What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching?
A Heuristic Inquiry

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For Sheil. My inspiration

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ABSTRACT

There has been a surge of interest in team coaching in the last fifteen years with dyadic coaches adapting their approaches to meet this demand and an ever-increasing array of team coaching courses and accreditations on offer. A review of the salient literature highlights that understanding of the process of team coaching, based on the first-person perspective of team coaches, is lacking and is needed to provide this perspective on this emerging practice. A qualitative study was conducted with ten highly experienced and qualified coaches using heuristic inquiry methodology, featuring in-depth interviews and reflective logs. Heuristic inquiry methodology was enhanced by the inclusion of three focus groups, spaced over an eleven-month period, enabling shared learning, expanded thinking and knowledge development amongst the co-researchers.

Team coaching emerges as a process that comprises three distinct stages: preparation, intervention and evaluation, with particular importance placed on giving time and attention to the preparation phase. There is some universality of experience relating to the structural elements of team coaching that are present in all types, genres and approaches to team coaching. However, there is also significant divergence resulting in different approaches in how team coaching is delivered.

The role of a team coach is a complex one. It necessitates effective use of coaching skills but also the ability to effectively perform and move in, and out, of other roles. In addition, there are also a number of roles that the team coach may be inadvertently drawn into. Coaches experience team coaching as more challenging than dyadic coaching and undergo more extreme emotions, the highs are higher and the lows lower. These demands highlight important considerations regarding self-care, reflective practice and supervision.

The study's findings shed light on the emergent practice of team coaching and, in particular, provide the missing voice of the team coach. From a knowledge perspective a number of the findings challenge concepts in the existing literature, including perspectives on the timing of interventions, readiness on the part of team members and the role of team coach. Other findings add to existing knowledge by contributing empirical insight as well as opening up new areas for debate. In addition, the findings have considerable potential to inform practice, and the coaching profession, by providing insight and a practical resource in the form of the PiE Team Coaching Framework which details universal elements, as well as typical variations, for team coaches to consider in their practice.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Team coaching as a distinct form of coaching has received increased attention in the last 15 years with a growing number of organisations seeking team coaching. Practising dyadic coaches are adapting their approaches to meet this emergent demand and the array of team coaching courses and accreditations is increasing (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2017). Commensurate with this rise in interest has been a growth in team coaching publications (Clutterbuck, 2007; Hawkins, 2011; Thornton, 2010; Leary-Joyce and Lines, 2017; Clutterbuck, Gannon et al, 2019) informed by espoused theory and practitioners conceptualising their practice. There is a consensus that working with teams is much more complex than working with individuals (Brown and Grant, 2010; Edmondson, 1999; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Kets de Vries, 2011; Thornton, 2010). Teams are complex adaptive systems with each team member able to adapt their behaviour according to their own goals, desires, personal characteristics and prejudices stemming from their personal histories (Cavanagh and Lane, 2012). Despite this rise in interest in team coaching Brown and Grant (2010) and Hawkins (2014) argue the research base for coaching has continued to focus primarily on dyadic coaching. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) concur citing a distinct paucity of theory driven models of practising team coaching and almost no empirical evidence as to the efficacy of these approaches.

As a practising dyadic coach for more than 20 years I have witnessed the emergence of team coaching prior to gradually introducing this as part of my professional practice. In this chapter I will explain my increasing interest and involvement in team coaching, the gaps in knowledge about team coaching as a process, how I arrived at my research question and objectives and conclude with an overview of my research design and methodology.

1.1 From a seed of curiosity to a field of study

My first encounter with team coaching, as a discrete and emergent member of the coaching family, was in 2005. I was undertaking a coaching diploma and one of the workshops was on team coaching. Most of the workshop centred on a team performance model, looking at energy flow and positive and negative team behaviours, in a quest to become a high-performing team. We explored how this model could be used to coach a team using our freshly-honed coaching skills and behaviours. I recall being interested, enjoying the session and also wondering whether this process was really different to team development or facilitation.

Over the following years I continued to add to my knowledge of dyadic coaching, completing my MA in Coaching and Mentoring in 2007 and my Coaching Supervision Diploma in 2011. I maintained an interest in team coaching, attending the occasional CPD session or workshop, as well as working with organisational teams. In hindsight, I did a very good job of sitting on the fence whilst working with teams - straddling coaching and development, by referring to such sessions as “team coaching and development”.

After one such intervention I spent some time reflecting on the experience and how a coaching approach now percolated most aspects of my work, including how I worked with teams, contracted with them and provided support and challenge through listening, questioning and working with my intuition. I was aware that how I was working with teams was very different to how I had worked with teams ten years previously. I started to be curious about how my work with teams was evolving and whether this constituted team coaching.

A strong pattern in my professional development has been to underpin my practice with knowledge, which led me to enrol on a team coaching programme. The programme was designed as a blend of team coaching and team coaching supervision. The attendees were all experienced coaches and supervisors with varying levels of experience and knowledge of team coaching. What became apparent from the outset was that there was no shared understanding or conceptualisation of team coaching. We explored a number of team coaching models but, whilst some elements of these models resonated with us, we all felt that they were too theoretical, too linear and did not capture the messiness of the team coaching that we experienced as practitioners. Even those who had trained as team coaches using a particular methodology were quick to point out that they did not necessarily always follow that methodology. I left the programme with more knowledge about team coaching, as well as a number of remaining and additional questions.

I continued to explore team coaching through reading and attending workshops as well as working with teams - now calling these interventions “team coaching”. At the end of 2016 I was asked to deliver a session on team coaching at a conference which forced me to commit my current thinking on the subject into a presentation. The level of energy during the session, number of questions and follow-ups afterwards underscored for me the level of interest in team coaching as well as a continuing lack of understanding as to what exactly it was.

Having decided to take my professional development to the next level and undertake a Professional Doctorate, team coaching was an obvious choice for my field of study. I had become genuinely curious as to what the experience of team coaching was and how this was different to other team interventions. The word “experience” was important to me as I wanted to go beyond proposing a model or framework to be used and look at the “*process or fact of personally observing, encountering or undergoing something*” (Oxford English Dictionary). In addition, having been involved in some exchanging of ideas, I was keen to take these discussions to a deeper level with other team coaches. I was motivated by the opportunity to add to the emergent knowledge on team coaching. Equally, I recognised that I was not setting out as a blank canvas. I had some knowledge and opinions already and I would need to be extremely mindful of these as I undertook my research. Crystallising my exact research question emerged through reading the literature, self-reflection and discussion with supervisors, course colleagues and practising team coaches.

1.2 Key concepts – group or team coaching

Even the most cursory review of the literature reveals diverging opinions on team and group coaching. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017 p. 487) summarise the current predicament: "*The literature on group and team coaching is bedevilled by a foundational lack of clarity*". They argue that authors who attempt to publish in this area seek to reduce this lack of clarity and do so by providing specific definitions of what is a "team" and what is a "group" and how this difference has implications for coaching. I concur with O'Connor and Cavanagh, that the groups versus teams debate is one area that has been covered in some detail in the literature (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Hawkins, 2011; Peters and Carr, 2013) and from the outset I did not feel a need to add to this debate. However, as I decided to research "team coaching" rather than "team and group coaching", it is worth noting the distinction I am making between the two. "Team coaching" has historically been described in the literature as engagements with intact teams in which members work together and share responsibilities for the output of the team (Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Thornton, 2010; Hawkins, 2011). By contrast, "group coaching" is generally regarded as a small number of people who meet together on several occasions for the purpose of learning through exchange and interaction with one another (Thornton, 2010). More recently, this distinction has been challenged as too restrictive as it excludes interventions, such as coaching a group of leaders who all have a shared goal, for example, improving their leadership style and seeking opportunities for behaviour coaching in a group (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2017). Clutterbuck et al (2019) continue this debate by arguing that one of the applications for team coaching is to help a group of people who lack defining collective characteristics of a team, such as shared purpose and priorities, to become a team. In setting out to study team coaching I anticipated that I would mainly be focussing on intact organisational teams. However, I was open to discussion with participants on how these different definitions affect their practice.

1.3 Gaps in knowledge and purpose of the research

A review of the literature highlighted a plethora of conceptualisations of team coaching including arguments that its primary purpose is "developmental", "relational", "systemic" or focussing on "performance". Jones et al (2019) identify 15 definitions of team coaching and six dimensions on which these definitions diverge. The earliest, and often cited conceptualisation, is that of Hackman and Wageman (2005) who outlined an approach to team coaching, which was further developed by Wageman et al (2008). This approach is explicitly developmental, focussing on where the team is in its developmental journey and designing an intervention accordingly:

> *A direct interaction with a team intended to help members make co-ordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work* (Wageman et al. 2009 p. 269).

Notably, Wageman et al (2008) advise team coaches not to address personal relationships explicitly arguing that, whilst such interventions may be enjoyable, they are not likely to lead to improvements in performance.

Clutterbuck (2007 p. 77) assumes a different standpoint with his definition of team coaching:

> *Helping the team to improve performance, and the processes by which performance is achieved, through reflection and dialogue*.

Here, whilst agreeing with Hackman and Wageman (2005) that team coaching is about "helping", Clutterbuck (2007) stresses that this helping goes beyond what the team achieves and also encompasses how it goes about this, including the team's processes and the use of reflection and dialogue. Clutterbuck also refers to the work of Senge (1999), connecting team coaching to organisational learning. Team learning, he argues is a key ingredient of an organisational learning agenda and a major focus of team coaching is to help teams and thereby organisations to learn and become more effective. This focus on learning is made more explicit in Clutterbuck's (2013a p. 271) later definition of team coaching:

> *A learning intervention designed to increase collective capability and performance of a group or team, through application of the coaching principles of assisted reflection, analysis and motivation for change.*

By contrast Thornton (2010 p. 120) espouses a psychodynamic approach to team coaching, recognising that the team is made up of individuals who need to collaborate together to achieve performance, with the central role of the coach being to manage relationships:

> *Team coaching is coaching a team to achieve a common goal, paying attention to both individual performance and to group collaboration and performance.*

Thornton's (2010) approach is therefore relational but also systemic with Thornton arguing that it is "*at our peril*" if we ignore the system within which our client team operates. However, Thornton advocates caution, arguing that a team coach should only call out the functioning of relationships between members if this is likely to prove meaningful and relevant to team members.

Hawkins' (2014) definition of team coaching can be seen to have links with both Clutterbuck (2013) and Thornton (2010). He similarly espouses that the team coach needs to pay attention to the emotional work of the team and, like Clutterbuck, he regards the team as a learning system. However, whilst Thornton (2010) advocates a systemic perspective, Hawkins' (2014 p. 107) approach is explicitly systemic, not merely looking at the relationships between team members but also with other teams:

> *Systemic team coaching is a process by which a team coach works with a whole team, both when they are together and when they are apart, in order to help them improve both their collective performance and how they work together, and also how they develop their collective leadership to more effectively engage with all their key stakeholder groups to jointly transform the wider business*.

Hawkins (2014) argues that team coaching is a distinct discipline, defining a whole gamut of team interventions including team facilitation, team development, team process consultancy, team building and team coaching. Hawkins (2014) proposes a continuum of team interventions ranging from team facilitation at one end to transformational leadership team coaching at the other.

However, whilst there may not be real clarity in terms of what team coaching is and is not, the question remains as to whether the experience of team coaching is substantially different to other group or team interventions. Whilst Hawkins (2014) argues that it is, others take a more nuanced approach. Brown and Grant (2010 p. 36) argue that there is "*conceptual confusion*" as to how team coaching is distinctive from other team-based interventions positing that, whilst Hawkins (2014) regards process consultation as a distinct group intervention, Hackman and Wageman (2005) position process consultancy explicitly as an approach to team coaching. As another example of a "*conceptual confusion*" Brown and Grant (2010) cite Clutterbuck's (2007) attempt to draw a clear distinction between the role of a team facilitator and team coach. Brown and Grant (2010 p. 37) argue that, whilst Clutterbuck provides some "*important clarity about these concepts"*, his conclusion that there is some overlap between the two and that, from time to time, both the coach and facilitator may move from one role to the other as required then serves to blur the boundaries again. Lawrence and Whyte (2017) add to this confusion by citing Stewart's (2006) research on competencies for facilitators where she outlines different perspectives on facilitation before concluding that:

> *All describe the role of facilitator as responsible for helping the group increase its effectiveness by improving its process and neutral in the content of the group's decisions and solutions* (Stewart 2006, p. 420).

Lawrence and Whyte (2017) argue that this definition of facilitation is similar to some of the definitions of team coaching, in particular those of Hackman and Wageman (2005) and Clutterbuck (2007), and for this reason it may not be surprising that the terms coaching and facilitation are used interchangeably in the literature.

A key question emerging from this "*conceptual muddle*" (Brown and Grant, 2010, p. 37) is whether team coaching is really just an example of the emperor's new clothes with pre-existing team interventions being repackaged as "team coaching" and team coaching positioned as the new coaching offering for practising coaches and a new developmental fad for organisations.

Whilst the conceptual confusion has been highlighted and explored in terms of definitions, the literature has largely fallen short of describing what is the actual experience of taking part in team coaching, in particular from the perspective of the team coach. A number of team coaching models have been developed (Clutterbuck, 2007; Brown and Grant, 2010; Hawkins, 2014; Carr and Peters 2011) and practitioners have contributed to the team coaching literature by providing case studies (Clutterbuck, 2007; Woodhead, 2011; Carr and Peters, 2011 and Dassen, 2015). However, there is a paucity of evidence of how these models have been used and experienced in practice and of the team coaching process: what happens between the coach and the team, the specific coaching activities that take place and how these are similar/different to other team interventions, for example team development and team facilitation, and one-to-one coaching. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) comment that knowing more about the specificity of the coaching processes and activities would help considerably with replication and interpretation for practice.

To date these conceptualisations are opinion-based with practitioners and thought-leaders in the field of coaching trying to conceptualise their own practice. This sense of evolution is underlined further by the fact that two of the most influential proponents of team coaching have markedly changed their definitions of it in the past decade (Clutterbuck, 2007, 2013; Hawkins and Smith, 2006, Hawkins, 2014). This developing understanding would appear to support Hawkins' (2014) assertion that team coaching is 30 years behind dyadic coaching in terms of common definitions, research and established training programmes or accreditation and that the discipline is "*still on the nursery slopes*" in terms of developing an extensive research base (p. 239).

In such muddled and emergent territory I took a stance of curiosity, adopting no hypothesis or expectation about what I would discover. As I reviewed the literature, I became aware that the experience of team coaching was invariably presented through theoretical models by a few leading voices in the field or from the perspective of team members in case studies. The team coaching experience from the perspective of practising team coaches was largely absent and I believed this missing component was important to present a more complete picture of the process.

I formulated a simple research question: What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching? I deliberately chose the word "essential" as I wanted to uncover the aspects of team coaching that were deemed absolutely necessary or indispensable, pertaining to the essence of team coaching, elements which did not have the same level of importance in other team interventions. Uncovering these essential elements would, I believed, both add to the understanding of what team coaching is as well as how these elements are created and experienced by team coaches.

I set four objectives designed to inform my overall question. They were:

1. To review the literature on team coaching to critically evaluate the state of knowledge in relation to team coaching.
2. To explore personal experiences of team coaching with team coaching practitioners.
3. To acquire a deeper understanding of the essential elements of team coaching.
4. To elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching and contribute to practice by developing a comprehensive framework of team coaching.

1.4 Research design and methodology

As a researcher my philosophical assumptions are in line with social constructionism focussing upon the development of meaning and knowledge through social engagement, interaction and interpretation. Social constructionism suggests that there are "knowledges" rather than "knowledge" and that the same phenomenon or event can be described in different ways, giving rise to different ways of perceiving and understanding it, none of which are necessarily right or wrong (Willig, 2007).

From the outset, the purpose of my research was to explore the experience of team coaching from the perspective of team coaches. Such an inquiry would encompass what is important when we team coach and what do we understand we are doing when we engage in team coaching? The subjective nature of experiences and perceptions suggests a phenomenological approach and I adopted a heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) methodology for the study. Heuristic inquiry is particularly appropriate due to its search to discover the nature and meaning of lived experience, in this case of team coaching (Sultan, 2019). Heuristic inquiry benefits from the researcher being present throughout the process and being conscious of personal thoughts, actions, feelings and behaviour, during and post practice (Bachkirova, 2016). Additionally, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge, including comparing their experience with that of others (Bachkirova, 2016). In adopting this position, I was aware that I would be bringing my own personal and cultural perspective to bear on my research project and of the need to explicitly clarify the perspective from which I approach my material as well as being concerned about personal and epistemological reflexivity (Willig, 2007).

In addition to the personal knowledge of the phenomenon, intense interest in studying it and involvement in the research of the principal researcher, heuristic inquiry is also distinguished from other phenomenological approaches, by the selection of co-researchers who can engage in collaborative inquiry (Patton, 2015). In this study, the knowledge created comes from the combined experiences of me as the primary researcher, with ten other team coaches sharing the exploration as co-researchers. Co-researchers were selected using purposive sampling (Robson, 2011) using professional coaching networks (including the European Coaching and Mentoring Council, Association for Coaching and the Coaching Supervision Academy), coaching forums and LinkedIn groups and the snowball sampling approach (Bryman, 2004 p.184).

The study commenced with an orientation focus group in March 2019 which was used to share perceptions of team coaching and agree on the subsequent reflective review process. The latter included how reflections would be captured, how frequently and how these would be shared with the principal researcher. All researchers then maintained reflective logs over a period of six months, emailing their reflections to me.

I conducted interviews with my ten co-researchers. These took the form of "*informal conversational interviews*" (Patton, 2015, p.437-438) as recommended by Moustakas (1990, p.47) as the most appropriate for heuristic inquiry. During the course of these interviews we also explored insights and themes emerging from the co-researchers' reflective logs.

The recordings from the orientation focus group and interviews were transcribed by a third party after which I undertook thematic analysis of these, together with the emailed reflections, searching for patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). The heuristic approach acknowledges that patterns and themes will evolve and that it is necessary to group and re-group the data in order to experience complete immersion. Having developed a composite depiction of the common qualities and themes that embraced the experience of the researchers, I then shared these themes at a second creative synthesis focus group. This focus group served two purposes. Firstly, to validate the findings and, through discussion, gain a deeper and richer understanding of the essential elements of team coaching. Secondly, to co-create a "creative synthesis" (Moustakas, 1990) of team coaching to inform my subsequent development of a comprehensive framework of team coaching.

Following the creative synthesis focus group, I created a draft framework of team coaching which I then shared this with my co-researchers at a third "validation" focus group. The purpose of this focus group was, through discussion, to refine the framework by amending any of the content and adding any missing components.

The development of a comprehensive team coaching framework was the fourth, and final, objective of my study. This is a comprehensive document spanning several pages and, having reached this stage, I decided to create my own personal “creative synthesis” of this framework (which is a feature of the heuristic inquiry methodology), bringing together all of the elements that had emerged into a total experience, showing patterns and relationships. The resulting PiE Team Coaching Model is both a “creative synthesis” and has also evolved into a team coaching model. Creating a team coaching model was therefore a by-product of my study and not my intention at the outset. It does, however, provide additional valuable insight into the process of team coaching and a practical resource for the coaching profession and is therefore included in the thesis.

1.5 Thesis plan

This section sets out the structure of the thesis and provides a brief overview of each chapter.

Chapter Two discusses the literature that is pertinent to this study, acknowledging the contribution of “thought leaders” alongside the emergence of empirical research.

Chapter Three examines the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis. In keeping with the style of heuristic inquiry it is written in the first person.

Chapters Four, Five and Six explore the three integrated themes to emerge from the analysis. Chapter Four considers the “Preparation” phase of team coaching and reflects on the activities undertaken in this phase by the team coach. **Chapter Five** introduces the metaphor of a “Murmuration” examining the complexity of roles, skills, behaviour and knowledge drawn upon by the team coach during team coaching and the necessity of switching seamlessly between these. **Chapter Six** provides an “Evaluation” of the demands of team coaching on team coaches including reflections on the differences between individual and team coaching and the experience of team coaching when compared to other team interventions.

Chapter Seven relates the findings of this research to existing literature. In addition, the discussion seeks to investigate and elaborate on these themes by drawing in additional literature.

Chapter Eight summarises the aims and purpose of the study and provides the conclusion. The contribution to the field of coaching is established together with a team coaching model and accompanying framework. Limitations are outlined and a number of areas for future research identified.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to explore and evaluate the key debates and insights in the extant literature which might inform the approach to this research study and to highlight the theoretical and empirical gap in the field which is intended to be addressed by the research.

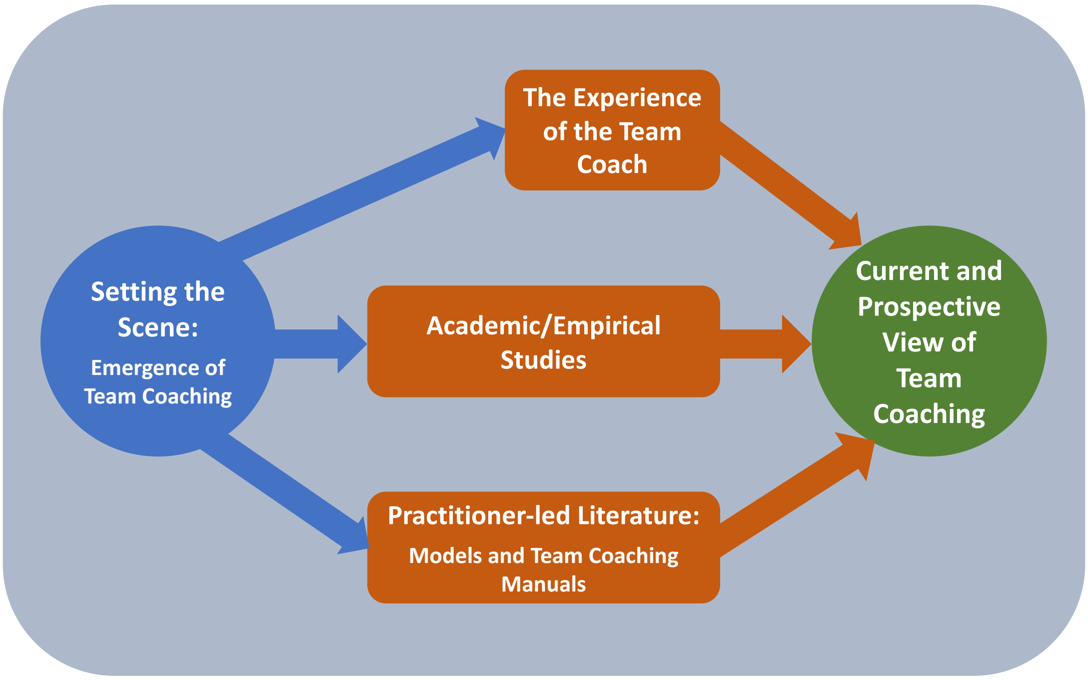
My literature search started with the key search terms of “team coaching” and “team coaches” using internet search engines including Google Scholar. The results from my searches were then interrogated using online databases including PsychINFO, Business Source Complete, Academic Source Complete and EBSCOhost. These searches identified a wealth of team coaching literature within a sports context. As I was specifically interested in team coaching in organisations, I made an early decision to discount literature focusing on sports team coaching as the nature of interaction and overarching aims of coaching in sport are quite different from coaching in organisations. I also decided not to include dyadic coaching literature as this would be too general and I was unclear at the outset which particular aspects of this literature it would be useful to explore. Whether to include other team-related literature, for example team facilitation, team development and process consultation was a decision that evolved over a period of time. My early analysis showed that team coaching, whilst still a reasonably new concept, has already absorbed the ideas and research on other types of group interventions and the differences between these interventions has been well described and agreed in principle. The problem that I set out to explore did not lie at the boundaries between team coaching and other group/team practices. The experiences of team coaches seemed unique exactly because the practice of team coaching was a product and amalgamation of other practices. I believed it was unlikely that new insights could be derived from the earlier literature devoted to different and separate interventions. I therefore decided to focus my literature review on team coaching literature and to organise the review broadly chronologically.

I sought to focus my review on journal articles published in reputable journals and unpublished research. These journals included the International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring, the International Coaching Psychology Review and Coaching: An International Journal of Theory Research and Practice. One of the challenges I encountered was the plethora of popular team coaching handbooks, often written by coaching “thought leaders” which have been published in advance of any significant body of empirical research into team coaching. There is, therefore, some reference to published books, but I have restricted this to ones which are scholarly in nature and provide reference to empirical work.

In keeping with the emergent and evolving understanding of team coaching, this review of the salient literature adopts a broadly chronological approach, commencing with some of the original and significant research prior to exploring the body of practitioner-led literature followed by the academic/empirical studies. The review concludes with the most current and prospective thinking on team coaching. The chapter is divided into six sections:

- Setting the scene: the emergence of team coaching
- Practitioner-led literature: models and team coaching handbooks
- Academic/empirical studies
- The experience of the team coach
- A current and prospective view of team coaching
- Summary

The chronological flow of the literature review is presented in figure 2.1.



2.1 Setting the scene: The emergence of team coaching

Figure 2.1: Chronological flow of literature review

A comprehensive critique of the behavioural science literature relating to coaching (Grant, 2009) highlighted 518 articles published between 1937 and 2009, however only six of these articles had the term “team coaching” in their description, highlighting the lack of knowledge of team coaching when compared to dyadic coaching. Of these six articles, Hackman and Wageman’s (2005) seminal article, “*A Theory of Team Coaching”* has become the most widely-cited, comprising an extensive literature review, definition and conceptualisation of team coaching. Hackman and Wageman’s (2005) research is frequently quoted as the academic authority on what we know about team coaching (Traylor, Stahr and Salas, 2020; Murphy and Sayer, 2019; Peters and Carr, 2019) and the first significant piece of empirical research and definition of team coaching as:

> *A direct interaction with a team intended to help members make co-ordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work* (Hackman and Wageman, 2005 p. 269).

This research makes a substantial contribution to the knowledge of team coaching in drawing together and detailing various existing approaches to team coaching being practised at the time. These approaches are labelled: eclectic, process consultation, behavioural models and developmental coaching, with a brief description of each approach provided below.

- **Eclectic:** This approach includes activities that have their origins in no particular theoretical approach but have "*considerable face validity*" (Hackman and Wageman, 2005 p. 270) including models from practitioner literature, management consultants, team facilitation, working through interpersonal frictions and conflict.

- **Team Process Consultation.** The process consultation approach looks at team development through the organisational development (OD) lens. Schein's (1998) process consultation model pre-dates most of the literature on team coaching, however, with its use of concepts from different schools of psychology, emphasis on inquiry, feedback, self-improvement and the requirement for the consultant to vary their role from being "*confrontive*" (considerable intervention and own opinions), presenting "*neutral*" questions to being "*pure*" (letting the client do the talking) it would appear to have many parallels with both dyadic and team coaching.

- **Behavioural models.** This style of team coaching involves the team coach working dynamically with the team and providing feedback. One approach propounded by Schwarz (1994) involves three distinct phases: observing actual group behaviour to note behaviours; describing to the group what has been observed and testing inferences and helping group members decide whether they wish to change their behaviours and, if so, how they might do so.

- **Developmental coaching.** The distinguishing feature of this approach is the central role given to time and timing. The approach is based on two key premises. Firstly, that teams need help with different issues at different stages of their development and, secondly, that there are times in the life cycles of teams when they are more or less open to intervention (Gersick, 1988). At the heart of the developmental approach is the "learning session" where the coach and team members review the team's purpose, assess its progress to date and identify the issues needed to be dealt with next.

In addition to providing a definition of team coaching and detailed descriptions of four different and prevailing approaches to team coaching, Hackman and Wageman (2005) introduce a number of key considerations when embarking on team coaching. The first of these is the concept of team members' "*readiness for coaching*" which is defined as:

> *the degree to which the issues to be addressed are among those naturally on team members' minds at the time of the intervention, coupled with the degree to which the team as a whole is not at that time preoccupied with more pressing or compelling matters.* (p. 275)

The second consideration relates to the timing of team coaching interventions with reference to Gersick's (1988) research on team development. Gersick (1988) identified a pattern which she named "*punctuated equilibrium*", arguing that teams were most receptive to coaching at the very beginning, mid-point and conclusion of their time together. Gersick's (1988) research was limited to task-performing teams with life cycles of several days to several months and therefore, at face value, has little relevance to organisational teams, including leadership teams, that exist to perform "business as usual". Whilst acknowledging this point, Hackman and Wageman (2005) posit that humans have an inherent need for "*temporal markers*" and, as a result, these are created in organisations, for example financial reporting periods, performance cycles and terms in schools. Hackman and Wageman (2005) make the case for using these *"temporal markers"* to shape the collective activity and, if these are not already in place, that they are created to pace activities.

The concept of team coaching proposed by Hackman and Wageman is primarily that of a manager with direct authority over time and decision-making, operating as an internal coach and working with a project team or team performing tasks with a lifecycle comprising of a beginning, middle and end. As such Hackman and Wageman's conceptualisation of team coaching is less relevant for more current team coaching interventions whereby an external team coach works with an intact team collectively. However, in introducing the terminology of "readiness for coaching" and "temporal markers" to influence the timing of interventions, Hackman and Wageman (2005) introduce concepts which have continued to be explored in subsequent literature (Clutterbuck 2007; Hawkins 2011; Peters and Carr, 2013).

Chronologically Brown and Grant's '*From Grow to Group'* article (2010) is situated after the landscape shaping of Hackman and Wageman's (2005) study and towards the start of the emergence of team coaching manuals (Clutterbuck, 2007; Thornton, 2010; Hawkins, 2011). The paper is significant as it explores and builds on key themes already identified in the literature, including the differences between groups and teams, team coaching versus facilitation and "*readiness for coaching*", as well as starting the discussion on other themes, in particular taking a systemic perspective. The paper makes a powerful case for group coaching as an under-utilised means of creating change in organisations, arguing that the focus of most organisational coaching is one-to-one, whereas research and practice suggests that interventions in organisations should be at the group level. Citing Kets de Vries (2005) Brown and Grant (2010) posit that group coaching is more effective than dyadic coaching because it deals with both cognition and affect within the organisational system, rather than focusing merely on individual goal attainment.

Brown and Grant (2010 p. 41) also provide a practical contribution for the team coaching practitioner in providing "*a practical guide or template for the group coaching process*", adapting the one-to-one coaching model, GROW (Whitmore, 2002) for use in a group setting with the acronym GROUP. Whilst the first three letters and stages of the model are the same as for GROW, the two models then diverge with U, representing "Understanding" others, a phase of "*generative dialogue*" when participants are "*thinking together*" and genuinely open to possibilities (p. 39) and the final letter " standing for "Performing". In this final stage the group moves from option generation and dialogue into action design and implementation. Here Brown and Grant (2010) make reference to Tuckman's (1965) model and the final stage of "Performing". However, the focus is more than simply putting words into action, involving "*triple loop learning*", going beyond altering mental models and thinking to making fundamental and transformational changes in the way people are.

Brown and Grant (2010) contribute to the emerging knowledge of team coaching in a number of ways. Firstly, in GROUP they provide a template, building on the well-known GROW model, enabling experienced dyadic coaches to take their practice into team coaching. Secondly, they both build on, and introduce, important team coaching concepts from the perspective of team coaches. One such example is the concept of "*readiness for coaching*", previously introduced by Hackman and Wageman (2005) referring to the extent to which team members are ready to address those issues at the time of the intervention and not preoccupied with other more pressing matters. Brown and Grant (2010) extend this definition of "*readiness*" to encompass individuals needing to be "*willing participants*" (p.34) citing Kets de Vries (2005) on the importance of participant consent and ethical concerns regarding participants who are required to participate in group coaching programmes under duress.

> *Even where the coaching issues are not overtly personal, there may be reluctance to step outside the customary topics and explore issues normally avoided by the group* (Kets de Vries, 2005 p.34).

Here, whilst moving the discussion on "*readiness for coaching*" forward by introducing an additional ingredient of "*willingness*", it is notable that Brown and Grant (2010) stop short of providing tangible detail of how such "*readiness*" can be gauged by the team coach, merely concluding that the concept is "*challenging*". In addition, in the "Understanding others" phase of their GROUP model, Brown and Grant (2010) make reference to the importance of the team coach listening to "*their own personal and internal process*" (p. 40), citing Schein's (2003) example of spending more time in self-analysis trying to understand what was going on for himself than being present in the moment. Whilst Brown and Grant (2010) provide just a glimpse of this dynamic and stop short of exploring this parallel process in any depth, it could be argued that, in raising this personal aspect they paved the way for practitioners to explore this in their subsequent research (Dassen, 2015. Hauser, 2016; Lawrence and Whyte, 2017).

2.2 Practitioner-led literature: models and team coaching manuals

The decade following Hackman and Wageman's (2005) study witnessed an intensification of interest in team coaching and the rapid growth of team coaching practice. This level of interest has increased further with the Ridler Report (2016), a survey of 105 organisations on strategic trends in the use of coaching, finding that 58% of the organisations surveyed currently use team coaching and another 28% are considering introducing team coaching to their organisation in the next three years (Mann, 2016). The condition of the literature for the period 2005-2015 is of note as academic interest has lagged notably behind practitioner engagement leading to a rich array of practitioner contributions including models and team coaching manuals, contrasting with a paucity of empirical research based on rigorous research standards. However, when assessing the contribution towards the ongoing development of knowledge and understanding of team coaching, both practitioner and academic contributions can be seen to have different, but important, contributions. Whilst the academic contributions provide much needed and scarce references to empirical study, practitioner literature has provided an ongoing dialogue on the development of team coaching. This is particularly evident in the number of "thought leaders" who have continued to develop and publish their current thinking on team coaching over an extended period of time including: Clutterbuck (2007; 2008; 2013a; 2013b; 2019); Hawkins (Hawkins and Smith, 2006; 2011; 2014; 2019) and Thornton (2010; 2016; 2019a; 2019b).

A number of comprehensive team coaching books informed by team effectiveness have been published, most notably Clutterbuck (2007) and Hawkins (2011). Such publications are characterised by team coaches explaining their practice and presenting a theoretical underpinning for the team coaching process, rather than the traditional empirical studies of team coaching. As an early example Clutterbuck (2007) contributes to the knowledge of team coaching by attempting to remove some of the mystique surrounding it and provide definitions and distinctions including the difference between a team and a group and between facilitation, team building and team coaching. Clutterbuck (2007) takes some of the key concepts of dyadic coaching, including confidentiality and creating a reflective space, and explores how these can be applied in the team setting. In addition, Clutterbuck (2007) builds upon the work of Hackman and Wageman (2005) by providing an alternative definition of team coaching, emphasising reflection and dialogue, as well as developing the concept "*temporal markers*", taking away some of the rigidity of time and instead describing the different foci of interventions, ranging from motivational (beginning), consultative (mid-point) and educational (end).

Published four years later, Hawkins (2011) team coaching manual reflects the move away from the project/work team concept of team coaching originally proposed by Hackman and Wageman (2005), to a concept of team coaching as a specific process for teams that exist in perpetuity, for example leadership teams. Hawkins (2011) adds to the growing debate on what exactly team coaching is, and how it is different to other team and group interventions, by describing a wide array of team interventions on offer and creating a continuum ranging from team facilitation to transformational leadership team coaching. Unlike Hackman and Wageman (2005) who posit that team process consultation is a discrete form of team coaching, Hawkins (2011) regards process consultation as a different discipline to team coaching. In addition, he distinguishes between different forms of team coaching: leadership team coaching, transformational leadership team coaching and systemic team coaching. Echoing Clutterbuck (2007) he takes elements of dyadic coaching, including contracting and core learning, and puts them into the team context – how the team contracts with wider stakeholders and how the team grows its individual and collective capacity.

In summary, Clutterbuck (2007) and Hawkins (2011) contributed to knowledge of team coaching by providing definitions and conceptualisations of the process as well as providing useful information for the practitioner team coach. The latter includes a view of the competencies and capabilities required for team coaching as well as a wealth of tools, inventories and techniques to be used and advice on how and when to use them. However, whilst acknowledging the contribution, it can be argued that the definitions proposed are too restrictive and linear, making little allowance for the messiness of reality. Whilst such practitioner literature provides a useful resource for coaches, it does rely heavily on the authors conceptualising their own practice and espousing accepted wisdom rather than referencing empirical study.

A different lens on team coaching is provided by Thornton (2010) who goes beyond the process aspects of team coaching, using key concepts from psychology, group analysis and systems theory, to explore how these concepts are experienced by the team coach. Thornton posits that two of the core skills in team coaching are "*holding*" and "*exchange*", which she later simplifies as referring to "*safety and challenge*" (Thornton, 2016). "*Holding*" is the capacity to enable clients to feel safe enough to work and from the practitioner perspective necessitates the ability to "*hold a group of clients simultaneously, containing more difficult feeling and stronger projections than with one person*" as well as holding "*the impact of that broader system on the group they are working with*" (Thornton, 2010 p. 33). The description of "holding" skills is wide-ranging, being as fundamental as welcoming people and setting up boundaries, to role modelling behaviour, engaging with what comes up in the group, containing difficult emotions to allow group members to become aware of, digest and integrate them. In addition, Thornton (2019b) speaks about the self-constraint part of "*holding*" – not jumping in too quickly, speaking and directing less and being comfortable with silence. Thornton (2019b) maintains that, once there is adequate "*holding*" the group begins to find an appropriate level of mutual challenge ("*exchange*"). "*Exchange*" is presented as the encounter with what is new, different or previously unknown in one's experience. Thornton (2019b) asserts that difference carries information and, without difference, there is no change and development.

Unlike Hackman and Wageman (2005) who advise coaches not to address personal relationships explicitly, positing that, whilst it may be enjoyable it is not likely to lead to improvements in performance, Thornton (2010) argues that an important aspect of team coaching involves surfacing interpersonal tensions. For Thornton (2010) kick-starting a conversation about how individual differences hamper and help is important and the challenge for the team coach is to keep the group safe enough to enable learning, encourage curiosity, exchange of views and create the right conditions for the "*undiscussables*" to be discussed.

This concept of creating a "safe space" for a team is not a new one and would appear to resonate with Edmondson's (1999) work on "*psychological safety*" in teams – namely a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. Edmondson (1999) stresses that for team psychological safety to be a group-level construct, it must characterise the team, rather than the individual members of the team, and team members must hold similar perceptions of it. Team psychological safety therefore involves, but goes beyond, interpersonal trust. It describes a team climate characterised by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves. Edmondson (1999) argues that, without "*psychological safety*" members tend not to share the unique knowledge they hold, such that discussions consist primarily of jointly held information and members will avoid placing themselves at risk by admitting mistakes or asking for help for fear of appearing incompetent. Brown and Grant (2010) concur, emphasising that in the absence of a safe space for team coaching,

> *…there may be reluctance to step outside the customary topics and explore issues normally avoided by the group. Such breaching of group norms is likely to raise anxiety at both an individual and group level.* (2010 p. 34).

From a process perspective Thornton (2010) adds to the debate on the timing of interventions positing that the lens of coaching has time limits and time limits are useful in focussing and refocusing the team on task, arguing that a coaching assignment should have a clear beginning, middle and end and also that each session should be structured to have a clear beginning, middle and end.

Thornton (2010) contributes to the knowledge of team coaching by providing an insight into the experience of team coaching from the practitioner perspective and in particular how some of the elements of dyadic coaching, including creating the coaching space and providing support and challenge, are created and experienced by the coach in a team setting. Thornton (2010) also introduces terminology and concepts to the practice of team coaching, including "*holding*", "*safe space*", "*exchange*" and "*undiscussables*" which practitioners have subsequently explored in their own research (Woodhead,2011; Carr and Peters, 2013).

2.3 Academic/empirical studies

Academic interest in team coaching has lagged behind practitioner engagement with research on team coaching largely emerging in the form of practical case studies (Traylor, Stahr and Salas, 2020). In their review of executive coaching research Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) describe a three-phase process of knowledge maturation: exploration (definitions and boundaries); theory building (methods and measures) and identifying theoretical exceptions and variances when quantitative research to study impact is more prevalent. When reviewing the state of the academic and empirical literature, Peters and Carr (2019) assert that team coaching is in the first phase, and the early stage of theory building. However, they argue that the knowledge base is growing and that the number of studies on team coaching outcomes has "*grown vastly"* since Grant's (2009) annotated bibliography and more than doubled since their own previous review in 2013, rising from 13 to 33. Peters and Carr (2019) do, however, acknowledge that there is still a "*lack of thoroughly documented and peer-reviewed case studies*" contending, that of the 33 studies, only 17 of these are academic or empirical studies with the remaining 16 case studies/case descriptions "*showcasing the work of external coaches implementing team coaching*". However, despite these assertions that the number of studies is growing, the overall number is still small, particularly when compared with dyadic coaching. It is also of note that, of the 17 academic or empirical studies identified by Peters and Carr, 12 of these involved the team leader acting as a coach, making the number of academic/empirical studies in which the coach was an external coach very small indeed. Murphy and Sayer (2019) concur, referring to the "*relative immaturity*" of the research and citing just six studies which they explore in their own research. Whilst this lack of empirical research on team coaching is understandable given the challenge of working with teams, additional studies would provide a useful contribution to the overall knowledge base.

Despite the small number of academic/empirical studies, a critical review of these is useful in providing an insight into if, and how, team coaching practitioners are engaging with espoused theory in their own team coaching as well as detail of the process they follow.

Collaborative action research has been used in a number of studies including Mulec and Roth (2005) with drug development project management teams and Haug (2011) with a product launch team. With the former, the findings centre around the benefits experienced by the team members whilst the experience of the coaches is couched in non-specific terminology. The collaboration was "*fruitful"*, and the team coaches "*increased their insights into their own way of intervening and their own contributions to the teams*" (Mulec and Roth, 2005 p.490). However, no specific details are provided. This limitation is highlighted in the conclusion of the study with recommendations for intensive collaboration of this kind to assist with "*better insight into the internal coaches' learning*" (p.490). A similar theme emerges from Haug's (2011) study which provides a detailed overview of the team coaching process followed including the number of meetings, timings, individual coaching provided and observations from team members on the success of the intervention. What is missing is the "voice" of the team coach describing how these various interventions are experienced by the coach.

A different perspective on team coaching is providing in Kets de Vries' (2005) case study of a leadership team coaching intervention describing the team coaching sessions as being a "*transitional space*" where team members open up and share information and talk about the real issues. "*They stop beating around the bush, they stop playing politics and they start to support each other*". (p. 70-71). The use of language here is notably similar to that of Thornton (2010) when she speaks of surfacing the "*undiscussables*". Like Thornton (2010), Kets de Vries (2005) promotes a psychotherapeutic approach to team coaching espousing that leadership coaches are not trainers and a simple training perspective falls short of the degree of reflection and introspection required for team coaching, proceeding to argue that a good grounding of psychotherapy is required to be an effective team coach. The case study provides a useful contribution as it goes beyond describing the process of team coaching followed, to provide glimpses of the experience itself from the perspective of the team coach practitioner.

