



Orientation and Coaching for families

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What is family coaching?

Life coaches understand that every family has its problems, whether those problems are as commonplace as not knowing how to deal with difficult teenage behaviour, or as complex and devastating as trying to cope with betrayal or a separation.

The truth is, living with other people is difficult, even if those people happen to be the ones we care most about in the world. Managing a good family dynamic takes time, patience and practice. Keeping all family members happy is no easy task - especially when you all have to live under the same roof.



What is family coaching?

Family coaching sessions are designed to provide families with the tools and techniques to resolve conflicts, reach compromises and hopefully transform a difficult living situation into a comfortable one.

Family coaching follows the same basic concept as all other types of coaching: guiding a person from where they are, to where they want to be.



What is family coaching?

Just as a business coach might be drafted in to help restructure a team or advise a manager on communication techniques, a family coach will enter into the home to work with all members of a family. They can help to find out where the problems are and what changes can be made to reach a happy medium.

Family coaching sessions are designed to keep disputes as rational as possible. When we let our emotions get the better of us, arguments can easily turn into shouting matches. A coach will ensure any arguments that arise between family members during a family coaching session are kept as structured, fair and valid as possible - so that everybody has a chance to have their say.





A coach

When we refer to a coach, we mean: a person who works one-on-one with a participant in a collaborative process to help address individual and family goals. This broad definition of coach includes everyone that provides one-on-one services including, case managers, family support workers, counsellors, and others. It does not mean, however, that a coach is only using “coaching” to support families.



A participant

When we refer to a participant, we mean the person who is taking part in the coaching relationship. Because the target audience for family-centred coaching is often parents, the terms participant and parent are used interchangeably in this guide. In addition, our definition of parent is purposefully broad — it may include grandparents, foster parents, and other caregivers who are responsible for keeping a family moving together.



A family

When we refer to families, we take an expansive view of intentional and created families in their many varieties. A family could include a parent and his or her children. It could include stepparents, grandparents, and foster parents and children. Or it may include cousins, aunts, uncles, close friends, and any other person who is considered part of the family.



Parents are their own best experts at what they need

The key is putting the participant or parent in the driver's seat of the work because parents are their own best experts at what they need, what strengths they can draw from and build upon, and where the sticky challenges are for themselves and their families. In family-centred coaching, **the participant takes the lead in identifying goals for their defined family**. Doing this, and establishing a relationship between coach and participant on the same level, is the heart of the work, and enables coaches to support parent-driven agendas. When constructed in this way, the relationship between a participant, their defined family, and the coach can be transformational for families to achieve their goals. You as a “coach” enter with a wide lens on how a family may be defined and the range of interests and needs they may have.

The whole family

Family-centred coaching focuses on the whole family, instead of focusing only the interests of one person. While many organizations focus on particular aspects of a participant's life — such as financial stability or child developmental outcomes — family-centred coaching aims to bring all aspects together to better serve the family. Family-centred coaching helps you find ways to consider the whole family, even though all family members aren't usually a part of the actual coaching sessions.



Common issues family coaching can help with

Some reasons people seek family coaching include:

- resolving marital problems
- addressing work/life balance
- bringing up children
- dealing with problem teenagers
- dealing with life after separation or divorce





Common issues

Problem behaviour

If your family life is becoming difficult to manage because of destructive behaviour, a coach can help you to manage and improve the behaviour of your teenager or younger children.

Children

Sometimes, for one reason or another, children need a little extra support or a different type of discipline to perform at their best. If your discipline strategies aren't working or your child's behaviour is starting to affect other areas of life such as their performance at school or your social life, it can become frustrating.

Although it's often easier said than done, it's important to try not to take your frustration out on your child, displaying it as anger.



Children learn from who they spend time with

Children learn from who they spend time with. They are modelling you and your partner. If you want your child to behave differently when they are angry you need to show them how to do this by doing it yourself when you get angry.

Teenagers

The teenage years can often be difficult for all the family to deal with. A combination of raging hormones, school stresses, peer problems and the natural fight for independence can quickly turn the home into a battleground. For some parents, controlling wily teenagers can be next to impossible.





Unfortunately, though, **parents who meet their teenagers' behaviour with anger only serve to distance themselves even more.** From a teenager's perspective, a stressed and angry parent who constantly nags them could be seen as trying to deprive them of happiness. Teenagers may not understand that their parent's anger is only a form of anxiety. Often, we display destructive emotions to hide our real ones because we don't know how to deal with them.

A family coach can work with parents and teenagers together in order to **establish mutual respect, clearer boundaries and a greater understanding of each other.** A family coach will help both problem teenagers and parents to see life from the other's point of view.

Family Coach tasks

As a Family Coach, you will need to:

- **Support** the Host Family. This ensures that families get the support and resources they need to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.
- **Monitor** children's safety. Because safety is a top priority, the Family Coach begins assessing safety within 48 hours of a child moving in with the Host Family—and each week for at least a month.
- **Provide** a family in need with resources, such as community referrals and assistance in making their appointments.
- **Facilitate** the relationship between the Host Family and the Family in need with compassion and empathy.



What is also important?

- **Listen** to Host Families and Families in need. The Family Coach provides space for them to express their thoughts and concerns.
- **Manage** expectations. For example, the Host Family may feel that they must fix problems or situations that are not their responsibility. Alternately, if a hosting arrangement seems longer than expected, the Family Coach is needed to temper expectations.
- **Show** empathy, hope, grace, and compassion. We work hard to err on the side of grace.
- **Problem** solve. Family Coaches work with the church and other community resources to assist Families in need.
- **Reassure**. Stressful situations require a calm presence and the ability to give hope to those who may feel hopeless.





Work/life balance



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- Getting married or having children doesn't necessarily mean you have to put your career goals on hold - you simply have to think more carefully about your work/life balance.
 - Family coaching can be a great tool for families to work on achieving this together, as it offers everyone the chance to get together in the same room and set out exactly how they feel. Family coaching sessions are designed to get everyone's opinions out in the open so a good compromise can be reached.
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Move forward

The idea of family coaching is not to place blame on one another or to discuss what happened. The idea is to move forward by configuring a new family dynamic. A family coach will develop certain interactive exercises and techniques to rebuild those trust bonds and help families recover from a big shake-up.

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Thank you!

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