happens when we move to practice by participants with feedback. Now, we know that adult learners – as adult learners, we don't always like to practice and we don't always like to put ourselves out there and practice, you know, during the training. We'd rather go home and practice where nobody could see us. But if we practice during the training while we're there, it boosts up the knowledge to 60 percent of the participants will obtain the training outcomes for both knowledge and skill acquisition; and look, but only five percent are going to transfer that new knowledge and new skill to their real life situation.

But look what happens down there when we add coaching in. When we provide coaching in real life context – so we follow a training event with coaching, look at that knowledge. Ninety-five percent of the participants obtain the training outcomes. Same way for skill acquisition. And look at that transfer to real life context, 95 percent of the participants. Now to me, that's a winner. And to me, it's so dramatic. The difference between even when we have people practice during the session to coaching outside, the dramatic – the dramatic increase in the effect that it has on our learning outcomes. So, what this is telling us is the importance of having coaches in place or identifying coaches and supporting people through coaching and in the real-life setting.

Just a little bit more research that I want to share with you here. And this was done by Carol Trivette and some of her colleagues at the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute, which happens to be here in – based here in Morganton, North Carolina, an international research institute. And they did a few years ago a research synthesis related to different types of professional development. So they looked at coaching, they looked at guided design, accelerated learning, and then some other adult learning strategies.

And what they found was that the most effective types of professional development ensure that the learners receive what you see there on the screen, guidance, feedback, and the types of support that ensure a deeper understanding of the content. What they found was, when they looked at coaching as one of the means of professional development, that it was consistent with five implications that they were coming through – to through the synthesis for in-service training.

So let's take a look at those five indicators that they were looking at. The first one was that the professional development needs to build on the coachee's experiences. And coaching does that because we start with what the person we're coaching already knows. What is it that they know or are doing in this situation? Even if it's not what we want them to be doing, it's the reality, so it's where we have to start and then we can build from there. We have to acknowledge that and we have to start there.

Secondly, coaching, as it relates to these five dimensions, uses the adult learning characteristic of introducing the content. And so, we may introduce the content in a formal presentation or in some kind of workshop or training. We may illustrate and even provide practice opportunities, as I showed you in the chart previously. Then we want to help support people to evaluate what it is they're learning and compare it to their own practices. Reflect on or think about what they're doing and take it even deeper, start internalizing it. Think about perhaps what they could do differently and then, over time, with support, become more masterful of the content.

Coaching also promotes active participation; and what we know from capacity building and the research related to capacity building models is that there must be active participation on the part of the person that we're coaching in order for the person's capacity to be built. And what do we mean by active participation? Well, we mean doing something. Doing something related to the content, the skills, and the information that was trained.

Number four, we know from the professional development literature that coaching provides many opportunities over time for reflection and feedback by the coach. People need to reflect and think about what they're doing and how it's working. And feedback can be supportive and feedback can be helpful to know if they're on track or to know new ideas and to keep the information and our personal databases growing.

And then finally, coaching fits because we generally have – once we're past the training event, a coach and a coachee working closely together one on one so that we can go at the pace of the coachee, whereas classroom-based training or workshops go with the pace of the presenter because he or she has a lot of information to share and needs to make sure it all gets out there. But then when we move it to the coaching in real-life activity, we can slow down and go more at the pace of the coachee.

So when we provide opportunities for the person that we're coaching to practice, to receive feedback, to reflect, et cetera, as you see there, over time and in context, it makes a huge difference. So, let's just think about that for a moment. And if you think about it, you know it's a whole lot easier to cook by doing it, not just by reading the recipes.

It was a whole lot easier when we learned how to drive once we got behind the wheel. And those of you who – I may be dating myself, but when I was taking driver's training, they put us in these driving simulators and they ran these videos that we tried to drive to. It was way different being behind the wheel of a car. In fact, it was a lot more fun, but a lot more scary, than it was in that simulator.

And think about this one: when you learned to swim, it was very different learning the strokes on the side of the pool versus when you had to get in the water. And when once you got in the water, it was a whole different game, wasn't it? I mean, it was sink or swim. And there were a few times I thought I was sinking. So, it helped me to learn how to swim more by being in the water than it did when I was outside the water learning some of the strokes and learning about the content. Although that was helpful to apply, but I couldn't apply it until I was in the water.

So, here's what we know. Coaching is one of the few adult-learning strategies or strategies for transfer of training that has been identified by research as being effective. So coaching is identified by research as being effective. So if we're coaching, what are we doing? Well, let's look at some of the characteristics.

So when I was looking at the research and I was digging into it to find out, "Okay, I understand coaching is research-based, but how do I do it?" So in the research, it was showing us that there were these five characteristics of the practice. And so if I was coaching based on the research, I need to be doing these five things.

And the first thing I'm going to be doing is joint planning. And I always make sure that I end with a joint plan. And that is, who is going to do what by when? What am I supposed to do as a result to this coaching conversation and what is the person that I'm coaching going to do as a result? And then the cool thing about that is then I'm better assured that active participation required for capacity building is going to occur between our visits and we have a natural starting point for our very next visit because we had a previous joint plan.

And so, I don't have to start with, well, what are we going to talk about today or what should we do today, but it's, you know, based on what it was that we talked about last time. "Last time you were going to have him up in the high chair to have his meal. Tell me how that's going." So, it provides a natural entry point.

Another characteristic is observation. And that gives us, or whoever the coach is, an opportunity to observe the person that we're coaching in the real-life activity – teacher in the classroom, parent and child in the home. It also can provide the opportunity for the teacher or the parent to observe the coach. They could see how the coach might do it. We call that modeling. But we want to be very intentional about it if we're going to model. So, we're going to show them something to do but we don't want to always be in the showing or modeling position.