> *What makes group leadership coaching so effective is that participants become committed to helping each other change. The leadership coach who sets the process in motion is eventually assisted by a number of volunteer 'assistant coaches' who help each other stay on the right track* (Kets de Vries, 2005 *p. 70).*

In her study, "How coaching interventions can support team working", Woodhead (2011) describes a "*symbiotic intervention of team coaching and facilitation*" with a leadership team. Woodhead (2011) presents in some detail the practicalities of the team coaching (location, length, number of sessions and regularity), as well as her approach with emphasis on using "*emotional intelligent activities*" to promote learning and understanding and enable dialogue to take place. Woodhead (2011) identifies 10 core themes of which "*a safe space for opening up*" is the most fundamental. It is notable that Woodhead's (2011) language echoes that of Thornton (2010) with a "*safe space*" having obvious similarities with "*holding*" and her description of surfacing of past issues which were hindering the team in moving forward that of raising "*undiscussables*". Whilst the research does provide some useful insights it has its limitations including, by Woodhead's (2011) own admission, the team size of three is small and all team members knew each other well prior to the coaching. In addition, little detail is given of the specific activities engaged and what the team members got out of the intervention is the focus of the study without much insight provided into Woodhead's own experience as the team coach.

It is unclear from the title of Carr and Peters (2013 p. 82) dual case study, "the experience of team coaching" whose "*experience*" will be explored – the team members', team coach's or both. Equally the first aim of the study, to identify "*the participants' significant meaning experiences or turning points during team coaching*" does not specify who the "*participants"* are. It is only upon further reading that it becomes apparent that the "*experience*" is that of the team members themselves. This much-cited dual case study provides an important contribution to the team coaching literature, including a detailed review of team effectiveness research, different perspectives on team coaching as well as Carr and Peters' (2013) own conceptualisation of team coaching. In addition, the study builds upon some of the previous theoretical debate on the timing of interventions, contending that team coaching should have a definite beginning, midpoint when the team has completed half of its work and an end when the work is finished and the focus is on drawing on experiences and learning. Here Carr and Peters (2013) would appear to be aligning themselves with a "*developmental*" approach to team coaching (Hackman and Wageman, 2005), positing that, whilst not all teams have distinct beginnings, middles and ends, there is real benefit to a team coaching assignment having a clear beginning, mid-point and end, including specific activities which can be undertaken at these markers. In addition, they place particular emphasis on the notion of a "*team launch*" for the work, clearly delineating that this is a fresh start for the team.

Concurring with Hackman and Wageman (2005), Carr and Peters (2013 p. 42) emphasise the importance of "*readiness for coaching*"

> *It may feel good and even expedient to just dive in with coaching or to start a conversation about group dynamics with a team. However, your efforts will be like putting new paint over an unprimed wall… it won't be long before the paint starts to peel*.

However, how such "readiness" can be assessed by the team coach practitioner is not explored in any detail. In addition, whilst participants' "*significant meaningful experiences or turning points during team coaching*" are described, these are from the perspective of team members. Despite the study being set up as a dual-case study, the opportunity for Carr and Peters (2013) to share and contrast their own experiences as team coaches is not capitalised upon.

An alternative approach to team coaching is provided in Dassen's (2015) study, comprising multiple case studies in Northern Europe healthcare and non-profit organisations, involving 10 team coaching programmes, each team comprising of 5 to 18 members. The study makes use of drama techniques, tried and tested in the therapeutic setting, in order to help clients gain a deeper insight into their unconscious processes and develop new and more effective behaviour. Here Dassen (2015) would appear to be adopting a "*behavioural*" team coaching approach (Hackman and Wageman, 2005) with the team coach working dynamically with the team. Whilst the focus of the study is on the benefits that team members acquired through utilising drama techniques, four of the participating team coaches were interviewed and ask to describe some of the challenges they met when coaching and the skills they found necessary to meet these challenges. One of the challenges identified was the "*contagiousness*" of group dynamics and the risk of being pulled into the existing dynamic of the team being coached (Cox & Patrick, 2012). The coaches described the experience of being consciously aware that they were being pulled into the team's dynamic and identified not giving into that pull, but making it explicit, in order to help the team see what might be going on, as an important skill, contributing both to creating a safe environment and to helping the team look at their own dynamic. The coaches also identified how looking at defensive patterns and the underlying difficult emotions, surfaced a lot of anxiety and discomfort for the participants and how they in turn had felt challenged to contain these anxieties in themselves and not discount them, for example, by making a quick joke to reduce tension or falsely soothing the team by reassuring them that things weren't so bad. Here there are echoes of Thornton's (2010) descriptions of "*containing*" and "*holding*" in the descriptions of coaches containing their own anxiety in order to set an example for the team to do the same, thus creating a holding space.

The study provides some valuable insights into team coaching from the team coach perspective including the role of the coach. Here the discussion moves from the question of neat definitions as to whether the coach is operating as a facilitator or team coach (Hawkins, Clutterbuck, 2007; Brown and Grant, 2009; Hawkins, 2014) to explore the contagiousness of group dynamics and how the coach can unconsciously be pulled into these. However, these insights feature as an adjunct to the overall research project, summarised at the end of the paper and comprising of the reflections of some, but not all, of the team coaches. Additional insights into the range of roles that practitioners may be drawn into and how they would recognise that this has happened/starting to happen, and strategies for addressing such dilemmas would have been useful information for team coaching practitioners.

2.4 The experience of the team coach

The literature reviewed so far has largely focused on defining team coaching in contrast to other team interventions, approaches to team coaching and applying team coaching within a particular case study and evaluating the feedback from team members. The experience of the team coach, for example, what it feels like to deliver team coaching in practice, how this differs from dyadic coaching and the behaviour, skills and knowledge utilised by the team coach, is largely an adjunct to the focus of an overall research project. Hauser (2014) represents a departure in the literature whereby the voice of the team coach begins to take centre stage and we see team coaching through the first-hand experience of the team coach. Hauser (2014) presents a framework for behavioural team coaching identified through qualitative interviews with eight experienced team coaches. At the core of the framework is the concept of "*shape-shifting*", how changing conditions during the coaching sessions determine the selection of the role or style a coach chooses. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017 p. 497) provide a useful distillation of this framework by summarising the considerations as:

1. **Outcomes of coaching:** including multiple potential goal levels of personal, interpersonal, team and organisational
2. **The coaches' approach:** identifying directive task-oriented versus relational process-oriented approaches
3. **Timing of interventions:** referring to the interventions that tend to be used during the start, middle and end phases of a coaching engagement.
4. **Roles enacted through behaviour:** the four roles enacted by team coaches over an engagement included were advisory, educational, catalytic and transitional
5. **Influence on the coach's approach:** including personal attributes, background and experiences.

Hauser (2014) provides a valuable contribution to the knowledge of team coaching by taking themes raised in earlier research and adding an additional layer of understanding from the team coach's perspective. For example, the concept of "readiness" (Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Brown and Grant, 2010) is defined as the "*team's ability and willingness both to work together as a team and to be coached*" (p.59) with Hauser giving voice to how this is experienced by the team coach. Whilst Brown and Grant (2010) highlighted the importance of paying attention to the system, Hauser's (2014) research explores what this means in practice as a team coach with the need for a strong understanding of group dynamics and group-based dialogue emerging as vital skills for a team coach, alongside the interpersonal skills required for one-to-one coaching.

Adopting a similar approach to Hauser (2014), Lawrence and Whyte (2017) sought to gain clarity on which models, tools and approaches team coaches currently use, identifying nine dimensions of practice, five relating to process (task, relational, broad systemic, dialogic, developmental) and four relating to preferred methodology (educational, behavioural, action learning and planned versus emergent). Like Hauser, (2014) by foregrounding the team coach, the study adds to the literature by providing an insight into how team coaches work with teams and lessons learned through experience. These lessons are: the necessity of contracting and managing group process; the challenge of working in a complex and unpredictable environment where there is no hiding place; the need to adapt quickly to what is happening in the room; the importance of listening and at times sitting with silence and when to challenge and when to support. Echoing Dassen (2015), Lawrence and Whyte (2017) highlight the significance of being aware of group *"contagion*" and of managing self, for example understanding how insecurity can show up in the way the coach operates either becoming enmeshed in the system or pushing it away.

The limitations of both Hauser (2014) and Lawrence and Whyte's (2017) studies are that they rely on short semi-structured telephone interviews in which team coaches were asked to recall experiences which were then analysed to distil the data into themes. What is missing is the richness of the individual team coach voices, including reflections captured during or immediately after events, and the absence of any visual clues emerging and captured during the interview. In addition, there was no opportunity for participating team coaches to discuss together, and build upon, shared experiences to generate a richer level of meaning.

The richness of the individual team coach's voice is provided in James et al's (2016 p. 3, 6) auto ethnographical study of team coaching in which James explores her team coaching practice "*through my communications, my actions and ways of being"* and draws on "*the rich experiences of working alongside my clients and responding to their needs*". The resultant research describes not only what James does in her team coaching but, most importantly, how this work impacts on her personally. Using storytelling and metaphor James brings to life the complexity and real-life messiness of translating espoused theory into practice. These experiences include the process of contracting with individual team members, with James contrasting her own experience with that of "best practice" espoused by Thornton (2010) and Hawkins (2011) in the literature. Throughout James makes extensive use of her own reflective log, providing valuable insights into the internal dialogue of the team coach as she moves between "*knowing, doubting and deliberating coach*" responding to her clients "*spontaneously and in the moment*" (2016 p. 4). In addition, James' study provides a previously under-explored perspective on how a safe space is created and experienced in team coaching by the team coach.

Whilst the study provides a useful perspective on how espoused theory translates into practice, as James' herself acknowledges, it is based on the experiences of one team coach working with one team (James et al, 2016). A similar process, with different teams in different organisations, as well as the opportunity for team coaches to reflect and shape their experiences through dialogue with other practising team coaches, would provide a richer and broader understanding of how the process of team coaching is experienced by team coaches.

2.5 A current and prospective view of team coaching

The previous sections of this chapter have explored how knowledge of team coaching has emerged through a combination of team coaching handbooks and empirical/academic studies. This growth in knowledge and sequencing of publications over the last fifteen years is presented in figure 2.2.

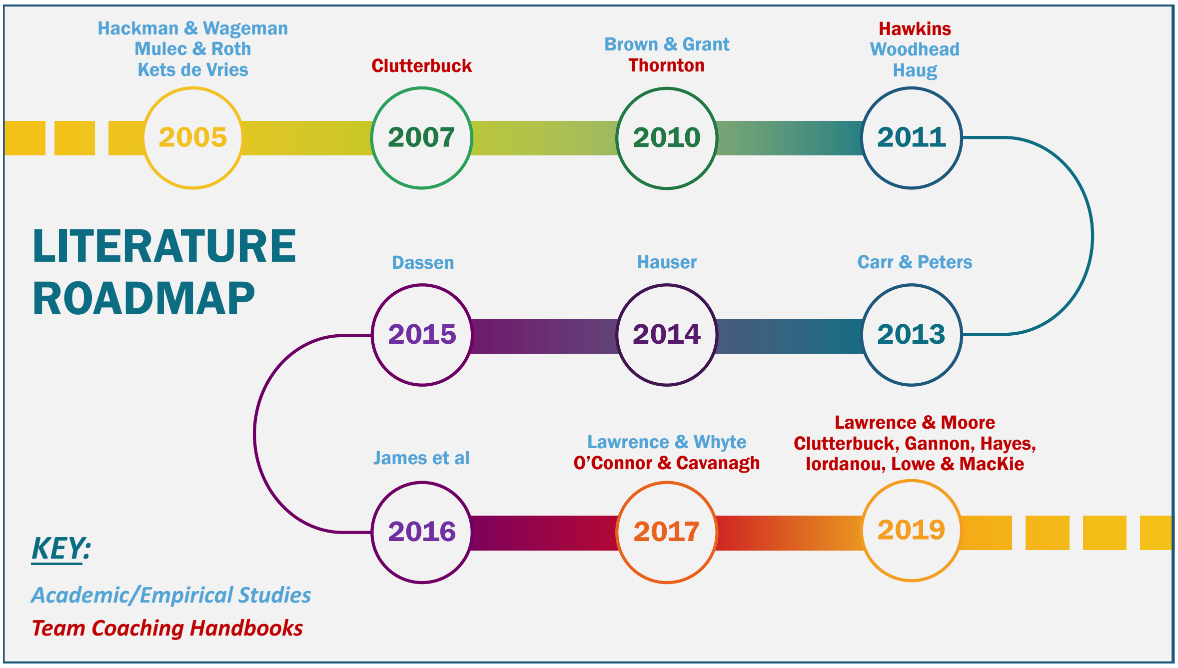


Figure 2.2: The growth of team coaching knowledge

Recent years have witnessed attempts to pull together this body of knowledge into a coherent understanding of what team coaching is, in particular for a team coaching practitioner audience, to provide both a current understanding of the practice as well as an appreciation of how team coaching will develop in the future.

A critical overview of where team coaching is as a practice, including a discussion of the key debates and accompanying research and a review of emergent issues, is provided by O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017). Pulling together the disparate literature O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) present a health assessment of team coaching as suffering from a "*lack of definitional and theoretical coherence in the coaching literature*" (p. 499). Concurring with Clutterbuck (2007) and Hawkins (2014), O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) proceed to argue that most team coaches find it difficult to articulate a model of group or team coaching that extends beyond individual coaching conducted in organisations and that a failure to address this ends up in facilitation or team building. Continuing this "*retrospective"* overview of the literature, O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) posit that the key issue is that most team coaching models assume a linear model of change – assessing where one is, assuming a goal and end point, charting a course and measuring success. Moving to a "*prospective*" overview of the literature and emerging issues, O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) argue for a non-linear approach to team coaching that is more in keeping with a scientific model of experimentation.

Whereas others have stressed the importance of adopting a systemic approach when team coaching (Thornton, 2010; Hawkins, 2014), for O'Connor and Cavanagh this perspective is essential.

> *It is this systems insight that makes team and group coaching possible, and which differentiates it from one-on-one or dyadic coaching.* (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2017 p. 488)

O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) proceed to argue that there are three systems in play in team coaching, each nested within larger ones: the team, the team's immediate environment and a wider environment. Each new level of the system is unique and whole in its own right and for the coach there is a different form of coaching – skills, performance and developmental. Adopting an internally-focused team coaching approach (at a skills level) results in the internal dynamics of the team only being addressed as they relate to goal attainment externally. Particular relationships are only relevant if they get in the way of effective team performance. In contrast the systems team coach regards the team as a coherent unit and works at the level of performance coaching, helping the team notice and improve how it organises its activity and its habitual patterns. At the widest level the system team coach enters into "*developmental coaching*", getting the team to reflect on its relationship to the wider environment, not just what they do together, but why they do what they do.

In making such a powerful case for taking a systemic perspective, O'Connor and Cavanagh can be seen to have provided a useful synthesis of previous perspectives of team coaching being specifically "*behavioural*" or "*developmenta*l" (Hackman and Wageman, 2005) arguing the need to develop a more "*nuanced and sophisticated case conceptualisation*" from a systemic perspective prior to team coaching commencing.

The preceding literature had introduced the concept of "readiness" for team coaching, developing this theme from a team construct (Hackman and Wageman, 2005) to individual "readiness", stressing the importance of understanding that individual goals may be different and, therefore, the prudence of interviewing all team members beforehand and ensuring that learning goals are shared (Thornton, 2010; Carr and Peters, 2013; Hawkins, 2014). An additional dimension to this debate is provided by Clutterbuck (2013) who argues that individual differences around "readiness" may extend beyond divergence in learning goals to include different abilities, including pace of thinking and deciding. O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017) extend this argument still further, cautioning that one of the challenges of coaching a group rather than an individual is that group members will not be at the same level in terms of skill and personal development and that:

> *One (or many) group member(s) may need to increase their personal skills in order for them to contribute toward attainment of a shared goal.* (P. 499)

This argument for a more nuanced and sophisticated conceptualisation of team is echoed by Lawrence and Moore (2019) who posit that there are five generic models for coaching teams and groups, each building on the other, to create an ever-increasing sophisticated approach. These models are reproduced in figure 2.3.

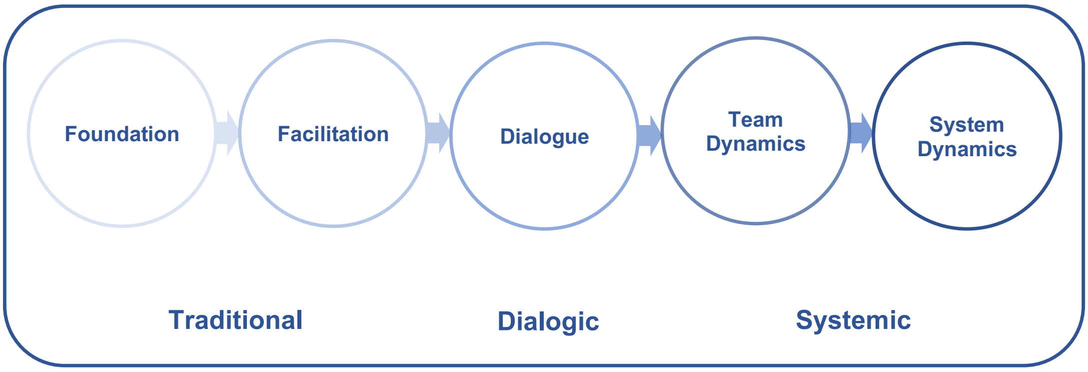


Figure 2.3: Approaches to coaching, Lawrence and Moore, (2019). p.100

Lawrence and Moore contend that "*traditional*" coaches, upon being asked to work with teams are likely to leverage their foundation one-to-one coaching skills. If they have "*facilitation*" skills too they are likely to access these skills as well, adopting quite a structured approach to working with a team. By contrast, the "*dialogic*" coach will focus their attention on how the group is co-creating the conditions for effective dialogue. Moving into the "*team dynamics*" space the coach will have access to models that allow them to understand team and group dynamics and how people relate to one another, including psychometrics. Depending on the team coach's philosophy he/she may choose to adopt a relational and/or developmental approach to team dynamics. "*Relational*" refers to the perspective that the team coach must attend to interpersonal relationships between team members and what is going on "*below the surface of their day-to-day routines*" (Ket de Vries, 2005 p. 72). "*Developmental*" refers to a belief that teams go through developmental stages in the way they operate, for example Tuckman's (1965) theory of forming, storming, norming and performing or Gersick's 'punctuated equilibrium' (1988). Finally, the coach occupying the "*system dynamics*" space will seek to understand how team dynamics are influenced by events outside the team within the broader system. They will not only be comfortable with dialogue but have the ability to notice and work with patterns of dialogue.

Lawrence and Moore's (2019) framework is particularly useful for the practitioner team coach as it provides an insight into the route the dyadic coach is likely to follow when entering team coaching and how their team coaching practice may develop as they acquire more knowledge and experience. It also serves as an over-arching backdrop of how the perspective of team coaching and the role of the team coach has changed from adopting a narrow range of approaches and being focused on the performance of the team (Hackman and Wagemen, 2005) to utilising a wide-range of approaches and taking account what is happening outside the team, in the wider system. Viewed through this lens Thornton's (2010) conceptualisation of team coaching can be seen as both relational and systemic, attending to the team dynamics, including discussing "*undiscussables*", as well as the system within which the client team operates. By contrast Clutterbuck's (2007) early research adopts a developmental approach and, whilst Clutterbuck (2007) does acknowledge the impact of external stakeholders on the team, he has been criticised for not placing sufficient emphasis on this (Hawkins, 2011). It is noteworthy that Clutterbuck's most recent team coaching model, PERIL, (Clutterbuck 2019) assumes a more systemic approach with 'E' denoting "*External processes, systems and structures*", focussing on how the team interrelates with its multiple stakeholders. Hawkins (2019) adopts a similar approach to Lawrence and Moore (2019), regarding team coaching in terms of levels rather than different brands. Level 1 focuses on the inter-relationships between the individuals; Level 2 focuses on the team being more than the sum of its parts including better meetings, generative dialogue and collaboration and Level 3 regarding the team as existing to create value with all of its stakeholders. The latter approach Hawkins (2019) labels as "*systemic team coaching*" with his five disciplines model differentiating between internal relationships and task and external relationships and task.

In the 'The Practitioner's Handbook of Team Coaching' (2019), the editors state their aim of providing a comprehensive overview of the field and enhancing the understanding and practice of team coaching by synthesising and integrating "*relevant theories, research and practices that comprise and undergird coaching*" (p. xix). The handbook represents a significant contribution to the knowledge of team coaching in bringing together the diversity of theories and models, approaches to delivering team coaching interventions, the essential skills required for team coaching and some emerging perspectives on team coaching including coaching virtual teams. Whilst much of the prior research has focused on clarifying the differences between groups and teams, the use of practitioner-led team coaching models and the impact of coaching on team performance from the perspective of the team members (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2019), this handbook is written with the practitioner as the audience. In bringing together experience and research, accumulated over more than a decade, and from a wide variety of academic and practitioner sources, it provides a valuable insight into the role of the team coach and how this work impacts on the team coach professionally and personally. This includes a number of aspects that were explored previously in quite a simplistic fashion which are now revisited, in the light of experience and research. A number of these debates, which are particularly relevant to the experience of the practitioner team coach, are synthesised below.

- **The role of the team coach.** Whereas much emphasis had previously been placed on attempting to define team coaching as a distinct discipline to be adopted in preference to facilitation, consultation or training (Clutterbuck, 2007; Grant, 2009; Hawkins, 2014) there is a growing consensus that skilled and trained coaches will likely employ a mix of coaching, facilitation, consultation, education and training skills to effectively support the team (Peters, 2019; Lawrence, 2019). Thornton (2019a) also draws attention to "*who or what am I invited to be*?" referring to the roles the coach may unwittingly be drawn into as well as the importance of counter-transference – "*what feelings do you have in the room/are you left with afterwards?" (P.215).*

- **The complexity and impact of team coaching on the coach.** There is a growing understanding of the dynamic complexity of working with teams rather than individuals and of the need for the team coach to have professional support and supervision. (Hodge and Clutterbuck, 2019; Thornton, 2019b; Lane, 2019). Thornton (2109b) argues that the team coach must be able to "*tolerate discomfort*" to surface the group's dilemmas and how supervision from someone with "*group experience and business wisdom is essential*" (p. 328). Hodge and Clutterbuck (2019), whilst endorsing the use of supervision to build confidence and prepare and manage ongoing incidents that emerge from the work, argue that this may on its own not be sufficient.

- **Approaches to team coaching.** Linked to the above discussion on roles and complexity, there is also a growing debate about the approach of the team coach, especially around structure. Lawrence (2019) contends that attempting to differentiate between team coaching and facilitation on the basis of structure and educational content is futile. Clutterbuck et al (2019) differentiate between "*fluid"* and "*rigid"* approaches, with the former aiming to give as much control over the learning dialogue as possible to the team and the latter necessitating all members of the team to undertake the same diagnostics to prescribe the issue that the coaching will focus on. This theme is extended by Hodge and Clutterbuck (2019) who posit that effective coaching conversations balance structure (a broad and purposeful framework) and flow (dealing with issues, ideas and insights as they occur). What emerges from this debate is a sense of there being no "best" way or one size fits all. Instead Lawrence (2019) advocates building a "*container*" for the work that needs to be done and that it is the coach's job to construct, maintain and dismantle this container.

What emerges from the above research is a growing consensus on the complexity of team coaching, of there being many versions of it being practised and of the demands of it on the practitioner being far greater than for dyadic coaching. All of which has significant implications for the team coach, especially an externally resourced coach, as opposed to a line manager coaching their team. As Hodge and Clutterbuck (2019 p. 339) acknowledge, there may be a significant difference between team members saying they are receptive to team coaching and how they actually respond in practice.

> *Groups develop hypersensitive immune responses to well-meant 'interference', even if the agent concerned has been invited in.* (p.339)

Helpful though this handbook is in providing insights into the practitioner's perspective of team coaching, all of the accounts are brief, outlining a particular dilemma or challenge, but stopping short of providing in-depth first-hand accounts of the experience from the perspective of the team coach practitioner. Such missing accounts have the potential to provide valuable insight into the phenomenon, including the roles the team coach plays and how they describe these roles, what balancing "*fluid*" and "*rigid*" approaches feels like in practice and the impact of the team's dynamics on the team coach and it is this gap which is addressed by this research study.

2.6 Chapter Summary

From this review of knowledge relevant to this research study, it can be seen that team coaching is at a much earlier stage of deliberation and definition than dyadic coaching (Clutterbuck et al, 2019) with no general agreement about the definition, scope, purpose or nature of team coaching. Conceptualisations of team coaching range from emphasis on team task and getting the team to use its collective resources to achieve their outcomes, to improving dialogue or becoming a learning team taking account of the needs of its stakeholders. Despite the explosion of interest in team coaching, as evidenced by the plethora of team coaching manuals, models, accreditations and organisations offering team coaching, academic interest has continued to lag behind that of practitioners. Furthermore, much of the team coaching research is based on small data sets and largely derived from practitioner experience and observations and not grounded in scholarly research.

Current thinking on team coaching is that it is a complex discipline and significantly more challenging for the coach than dyadic coaching (Clutterbuck et al, 2019). It is therefore important that those practising, or aspiring to practise, team coaching have detailed knowledge of what this entails, and the knowledge, skills and experience required to be proficient in this field. As much of the empirical research on team coaching has been in the form of case studies, the principal voice has largely been that of team members describing the experience and their perceptions of how team coaching impacted on team effectiveness. The team coach's own experience features as an adjunct with only glimpses of their own thoughts and feelings and reflections on how the work has impacted on them personally. The voice of the team coach has come to the fore in more recent studies (Hauser, 2014; James, 2016; Lawrence and Whyte, 2017) but it remains a quiet voice with evidence gathered from semi-structured telephone interviews allowing limited opportunity for in-depth discussion of specific challenges and experiences. Dialogue between practicing team coaches on their conceptualisations of team coaching, their approach and how this work impacts on them is scarcely evident.

Most of the published case studies and handbooks feature practitioners utilising their own team models and frameworks which has given rise to a multitude of different team effectiveness models or frameworks being developed with Peters and Carr (2013) identifying 130. This number will undoubtedly have risen in line with increased interest in team coaching. However, whilst these resources are helpful, with some of them providing examples of how to apply their toolkits and activities to use, the models are not necessarily evidence-based and the case studies are informal and are often light on detail, such as the length of the coaching engagement, approach, size of team and success criteria and measurements. As a result, the theory of team coaching has developed on an ad hoc basis. What is absent is a robust dialogue between practicing team coaches on the essential elements of team coaching, irrespective of the array of models and frameworks that might have informed their practice.

This gap in knowledge is important because interest in team coaching shows no sign of abating (Mann, 2016) and, without this team coach insight, future development of team coaching theory is only partially informed. The contribution of this study is therefore to provide this missing team coach perspective by providing an in-depth view of the experience of team coaching, including both the process followed and the impact of this on the coach, from the perspective of team coaches. Furthermore, the study will provide the opportunity for discussion and exchange of views between team coaches to provide a richer understanding of the team coaching experience. The visual conceptual framework in figure 2.4 summarises the context and contribution of this research.

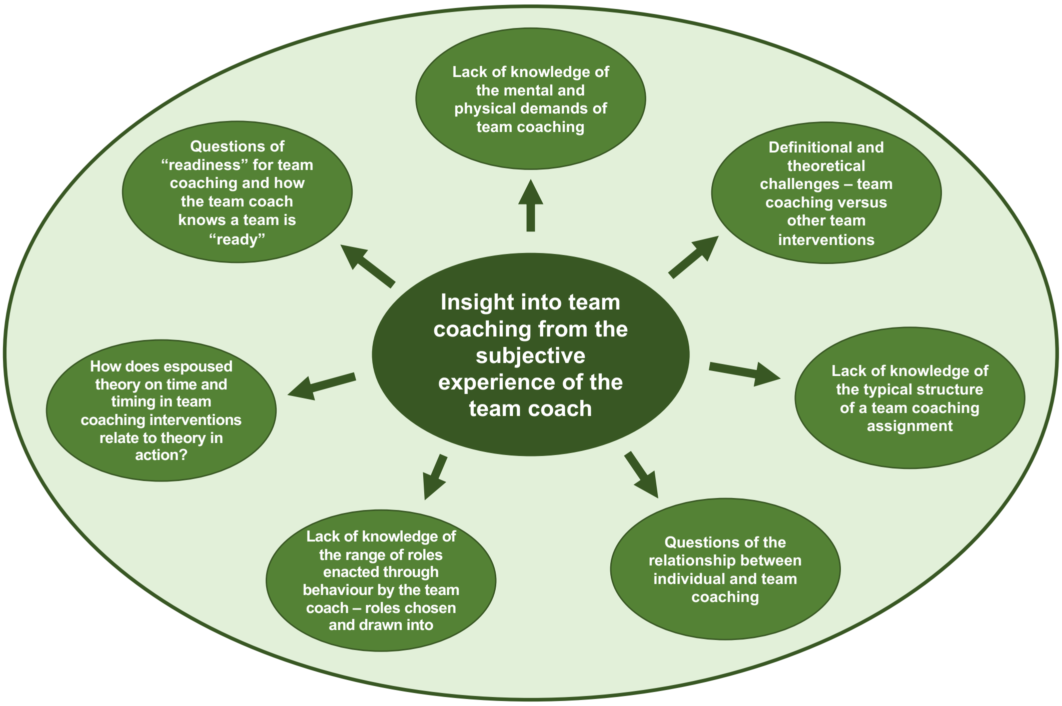


Figure 2.4: Conceptual model of key debates and issues and gap in existing knowledge

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter situates my research question, "What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching?" within an interpretivist paradigm, assuming a social constructionist epistemology. I outline some of the research methodologies suited to this paradigm which were considered for this research and the reasons for deciding upon my chosen methodology, heuristic inquiry. I discuss the philosophical roots of heuristic inquiry, the role of the researcher, particularly in relation to reflexivity, and the specific methods used in this research, including the approach to co-researcher recruitment, the sources of data collection and data analysis. I consider measures of quality in heuristic inquiry research, some of the critiques and ethical challenges associated with the approach and how I have addressed these.

3.1 My ontological and epistemological positions

This research assumes a social constructionist epistemology and is conducted within an interpretivist paradigm (Crotty, 1998). When seeking to clarify and explain my ontological and epistemological perspectives, chosen methodology and methods selected from my research I found Crotty's (1998) summary of the four "basic" elements of any research process a useful aid. Crotty (1998 p. 2) proposes four fundamental questions for the researcher to consider:

- What methods do we propose to use?
- What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
- What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?

Crotty (1998) posits that these four elements inform one another, in a hierarchical structure (figure 3.1).

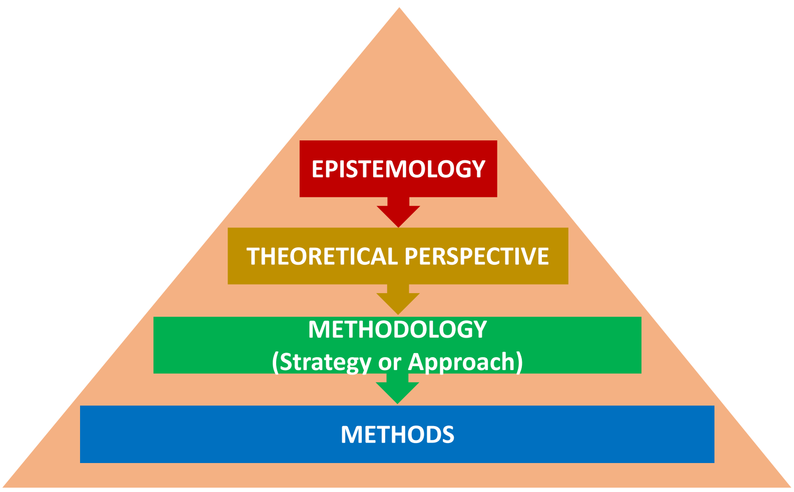


Figure 3.1: Fundamental elements for the researcher based on Crotty, (1998). p.4

Cresswell (2018) adopts a similar standpoint and hierarchy of criteria, advising that the researcher's worldview assumptions should determine the design used to study a subject. These philosophical assumptions will include the researcher's perspective on the fundamental questions of ontology, the nature of being and reality and epistemology, relating to knowledge and how we know what we know.

As a researcher my philosophical assumptions are in line with social constructionism focussing upon the development of meaning and knowledge through social engagement, interaction and interpretation. Social constructionism can be seen to be both a philosophy of life and a research paradigm, in being both a way of being and a way of knowing (Sultan, 2019). Social constructionism suggests that there are "knowledges" rather than "knowledge" and that the same phenomenon or event can be described in different ways. Meanings are varied and multiple, giving rise to different ways of perceiving and understanding the phenomenon, none of which are necessarily right or wrong, The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation with the researcher looking for the complexity of views rather than seeking to narrow the meaning into a few categories or ideas. Knowledge is therefore constructed, not revealed, utilising exploratory, inductive approaches focused on understanding meanings and the essential natures of things. (Willig, 2007, Cresswell, 2018).

The researcher's theoretical perspective refers to the philosophical stance or paradigm underpinning their methodology. It therefore provides a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and criteria (Crotty, 1998). The conception of interpretivism as a paradigm can be regarded as a reaction and foil to the long-prevailing positivist paradigm (Schwandt, 2007). With its focus on scientific methods positivism propounds a notion of reality comprising of facts that can be objectively observed (Crotty, 1998; Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992). Critics of the traditional scientific method note in particular the limitations of the approach in relation to the observation and understanding of human activity, arguing that natural reality and social reality are different kinds of reality and their investigation therefore requires different methods (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders et al, 2009; Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992). Whereas positivism follows the methods of the natural sciences in search of consistencies and regularities and an attempt to identify universal features, the interpretivist approach focuses on individual cases and appreciating uniqueness and individuality. The interpretative paradigm is therefore characterised by an emphasis on description rather than explanation; representing reality through the eyes of participants; a focus on the meaning of experience and behaviour in context and complexity and the use of qualitative methods for research (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992).

The above epistemological and theoretical perspectives resonate with me and my own experience whereby the sense I make of events can be revealed through discourse as being different to that of another. However, through ongoing discourse, it is possible to develop a shared, or at least mutual, sense of what such phenomena mean to each of us and both of us together. Knowledge is therefore socially constructed in human interactions. However, meaning is fluid, changing over time and with circumstances (Patton, 2015). I am conscious that as a researcher I may seek to understand the context and then make an interpretation of what I find, but that this interpretation does not happen in isolation, being shaped by my own experience and background including my interests.

As is clear from the review of the literature, an understanding of team coaching amongst professionals and organisations is emergent and constantly being refined. Given this escalation in the frequency, range and nature of team coaching constructs, it is of great interest to the coaching field to understand how coaches practising in this field describe the actual experience of team coaching.

In seeking to decide upon my methodology I took inspiration from Moustakas (1994 p. 21) who argues that there are a number of "common bonds" of qualitative research that distinguish them from traditional, natural science, quantitative research theories and methodologies. These are:

1. Recognising the value of qualitative designs and methodologies, studies of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches
2. Focusing on the wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts
3. Searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations
4. Obtaining descriptions of experience through the first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews
5. Regarding the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behaviour and as evidence for scientific investigations
6. Formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher
7. Viewing experiencing and behaviour as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object and of parts and whole

All of the above criteria are ones which resonate with me as a researcher, highlighting the importance of the individuality of experience. Aligning myself with these "common bonds" suggests qualitative research is best suited to reflect a social-constructionist/interpretivist position on the experience of team coaching and is therefore appropriate for this study.

3.2 Choosing my methodological approach

When writing my research proposal as part of my application for the DCaM, I was quite clear that I wanted to be an intrinsic part of my research. For my MA I had chosen a phenomenological approach, bracketing my own experience and had found this both challenging and frustrating. This time I felt that I had knowledge and experience of team coaching that I wanted to bring to my research to engage with, challenge, adapt and develop as part of this process. I also knew that my own passion for this subject would not be satiated by remaining on the fringes of the research.

An early methodological consideration that appeared to satisfy my desire to be an active participant in my research was action research. In action research practitioners investigate their own practices as “insider researchers”, in contrast to traditional forms of social science research where a professional researcher conducts research on practitioners (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Reason and Bradbury, 2006). The opportunity to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in collaboration with fellow team coaching practitioners had significant appeal.

The main pioneer of action research was Kurt Lewin who first introduced the term in 1946. Lewin’s ideas have remained influential and subsequent researchers adopting action research organise their own research into cycles of steps. Zuber-Skerritt, (2009) describes these steps as “The four moments of action research”.

1. A specific problem is identified, a hypothesis or model is developed and a course of action outlined
2. The hypothesis or model is tested via an intervention of some kind
3. Observations are made and data collected (focus groups, interviews diaries etc)
4. Data are evaluated and some adjustments are made to the action

Once a cycle is complete, steps 2-4 are repeated again.

Whilst action research had some obvious immediate attraction and clear alignment with my desire to be an insider researcher participating with others, further investigation of the methodology highlighted some important potential obstacles. Firstly, I was aware that I had views and opinions about the process of team coaching but I did not have a model or hypothesis that I wanted to test out with others. In discussions with my supervisors and DCaM colleagues I became aware that I was most interested in how other team coaching practitioners were experiencing team coaching rather than, from the outset, seeking to draw together a theory of team coaching, which would necessarily attempt to be generic in nature. Secondly, I had significant concerns about how time-consuming the process would be. From my own practice I was aware that organising team coaching was more challenging than organising dyadic coaching, necessitating the co-ordination of multiple diaries and that the gaps between team coaching sessions could be lengthy. This factor, coupled with the need to have at least two cycles of action, was pointing towards a lengthy research process - without factoring in the additional complexity of working with other team coaching practitioners, working with their own teams. I was aware that I only had a finite amount of time to conduct my research and this was the pivotal consideration in me deciding to look at an alternative methodology that still enabled me to be an insider researcher participating with others.

In search of an alternative methodology I explored conceptual encounter devised by Joseph de Rivera (1981). Conceptual encounter asks how we can describe the meaning of an experience, with the goal of producing a map of personal experience. Conceptual encounter is an iterative process with the investigator questioning the partner about their unique experience prior to the investigator sharing their own conceptual ideas. The investigator then checks the partner's understanding and asks how it fits with partner's concrete experience. After the ensuing dialogue, the investigator revises or refines their conceptual map and then repeats the encounter with a series of partners prior to converging on a final version.

As a methodology conceptual encounter enabled me to be an "insider researcher" at the heart of the investigation, rather than relying on my own personal experience or working from informal accounts of an experience from participants. I could see real benefits of this approach – being able to see ideas that were previously unknown to me, leading to a richer and deeper understanding of the experience. However, further scrutiny and discussion with my supervisors highlighted some key issues. Firstly, conceptual encounter seeks to conceptualise a phenomenon including emotions or psychological concepts. By contrast team coaching is a process not a concept and I had doubts as to whether this methodology could be adapted to a process. Secondly, as described for action research, although I had some strong views, I did not have a model or hypothesis that I wanted to put forward to others at the start the process.

3.3 Deciding upon heuristic inquiry

The process of exploring a number of different methodologies, provided me with clarity that I needed an approach that combined a greater level of coherence between my research question, my own philosophical perspectives and my desire to be an intrinsic part of my research working with others. In addition, I recognised the need to undertake a study that was seen as credible and achievable within the finite timescale of a professional doctorate.

With this emerging clarity I turned my attention to heuristic inquiry as a potential methodology. This approach appeared particularly appropriate due to its search to discover the nature and meaning of lived experience, in this case of team coaching. Heuristic inquiry is a variant of phenomenological research designs, having strong roots in humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1956; Rogers, 1961) and in Polyanyi's (1962) study of personal knowledge, indwelling and tacit knowledge. Heuristic inquiry was first used and documented by Moustakas in his work on loneliness (Moustakas, 1961), subsequently discretely outlined in Heuristic Research (Moustakas, 1990) and more recently detailed as a methodology by Sultan (Sultan, 2019). Taking its name from the Ancient Greek word, heuriskein, meaning to discover or find, heuristic inquiry encourages a spirit of inquiry to discover the nature and meaning of subjective experience (Moustakas, 1990; Sultan, 2019). Heuristic inquiry benefits from the researcher being present throughout the process and being conscious of personal thoughts, actions, feelings and behaviour, during and post practice (Bachkirova, 2016). Moustakas (1990) asserted that, although it is feasible to conduct heuristic research with only one person, studies will attain deeper, more varied meanings when they include the experiences of others, a view subsequently endorsed by Sultan (Sultan, 2019). Therefore, in addition to understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge including comparing her experience with that of others (Bachkirova, 2016).   Heuristic inquiry therefore satisfied two of the key criteria that had emerged from my inquiry into my proposed methodological approach so far: the desire to be part of my research as an insider researcher and support of my social constructionist interests by working with other practicing team coaches, to develop meaning and knowledge through social engagement, interaction and interpretation.

3.4 My approach to reflexivity

In adopting heuristic inquiry as my methodological approach, I was aware that I would be bringing my own personal and cultural perspective to bear on my research project and that these would inform and influence my research. Mason (2004 p.5) stresses the importance of reflexivity, defining the practice as:

> *Thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognising the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see*.

Wilig (2007) similarly posits that the researcher requires awareness of their contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of being "outside of" one's subject matter whilst conducting research. Having chosen the position of an insider researcher I had already make this acknowledgement, but I was aware that I would need to continually engage in two kinds of reflexivity throughout my study: personal and epistemological. Personal reflexivity involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences and interests have shaped the research including, in my own case, my views on some of the prevailing theories and models on team coaching. Epistemological reflexivity requires engagement with questions such as: how has the research question defined and limited what can be "found"? How has the design of the study and the method of analysis 'constructed' the data and the findings? (Wilig, 2007).

Prior to commencing my study, I made use of journaling to explore my own perspective on team coaching including my coaching qualifications and methodologies underpinning my practice. In choosing how to engage with my research topic I was influenced by Buber's (1958) distinction between "I-It" and "I-Thou" relationships. The former perspective regards other human beings from a distance, from a superior vantage point of authority and as objects or subjects in the environment to be examined. In contrast the "I-Thou" perspective acknowledges the humanity of both self and others and implies relationship, mutuality and genuine dialogue. This sense of me as a researcher, as a real live person making observations, asking questions and taking notes, resulted in my decision to employ the first-person active voice "I" in contrast to the traditional third-person passive voice of academia throughout my study (Patton, 2015).

Further examination of reflexivity also highlighted the importance of considering, not only my own personal reflexivity but that of my co-researchers. Here I found Patton's (2015) triangulated reflexive inquiry a useful model (figure 3.2), distinguishing between self-reflexivity, reflexivity questions about those studied (co-researchers) and also those who receive my findings, in my case both the world of academia and practitioner team coaches.

