The Coaching Conversation: Elements of a Coaching Model

Establish Focus

• The goal is to establish the topic of the coaching conversation. Creating a collaborative tone to the conversation and having a known goal for the end of the conversation.

• Important skills in this phase are: listening to the important issue, clarifying with the coachee to refine the focus, asking open ended questions, paraphrasing and empathy to establish tone and common understanding, summarizing the information received from the coachee, keeping the conversation future-focused, seeking agreement on what the focus will be for the discussion.

Exploration

• The goal is to explore the coachee’s perspective, needs, values and beliefs. Exploring leads to a deeper understanding for the coachee. It is important for the coach to maintain an attitude of curiosity rather than judgement when exploring.

• Important Skills in this phase are: listening actively, continuing to check for understanding, asking open ended questions, acknowledging feelings, exploring the coachee’s current perspective and alternate perspectives.

Action Planning

• The goal is to decide on a goal or course of action.

• Important skills in this phase are: maintaining focus on the outcome rather than the issue, asking open ended questions, breaking a big goal into smaller chunks, identifying barriers and ideas to overcome them, keeping the conversation specific rather than vague.

Closing

• The goal is to have a review of learning in the session, establish accountability and re-emphasize your support.

• Important skills in this phase are: summarizing the session, asking open ended questions, establishing specific accountability of coachee (what will be done and when it will be done by), acknowledgement, committing to anything you will do as the coach/manager (in service of the coachee’s goal).