And action practice kind of goes hand in hand with observation. If I'm observing, the parent or the teacher would be practicing and vice versa. If they're observing, then I would be in action and I would be modeling.

Feedback is another characteristic of coaching practices where we would be sharing additional information or we would be letting the person know that what they're doing is matching what we're talking about or it matches what we learned at the training. And so, we provide affirmative feedback; or it might be evaluative where we're telling them it's good or we like it when they get down on the child's level or so forth; or inform with a feedback where we're just sharing additional information.

Now notice one thing as you look at these characteristics, there aren't numbers at the side of them because they sometimes happen in various orders based upon how we naturally interact with another person. So we might walk into a classroom and start with observation and then as we have a chance to talk to the teacher, we might refer back to the joint plan. And then, we might go back to observation and then reflect.

Reflection is a key component or a key characteristic of coaching. And it's – it's what we do to help the person stop and think about what it is that they know, what they would like to have happen, what ideas

that they have – happen to have maybe close the gap between what they want and what is happening now. And Nancy is going to take us a little bit further in our thinking about reflection.

Nancy: Okay. Well, thank you. I think that that was so great in helping us understand the research support for coaching, the processes and characteristics, and the really – you know, what's really important in coaching that furthers learning and skill development. And so, I do have some additional thoughts about that and I want to, you know, go back to your idea about learning as a process that takes place over time.

I think we exist in a time, now more than ever, where there's tremendous pressures to – for learning to be quick. And not just learning. I think there's general pressure to find quick fixes everywhere. But, you know, most of the time, what we're learning when we work in the infant/family field is very complex and it requires changes in our attitude sometimes, and we have to question and examine them or expand and broaden them.

It requires changes in how we do the work and it requires our knowledge to grow. And you may be able to learn some things quickly. I mean, the first time I burned my hand when I was learning to cook, I realized that I had to use the potholder all the time. Every once in a while, even that simple the lesson I still forget and burn myself. But really, most other things take more time.

And I liked your driving example, Dathan, because I think that is a great example of something we expect to take time. You go out on practice driving sessions over and over and over. And if you'd ever helped a teenager learn to drive, you know how harrowing that can be. And learning to drive, we could think of as being kind of simple compared to the complexity of the work with young children and their families.

So I'm sure you've heard of the slow food movement, which is about slowing down and taking time to carefully prepare and enjoy our meals. I think we kind of need a slow learning movement so that we can take the time we need to do the thinking and the practicing so we can learn and improve the quality of our work. Coaching lends itself to the slow learning movement as an ongoing process that supports learning through reflection.

And what I'd like to do is now take a look at what we mean by this idea of relationships that Dathan has been talking about and also connect reflection and relationships. What we learn from the coaching relationship itself is just as important to our – building our capacities as what we might learn in a training workshop. And some people might say it's even more important.

So when a coaching relationship is working effectively, we're working together as partners with our coaches and they experience safety and openness that provides motivation to learn and to try new things. What we experience in one relationship we carry into others, and that's really what's meant by the idea of the parallel process in relationships. So the parallel process in relationships tell us that the interactions and the emotional exchanges that happen in one relationship can influence that same exchange in another relationship.

If we're in the coaching role, we can deliberately use our relationship to help build the capacity to develop safe, open, and supportive relationships between those we coach and the families that they work with. And when coachees in turn are able to use those skills with the parents and the children they work with, parents and children are developing, getting the experience of – of nurturing responsive interactions that they can then provide to each other.

So the coaching relationship gives us a template that we can carry forward. We know how it feels. It helps us create those relationships. To picture how it works, I'm going to ask you to imagine something. Let's say – you can sort of watch this in your mind as a little video.

You arrive at work after a very rushed morning and a really rough commute. A coworker greets you with a smile and she offers to get you a cup of coffee while you get settled. So how do you feel then? Do you feel valued, cared for, able to perhaps let go of some of the stress you brought in the door with you? How do you carry that experience into your next interaction of the day?

Hopefully, that has given you some reserves of patience and maybe some willingness to offer support to the next person you encounter. That make sense? So you can see how one relationship can influence another relationship in the movie we all just watched together in our minds. The bottom line is that relationships influence other relationships and this is the essence of how the coaching relationship influences outcomes.

So there's the what of coaching. And the what involves the knowledge that's shared, the goals that we're trying to reach, the expectations, and the purpose. The relationship is really the how of coaching. It's really the coaching relationship. Coachees can be open to reflecting, learning, trying out new perspectives, and practicing new skills. And this is how coaching helps build competencies.

So we can think about competencies as having the components of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. And when people get someone to swim in the water with them and work alongside them as they build the skills and gather the knowledge and perhaps reshape or broaden or deepen the needed attitude, competencies grow. I think that coaching creates the time and the opportunity to do some examining of the attitudes, question their beliefs, think carefully about what they know, and deepen their skills.

Coaching supports reflective thinking. I started to say reflective taking, and I have no idea what that would be, but it's an interesting idea. Coaching supports reflective thinking. And one way to think about reflective thinking is that when we are doing that, we're taking the time to look, listen, and learn from our work.

Let's talk about three components of reflection that coaching can help us with. So you see them here: reflecting in, on, and for action. And your first thought might be, what the heck is she talking about? Well, let's start with the one that I think is the most self-evident, and that one is reflecting for action. We do that when we stop and take time to prepare, to think ahead about what might happen, what might the response be to what they're doing, and get as ready as we can for all of the things we can predict could happen. Okay, so that's looking ahead.