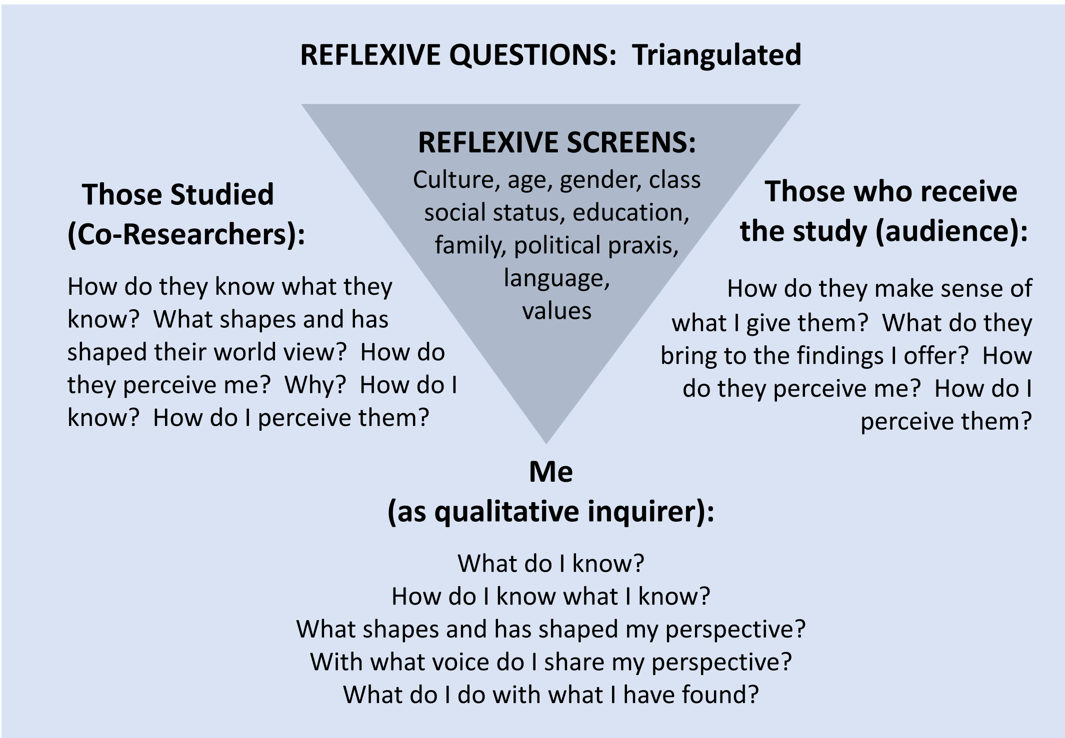


Figure 3.2: Triangulated reflexive inquiry. Adapted from Patton (2015). p.72

I took note of the "those studied" prompts by commencing each interview with an invitation to the co-researcher to share their background, the philosophies and approaches underpinning their coaching practice and their journey into team coaching, including any formal qualifications they have undertaken. This information is summarised in table 3.2 later in this chapter. I was cognizant of the fact that I knew some of my co-researchers quite well, for example having participated in peer supervision groups together in the past, whereas I had not met or had any connection with others. I knew that I would need to take these varying levels of familiarity into account, particularly in the focus groups. Two of my co-researchers possessed "academic expertise" with one having a professional doctorate and the other in the stages of completing his professional doctorate, both undertaking studies on aspects of team coaching. This fact provoked some mixed responses in me – I was delighted to have such knowledgeable co-researchers taking part in the study, conscious of not giving a disproportionate amount of weight to their comments as well as slightly intimidated by the thought that they could be perceived as more qualified than me. I also became aware that I too had a reputation in the field of coaching with one co-researcher commenting that she had read my book, found it incredibly useful and had recommended it to others and another that she had heard of me and my work and was really looking forward to meeting me. These reflections on knowledge and expertise were particularly valuable when I prepared for the first focus group and are discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

I took steps to ensure that reflexivity prevailed throughout the study by using a research journal. Capturing my thoughts, feelings, current thinking and questions enabled me to subsequently return to these with a critical eye and notice any assumptions or perceptions I was making. The practice of regularly presenting our research to our peer group, all of whom were interested in my research and had some personal involvement in team coaching, was invaluable as their critique invariably highlighted an assumption I was making or something I had missed. I also availed myself of regular supervision sessions with my supervision team, in particular prior to key milestones in my research. I shared my draft interview questions with them and the suggestion of including the question, "*What happened in your team coaching that made you question if this is part of team coaching*?" provoked a wealth of data on what team coaching is not. Something that my draft questions would not have uncovered. I shared my initial high-level thematic analysis with my supervision team prior to discussing this with my co-researchers and used their critical questions to help me understand any obvious gaps and limited thinking. I was also aware of the importance of reflexivity in the analysis of my data, ensuring that all voices, including differing opinions were heard, and including quotes from all co-researchers rather than relying on dominant voices.

3.5 The phases, concepts and processes of heuristic inquiry

Moustakas (1990) identifies six phases for heuristic inquiry with Hiles (2001) adding a seventh, 'validation' phase. Whilst these phases are presented in a linear format, in practice I found my experience was much more fluid with me moving back and forth through some of the phases and spending varying amounts of time in each stage. This was due to a number of factors including my decision to enhance the heuristic inquiry approach by adding focus groups, at the start and end of my field work; the fact that I was at times working on other aspects of my thesis at the same time as my field work and was not purely focussing my attention in one phase, as well as the constraint that I had a finite amount of time to complete my thesis and it was therefore not possible to work in the time-free state that Moustakas espoused. These seven phases are summarised below.

- **Phase 1: Initial engagement.** This phase is about discovering an intense interest, one that holds important social meanings and personal compelling implication that calls out to the researcher. Initial engagement invites self-dialogue which eventually forms a question. Moustakas speaks of the question lingering with the researcher awaiting the disciplined commitment and willingness to enter fully into the theme to reveal its underlying meaning.

- **Phase 2: Immersion.** Once the question is formulated the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping and even dreaming. In addition, the researcher enters fully into life with others whenever the key themes are talked about. Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion.

- **Phase 3: Incubation.** In this phase the researcher retreats from the intense focus on the question, allowing the unconscious mind to continue to work and extend understanding on levels outside of immediate awareness.

- **Phase 4: Illumination.** Illumination is characterised by a breakthrough into conscious awareness of the qualities and clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question. Illumination can take the form of a new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge or a new discovery.

- **Phase 5: Explication.** The purpose of this phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness in order to understand its various layers of meaning.

- **Phase 6: Creative synthesis.** This phase involves the researcher being challenged to put the components and core themes into a creative synthesis. This usually takes the form of a narrative depiction, utilising verbatim material and examples but it may be expressed as a poem, story, drawing, painting or other creative form.

- **Phase 7: Validation.** This phase is an additional step to the original phases and involves repeatedly going back to the raw data and checking with co-researchers for the sense of 'meaning' that it holds for them is key to this phase.

In addition to the phases of heuristic inquiry, Moustakas also identified seven core processes which he posited underpinned these phases. These are explained in table 3.1. Not all processes are required at each phase of heuristic inquiry and some are seen to be more important than others. For example. "tacit knowing" and "intuition" are emphasised in five of the seven phases whilst "indwelling" is highlighted in just one phase.

Core Process	What this involves and how I used the process in my study
Identifying with the focus of inquiry	Through exploratory open-ended inquiry, self-directed search and immersion in actual experience, getting inside the question. 'The inverted perspective; (Salk, 1983). ***Once I had decided on my research question it became all absorbing and I would suddenly find myself thinking of a person to talk to, a question to note down as I unconsciously start to engage with my inquiry.***
Self-dialogue	Being open, receptive and attuned to all facets of one's experience of the phenomenon. ***The process of reflecting on my own experience of team coaching, including re-connecting with what I already knew as well as looking at the familiar with fresh eyes and discovering new insights, as I engaged with other differing perspectives.***
Tacit knowing	The key concept that underlies all others. Tacit knowing gives "birth to the hunches and vague, formless insights that characterize heuristic discovery" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p.49). The idea of knowing the various parts of the tree and the ultimately a sense of the treeness of the tree. ***As the interviews progressed 'tacit knowing' became more evident as I became less aware of consciously directing the conversation.***
Intuition	The bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge. **An internal capacity to make inferences.** ***At times this appeared elusive as I felt submerged in the detail. But then a hunch or insight would suddenly appear, often provoked by a metaphor surfacing from the transcripts or me going for a long walk.***
Indwelling	Turning inward to seek a deeper more extended understanding of the experience. A conscious and deliberate process. Following clues and dwelling on them. ***A process that I returned to many times as I revisited my various sources of data, rereading them, making notes, mulling over connections and associations and finding new ones.***
Focusing	Clearing of an inward space to tap into thoughts and feelings; making contact with core themes and explicating them, identifying new qualities. **'Space' became increasingly important as I sought to make sense of the volume of data I had collected. At times I felt overwhelmed and creating mental space by blocking off periods of time and physical space in the form of being removed from my normal work environment enabled me to take a step back and allow higher level themes to emerge.**
Internal frame of reference	Looking at own experiences in perceptions, thoughts and feelings. A sense of needing to be in something to understand it. ***An ongoing process as I engaged and re-engaged with my own experiences as well as empathising with those of my co-researchers.***

Table 3.1: Seven core processes of heuristic inquiry (adapted from Moustakas, 1990, p. 15-27)

Figure 3.3 brings together the seven phases and seven processes, depicting the linkages between them. The diagram also shows Moustakas' recommended order of progression between the phases as well as my own actual experience of moving through the phases and how my research activities mapped onto these phases.

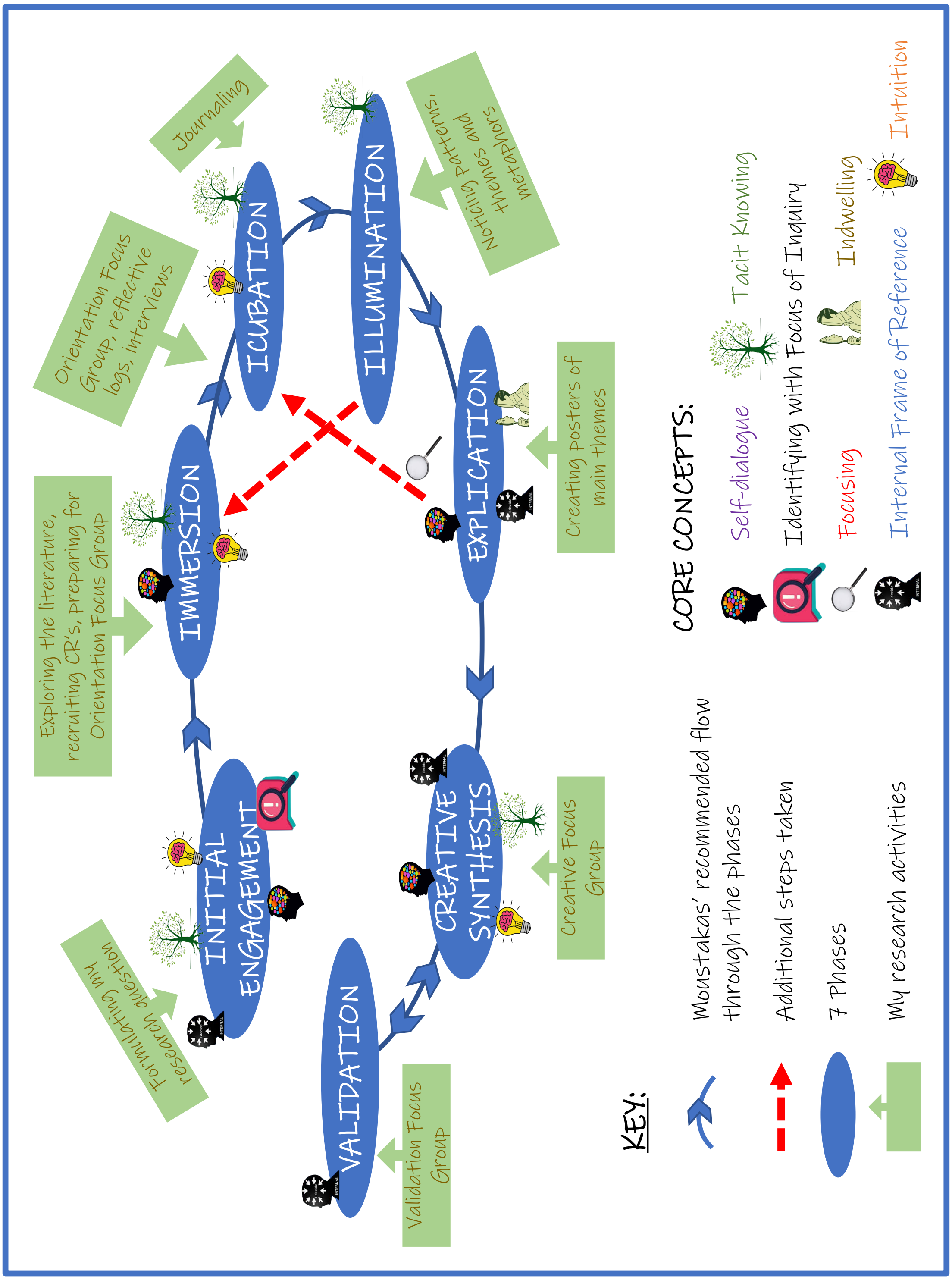


Figure 3.3: Heuristic inquiry phases, core concepts and my research activities

3.6 Recruiting my co-researchers

At the heart of heuristic inquiry is the principle of equality in the status of the researcher and co-researchers and of the principal researcher and co-researchers having an intimate relationship with the topic of inquiry (Wertz, 2005). I had entered into team coaching having practised dyadic coaching for many years and was particularly interested in the specific coaching activities that take place in team coaching and how these are similar/different to dyadic coaching. In addition, my experience was that of an external team coach working with a team in an organisation, rather than that of an internal coach or team leader practising team coaching in an organisation they were part of. I therefore believed that it was important to work with co-researchers who similarly had a background in dyadic coaching and who were also working as external team coaches as this would enable us all to explore similarities/differences between dyadic and team coaching from our own experiences. In making this decision I recognised that this would discount team coaches with different backgrounds, for example those who had entered the practice with a team facilitation rather than a dyadic coaching background and could be perceived as creating a biased sample.

I therefore extended Moustakas' (1990) requirement that the investigator must have a "*direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated*" (p.4) to all of my co-researchers, stipulating that participation in the research was subject to participants having at least five years' experience working as coaches, some experience of team coaching and be currently practising team coaching with one or more clients. In addition, they needed to be members of a professional coaching body and practising coaching in line with the body's professional and ethical codes of practice.

Having decided on the above key criteria I made a conscious decision not to invite any coaches that I had trained, supervised or worked with on a regular basis to participate in the study as I was aware that they would undoubtedly have very similar views as me and I may even hear my own words being echoed back. I also did not want to work with co-researchers who had similar backgrounds, for example all having been trained in the same team coaching methodology. I sought participation from ten practicing team coaches, interested in exploring their personal experiences of team coaching as my co-researchers. This sample size was complementary to the heuristic inquiry approach (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2015; Sultan, 2019) where the intent is not to generalise information but to elucidate the specifics and the richness of individual cases (Cresswell, 2018; Smith, 2008).

I used purposive sampling (Robson, 2011) to select my co-researchers, using professional coaching networks (including the European Coaching and Mentoring Council, Association for Coaching and the Coaching Supervision Academy), coaching forums and LinkedIn groups and the snowball sampling approach (Bryman, 2004). A 'recruitment flyer' was created which was then posted on social media networks with interested parties requested to approach the principal researcher for a participant information sheet. The names (pseudonyms) and a brief biography of my co-researchers, and myself as principal researcher, are presented in table 3.2. Co-researchers were also assigned a colour which was used in the subsequent data analysis as demonstrated in figure 3.5.

NAME	BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
ANITA	An independent coach for 10 years. Prior to this worked in a large IT multinational in a range of positions for 12 years. Has an MBA, an MSc in Business and Executive Coaching, incorporating a team coaching diploma and is a qualified coach supervisor. Has a Gestalt and somatic orientation.
BOB	An executive and team coach for 12 years. Prior to this spent over 10 years in global leadership and executive development. Has Postgraduate Diplomas in Executive Coaching, the Psychology of Executive Coaching and Systemic Team Coaching. Currently undertaking Doctoral research in coaching. Gestalt, strengths and systemic thinking all inform his coaching practice.
GRACE	An academic and executive coach for 11 years. Prior to joining academia worked for 20 years in large multinational corporations in a variety of roles including OD. Has a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring. A person-centred philosophy, systemic and cognitive thinking underpin her coaching practice.
JACKIE	An independent coach for 14 years. Prior to this spent 20 years in the recruitment business. Co-coaching Forum Facilitator for the AC since 2014. Has an ILM7 Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring. NLP and TA inform her coaching practice.
JEN	An independent coach for eight years. Prior to this worked in HR/L&D for 20 years, then consultancy for six years. Has a Postgraduate Certificate in Coaching A qualified somatic coach which is the foundation for her coaching style and approach.
JOHN	An independent coach for 12 years. Prior to this worked in the church as an ordained Minister and Chaplain. Has an Advanced Diploma in Professional Coach-Mentoring and is a qualified coach supervisor. Jungian Type is a big influence on his coaching practice.
JOY	An independent coach for seven years. Prior to this had a varied career in senior retail operations roles for 20 years, including in L&D. Has an MA in Human Resources, a Certificate in Team Coaching and is a qualified coach supervisor. Clean language, systemic constellations, TA and Gestalt all inform her coaching practice.
KENNEDY	An independent coach for more than fifteen years. Previously held corporate roles in both the UK and Switzerland. Has an MSc in Coaching and Behavioural Change and a Diploma in Team Coaching. TA and systemic thinking inform her coaching practice.
LIZA	An independent coach for 18 years. Prior to this was HR Director of a HR Consultancy. Has an MBA, an MA in Coaching and Mentoring and is BPS accredited to use a wide range of psychometrics. Is an ICF accredited team coach. NLP and TA inform her coaching practice.
MONICA	An independent coach for 20 years. Prior to this worked in consultancy. French, living in the UK, with extensive experience of working with the European Commission. Has an Advanced Diploma in Coach-Mentoring. Systemic thinking and coaching constellations inform her coaching practice.
GILL	An independent coach for 20 years. Prior to this was HR Director of a global high-tech organisation. Has an MBA, MA in Coaching and Mentoring and is a qualified coach supervisor. A person-centred philosophy, strengths, NLP, TA and Gestalt all inform her coaching practice.

Table 3.2: Pseudonyms and brief biographies of co-researchers and principal researcher

Upon expressing an interest, co-researchers were sent an invitation to participate in the research accompanied by a participant information sheet detailing the process that would be followed. Co-researchers were invited to take part in the following process designed to allow them to perceive and describe their experiences of team coaching including key experiences, feelings and thoughts generated and what they had learned from the experience.

- An orientation focus group lasting approximately two hours and audio recorded to provide a briefing on the research as well as decide on the reflection log format.
- A one-to-one in-depth interview of approximately 90 minutes for co-researchers to share their experiences of team coaching including themes emerging from their reflective logs. The interview would be audio recorded.
- Completion of reflective logs after team coaching sessions as well as on a periodic basis. The combination of interviews and reflective logs was intended to provide a longitudinal element to the study with co-researchers completing these when prompted by a thought or feeling about team coaching.
- A creative synthesis focus group lasting approximately two hours and audio recorded, where the key themes arising out of all data analysed by the principal researcher would be shared in order to jointly develop a “creative synthesis” (Moustakas, 1990; Sultan; 2017) of the essential elements of team coaching.

At the outset I recognised that completion of all of the above stages of the process would involve a significant investment of personal time from co-researchers, equating to up to ten hours per co-researcher. When briefing co-researchers it was, therefore, decided that the essential elements of the process would be the interview and completion of reflective logs with attendance at focus groups optional.

3.7 Data collection

As the study progressed it was apparent that developing a “creative synthesis” and exploring the essential elements of team coaching was too ambitious for one focus group. An additional validation focus group was, therefore, included as an additional and final stage. The stages of the process, data generated, order collected and analysed are presented in figure 3.4 with the green arrows denoting the three focus groups. The stages of the research are described in detail below.

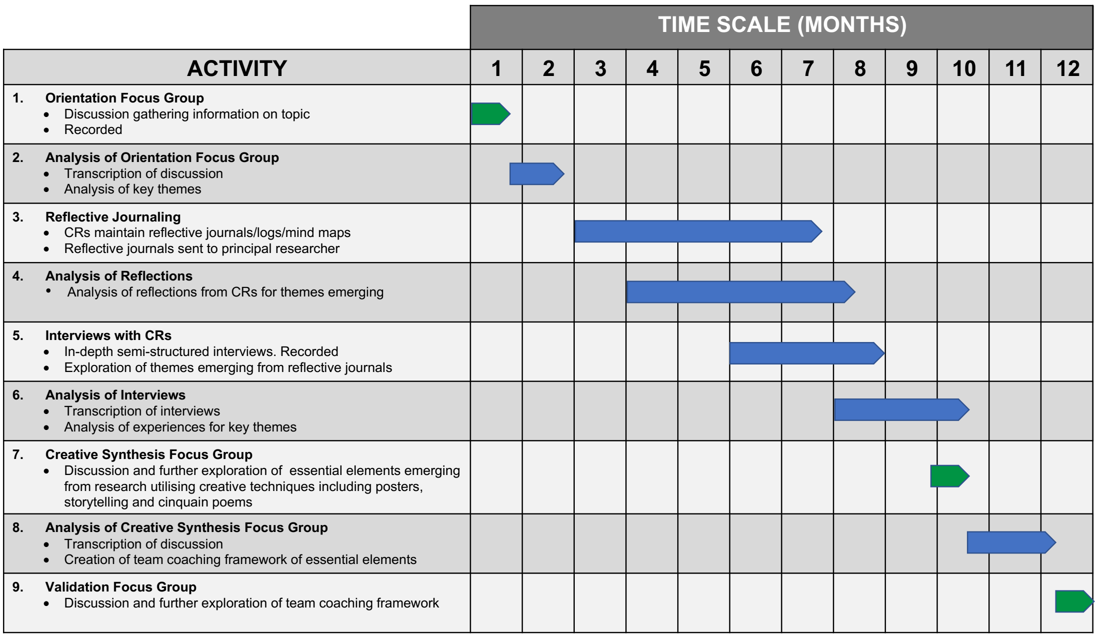


Figure 3.4: Activities, sources of data, collected and analysed

3.7.1 Orientation focus group

The orientation focus group had two purposes. Firstly, the literature review had identified a wide array of conceptualisations of team coaching. I had also become aware of the high level of interest in team coaching which had been mirrored by the ease in which I identified my group of co-researchers. It was therefore important that the research topic, purpose and outcomes were clear and aligned for all co-researchers with opportunity for discussion and clarification. Secondly, the next phase of the research was the maintenance of reflective logs by co-researchers and the focus group provided an opportunity for co-researchers to discuss and agree on the format of reflective logs, the frequency of reflections and how this data would be shared with the principal researcher.

The orientation focus group was attended by six co-researchers and facilitated by the principal researcher. Consideration was given to the ethos of heuristic inquiry in relation to the equality and contribution of all and providing space and time for all researchers to share their experiences. This consideration was reflected in the choice of venue and layout with a spacious meeting room booked, with natural light, fresh air, fresh flowers, a range of refreshments and the chairs arranged in a circle to represent the equality of contribution. I also decided to audio record the focus group using a digital recorder as well as my phone as a secondary backup device.

As the date of the orientation focus group approached, I reflected on what my role needed to be during the focus group, both how I needed to be in order to get the best out of the co-researchers and how I needed to run the session. Wilkinson (2008) advocates that the researcher acts as a "moderator" for the group: "*posing the questions, keeping the discussion flowing and encouraging people to participate fully*" and "*actively encouraging group members to interact with each other*" (2008, p. 187). I was heedful of the range of communicative processes Wilkinson identifies as being part of focus groups including: "*storytelling, joking, arguing, boasting, teasing, persuasion, challenge and disagreement*" (2008, p.187). In particular I was aware that my group of co-researchers had a wealth of collective experience and qualifications and that, in order to create as equal and collaborative space as possible, I would need to ensure that any "showcasing" of expertise was kept to a minimal and be mindful that co-researchers would probably be comparing themselves to each other resulting in possible feelings of inferiority in the group. I therefore pre-empted this concern by emailing everyone in advance, acknowledging the level of experience in the group and inviting everyone to provide a brief introduction to themselves at the start at the session focusing on themselves as a person, any particular lens that they brought to their coaching and team coaching and to keep references to qualifications, expertise and length of experience to a minimum. This worked well with several comments at the end of the session that co-researchers had looked at other co-researchers' LinkedIn profiles ahead of the session and had been sitting there at the start wondering whether they deserved to be there.

I was also conscious of advice that a focus group should have a clear "schedule" with a distinct beginning and end involving practical considerations - including attending to participants' comfort, reiterating issues of anonymity/confidentiality and setting ground rules for running the group at the start and reiterating thanks and information about next steps at the end (Wilkinson, 2008). The discussion on confidentiality/anonymity took an unexpected turn when my suggestion that I create a pseudonym for each co-researcher met with an immediate suggestion that all co-researchers create their own. This suggestion quickly gathered energy and enthusiasm. From my perspective it also resonated with the spirit of heuristic inquiry and the theme of co-creation and equality of contribution. We therefore agreed that all co-researchers would create their own pseudonym, which they would share separately with the me but these pseudonyms would not be shared with other co-researchers to retain anonymity.

After the introductions the remainder of the session was split into the following schedule.

1. A detailed explanation of the research topic, purpose and objectives followed by questions and discussion.

2. Co-researchers providing their own current definition and explanation of team coaching which we agreed we would use as our baseline for the start of the research. These are all reproduced in appendix A.
3. A discussion on the format and regularity of reflective logs. Prior to the focus group I had prepared a draft format for reflections which I shared with my co-researchers. These questions were discussed and refined and some additional areas added particularly around roles which the team coach had played (intentionally or unintentionally) and themes and patterns. The revised format is in appendix B. It was agreed that reflections could be sent to the principal researcher at any time. In addition, the principal researcher would prompt all co-researchers at the end of each month.

Immediately after the focus group I listened to the recording in its entirety making notes of what I perceived to be salient points. I then transcribed the session, omitting the section when I was briefing the group on my research topic as I already had this in a scripted format.

A week after the orientation focus group I held a Zoom call for two co-researchers who had been unable to attend this session. This was a shorter one-hour session comprising of a re-run of points 1-3 above. I also had separate phone calls with the remaining two co-researchers who had been unable to attend either of these sessions.

After all of the above sessions had taken place, I emailed my co-researchers as a group thanking them for their contribution so far, sharing the typed-up definitions of team coaching that everyone had provided and the revised reflective log format and confirming next steps.

3.7.2 One-to-one in-depth interviews

At the start of my research I had anticipated that the interviews would be a mixture of face-to-face or phone/Zoom, to allow flexibility with geographical logistics and work schedules. However, having experienced the richness of being face-to-face with my co-researchers in the orientation focus group, as they described not only the process they had gone through but also complex and surprising feelings and somatic responses, phone/Zoom felt like too impersonal a medium and I felt I may miss some of the richness of the experience. I therefore decided to conduct my interviews face-to-face wherever possible. Consequently all but two of my interviews were conducted face-to-face with the remainder using Zoom. I also took note of the feedback from the orientation focus group that using a designated meeting space, free from interruptions and noise, had created a conducive environment for the session and how Crotty (1998) highlights the importance of the setting in which interviews are conducted. I took this insight into the one-to-one interviews, booking quiet meeting rooms with natural lighting and ensuring that I was in a private space, away from my work setting, for the Zoom calls.

Moustakas (1990) recommends that interviews take the form of "conversational dialogue", rather than semi-structured interviews, and determined by an inner experiential time rather than the clock. Whilst wanting to stay as true to the principles of heuristic research as much as possible, practically I felt that I needed to have at least a small number of questions that I asked all of my co-researchers to facilitate the data analysis phase. My co-researchers also invariably asked how long I needed for the interview and, "as long as is needed" did not seem a viable response to such questions. I therefore advised co-researchers that I anticipated that the interview would take approximately 90 minutes but asked them to allow up to two hours to allow a little leeway. I also prepared a limited number of questions to ask all of my co-researchers with a view to then expanding upon these, depending on the responses I received.

My initial questions were drawn from Mousakas' own examples of typical heuristic inquiry questions as well as themes arising out of the literature that I felt warranted further inquiry including conceptualisations of team coaching, the idea of "readiness" for team coaching, the roles played by team coaches and the concept of "group contagion".

I piloted my interview questions with a colleague which proved a valuable experience. In particular he commented that my question, "*How do you perceive and describe your experience of team coaching*?" was too vague and he had no idea how to start answering it. I therefore amended this question to the more specific – "*Can you describe the structure of your team coaching? What does a typical assignment look like*?" The interview questions are in appendix C.

I audio recorded all of my interviews. At the start of my research I had been torn between having my interviews professionally transcribed and undertaking this task myself. Time was an obvious factor and I was concerned about how long it would take me to transcribe them myself. Equally, I recalled the experience of undertaking the field work for my MA and how personally transcribing the interviews had reconnected me with the experience and helped me relive it again, listening to the interviewee's voice and picking up nuances that I had not noticed at the time. Transcribing the interviews myself also seemed more compatible with heuristic inquiry and the concept of "immersing" myself in the data. However, having transcribed the orientation focus group myself I quickly realised that continuing to do my own transcribing was going to be far too time consuming and prevent me from using valuable time to work on other aspects of my study. I therefore engaged the services of my personal assistant to transcribe the interviews, ensuring that the appropriate confidentiality documentation was completed in line with research ethics.

3.7.3 Reflective logs

In my desire to keep as true to the principles of heuristic inquiry as possible the format and regularity of reflective logs were discussed and agreed at the orientation focus group. We agreed that co-researchers could use the agreed format and set of questions as a guideline and submit reflective logs whenever they chose to and in whatever format that worked for them. My co-researchers also requested that I send them a monthly reminder, including a brief update on my own progress and whether I needed anything more or different from themselves. In practice this part of the study was less useful than originally envisaged. Some of my co-researchers had just finished team coaching assignments, or had work deferred, or were working with teams that met only twice or four times a year. Some were reticent about committing their reflections into words, with a couple emailing me describing how they were finding the practice difficult and were subsequently reflecting on what this meant for their own reflective practice. As a result of these challenges I received a variable number of reflective logs with some co-researchers sending me regular detailed logs and others a small number of reflections. Equally the quality of reflections varied with some capturing insights as well as impact on self, whereas others were primarily a description of what happened at the session. This variability of quantity and quality did present a challenge in ensuring that all voices were heard when I came to data analysis.

3.7.4 Creative synthesis focus group

The creative synthesis focus group served two purposes: firstly, an opportunity to share my findings with my co-researchers and through discussion enable a richer and deeper understanding of them and secondly to develop a creative synthesis of the key themes. Moustakas (1994) suggests that the researcher

> *Write a brief creative close that speaks to the essence of the study and its inspiration to you in terms of the value of the knowledge and future directions of your professional-personal life*. (p. 184)

Whilst I liked this concept, I also wanted to retain the co-creation element of my research. After reviewing a number of creative options, I elected to use cinquain poetry for my creative synthesis. Having concluded the first part of the focus group we took a refreshment break and I then invited my co-researchers to spend three minutes writing a piece of prose starting with “My experience of team coaching …” I completed the activity at the same time. Having done so we spent some time reading through our prose underlining key words, either ones we had repeated a number times or that seemed particularly meaningful. I then invited my co-researchers to create their own cinquain poem, i.e. a poem comprising of five lines and nine words capturing their essence of team coaching. We all then shared our prose and/or cinquain poem. I collected all of the prose and poems at the end of the session.

3.7.5 Validation Focus Group

This focus group was added on to the end of the study as it became apparent that it would be too ambitious to provide a creative close to the study, and explore in detail the essential elements of team coaching in order to develop a framework of team coaching, in one focus group. At the validation focus group I shared my draft framework of team coaching with the co-researchers.

3.7.6 Summary of data sources

Table 3.3 summarises the various data sources for the study, number of these, and number of words/duration of sessions.

Data Source	Number	Length	Number of Words
Orientation Focus Group*	1	2 hours	
Reflective logs	21	Varying from 300 words to 3,000	25,716
Interviews	10	Interviews varied from 1 hour 8 mins to 1 hour 45 mins A total of 14 hours 20 mins	98,563
Creative Synthesis Focus Group*	1	2.5 hours	
Validation Focus Group *	1	2.5 hours	

**Only the participants' discussions amongst each other were transcribed*

Table 3.3: Data sources including number and length of interactions

3.8 Analysing the data

Moustakas (1990) presents an outline guide of procedures for the analysis of data with eight steps which are summarised in table 3.4 below.

Step	Description
1.	Gathering of all the data for each co-researcher (recording, transcript, journal, notes)
2.	Entering into the material in timeless immersion until it is understood
3.	Setting data aside for a while, taking an interval of rest before returning to the data with fresh energy and perspective.
4.	Return to the original data of the individual co-researcher. Does it contain the qualities and themes essential to the experience? If it does the researcher is ready to move to the next co-researcher. If not, the individual depiction must be revised to include what has been omitted or deleted.
5.	Undertaking the same course of organisation and analysis for each of the other research participants until an individual depiction of each co-researcher’s experience has been constructed
6.	Gathering all depictions. Re-engagement with immersion process to draw out the universal qualities and themes of the experience. Develop a composite depiction.
7.	Selection of two or three participants who clearly exemplify the group as a whole. Development of individual portraits of these persons.
8.	Development of a creative synthesis, an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings

Table 3.4: Outline guide of procedures for analysis of data Moustakas (1994). P. 51-52

Whilst wishing to adhere to Moustakas’ (1990) methodology as closely as possible, I was equally mindful that he had labelled this an “outline guide” rather than a prescriptive to be followed religiously and of my need to adopt an approach that worked for me from a practical and philosophical perspective. Once I had established my data collection methods and order of collection it was apparent that I would need to adopt a less linear and “timeless” approach than Moustakas’ guide suggests to take into account the fact that I would be conducting interviews over a seven month period and receiving reflective logs on an ad hoc basis. I also chose to omit step 7, the exemplary portraits, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the concept of “exemplary” felt quite incongruent to me from my relativist position of valuing the individual experience, implying a sense of judgement on my behalf as to which of my co-researchers’ experiences were more “exemplary” than others. Secondly, from a practical standpoint I was aware that some of my co-researchers were well-known in the field of coaching and that constructing a sufficiently detailed portrait, whilst maintaining anonymity for both my co-researcher and their clients, would be extremely challenging. Finally, the fourth objective of my study was to “To elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching and contribute to practice by developing a comprehensive framework of team coaching”. In order to achieve this objective I believed I would be needing to generalise and homogenise the experiences of my co-researchers by stage 7 of my analysis, whilst exemplary portraits would be retaining too much focus on individual experiences.

After a good deal of soul-searching I decided to use NVivo software to commence my thematic analysis. My soul-searching stemmed from my preference for a more creative and hands-on approach for identifying themes using post it notes and mind maps - a process that I had used successfully for my MA and which intuitively felt a more natural fit for heuristic inquiry. However, it soon became apparent that the amount of data generated from ten interviews would be significantly greater than the six interviews that I had conducted for my Masters. In addition, I had collected a wealth of data from the orientation focus group and an array of reflective logs in various shapes and forms which I also needed to analyse. Faced with this conundrum I was guided by Patton's (2015 p. 529) argument that qualitative software can play a useful role in managing the volume of qualitative data and *"**assist**"* analysis in the same way that quantitative software does. Patton (2015) argues that qualitative software can help build connections to enable further development of insights and to assist with storage and retrieval. Similarly Sultan (2019 p. 148-149) urges the would-be heuristic inquirer to:

> *Be creative and not limit yourself with categorical thinking (e.g. "Tables are for quantitative studies"). Use whatever platforms help you access the experience you are exploring.*

I was persuaded by the above arguments and decided to trial NVivo and was pleasantly surprised that I found it quite straightforward to use and, more importantly, that I felt comfortable and more in control of a wealth of data.

I undertook steps 1 and 2 with all of my co-researchers with interviews spaced over a seven-month period and reflections received on an ongoing basis. After each interview I sent the MP4 file to my transcriber for transcribing, I read reflective logs as I received them and then electronically filed these away to allow my thoughts to incubate (Moustakas). Step 2 was time bound rather than open-ended as a practical consideration. Step 3 - 5 entailed me returning to the data after an interval of rest with renewed energy and enthusiasm. I gathered all of the data (focus group, reflections and interview transcription) for each co-researcher in turn, read through it all several times and listened to the interview to gain the fullest possible sense of that co-researcher's experience. Since the orientation focus group I had been noting in my research journal any themes that seemed to be recurring and I set these up as an initial set of codes in NVivo. Working systematically, I then worked through each co-researcher's data, coding text to existing codes and adding new codes as necessary. I worked hard to resist the temptation to generalise and make meaning and adopted the approach, if in doubt set up a new code even if it is a theme unique to one co-researcher. This did leave me with a long list of codes (as displayed in table 3.5) but I made a decision to reduce these later rather than adopting a reductionist process too early on.

Name	Files
Feelings and Thoughts G...	15
Somatic Changes	1
How do I Know Team Coa...	10
Key Learning	8
Models and Frameworks	4
Constellations	5
Gestalt	1
NLP	1
Psychometrics	3
Jungian Conceptuali...	6
Strengths	2
Psychotherapeutic App...	1
TA	2
Somatic or emobodime...	1
Team Development	11
Team Identity and Purp...	6
Qualifications and Experi...	10
Readiness for Team Coac...	17
Definition of Readiness...	9
Individual Team Memb...	16
Team Leadership	7

Name	Files
Skills and Behaviours	0
Challenging	16
Clean language	1
Coaching skills	7
Courage and resilience	1
Creating a Safe Space	9
Holding the structure	4
Intuition	1
Keeping a Written Rec...	3
Metaphor	1
Modelling behaviour	4
Observational feedback	10
Pattern Recognition	5
Thinking on my feet	8
Understanding the Bro...	5
Structure of Team Coachi...	0
Co Team Coaching	18
Coaching Methodology	14
Coaching Team Memb...	9
Coaching the Team Le...	9
Duration of assignments	2
Individual 121s - Contr...	11
Length, Regularity and...	14
Team Coaching Develo...	9

Name	Files
Team Coaching Conceptu...	0
A Journey	1
An extension of individ...	1
Emergent Metaphors	2
Team Performance	1
Team Coaching Roles	2
Becoming Part of the T...	4
Continuity	2
Outsourced team pe...	1
Remaining objective	1
Team Leader	7
Catalyst	1
Coach	5
Comedian	1
Confidante	2
Facilitator	8
Holding Up the Mirror	7
Mediator	1
Permission Giver	3
Referee	3
Sharing expertise - tea...	0
The voice of the stake...	1
Transactional Analysis	12
When is it not team coac...	9

Table 3.5: Codes arising out of NVivo Analysis

Steps 6 and 8 were completed twice. The first iteration of step 6 entailed me taking a planned break before returning to the data a few weeks before the creative synthesis focus group. Whilst I had found NVivo useful initially to make sense of a wealth of data, I then struggled to shift my thinking from a long list of codes to noticing patterns and themes running throughout the data. I therefore returned to the "immersion" stage, re-reading the interview and focus group transcripts, reflection logs and my journal notes. Gradually patterns emerged in the form of repeated key words/phrases. These notable words and phrases were transposed onto Post-It notes and, using repetitions, recurring metaphors and coaching/psychotherapeutic theory were clustered together to form emerging themes. An insight into this process can be seen in figure 3.5.

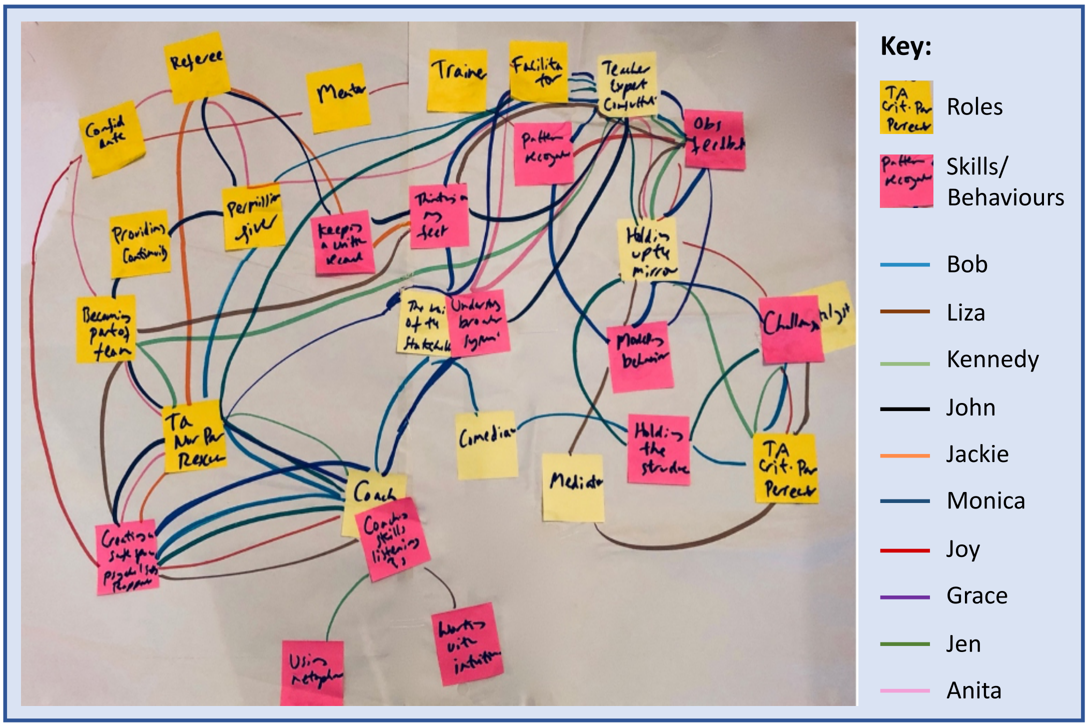


Figure 3.5: Using Post-It notes to uncover emerging themes

As patterns and themes started to emerge I created a poster for each key theme comprising: a short summary of the theme, any related sub themes and some bullet points to describe these as well as several verbatim quotes from co-researchers to bring these themes to life. These quotes could be accessed by lifting the coloured tabs on each poster (figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Posters created for the creative synthesis focus group

I used the first part of the creative synthesis focus group to share my findings to date with my co-researchers. In advance of the session I had displayed the posters around the room as shown in appendix D. The session commenced with me walking the co-researchers around the gallery of posters explaining the background to and content of each theme. My co-researchers then spent an hour reading the material on the flipcharts, asking me questions, making comments and discussing reactions with other co-researchers. I invited my co-researchers to use Post It notes to add to the flipcharts, in particular pointing out anything they felt was missing, was particularly important as well as linkages between themes. As previously the focus group was audio recorded.

Step 8, the creative synthesis, was completed during the creative synthesis focus group using cinquain poems. To enable me to be fully present at the focus group I created my own cinquain poem ahead of the session.

After the creative synthesis focus group I listened to the audio recording of the session, read through the transcription and repeated step 6, making any modifications arising out of the focus group to create my final composite depiction of the essential themes.

