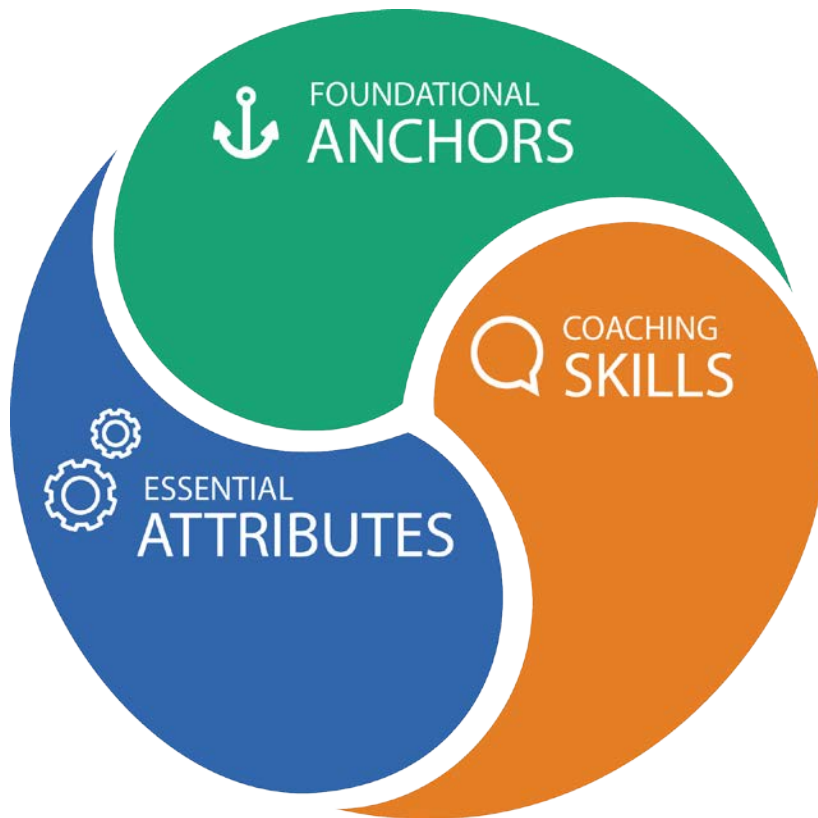


Butler Institute for Families

Coaching Approach



COACHING Approach

The Butler Institute for Families believes a skilled and competent workforce is crucial to achieving its vision of *Strong Systems, Strong Communities, Strong Families*.

Coaching is no longer a luxury but an essential component of successful change implementation. Butler offers a systematic approach to support a competent and skilled workforce.

Why Coaching?

Coaching has emerged as a crucial aspect to support this vision. When an individual or organization considers shifting their practice, in reality they are asking for a shift in staff behavior. Training is often the first avenue considered to support a shift. According to research, a “training-only approach” indicates that at most 25% of learners will transfer the new skills into practice. However, when coaching is added as an element the transfer of a new skill jumps to 90%.¹ Recently, studies have begun to show that successfully implemented staff and leadership development programs, like coaching, can improve employee retention, productivity, and communication.² Furthermore, implementation science captures the importance of coaching by elevating it to one of the three competency drivers necessary for improved implementation outcomes.

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) states the rationale for coaching:

- **Newly learned behaviors are crude.** Training is designed to introduce learners to a set of new skills. Coaching is designed to help learners unpack the nuances of those new skills and apply them effectively to various situations.
- **Newly learned behaviors are fragile.** When practice shifts are made, they can affect whole systems that may react unfavorably. Coaching supports the learner in sifting through this “noise” to identify effective change mechanisms within the service population and the system itself.
- **Newly learned behaviors are incomplete.** As good as trainings are, there are limitations in the applicability of those early skills because of time and environment. Coaching reinforces learners to apply new skills in “real-life” situations and deepen their understanding of the elements required for sustained change.

Definition

Butler Institute for Families believes coaching is an ongoing client-driven process, centered on solution-oriented interactions designed to increase awareness, build capacity, and achieve desired growth.

¹ From the Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Information Center (ACCWIC) at the University of Maryland

² The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Coaching in Organizations (2015)

Foundational Beliefs

To achieve this goal, Butler relies on the following anchors to guide our coaching practice:

- **Partnerships should be interactive.** In any successful coaching endeavor, there is an environment of mutual trust and equality that allows each player to bring their unique gifts to the table in an effort to move toward the desired outcomes. Each participant has something valuable to contribute, and the combination of various viewpoints, skills, and roles creates the strongest solution.
- **All people, groups, and organizations are creative and resourceful.** For lasting change to occur, the ideas and concepts must come from within the individual or organization that desires transformation. Individuals and organizations are capable of knowing what they need and how to get there. They know what works for them and what doesn't. They have had years of being successful through many different experiences. The creativity and dedication of individuals and teams within an organization are the drivers for healthy and sustained change.
- **Positive intent should always be assumed.** Understanding people's actions and words through a lens of positive intent is crucial for a successful coaching process. We believe that people make the best decision they can at any given moment.
- **Growth and change take time.** Growth takes time and effort. When an individual or organization starts on the path of transformative change, they can expect successes, bumps, and regrouping to occur. This journey is all part of the process toward enduring growth and change.
- **Everyone has a story.** To support organizations and individuals in pushing their thinking envelope, we seek to understand their unique perspective of how they negotiate the world. An individual's cultural lens influences how they see and react to situations. Coaches explore these distinctive viewpoints to support the creation of unique solutions that are more likely to survive within a complex organizational environment.

Essential Attributes

Coaching is about being present *with* the person and *for* the person. Hence, the coach needs to have innate characteristics to nurture this unique environment. Central to Butler's coaching approach are the following coaching attributes we consider essential:

- **Humility.** From a coaching perspective, humility is understanding that we are part of a greater whole and that each of us has a role to play toward achieving desired goals and states of being. Humility allows the coach to hold space for listening, learning, and joining with others. It is important for every coach to understand that their view may not be the "right" view or the only view and to coach from a place of understanding.

- **Curiosity.** Without curiosity, ideas and solutions may pass by without notice. Curiosity leads to inquiry and engages one's mind to create fertile ground for anticipating and recognizing new ideas and possibilities.
- **Unconditional positive regard.** Basic acceptance and validation of each person's unique and genuine expression of humanity is a foundational requirement for understanding and meeting that person's needs within a change effort. A coach needs to start from that place of understanding in order to develop a partnership that serves the individual and the organization.

Concrete Skills

Lastly, Butler's coaching approach utilizes three basic skills that act as cornerstones to support an organization's or individual's move toward desired growth:

- **Listening to understand.** An effective coach practices listening to understand versus listening to respond. Purposeful listening widens the path of possibilities and opens the doors to strategic solutions that emerge from our shared understanding. Understanding comes through remaining curious about the actions and interactions with which we witness and engage.
- **Asking powerful questions.** Questions are the coach's most powerful tools. The information obtained is directly related to the strength and poignancy of the questions asked. A skillfully worded question can remove barriers and deepen or clarify the level of understanding within the coaching partnership. Asking powerful questions moves individuals and organizations toward their desired goals.
- **Appreciating the best of WHAT IS and WHAT COULD BE.** Individuals and organizations stay strong by focusing on what is already working well. Coaching offers the opportunity to appreciate the good and what has already been accomplished while exploring more ways to achieve success. By appreciating the best of what already exists, coaching helps strengthen the capacity to achieve goals and improve outcomes.