After we do something, we might reflect on that experience. Look at what happened in order to learn and possibly to keep doing what worked well and to make changes if things didn't work as we had hoped. So that's looking back.

Reflecting in action, I used to think, when I first heard the idea, is that taking a minute to stop and think when someone asked a question or did something and you weren't sure what to do next. And I learned after reading Donald Schön's work a little more carefully that that's a very brief, in-the-moment almost reflection on action when you do that. And that's a perfectly wonderful thing to do. But reflecting in

action is that when you see people doing it, responding to the unexpected in a very smooth and effective way, making an adjustment almost instantaneously, that's reflecting in action.

When you've done that – let's say all of a sudden a child got ready to bite another child, and in that moment you fluidly stepped in and distracted the child that was getting ready to inflict the bite, and someone else had said, "How did you know how to do that with him?" And you might say, "Well, I don't know. It just seemed like the right thing."

In reality, that response of yours was based on everything you had learned up until that point about that child in particular, about how to redirect a child that's starting to do something wrong that might have come from something you read or something you were trained in, and about thinking back on those experiences and perhaps discussing them with somebody.

So coaches can help people get ready for action; and an example like that, they might say, "So under what conditions would this child tend to bite?" and help you identify those and then help you think through a few steps you could take that might help redirect the child or stop the injury from happening, and can help you reflect on action by giving you someone to talk with about how the different strategies that you tried worked out.

The more you reflect for action and on action, the better and better and better you get at reflections in action. So coaching really enhances practice by providing plenty of opportunities for reflecting for action and reflecting on action. And Dathan, I know that you have some additional thoughts about reflection that relates to coaching.

Dathan: Yes. Let's talk about some of those. But I just want to say – and I want to make sure everybody heard that notion of yours about the slow learning movement, that we really need to kind of slow things down, give ourselves the luxury sometimes of having the opportunity to reflect. Reflect and think about what it is that we want to do or what we want to have happened, or reflect on what did happen and how we might do it differently next time. Such a key characteristic of coaching and of adult learning.

Whenever I think about reflection, it takes me back to a time whenever I was first starting to do home visits. So I was very new at it, but I thought I was pretty good at reflecting and planning and thinking about what was going to be happening and planning my visits and being thoughtful about it. And I was working with this family of a little girl who had six siblings, and I would go to see her and her mom at their home.

And when I asked the mother the best time for me to go, she said 3:30 in the afternoon would be great. Well, I didn't really know at that time that she was the block parent, so that meant that all of the children in the neighborhood when they got off the school bus, if they didn't want to go home because their parents weren't home from work yet, they could go to this house. And so, I didn't really know that when I agreed to go at 3:30 that the school bus dropped off in front of their house at 3:35.

So there I was in the living room surrounded by all the neighborhood children and the parent, and there I was – and this was in the day when I was still, you know, working out of my toy bag and trying to get the child to communicate using the toys that I was bringing in my toy bag. And so, within that moment as I was sitting there in that living room surrounded by all the family and the neighbors and the parent, where I was doing some pretty quick reflecting on what am I going to do now, how am I going to make this work, how am I going to show that I can get this child to produce sounds, produce some words?

And there was the brother – the older brother was sitting behind me and he was eating his snack and his feet didn't quite touch the floor as he was sitting on the couch. And so, he was kicking his legs. Well, it just so happened each time he kicked his leg, it went right into my back – so right between my shoulder blades. And so I call this the – we would typically call this kind of the whack on the side of the head. But I call this the kick, you know, the between the shoulder blades, thinking about what am I doing and how am I going to do this and then really trying to reflect in that moment.

And I have to admit, I wasn't too smooth at it, especially whenever he shouted out at me, "Hey, mister, if you'll do it this way, she'll do it every time." And so I quickly thought, "Let's see. Maybe I should do what he's suggesting." And so I did, and guess what happened? She did it. She did it. And so, he had reflected on what I was doing and what he knew worked, what he had seen happen, and it worked.

And so that was one of those early moments where this notion of reflection and notion of how can I further support, whether it's the brother or the mother or a teacher, in thinking about these things because they have the information that often I don't have. And so when coaches use reflection, it helps that learner to come to a deeper understanding of what might work, what doesn't work, how do you modify it, what might you do differently next time.

Doyle, in his 1999 book, has a quote that I really like. And it's a – that reflection is "looking back in order to move forward" – "looking back in order to move forward." I like that because that's really in essence what we want to do as a good coach, help the person to think back to a time where maybe it did work or to what they do know and start there.

Now, reflection is initially prompted by the coach in the form of a question. And so, some examples of questions might be: What have you already tried? What are you doing right now? How is that working? How could you do it differently? What other ideas can you come up with? What other ideas have you thought about? When would you like for this to happen? What's the first step you're going to take to make this happen?

Do – we initially help them to reflect by asking the questions, and then ultimately the coach begins to reflect more and begins to ask himself or herself these questions. And so, then they're really doing all the work instead of the coach doing all the work because they've learned from the coach the problem-solving process or the reflective questioning process so they can reflect and analyze themselves and come up with a new or a different idea or determine that they may need to access a formal or an informal resource.

And look down there at the bottom of this slide and this quote, "in the current and the future situations." So we ask these questions now with the intent that, over time, the person will be able to ask the questions of himself or herself. So this really brings us to the point of thinking about, well, who can provide coaching? Who would we get in our program to be a coach? Or, how do we access a coach? So let's talk about that for a few minutes.

So in the literature, when we again go back to the research related to coaching, we find that there are two types of coaches mentioned, expert and peer. So an expert has a really deep level of knowledge around the content and a peer may be someone that you work with who's just learning as you are. And so, you're still going to try to coach one another and support one another in this new learning, but you both have about the same level of knowledge and understanding.