The last stage of my analysis was to develop my comprehensive framework of team coaching, the final objective of my study, and to use another focus group, the validation focus group, to share and explore this with my co-researchers. I spent the intervening two months between the creative synthesis focus group and the validation focus group creating this framework which I again transferred on to large posters. Once again I displayed these posters around the room, walked the co-researchers around the posters and then left some time for them to read and reflect on the material and suggest additions or raise questions using Post It notes. This process is captured in appendix E. As a group we then focussed on each part of the framework in turn, discussing any questions that had been raised via Post It notes and making amendments or clarifications where necessary. As previously the focus group was audio recorded.

After the validation focus group I listened to the audio recording of the sessions, read through the transcription before making any necessary modifications to my comprehensive framework of team coaching.

3.9 Ethics and Confidentiality

As I designed the study I became increasingly aware that in adapting a social constructionist stance I would need to consider two components of ethics and ethical behaviour. Firstly, those components focussing on clarifying and fortifying boundaries to avoid negative outcomes and ethical complaints. Secondly, those components that position ethics as a driver of effective practice, creating conditions in which sufficient trust exists to enable human beings to flourish and foster social interaction and shared action (Cavanagh, Stern & Lane, 2016).

Prior to commencing this research, a proposal for the study was submitted to the Oxford Brookes University Ethics Committee. The study, together with its approach to mitigating potential risks was approved. A possible risk for co-researchers taking part in this research was that they might experience negative emotions as a result of discussing their experiences, particularly when asked to recall more challenging situations. This risk was mitigated by informing co-researchers that they could withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide reasons and by providing signposting information for co-researchers to raise concerns with the Oxford Brookes Ethics Committee or my doctoral supervisors.

The primary risk for my co-researchers related to anonymity - their own, client and any team coaches that they had co-coached alongside. This risk was mitigated by the co-researchers providing pseudonyms for themselves, co team coaches and clients in their accounts and by inviting co-researchers to write their own mini biographies which are displayed in table 3.2.

Reassurance with respect to the confidential nature of the interview and reflection process and the management and security of materials, both paper and electronic, were also specified, ensuring that hard copy records were locked away and data and recordings under password control on my computer.

Informed consent was ensured by providing comprehensive participant information sheets to all participants and obtaining signed consent forms from all participants. See appendix F for a copy of a participant information sheet and appendix G for a copy of a consent form. Having made a decision to use my assistant to transcribe the interviews and focus groups a confidentiality agreement was created and agreed to by both parties.

In line with the ethos of heuristic inquiry, co-researchers were sent transcripts from their interviews so they could ensure that these were a faithful depiction of their experience as well as amend any depictions. A few minor amendments were made which in all cases related to taking further steps to anonymise clients or co team coaches. The challenge of protecting the identity of co-researchers whilst providing rich detail of their experiences presented an ongoing challenge throughout the writing up phase.

The above steps explain how I managed ethics and ethical behaviour from a perspective of avoiding negative outcomes and ethical complaints. However, I was aware that simply stating that I had followed the University's ethical guidelines did not satisfy true ethical practice and that I also needed to focus on "*process ethics*", the relational processes that are responsible for the sustenance of relationship (Gergen, 2001). Such a focus would include no researcher/researched distinction, instead adapting a stance of co-researchers who are also acknowledged as experts who work with the principal researcher and the importance of bringing disparate ideas and practices into conversations in a spirit of curiosity rather than judgement (NcNamee, 2020).

NcNamee (2008) argues the importance of creating a context (physical, relational and personal) that invites a different form of conversation, that of "*growthful dialogue*". In section 3.7 I explore how I sought to create such a context in my interactions with co-researchers, including conducting interviews and focus groups face-to-face; booking meetings rooms with natural light, refreshments and informal seating and inviting co-researchers to introduce themselves as people rather than emphasising professional qualifications and expertise. From the outset I positioned myself as a co-researcher, rather than an expert, and fostered an environment of generous listening and curious inquiry. In the focus groups I sought to invite all voices into the conversation and to promote a different form of conversation, that where co-researcher's could hold their own position whilst allowing other co-researchers, often with very different positions, to do the same. In addition, I endeavoured to include all co-researchers' voices in my findings chapters.

3.10 Reflections of quality criteria for qualitative research

Measures of quality in qualitative research need to be congruent with the paradigm within which the research is constructed. In contrast to quantitative research, the researcher in qualitative research is not conceived of as an objective observer who describes and reports on phenomena without contamination. Indeed, in placing the researcher as the primary instrument, heuristic inquiry, directly challenges traditional scientific concerns about researcher objectivity and detachment (Patton, 2015).

I took note of approaches to recognising quality and rigor in qualitative research including Lincoln and Guba (1985) who advocate credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Cresswell (2018) stresses the importance of rigorous data collection methods including multiple sources of data, using a recognised approach to qualitative inquiry and writing persuasively so that the reader experiences "being there". Patton (2015) takes a slightly different approach emphasising the importance of “authenticity” which he argues comes from providing a

> *credible, authoritative and trustworthy voice engaging the reader through rich description, thoughtful sequencing, appropriate use of quote and contextual clarity. (p. 73)*

I was mindful of some of the limitations levelled at heuristic inquiry as a methodology, particularly in relation to its subjectivity, introspection and rigor (Patton, 2015; Hiles, 2001). Etherington (2004) warns that the emphasis on subjective experience increases the researcher’s bias which can manifest itself in a number of ways including the selection of co-researchers and how meaning is synthesised. Whilst acknowledging the above concerns about the subjectivity and generalisability of heuristic inquiry, much of this would appear to stem from Moustakas’ early research where heuristic inquiry is established as self-research with the researcher maintaining “*an unwavering and steady inward gaze*” (1990, p.13). In evolving heuristic inquiry to embrace the exploration of the experiences of co-researchers Moustakas provided the opportunity for different perspectives, multiple voices and experiences to be heard. In choosing to adopt this participatory approach, working with ten co-researchers, from diverse coaching backgrounds, none of whom had been trained or supervised by me or followed an identical development path as a coach, I minimized the likelihood of accusations of self-absorption, bias and a lack of dependability/reliability. Gray’s (2009) comments resonated with me,

> *..we can add authenticity, which relates analysis and interpretation to the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the subjects of the research. This means the researcher being aware of the multiple voices contained in the data and the subtle, sometimes conflicting realities within it.* (p. 194)

The inclusion of three focus groups enabled me to facilitate face-to-face discussion between my co-researchers and highlight and challenge any assumptions I may have made in order to gain a richer and deeper level of meaning underpinning the data, thereby addressing the “confirmability” aspect of quality and rigor.

In seeking to meet the criterium of “credible” I took particular note of Shenton’s (2004) and Cresswell’s (2018) assertion that one of the most significant ways that qualitative research can gain credibility is by adopting research methods that are well established. I was therefore encouraged to discover that heuristic inquiry has been employed successfully by researchers to produce original empirical research in the field of coaching (Prescott, 2010; Munro, 2012; Wood, 2015; Wallis, 2016; McCartney, 2018).

3.11 Summary

This chapter reflects my philosophical and methodological approach to the gathering and analysis of data in support of my research question and objectives. I have explained how my desire to be an insider researcher participating with others led me to choose heuristic inquiry as my chosen methodology. Heuristic inquiry is a well-established methodology (Moustakas 1990) providing both a rigorous process as well as scope for the researcher to adapt the approach. I embraced the opportunity to research collaboratively, recruiting co-researchers who had a personal interest and involvement in team coaching whilst seeking diversity in backgrounds and experience. Enhancing heuristic inquiry through the inclusion of three focus groups enabled shared learning, expanded thinking and knowledge development amongst the co-researchers. In addition, the design of the study with the combination of data gained via focus groups, interviews and reflective logs over an eleven-month period built in a longitudinal dimension to the study.

Introduction to Findings

In the following three chapters, I present the findings from the study germane to the research question: What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching? The findings are presented as a series of themes derived from the data analysis.

The NVivo analysis of the interview transcriptions, reflective logs and focus group transcriptions generated a wealth of codes and sub codes relating to roles, skills and behaviours adopted, knowledge utilised, preparation undertaken and evaluation of practice. The ensuing process of mapping key words/codes arising from this analysis, using Post It notes and coloured pens, enabled patterns to emerge amongst the data as presented previously in figure 3.5 in chapter 3. As I continued the process three clear groupings emerged: elements that occurred prior to team coaching commencing; experiences that took place whilst the team coach was “in the room” with the team carrying out team coaching and finally reflections post assignment evaluating the experience.

As I considered how to theme my findings I recalled how, at the orientation focus group, I had invited co-researchers to share their own conceptualisations of team coaching. As I revisited these conceptualisations I noticed that several described team coaching as a process taking place over an extended period of time, with a sense of movement, direction and change. A number of co-researchers used the analogy of a “journey” and, whilst mindful that this analogy is well-worn, the metaphor seemed to resonate with my findings. I had been particularly struck by Jen’s metaphor of team coaching as a “murmuration” of starlings and I decided to combine the two metaphors of a “journey” and a “murmuration”. The ensuing metaphor, which I have used to theme my findings chapters, is therefore that of a flight involving a flock of birds. The beginning, or preparation phase when the flock is getting ready to take flight; middle or intervention phase when the flock has taken flight and started to “murmurate” and the last reflection or evaluation phase when a new destination has been reached, the activity has ceased and the highlights and challenges of the journey are reflected upon alongside the learning for future activities. These three themes in turn became chapter titles namely:

Chapter 4: Preparing for team coaching
Chapter 5: Delivering team coaching: the murmuration
Chapter 6: Evaluating team coaching

The primary data sources in the three chapters consist of interview transcriptions (I) and reflective logs (RL) from the co-researchers. Supplementary data is provided from the orientation (OFG); creative synthesis (CSFG) and validation (VFG) focus groups. The voices of the co-researchers are used extensively throughout the three chapters, in all cases the pseudonym of the co-researcher is provided, together with the data source. For example, “Kennedy: I”, denotes that the source was Kennedy’s interview.

In keeping with the principles of heuristic inquiry, I was ever-present in the research. I selected some starter questions for the interviews and reflective logs and introduced arguments from the literature that appeared salient into the focus groups to ascertain if these were supported or challenged by the group. In parallel I explored my own personal attitudes, ethical dilemmas and moments of insight in my own team coaching practice keeping a reflective log and research journal. My own voice, therefore, became part of the researchers’ voices as I combined my insights and practices with those of the co-researchers. At the end of each chapter my own voice comes to the fore as I reflect on what I particularly took from the findings and what surprised or particularly resonated with me.

Chapter 4 – Preparing for Team Coaching

The over-arching theme of this chapter is the first, preparation phase, of team coaching. A number of themes emerged from the data analysis relating to timing, activities undertaken, support and knowledge required by the team coach as preparation, prior to commencing team coaching. These are:

- Team "readiness"
- Team coach readiness: flying solo or in pairs?
- Timing: is there a "right" or "wrong" time?
- Individual coaching whilst team coaching: to do or not to do?
- Preparing the route

4.1 Team "readiness"

The concept of "readiness" for team coaching was one that arose out of the literature, usually in a short statement such as, "the team needs to be ready". How the team coach knew that a team was "ready" was something I felt warranted further inquiry and, therefore, one that I raised at the orientation focus group. A rich discussion ensued and it was agreed that this concept of "readiness" was something that we would all individually reflect upon in the following weeks and I also included a couple of questions exploring "readiness" in my draft interview questions (see appendix C). This section deals with three sub themes which emerged, under the broad heading of team "readiness" for coaching.

- "Readiness" versus "willingness"
- "Readiness" of team members
- "Readiness" of team leader

4.1.1 "Readiness" versus "willingness"

All co-researchers agreed that gauging whether a team was "ready" for team coaching was complex. At the heart of this challenge was the likelihood that the vast majority of participants would not have experienced team coaching before and therefore have a limited view of what it entailed. Often "readiness" referred to a willingness to engage with the process.

> *I think willing is more the word because as group they agreed that they were willing to be coached. Whether they were ready to be coached I think is the difference. Maybe the willingness makes them ready but are they sure about what they are signing up for? Do they actually know what team coaching is? I think there's that space between willingness and readiness – are they interchangeable? What's connected?* (Kennedy: I).

Another aspect of "readiness" was a sense of being ready to do something, to take action, despite a level of uncertainty about what was involved. Jen emphasised this commitment to action, differentiating between being "ready" in terms of "*well I'm ready for it*" versus "*ready to do something with it as a result of the coaching*" (Jen: I). For others there was an element of being "ready", despite knowledge that it could be quite a challenging experience. Anita (I) posed the question, "*Are they ready to jump into the pool*?" having been told that the water will be cold and it will be a shock. For teams that are struggling in their performance as a team, "readiness" is closely linked to team members knowing that things need to change.

> *I think it's that piece about change. It's either bad enough that they know they need to do something or they want to be different. And I think without one of those as the impetus it won't happen (Joy: I).*

Another important aspect of "readiness" is that teams are made up of individuals and individuals will inevitably be in different stages of "readiness". This sense of individual versus team "readiness" was often referred to in the form of a sporting metaphor or analogy, including team members being ready to climb up to the top of the diving board and dive into the cold water or at the starting line-up for a race.

> *It's like if you have a starting line in a race, you've got some people that are lined up ready to go and other people that are like "well I'm already started"… and I think that's exactly what you have in a group. Some are facing the wrong way…. What their experiences have been in the past, their own personal experiences of counselling, therapy and coaching, and what they're holding about their parents' views – all that sort of stuff comes into the room, doesn't it?* (Jen: I).

Understanding where team members are in relation to the starting line and, where necessary, getting them onto the starting line is challenging and complex. Kennedy provided a vivid illustration of this challenge in action, describing experiencing differing levels of "readiness" with some team members "*really thirsty and curious*", another team member who was "*really interested but quite scared and feeling vulnerable*" and another who was "*Ok, well I just want to be working part-time, I'm not that interested*". These different levels of "readiness" had manifested themselves in contrasting behaviours with some team members setting off from the starting line, really eager and "*let's do this*!" By contrast others were backing away from the starting line, "*Oh god we don't want to do this*!" Kennedy saw "readiness" as "*despite everything are they willing to do it? Are they willing to give it a try and see what it's about*?" (Kennedy: I).

4.1.2 "Readiness" of team members

Set against this backdrop of "readiness" for team coaching being an almost unattainable position, co-researchers had differing views of how much "readiness" they personally needed from team members before embarking on an assignment. One perspective was presented by Monica who downplayed the importance of team members needing to be "ready".

> *I don't need personally a team to be ready for team coaching before I'm in front of them. Why would they be? They don't know what team coaching is as such.*

Continuing her theme Monica described how she was unfazed by scepticism amongst team members;

> *I would expect that in a team there will be one or two who are sceptical, on the side, can't be bothered, don't want to get involved, don't believe it. I expect it, I never mind it, they have a voice, they have a voice in the system. It's normal in a team to have someone who plays that role and I don't mind* (Monica: I*).*

However, this stance was unusual, with most co-researchers stating that they wanted to sense some level of "readiness". For some, once the business/leader has decided to go ahead with team coaching, part of their role as team coach is getting the remaining team members on board. John used the analogy of a diving board.

> *My role in the individual team meetings is to get them to the position where at least they are beginning to climb the steps onto the diving board… they've walked up the first two steps towards the diving board anyway because they are just doing what the boss says but there's a sense that as they engage in the process they become hopefully more voluntary about taking the last steps up there and saying, "Ok right we're now ready to jump and the water's lovely and warm. It'll be fine when we get in"* (John: I).

Jackie similarly saw part of her role as onboarding team members, although her terminology was less about enticing members to join.

> *I'm driven by what the business needs and I think that if they are in a position where they have to deliver certain things then, if the business is ready, it's my job to make sure everyone else comes on board. If it's hurting the business, or if it's going to enhance or improve the business, then that's why that intervention is chosen. It tends to be dictated by the people paying the invoice* (Jackie: I).

However, some team coaches require some demonstrable commitment and a willingness to engage prior to commencing team coaching. Speaking as a proponent of this approach, Joy provided an example of a pre-coaching meeting sharing the results of the team diagnostics, where there had been no sense of "readiness" and how she had been prepared to cut her losses and walk away from the work.

> *Afterwards I said to P (co coach), "If they aren't able to commit fully we walk away from this now" and at that point they hadn't paid us for about £8ks worth of work. But I said "If that's the case we'll just walk… I'm not prepared to enter into this if they're not committed because it'll be painful every step of the way" (Joy: I).*

Whilst similarly acknowledging the difficulty of ascertaining true "readiness" in a team, several co-researchers shared their experience of how they gauged its presence during one-to-ones with team members. Consistent terms were used to describe team members' "readiness" including: "levels of enthusiasm"; "excitement"' "how engaged they look"; "alignment" of expectations with the purpose of the work; words such as "I'm up for it" and scaling questions being used to ascertain commitment.

However, actions speak louder than words as summarised by Grace.

> *My observation in organisations is that time together with these teams is so tight, so time invested in themselves is quite at a premium and therefore to be prepared to invest in themselves and say, "no actually this has got so important to us now" (usually because there's such a big problem) that they've decided they really have to do something* (Grace: I).

The fact that team members are willing to invest in time together, in an organisational context where time is invariably regarded as a precious resource, is perhaps a stronger indicator of "readiness" than just enthusiastic words.

4.1.3 "Readiness" of team leader

Whilst there were varying levels of "readiness" required from team members before embarking on a team coaching assignment, co-researchers converged on the importance of the team leader being "ready". However, different aspects of "readiness" in relation to the team leader were described.

One aspect, highlighted by several co-researchers, is the importance of engaging first with the team leader. For John this was described as the gateway into the work.

> *If I come alongside whoever is the team leader and the team leader says "this is why I want us to work together, this is what I want us to work on and I think this is the time for us to do it" then, like I say they are probably as ready as they are going to be* (John: I).

An additional nuance to team leader "readiness" is the importance of the team leader understanding the risks inherent in team coaching, being ready to personally engage, be aware that how they present themselves will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the intervention and also that everything might not go to plan and they may not get exactly what they want as an end result.

> *It's their opportunity to really step into the leader role and be seen as the leader. I feel a sense of responsibility that I ensure that the leader is clear on that so they don't go in and mess it up. I would work with them – how are you going to show up? They are all watching you. What's your level of readiness here?* (Anita: I).

How the team leader engages impacts upon the work with several co-researchers emphasising the importance of being "humble" and "vulnerable". Bob provided an example of an early team coaching experience where the team leader had "damned the whole thing" through an unwillingness to be vulnerable. His key learning had been:

> *Are they open to feedback? How secure is the team leader? I think if the team leader really was giving me the sense of they weren't willing to bring vulnerability – they wanted an agenda, to use games etc – then I think that would make me think this isn't going to be team coaching, this is going to be facilitation* (Bob: I).

Humility can be present in subtle ways. For example, a team constellation activity with team members standing in order of when they joined the team. If the team leader had been last to join the team, how well could they tolerate being last versus first? A dilemma that is perhaps hard to predict and gauge.

Buy-in from leaders can though be quite nuanced. An example was provided by Liza who, in a reflective log differentiated between "*total buy-in*" from the HRD and "*intellectual buy-in*" from the chief executive who was the team leader (Liza: RL). Continuing her reflection Liza described how it had been evident that the chief executive had been "encouraged" by his HRD to have the meeting. He was initially very sceptical and adamant about the specific wording that could be used when introducing the work to team members. Liza had moved forward with the assignment feeling that there was sufficient buy-in, although mindful that the chief executive was uncomfortable and the process constituted a leap of faith for him. At times, therefore, team coaches may decide to proceed with an assignment, knowing that the team leader is still holding some reservations, taking a pragmatic approach that they have a sufficient level of engagement.

4.2 The timing of team coaching interventions

Another theme that had arisen in the team coaching literature, and I believed warranted further investigation, was that of the timing of team coaching interventions; whether there was an optimal time to commence a team coaching assignment; better or worse times and whether there were times when team coaching should not be undertaken. With much of the literature focusing on project teams with natural beginnings and endings, I was curious how co-researchers experienced the timing of interventions with intact teams, for example leadership teams, which existed in perpetuity although membership may change. This theme was introduced as a discussion topic at the orientation focus group, with the question posed, "is there a best time to commence team coaching?"

Co-researchers had all experienced requests to delay team coaching assignments due to team members leaving and successors not having been appointed, competing commitments cited or it not being the right time and this was a topic that resonated with everyone. Responses converged around the opinion that there was no best or optimal time to commence team coaching. Similarly, there was general agreement that there was little or no value in delaying the start of an assignment as team members were leaving or were about to join. In support of this view examples were provided of teams that co-researchers had worked with over a period of time when several, sometimes the majority, of team members had changed.

> *I've got a senior team who started off with ten, then ended up with five and they've had six or seven team members come in and out* (Joy: OFG).

Far from this being regarded as negative, positive aspects of team membership changes were highlighted with team coaching providing a catalyst for the team leader to realise that the constitution of the team was not right, changes were required and it was time to take action. There was a general consensus that comings and goings in a team were "*business as usual*" (Liza: OFG).

There was similar alignment around the concept of there being no optimal time to commence team coaching, although co-researchers expressed their sentiments in different terms. A number of views clustered around the, "just get on with it" sentiment, the most strident of these being Monica. Recalling her frustration at having had team coaching work postponed previously Monica shared how her approach now was:

> *… no stop waiting until this and until that and when this and when that – right now is exactly the time when you need team coaching!* (Monica: OFG).

This same sentiment was echoed by others, using more pragmatic and nuanced language and raising the rhetorical question, "well how long do you wait?". Jen was an example of this sentiment - "*if you waited for a whole team to be ready, you'd never get started*" (Jen: OFG).

Several metaphors were used to capture the timing of interventions with a team, including the sporting analogy of the transfer window being closed so the team has to play with the players it has at that point in time and the analogy of a river flowing.

> *You get a splash or it goes off to one side (somebody leaves the team but then another one comes in). You've got to keep in motion together* (John: OFG).

John described an important part of his role as a team coach, that of "onboarding" new people into the team. Continuing the flowing river metaphor, John described how he would have a two hour individual session with a new team member, taking them through any psychometrics and models the team had used to enable the team to "*get the different flow together*" and "*the river to keep flowing*" (John: I). Whilst this onboarding role was not identified by other co-researchers this may have been in part because John tended to work with a team for a defined, often lengthy, period of time, rather than for a defined number of sessions over a shorter time period. John's team coaching philosophy was based upon using a small number of psychometrics/models on an ongoing basis so that he could "*stitch people into that discussion quite easily*" (John: I).

The question of whether now was the best time, in terms of other competing priorities in the business, met with some lukewarm acknowledgement that the environment within which the business is operating in may determine how much time the team may have to focus on team coaching. However, there was considerable support for the view that often such "competing priorities" were delaying tactics, masking a nervousness about the risks involved, the scope of the assignment and the costs associated with it.

> *In a way I think they are just excuses, because actually it's a big step* (Liza: I).

The one exception to the "team coaching can happen at any time" argument was if there was no team leader in place. An example was provided by Liza who had been about to commence coaching a senior leadership HR team when the HRD was removed from the team.

> *There was no way I could have sold that … there was too much flux, too much shock, and you don't know what the new person is going to come in and do. It's slightly different, I think, if you've started and the leader comes in having taken over from another leader who's started this process… I struggle that it can start without a leader. If the leader leaves half-way through then I think it can continue* (Liza: OFG).

Co-researchers were in agreement that team coaching could be happening during the course of which one leader might leave and another join, however, the consensus was that starting an assignment without a leader in place was to be avoided.

4.3 Team coach "readiness": Flying solo or in pairs?

Whilst the themes of team "readiness" and the timing of interventions were ones that had arisen from the literature and explored in the study, the concept of team coach "readiness" to undertake the assignment, and what support they might need along the route, emerged from the orientation focus group, interviews and reflective logs, as co-researchers described their team coaching practice. A key decision being whether the team coach would plan to undertake this assignment on their own or work with a co team coach.

Co-researchers' responses to the practice of working with a co team coach spread across a spectrum. For some working with a co team coach is central to their practice, the work is proposed and planned based on two coaches, and the only key decision to be made is who the team coach might choose to work with. This approach is typified by Bob.

> *Another philosophy is, there're two of us, 99% of the time there are two coaches on the basis that we will provide a range of personalities, experiences, insights, four eyes are better than two. It gives them someone to connect with different roles (*Bob: I).

Whilst Liza outlined a similar philosophy she introduced an additional nuance of power within the relationship, and some intrigue as to how this dynamic manifests itself in practice - *"there are two of you and there is always a lead coach"* (Liza: OFG).

However, there was not unanimous support for co team coaching with concern expressed about the additional dynamic this brought to the work with two team coaches in the room and different relationships at play. Speaking from this end of the spectrum John commented.

> *For a group of eight, ten, twelve, I've always done it on my own partly because of their dynamic and once you start with one-to-ones who would you have the one-to-one with if you've got two team coaches in the room together? Then I know half of them, and you know half them. It then wouldn't work for me in terms of the way I would like to do it…. So the short answer is "no, I never have". And as you can hear I would not welcome that particularly (John: I).*

Size of team emerged as a key consideration for whether or not to work with a co team coach with a general consensus that if a team size is eight or under the team coach would "*happily do it by myself*" (Monica: I). Above this number the challenge for the team coach is mentally and physically demanding with so much going on, dynamics at play and the coach trying to hold everything in their head with no respite.

Whilst most co-researchers cited a preference for working with a co team coach if the team comprised of more than eight, most described how they were prepared to be flexible in their approach. Joy volunteered how she would happily do so for a shorter intervention.

> *If it's under 10, 8 to 10, I'm happy to run it on my own, I've done bigger ones, but I know it's hard to hold the numbers, there's too much going on. So, I'll do it for a one-off but if it's going to be a long intervention, we'll bring two people in* (Joy: I).

In the main this flexibility is driven by a recognition that gaining agreement for two coaches is not always possible, for example if there are budget constraints at the outset. However, there was also an awareness that team coaching is an emerging practice, organisations are still coming to terms with what it is, as an intervention involving multiple sessions it is already perceived as expensive and that adding in the cost of an additional team coach may make this cost seem prohibitive. As a result, several co-researchers commented that they were reticent about stipulating two team coaches as an absolute requirement of them taking on the work and, as a result, sometimes carried out the work on their own.

Deciding on the right co team coach to work with is an important consideration. Consistent terms were used to describe the criteria co-researchers used to make this decision including "*alignment*" around ways of working, "*respect on both sides*" and choosing someone who was "*different"* or "*opposite*" in style to provide contrast for the team members as well as a fun/interest element for the team coach. For Anita, as a Gestalt practitioner "*alignment*" meant working with someone who had a good understanding of Gestalt whereas for Joy "*difference*" was key, "*I wanted a 'boy" and also he's my polar opposite in style*" (Joy: I).

4.4 Individual coaching whilst team coaching: To do or not to do?

Whilst team coaching is a process of a team coach working with a team, a number of separate arrangements between the team coach and team members might exist alongside, but outside, the team context. These include individual coaching arrangements as well as the close working relationship fostered with the team leader. In describing their team coaching practice, all co-researchers outlined their personal decision criteria, ethical and boundary considerations relating to individual coaching. Three sub themes, under the broad heading of individual coaching arrangements during the team coaching assignment, emerged and are explored in this section:

- Coaching the team leader
- Preferential treatment for the team leader
- Coaching team members

4.4.1 Coaching the team leader

Opinions on having individual coaching arrangements with the team leader during the course of the team coaching assignment, were quite divided in this study with views ranging from "it's essential" to "I never do this" as displayed in figure 4.1.

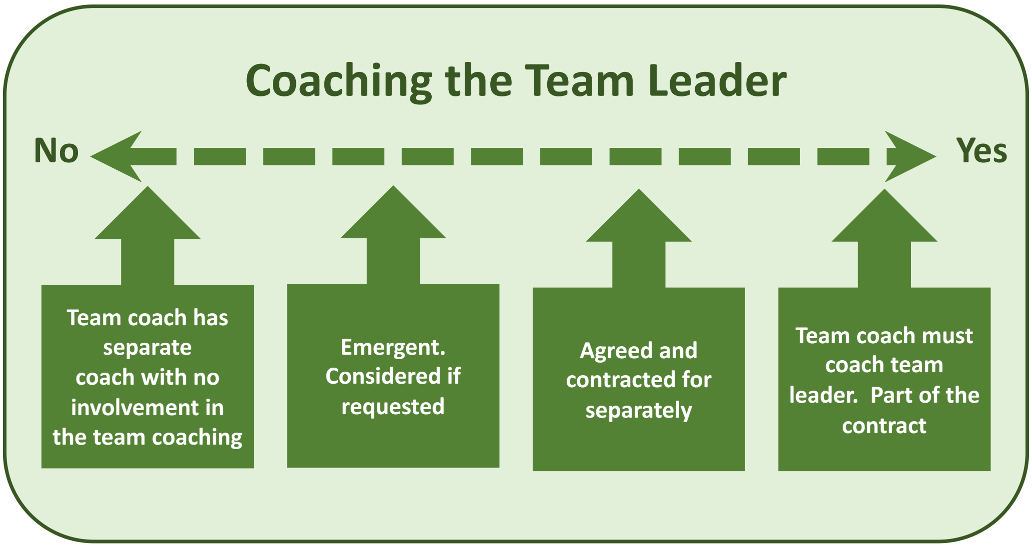


Figure 4.1: To coach or not to coach? Perspectives on coaching the team leader

Those clustered at the "yes" end of the spectrum explained their decision as being inextricably linked to the team coaching methodology they had been trained in. Liza explained this as, "*the lead coach will coach the chief exec, but it's all very transparent"*. Whilst emphasising that "*people don't worry about it, it doesn't seem that it's on their agenda*" (Liza: I) and "*I have never had a problem, it's not difficult at all for me to respect my contracting with a team and yet coach the leader as well*" (Kennedy: I), it could be argued that this philosophy had been adopted as good practice without critical examination of how this fitted with the co-researcher's own practice and ethical considerations. This is apparent in Kennedy reflecting upon the practice in her interview.

> *But maybe, because I've learned from xxx and she always says "I will not coach the team unless I coach the leader as well!" Sitting with it it's also, "yes how can I be more useful if I don't coach the team leader?" It's even more neutral isn't it*? (Kennedy: I).

In contrast to the linear models presented in team coaching manuals, co-researchers often described quite "messy" starts to team coaching assignments with the coach already engaged in individual coaching with the team leader prior to being invited to do some work with the team. In such situations the need for clear contracting and transparency was stressed by co-researchers. For Joy this entailed sharing the pre-existing coaching arrangement with the team at the outset with the "*agreement that I would coach nobody else*" (Joy: I). Anita similarly shared her process of managing boundaries by first contracting with the team leader and then separately with the team.

> *That's how I manage the boundaries and there's agreement in those contracting discussions around what will be covered and the structure, how I'm planning to work, what questions do they need to bring in, what role will they play?* (Anita: I).

However, not all team coaches have adopted a philosophical position on this subject yet. For Grace and Bob, the question of whether to coach the team leader or not emerged as something that they were currently exploring in their own practice, with no immediate answers. Grace acknowledged that the dilemma "*left questions for me because I haven't fully addressed in my own mind what my position is on that*" (Grace: I). Bob referred to how he was "*slowly building it into my practice just to see if it makes a difference in terms of the team dynamic if you're also coaching the leader*" (Bob: I).

John was the sole representative of the "no" end of the spectrum, explaining how he never coached the team leader and was currently coaching a team where the leader had a separate coach.

> *I'm interested in the whole dynamic between the team leader and coaching the team. Particularly in relation to team x, the leader has a coach that's not me. I don't know what he talks about with him or her … I don't even know who it is. But*

> *what he talks to me about is the dynamic in the team and the patterns he's seeing in the team and how we can work together on that …* (John: I).

For John his decision was based on his philosophical position that there were too many ethical dilemmas involved, a lot more "*Chinese walls*" and the challenge of not allowing things to "*bleed too much*" (John: I). His practice was based on previous reflections that some level of contamination could not be realistically avoided and that as a team coach you would be changed by that and, as a consequence, may be less effective.

4.4.2 Preferential treatment for the team leader

Although there were differing views on coaching the team leader, there was general consensus on the importance of the team leader getting preferential treatment and acknowledgement that the leader is the most exposed in the team and their level of vulnerability will be a factor in how open the team will be. Practically this preferential treatment typically involves meeting with the team leader prior to a team coaching session, giving them a quick snapshot of the initial diagnostic results before the first debrief "so they don't get alarmed or surprised by anything" (Bob: I) and having high level, structured conversations with the team leader, before meeting with the rest of the team, to both get their impressions but also to build trust.

Despite not coaching the team leader, John was a strong advocate of preferential treatment for the leader.

> *The way I would normally enter into a team situation would be contracting with the leader of the team (rather than anyone else), work out what we're trying to achieve. So I think there's an element in team coaching where you have particular responsibilities to the person who's leading that team and you might have a slightly different coaching relationship with that person to the rest of the team because their agenda for the team will no doubt feed into your agenda* (John: I).

4.4.3 Coaching team members

The question of whether to coach team members, or not, alongside a team coaching assignment met with a similar spectrum of responses as the previous question regarding the team leader. However, philosophical positions on this question were less fixed.

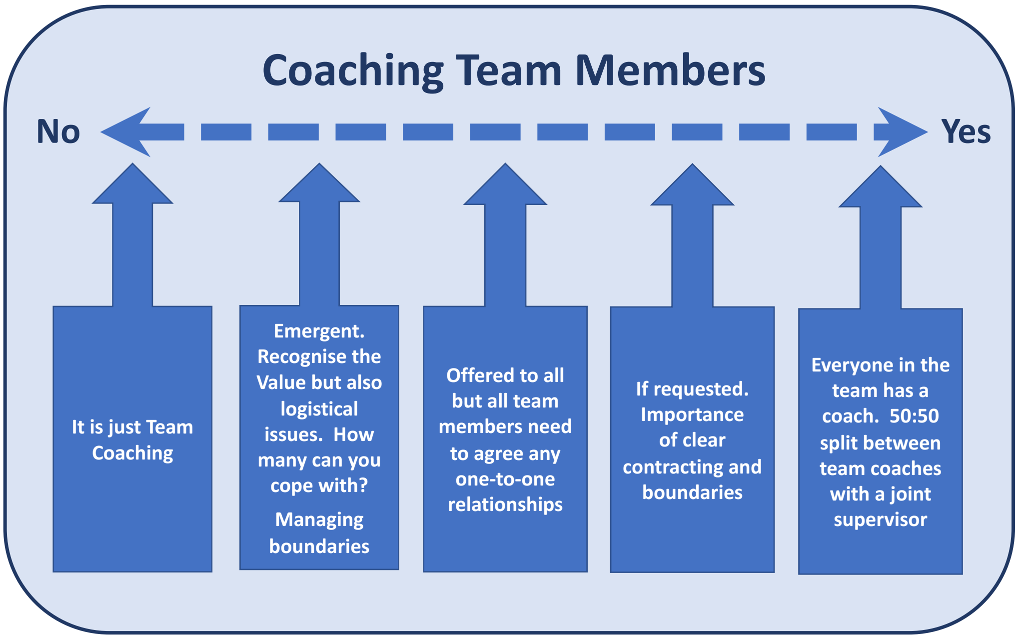


Figure 4.2: To coach or not to coach? Perspectives on coaching members of the team

The philosophical position on the “yes” end of the spectrum (figure 4.2) was represented by Liza who described how in her methodology everybody in the team had a coach, the two coaches splitting the coachees between them and the coaches having a supervisor for the two of them. Having adopted this practice on a number of occasions Liza described how she believed this process worked if the contracting was clear and transparent.

> *A lot is on contracting at the very start because we have to be really transparent in the contract, who is working with who, what the boundaries are, what we will share, what we won’t share. For example, we won’t share anything that goes on in the one-to-one sessions, but, if they want anything shared, they can tell us or they can share it* (Liza: I).

At the opposite “no” end of the spectrum Bob outlined a different philosophical perspective of not coaching team members, having dabbled with it in the past and concluded that it blurred too many lines, “*confuses relationships and I think it changes psychological safety in the group*”. His mantra was, “*we’re coaching the team and supporting the team leader but we’re not doing anything else*” (Bob: I).

Most co-researchers outlined an emergent approach to coaching team members and described how they were experimenting with this in their team coaching practice. Dyadic coaching, alongside team coaching, can be particularly valuable when there are themes which are applicable to all team members or the team needs to make a step change in behaviour which necessitates all team members making a change in behaviour.

> *I think there are some conversations you can have in that group context and there are some that are really helpful to have individually in that safer space for that individual to think "what's my role in this?"* (Grace: I).

However, making a decision to provide individual coaching raises the logistical issue of, how many can you cope with? Faced with this dilemma Grace provided an example of where "*I decided I couldn't possibly coach them all, and I didn't want to have priority relationships with two or three of them, so I chose to coach none of them*" (Grace: I). Coaching six or seven team members felt feasible, whereas a larger team of ten to twelve was too many resulting in a dilemma for the team coach if they were working on their own.

Faced with potential ethical and logistical issues some co-researchers had adopted a stance which they felt was both transparent and ethical. Joy described how;

> *…with a team we say as part of the pitch "one-to-one coaching is open to you either through me, or through Chris, or through anyone else that we think is appropriate for you. But we will only coach you If the team agrees". The team has to agree that they're happy for us to have that one-to-one relationship otherwise there's that conflict of interest (Joy: I).*

Overall the key considerations for team coaches contemplating dyadic coaching emerged as transparency in who was coaching who, the importance of contracting and in particular that whatever was said or happened in individual conversations stayed there and there was no reporting back.

4.5 Preparing the route

Two features of preparing for team coaching sessions emerged as particularly significant in the study: gaining insight from team members and stakeholders to inform the work and then designing the team coaching assignment.

4.5.1 Gaining insight from team members/stakeholders

All co-researchers emphasised the importance of gaining insight from team members and stakeholders before embarking on a team coaching assignment, although how they gained this insight, and the degree to which they insisted upon it, varied. Although not necessarily recognising gaining insight as a "red line", without which they would not engage in a piece of work, several co-researchers described an approach that appeared non-negotiable. John mused;

> *I think I probably don't have any real red lines, but I would say that's the way I like to do it, therefore this is what it will all cost. So that's what I'm contracting for and if you decide not to do it well let's talk this through. Let me tell you the virtue of this*

> *…With team coaching I don't think I've ever not done it that way because it helps me to feel comfortable … So yes, I say yes, it's a red line!* (John: I).

Having one-to-one meetings serves a number of purposes, with different aspects being more or less important for different team coaches. An obvious benefit is that they are useful for picking up themes and trends in the organisation, key issues facing the team and to ensure that these are heard from all team members and not just from a selected few.

> *The stakeholder interaction that you have at the beginning is never the whole story and so it's very easy to get wrong-footed in the first session about where people are coming from (Grace: I).*

> *In systemic terms it's everybody's individual truth. So, what is it really like to be a member of this team? What's your truth as you sit in this team, as you work in this team?* (Kennedy: CSFG).

For most co-researchers the practice of having one-to-one sessions had been reinforced by challenging previous experiences. Several used the analogy of having been "*bitten on the bum*" in the past. An example would be Jen who recalled a particular painful experience of team coaching when she had not had one-to-one meetings with the team members in advance and only had insight provided by the team leader.

> *I think one of the things that I found difficult was not having that one-to-one relationship. So, I'd stand next to somebody at the coffee station and have a conversation but that was all I'd have with somebody so I didn't really know them that well. I didn't even know, from the team leader briefing me, which three were on the starting line, which one was up here and which two were back here. I didn't even have a picture of that, and I think that knocked my confidence (Jen: I).*

Other benefits of one-to-one sessions were identified. For Joy they served as an opportunity for team members to have a cathartic "*bitch and moan*" session.

> *For me this is also a parking lot. This is your bitch and moan session. You can raise it again, but you can't moan about it!* (Joy: CSFG).

However, this cathartic session also has a dual purpose. The team coach hears the unblemished "truth" but equally the session starts the trust-building process with individual team members, what is said in confidence remains confidential with only themes shared back.

> *For me the moans never go anywhere. The themes are the only thing that come out. But they sit and inform us and that's the bit where nothing comes out "stage left" that we haven't heard about because they feel totally safe to say it* (Joy: CSFG).

The importance of one-to-ones as an opportunity to build trust was identified by several co researchers. Grace described this process as:

> *This whole idea of enrolling individuals into the coaching process and building the trust with them, it's quite hard to do in a room with people you've not met before, you don't know what the nuances are……the relationship that you have with the team and the permission for them to trust you to take more risks perhaps more quickly comes from those initial conversations and that initial relationship building of why you're there* (Grace: I).

Whilst all co-researchers emphasised their preference, or in some cases requirement, to have one-to-ones with team members, the form of these varied. Practices range from asking a number of standard open-ended questions to all team members to use of a team diagnostic to gain insight against a range of factors, with the output fed back to the team at the first session. A small number of co-researchers extend this insight-gathering to encompass key stakeholders including the team's commissioner (team's boss) and internal and external customers with varying methods of gathering data. Liza extolled the benefits of using a standard questionnaire with team members and stakeholders.

> *There is often a mismatch between how the team sees themselves and how the stakeholders see themselves and even how their boss sees them. I find it very risky. The beauty is if you are using one of these diagnostic questionnaires it's part of it so it's very quick and easy to get and also so visual to see the differences (Liza: CSFG).*

For Joy insight gathering took the form of a series of stakeholder focus groups held over the course of a day with the same questions discussed with all groups. By contrast, other co-researchers had less formalised processes, often citing budget constraints, perhaps having developed their own diagnostics or set of questions, but still held with the same principle of striving to gain as much feedback on the team and its performance from team members and, where possible, stakeholders.

4.5.2 Designing a team coaching assignment

Whilst there was much agreement amongst the co-researchers around gaining insight prior to team coaching, opinions were noticeably divergent regarding the design of a team coaching assignment. Table 4.1 summarises the various approaches adopted, indicating those that were typical, being mentioned by several co-researchers, as well as any notable variations. As can be seen co-researchers polarised around the length of assignments and regularity of team coaching sessions whilst there was some convergence in terms of the number of sessions, size of team and length of sessions.