Though in Early Head Start, coaching could be provided by the person conducting or responsible for the training. So, many of you, you have in house experts; you have staff on board who it's their role to provide training and technical assistance perhaps or provide consultation. Some of you contract with or you obtain trainers from outside your organization to come in and provide content knowledge. And so, it might be the task of asking them or figuring out with them a way that they can then help the learners in the workshop apply this in practice or apply this to their real life practice. And so the topics may be around child learning, it may be around parenting supports or child safety, or health or good nutrition, things like that.

Coaching as a follow-up to training or just-in-time coaching, or what I call, from my friends in Maine, coaching on the fly, could be provided by someone on staff who maybe has been assigned a role as a coach. Or maybe it's a technical assistance provider in your T/TA network that's going to be coming in and providing support. And maybe those supports would be around adaptations to the curriculum or maybe ways to think about and help modifying the environment for a child in the classroom who happens to have a disability.

Training follow-up or just-in-time learning and fidelity to practice coaching could also be provided by a manager or a supervisor in the program. So when staff have questions about this particular program policy or a procedure, the supervisor or manager could use coaching as a way to build the capacity of the staff person to know and understand the policies and procedures so that over time the supervisor no longer has to be a walking policy and procedure manual. "Oh, you don't know what to do? Go ask Jo, she'll tell you. Yeah, she'll tell you what to be doing." Well, we want Jo to support the staff in ways that they can learn what the policies and procedures are so they don't always have to rely on her over time.

We may also think about coaching as occurring between two – two peers, two colleagues. They have the same or similar roles, similar knowledge and skills, and they support each other in using new information perhaps that they learned – that they – that they learned from a workshop or a training that they recently attended. So, maybe they just went to a training to learn about a new job search program in their community.

And so whenever this topic comes up with the families they work with, then they're going to coach and support one another in being able to share information and help families access resources and supports. Or maybe they're going to apply some – some new environmental arrangement in their classroom based on the training. They have similar knowledge but they are going to work with another to help support one another in thinking about how they can apply that new information and apply those new skills.

So this takes us to thinking about the characteristics and the competencies of coaches. So if we can identify people in our program who could be a coaches based upon their role or even peer to peer, then what would the competencies – would be that we would look for? Let's talk about this for a moment. So when we looked at the research, what we found was that there were – there was a set of competencies that people often demonstrated when they were being referred to as effective coaches. And this list includes those competencies.

And so the first competency was conscientiousness. And what that means is that the coach has attention to detail, the coach is a responsible person that people believe in, the coach is organized and can help the person that he or she is coaching also organize his or her thoughts and actions in order to

apply this newly-learned information. The coach is reliable. So the coach does what she says she does – will do when she said she would do it, and we can always depend on it.

We also know that effective coaches are warm and friendly. So think about people that you go to in your organization for support and think about that for a moment and think – ask yourself, would you go to somebody in your organization that you would refer to as cold and bristly? Now I know some of you are in groups, so don't look around at one another. Don't make eye contact during this point. No, you want to go to somebody that's warm, that's friendly, that sociable, someone that others like to go to and talk to because you see them as helpful and open to discussion and open to ideas.

We also know that an effective competency of good coaches is being agreeable. Now, this doesn't mean just rubber stamping. And whatever the coachee says, then the coach is going to say, "Oh, okay. It sounds like a good idea to me." That's not what we mean by agreeable. We mean somebody who's flexible, who's trusting and respectful, and who promotes the coaching relationship. Because as Nancy has said and as I've said earlier, this is about relationship-based practice and having a good, strong relationship between the coach and the coachee.

Another characteristic that the research identifies is open to experience. And what that means is being objective; so, not being hypercritical. It means that it doesn't have to just be the way or just match the thinking of the person who is coaching – of the coach. It means that the coach is flexible. I was in a training once and that the trainer said, "Blessed are the flexible for they will never be bent out of shape." I like that and I think that's a good descriptor of an effective coach.

The good coach is unflappable. That things aren't going to bother him or her; going to roll with the punches. We're open to new ideas; we're open to the ideas of others and building on them. Sometimes I'll say, "You know, if it's legal and if it's safe and if it's within the guidelines of what we are supposed to be doing, then I'm open to hearing about it. I'm open to discussing that and talking about that as a possibility."

And then this fifth characteristic is emotionally stable. Now again, don't look around at one another. Don't make eye contact, maybe, during this point. Usually, when we do this live, people kind of giggle when we talk about emotional stability. But what we mean is calm. Somebody who's calm. Someone who's relaxed, trustworthy. Somebody who doesn't need to get his or her own agenda met, that he or she is in it for the coachee, the person that he or she is coaching, not just for what he or she gets out of the relationship.

The fact that it's a partnership and we both come with knowledge, experience, expertise, and we are going to build upon that, identify it, celebrate it, value it, and move forward based on what it is that we're wanting to do and needing to do according to the professional development experiences that we've been having. And now Nancy is going to share with us some important skills and strategies that coaches need to have.

Nancy: Okay, that was really helpful to think about because I think what you just shared put a vivid picture in our mind of who can be a coach and what effective coaches are like. And what I wanted to talk about a little bit is what are some of the practical strategies and skills that we can use to put those competencies into action when we're working with coachees. And if your connection to coaching is you are being coached, you can think about whether you see your coach using these skills and if you're also beginning to use them with the parents and children that you work with.

So, the first thing I want to talk about is active listening. And if you've taken any communication skills workshops, for sure you've heard this term. To me, it's very a important one because it means putting all distraction aside in order to be fully present and very tuned in to the person I'm talking with. And that can be hard to do in a busy work setting.

So it can mean deliberately doing things like turning the ringer off on your phone, turning off the computer. And we can't always do that, but when you can it certainly helps focus and stay tuned in. Putting aside internal distractions and so being ready for coaching by sort of letting other concerns and other things you have to remember for the day sort of go away while you stay focused on interacting with the coachee. So seeking to fully understand from of the perspective of the other person that their experiences, questions, and concerns can be a part of active listening as well.

Another skill and strategy is asking questions. And we heard some very good examples of open-ended questions that Dathan suggested. And so, those open-ended questions that he was saying sort of help the coachee explore and figure things out. And maybe as they're answering the question, what other ideas have you had about that? I know when I answer a question like that, at first time I might say something like, "Well, I don't really have any other ideas." And then, "Well, I have been thinking," and maybe come up with something. And as I'm talking aloud, I'm thinking it through and figuring something out that I might not have gotten to otherwise.

And another way of using the opportunity to ask questions is to wonder together with somebody. So if they present something they're very frustrated with, like, "I keep asking this parent to call me to set up some time so we can have a meeting – have a conference and talk about some questions I have about her child. But, you know what? I'm really frustrated with her because she does not follow through. She never calls back."

So an example of a wondering together kind of question would be, "I wonder what that means. What might make her not follow through when you ask her to call you?" you know. And as you explore that together, you might start with the first assumption. And my first assumption could be she doesn't want to talk to me. But there's other possibilities and we could find them. Perhaps she could be very busy. She could have other children at home. She could be afraid to talk with you. She might have a second job she has to get to.

So there's lots of things that we might discover and want to consider through wondering together. And as we wonder together – you know, we have mentioned a couple of times that coaching is a partnership, and I think that puts you next to each other in a way that shares the power and the decision-making and the direction-setting of the coaching interaction.

Empathizing is another skill and strategy to use. And empathizing is a skill in terms of being able to put aside your frame of reference and try to adopt as much as possible what the other person's perspective might be, how are they seeing the world, what is this feeling like to them, and recognizing and respecting experiences they're having that may be somewhat different from your own. It also can involve accepting the strong feelings that they have because working closely with families and their young children can really bring out some very strong positive feelings as well as some very strong negative and difficult to handle feelings.

So that would be one aspect of empathizing, and another is letting the other person know of your effort to get what it's like for them. Now we don't always get it right, so it's kind of nice to ask or make an empathic statement with enough room so that they can add some additional information if they want to clarify.

So what I mean by that is, "Oh, so that makes you angry?" So you heard the sort of question in my tone of voice and that's a little bit easier to correct. "I wouldn't say it makes me angry, but it does make me wonder if I've just done something wrong." Okay. So that's clarified for me and it would be – it would be harder to do that if I'd said it in a tone of voice as if I were making a pronouncement.

Pointing out the positive is another skill that we can use and can be a powerful relationship-building strategy as well as a powerful capacity-building strategy. So we can point out the positive to a person for just being, for who they are, and we can also point out the positive for their actions, for what they're doing.

So here are some examples for pointing out the positive for being, and this one can be very helpful when you're working with someone that, you know, you may not see a lot of positives in and you're maybe having some challenges in building a connection. But we can always point out the positive to another person for being. So if I were pointing out a positive to all of you who are attending this webinar, I might say, "I'm just so glad you're here. I'm very excited that you joined us." Okay; that's pointing out the positive for being.

I want to point out the positive for doing or for actions. I could say, "You know, I noticed that you're taking notes and that you're really attending carefully, and you'll be able to use that when you're having a discussion later or thinking back on this webinar and what you learned from it." So, that would be pointing out the positive for – for doing.

Okay. So not knowing is the next one we see here. And you might be thinking, "Not knowing does not sound like a skill to me." And, you know, ordinarily probably we would – we want to be able to answer questions when people ask us things. And so, I'm going to tell you how not knowing can actually be helpful in a coaching relationship.

Sometimes people will come to us as coaches and ask a question, and there are times certainly when sharing information is very important. But we may not maybe know the answer. So what would the best place to refer this child and parent for infant mental health services? What if we don't know? It just doesn't happen to be our field and we have to find out?

If we can just say, "No, I don't know but I'm going to look for that information and get back to you," and then follow through, we're showing that it's really okay not to know everything and that people can find things out and get what they need, and that the coachee can trust us as a coach to come through – to follow through when we say we'll do something. So a lot of good messages get shared by not knowing in that instance.

Another example is just holding back a little because I might think I know how to fix something – a situation that someone has presented to me. And my idea might be okay, but it might actually not be the right one or best one in the situation. So if I can hold back a little bit by saying, "Well, I don't know. Tell me what you've tried? What thought do you have about this?" It's not so much that I have no idea what to do, but I don't know what's best here. So that gives the other person the chance to come to some

discoveries of their own, and that also slows me down from popping out with an answer that might not even make sense.

Respecting is part of coaching. And respecting as a coach means many things and some of the ideas I think connect with what Dathan was talking about in terms of consistency. So being consistent, when I thought about that, I was thinking the idea of showing up on time, when expected, following through as you said you would, pursuing the plan that you developed together. And, you know, being reliable and consistent in that way.

Another way of demonstrating respect and a strategy to use is to ask the coachee for their ideas and their input, what their goals are, where they – what they would find most helpful from you as a coach. And collegiality refers to the idea that you can use strategies that will help you jointly create a plan so that you're initiating an agenda that you both think makes sense and make decisions together.