Planning the Team Coaching Intervention	'Typical' Approaches	Variations
Length of assignment	• No consistent approach. Contracting tends to be about the number of sessions rather than the length of assignment.	• No fixed timescale. Work with team as long as is productive. Contract for a defined period of time eg 1 year; eg 4 to 6 meetings this year and then review • Assignments are 12 – 18 months • Assignments are 6-9 months
Size of team	• 5 – 12. 8 usually maximum size for working on own. Up to 12 with another co team coach	
Number of sessions	• Typically 4 to 6 sessions	• With longer assignments can be up to 12 sessions
Regularity of sessions	• No consistent approach	• Spacing of sessions varies from monthly, to every 2 months, quarterly or twice yearly • With dispersed teams may be some meetings via phone or video in between face to face sessions
Length of sessions	• Typically half day sessions • May start with lunch for ice-breaking gathering followed by session of c 3.5 hours	• One full day 'kick off' followed by shorter half day sessions • 1-2 days 'kick off' followed by at least one ½ - 1 day follow up 3 months later • Full day sessions. AM is a normal team meeting with TC observing or facilitating. PM is team coaching

Table 4.1: Designing a team coaching assignment

4.6 Summary

Returning to one of the objectives of this study, to elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching, I noticed quite early in the study that several of these essential elements related to the "preparation" stage of team coaching. Many of these elements take the form of considerations that need to be thought through, decisions made and data gathering that needs to take place prior to commencing team coaching sessions with the whole team. I had entered the study with a significant amount of scepticism about the notion of team "readiness" based on my own experience of encountering very different levels of "readiness" amongst team members. To me "team readiness" appeared an almost unattainable ideal. I was therefore reassured that I was not alone and that, in practice, team coaches are likely to gauge "readiness" by a sense of team members being willing to give team coaching a go, to invest some energy and time in it. However, I was struck by the non-compromising attitude towards the team leader. Co-researchers were unanimous that, whilst team member "readiness" is not seen as essential, or even truly possible, having the team leader onboard is regarded as essential. The implication being that commencing team coaching without this element severely reduces the chances of a successful outcome.

Whilst there were similarities in how team coaches prepared for team coaching assignments, there were also some key differences. As such two of the essential elements of team coaching take the form of key questions that the team coach needs to ask themselves, and answer, prior to undertaking team coaching work. These questions are, firstly, do I need to work with a co team coach and, if so, what are my criteria for deciding who? Secondly, do I enter into any individual coaching arrangements with the team leader/team members alongside the team coaching and, if so, who? I was surprised that no clear accepted "good practice" emerged – although in hindsight perhaps I should not have been as these are two questions that I have wrestled with myself. Team coaching methodologies have clear "rules" but these "rules" vary across methodologies. This finding unscored for me the importance of team coaches considering a number of factors to reach their own informed decision including ethical considerations, managing boundaries and logistics relating to how many team members they can practically coach.

Gathering insight for the assignment emerges as an essential element, irrespective of the team coaching methodology followed by the team coach. At times I was surprised at the length of time and degree of thoroughness team coaches shared in the descriptions of their insight gathering. However, when I heard some of the horror stories arising out of taking short cuts and subsequently being "bitten on the bum" in team coaching sessions, it was not surprising that team coaches are clear, sometimes uncompromising, in the insight-gathering approaches they adopt. Collecting information via one-to-ones with individual team members is viewed as the bare minimum and essential to ensure that team coaches enter into the work with as much background information, and from as many sources, as possible. In addition, many extend this information gathering to include stakeholders to get as full a picture of the context in which the team is working.

As team coaches start to plan the team coaching sessions I was not surprised at hearing the many different forms that this may take with no two team coaching assignments looking identical. Team coaches polarise around the length of assignments and regularity of sessions. However, common elements include the typical size of team, length and number of sessions.

Finally, the overwhelming message I took from the "preparation" phase is that it is a lengthy one involving a number of key questions that need to be thought through and answered and data to be gathered and analysed prior to the team coaching sessions commencing with the team.

Chapter 5 – Delivering Team Coaching: The Murmuration

This chapter explores the middle or intervention phase of team coaching. The analogy of the delivery of team coaching as a "murmuration" originated in the orientation focus group when co-researchers were invited to share their conceptualisations of team coaching. Jen provided the following description:

> *It's a bit like the starlings when they're doing their murmuration in the sky and they're all moving in sync with each other and instinctively know which direction they're going in. It's about enabling them to get really clear about their declaration, what they're committed to, their purpose and then clarity about how they're going to show up and work with each other and then embody that in a series of practices…...* (Jen: OFG).

As I thought about an appropriate term for this middle, intervention phase, I recalled Jen's analogy and how it had resonated with the group. Many of the qualities of a murmuration - the need to be agile and respond rapidly; the awareness, sensing and responding to one another and the seamless adoption of different roles - seemed to be applicable to what was emerging about the experience of delivering team coaching. The intervention phase of team coaching, therefore, became known as the "murmuration" with the following themes emerging:

- Creating optimal conditions for safety and growth
- Challenging performance
- Providing direction: roles adopted by the team coach
- Roles that the team coach can be drawn into
- Navigating individual relationships in the team setting
- Ways of working: "planned" or "fluid"

5.1 Creating optimal conditions for safety and growth

Being able to create a safe space was identified as one of the fundamental requirements of a team coach. All of the co-researchers stressed the importance of a safe space and described this as something that was created between the team coach, the leader and the team members. Whilst agreeing that this was a fundamental requirement, there were some different approaches to establishing this. For Anita it was "*psychological safety*", team members "*getting to know me as much as they need to*". Anita gave an insight into how she set about creating a safe space:

> *I give them a bit about me, my background, how I work. I explain the process, how it works, the boundaries, confidentiality. I think there's something about how I show up. I do show up grounded, confident, "I've got this, mean stuff won't happen, I'm solid in it". I take time before I go in to see a team to be mindful of myself and make sure I'm in my body which I think is important – not scatty in my head, or all over the place* (Anita: I).

Bob similarly identified, "*the ability to build psychological safety*" as an important skill. Whilst Anita had described how she embodied psychological safety, Bob identified a number of skills and behaviours he employed to develop the coaching relationship including,

> *the ability to ask good questions, to pay attention, to be able to explore below the surface, not just what's being said. The ability to be curious and inspire curiosity in the team. Respect of the individual, being sure you hear their voices, bringing in other voices* (Bob: I).

Several co-researchers identified how they used coaching skills, honed from years practising dyadic coaching, to create a safe team space. An example would be Grace who emphasised the importance of listening as "*probably the most important thing… listening with my head, my heart, my ears, my eyes, the whole thing*" (Grace: I). A slightly different perspective on using coaching skills was provided by Kennedy when describing how she used her knowledge of transactional analysis as a framework for creating a safe space modelling "adult" whilst also encouraging a different, creative, "free child" space.

> *Holding as much of a neutral space as possible, a safe space, trusting them, trusting the process, being that adult in transactional analysis, their window on the world, 'I'm OK, you're OK'. Sometimes free child turns up, being creative, "Ok let's try something different!" So, it might be offering a constellation or a map, or moving around, "let's play musical chairs, let's see how sitting somewhere else is going to change things. Let's just try it out!" that creative free child, free spirit turns up (Kennedy: I).*

Creating a safe space was something all co-researchers worked hard to create at the outset but was also constant work in progress throughout an assignment. The ability to role model behaviours for a team was both an important and common practice. However, there were divergent approaches in what co-researchers chose to role model. Anita and Bob both described how they deliberately used humour - to joke about herself and "*role model vulnerability to a degree*" (Anita: I) and as a "*way of making contact with me; of showing that it's not life and death*" (Bob: I). Monica described how she would role model confusion or vulnerability in a deliberate attempt to normalise these feelings.

> *I will role model saying, "I don't know" or "I'm confused right now" or "I'm puzzled". So, I show them how it's possible to be confident and yet there are occasions not to know and to ask the question and to say how you feel (Monica: I).*

Closely aligned to psychological safety was the importance of building trust. In the 'Preparation' phase meeting with team members individually was regarded as an invaluable means of gathering information on the team and team members. In addition, these sessions served as an important opportunity to start building trust with team members. Joy's words typify this sentiment.

> *The initial conversation stage, that initial diagnostic is really useful because it sort of does that trust build between us. Because they know at that stage what they've told us, and they never usually hear that come back out again. So, they recognise that they can have that conversation (Joy: I).*

Bob extended this theme by reflecting on the importance of how he presented himself in the first team coaching session, mindful that this session created the space for the remainder of the work.

> *I need to demonstrate in the first session together that I'm a safe pair of hands for them. I think that sense of managing the process confidently gives them a sense of freedom – if the coach isn't going to be fazed by what you're going to say then you're much more likely to say what you think aren't you? So that's the sort of space I try and create with a team – the one where, because it's not going to throw me, then it's not throwing them. So as safe a space as I can, I guess (Bob: I).*

The ability to create and nurture a safe space therefore emerged as an essential element of team coaching, something that was vital not only at the outset of team coaching but also to sustain and develop throughout the assignment.

5.2 Challenging performance

Another key theme emerging from the study was providing the team with challenge. Almost all co-researchers described how they would challenge the team collectively as well as individual members of the team. However, the form this challenge took varied considerably ranging from high challenge, provocative interventions to less direct approaches.

An example of the more provocative approach to challenge would be Monica who described her style as:

> *..asking provocative questions sometimes. So, yes, there's quite a lot of humour, but there's also a lot of pushing back* (Monica: I).

An equally high challenge and direct approach was adopted by Joy who described how she could be "*quite direct*", once the team had got used to her, and being very comfortable "*calling out*" behaviour. Joy recalled the following example of her challenging a team:

> *And we got to one bit and they said, "Oh we just haven't had time, we've got to get involved with things, we've got a whole challenge with our clients, they require us to get involved". And I said, "no sorry, that's bullshit. I don't buy that at all why you've got to get involved. You're a senior manager, you've got loads of people underneath. Why?"* (Joy: I).

Several researchers described their approach to challenge in terms of a spectrum of approaches that they adopted. For Bob his spectrum ranged from "*calling out or being curious about the dynamics*" to the "*bigger challenge of 'we're getting nowhere here'*." Musing on the subject, he acknowledged that he could be evoking or provoking challenge:

> *My default is more of an evoker of challenge as opposed to being too Gordon Ramsey about it. I will be thoughtful about the challenge and having two of us makes me better at that* (Bob: I).

Whilst still using the term “challenging”, other co-researchers described a style of challenge that was less provocative and direct and only used in particular circumstances. An example would be John who shared how he was comfortable challenging, but that there needed to be a real reason for this.

> *I will be quite challenging, probably around the values… stuff that doesn’t fit with what they’ve told me. I will sometimes step in and just say, “well how does that fit with this? There’s a whole lot of stuff about integrity here. How would some members of your staff hear the conversation that we’ve just had?” So, I’m fairly comfortable doing that kind of thing* (John: I).

This form of challenge was often referred to in the form of a metaphor or analogy. The most commonly used analogy was that of “holding up the mirror”, a technique of holding the space and inviting team members to look closely at themselves and their actions.

A recurring topic in discussions with co-researchers was the differences they experienced between dyadic and team coaching, one of which was how and when to challenge in a team setting. I had been aware of some of the tensions I had experienced myself around challenging individuals in a team setting, one such reflection being captured in the extract from my reflective journal in appendix H. Several co-researchers shared similar challenges. Kennedy spoke about the difficulty of “*challenging or pressing pause or time out*” as she knew team members as a team but not individually. For Kennedy the dynamic about when and how to challenge was “*much more present*” in individual coaching where “*I know it, and I sense it, versus five people and what’s going on for them that day, that month, when they come into the group*” (Kennedy: I). Liza acknowledged her comfort level in challenging in an individual versus a group setting.

> *I find it much easier to do with an individual on a one-to-one than I do in front of the group. I know we’ve contracted that it’s OK to call it out and name an individual but, if it’s one-on-one, I can say, “Jane what are you doing right now?” Whereas in a group I sometimes think “Aw, is it fair to call it out now?” (Liza: I.)*

Co-researchers described the skills and behaviours they would draw upon to present challenge, citing many examples. Monica described how she would sit in on regular team meetings, observing and then pressing the pause button and asking, “*what are you noticing right now. What is happening for you now? What do you think is happening in the room, or what isn’t being said?” (Monica: I).* Grace outlined a slightly different approach where she might make her own observations, perhaps referring back to the contract and offer some helpful tips, often early on in the process as a way of getting the team to develop ways of operating that she could refer back to.

The “do I raise this now or not?” is a recurring dilemma with team coaches using similar criteria to make a decision including, hearing a story that seems to be repeating itself and noticing a pattern that keeps recurring or going round in circles. A typical example of noticing a pattern and deciding to raise it was provided by Kennedy.

> *I observe something, maybe I notice a pattern, and at some point in time I call it out… It keeps going round in circles, keeps coming up. If it happens once - if it's something I've noticed and wondered if it'll happen again – I just hold it in my awareness. If I see it as a pattern going round in circles then I flag it up* (Kennedy: I) .

The team coach's philosophical grounding in coaching appeared to be intertwined with their approach to challenging the team and, in particular, how they presented challenge. As Gestalt practitioners Anita and Bob described how the use of self was a key technique for them, recognising how something was impacting on them and verbalising it with others. Anita (I) spoke about "*bringing it into the here and now and raising awareness for how what they're experiencing is impacting on them and others*". Like Grace and Kennedy, Anita and Bob stated that the decision to share what they were noticing with the rest of the team was one they wrestled with. For Bob, when he did decide to share, he recognised that this would require some bravery on his part. For example, "*I'm bored right now is anybody else feeling this?*" (Bob: I).

Whilst there were some notable differences in co-researchers' perceptions of what constituted challenge and how they themselves changed in a team setting, there was general agreement that time and challenge were related. At the creative synthesis focus group Kennedy outlined her perception of the relationship between challenge and time, with the former increasing as familiarity with team members increased, proceeding to sketch the relationship on a Post It note which is reproduced in figure 5.1. Despite some of the varying perspectives on challenge, all present were in agreement. "Yes, that's it", the others commented, "you've captured it!"

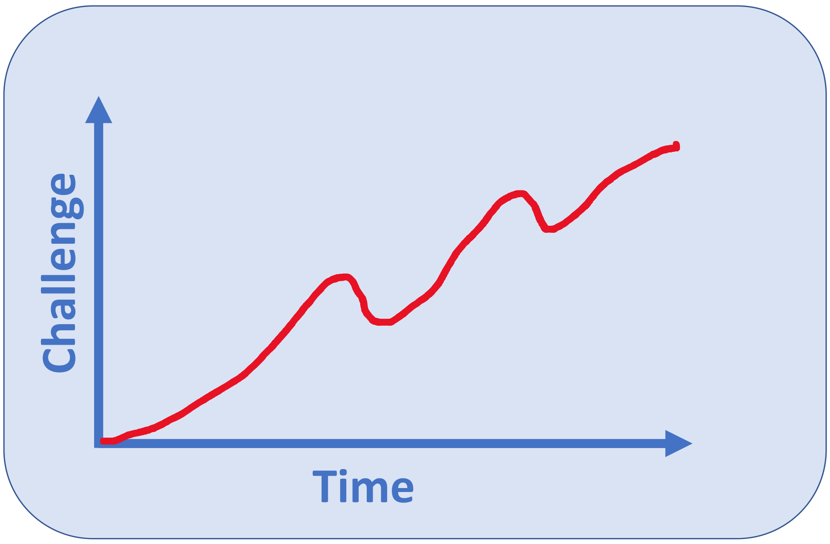


Figure 5.1: A representation of the typical relationship between time and level of challenge

5.3 Providing direction: roles adopted

Whilst recognising that they tried to spend most of their time in the "coach" role, holding as much of a neutral space as possible, all co-researchers acknowledged that there were other roles that they consciously adopted on occasion, especially roles which involved providing some input and direction for the team. The most frequently cited roles were those of mentor/expert; teacher/trainer; facilitator and referee. For all roles a pattern emerged of when this role was consciously used and performed well, but also when the role was overplayed, too comfortable and there was a danger of the coach defaulting to this.

The role of facilitator was one that several co-researchers mentioned. For Jackie:

> *My mindset typically starts in facilitator, I would say that's my most conscious state. Set the space in the room, the framework, that contracting piece, I take responsibility for that, how people are coming into the room and how I plan to have them leave the room* (Jackie: I).

Whilst agreeing that the role of facilitator was an important one, John's rationale was somewhat different to Jackie's and he highlighted parallels to his work as an ordained priest.

> *In my background as a priest there's a sense of liturgy about when you're putting a service together in a church – you have to go from here and people are ready to go there. Then there's a sense you are ready for this prayer, or you have a reading or whatever it is. I think there's a similar set of skills around facilitating your team and designing a team day, so I think I have those skills. I enjoy that kind of thing about what will actually produce the right kind of flow through the day. It's about making the right space for them to occupy and to play in as it were* (John: I).

The role of facilitator appeared to be one that felt familiar and comfortable with strong links to work that the co-researcher used to do or still did.

Bob provided a complex and complicated relationship with the role of facilitator describing how it was "*an easy role to play*" and it was a role he needed to ensure that he did not get stuck in. Asked how he would recognise if this was happening, he described the actions of "*grabbing the markers and starting a flipchart charting the team's discussions*" or "*pumping in my energy when they don't feel it*" (Bob: I).

The role of mentor/expert was similarly one which some co-researchers saw as a positive role, whilst recognising that it could be overplayed. Joy described how she would consciously adopt the role of mentor in some team coaching sessions:

> *The mentoring side comes in when actually they don't have a huge amount of industry exposure or they'd don't have the wider future agenda piece so it might be how do other industries do it….so my role will be to come in and go, "so have you thought about x, u and z?" So, it's just bringing that outside knowledge in and they can take it where they want (Joy: I).*

Kennedy acknowledged that the mentor/expert role was positive, in the sense of sharing information and models/frameworks. However, as with the facilitator role, co-researchers were able to recognise when they were playing the role of mentor/expert well, and also when they were overplaying the role.

> *Expert! I know that shows up if I'm talking too much. But that's also sharing information with them… but then I realise, "oh this is going on too long, I need to withdraw!" I get that sense of 'it's about me and it shouldn't be about me, it's about them!' (Kennedy: I.)*

There was some acknowledgement that roles could be assumed by the team coach as well as projected onto the team coach by the client. As an academic Grace was acutely aware of, not only slipping too comfortably into the role of mentor/expert, but also having this projected onto her by clients.

> *I try to wear my team expertise lightly but clearly you bring that and people ask you to work with them because you know something about that so I think I come with some knowledge and expertise that I try to have in the background but refer to when it feels helpful…. It's interesting how people bestow that academic identity onto you more than you think you are displaying it (Grace: I.)*

Participants polarised around the role of teacher/trainer with some seeking to avoid mention of models/frameworks arguing that this could result them being treated as "the expert". Others argued that the teacher/trainer role was a legitimate role. Speaking as an advocate of the latter approach Monica described how she shared some models with teams, to enable insight and "*practice different behaviours*". Monica saw part of her role as being to "*inform and educate in a way*" (Monica: I). Similarly, Liza described the role of teacher/trainer as "*transferring a lot of what you do as skills to them*". Liza went on to provide an insight as to how she might do this in a session.

> *Sometimes I see something going on, and it usually happens when I'm the second coach and I'm observing the first coach with the group. For example, the parent/child dynamic. It's then stepping in… asking, "would it be useful… there's a well-known model that might explain …" because it normalizes something that's going on. For me the whole purpose of sharing something like that is to try and normalise what's happening* (Liza: I).

The roles of mentor/expert; teacher/trainer; facilitator and referee emerged as roles which co-researchers felt had some legitimacy in team coaching. The roles were discussed at the creative synthesis focus group and, whilst there were some diverging views on how much a given role should be present in team coaching, there was convergence on the descriptions of each role when it was performed well as well as what was happening when the role was overplayed. These descriptions are summarised in table 5.1.

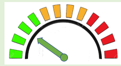
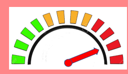
Roles - Adopted	Performed well 	Overplayed 
• **Mentor/expert**	• Bringing in outside knowledge eg of industry trends or the wider strategic perspective for the team to accept, reject or keep. Sharing of knowledge to provide insight/perspective.	• The coach is talking too much, sharing too much of own expertise with the team, giving their opinion. It's more about the coach than about the team. • A role that can be projected onto the team coach by the team.
• **Teacher/trainer**	• Transferring a lot of what the team coach does as skills to the team, sometimes through demonstrating the process (eg listening, asking questions, observational feedback) and sometimes through explaining eg sharing a model to explain what might be going on in the team	• Doing too much of the talking, over sharing of models or theory • Feeling the pressure to 'give value for money'
• **Facilitator**	• Facilitating the process, designing the day, the flow of the session, the room, seating, creating and holding some structure and the time	• Grabbing the markers and flip-charting the discussions, starting to drive the agenda, pumping in my energy into the room, being too active, filling silences • Feeling uncomfortable. To divert attention elsewhere
• **Referee**	• Managing the process, helping the team make proactive, deliberate choices about what they're doing in the moment rather than being too free-flowing that it just flows away. Pointing out when 'we're off the pitch' eg not living out values, or going off topic	• If overplayed can become the 'marshal', being too directive with the team.

Table 5.1: Providing direction - roles adopted by the team coach

5.4 Roles that the team coach may be drawn into

Alongside the roles described above that team coaches may consciously choose to adopt, a number of other roles were identified that co-researchers could be drawn into for a variety of reasons including: familiarity with team members, a vacuum or vacancy in the team and personal needs or drivers, including a desire to belong. This section explores two sub themes, describing the roles that the coach can be drawn into:

- Group contagion including roles that the coach is drawn into due to a vacuum and/or personal needs
- Parenting roles triggered by behaviours in the team

5.4.1 Group contagion

One inherent risk of working with a team for a length period of time is "group contagion", with the team coach gradually losing a sense of distance and objectivity and effectively turning into a team member. An example of this was provided by John who described how familiarity could lead to a lack of rigor on the part of the team coach resulting in forgiving or ignoring behaviour that the team coach would previously have challenged.

> *I think the danger is that, the longer you work with the team, the more you are likely to become part of it and not address things that you should address because that's just the banter in the team or it's just "ah we've come across that before' and just let that go because we let that go last time….* (John: I).

Whilst there was general agreement that "group contagion" was a potential issue, co-researchers expressed how they knew they were becoming part of the team in different ways. For John it was the transition from being the "referee" at the start of the assignment to "*playing with the ball rather than standing back and looking at the interaction of other people playing with the ball*". "Playing the ball" meant becoming a team member in group discussions, stepping in with solutions or opinions too readily. Liza experienced a different aspect of "group contagion" as a sense of losing objectivity, team members "*starting to hit buttons*" for her which could result in her "*taking sides*" in the team.

> *Like with Fiona thinking … "if you don't shut up in a minute… no wonder people don't want to come and talk to you because you take up so much time and we don't get anywhere!" It's staying objective when you get so much feedback about people. I get sucked into things like that and I really do have to manage myself (Liza: I).*

Another aspect of "group contagion" is the danger of starting to "collude" with team members. This danger appeared to be more prevalent with co-researchers who described their coaching style as strongly empathic with self-knowledge that they could at times be overly supportive of their coachees. As someone who recognised this pattern in herself, Liza shared the dangers of being "*sucked into*" being overly supportive of the team, ("it really is tough for you guys"), or of responding to the invitation, "*what do you think we should do*?" resulting in becoming a "*decision maker*". Liza acknowledged that, "*It's very easy to collude, whether it's good, bad or indifferent*" (Liza: I).

Becoming part of the team emerged as a multi-faceted and complex issues driven by a number of factors. One such factor is the need to belong, to be part of something. Kennedy provided an eloquent and compelling account of her own need to belong, driven by a life-time of being a single-parent child, with no siblings. Equally she was aware that she had held some very responsible jobs in her time in corporate life and sitting with leaders in a senior leadership team felt very comfortable and her rightful place.

> *Noticing how comfortable I felt sitting with five other people in a business context because that's where I come from. I felt really comfortable and I thought, "oh but I don't belong here, I'm only part of this for 3 hours and then I leave". So, my own sense of belonging and not belonging, how that impacts, how I turn up and how I challenge or not… because I think this is really lovely being part of this team* (Kennedy: I).

The role of "de facto" team leader emerged as the role that co-researchers were in most danger of assuming. Two clear reasons were identified by co-researchers – one being a sense of being pulled into the role due to a perceived vacuum with a lack of strong leadership in the team. An example of this "pull" in action would be Grace who described that this was an easy role for her to fall into, as well as the signs that she was starting to assume the role.

> *The pseudo team leadership role – I've done that as well! That's a natural position for me. I think it's when you feel as if there's a bit of a vacuum there. Usually the team leader is not doing it or doesn't really know how to do it. Then I'm consciously forcing myself not to volunteer to take on things that might be helpful to move a particular process forward* (Grace: I).

The second reason related to the co-researcher's own background and the fact that they had led large senior teams in the past and the team leader role felt very natural and comfortable. Here there was more of a sense of a "push" from the co-researcher, them getting overly involved and starting to assume the leader role. An example of this was provided by Jackie who somewhat jokingly remarked, "*Well, I'm the leader, the* *director of the day! I'm directing the orchestra, aren't I*?..." before pausing to reflect and adding, "*That's a comfortable role, a bit too comfortable really…*" (Jackie: I).

The above comment raises an underlying ethical issue around boundaries, working with the team leader rather than taking on that role and of the team coach being attuned to their own needs and areas of comfort as well as aware of the various "hooks" that might draw them into the leader role. An example of this in action was provided by Kennedy who described her own background and comfort areas, "*I've run all the versions, huge multi-million organisations. I'd be very happy leading*." However, she also recognised the danger of "*making myself bigger than the leader*", continuing to muse, "*and then what happens when I leave? I need to work with the leader to keep them big versus me who needs to be small"*. Kennedy described behaviours that she noticed from team members that she was getting drawn into being the leader of the team. "*Looking to me rather than at each other. That's the first sign*." Continuing her story she described behaviours she adopted to halt this pattern.

> *I invite them to look at each other when they're talking rather than at me….I always try to sit a little bit further back. Because initially, when we first set it up, I was sitting with them and then it would naturally start. I found myself sitting more and more further back so that I would be out of it. But I would invite them, if they kept talking to me, then I would invite them to look at each other* (Kennedy: I).

5.4.2 Parenting roles

All of the co-researchers in the study were very familiar with transactional analysis with several of them having completed extended personal development using the framework. It was, therefore, not surprising that there were a significant number of references to ego states, especially critical parent and nurturing parent, descriptions of the Karpman drama triangle in action and of co-researchers being "hooked" or "triggered" into different roles by team members' behaviour.

The "nurturing parent" ego state was widely cited by co-researchers as a role they were aware that they moved into with some aspects of the ego state regarded as positive. An example would be John who emphasised boundary-giving, providing structure and creating conditions for growth as beneficial aspects of "nurturing parent".

> *I think a good parent invests in a child and provides some boundaries and structures within which it can grow until the point at which it then leaves and does its own thing. It's got those imaginary implicit boundaries still with them that are still helpful* (John: I).

For Jackie "nurturing parent" equally had a valid role in ensuring that no one was talked over and that "*everyone's voice is heard*" (Jackie: I). The challenge appeared to be when the co-researcher became too drawn into the nurturing parent ego state or found themselves in “rescuer” role. Consistent terms were used to describe this sense of being too involved including “feeling sorry” for team members; a desire to “help out” or “look after” team members or “sort it out” for them. An example would be Grace’s reflection:

> *She was looking at me almost beseechingly “what the hell do I do here?” and I was torn ……. I think it was recognising that it was quite difficult because I did feel sorry for her that she had everything against her – he was older, higher up the hierarchy, there was a male/female dynamic, he was a doctor she was a nurse, there was a lot going on that made it difficult for her. I put them together, I’d suggested that they should go together because I had thought from speaking to her individually that actually she was a really capable and competent person that could deal with the exercise…So I felt responsible as well* (Grace: RL).

Almost the same number of examples of being triggered into “critical parent” were provided as being pulled into “nurturing parent”, however, in terms of their experiences of being pulled into the two roles, co-researchers were spread across a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum were those who identified strongly with “nurturing parent”; who had similarly emphasised the building psychological safety and relationships aspects of team coaching; described their approach to challenge in terms of observational feedback or holding up the mirror and some discomfort in challenging individuals in a group setting. In the middle were those who recognised that they could be pulled into both “nurturing parent” and “critical parent”, depending on the situation and particular triggers. At the other end of the spectrum were those who only identified with “critical parent”. It was notable that the latter group had identified with some of the stronger forms of challenge, for example being provocative, and described themselves as very comfortable challenging others in a group setting.

Whilst some aspects of “nurturing parent” were regarded as beneficial, “critical parent” was always presented in a negative light. An example would be Bob, when he reflected upon a recent team coaching session, noticing that he had got “hooked” into one of the team member’s behaviour.

> *I got hooked into Sam’s “no time, this is stupid” comments during the crowd surfing exercise. I went to critical parent and stopped everyone to announce that Sam wanted more time. It was an attempt to embarrass her, but she wasn’t, and they continued on* (Bob: RL).

A similar example of being triggered by team members’ behaviour and reacting in a way, which the team coach then regretted, was provided by Joy. Reflecting on a very challenging session Joy wrote:

> *In the large group the three girls formed a clique and were very vocal with personal agendas. I had to shut them down at one point as it was going very off-topic, which made them sulk like school kids! I went into parent role and got sulky child reaction* (Joy: RL).

Joy continued to reflect upon how she had taken this particular team coaching session to supervision and concluded that she, "*didn't handle it elegantly and it was like corralling school kids all morning*". Reflecting on the next team coaching session Joy noted how she had taken the learning from this session and "*softened the tone*", using more of a "*how shall we approach this*" style (Joy: RL) which resulted in more positive behaviours.

Most of the examples of co-researchers being drawn into "nurturing" or "critical" parent roles were taken from reflective logs rather than interviews. This would suggest that these dynamics of transference and countertransference are not generally in the conscious awareness of the team coach and that engaging in reflective practice and supervision is important for enabling the team coach to notice how their work is affecting them, as well as any patterns they are falling into.

5.5 Navigating individual relationships in the team setting

Whilst team coaching is essentially a team coach working with team members collectively, there are a number of individual relationships at play between the team coach and others which it is important to both acknowledge and understand. This section covers two sub themes under the broad theme of navigating individual relationships in the team setting. These are:

- Individual coaching relationships
- Working with a co team coach

5.5.1 Individual coaching relationships

As discussed in the previous chapter there was a spectrum of approaches to the practice of having individual coaching arrangements alongside team coaching with some coaching the team leader, and sometimes other members of the team, whereas others did not, either as a conscious decision or because this was not currently part of their practice. If team coaches decide to enter into individual coaching relationships it is apparent that this does create some additional complexities. An example of such would be Kennedy who shared her experience of coaching the team leader to become a stronger team leader and the challenge of seeing him in action in the team settings, as well as the reward of noticing him getting stronger.

> *Initially for the first three or four sessions it was like, "no, no, no!" And he'd look at me as if to say, "have I done it right?" Afterwards we'd unpack that in a coaching session and I'd say, "what was going on for you?" And he'd say, "Oh I need to know I was doing it right". And I'd ask, "so what was the impact? What did you notice?" So, again feeding it back to them… and just noticing that progression of a leader, becoming stronger in his own leadership* (Kennedy: I).

One of the advantages of practicing individual coaching alongside team coaching is the opportunity to witness the individual in the team setting, to witness an incident or behaviour in action and then take this outside of the room and explore it in an individual coaching session. When no individual coaching relationship exists, the coach may feel powerless as intervening in front of the group may not be appropriate and there is no other vehicle. Thinking back to a recent piece of work Grace shared her frustration at witnessing a young and junior team member on the receiving end of some challenging behaviour and feeling helpless because individual coaching was not part of the assignment and there was no private space and time to enable her to work with this individual separately.

> *So I just had to reiterate what it was they were supposed to be doing and how they were supposed to be doing it and try to get him to do more of what he needed to do and to reassure her that she was doing the right thing. But it was public feedback rather than a private review of how she might handle a difficult situation* (Grace: I).

However, seeing your individual coachee in action and gauging how to interact with them in a group setting can also present challenges as expressed by Liza.

> *I sometimes wonder whether I'm being too harsh on my coachees or too soft? Am I saying that because I don't want them to get away with anything because I'm their coach? So, I have that in a dialogue going on for myself. I think the more I've done it the more I think it works and I've got better at naming that that's what is going on for me sometimes with the group. For example, "I don't know if I'm being harsh on Matilda because I coach her… Matilda I notice that this is what you keep doing." And someone else will say, "no you're not being harsh". So, you're using them as your temperature gauge at the same time* (Liza: I).

5.5.2 Working with a co team coach

For those who decide to practise team coaching with a co team coach, navigating the relationship between the two of them in the team setting, requires planning upfront. Bob's practice emerged as quite typical, '*We might agree, "Ok I'm going to do the opening round, check in, you look after that, I'll go through the norms from last session*"'. (Bob: I). Other considerations are splitting the session "*depending on where our strengths and preference lie*" and "*of mixing the voices all the way through*". (Joy: I). However, all emphasized the importance of flexibility on the day. For Liza:

> *Either one can step in and we tell the team that's going to happen. It doesn't mean that the person's not doing a good job, somebody else has just seen a different thing. When people always say it's about the 'contracting' I don't think I really got it until team coaching. You're re-contracting all the time to make sure that you're not doing something that is making things worse or compounding patterns that are already happening like saying, 'I'd better not say anything because it's the Chief Exec speaking. The contracting makes it work* (Liza: I).

Where team coaches do work in pairs the general practice seems to be alternating between one taking the lead role and the other an observational role, with an agreement that if the observer notices something they have permission to say what is on their mind if they believed that to be helpful in the moment. Another consideration is the layout of the room and where the two team coaches sit with a popular approach having the team and team coaches seated in a circle, ensuring that the two team coaches can see each other and watch for each other's eye contact.

Consistent terms were used to describe the dynamic between the two team coaches including "being completely in the moment", "instinctive" and "present". Equally co-researchers used quite similar language when describing how they would make an intervention when they were not in the lead role. For Bob, "*There are no major signals, more at 'is this a good time to bring in something I've observed*"? (Bob: I). Grace described a similar approach, of gently offering feedback, emphasising the importance of "transparency" in how the two coaches were communicating with each other.

> *We try to almost role model to the team members how we communicate with each other. So, I would say, "Paula, I'm noticing something here, would this be a good time to share what I'm noticing?" I think if she really thought, "oh gosh don't say it now, say it in a minute", she would then say transparently to me, "yes let's do that in a moment"* (Grace: I).

Similarly Monica spoke of "*modelling the behaviours we want to see*" and of the importance of working with someone whose style is different, "*so I might say something to the team and it's really helpful if the other coach can say it again, but maybe in a slightly different way, because then the team hears it twice and gets a chance to view it in a different way*" (Monica: I).

Whilst those practising co team coaching stressed the positives of working with a co team coach during their interview, some of the reflective logs provided a different insight into the sometimes difficult dynamics of working with another experienced coach. This is evident in Joy's reflection on a check-in run by her co coach.

> *It took a long time to go through it. C wasn't concise and I didn't have time to re cut it. C can be very wordy – I'm trim in comparison, I can be sparse. Need to find a happy medium (Joy: RL).*

Bob shared his experience of "*chaotic preparations*" ahead of a team coaching session and of people having "*no clue*" about the session. Bob mused how he felt at a disadvantage as his co team coach had met with the team previously but he had not. In a separate reflective log some perceived inequality in workload/responsibility was evident.

> *Frustrated that T texted that morning to say she would meet me at client and go with whatever I decided to do. Felt taken for granted and all responsibility on me* (Bob: RL).

Equally being on the receiving end of your co coach intervening with their comments can give rise to insecurities and self-doubt for the coach running that session. Personal resilience and being at ease with own style and abilities are, therefore, important qualities, as is evidenced by Liza's reflection after one of her early experiences of working with a co team coach.

> *During the early part of the session, it felt like Dawn was coming in a lot when I was leading the group and I was worried she thought I wasn't handling the group. We discussed this. She felt that what was happening in the room was quite tough for one person to manage and was trying to support me. We agreed that she would give me a few seconds and that, if I looked like I needed the support, she would jump in – or if she felt she had something different to contribute. And vice versa* (Liza: RL).

Contracting at the outset and re-contracting on a regular basis emerged as crucial. In addition, all of those who practised co team coaching volunteered that they tended to work with the same person, valuing the familiarity of this relationship as well as the trust that had built up.

5.6 Ways of working: "planned or 'fluid'

One of the key characteristics of a murmuration is the ability of the flock to change speed or direction almost simultaneously. This theme of charting a course but then changing direction and adapting rapidly to circumstances is covered in this section. The section covers two sub themes under the broad theme of ways of working. These are:

- A planned or fluid approach
- Thinking on my feet

A significant point of divergence in the study was how much co-researchers adopted a planned or fluid approach to preparing for a team coaching assignment. A range of styles were explained from structured and planned to a more emergent, co-created on the day. Although no two co-researcher's descriptions of a team assignment were the same, a small number of "typical" approaches emerged particularly around the start of the work namely: having a planned first session including sharing the output from any diagnostic and/or feedback and all team members undertaking a standard diagnostic. However, once this first session had taken place, approaches to planning sessions were more divergent ranging from having an overarching plan for each session to seeing what emerged on the day. These "typical" approaches and some of the variations are presented in table 5.2.

'Typical' Approaches	Variations
• First session generally planned eg contracting, how are we going to work together? Going through the output from the team diagnostic and team member and stakeholder feedback. Data shared with team and they decide what they want to work on • Use of a 'standard' tool eg Myers Briggs to provide a common language and understanding for all team members	• Adopting a 'light touch' approach with psychometrics. A belief that they can be a distraction and get in the way of what is happening in the room. Only used at client's request. • Start with the work in hand and agree the 'agenda' for the day • Have a rough agenda or some ideas in 'back pocket' but work with what is current on the day; holding 'planning' and 'flexibility' • Over-arching plan for the assignment and each session (eg first session use of psychometric, second session team purpose and team charter)

Table 5.2: "Planned" versus "fluid" approaches to team coaching

Speaking as someone who adopted a planned approach, Joy described a "typical" team coaching assignment as commencing with information gathering through focus groups and one-to-ones prior to going into the first intervention, usually two days involving at least one psychometric, DISC or strengths, a team diagnostic as well as an introduction to Tuckman and Lencioni. John similarly adopted a planned starting point

> *In the first meeting … getting the personality stuff, the sense of what it is to develop as a team and the values, and get that in place at the first meeting and thereafter it would very much depend on what emerged from that first meeting …* (Joy: I.*)*

Another approach, described by several co-researchers, was a structured and planned start: running a team diagnostic, sharing the findings with the team and encouraging the team to identify their own priorities to work on, after which the work would become more "emergent" or "organic". Grace spoke of "*having a fairly macro picture in my head, some kind of team effectiveness, loose middle bit and how we might end*". Bob summarised his approach to an assignment as:

> *The first workshop is usually about debriefing the data in the morning, picking up some norms before that, using the afternoon to get them to start focusing on where they want to focus, checking on progress, contracting for the next intervention. So, a rhythm of workshop, check in call, how's it going? What do you as a team want to address next workshop? and so on…* (Bob: I).

A number of factors determined whether co-researchers adopted a more "planned" or "fluid" approach to preparing and delivering an assignment including their own personality preferences, particularly in relation to structure. When reviewing the draft team coaching framework during the validation focus group John lingered for some time on the "planned or fluid approach" section.

> *That whole area just landed with me in terms of I'm quite a planner. I want to know for my own sense of comfort what the structure of the day looks like, but actually having planned in the possibility of flexibility. Spontaneity. Also being aware that that's a dynamic for members of the team as well. Some of them will want a clear agenda, 9.30, 10.30 etc … and others would die if they saw that! (John: VFG).*

Several co-researchers explained how they had taken their style as an individual coach and incorporated this into their team coaching practice, particularly around seeing what emerged on the day. Anita described this kind of approach.

> *It tends to be co-created. Even in my one-to-one coaching I will keep notes but they are very light notes, just to remember the key things. I'll always start with 'What's emerged? What's with you now? What's important now? What will be useful today?' The team might spend 30 minutes or more (even in the one-to-one sessions) spending time digesting what's happening, what's come up and what would be useful for today?* (Anita: I).

Kennedy described a similar approach of turning up with some ideas in "my back pocket" but of then checking in with the team what they wanted to work on that day.

> *Often I'd prepared something to offer back to them but it wasn't current any more, they'd moved on. So it was very much about meeting them where they were and not saying, "oh yes but we had this that we looked at last time …"* (Kennedy: I).

"Planned" and "emergent" styles also showed up in the use of psychometrics, frameworks and models during team coaching. An extensive list of psychometrics, frameworks and models were referred to in the interviews and these are presented in appendix I with the most frequently mentioned in the first column.

Co-researchers polarised around the use of psychometrics with some describing how they invariably used a particular psychometric/psychometrics at the start of an assignment whereas others described how they only used psychometrics at the specific request of a client, believing them to be a distraction. There was a similar range of responses to sharing models and theories. Some co-researchers outlined a range of models that they might use with a team whilst others described a more nuanced approach. Advocating the latter Liza described how she might bring in a model as a "*helpful way of normalising something*" but that she had learned to do this with "*caution*" and "*I always offer it as a suggestion that might help and, if it doesn't park it*" (Liza: I). A smaller number of co-researchers described how they used few models and frameworks. This stance is typified by Anita who described how she was now less reliant on theory in her work, "there was a time when I learnt a new technique and thought, '*how can I bring it in now? .. but I'm noticing that I'm not actually using a lot of that stuff*' (Anita: I).

Closely linked to having a structured or emergent approach is the ability of the team coach to react to events - what several co-researchers described as the "ability to think on my feet". Bob emphasized the importance of knowing how to hold the tension between, "*here's the next thing to do*" versus "*something's happening right now… not being precious about the agenda or the exercise… being comfortable, letting go of control*" (Bob: I) References were often made in the form of a metaphor, such as Monica, who likened the skill to "*my ability to really dance with what I've got, and to be really present*" and John who used the analogy of flow and water.

> *The image of flow also reminds you that water can do what the heck it likes at any point really. Water will just go where it goes. If, in the moment, it becomes obvious that the team just needs to stop and talk about something else for an hour that we haven't predicted, then I'm quite comfortable with that* (John: I).

"Thinking on my feet" showed up in various forms including: a decision to spend longer on a topic; to change topic completely; redesigning a planned session overnight or throwing in an activity to shift or create energy. Paradoxically, whilst the impact might be that the session appeared fluid to the team members, co-researchers were unanimous that their ability to think on their feet was underpinned by years of experience and the knowledge that they had the ability to shift the energy by suggesting another activity, timeout or engaging in something completely different, for example a constellation.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has focused on the "murmuration" or intervention phase of team coaching and identified how team coaches regard creating and nurturing a safe space, combined with an optimal amount of challenge, as essential elements at the heart of team coaching. These findings, and the strength of them, was something that resonated with me and my own coaching practice. For me, creating a safe space starts in the preparation phase and is something that needs to be constantly nurtured during the delivery phase. Looking back, I can see this in action throughout the study starting with my approach to the orientation focus group. I am aware that I went to great lengths to create a conducive environment as well as deciding how I would ask co-researchers to introduce themselves, in order to create a safe space from the outset. Challenge is intrinsically related to a safe space and once the latter has been established the team coach is able to increase the level of challenge in order to improve performance. Whilst team coaches all emphasise the importance of challenge, how, and how much, challenge is presented, is unique to the personality and philosophical perspective of the team coach. I was surprised at just how many different ways team coaches described their own form and range of challenge and how some of these were similar, and others very different, to my own.