You can establish a collegial partnership relationship by discussing expectations of each other and also identifying any boundaries that might exist. One I can think of that I think is important are – are there any boundaries or limits to privacy and confidentiality in the coaching relationship? There might be. There may be some things you might be required, say, by law to report. And an obvious example of that would be if someone is disclosing that they had harmed their child. Okay. But there are other things that may not be able to be held private, and so you can sort of set those boundaries. "You know, I'm not here to report it back to your supervisor," if you're not the supervisor. "I am here to do..." and outline what that is.

So those are some skills and strategies that help you establish the relationship that creates the safety within which reflection, learning, and growth in terms of skills and competencies can take place. Dathan, I think one of the things that you were going to talk about is looking at a comparison of some of the helping roles or goals that have to do with professional development that are found in the early childhood field.

Dathan: Yes, let's take a look at that. As Nancy and I were preparing for this webinar, one of the things that we were talking about was how often we receive the question, how is coaching different from mentoring? Or how is coaching different from supervision? And so we thought we would put together a slide that you see in front of you that gives you just very basic definitions of each of the three.

So as you can see on the slide and as you heard, coaching is used to build skills and knowledge. And when use coaching as part of our professional development, it's used to help people transfer the learning from the classroom into practice – into their everyday practice activities.

Mentoring is usually done by a more experienced person or staff member to support someone who is new or someone who may have less experience. And that mentoring relationship may take place over time in terms of several months to maybe even a year or years in some situations, whereas coaching tends to be fairly short term. I mean, it can happen over a period of months even, but in general it's short term – and when you compare it to mentoring.

And then supervision, I love – this is Nancy's definition of supervision, which I love: used to support staff to do their best work; to ensure that they have what it is that they need to shine; to provide excellent customer service; to provide excellent and high-quality support to young children and their families.

Now, a mentor and a supervisor can use coaching. So when you're – you have on your mentor or your supervisor hat, you can use coaching as a way to build skills and knowledge and help them to transfer new learning into practice. That – this is how we kind of differentiate from amongst these three.

So what we'd like to do now is to do a little bit of a role play, and Nancy and I have written a role play to provide you as an example of a coaching conversation. And so as we read the role play, we want to give you a job to do. And your job, as you hear us go through this, is to think about and identify the skills and strategies that Nancy talked about. So which of the skills and strategies do you hear as we go through the role play? And when we finish the role play, we're going to put another poll up and we're going to ask you to identify which ones you heard. Alright?

So here we go. Let me give you a little bit of background information for our scenario this afternoon. And the situation is Jerilyn, who's the child, newly enrolled in one of the Early Head Start program's classrooms. And Jerilyn's mother – her name is Sandra – she's been assigned a family support worker, Susan, to assist with the goal setting process. And so Susan and Sandra have had one visit so far, and Susan has been working with a coach as part of her ongoing professional development. So this conversation you're going to hear is between the coach and Susan, who's the teacher. So here we go.

(Coach): "Susan, last time when we met, we were talking about family engagement and especially family partnerships. Since Jerilyn is new, you were planning to talk with her mom about the family goals."

Nancy (Susan): "You know, I'm so glad we were planning to meet today because I did that. And her mom kind of blew me off when I tried to talk with her about it."

Dathan (Coach): "Oh. Well what do you mean when you say she blew you off?"

Nancy (Susan): "Oh, she just didn't want to talk about it."

Dathan (Coach): "Well, I remember that you had a home visit with Sandra before Jerilyn started in the program. How did things go during that visit? When you met with her, what was one of the family goals that you identified?"

Nancy (Susan): "Well, it went okay, I guess."

Dathan (Coach): "Well, during the visit, what did you learn about Sandra's family goals?"

Nancy (Susan): "The main goal was for Sandra to go back to school and get her GED. I had even found three places where she could go to take the GED classes; but they're starting soon, so she needs to get on with it."

Dathan (Coach): "And how did you come to that goal?"

Nancy (Susan): "Well, Sandra said that she wanted to get a job but she didn't finish high school. So I thought the first step would be for her to get her GED and when I got back to my office, that's what I put as the goal on the family plan. I even gave her a copy of the plan to look over, and we were supposed to talk about it when she came to pick up Jerilyn on Monday. That's when she just blew me off, and she – and said she read it but she couldn't talk about it. Then she just sort of turned her back and left. She seemed in kind of a huff."

Dathan (Coach): "Well, thanks for sharing that information. You know, it sounds like you were really listening to the mother about her desire to find a job. And to be helpful, you formulated what you thought was a plan that made sense."

Nancy (Susan): "Well, exactly. But now she acts like she doesn't want to do it."

Dathan (Coach): "Let's think about this for a minute. So you heard her express a need and then you came up with a solution."

Nancy (Susan): "Yeah, that's right."

Dathan (Coach): "So how does that match what we talked about as part of the family engagement training last month?"

Nancy (Susan): "Well, we talked about building partnerships with the parents and working with the parent to identify their interest and strengths and needs in order to develop the plan."

Dathan (Coach): "Right. That was the discussion of the training. So you had a conversation with the mother about wanting to get a job, and then what?"

Nancy (Susan): "Oh, my gosh. Then I developed the plan. I guess I kind of jumped the gun there a little bit. Maybe getting her GED was really more my priority than hers. But I know that she needs to complete her GED before she can start a job training program."

Dathan (Coach): "Well, that makes sense. So what conversation did you have with her about that?"

Nancy (Susan): "Right. None, really. Now that I think about it more, I could have learned more from her. I felt like it was so obvious that she should go to school, but I could have talked more with her about her strengths and her interests and then asked her more specifically about her goal and what step she thought might be needed to get there. I remember now. We practiced having a conversation like this as part of the training. You know, it's a lot tougher in real life."