Exploring the personal experiences of team coaching highlighted that team coaches find themselves assuming a variety of roles, not simply that of “team coach”. Some of these roles relate to providing direction and knowledge and are identified as useful roles for the team coach to assume on occasion. These findings resonated with me as I had described myself moving between a number of roles in my own reflective logs, together with reflections that this role had been appropriate in the circumstances. However, there is a danger that the coach can become too comfortable and over-play these roles. I was particularly struck by the range of other roles that the coach can be drawn into, rather than having deliberately chosen. As such they are not “essential elements” for the team coach to include in their practice but rather for the them to be alert to, to be aware of their own patterns, needs and triggers, and recognise when these have been triggered. These roles cluster around “group contagion” with the coach becoming a de facto team member or team leader and parenting roles with the coach becoming overly protective of team members (nurturing parent) or overly challenging (critical parent).

As discussed in the previous chapter, team coaches have divergent approaches to having individual coaching relationships alongside team coaching. As someone who has coached team leaders, and occasionally team members, alongside team coaching arrangements, I recognised and shared the importance of creating boundaries, working transparently and navigating ethical considerations in and outside the room. A similar consideration exists for those team coaches who practice team coaching with a co team coach. Agreeing how the two coaches will work together, how they will seamlessly hand the baton to each other and offer observations whilst the other is running a session, are all important elements for the two coaches to agree upfront, as well as reflect upon together on an ongoing basis.

The conclusion that the content of team coaching varies significantly did not surprise me. However, the findings did provide rich additional insight into this variance including the importance of the team coach’s own coaching philosophy, drawn from their individual coaching practice, and their personality preferences, in terms of favouring a more “planned” or “fluid” approach. Identifying essential elements is, therefore, challenging. However, I was reassured that it is possible to identify some “typical” approaches to planning a team coaching intervention, as well as some popular variations. In addition, whilst an extensive list of psychometrics, frameworks and models are used by team coaches, there are a small number which are used most frequently.

Chapter 6 – Evaluating Team Coaching

As I thought about an appropriate term for this final stage of team coaching I became aware that evaluation was a common thread running through all the themes relating to this phase - whether it be the success of a team coaching assignment; the impact of the work on the team coach; the differences between team coaching and other team interventions and the similarities/differences between dyadic and team coaching. Returning to the metaphor of team coaching being a flight involving a flock of birds there are three distinct stages: a pre-flight "preparation" phase, a middle or intervention phase when the flock has taken flight and start to "murmurate" and the last reflection or evaluation phase when a new destination has been reached. This final stage draws the "murmuration" to a close, the flock has found a new roost and different vantage point. A new destination has been reached, the activity has ceased and there is time to reflect on the highlights, the challenges faced and overcome and extract learning for the future. It seemed appropriate, therefore, that this final phase of team coaching, became the "evaluation" phase.

The chapter explores a number of themes emerging from the data relating to the overarching theme "Evaluation". These themes are:

- Evaluating team coaching: what is it and how do I know I'm doing it?
- Evaluating the success of team coaching
- Evaluating the individual versus the team coach
- Evaluating the cost of team coaching on the team coach, self-care and external support

6.1 Evaluating team coaching: what is it and how do I know I'm doing it?

Much of the literature on team coaching focusses on attempting to define team coaching as a discrete process and different to other team interventions, for example facilitation and team building. At the outset of my study I had reflected on whether this was necessarily the case or whether it might be a case of the "Emperor's new clothes" with team coaching being marketed by thought leaders and training providers as the new coaching offering. I felt this "Emperor's new clothes" topic warranted further inquiry and it was therefore one I introduced at the orientation focus group by asking all co-researchers to share their conceptualisation of team coaching. I returned to this query in the interview with question 8, "what happened in your team coaching that made you question if this is part of team coaching?" included to elicit co-researcher's thoughts on team coaching versus other team interventions. This topic was also revisited in the creative synthesis focus group.

This section explores two sub themes, under the broad heading of evaluating team coaching as a discrete process:

- Team coaching. What is it?
- Team coaching. How do I know I'm doing it?

The co-researchers in this study were all highly experienced and qualified individual coaches with varying levels of qualifications and experience in team coaching. Several described their team coaching practice as "emergent", built on their dyadic coaching philosophy, experience of working with groups and teams as well as knowledge from any team coaching development undertaken. All recognised team coaching as a discrete process, whilst acknowledging somewhat "fuzzy" boundaries between it and other team interventions. When evaluating what exactly team coaching was it often appeared easier to describe what it was not. Some similar expressions were used to describe what team coaching was not including any intervention seen as a "team building", just getting team members together to have a "nice day" or "fun" and work with just a "short-term focus". Joy pulled together all of these elements in her summary.

> *Anything which is seen as a team build event isn't. I think the piece where we're not looking at any longer-term behavioural change, where we're just looking at the output rather than the health of the team. If we're just going to get everyone together to have a nice day, then I would say it's not even group coaching it's pure facilitation (Joy: I).*

For some team coaches, coming to an understanding of what team coaching is, often emerges by reflecting on work they had been involved in previously which they now concluded was not team coaching. This work might have been sold, by themselves or others, as "team coaching" but in hindsight had been largely facilitation or training. All co-researchers were able to provide rich examples, but it was notable that these examples were quite different. Jen recalled an example of slipping into trainer mode during a team coaching session – "*It was literally a tutorial workshop on what is a vision and how to write one. It wasn't coaching"* (Jen: I). For Monica it was a time when she was co team coaching but, in her opinion, some of the activities introduced by her colleague were too shallow.

> *I thought I was doing team coaching but in fact I was just facilitating…. I was brought in as the 'expert' to sort them out versus I can support them to support themselves out…. There have been some very positive experiences before, but I realise they weren't team coaching…. People who have gained a lot of benefit from sitting, talking, some of the facilitation I've done, or some of the input I've given around theories has been really useful. But it wasn't coaching!* (Kennedy: I).

Whilst there was convergence on the kinds of activities that were not team coaching there was also divergence. Some team coaches routinely work with a team on their team charter, vision, purpose and use psychometrics to provide a common language and understanding for the team, describing these activities as a core part of team coaching and often the starting point for the work. For others the use of tools and techniques can result in a perception that the work focusses too much on process. Speaking as someone who favoured a “fluid” approach to team coaching with minimal use of tools and techniques, Bob argued any team intervention that overly focussed on process was not team coaching.

> *…trying facilitation to get to a vision statement or run stuff on Myers Briggs or lots of diagnostics or psychometrics. Less of a focus on how a team is performing. It is too overly focused on task as opposed to teamwork in terms of dynamics and calling out what’s in the room. They’re just doing chunks of work … team charter, mission statement …* (Bob: I).

Other co-researchers also emphasised this importance of being “fluid” and working with what is emerging for the team rather than a fixed agenda as well as an awareness of how theory and models are used. Anita described how;

> *I feel I’m team coaching when we’re sitting around talking about stuff that’s emerging as important for the them in that moment and supporting them and having a deeper conversation around the challenges they are having. Sometimes I might throw in a model to frame it if I think it’s useful…. When anything is being used to facilitate the conversation, that for me is coaching. When it comes to getting more into the theory or the model itself then it’s not so much* (Anita: I).

However, the line between team coaching and other team interventions is not necessarily hard and fast. An example would be John who described how he experienced a “grey line” between team coaching and facilitation. As someone who works with a number of teams, perhaps meeting with them once or twice a year, he commented that “*you’re coming to it fresh each time, or sort of fresh, but there is still the continuity of personnel.”* He mused whether if you are starting to meet three times a year it would *“feel like team coaching because the meetings are close enough together for people to have last time very clearly in their minds”.* For John there was a spectrum with, “*the distance between meetings probably determining whether it’s down the team coaching end of the spectrum or just the facilitation end”* (John: I).

Whilst no one else voiced this particular dilemma, or described the relationship between team coaching and facilitation in the same terms, there was broad agreement that a key ingredient of team coaching is that it takes place over a number of sessions. Liza described how she did not *“call it team building unless I can see it being a journey”*. By “journey” she meant that it was more than a one-off intervention, was *“holistic”* and involved work that necessitated a *“coach”* which for Liza would exclude *“team building activities”* (Liza: I).

What emerged from the study is that there were quite different perceptions of what team coaching is. This was apparent at the outset in the wide array of definitions provided by co-researchers as well as at the validation focus group twelve months later where some similarities in practice were identified as well as differences. What was evident, however, is that co-researchers were generally quite clear about what constituted team coaching *for them* and also knew when they were straying or being drawn into something that they did not recognise as team coaching.

6.2 Evaluating the success of team coaching

Team coaching is typically a lengthy and expensive development intervention, particularly if all aspects of the process are included: gathering insight from team members and stakeholders, working with a co team coach, carrying out a number of sessions and possibly including some individual coaching. The stakes are therefore high to demonstrate that it works. The challenge of evaluating the success of team coaching was one that was raised at the orientation focus group and that I took into the subsequent interviews to explore, asking the question "how do you know your team coaching is working?"

Co-researchers used consistent terms to describe their current evaluation process including: *"emergent", "embryonic"* and *"anecdotal"*. It was also notable that, when describing current processes that they had in place, co-researchers often used caveats and descriptions lacked detail of rigor applied. A common practice involves rerunning surveys/questionnaires that have been used at the start of the assignment to demonstrate progress. Grace described this practice, although the choice of words and tone suggested that she was less than convinced about its true worth.

> *I suppose at what I think is a fairly superficial level… you might do some team effectiveness measure and you might measure it again later, and they say "actually I think we have made progress on those specific things"* (Grace: I).

For Bob his evaluation was similarly *"anecdotal at the moment"* comprising a rerun of a survey as well but complementing this with feedback, for example, "*team members saying that they've gained something from it in terms of clarity or the ability to have tougher conversations or greater trust in the team*" (Bob: I).

Yet surveys can be problematic to rerun as scores can go down as well as up. As someone who regularly re-ran a survey, either the whole survey or a "pulse check" on a number of factors, Liza explained how scores often go down before they start to improve as, "*what typically happens is the team are harder on themselves because they now know what 'good' looks like*". Whilst Liza argued how this can be an excellent learning experience for the team she also volunteered that

> *…..it takes a bit of realisation for themselves to think "actually it's not because we're worse, we are actually better, but we now know what we're striving towards". For example, they'll say they've managed their stakeholders brilliantly, they've now had some feedback from the stakeholder saying they haven't and now they see what they don't do. So, you've got metrics as well in this model (Liza: VFG).*

Whilst this increasing self-awareness on the part of the team is useful, managing the narrative for team members, and potentially stakeholders, around a set of scores, which have apparently worsened as a result of team coaching, needs some skill, experience, and perhaps bravery, on the part of the team coach.

For most team coaches assessing how well the team coaching is going is largely down to their own intuition, sometimes aided by a key moment in a specific session when there was a notable "shift in the room". Asked to provide examples of this, some co-researchers could recall exact moments in rich detail. For Bob this moment happened in workshop three when one of the team members said,

> *When we meet there's no fun anymore. I come protecting myself and it's not fun, there's no energy and yet the very thinking we should be focussing on is how we bring energy to our 300 reports* (Bob: I).

Looking back, for Bob that was "*the moment when something moved for one person first then it moved others*". For Kennedy the "shift" happened during the fourth session when she observed that team members were able to be "quite vulnerable with each" during a lengthy difficult conversation.

> *After that meaningful conversation they were almost flying. So, it was like they had to unpack a lot of layers and hit bottom to then fly – that's my analogy (I'm thinking of the transition curve) – hit the bottom and then carry each other up* (Kennedy: I).

Kennedy similarly recognised a "shift" in behaviour from the team leader. In the initial sessions she noted how he'd always asked her, "*what should I do*?" but in the later sessions "*it was he who was making the decisions*". She recollected a specific occasion when the leader had made a decision.

> *My personal satisfaction was, "yes! He's owning it!" I fed that back to him that there was a real shift in his authority towards me and the other team members in his authority as a leader. It was great to witness that* (Kennedy: I).

However, change does not always entail a discernible "shift in the room" at a specific moment in time, with team coaches often recognising and noticing more subtle changes in ways of being and acting. Consistent language was used to recognise such behaviour including, *"energy in the room"*, team members being *"comfortable disagreeing with each other*", *"challenging each other"* and having *"productive"* conversations about the *"real issues".*

Another key aspect of evaluating the success of team coaching is the sustainability of the work, during the remainder of the team coaching but also crucially beyond the life of the assignment. Recalling her work with one team Kennedy reflected on how she became aware of team members sharing more of their experiences, listening and connecting with each other and showing a lot more empathy and sensed that the change was becoming embodied.

> *You could almost see the connections being built stronger as though there were more wires on the connections… it was like a piece of string, but it was becoming a much bigger piece of string or a piece of rope. I could sense there was so much more dialogue and openness and sharing* (Kennedy: I).

For others true sustainability was about “traction”, seeing forward momentum and the team coach not having to do all the work. For Joy it was the point where

> *a) they’re doing it and b) they’re taking accountability for it and challenging it other. At that point I can step back, and I know they’re ready, they don’t need me anymore. They might want me, but they don’t need me. The two are different (Joy: I).*

Evaluating the longer-term impact of team coaching was still work in progress for all co-researchers. Most identified specific, but hard to measure, changes they had witnessed including team members starting to self-facilitate their own meetings going forward; team processes becoming more defined and sharp and, in particular there is action - “*the project gets done or stuff happens, and it happens because they want to get it to happen”* (Jackie: I).

Whilst team coaches might struggle to provide clear, measurable, criteria to demonstrate that their team coaching has been a success, they were all able to articulate when they knew it was not really working. “Energy” has particular significance and meaning for team coaches with a high level of energy associated with team coaching working and conversely a lack of energy with a sense that it was not working well. There were several comments about how co-researchers interpreted a lack of energy and the impact it had on them. For Liza;

> *I can tell you how I know it’s not working! It’s energy levels at the end of a session. I’ve come out of sessions where energy was low, people seemed despondent, they’ve agreed to what they were going to do, and I’ve walked out thinking, “even they know I’m noticing that the energy is low”.. and you think, “what happened there?”* (Liza: I).

For Bob there was a sense of “*stale air*” in the room as well as a sense the “*learning was cut off”.* He continued to describe this as a sense that “*people have stayed in their pre-emptive locations or there is no sense of insight or no sense of even the conditions for change*”. Signs that this was happening were when he got a sense that teams were going through the motions, there did not appear to be any depth in conversations and where support was high and challenge low.

Evaluating the success of team coaching appears to be in the early stages for team coaches with heavy reliance on own observed behavioural changes, levels of energy and activity as well as some data gathering through re-running surveys. Co-researchers appeared to be somewhat conflicted by this state of affairs. On the one hand, they all had their own internal barometer to gauge the success of the intervention and therefore did not particularly require further endorsement. However, there was a general acceptance that this was not sufficient for stakeholders and potential users of team coaching who would undoubtedly be seeking more tangible measurements of success for what is a lengthy and costly team development intervention.

6.3 Evaluating the individual versus team coach

One of the questions that was posed at the start of the study was how team coaching is similar/different to dyadic coaching. When seeking to recruit my co-researchers I had stipulated that co-researchers needed to have a minimum of five years' experience working as an individual coach as well as some experience of team coaching. I recognised in setting these criteria I was revealing my own view that team coaches would have entered team coaching via an individual coaching route. This link between dyadic and team coaching was something I was curious about and it also emerged as a strong area of interest for the co-researchers, originating in the orientation focus group, featuring in all of the interviews and discussed again at the validation focus group.

The broad heading of evaluating the individual coach versus the team coach includes two themes that emerged through the analysis of all data sources.

- Is team coaching something only an experienced individual coach can do?
- Am I a better/different individual coach versus team coach?

6.3.1 Is team coaching something only an experienced individual coach can do?

All co-researchers were highly experienced and qualified individual coaches and it was perhaps no surprise that the general consensus was that dyadic coaching experience was necessary to be an effective coach. However, responses varied in strength ranging from "definitely" to a cautious "perhaps not". Speaking from the "definitely" end of the spectrum, Kennedy's response was immediate and unequivocal.

> *When you talked about going in with no individual coaching I felt, "Oh my God!" I felt fear in my stomach. I think you'd have to be an incredibly good team facilitator or done a lot of work with groups. No, my gut senses, no. For me personally, no! I think having coached different types of people and having to use different skills, different approaches, has enabled me to sit with very different people* (Kennedy: I).

Several responses were more nuanced, however still concluding in a "no" answer. Anita's response was immediate, *"I think no"* before pausing and adding, *"well maybe that's too hard and fast"*. Like Kennedy, Anita highlighted how her *"grounding"* in dyadic coaching helped her in her team coaching continuing to describe how both practices now sat alongside each other and *"they do feed each other".*

> *I think something would be missing… My grounding in my individual coaching definitely helps me in my team coaching but there is a difference and I've had to learn the difference. As an individual coach I've learnt a lot just listening to people around the challenges that they're facing from being in a team. It brings you a lot of knowledge and makes you wise to what's going on (Anita: I).*

At the other end of the spectrum was a cautious openness to team coaches entering the practice without necessarily having a background in individual coaching. Speaking from this end of the spectrum, Bob mused how he would *"like to be open to the idea that you don't have to have done one-to-one to be a team coach, that there are other roads in"*. He shared how he had recently worked with someone who had done little one-to-one but *"his way of being is very much inviting the dialogue and challenging support".* Bob argued that, in theory, effective team coaches could come from a range of backgrounds including team leader experience, OD or industrial psychology. However, it was noticeable that Bob's language made much use of *"in theory"* and he did not espouse this opinion with either much conviction or provide more than one example of this in practice. A similar tentative openness to the idea was expressed by Liza who described co coaching with one person who provides "*excellent team coaching… she facilitates very well and she observes what's happening*…" who was not an individual coach. Reflecting out loud Liza provided an interesting distinction between someone practising with knowledge versus someone drawing upon other innate and learned abilities.

> *Whether or not she could decodify what she does to do it again … because a lot of it is because she just knows what's right in the moment and she trusts herself. She's very comfortable with groups… I think she naturally has coaching insight and mindset. But I don't think she does it with awareness and intent and whether she could decodify it and tell someone else what she does … (Liza: I).*

The general consensus in the study was that team coaching is a skilled activity performed by experienced one-to-one coaches, although there was some openness to the fact that others with a strong team/OD/organisational psychology and strong natural instincts and skill could be effective in the process and perhaps work alongside an experienced coach in a co coaching arrangement.

6.3.2 Am I a different/better individual coach versus team coach?

As practising dyadic and team coaches, co-researchers frequently compared and contrasted themselves and their performance in the two roles. A unique perspective was provided by Monica who was quite clear that she saw herself as the same person in both settings.

> *I'm just as open as I am in individual coaching. I think that's because I've had so much experience in one-to-one coaching … because I trust myself that I can coach well. It doesn't matter if one session doesn't go as well as it could have gone, that happens often, but ultimately, I believe I'm a good coach and it's given me the freedom to just really attend to the team* (Monica: I).

However, this perspective was an unusual one, with most co-researchers expressing a difference between them as a dyadic and team coach. Often this difference is largely down to how the team coach feels inside and is not necessarily evident to others, with several co-researchers sharing how the dialogue in their heads was often louder and more critical when they were team coaching than when they were engaging in dyadic coaching. For Kennedy embarking upon team coaching had given her *"more doubts"* than she had experienced working with teams previously or in her dyadic coaching work.

> *It was exciting but scary at the same time. Oh my God, we're just going to have a conversation! What do I need to do? How much do I need to do? When do I need to intervene? Sometimes I felt a bit shy…* (Kennedy: I*).*

What is apparent is that, when the voices of doubt take over and become louder, this is significantly more problematic for the coach in a team versus individual setting. Several examples were provided of challenging behaviour from team members and how the coach had struggled to know whether, and how, to handle the situation in front of other team members. A powerful example was provided by Jen when she described how she had felt very vulnerable due to the *"passive-aggressive"* behaviour of one team member.

> *What was going on in my head was behind the scenes she was saying "she doesn't know what she's doing, she doesn't give us enough challenge, there's not enough direction, this isn't making any difference" (Jen: I).*

Jen's reflective log relating to this session is particularly insightful, revealing her own insecurities about how she felt and what she did as well as illustrating how feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy can linger in team coaching.

> *As usual, self-doubt as to whether I'm good enough. Do I prefer one-to-one coaching as it's "safer"? Do I have the skills? What more could I have done? How would someone else have approached the team? How do I show up differently and be more challenging? Could I have achieved anything different, given the environment? (Jen: RL).*

Most co-researchers described a difference between themselves as an individual and team coach and there was total agreement that the latter was more challenging than the former. As would be expected, with all co-researchers having far less experience of team coaching than they did of individual coaching, most volunteered that they felt more comfortable carrying out one-to-one coaching, but did not comment on whether they believed they were a "better" individual versus team coach. The one exception would be Liza who described herself as a *"better individual coach".* However, it was notable that this assessment was not linked to her own abilities but down to the time constraints inherent in team coaching.

> *I always want more from what I do with my team coaching. It's never good enough because I don't feel I've got enough time with them as a team, so I don't feel it's as significant as it could be. I find I have more influence one-to-one than at a team level in my opinion…I do find individual coaching much easier than team coaching* (Liza: I).

Those team coaches who have individual coaching arrangements with team members alongside team coaching described an ideal scenario for them of having quality time to spend with individual team members to work on their needs as well as the opportunity to see some of this work translate to the team setting.

> *Just seeing the Chief Exec really stand up and challenge his team, that was from the one-to-one stuff. It was great to be able to see it* (Liza: I).

A picture therefore emerged of coaches regarding their dyadic coaching as informing and supporting their team coaching practice. Coaches are typically less comfortable delivering team coaching than dyadic coaching, primarily due to the fact that they have not had as much experience of this. In addition, coaches experience more intense emotions when team coaching. Challenging experiences linger on, whilst there can be real pride in observing leaders taking learning from individual coaching sessions and putting this into practice with their team.

6.4 Evaluating the cost of team coaching on the team coach, self-care and external support

The theme of the cost of team coaching on team coaches was one that arose at the initial orientation focus group prior to being raised in some of the interviews and featuring in several of the reflective logs. As the study progressed this theme expanded, from recognising the impact, to the importance of team coaches "*taking care"* of themselves and featured as a key discussion topic in both the creative synthesis and validation focus groups. The broad heading of evaluating the impact of team coaching on the team coach includes two themes that emerged through the analysis of all sources of data:

- The cost of "holding the team"
- Restoration and taking care of self, including supervision

6.4.1 The cost of "holding the team"

Team coaches invariably describe team coaching as more physically and mentally demanding than individual coaching and of evoking a broader range of emotional responses, the highs being higher and the lows being lower. Team coaches describe moments of real pride and joy when they had witnessed behavioural changes in team members or the team leader. However, they also describe at least as many occasions of self-doubt and anxiety and how it can be easy to take on the mantle of the weight and pressures of the team. An example of how coaches experience the difference between individual and team coaching is provided by Jackie.

> *I think I need to learn a way, and it's true for one-to-one, but it's multiplied in team coaching by how many people are in the room, that you need to be able to bring yourself back … because you take a lot on … we have a lot of different roles when we're team coaching…. I think mentally we need to be equipped… learn how to shake off the day without losing the important stuff… but have ourselves mentally cleansed for next time* (Jackie: I).

Liza echoed this theme of the team coach continuing to process the work after sessions have finished and this process being far more long-lasting and magnified than that of individual coaching.

> *I find with team coaching there's so much going on, so many dynamics. I always go away thinking, "did I do the right thing there?" I probably leave team coaching with more questions about how I behaved than I do in one-to-one sessions. Even with my trickiest one-to-one client, I don't go away and think about it as much as with my coaching teams* (Liza: I).

The analogy of "holding" the team was repeatedly used. For some "holding" was predominantly a mental activity, made more challenging by the numbers of individuals involved.

> *When they're all together it's like, how do you hold all of that? Whereas with one-to-one it's a lot simpler* (Jen: I).

For others "holding" what is going on for all individuals in the team is described in both mental and physical terms.

> *It's like in modern dance, they have a sock, or very thick tights, and there are two or three people inside it and you can see an arm pushing out or a head or a leg and it's almost like that's how a team is… they're constantly moving and grappling… the position changes and how they norm and form and perform differently on different days, weeks and months, depending on what's going on for them as a team, individually, in the organisation, in the wider system …* (Kennedy: I).

At least part of the physical and mental demands of "holding" team members may be attributed to where the team coach physically sits in relation to the team. In team facilitation, or other team interventions, the person leading the session tends to stand or sit at a slight distance from the team so there is a sense of physical distance and difference enabling some objectivity. In team coaching the team coach invariably sits in the team with most describing their practice of sitting in a circle, with no tables or other barriers, alongside members of the team. The sense of being detached, outside the team in the facilitator role, and in it, sitting with the team as team coach, is depicted in figure 6.1.

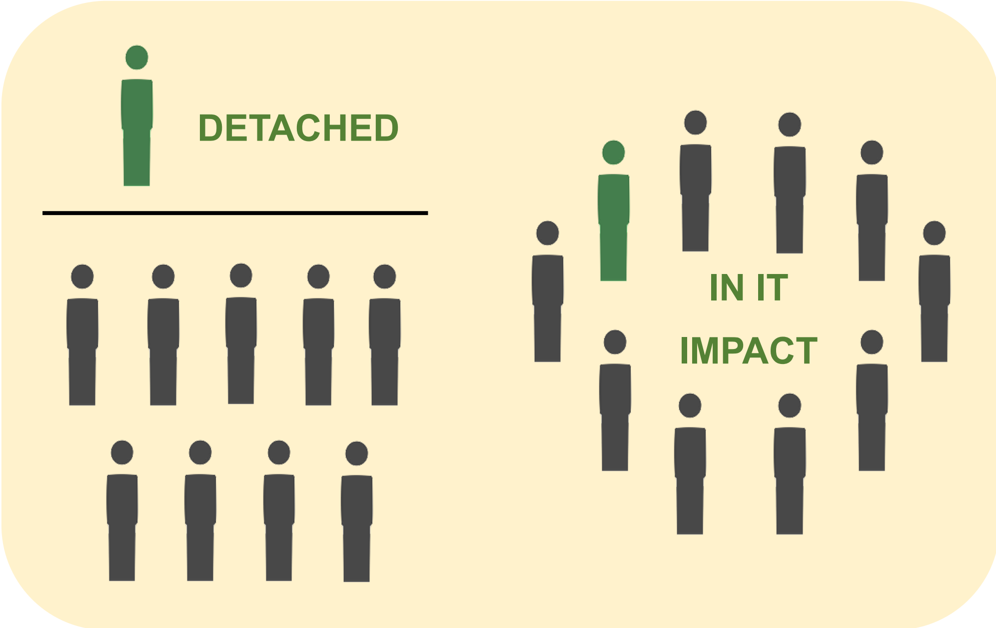


Figure 6.1: "Detached" facilitator role versus "in it" team coach role

Once the team coach is "in it", the sense of physical distance and difference is lost, the team coach is sitting alongside team members, picking up the same undercurrents, dynamics and emotions and maintaining objectivity is challenging. Whilst there are benefits of adopting sitting in a circle seating where there are no barriers and no hierarchy, the practice does require self-awareness and self-management on behalf of the team coach. Several co-researchers described the practice as a dance of "stepping in and stepping out", being able to get close enough but also retain own sense of self and objectivity.

At its most challenging the physical process of "holding" can be physically and mentally draining. Such an example was provided by Joy writing in one of her reflective logs at the end of two days team coaching.

I was knackered at this point, and not picking up on all the clues so I took a back seat and observed whilst C facilitated. Draining holding all the energies in two days with 17 people (Joy: RL).

6.4.2 Restoration and taking care of self, including supervision

Many of the self-care practices shared by co-researchers had their origin in the "preparation" phase of team coaching namely: sharing the load by working with a co team coach, particularly if the team has more than eight members; getting insight from all team members, as well as stakeholders where possible, to avoid getting "bitten on the bum"; appreciating that the work is demanding and so allowing for this in the diary and planning sessions, for example, as half rather than full days.

The importance of supervision as external support for team coaches emerged as a growing consideration for co-researchers as the study progressed. Responses polarised on this topic with some partaking in regular supervision as part of a particular conceptualisation of team coaching and others currently not taking their team coaching to supervision whilst others were utilising ad hoc arrangements or adapting current practices. This spectrum is displayed in figure 6.2.

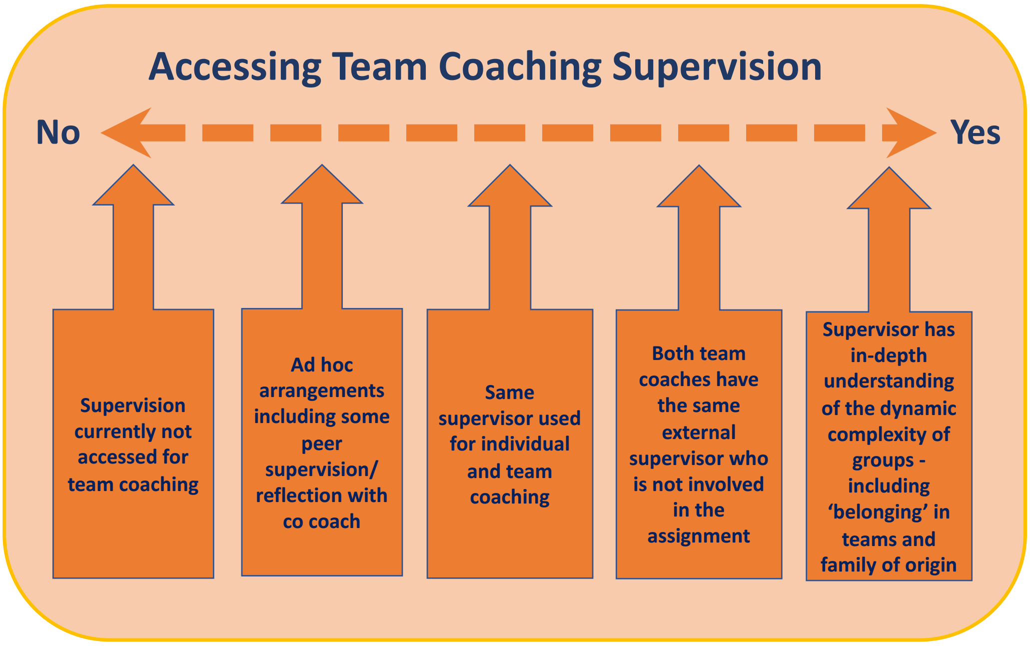


Figure 6.2: Accessing team coaching supervision

Many co-researchers described their team coaching practice as "emergent" or in its "infancy" and, extending this metaphor, it could be argued that team coaching supervision is "embryonic". An example of this would be Jackie, speaking from the "no" end of the spectrum, as she mused out loud at the validation focus group. "*Well … when we've got our own supervisor, would we have a team coaching supervisor?*" before continuing, "*I was just thinking, I haven't once taken team coaching to supervision…*" (Jackie: VFG).

A common practice is for team coaches to use the same supervisor for their dyadic and team coaching practices. Several co-researchers shared how they used the same supervisor for individual and team coaching, occasionally as part of a conscious decision that the supervisor had the experience and knowledge to support both types of work. However, for most this had not been a conscious choice and driven mainly by the fact that it was all “coaching” work and they had started to incorporate team coaching work into existing supervision arrangements. This approach was exemplified by John.

> *I have the same supervisor for the whole thing and I’m quite comfortable dealing with the same person and she seems comfortable with it* (John: VFG).

A small number of co-researchers had separate team coaching supervision arrangements. An example would be Liza who described how the methodology she was trained in and followed stipulates that both team coaches share a supervisor who was not involved in the team coaching assignment. Advocating this approach Liza argued that, whilst peer reflection with a co team coach was useful, in itself it was not enough.

> *I feel quite strongly that there should be an external supervisor involved in that … otherwise you’re both colluding about what a brilliant job you do! Or crappy job!* (Liza: VFG).

As the study progressed it was evident that co-researchers were becoming increasingly aware of the importance of supervision in supporting their team coaching practice. In the orientation focus group there was no mention of supervision and only two references to it in the interviews and reflective logs. By contrast the role of supervision had emerged as a core theme by the time of the creative synthesis and validation focus groups with rich discussions amongst co-researchers on the form this should take, the types of dilemmas team coaches might take to supervision and the background of the supervisor. Several co-researchers commented that they had started practising team coaching without too much thought as to whether their current supervisor, who they used for their one-to-one coaching, had the expertise to support them.

Whilst most of the co-researchers were not currently working with a supervisor who they had specifically chosen because they understand the dynamic complexity of groups, almost all agreed that this was an important factor and something that they were contemplating. An example would be Kennedy, who, as someone with a strong systemic background, believed it was important that she worked with someone who had a good understanding of what happens relationally when the coach comes in a group, including belonging in teams and the importance of family of origin. Having undertaken some personal development in this area Kennedy was aware of how her own patterns and reactions may show up in a group setting, including her own need to belong and difficulty in saying “goodbye”.

> *I feel that sense of pride, that nurturing parent, that they are able to fly on their own and I can go off and join another murmuration. But there is a sense of “ah I really liked those people” and “I really liked that work”. That stems from my own family of just me and my mum. Whereas somebody who had a good family maybe they can step in and step out easily and not get so attached. Because it’s often been me*

> *and my mum and I've often had to take the lead. I have to be careful that I don't take the lead or become bigger than the leader. So, I've got to take all of that back* (Kennedy: VFG).

Supervision emerged as an important element of the "evaluation" phase, especially in relation to how well the assignment had gone and extracting learning for the future. However, it is apparent that team coaches are becoming increasingly aware that supervision has a key role throughout the whole team coaching assignment. In the "preparation" phase in reflecting on ethical dilemmas, boundaries and contracting that the coach has to navigate. During the "murmuration" phase in understanding how the work is impacting on the team coach, including triggers, transference and countertransference. Finally, in the "evaluation" phase to explore "endings"; "stepping out", leaving the leader and the team resourced for the future and any "hangover" from the work, including what the team coach is taking away and feelings and emotions associated with the assignment. Establishing supervision arrangements with a supervisor with the right experience to support this work is therefore an important consideration prior to team coaching commencing.

6.5 Summary

Returning to one of the objectives of this study, to elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching and to contribute to practice by developing a comprehensive framework of team coaching, it is apparent that a number of essential elements link to the "evaluation" phase of team coaching. As the study progressed it also became increasingly apparent to me that this final phase is the least mature and defined of the three phases with team coaches still determining the form of some of the elements and how they fit into their own team coaching practice. Team coaches concur that it is important to provide clarity around what team coaching is, and is not, for organisations considering investing in team coaching and coaches looking at extending their dyadic coaching practice into team coaching. However, whilst there are some similarities in conceptualisations of team coaching, there remain significant differences.

The co-researchers' recognition that evaluating the success of team coaching is an essential element, whilst also acknowledging that their own attempts to do so are "emergent" or in their "infancy", had particular resonance with me. Whilst it could be argued that the same challenges are inherent in dyadic coaching, team coaching constitutes a significantly bigger investment in time and money on the part of organisations and teams, and a lack of clear evaluation criteria and methods is problematic for both team coaches selling team coaching and organisations and teams looking to engage in it. Team coaches appreciate the importance of creating more robust evaluation methods and are in varying stages of seeking to address it.

I think it is debatable whether experience of dyadic coaching is an “essential” element for team coaching. I deliberately chose co-researchers who were all highly experienced individual coaches. It is, therefore, not surprising that most argued that dyadic coaching experience is extremely important, if not a requisite, for practising as a team coach. All co-researchers emphasise how their dyadic coaching provides the grounding for their team coaching in terms of skills, behaviours and knowledge. In addition, all acknowledge that they find team coaching considerably more challenging than dyadic coaching and are conscious of questioning their own capabilities on a more frequent basis. Entering into team coaching without dyadic coaching experience would, therefore, appear to be an unusual route and necessitate particular knowledge and skills on behalf of the individual, for example group dynamics, OD and organisational psychology.

One important, but still very emergent, element, is that of self-care and external support for the team coach. Team coaching is undoubtedly a challenging activity with the highs and lows much more extreme and magnified than for dyadic coaching. As such it is physically and mentally demanding for the team coach and establishing self-care practices at the outset is important. As someone who engages in regular individual and facilitated group supervision with a supervisor who has specialist knowledge and experience of working with groups, I was surprised that not all of my co-researchers had adopted the same approach. However, it is certainly clear that team coaches are placing increasing importance on external supervision to provide additional insight and support in their practice.

Chapter 7 - Discussion

This study set out to explore the experience of team coaching from the perspective of team coaches, with a view to eliciting the essential elements of team coaching. My aim was to listen to the individual and collective voices of the co-researchers, educe the richness of their and my own experiences and interpret the meanings made of this practice. In doing so I am to inform theory development in team coaching by contributing the voice of practitioner team coaches. This chapter develops my holistic meaning making of the data from the findings chapters, presenting the analysis with my own researcher voice. My views are based on the fusion of data with reference to the debate and issues raised in existing literature. Additional literature that has become pertinent following data analysis is used to inform the discussion; a process in line with heuristic inquiry (Sultan, 2019). In keeping with the principles of heuristic inquiry, no population generalisability is claimed for the findings explored here. Instead, my purpose is to offer theoretical generalisability, in which the reader relates and extrapolates the material presented to their own personal and professional experience, thereby judging the contribution of this study in terms of the light it sheds in this context (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Patton, 2015).

The chapter has four overarching themes:

- The team coaching experience: convergences and divergences
- Team coaching - team specific considerations
- Team coaching – coach specific considerations
- The team coaching process: implications for practice

These overarching themes are not intended to be comprehensive, encompassing all the varied and wide-ranging findings from the study. Instead they represent the most significant meanings I have derived from the findings and ones which I believe provide particular insight for theorising and team coaching practice.

The chapter will conclude with the presentation of a team coaching model and accompanying explanatory framework detailing typical approaches to team coaching and popular variations.

7.1 Team coaching experiences: convergences and divergences

In choosing to adopt heuristic inquiry as a methodology for a study seeking to elicit the essential elements of team coaching, I was aware from the outset that I had set myself a challenge. As a methodology heuristic inquiry focuses on individual experiences, celebrating difference and, where co-researchers are used, using purposive selection to ensure a maximum variation sample (Moustakas, 1990; Sultan, 2019). Having adopted this approach and recruited a diverse sample of co-researchers, I had some concerns that my research might uncover far more differences than similarities in team coaching practice. However, I also took heart from another central tenet of heuristic inquiry, that "*honouring difference allows us to highlight similarity*" (Sultan, 2019 p. 21) and that ultimately co-researchers differences are transcended through the identification of common themes (Cresswell, 2013).

In seeking to understand where team coaching is in its establishment as a recognised practice, the development of its older and more mature "sibling", dyadic coaching, provides a useful comparison. Writing in 2009, Bachkirova and Kauffman posit that there are a wide range of perspectives on what dyadic coaching is and it is the richness of these perspectives that contributes to the development of the field. Bachkirova and Kauffman (2009) proceed to argue that approaches to coaching are diverse and definitions seem to be evolving, however, each coach has some internal working definition of what he or she offers. A more recent comprehensive review of the coaching process concluded that the coaching landscape has not become significantly clearer with a diversity of definitions and styles being adopted (Myers, 2017). If this is the case then logic would suggest that there would be even less clarity surrounding team coaching which, as has been mentioned on multiple occasions in this study, is still largely regarded as a "*new and young craft*" (Hawkins, 2014 p. 7). This lack of clarity was certainly evident in this study - in the different ways in which co-researchers defined the practice of team coaching, the diversity of approaches adopted, interventions made and how they described their sessions, reflecting the complexity of this process.

At the same time, in search of universality of experience of team coaching the study identified some elements seen as common. It is a process that takes place over a number of sessions, spread out over a period of time; it involves individuals in a team learning together whilst completing a task/carrying out their business; it is holistic focussing on the whole team; it involves work that necessitates the use of a coach (ie it is not simply team building); it focusses on the health of the team and long-term change and utilises the behaviours and skills of dyadic coaching.

Whilst co-researchers' opinions all converged on the above elements, there was significant divergence on other aspects of team coaching, in particular relating to how team coaching is delivered. A useful framing for understanding these differences is that they can be seen to fall into three different types of divergence: theoretical/philosophical perspectives underpinning coaches' approaches; psychological differences and differences in team coaching CPD.

7.1.1 Theoretical/philosophical perspectives underpinning coaches' approaches

All of the co-researchers in this study identified with one or more theoretical perspective underpinning their coaching practice. The most typical being: gestalt, person-centred, systemic and transactional analysis. It is clear from this study that team coaches bring whatever philosophical perspective they utilise in their dyadic coaching practice into their team coaching work and this is an important influence on how team coaches deliver team coaching. Some traditions minimise the role of the coach's personal engagement, for example person-centred or, conversely, highlight this role, for example gestalt or existential (Cox et al, 2014; Myers, 2014). In addition, there are varying activities and interventions stemming from these traditions. For example, the "systemic coach" will adopt approaches involving the wider system including use of constellation activities. The "gestalt coach" will favour interventions that heighten team members' awareness of their here-and-now communication including creative approaches. In contrast the "person-centred coach" will focus on a creating a growth-promoting climate to bring about change, with challenge taking the form of light-touch observational feedback and use of "clean language" (Lawley and Tompkins, 2000) to raise awareness.

Team coaching is, therefore, not a homogenous practice, with team coaches developing their own approach, choosing what they perceive to be useful and mixing and matching from the array of options on offer. Such considerations are important for practice as, whilst team coaching offerings may appear very similar on the surface (for example the same number and duration of sessions), the content of the sessions and style of interventions is likely to be quite different. Equally the requirements of organisations and teams are not homogenous, enabling clients to select a team coaching approach that meets their style and specific needs. As such, there are many different ways of doing a good job as a team coach.

7.1.2 Psychological differences

The existing literature provides some thoughtful insight into different approaches to team coaching that might be indicative of individual preferences and styles (Clutterbuck et al, 2017; Lawrence and Whyte, 2017). For example, Clutterbuck et al (2017) differentiate between "*fluid*" and "*rigid*" approaches with the former categorised by minimal use of structure and agenda in favour of working with whatever emerges on the day with the team. By contrast, rigid approaches may insist on all members of the team undertaking the same diagnostics to determine the issues the coaching will focus on, or commence with all members of the team completing the same psychometric assessment. As different approaches to planning and structure were certainly evident in this study they might be seen as indicators that team coaching process also reflects the psychological differences of the coaches.

The differences in approaches were particularly noticeable in relation to structuring the process. Some team coaches identified as favouring a planned and structured approach and described how they adopted this approach, including in their dyadic coaching. Even when they had ostensibly turned up without a plan for a team coaching session, they had something in their "back pocket". Other team coaches favoured a more spontaneous approach and were similarly consistent in how they applied this – using very little structure and planning in their dyadic coaching sessions and having a strong preference for seeing what emerged in team coaching sessions.

Psychological differences were also were also explicitly expressed when co-researchers described themselves in relation to their practice. On occasion they said, for example, "I'm provocative" or "I'm not a challenging coach". It was then apparent that this sense of self translated into the coach's behaviours with, "I'm provocative" readily providing examples of their high challenge interventions and "I'm not a challenging coach" describing a reluctance to directly challenge and instead providing examples of observational feedback.