Dathan (Coach): "I absolutely understand that. You know, that's one of the reasons we agreed for me to serve as your coach, to help you to apply what we learned at the training. So, how do you think what you have just reflected on relates back to her blowing you off?"

Nancy (Susan): "Okay. I developed the plan. It was my plan and not hers. Maybe she had other ideas and maybe I assumed way too much."

Dathan (Coach): "Could be your desire to be helpful. Maybe it just got in the way a little. How can you use that wish to be helpful in a way that keeps Sandra in charge of planning how to reach her goals?"

Nancy (Susan): "Maybe I should ask her for a few minutes next time she's at the center. I can meet with her and let her know that I'd like to back up a bit and find out some more about her interest in getting a job. I'll ask her if that's still her priority, and if it is, then I'll ask her if we can start over and talk about all the options so that I can learn from her what makes sense and how I can support her goals and plans. And then if I want to offer a suggestion, I'll ask her if she'd like me to do that."

Dathan (Coach): "So when will you have this conversation with her?"

Nancy (Susan): "I'm going to talk to her at pick-up today. Maybe we can plan to meet early next week."

Dathan (Coach): "Alright. So then what should – what should the plan be for our next meeting?"

Nancy (Susan): "Well, I'd like to fill you in on how that goes with Sandra and then I would like to look over some of the other family partnership agreements that I've developed to see if they are my plans or truly the family's plans."

Dathan (Coach): "Sounds great. I'm going to look forward to talking with you about that."

Nancy (Susan): "Okay. Thank you."

Dathan (Coach): "You're welcome."

Okay, so that's the role play. Now take one last look here at the coaching skills and strategies; should be those posted. And now we're ready to post the poll, Kelly. And so what we would like for you to answer is which of the following coaching skills and strategies did you hear in the role play? And we'd like for you to choose one of the answers below. Is it active listening or asking questions or respecting, or did you hear all of the above or did you hear none of the above?

How would you respond to that question? Which of the following coaching skills and strategies did you hear in the role play? So take a minute. If you want to talk it over with some of the other people who are sitting there nearby you if you're in a small group, go ahead and do that, and then quickly post your response to this poll. Active listening? Asking questions? Respecting? All of the above? Or none of the above? Nancy, while we're waiting for the poll results, I just wanted to reiterate how critical those skills and strategies are.

Nancy: It's kind of interesting when you look at them in that they can really reinforce and support each other as well so that using questions can help in building empathy, for example. So I think we have some responses here. And most people that responded thought that it was all of the above, and I think that makes sense. There may even have been a couple of skills and strategies in addition to those. So as you talk and – and then there were some people who thought that none of the above were used. And I don't know if you chose that if you thought that perhaps some other skills were used from – from the list that we put forward as well from the prior discussion.

So it's interesting to think about how those of us who are participating the webinar, how do we use these skills in relationship-building and coaching roles, as well in other roles? What we ourselves feel most comfortable with and use most readily, and perhaps those skills that we might like to practice and learn more about. I wondered if at this point, now that we have been able to see the response to the poll, if there are any questions that anyone has written in or has right now that they would like us to respond to.

Linda: Alright, we do have a couple of questions that have come in. And I want to remind our audience to make sure that if you have a question, that you go the leaders and assistance chat area and put your questions in so that we can see them so that our presenters can answer them. So, one of the questions

that came in is that, "You all discussed that supervisors can also be coaches. I'm not actually sure how this can be done? Can you provide an example or guidance?"

Dathan: Sure. I'll start then, Nancy.

Nancy: Yes, I was just going to suggest that you start. Go ahead.

Dathan: Okay. So one way – so if – I'll just go back to one of the examples that I provided. So if a staff person comes to you and says, you know, "What is our procedure about hand washing? I talked to some of the other colleagues and they – they do it differently with the children than what – what I've been doing." Then as a supervisor, I have options there.

One option, if I just stay purely in a supervisor role, many supervisors would say, "Our policy is this. This is how you go about doing it and this is what you need to do." And – but they would do it in a nice a way, certainly. Now if we want to take a step back from that and use more of a coaching approach, I might say as a supervisor, "Tell me how you're doing it now. Describe for me." Or, "Would you like to just – why don't I just go into your classroom and you show me how it is that you go about that?"

And so then they'll tell me, and then I'll say, "How is does that match what it is that you've heard is the way to do it?" because I want to find out what other information is out there. I need to know what she already knows, because if she's correct in the way that she's doing it, then I want to support her knowledge and acknowledge and affirm that she has – has it. I'm going to let her know that. If it's not matching our policy or our procedures, then I'm going to share what the policy is, show it to her if it all possible in that moment what the policy is, and then help her analyze how her procedure was different than the current procedure.

It takes a little bit longer. But if we're looking out for the future, so then she's identifying the resource that we go to, which is the policy and procedure manual, she's thinking about how she's doing it, she's seeing if it's correct in matching the policy or not, we're much further down the road than if I just told her. Nancy, what would you add?

Nancy: I think that was a great example, and I think – my thought about it is this is a supervisor using a coaching approach to respond to a question or concern. So it may not be someone who has taken on the role of only being a coach to that person. You still are the person in charge and the person responsible for the quality of the work and performance and all of those things that supervisors carry. And sometimes I think that the work of a reflective supervisor can be very similar to the goal of approach. So I think that when you're choosing a coaching strategy or a mentoring strategy, you're picking those for particular purposes. And you can do that in your role as a supervisor.

Linda: Thank you, Nancy and Dathan, those were great questions. We have another one from the audience. "Other than when dictated by funding, what are some indicators in determining when to end a coaching relationship?"

Nancy: That's such a great question. I – and I don't have any definitive answer for it. But I think that before you start coaching, you want to think about how will I know when it's time to end? And you're – you know, sometimes you're right. Someone will dictate to you, this can be a three-month intervention or a one-year intervention that you can provide or...

But supposing it's more open-ended than that and you can design it, how would you know that it was time to end? I like Dathan's emphasis on we're coaching to build competence and capacity. And so, what would be your indicators that the person you were coaching had built sufficient capacity that they were ready to move forward on their own? And I would start kind of identifying when I see and I, you know, look for specific things – A, B, and C – then it's time to start looking at ending this relationship.

And of course, you can make a plan to end fairly quickly or you can make a plan to start decreasing how often you meet and end gradually. So there are some choices there. I don't if that got what was behind the question but that was something that kind of came to me when I heard it. Dathan, did you have anything else?

Dathan: I would absolutely agree with you. And whenever we could start or initiate a coaching relationship, we would do it in terms – by finding out what is that goal? What is the end outcome that we want to have based on our coaching relationship? And how will we know when we're there? Typically – that's typically a question that I ask when I initiate a coaching relationship. And then, we're constantly monitoring that as we move through. And by having a joint plan at the end of each conversation, then that helps us kind of monitor and mark where we are on the road to getting to that end outcome.

Linda: Thank you both. Those are very thoughtful answers. So I'm going to kind of combine three questions in this next one, but they're all around kind of coaching in a situation where staff might be a bit resistant. So kind of like – either staff that just only comments with one word, they're not really part of that partnership that you've talked about, or there's a conflict between the coach and the – and the person they're coaching. And sometimes that could be – even as this – if the supervisor's the coach. So there's several questions around, you know, resistant staff and how you might handle that. And I'm sure you all have had experiences with that.

Nancy: Dathan, would you like to start us off?

Dathan: Sure.

Linda: [Inaudible]

Dathan: Yes, absolutely. I've experienced that. A couple of thoughts that came to my mind as I was hearing that – the question: 1) in terms of coaching somebody who provides limited responses, one check that I always want to do, it goes back to one of Nancy's strategies that she talked to us about, and that was make sure I'm using an open-ended question. Because if I'm asking yes or no questions but I don't realize it, then I'm opening the door and I'm inviting brief responses. So I'm going to make sure that I ask open-ended questions.

The other thing that came to my mind is the fact that we can't coach someone who doesn't want to be coached. And – because it's absolutely a relationship and it's a two-way street. And so if we're really to that point in the – under the circumstances where we have the resistance, one is I'm going to try to build the relationship and open the door. I'm going to do everything I possibly can. If it's – I'm the person's supervisor and maybe we have this relationship based on supervision, then maybe coaching isn't a tool of a strategy that I could use in that circumstance. Nancy, what are your thoughts?

Nancy: Those ideas all make – totally make sense. They're very helpful. And I was thinking about what you might – what I might do as the coach when – in an effort to establish a relationship but there seems to be a stumbling block to begin with. You know – because I think the idea I always have in my head is I walk in and, of course, everyone will be very happy to see me and ready to get going. That's not always the way.

People might be resentful or afraid, or you know, wonder why they got picked out to get the coach. They may not be excited about it. So there are people who have backgrounds that make them very slow to trust and to be able to open up and talk about their experiences, especially if that involves something they feel vulnerable about. So, you know, if – hopefully there's some time to do some relationship building, getting to know each other, and then see if we can move forward. So that would be – you know, that could turn into a long discourse.

So I'll sort of stop at that point; but the other – the other thing I was thinking about is using the skill of empathy and just seeing if it's possible to open up a discussion about what is this like for you for us to be here together for coaching, you know? What can you tell me? What thoughts do you have about me being here? I know some people feel uncomfortable and, actually, it's okay with me if you tell me that.

And so, using some open communication kinds of encouragements. Sometimes those things are affected. I'm not going to say you can – every person can connect – every coach can connect with every coachee. It's not always going to work. If there are some existing conflicts or conflicts come up that despite all your use of have these interpersonal skills don't seem think to be working out, I think it's okay to ask if they'd like your help in finding someone else that they could work with, and that you'd be glad to do that because you want them to have an effective coaching experience.

And I think you can ask – well, you're asking us for our thoughts on it. And if you have access to someone you yourself can go to and describe what's going on and get some feedback and help in thinking it through, that can be tremendously worthwhile.

Linda: Thanks, Nancy and Dathan. That was good. I'm going to ask – we have like one minute left and we still have quite a few questions, but we'll end up putting those – we'll have those answered later on. But I thought it might be really helpful just to say – there's a question around, do coaches need specific training? So I thought that might be one that we could answer pretty concretely.

Nancy: Well, I think – I – actually, I don't know because I think specific training is extremely useful and it helps put a framework and a purposefulness and a focus into the work. And I think many people have developed coaching skills in the course of their work and the training in itself might serve to put a framework around what they're doing; you know? Then there are questions about requirements in different states and in different programs, and, you know, there's a lot of directions we could go responding to that question. But the bottom line is I think that training – specific training is very, very helpful.

Dathan: I – I would absolutely agree. And being a – becoming a good coach requires practice. It really takes practice to get it down and to be good at using the characteristics and exemplifying all of the skills and strategies.

Nancy: I agree. Okay...

Linda: Did you have something else, Nancy? I'm sorry.

Nancy: No, I was just going to say it looks like we're at the end of our time and I know that you were going to close things up.

Linda: I am, and I'm going to thank everybody for participating. This is the end of our session. We appreciate you all joining us today and we'll see you soon, I hope.