It can be argued therefore that the style of delivery of team coaching will vary, dependent on the psychological preferences of the team coach. This is consistent with research in both dyadic coaching and counselling (Baron and Morin, 2009; De Haan and Sills, 2010; De Haan, Duckworth, Birch and Jones, 2013; Du Toit, 2014; De Haan and Gannon, 2017). This literature highlights the importance of the relationship between client and practitioner, suggesting that this is the main contributor to a successful intervention, rather than the specific background or experience of the practitioner. Bachkirova (2016) extends this argument, referring to the "self of the coach" and arguing for the centrality of the practitioner's self in the achievement of coaching outcomes and for self as the main instrument of coaching.

7.1.3 Differences in team coaching CPD

All of the co-researchers in this study were highly experienced dyadic coaches with varying levels of experience of team coaching. Some had undertaken qualifications in team coaching whereas others had not. The existing literature provides a helpful starting point for how this difference may manifest itself in team coaching with Hackman and Wageman (2005) identifying one form of team coaching as "*eclectic"* and Clutterbuck (2008) suggesting that there are two categories of team coaches. The first category transfer what they do in dyadic coaching and "*add a dash of facilitation and/or team building and wing it*" (p. 220). The second, he argues, start from a deep understanding of process and team dynamics, distinguish carefully between team coaching and team facilitation, and have a clear understanding of practical and ethical issues. Clutterbuck (2008) posits that there are more coaches in the first category than the second.

It is certainly clear from this study that team coaches lean heavily on their dyadic coaching practice experience. However, the findings suggest that Clutterbuck's (2008) two categories of team coach are too polarised and do not take sufficient account of the many shades of grey in between. In addition, whilst some co-researchers used the term "eclectic" to describe their practice, they saw this as a positive approach, selecting and using the best elements from various sources, and building their own unique approach rather than adhering to an espoused methodology. There was some evidence that those who had undertaken team coaching CPD had taken decisions relating to their practice, particularly around ethical and boundary issues, for example, providing dyadic coaching alongside team coaching. However, it was also notable that co-researchers had not arrived at the same conclusions. In some cases co-researchers outlined the methodology they had been trained in and followed, whilst also acknowledging that they still harboured some ethical dilemmas and it was apparent that they had not integrated this new knowledge into their own practice.

Additional team coaching CPD therefore appears to provide greater recognition of the ethical issues and complexity surrounding team coaching but not necessarily ready solutions and the emergence of more effective team coaches.

One explanation for the amount of theoretical/philosophical, psychological and team coaching CPD divergence discussed above is the complexity of team coaching and the number of influences on the practice. Having completed their critique of the different perspectives on dyadic coaching Bachkirova and Kauffman (2009) conclude that one argument is to

> *abandon the criterion of universality and accept that there could be as many types of coaching as there are individual coaches* p. 107

An extension of this argument would suggest that the degree of divergence for team coaching will be considerably greater than for individual coaching as team coaches combine their individual and group work to create their team coaching practice. This was certainly evident in the study with co-researchers describing their sense of self as a coach based on their dyadic coaching practice, but also their sense of self working with groups and teams in a wide variety of group interventions. The sense of self as a team coach appeared to be largely work in progress as coaches sought to select elements of individual coaching and group work and build these into their team coaching practice. As such, whilst there was some convergence on considerations relating to the ***what*** of team coaching (including definitions and logistics) there was considerable divergence on ***how*** team coaching is delivered by team coaches, reflecting the amount of differences in backgrounds and style amongst team coaches.

7.2 Team coaching – team-related considerations

A key insight from this study is that team coaches spend a significant amount of time and energy preparing for a team coaching assignment. The existing literature suggests that an important component of this preparation is understanding some of the characteristics of the team and the context within which it is operating, including if the timing is right for such an intervention and how "ready" the team is for team coaching. These elements of timing and "readiness" are explored below.

7.2.1 Timing of team coaching interventions

The findings from this study are of particular interest as they challenge one of the pervasive arguments in the literature, that of the importance of the timing of team coaching interventions. Hackman and Wageman (2005) first argued the importance of timing in their "developmental" approach to team coaching which is based on two key premises: that teams need help with different issues at different stages of their development and there are times in the life cycles of teams when they are more or less open to development. This theme of the timing of interventions has continued to prevail in the literature (Clutterbuck, 2007; Hawkins, 2011; Peters and Carr, 2013; Wageman and Lowe, 2019) with some acknowledgement that many teams, including leadership teams, do not have start and end points. Nevertheless, there remains an argument that the work should have a clear beginning, midpoint and end point and that all work should commence with a "team launch" to signify that this is a fresh start (Peters and Carr, 2013; Wageman and Lowe, 2019).

The literature's argument for the importance of timing of team coaching interventions was certainly not matched by the experience of team coaches in this study where there was a strong sentiment that team coaching can happen at any time and that waiting for team members to either leave or join or for the "right" time was unproductive and unrealistic. Instead co-researchers used metaphors to describe a sense of continuity and perpetual motion, for example a river carrying on flowing with tributaries joining and leaving, or a sporting team where players join and leave but the team carries on playing.

One explanation for the discrepancy between the literature and the study's findings is the difference between "espoused theory" and "theories in use" (Argyris and Schon, 1974). Espoused theories are explicit and describe what we say we do whereas theories in use describe what we actually do. Viewed through this lens much of the literature on the timings of interventions can be regarded as espoused theory, relating to teams that have distinct beginnings and ends such as project teams. The team coaches in this study described different kinds of teams, ones that existed in perpetuity, in particular leadership teams, with players joining and leaving on a regular basis. What co-researchers described, their theories in use, were practices that heavily relied on adopting a pragmatic approach. All had learned that waiting for the "right" time, or for a particular player to leave or join was largely futile and invariably meant work being delayed indefinitely. In addition, several highlighted the "messiness" of reality, for example how they often coached the leader prior to be invited to undertake some work with their team, making the concept of a starting point somewhat problematic.

The study's findings are of particular significance to practitioner team coaches with several first-hand accounts provided of requests to delay work due to team members leaving or about to join the team or questions about when would be the "best" time to start. The findings indicate that team coaching can happen at any time in a team's life cycle and that players leaving and joining is very much part of what happens in teams, rather than a reason for delaying starting work. The study did, however, underscore the significance of the team leader's role, a key finding being that whilst team coaching can continue if the team leader leaves and their replacement has not yet been appointed, starting an assignment without a team leader was to be avoided.

7.2.2 Readiness for team coaching

The concept of being "ready" for team coaching is one that has developed in the literature starting with Hackman and Wageman's (2005) team construct of "readiness", namely that issues to be addressed are naturally on team member's minds and they do not have other more pressing or compelling needs. Over time the concept of individual readiness has been acknowledged with arguments that team members may be at different levels of readiness due to different abilities, including pace of thinking and deciding, (Clutterbuck, 2013) or skill and personal development (O'Connor & Cavanagh 2017). The literature would therefore suggest that whether this particular team is "ready" to undertake team coaching is an important consideration for the team coach prior to commencing any work.

The findings from this study challenge any idea of readiness being a team construct and much of the literature on the need for the team to be ready before the work can start and would appear to be another example of the difference between "espoused theory" and "theories in use" (Argyris and Schon, 1974). Most co-researchers expressed strong scepticism around the concept of readiness. This scepticism was informed by: disbelief that team members could be ready as they had no idea of what they were signing up to as most would not have experienced team coaching before; their own personal experiences of team members being at different levels of "readiness", as well as stated beliefs that as a team coach they also did not require everyone to be ready to start with the work.

The study expands and clarifies the notion of what "readiness" means in practice for team coaches, with most stating that it was important to have some level of "readiness" but often expressing this in terms of a "*willingness to engage*" from team members. This was reflected in the use of analogies, for example "*being on the starting line*" or "*climbing up the steps to the diving board*" implying that it was degrees that they were looking for rather than absolute commitment, or expressed as a subjective sense ascertained via levels of engagement, excitement, participant's using expressions such as "*I'm up for it*" and responses to scaling questions.

A potential explanation for team coaches' attitudes towards readiness may also be related to the challenge of "selling" team coaching. This challenge was a recurring theme throughout the study encompassing aspects of both cost (including the case for a co team coach) and scope (including the number of sessions and gaining insight from various sources). Co-researchers shared the frustration of tendering for work, elation at being selected and an ongoing frustration of wanting to do more team coaching. Set against this backdrop co-researchers were candid about the number and nature of any key criteria that they put in place for taking on work and whether these were strict "red lines" or negotiable. In addition it may be the case that self-deception can be at play with team coaches not noticing how their personal agenda, for example a desire to have more team coaching work, a concern that if they insist on certain criteria they may lose the work and a belief that if they do not take on the work someone else will, may prevent them from challenging the client (Bachkirova, 2016).

However, whilst true "readiness' from team members may not be a key criterion, the readiness of the team leader is of primary importance with some co-researchers describing assignments that had been "damned" from the outset due to the team leader's lack of engagement. Here the study provides first-hand explanations of some of the nuanced ways in which the "readiness" of the team leader might be apparent (or absent) including their ability to be humble, vulnerable, open to feedback, secure in their own role and aware that the team coaching might deliver some unexpected outcomes. A further insight from the study is that team leader "readiness" may be quite nuanced from "*total buy-in*" to "*intellectual buy-in*". Such insights are helpful for the team coach practitioner, particularly when team coaching interventions are commissioned by those outside the team, for example HR. Meeting with and getting the team leader on board at the earliest opportunity is of paramount importance for the ultimate success of the work.

7.3 Team coaching: coach-related characteristics

7.3.1 Roles that the coach assumes and is drawn into

There are conflicting views in the literature on the role of the team coach. As the knowledge of team coaching has increased it is notable that there has been a shift away from attempts to define the role of team coach and differentiate it from other team roles with an underlying sense that, if the team coach was not occupying the pure team coach role, then they were not team coaching (Clutterbuck, 2007; Brown and Grant, 2010; Hawkins, 2011). More recent literature has conceded that there are other valuable roles that the team coach can, and does, play during a team coaching assignment (Lawrence, 2019; Peters, 2019). This latter perspective is espoused by Peters (2019);

> *competent, trained coaches will likely employ a mix of coaching, facilitation, consultation and training skills to effectively support the team during these ongoing team sessions* (p. 188).

It is clear from this study that team coaches regard themselves as playing a number of roles during a team coaching assignment, the most frequently cited being those of mentor/expert; teacher/trainer; facilitator and referee. The study provides a valuable insider-perspective on the range of roles, the circumstances in which these may be adopted and the need to switch between them, as well as the skills and behaviours utilised by the coach.

In addition to deepening the understanding of the repertoire of roles that the team coach might choose to adopt during a team coaching assignment, the study also sheds light on those that the team coach may unwittingly be drawn into. The study expands and clarifies the notion of "group contagion" (Cox and Patrick, 2012) in the context of team coaching. Exploring individual first-hand experiences, it is apparent that this concept is complex and includes both the roles that the team coach may be drawn into, in particular those of team leader or team member, as well as an insight into what might trigger this response. Significantly some of these needs are triggered by a component which appears to be missing in the team, for example, strong leadership, whilst others are triggered by something that is missing for the team coach themselves including a personal need to belong and feel part of something.

The literature is currently light on how projection and transference manifest themselves in team coaching. A glimpse is provided by Thornton (2019a) in posing the questions, "*who or what am I invited to be?"* and "*what feelings do you have in the room/are you left with afterwards?*", encouraging the coach to reflect upon their own "*bodily and emotional responses*" alongside their "*thinking to understand what is going on*" (p. 216). The study therefore makes an important contribution in going beyond these glimpses and providing detailed accounts of the roles that the team coach can be invited or drawn into from the unique perspective of the team coach. Some of these roles have already been outlined above namely mentor/expert, teacher/trainer or referee. Perhaps of more significance are those that the team coach is not consciously aware of including critical parent and nurturing parent. The co-researchers' first-hand accounts paint a vivid picture of team coaches being triggered into nurturing and/or critical parent and, perhaps most significantly, that they had only appreciated that they had been triggered after the event when they had completed a reflective log or taken the issue to supervision.

Apart from identifying various roles that the team coach might be drawn into, the study also highlights that there is more work to do in understanding team members' reactions towards the team coach that have been transferred from earlier attitudes towards important figures in team members' lives, including parental and authority figures. In addition, it emphasises the importance of team coaches making use of reflective practice and supervision to process their own countertransference towards team members.

7.3.2 Understanding the cost of the work on the team coach

An important insight from this study is that self-care and external support for the team coach is an essential, but still very emergent, element of team coaching. Team coaching is undoubtedly a challenging activity with the highs and lows much more extreme and magnified than for dyadic coaching. Thornton, writing from a psychodynamic approach to team and group coaching, has long emphasised the challenge of this work, most recently writing

> *Holding a group of people means containing stronger projections and more difficult feelings than with one person. In working with teams, these stresses are multiplied because we are also holding the impact of that broader system on the team – all the pressures and 'theories-in-use' that organisation members carry with them, particularly the unconscious ones* (2019b p. 328).

Recent commentary acknowledges the physical and mental complexity and demands of team coaching for the team coach (Hodge and Clutterbuck 2019; Jacox 2019; Lawrence 2019; Thornton 2019a; Thornton 2019b). This challenge was certainly in evidence in this study with participants describing the physical and mental demands of the work in rich detail and the importance of establishing self-care practices at the outset of the work. Alongside this acknowledgement of the demands of team coaching, the literature has started to address the role of supervision in supporting team coaches (Hodge & Clutterbuck 2019; Thornton 2019a). Thornton (2019a) speaks of using supervision to build confidence, helping to prepare and manage ongoing incidents that emerge during the work as well as a container to download, stand back from and refresh their approaches during an assignment. Thornton (2019b) argues that the supervisor requires specialist knowledge, including experience of working with groups and "*business wisdom*".

This recognition for specialist team coaching supervision was apparent in this research, with scarcely any mention of supervision at the start of the study, a growing awareness of its role during the interviews, building towards an in-depth discussion on the importance of supervision and the requirements of a supervisor at the validation focus group eleven months later. The study can therefore be seen to support recent literature that, as knowledge is gained of the demands of team coaching, the profile of the supervisor is becoming more specific (Hodge and Clutterbuck, 2019; Thornton, 2019b). Team coaches are increasingly recognising the importance of working with a supervisor who understands the dynamic complexity of groups and how the team coach's own background and needs may influence their team coaching.

The findings would appear to support Hodge and Clutterbuck's (2019) suggestion that insight and learning about the importance and role of supervision can be gained from the neighbouring discipline of group psychotherapy. Whilst there were some references to co-researchers modelling a "team within a team" when working with a co team coach, there was little evidence of team coaches capitalising on this relationship for reflective practice and supervision. The findings would suggest that team coaches practicing in pairs may benefit from the well-established practice in therapy of having a post session review in which co-therapists provide valuable feedback about each other's behaviour and also aid each other in the identification and working through of countertransference toward various team members, as well as attending supervision together. Yalom (2005) stresses the benefits of co-therapists attending supervision together with the session providing a "microcosm" of what happens in group sessions in the form of parallel process – who defers to who, who reports the events of the session, do the co-therapists compete or complement and build on each other's work and do they view the group similarly or differently?

Towards the conclusion of the study it was apparent that co-researchers were increasingly becoming aware of how their own background and needs, family and professional, manifest themselves in their team coaching and of the importance of identifying suitable channels to process this insight. This theme is starting to emerge in current commentary with Hodge and Clutterbuck (2019) positing that team coaches may benefit from engaging in different forms of group professional support, for example group therapy or action learning sets, in order to become aware of their own patterns and reactions in group settings and how these may be triggered in team coaching. Here again it would appear that team coaching practice can learn from the more established practice of group psychotherapy where emphasis is placed on therapists engaging in group experience as part of their CPD in order to "*learn at an emotional level what they may have only known previously intellectually*" (Yalom, 2005 p. 553). Yalom (2005) proceeds to argue that such knowledge includes experiencing how important it is to be accepted by the group, what self-disclosure really entails, feelings of vulnerability and hostility as well as the therapist's own preferred role in a group and their habitual countertransference responses. In addition, Yalom (2005) extols the benefits of practitioners participating in group peer supervision in order to demonstrate the value of peer supervision, consultation and support.

The findings from the study therefore suggest that the practice of supervision will be an increasingly important element of team coaching in the future, focusing not just on the evaluation phase of team coaching but also on the support the team coach needs from the initiation to the conclusion of an assignment. In addition, team coaches are increasingly likely to recognise the importance of undergoing supervision with someone with specific knowledge of working with groups.

7.4 The team coaching process – Implications for practice

I commenced my study with a number of questions about the team coaching process including: what happens between the coach and the team, the specific coaching activities that take place and how these are different to other team interventions, for example team development and team facilitation as well as dyadic coaching. Concurring with O'Connor and Cavanagh (2017), I believed that knowing more about the specificity of the coaching process and activities would help considerably with replication for practice.

The study went some way towards identifying some of unique characteristics of team coaching, in contrast to other team interventions and these findings are explored in the previous chapter and summarised in section 7.1. This section will therefore explore the team coaching process including some insights into how this is similar/different to dyadic coaching. The section will conclude with the presentation of a team coaching model.

7.4.1 The team coaching process

Broadly speaking the coaching process describes the interaction between the coach and client within a coaching session or, most commonly, across a series of coaching sessions. Boyce and Hernez-Broome (2011) posit that the coaching process consists of four elements: the "mechanics" (number of sessions and the duration of these, session preparation and documentation of the session); content (contracting, action planning and evaluating progress); relationship and tools and techniques (active listening, questioning and feedback). Whilst the above elements were intended to describe dyadic coaching, the findings from this study suggest that they are equally applicable to team coaching. However, a fundamental difference between the two disciplines highlighted in this study is that team coaching has distinct preparation, intervention and evaluation phases with a significant amount of time spent in the preparation phase.

The study supports recent commentary on the increasing awareness of the importance of planning team coaching interventions with arguments for a 40:60 ratio of preparing for team coaching versus running the intervention (Bharuvaney et al 2019) and a working rule of thumb of there being at least the same amount of time spent in exploratory interviews to understand the team and its context as in delivering the team coaching sessions (Clutterbuck and Hodge, 2019). All co-researchers stressed the importance of taking time to tend to this preparation stage, often citing examples of how not doing so had resulted in them being "bitten on the bum" by entering into an intervention with an incomplete picture of the situation. The study adds to the literature by providing rich detail on the range of formats used for such data gathering, tools used and the stakeholders interviewed as well as some of the key questions that team coaches need to address, prior to commencing a team coaching intervention.

In addition, it is clear that data gathering interviews serve a vitally important opportunity for the team coach to commence building the coaching relationship with team members. There is widespread acknowledgement in the coaching literature of the importance of focusing on the coaching relationship early on (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Ianiro et al, 2013). De Haan and Gannon (2017) distil the research on the coaching relationship identifying the following prevailing characteristics: credibility, commitment, trust, transparency (explaining the coaching process) and building rapport. These characteristics can also be seen to be fundamental to building the coaching relationship in team coaching with co-researchers using exactly the same words to describe how they sought to present themselves and establish a relationship. It is apparent that team coaches draw upon their dyadic coaching experience to build relationships with individual members of the team prior to the first meeting with the whole team, as well as continuing to develop this working relationship in team sessions.

The study set out to elicit the essential elements of team coaching with the existing literature suggesting from the outset that building a safe space would be one such element with most studies emphasising the importance of this aspect with frequent references to "psychological safety" (Edmondson, 1999) and "holding" (Thornton, 2010). The findings from the study position building a safe space at the core of the team coaching process with all co-researchers stressing the importance of this as a foundational piece. The findings not only concur that building a safe space is vitally important, but also provide a strong insight into how practising team coaches go about establishing this safe space. There were echoes of Thornton (2019b) in emphasising the importance of creating firm boundaries, presenting self as a "safe pair of hands", modelling behaviour and being a boundary-keeper. In addition some co-researchers highlighted the importance of utilising honed coaching skills of listening, being present and grounded whilst others emphasised more individualised and personal practices including deliberate use of humour and making fun of self to demonstrate "it's OK to get things wrong" and what it means to be vulnerable.

The literature similarly suggests that challenging team members around individual and collective behaviours would be identified by co-researchers as another essential element. Thornton (2010) provides a helpful framing for what she calls "holding" (support) and "exchange" (challenge) and how the two are inextricably linked. Without the former team members will not feel safe enough and there will be insufficient trust. Without the latter though the climate is too supportive for any meaningful change to take place. This view was supported by the findings in this study with all co-researchers describing presenting challenge as a key component of their practice. Additionally, the study adds to the existing literature by providing an insight into some of the various ways in which team coaches provide challenge. For some it can take the form of a direct provocative remark whereas for others it is more likely to be in the form of observational feedback.

7.4.2 Team coaching – a creative synthesis

The findings from the study indicate that there are some broadly typical approaches to the “mechanics” and the “tools and techniques” (Boyce and Hernez-Broome, 2011) components of the team coaching process as well as some frequently cited variations. In line with the final objective of the study, “to develop a comprehensive framework of team coaching”, these elements are captured in a “Framework for team coaching” which is presented in appendix J. This framework details the key considerations, activities, behaviours and skills utilised, roles played and structure of a team coaching intervention and is intended to both inform and enable replication in practice.

A heuristic inquiry study culminates in a “creative synthesis”, bringing together the components and core themes thereby giving rise to new perspectives and meaning and a new vision of the experience (Patton, 2015). Moustakas (1990) describes the creative synthesis as, “*a brief, creative close, that speaks to the essence of your study and its significance to you and to others*” (p. 54). As I drew to the end of my study I was aware that my co-researchers had been an integral part of this, participating in three focus groups, interviews and reflective logs and I wanted to capture this contribution by using the words of my co-researchers to construct a joint creative synthesis of the experience of team coaching. At the end of the creative synthesis focus group I invited my co-researchers to write a piece of prose starting with the words, “My experience of team coaching….” Co-researchers then reflected on their prose, highlighting words which appeared to be particularly significant to them, prior to preparing their cinquain poem and sharing this with the rest of the group. I decided to use cinquain poems having previously used them myself in a workshop and been intrigued by their ability to capture the essence of a phenomenon in just five lines and nine words. An example of a piece of prose resulting in a cinquain poem is provided in appendix K.

After the focus group I created a synthesis of all of the cinquain poems which is displayed in figure 7.1. As can be seen, the poems provide a distilled insight into the diversity and similarity of experience. I am particularly drawn to a prevailing sense of tension in the work: the need to challenge but also support; the highs and the lows; a sense of energy but also feeling overwhelmed or tired and feeling responsible as well as the need to let go and stand back.

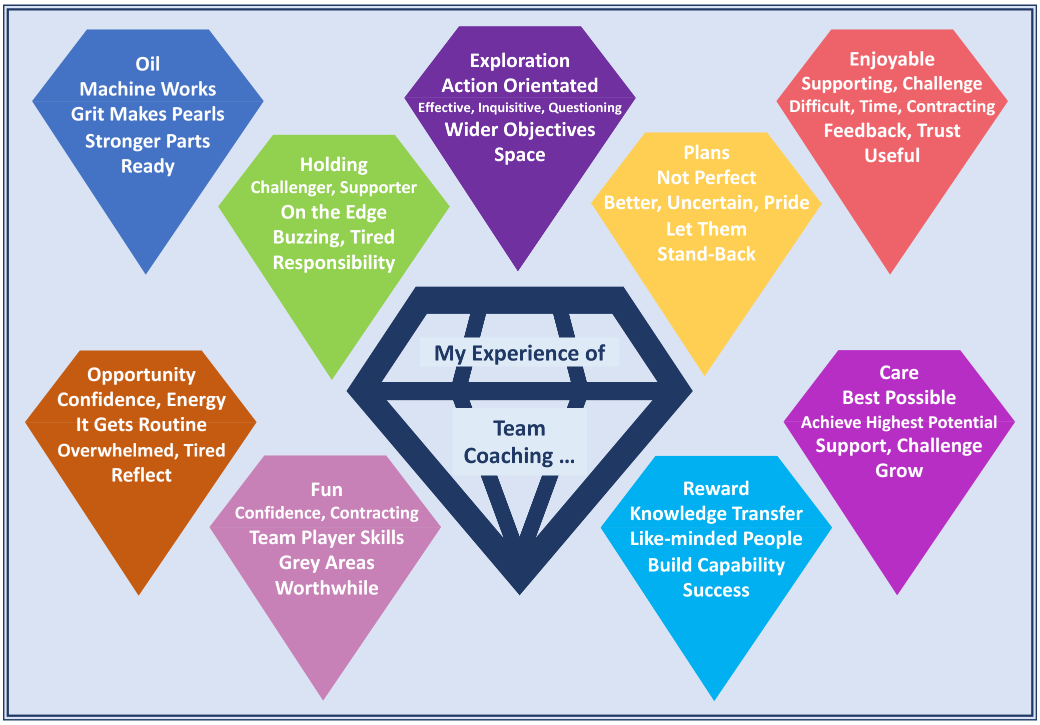


Figure 7.1: A creative synthesis - co-researchers' experiences of team coaching

As I drew the study to a close, I decided to create my own personal creative synthesis of team coaching, bringing together all of the elements that I had identified in the team coaching framework into a total visual experience, showing patterns and relationships. The resulting PiE Team Coaching Model in figure 7.2 is both a creative synthesis and also a team coaching model, building upon the findings from the research that team coaching comprises three stages: **P**reparation, the **I**ntervention stage and **E**valuation. Supervision is shown as running throughout an assignment, from the start to the finish, with different foci of attention in each phase. Creating a team coaching model was, therefore, a by-product of the study rather than one of my objectives at the outset. It does, however, provide additional valuable insight into the process of team coaching and a practical resource for the coaching profession and is therefore included in the thesis. A larger version of the model is included in appendix L.

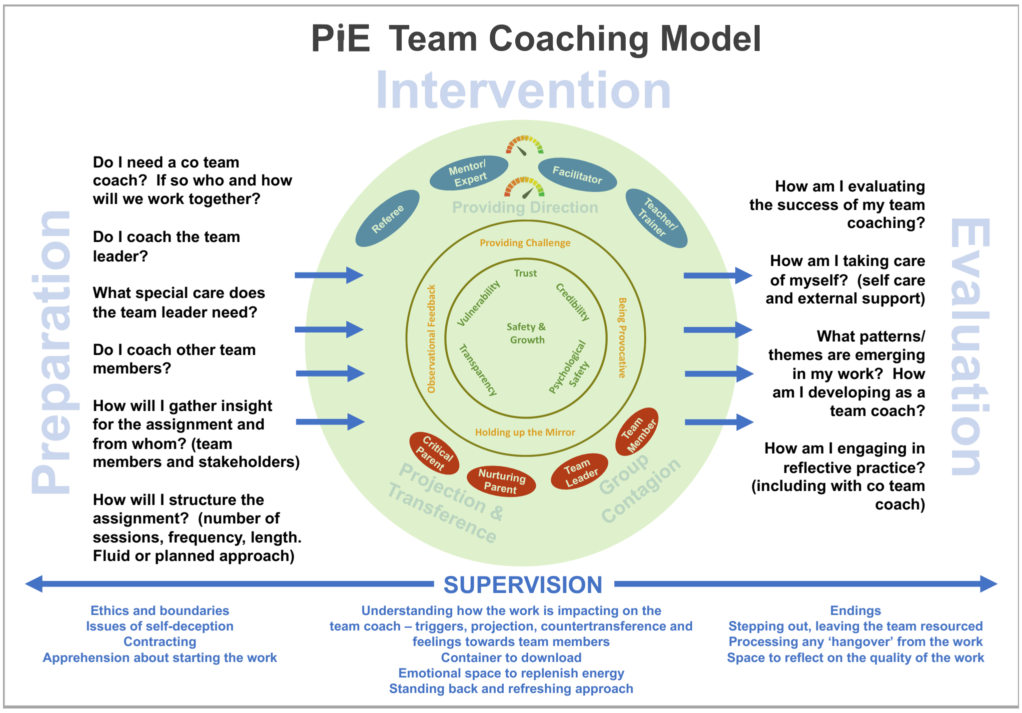


Figure 7.2: The PiE Team Coaching Model

The left-hand side of the model represents the preparation phase with the key questions the coach needs to have informed answers to prior to commencing a team coaching assignment. The questions include how they will gain insight for the assignment, and from whom, as well as decisions that will last throughout the assignment: whether the team coach will work with a co team coach, whether they will offer individual coaching alongside team coaching and establishing supervision support. At the core of the model is the intervention phase where a container of safety and growth is created complemented by challenge in order for learning and change to take place. During this intervention phase the team coach will assume a variety of roles, some by choice and some that they are unconsciously drawn into, and these roles are represented in the model. Finally, the evaluation phase is the time for the team coach to take stock, evaluate the work that they have undertaken on behalf of the client as well as understand what they are taking away from the work and bringing the assignment to a clear ending.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This chapter brings together the findings and conclusions of my work in a quest to evaluate them in light of the original research question and contribution to the literature and practice. The study set out to address the question, "What do the experiences of team coaches tell us about the essential elements of team coaching?" and had four objectives:

1. To review the literature on team coaching to critically evaluate the state of knowledge in relation to team coaching
2. To explore personal experiences of team coaching with team coaching practitioners
3. To acquire a deeper understanding of the essential elements of team coaching
4. To elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching and contribute to practice by developing a comprehensive framework of team coaching

This final chapter will revisit my research question and explain how each of the objectives has been met and the original contribution the study has made to knowledge, methodology and practice. The first section returns to the gaps in knowledge which I discovered through my review of the literature and decided to focus on and presents the most significant findings, including those that challenge concepts in the literature, add to existing knowledge and open up new areas for debate. The following section summarises the contribution to methodology. I then discuss how this research contributes to team coaching practice, with relevance to practitioners, coach educators, professional bodies, sponsors and users of team coaching, presenting a comprehensive team coaching model and supporting framework. Finally, I explore the study's limitations and further avenues for research arising out of it, prior to reflecting on the process of research from my own personal perspective, including my development as a researcher-practitioner.

8.1 Theoretical Contribution

The first objective of my study was to review the literature on team coaching and to critically evaluate the state of knowledge in relation to team coaching. In my review of the existing literature I traced the emergence and nature of academic and practitioner literature and evaluated the contribution of each. I identified debates and themes in the literature as well as issues and gaps which emerged, which I summarised in the model reproduced in figure 8.1.

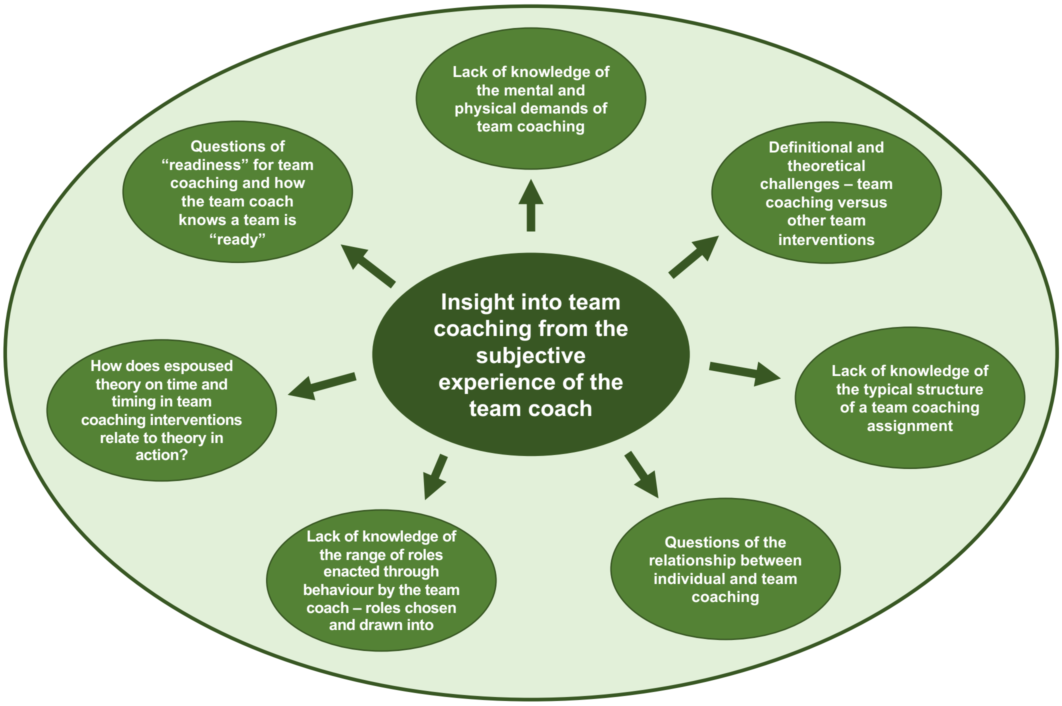


Figure 8.1: Conceptual model of key debates, issues and gaps in existing knowledge

A general conclusion from my review of the existing literature was that understanding of the process of team coaching, based on the subjective perspectives of team coaches, was lacking. The study's contribution to theory is, therefore, this missing perspective, providing rich insight from the various voices of the co-researchers as well as through my interpretative process and conceptualisation of findings.

There are a number of important findings from the study which provide a theoretical contribution to the process of team coaching. A number of these findings challenge concepts in the existing literature, including perspectives on the timing of interventions, readiness on the part of team members and the role of team coach. Other findings add to existing knowledge by contributing empirical insight as well as opening up new areas for debate. The most significant findings are summarised below.

- The study challenges strong arguments in the literature that team coaching suffers from "*conceptual confusion*" (Brown and Grant, 2010 p. 36) and a "f*oundational lack of clarity*" (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2017 p. 487). The study supports Clutterbuck et al's (2019) argument that team coaching is complex but found that there was minimal confusion. Co-researchers were all able to provide their own conceptualisation of team coaching and were quite clear about when they were engaging in team coaching and when they were engaging in some other team or group intervention. These conceptualisations contained some similarities as well as dimensions where there were distinct differences.

- The study shows that team coaching is a process that comprises three distinct stages: preparation, intervention and evaluation, with particular importance placed on giving time and attention to the preparation phase. The preparation phase has a dual purpose: providing insight for the assignment as well as opportunity for the team coach to commence creating a safe environment, the latter being regarded as essential for the success of a team coaching intervention.
- The results of the study support the argument that there is some universality of experience relating to elements of team coaching that are present in all types, genres and approaches to team coaching. However, there is significant divergence in theoretical/philosophical perspectives, psychological differences and team coaching CPD amongst team coaches resulting in different approaches to how team coaching is delivered. As a result, there are many different forms of team coaching on offer. Whilst this may challenge any desire on the part of the coaching profession to have a neat conceptualisation of team coaching, it does provide an array of choice for users of team coaching.
- The study challenges the notions of a “best time” and team “readiness” for coaching, presenting these as largely illusionary and aspirational concepts. Instead the study shows that team coaching can happen at any time and all team members do not need to be onboard at the outset for the work to be a success. However, the team leader is key – they need to be in place at the start, supporting the assignment and provided with extra care and attention throughout the work.
- The study illustrates that the role of team coach is a complex one. It necessitates effective use of coaching skills but also the ability to effectively perform and move in, and out, of other roles including those of facilitator, mentor and trainer. It is important that team coaches recognise why they are moving into a particular role, for example to share a model that they believe provides relevant insight for the team at that point in time. However, it is also import that they also recognise when they are becoming too comfortable and overplaying another role.
- In addition to the above roles that the team coach might consciously adopt, the study shows that there are a number of roles that they may be inadvertently drawn into including those relating to group contagion and those stemming from transference and countertransference. Insight into these roles is in its infancy and coaches are often only aware of being drawn into a role in hindsight. This finding gives rise to a strong suggestion of the importance of making use of reflective practice and supervision from the initiation to the conclusion of an assignment and of undergoing supervision with someone with specific knowledge of working with groups.
- The results of the study indicate that team coaches typically enter team coaching with a background in dyadic coaching. A significant consideration for coaches wanting to

extend their dyadic coaching practice into team coaching is that coaches experience the latter as more challenging than the former and undergo more extreme emotions: the highs are higher and the lows are lower. The demands of the work are only just starting to be recognised and team coaching practice would benefit from looking at other neighbouring practices, in particular group therapy, to acquire a deeper understanding of the requirements for self-care including supervision and how to leverage learning and reflection with a co team coach.

8.2 Methodological Contribution

The second and third objectives of my study were to explore the personal experiences of team coaching with team coaching practitioners and to acquire a deeper understanding of the essential elements of team coaching. In choosing heuristic inquiry as my primary methodology I was aware that it is a methodology whose explicit purpose is to understand the experience of a phenomenon or process and therefore an ideal fit, at least in theory, for my study's objectives (Sultan, 2019; Moustakas, 1990). I was also mindful of some of the limitations levelled at it, particularly in relation to its subjectivity, introspection and rigour (Patton, 2015; Hiles, 2001). Hiles argues that heuristic inquiry is an ancient form of research for psychological inquiry and therefore has a proven track record well before the advent of modern science and psychology whilst conceding that, "*it is a method of inquiry that is desperately in need of being reinvented*" (2001, section 3). Although Moustakas initially used heuristic inquiry for self-research he subsequently asserted that studies would attain deeper, more varied meanings, when they included the experiences of others (Moustakas, 1990). In her recent review of heuristic inquiry as a methodology Sultan (2019) presents a stronger case for it being a collaborative methodology. She argues that extensive contact with co-researchers allows for open and ongoing dialogue, opening up rich opportunities for shared learning and for expanded thinking and being and that

> *Ongoing respectful and affirming discourse supports the construction of community, even as every individual's journey and experience is honoured* (2019. P. 188).

I decided to enhance my use of heuristic inquiry by working with a number of co-researchers from various backgrounds, thereby creating effective conditions for intersubjectivity to develop (Patton, 2015). In addition, whilst heuristic inquiry was the primary methodology embraced in this research, this was expanded and enriched by the inclusion of three focus groups. This addition enabled me to facilitate face-to-face discussion between my co-researchers, making the process more collaborative and insights richer as co-researchers shared different experiences and perspectives highlighting commonalities as well as differences.

The focus groups were deliberately scheduled at the start of the study, immediately after the analysis of the data and after the draft team coaching framework had been prepared. This timing provided valuable opportunities for me to sense-check my tentative findings and meaning-making and highlight any assumptions I may have made, thereby gaining a richer and deeper level of import underpinning the data. Working with my co-researchers in this collaborative way also met with my philosophical position of knowledge being socially constructed through human interactions. This was particularly true for some of the new areas of debate arising out of the study which were discussed at the final focus group including supervision, self-care and CPD, with co-researchers (and myself) volunteering that the process of discussing these topics with others was both challenging and shaping their current thinking.

Combining heuristic inquiry with a number of focus groups proved to be a complementary and dynamic process and, whilst it may fall short of "*reinventing*" heuristic inquiry (Hiles, 2001), it does provide new ways of adapting it that add value to the quality of inquiry.

8.3 Contribution to Practice

The final objective of my study was to elicit and explore the essential elements of team coaching and contribute to practice by developing a comprehensive framework of team coaching.

Beyond the theoretical contribution explored in section 8.1, the study also provides an original contribution to practice by providing the PiE Team Coaching Model and accompanying framework. The PiE Team Coaching Model and framework are different from other team coaching models and frameworks, being developed through a collaborative research process in conjunction with other practising team coaches. They reflect the complexity of team coaching interventions by encapsulating the messiness of theory in use and including both the essential elements that are universal as well as typical variations identified by team coaches. The model is presented in figure 8.2.

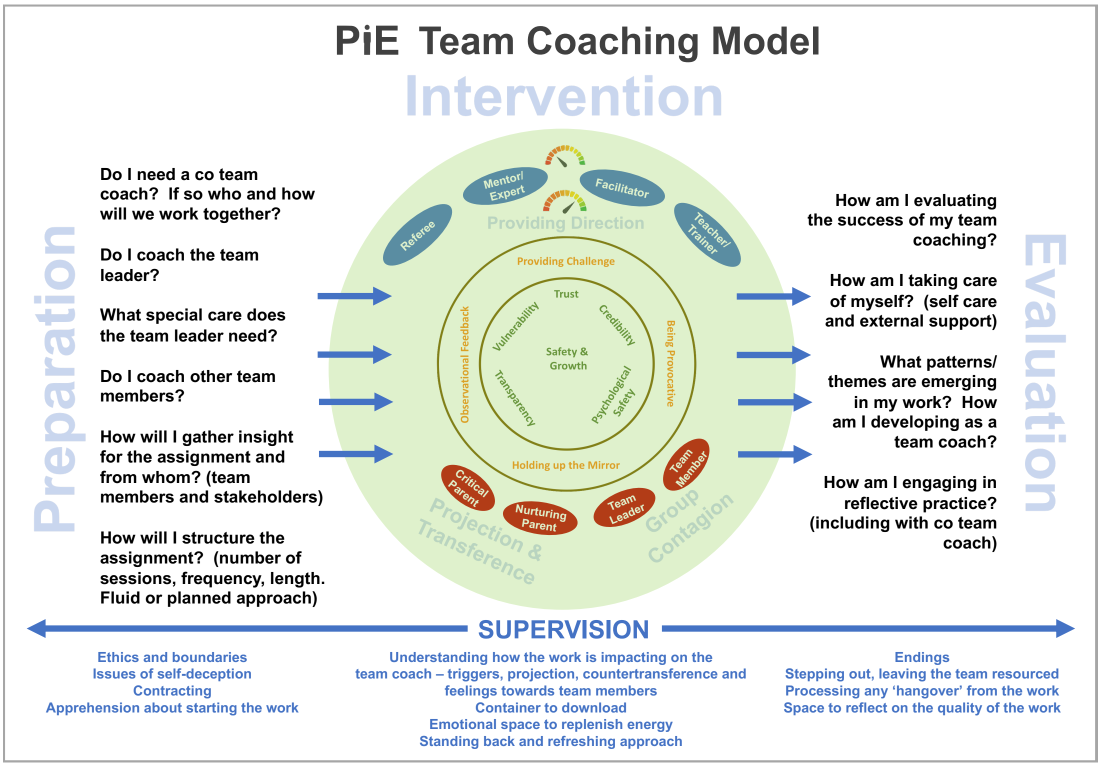


Figure 8.2: The PiE Team Coaching Model

The model provides an accessible way to represent the three phases constituting team coaching including the key questions that need answering at the preparation stage, the roles adopted, skills and behaviours utilised and knowledge accessed during the intervention phase and the key considerations for the team coach at the evaluation phase. The model recognises the universal elements of team coaching as well as the fact that there are many divergences in practice. The supporting framework for the model (presented in appendix J) therefore provides a supplementary resource for the coaching profession, detailing universal elements as well as typical variations for team coaches to consider in their practice.

There are a number of stakeholders who can benefit from the study namely team coaches, educators and trainers, potential organisational sponsors and users of team coaching, professional coaching bodies and coach supervisors. The benefits for each of these stakeholders are summarised below.

Team coaches. The PiE model and framework provide a practical resource for coach practitioners. This resource is useful for those who are currently engaging in dyadic coaching to utilise as a bridge into team coaching, enabling practitioners to reflect on their current areas of strength as well as additional knowledge and expertise they may need to develop. The model and framework are equally useful for those already practising team coaching to further inform and develop their practice by outlining typical practice as a base line whilst providing latitude for users to create their own “brand” of team coaching in line with their theoretical approach.

Educators and trainers. The study’s findings provide a contribution to those engaged in educating and training team coaches by providing insight into what needs to be on the curriculum for their coaching development programmes. Such insight would include ensuring that the universal elements are clearly identified and explored alongside the rooting of any such training in a philosophical perspective, for example gestalt.

Professional coaching bodies. The study provides a contribution to the coaching profession at a time when a central theme in the education and training of coaches is the role of competence-led approaches to accreditation (Lane, 2017). The PiE Team Coaching Model comprises of a blend of universal elements alongside typical variations with its central tenet that there are many different ways to do a good job. This approach presents an alternative perspective for professional bodies to consider during the current debate on the importance of developing competency frameworks and accreditation standards focussing on distilling practice into universal components. The study highlights that coach development goes beyond what can become a rigid and mechanistic perspective of development and makes a case for the professional bodies to consider the development of the whole person, their reflexive abilities and personal capabilities alongside the more traditional format of narrow competencies (Bachkirova and Kauffman, 2009).

Organisational sponsors/users of team coaching. The study also serves as a practical resource for potential organisational sponsors and users of team coaching, for example human resources, enabling appreciation of the essential elements prior to embarking on a team coaching assignment. Such insight would include valuable information on the practicalities of an assignment, for example duration, length and number of sessions as well as highlighting potential ethical and financial considerations to the sponsor/user, for example offering dyadic coaching alongside team coaching and the costs versus benefits of co team coaching. The “typical variations” detailed in the PiE framework provide sponsors/users with a range of options in order to make informed decisions on their requirements.

Coaching supervisors. The study highlights the demands of team coaching versus dyadic coaching and the emerging understanding of the importance of regular supervision with someone who understands the complexity of working with groups. This insight has particular significance for coach supervisors whose focus is currently on dyadic coaching practice and who may need to review their practice and/or undertake additional CPD in order to provide effective supervisory support to team coaches.

8.4 Limitations of the study and future research recommendations

8.4.1 Limitations of the study

A criticism often levied at qualitative research is that a study captures a moment in time for each participant whilst in reality sense made over time changes. This limitation could apply to a number of the studies explored in the literature review (Hauser, 2014; Lawrence and Whyte, 2017) where data has been gathered from team coaches utilising short telephone interviews. Such studies provide useful insights but are nevertheless a snapshot in time, relying on the clarity of the participant's thought processes and opinions in that interview. By contrast, this research goes a significant way towards addressing the moment in time criticism by gathering data, in various formats from the same research participants, over an 11-month period, enabling rich, in-depth sense-making to emerge. In addition, it provides further insight into how perceptions and conceptualisations change over time at the individual, and ultimately, collective level, for example by inviting all co-researchers to share their conceptualisations of team coaching at the outset of the study and returning to this theme with the cinquain poems at the conclusion.

The findings present a window on the team coaching experiences of ten team coaches, all of whom are highly experienced dyadic coaches although with varying levels of experience of team coaching and diverse backgrounds. As with all qualitative studies that have a small number of participants there are potential concerns with regard to the generalisability of findings. I recognise this limitation and would emphasise my aim for theoretical generalisability, enabling the reader to make a link between the findings provided, their own professional experience and the claims in the extant literature. Whilst the number of participants is understandably limited, it enables data to be provided that paints a rich picture of team coaching from knowledgeable and credible sources. I therefore believe the study can provide resonance with an informed reader's existing experience as well as expanding their knowledge of what is still a new and emerging practice.

Another concern might be the degree of my influence on the research participants. For example, it is possible that co-researchers will have modified their accounts according to their perceptions of my expectations and what I wanted from them. They could also be influenced by others in the focus groups, being attuned to perceptions of them and concern for what others thought of them. This could be particularly true when co-researchers were asked to reflect on occasions when interventions had not gone as well as they would have liked. Whilst this is a somewhat unavoidable limitation of a qualitative research study, I did recognise it and emphasised the importance of everyone's views and the particular value of diversity in their contributions. Moreover, I would argue that these interactions with and between co-researchers constitute an embracing of intersubjectivity with knowledge of team coaching being socially constructed through encounters amongst my co-researchers (Patton, 2015).

8.4.2 Potential areas for further research

This has been an exploratory study into the experience of team coaching from the perspective of practitioner team coaches. Team coaching research is still very much in its infancy, particularly when compared to its more mature sibling, dyadic coaching. There is, therefore, plenty of fertile ground for future researchers to take the knowledge generated from this study and build upon it. The following areas may be of particular interest to the generation of new knowledge as well as producing insights to further inform team coaching practice.

An obvious place to explore next would be the perspective on team coaching that this study did not attempt to cover; namely the experience of team members during team coaching. This would provide an interesting additional angle from which to view team coaching and would also allow for some "triangulation" of the findings from this study. Do team members identify the same or different "essential elements" and how are these experienced by team members?

The study identifies a number of key findings which would benefit from additional more focused research. For example, a key finding is that the philosophical/theoretical perspective of the team coach is an important influence on how team coaches deliver team coaching. A further line of enquiry suggested by this finding is whether the experience of team coaching participants is different where there are different underlying philosophies of coaching, for example gestalt, person-centred or systemic and, if so, in what ways? In addition, the study suggested that more research into evaluating the benefits of team coaching would be valuable from both a theoretical and practice perspective.

The importance of self-care and specialised supervision and appreciation of projection, transference and countertransference were themes that arose and became increasingly important during the study. The findings highlight that this is an area in need of significantly more focus and understanding. The study suggests that team coaching can gain valuable insight from more established neighbouring disciplines including, in particular, group psychotherapy and this would appear to be an area warranting further investigation. Useful research could include how supervisory practices employed in group psychotherapy can enhance and inform team coaching supervision or how learning from group psychotherapy supervision can add value for team coaching supervision from the perspectives of team coaching supervisees and/or supervisors.

The above suggestions for further research predominantly relate to additional qualitative studies. There is, however, particular scope to build upon this research by taking the essential elements identified in the PiE Model and Framework and testing these through a quantitative study. Such a study would enable a larger sample of practising team coaches to rate the importance of each element which would provide a more complete and nuanced picture of the essential elements ranked in order of significance. Such a survey could be repeated over time enabling valuable longitudinal research to be conducted to track the ongoing development of team coaching. Over time it will be beneficial to observe whether team coaching practices continue to converge, with more essential elements becoming clearer and agreed, or whether team coaching continues to be a practice with some elements of universality but large amounts of divergence.

8.5 Personal reflections on the research process and my own development as a researcher/practitioner

This thesis represents not only the data collected and analysed throughout my study but also my contribution and development as a researcher. I commenced the DCaM aware that it had been 10 years since I had completed my MA. During this time period I had undertaken a significant amount of CPD and written some practitioner publications but had not engaged in any academic activities. My researcher brain felt rusty.

Having previously used IPA as a research methodology with six participants for my MA study, I felt I had a good insight to what heuristic inquiry would entail. However, I was not prepared for the volume of data that would be generated from working with ten co-researchers using multiple data sources – interviews, reflections and three focus groups. For the would-be heuristic inquiry researcher I would offer both caution and encouragement. Caution that on the surface heuristic inquiry appears to offer a clear linear process and number of steps to follow, but that in reality a lot of the detail of how to do some of these steps is lacking and the process is not necessarily linear. Encouragement that this also makes heuristic inquiry a highly flexible process, enabling the researcher to engage with it in their own way.

Heuristic inquiry felt like a natural fit for me. As a researcher I was ever present and the stages of heuristic inquiry, and the ability to work through these in a non-linear way suited my style. The study coincided with some of the busiest times I have experienced in my professional work resulting in a pattern of periods of intense high activity when I completely immersed myself in the study punctuated with unavoidable pauses. Although this had not been planned, the process of pausing and then coming back to the data, helped retain a sense of freshness and novelty.

As a practitioner the accounts of co-researchers in this study are resonant with my own experience, as well as exposing me to a rich array of different approaches to team coaching. Consequently, I am now considerably more sensitive to ethical and boundary dilemmas and aware of some of the challenges inherent in the role of team coach including the risks of group contagion, transference and counter transference.

As mentioned above I joined the DCaM programme aware that my researcher brain was rusty. Looking back, I can see that the quality of my writing has improved with practice. In the early drafts of my findings I focussed too much on reporting what my co-researchers said. As time progressed, I started to explain, rather than merely report, offering possible explanations, instead of leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions. As this study draws to a close, I am considerably more experienced and my researcher's voice is more prominent and confident. I have taken some significant steps on the academic road and there is also plenty of open road ahead of me.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Co-Researchers' Definitions/Conceptualisations of Team Coaching

Working through a lens where I'm staying true to the ethics of individual coaching where it lies with their knowledge and what they're doing with it and allowing their thoughts to emerge so that they reach the results they're looking for. (Jackie)
It's a relationship with a team, where I maintain individual relationships with individuals in the team, to work with them on something important to them to achieve what they want to achieve. (Grace)
Helping a team improve its performance (performance and processes) through communication, curiosity and dialogue. (Bob)
It's like a cohesive organism that's made from different parts, where every part of that understands its role within the greater organism. And I know it's a system, but also actually it's living and breathing and growing like a moving mass. Everyone understands their role within that organism but also their own individual roles of what that makes up and that team coaching enables all of those parts to work together to perform at their optimum whilst enabling them to flex, develop and grow. (Joy)
It's a journey. It's about journeying with people that have a task to do and navigating the task and how they do that together in the best way in service of the organisation, in service of what they've been brought together to do. Right now, that's what I'm sitting with. So how can you get the best results, in the best way, for the team and the organisation. (Kennedy)
Team coaching is about improving the quality of conversations within the team and with their stakeholders that hold the system but it's also about the development as human beings as individuals and as a group so that development piece as it shifts a mindset and emotional intelligence and behaviours that's core as well. That's what comes to mind at the moment. (Anita)
The only purpose of a team is to get results, otherwise you don't need a team, so the team in any organisation, any context, is about getting results. And the objective, the product of team coaching, is to raise the awareness of team and then equip the team in choosing the behaviours that lead to high performance in a sustainable way So that when your job's done as a team coach, when they have meetings, they don't ever attend just to the business at hand anymore, but they always also attend to the system, every time they meet. So, there's always two levels of awareness – which are let's talk about business and what we want to achieve and by the way how are we are behaving that makes this as much as possible successful, really successful and we're enjoying ourselves and we have a sense of team. (Monica)
It's a bit like the starlings when they're doing their murmuration in the sky and they're all moving in sync with each other and instinctively know which direction they're going in. It's about enabling them to get really clear about their declaration, what they're committed to, their purpose and then clarity about how they're going to show up and work with each other and then embody that in a series of practices so they would come together on a regular basis to do those movement activities and by doing those movement activities that would naturally draw them together as a team and having a solid foundation to then do what they need to do back in the business with other people in their teams or stakeholders and having that sense of they've got each other's backs. So, for me team coaching is about moving them through that model and getting them to do that in an embodied way so that they are grounded and connected to each other and they've got a really clear sense of what are they coming together for and doing things. (Jen)
I see team coaching definitely as a journey it's absolutely the coach and the team are in it together for a duration to maximise performance in a sustainable way, totally sustainable and it's not just within the team it's the organisation in, it's the outside in, what are they seeing about the team and the team inside out and really getting a good understanding and working on clarity of purpose is really important. Are they doing work only their team can do? Whilst you're coaching a team to be a high performing team you are also teaching the individuals. They are learning how to be really strong team players wherever they go. (Liza)
An organisation needs to flow towards its intentions, as water always flows to the sea. Sometimes this flow will be turbulent, sometimes smooth; sometimes it may get blocked. The coach's role with the team is to help them identify its intentions and the state of flow, and to attend to the elements which will create the most sustainable and effective flow possible (not always the fastest). (John)

Appendix B – Outline for Reflective Logs

Reflective logs will be completed by co-researchers after team coaching sessions as well as on a periodic basis when prompted by a thought or feeling about team coaching. Co-researchers are free to reflect in a manner that suits them, for example mind maps and journaling the following are some prompt questions.

- **How do you perceive and describe this recent experience of team coaching?** *(What just happened, the 'within and without', ie the process I followed and what we actually did but also what went on internally for me).*

- **What key moments/triggers can you recall that seem significant? What examples are vivid and alive?**

- **What feelings and thoughts are generated by this experience of team coaching?**

- **What somatic changes, if any, did you notice in yourself when team coaching? What happened just before these? What happened next?**

- **What time and space factors affect your awareness and meaning of the experience of team coaching?** (*What did I think almost in the moment, what did I think on the train home, what did I think a week later what do I think now as I'm writing this? The impact of time and the impact of space after the event).*

- **What patterns are am I noticing in my work?** (*Patterns could be across the team development or journey or patterns that I'm noticing in myself eg triggers, a sense of 'whoops here I go again' ….)*

- **What role have I played today?** *('Role' could be both my sense of self, my identity, beliefs I held, who I am and how these showed up in my behaviour and also what the team has needed from me today, the role it's needed me to play, overtly or I've been pulled into)*

- **What have you learned about your experience of team coaching?**

Appendix C – Interview Questions

1. **Welcome, introduction, background of the coach** (*their choice of pseudonym, qualifications, Nationality, how long been coaching/team coaching, membership of professional coaching body, any specific methodology followed, theories or models informing their practice).*

2. **Could you describe the structure of your team coaching? What does a typical assignment look like?**

3. **Describe a recent team coaching intervention that you were involved with.** *(How they engaged with the client, what happened during the sessions including specific activities, models used, number of sessions and duration of these etc, how the team coaching ended).*

4. **What behaviours and skills did you draw upon in this team coaching intervention? What additional behaviours and skills did you find useful in other situations?** *(Follow up questions around similarities/differences to individual coaching and other team interventions).*

5. **What roles do you find yourself playing in this team coaching intervention? What other roles do you sometimes assume when team coaching? What determines the role you assume?** *(Follow up questions about what other roles they might get drawn into by the team and how these are recognised and experienced by the coach.)*

6. **How was the team behaving in this intervention?** *What did you observe that was making the intervention work? In other team coaching interventions what have you noticed that told you that team coaching is not possible/not working/not succeeding?*

7. **What does 'readiness' for team coaching mean to you? How do you know a team is 'ready'?**

8. **What happened in your team coaching that made you question if this is part of team coaching?**

9. **Link to reflective logs**: *What key experiences of team coaching do you recall as being significant? What examples are vivid and alive? What feelings and thoughts were generated by your experience of team coaching? What somatic changes, if any, did you notice in yourself when team coaching?*

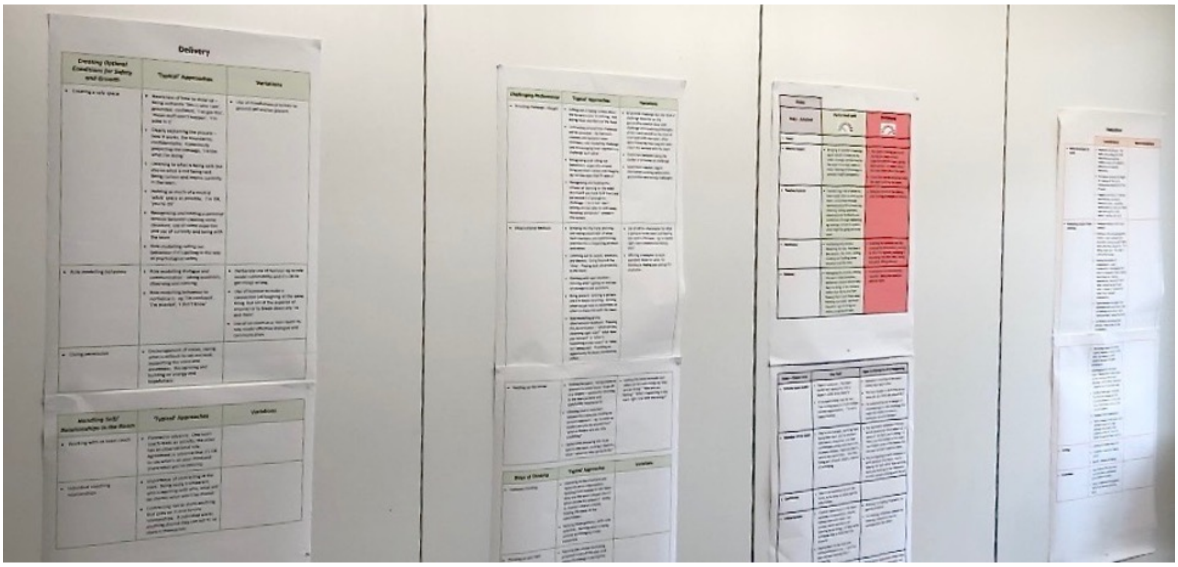
10. **What else seems relevant to your experience of team coaching that we haven't discussed yet?**

Appendix D – Creative Synthesis Focus Group

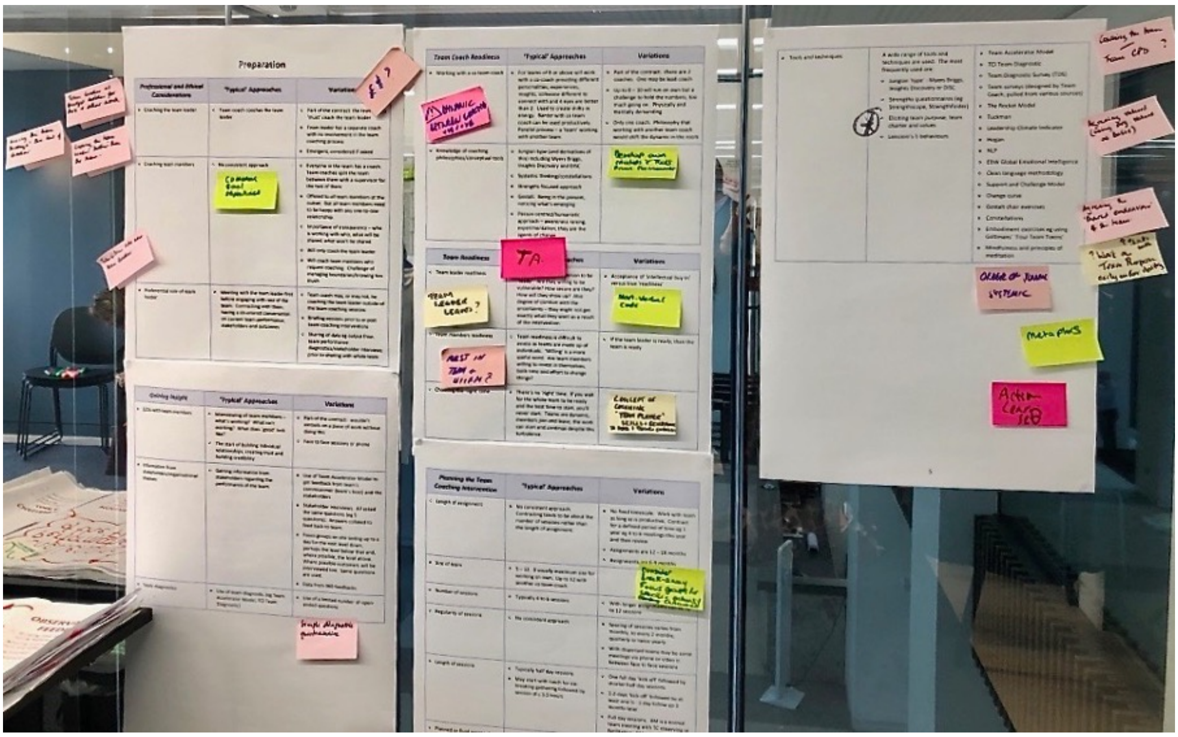
All set for the creative synthesis focus group

The gallery of posters

Appendix E – Validation Focus Group



Draft team coaching framework presented on posters for the co-researchers at the validation focus group



Co-researchers' comments and questions ready for discussion as a group

Appendix F – Coach Participant Information

Coach Participant Information Sheet

Study title: Exploring the essential elements of team coaching through the experience of the team coaches: a heuristic inquiry.

You are being invited to take part in a research study on team coaching. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study will be focused on a little-researched area of coaching – team coaching. The study will explore personal experiences of team coaching with team coaching practitioners utilising focus groups, interviews and reflective logs. The output from the research will be a deeper understanding of the essential elements of team coaching and the development of a team coaching framework.

Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been invited to take part as you are an experienced coach (of 5+ years) with some experience of team coaching and are currently undertaking team coaching with one or more organisational clients. During the study I will be working with ten coach participants with experience of conducting team coaching within organisations.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet along with a privacy notice that will explain how your data will be collected and used, and be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

What is Involved?
Coach participants will be invited to attend an Orientation Focus Group which will provide a briefing on the research project. The Orientation Focus Group will also help decide on the reflection log format, the frequency of diary-logs and how this data will be shared with the researcher. It is anticipated that the time commitment for completing reflection logs will be approximately 30-60 minutes per month. Coach participants will also take part in an interview. Interviews will be 60-90 minutes and will be audio recorded. The final stage of the process will be a Creative Synthesis Focus Group where the key themes arising out of the research will be shared and coach participants will create a 'creative synthesis' of the essential elements of team coaching. Each focus group will last approximately two hours and will be audio recorded.

When will the study take place?
The Orientation Focus Group will take place in February/March 2019. The maintenance and sharing of reflective logs and interviews will take place between March and September 2019 and the Creative Synthesis Focus Group will take place in November/December 2019.

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What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?

This study provides you with an opportunity to build on your valuable experience of team coaching with a view to co-creating a team coaching framework with a group of other experienced team coaches. The framework will be beneficial for practising team coaches, one-to-one coaches looking to expand their coaching practice into team coaching and for organisations commissioning team coaching. You may also benefit from further insight into your practice and yourself as a practitioner through in-depth reflection as part of the research.

The cost of taking part is only in terms of time involved.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you, the organisation you work for and the teams and individuals that you work with, will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with Oxford Brookes University's Policy on Academic Integrity.

The data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project. To preserve anonymity in the publication the findings will be described in aggregated themes and all coach participants will be allocated pseudonyms.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be used in my thesis for a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring. This will be published and held as a public document in the Library at Oxford Brookes University. You will be provided with a copy of the summary of the findings on request.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting the research as a student of the Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring Programme within the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. I am funding the research myself.

Who has reviewed the study?

The Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee has approved the research.

A supervisory team is monitoring the research and is as follows: Professor Tatiana Bachkirova, Director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies, Department of Business and Management, tbachkirova@brookes.ac.uk (01865 48 8367) Second Supervisor: Dr Ioanna Iordanou, Senior Lecturer, Department of Business and Management, (01865 485408), ioanna.iordanou@brookes.ac.uk

What should I do if I want to take part?

If after reading all the information you wish to participate please contact me on gill.graves-2017@brookes.ac.uk as soon as possible and by 31 January 2019 at the latest.

Contact for further information

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

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Appendix G – Consent Form

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: Exploring the essential elements of team coaching through the experience of team coaches: a heuristic Inquiry.

Gill Graves, Doctoral Student, Department of Business and Management
M: 07968 009804. E: gill.graves-2017@brookes.ac.uk

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

The following statements should be included, if appropriate.
If not, please ***delete*** *from the consent form*:

Please initial box

	Yes	No
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded	☐	☐
5. I understand that the focus groups will be audio recorded	☐	☐
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications	☐	☐
7. I agree that an anonymised data set, gathered for this study may be stored in a specialist data centre/repository relevant to this subject area for future research	☐	☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

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Appendix H – Extracts from Reflective Diary

6 February 2019

Chemistry meeting with Chief Exec, HRD and L&D. Very aware as I arrived that 'this is a top team', I had a parking spot reserved in the special car park, a very formal welcome and sign in at reception. A feeling of 'I need to be at my best today'. I then felt a bit on my back foot when the Chief Exec came down the stairs and very informally welcomed me. Was expecting his PA.

Reflections after the session… I was surprised at how much talking I'd done, how much I'd had to explain what team coaching is – this felt very different I usually listen more than I talk. They'd asked for it and sent me a detailed spec but I had a lingering sense of they had no real idea what team coaching is. Who'd written the spec? They asked loads of questions and repeatedly asked for examples. At times I felt like an evangelist… At one point I remember saying to myself, 'I'm educating here'.

Thinking about 'readiness for coaching' – he's keen but what about the rest of the team? He's been part of this team for some time and is now the boss. Interesting dynamic..

Perceptive question from the Chief Exec, 'How does the leader need to be?' My answer, 'part of the team and the leader…. Remember your power… may need to hold back rather than give view straight away'.

Felt I really gelled with the Chief Exec and if this was indiv coaching I'd get the gig! But couldn't read the HRD and was conscious that I know the L&D lead and he seemed a bit awkward. How much was me educating them about team coaching…?

19 March 2019

Second group coaching session with 'Group 7' a dispersed group using Zoom.

I went into the session feeling really positive. The first session had been brilliant, the group had really gelled. One person, Mary, hadn't been able to make the first session from the outset and had sent her apologies.

I was really knocked off my stride near the start when Mary started to smile. It felt a disingenuous smile and she then cut in and asked me the purpose of the sessions and how she would never have a meeting without first agreeing an agenda. 'I'm just being transparent'…. 'I'm actually amused…' For some reason the word 'amused' really jarred with me … I felt judged, defensive. I wanted to challenge her as I would in an individual coaching session but I held back – it was her first session, it felt too early for this group, they all seemed to be in high avoidance mode, drinking coffees, looking away etc. Mary went on to say how she would be professional and 'wouldn't let it show' when she was working with her own group. But it was showing! I felt I held back and the individual coach version of me would have given some observational feedback at this point in time – what I was seeing and feeling.

After the call finished I reflected on what had bothered me so much about this session. There were a number of aspects … being challenged in front of the others, my credibility (which I'd worked so hard on in the first session) was at stake. No one else spoke out. It felt like I was being tested. There were several levels of dialogue going on. I wanted to call her out but felt it was too soon. Her smile confused me. I wasn't sure where the conversation was going. I'd been complacent, I'd expected my 'lovely group' from last time and hadn't taken into account that Mary hadn't been there. Aware that I was smiling on the outside but inside lots of different conversations were going on. Also being aware of the impact of one negative person and how this affects me. If this was individual coaching I would have felt more resourced to address it there and then but the challenge of the group setting, only the second session and first for Mary and the fact that we were on Zoom all made me hold back. Could I have done a better job? Should I reach out to her separately? Not sure …. One for supervision next week! As well as something to explore with my co-researchers…

23 May 2019

Fourth group coaching call with the same 'Group 7'.

Mary checked in saying she felt very relaxed and shared her experience of using our check in 'how are we showing up?' at the start of what she anticipated would be a 'difficult meeting'. Mary shared how her boss saying, 'not great, I've just been to a friend's funeral' took the conversation to a different level. She went on to describe how she was using this check in at all of her meetings and was experimenting with having a more emergent agenda.

Whilst Mary didn't say 'sorry' or 'I was wrong' actually the sharing of her experiences felt even more powerful than if she had. She showed her vulnerable side. I noticed how the rest of the group smiled broadly at the end of her check in – there was a palpable, 'respect Mary' feeling!

My learning, having processed this at supervision … hang in there. It can take time. Not challenging earlier was the right move in hindsight! Also, remember Gill that the group you say 'goodbye' to in one session isn't the same group that you say 'hello' to in the next session. You say this to others, remember it yourself!

Appendix I – Psychometrics and Models Referenced

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Appendix J – PiE Team Coaching Model – Supporting Framework

PiE Team Coaching Model – Supporting Framework

Preparation

Questions to ask and answer	'Typical' Approaches	Variations
Do I need a co team coach? If so who and how will we work together?	• For teams of 8 or above will work with a co-coach providing different personalities, experiences, insights, someone different to connect with and 4 eyes are better than 2. Used to create shifts in energy. Banter with co team coach can be used productively. Parallel process – a 'team' working with another team	• Part of the contract: there are 2 coaches. One may be lead coach • Up to 8 – 10 will run on own but a challenge to hold the numbers, too much going on. Physically and mentally demanding • Only one coach. Philosophy that working with another team coach would shift the dynamic in the room
Do I coach the team leader? (Ethical and boundary issues. Transparency)	• Team coach coaches the team leader	• Part of the contract: the team coach 'must' coach the team leader • Team leader has a separate coach with no involvement in the team coaching process • Emergent, considered if asked
What special care does the team leader need? (Ethical and boundary issues. Transparency)	• Meeting with the team leader first before engaging with rest of the team. Contracting with them, having a structured conversation on current team performance, stakeholders and outcomes	• Team coach may, or may not, be coaching the team leader outside of the team coaching sessions • Briefing sessions prior to or post team coaching interventions • Sharing of data eg output from team performance diagnostics/stakeholder interviews prior to sharing with whole team
Do I coach other team members? (Ethical and boundary considerations. Transparency – who is working with who, what will/will not be shared)	• No consistent approach	• Everyone in the team has a coach. Team coaches split the team between them with a supervisor for the two of them • Offered to all team members at the outset. But all team members need to be happy with any one-to-one relationship • Will only coach the team leader • Will coach team members who request coaching. Challenge of managing boundaries/knowing too much
How will I gather insight for the assignment from team members?	• Interviewing all team members – what's working? What isn't working? What does 'good' look like? • Use of team diagnostic (eg Team Accelerator Model, TCI Team Diagnostic) • The start of building individual relationships, creating trust and building credibility	• Use of a limited number of open-ended questions • Part of the contract: would not embark on a piece of work without doing this • Face to face sessions or phone
How will I gather insight for the assignment from stakeholders?	• Gaining information from stakeholders regarding the performance of the team	• Use of Team Accelerator Model to get feedback from team's commissioner (team's boss) and the stakeholders • Stakeholder interviews. All asked the same questions (eg 5 questions). Answers collated to feed back to team • Focus groups on site lasting up to a day for the next level down, perhaps the level below that and, where possible, the level above. Where possible customers will be interviewed too. Same questions are used • Data from 360 feedbacks

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Planning the Team Coaching Intervention	'Typical' Approaches	Variations
Length of assignment	• No consistent approach. Contracting tends to be about the number of sessions rather than the length of assignment	• No fixed timescale. Work with team as long as is productive. Contract for a defined period of time eg 1 year eg 4 to 6 meetings this year and then review • Assignments are 12 – 18 months • Assignments are 6-9 months
Size of team	• 5 – 12. 8 usually maximum size for working on own. Up to 12 with another co team coach	
Number of sessions	• Typically 4 to 6 sessions	• With longer assignments can be up to 12 sessions
Regularity of sessions	• No consistent approach	• Spacing of sessions varies from monthly, to every 2 months, quarterly or twice yearly • With dispersed teams may be some meetings via phone or video in between face to face sessions
Length of sessions	• Typically half day sessions • May start with lunch for ice-breaking gathering followed by session of c 3.5 hours	• One full day 'kick off' followed by shorter half day sessions • 1-2 days 'kick off' followed by at least one ½ - 1 day follow up 3 months later • Full day sessions. AM is a normal team meeting with TC observing or facilitating. PM is team coaching
Planned or fluid approach	• First session generally planned eg contracting, how are we going to work together? Going through the output from the team diagnostic and team member and stakeholder feedback. Data shared with team and they decide what they want to work on • Use of a 'standard' tool eg Myers Briggs to provide a common language and understanding for all team members	• Adopting a 'light touch' approach with psychometrics. A belief that they can be a distraction and get in the way of what is happening in the room. Only used at client's request • Start with the work in hand and agree the 'agenda' for the day • Have a rough agenda or some ideas in 'back pocket' but work with what is current on the day • Over-arching plan for the assignment and each session (eg first session use of psychometric, second session team purpose and team charter)
Tools and techniques	A wide range of tools and techniques are used. The most frequently used are: • Jungian 'type' : Myers Briggs, Insights Discovery or DISC • Strengths questionnaires (eg Strengthscope, Strengthfinder) • Eliciting team purpose, team charter and values Lencioni's 5 behaviours	Other tools and techniques used are: • Team Accelerator Model • TCI Team Diagnostic • Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS) • Team surveys (designed by Team Coach, pulled from various sources) • The Rocket Model • Tuckman • Leadership Climate Indicator • Hogan • NLP • EBW Global Emotional Intelligence • Clean language methodology 2

Planning the Team Coaching Intervention	'Typical' Approaches	Variations
Tools and techniques (continued)		• Support and Challenge Model • Change curve • Gestalt chair exercises • Constellations • Embodiment exercises eg using Gottmans' 'Four Team Toxins' • Mindfulness and principles of meditation
Considerations for Supervision	• **Establishing a supervisory arrangement for self and co team coach** • **Ethics and boundaries** • **Issues of self-deception (how am I explaining taking on this work to myself?)** • **Contracting** • **Apprehension about starting the work**	3

Intervention

	'Typical' Approaches	Variations
Creating a space for safety and growth • Credibility • Trust • Vulnerability • Psychological safety • Transparency	• Clearly explaining the process – how it works, the boundaries, confidentiality. Consciously projecting the message, 'I know what I'm doing' • Awareness of how to show up – being authentic 'this is who I am', grounded, confident', 'I've got this' • Listening to what is being said, but also to what is not being said. Being curious and inspiring curiosity in the team • Holding as much of a neutral 'adult' space as possible. 'I'm OK, 'you're OK' • Role modelling dialogue and communication - asking questions, observing and noticing	• Use of mindfulness practices to ground self and be present • Deliberate use of humour eg to role model vulnerability and it's OK to get things wrong • Use of humour to make a connection (all laughing at the same thing, but not at the expense of anyone) or to break down any 'us and them' • Role modelling behaviour to normalize it: eg 'I'm confused', 'I'm puzzled', 'I don't know' • Use of co-coach as a 'mini team' to role model effective dialogue and communication
Challenging performance • Providing challenge • Being provocative • Observational feedback • Holding up the mirror	• Contracting around how challenge will be provided – by the team coaches and between team members, role modelling challenge and encouraging team members to challenge each other • Recognising and calling out behaviours, especially around living out team values and integrity eg 'so how does that fit with x?' • Bringing into the here and now and raising awareness of what team members are experiencing and how this is impacting on them and others • Listening out for words, emotions and themes. Going beyond the 'story'. Playing back observations to the team • Being present, noticing a pattern and if it keeps recurring. Sensing when to just hold in awareness or when to share this with the team • Role modelling giving observational feedback. Pressing the pause button – 'what are you observing right now?' 'what have you noticed?' or 'what is happening in the room?' or 'what isn't being said'. Providing an opportunity for team members to reflect • Holding the space – being aware of attempts to avoid issues, to go off at a tangent – constantly returning to the team purpose and stakeholder requirements	• All provide challenge but the kind of challenge depends on the personality comfort level with challenge and coaching philosophy of the coach as well as the level of trust built with the team, often determined by how long the team coach has worked with the team • Some team coaches regard themselves as being deliberately provocative and strong challengers • Use of self as a barometer for what is going on in the room and feeding this back to the team. Eg I'm bored right now is anyone else feeling this?' • Offering a metaphor to team members based on what I'm thinking or feeling and seeing if it resonates • Holding the space to model and reflect on fun and energy eg 'How are we doing?' 'How are you feeling?' 'What's happening in the room right now with the energy? • Working with own intuition – noticing what's going on and use of courage to ask questions • Allowing time to rant/vent followed by a directive holding to account approach – eg 'so what as leaders can you do around that?' 'what as leaders are you role modelling?' 4

Roles - Adopted	**Performed well** 	**Overplayed** 
• **Mentor/expert**	• Bringing in outside knowledge eg of industry trends or the wider strategic perspective for the team to accept, reject or keep. Sharing of knowledge to provide insight/perspective	• The coach is talking too much, sharing too much of own expertise with the team, giving their opinion. It's more about the coach than about the team • A role that can be projected onto the team coach by the team
• **Teacher/trainer**	• Transferring a lot of what the team coach does as skills to the team, sometimes through demonstrating the process (eg listening, asking questions, observational feedback) and sometimes through explaining eg sharing a model to explain what might be going on in the team	• Doing too much of the talking, over sharing of models or theory • Feeling the pressure to 'give value for money'
• **Facilitator**	• Facilitating the process, designing the day, the flow of the session, the room, seating, creating and holding some structure and the time	• Grabbing the markers and flip-charting the discussions, starting to drive the agenda, pumping in my energy into the room, being too active, filling silences • Feeling uncomfortable. To divert attention elsewhere
• **Referee**	• Managing the process, helping the team make proactive, deliberate choices about what they're doing in the moment rather than being too free-flowing that it just flows away. Pointing out when 'we're off the pitch' eg not living out values, or going off topic	• If overplayed can become the 'marshal', being too directive with the team

Roles – Drawn Into	**The 'Pull'**	**Signs to Recognise It's Happening**
• **Defacto team leader**	• There's a vacuum. The team leader isn't doing the role or doesn't really know how to • 'It's a comfortable role for me', 'I've run big teams in multi-million pounds organisations.' 'I'm very happy leading'	• Everyone is looking at the coach rather than each other • The team leader is deferring to me 'what do you think we should do?' • I'm volunteering (or in danger of volunteering) to take on things that might be helpful to move a particular process forward
• **Member of the team**	• They're nice people, working hard, doing their best, you've worked with them a long time, you feel comfortable sitting with them in a business context – because that's where you came from. You miss being part of such a team, a sense of belonging	• You normalise behaviour that you would previously have called out. A sense of 'oh that's just x being x' or 'that's just the banter in this team'. You forgive some of the foibles that you see and don't address them • You're stepping in with solutions or with opinions too much. You're playing the ball rather than standing back and looking at the interaction of other people playing with the ball 5

Roles – Drawn Into	**The 'Pull'**	**Signs to Recognise It's Happening**
• **Critical parent**	• 'Childish' behaviours in the team – separate conversations, cliques, talking over each other, low energy, team members not wanting to do things, or they want someone else to hold them to account • Feeling that I'm the only one calling behaviours out. I can't be the only one noticing this is happening	• Noticing I'm feeling frustrated, I'm getting irritated • I'm noticing unfairness, people not listening, imbalance, lack of consideration for others
• **Nurturing parent**	• Wanting to help, sort them out, make things better, feeling sorry for team members who seem to be struggling	• Being overly supportive of the team, 'It really is tough for you guys'. not providing challenging them in terms of how they step up • Being drawn into team members wanting you to take their side
• **Considerations for Supervision**	• Understanding how the work is impacting on the team coach – triggers, projection, countertransference and feelings towards team members • Container to download • Emotional space to replenish energy • Standing back and refreshing approach 6	

Evaluation

	Considerations
• **Building reflective practice**	• Was this assignment team coaching … or something else? What was asked for? What did I deliver? • What am I noticing about the development of my team coaching practice? • How does my dyadic coaching inform my team coaching? (Do I see myself as a better/stronger /different dyadic or team coach? What is my 'evidence'?)
• **Evaluating success of team coaching**	• Anecdotal feedback from team members • Noticing a shift and seeing some traction. Team members are proactively coming up with ideas about what they should do. Team Coach is taking a back seat. The team is running themselves • Noticing the quality of conversations – open conversation, challenging each other in a respectful way, saying how things are, sharing experiencing, listening to each other, connecting with each other. A sense of 'productive' rather than 'pretend' conversations • Team members are able to be vulnerable with each other, able to challenge each other more. 'undiscussables' being discussed. • Connections are being built stronger, more wires on the connections • Re-running surveys and seeing scores improve or doing a 'pulse take' just looking at a few aspects the team has been working on • Observing a shift in the team leader. Seeing them really stand up and challenge their team. Noticing a shift in their authority – towards the Team Coach and the team • Feedback from team members that they are managing their processes better as a team and have more clarity around roles and boundaries • Feedback from stakeholders • There's energy in the room, team members leave on a high. Although the proof of the pudding is later on. Did they follow through on their actions? • Progress is not linear. It may be slow then fast, backwards, forwards or static. Assessing overall progress is hard as a team coach and may be a roller coaster – exciting and scary
• **The cost of "holding" the team – restoration, self-care and external support**	• Importance of self-care. The work is demanding, far more than individual coaching. Holding a team of 6+ people is physically and mentally demanding. Recognise and allow for this when planning sessions eg half rather than full days • Appreciation the importance of getting insight from all team members, as well as stakeholders where possible, to get as full a picture as possible prior to commencing the work • Importance of having strategies for 'shaking off' the work, keeping some detachment from the work • Appreciation of the impact of where I sit – sitting in the circle with the team or slightly detached • Engaging in reflective practice with co team coach to draw out learning • Engaging in personal development/CPD to understand own typical patterns, reactions and needs in a group setting
• ***Considerations for Supervision***	• **Endings** • **Stepping out, leaving the team resourced** • **Processing any 'hangover' from the work** • **Space to reflect on the quality of the work** • **Engaging in supervision with co team coach to explore parallel process, transference, countertransference and themes emerging from the work** 7

Appendix K – Examples of 'My Experience Team Coaching'

Some Examples of 'My Experience of Team Coaching is ….'

My experience of team coaching is that it is ***fun***, daunting, challenging and ***worthwhile***. My experience so far leads me to believe that I need more experience and possibly to go on a course to build my ***confidence*** (feel more credible). My experience is that the ***contracting*** part is so key – with the leader and the team. There's a lot of variety of approaches and ways to team coach – there are ***no clear right and wrongs***. Being a team coach makes you think about how you show up in a team. *(Jen)*

My experience of team coaching is trying to provide enough ***oil*** to make the ***machine work***, enough ***grit*** to help generate ***pearls***, whilst allowing all the separate ***parts*** to become ***stronger*** and the best they can be, ***ready*** for their next team. *(Liza)*

My experience of team coaching is of ***challenge***, being on the edge, the dialogue inside is sounding louder than the dialogue on the outside. ***Holding*** so many people. Feeling a ***responsibility***. What if it goes wrong? But then what's the worst that can happen? Have I prepared enough? Have I prepared too much? What does it mean to be part of this team? ***I'm a visitor***, but I'm on an extended stay. What version of me needs to turn up today, in fact in this moment? The ***challenger***? ***Supporter***? By the end of today I'm going to be totally drained, having given my all, holding the team. If it goes as well as I hope, I'll be ***buzzing*** and ***tired*** in equal measure. *(Gill)*

My experience of team coaching is the best laid ***plans*** don't always play out. You can design an intervention and change it in a moment. You can't be hung up about the process – you are in service to the team, organisational and stakeholders. It's not about you. ***Perfect won't happen***. Instead, is it ***better***? To use the All Black's analogy, 'Have you left the jersey in a better place?' You won't have all the answers and it will be messy. You will be ***uncertain*** and that's OK. You will feel ***pride*** when the team makes a shift – how can you keep them doing this outside the room? It could be never-ending so identify when it's time for you to ***stand back*** and ***let them*** get on with it. *(Joy)*

Appendix L – The PiE Team Coaching Model