

PLANTING SEEDS THAT GROW: COACHING CONVERSATIONS WITH IT
PROFESSIONALS

By

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We accept this Report as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

In keeping with the principles of action research which are to be a benefit to the organization and individual participants this major project introduced within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a peer coaching and feedback environment. The purpose of this research was to discover the impact that practicing coaching and feedback had on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhanced communication in the workplace. Ultimately participants felt their workplace communication was enhanced as they practiced coaching and they reported increased accountability, motivation, productivity, efficiency, openness, and focus through their peer coaching. They also experienced deeper relationships within their peer coaching group and the larger team which they shared helped to make them a more efficient and effective team.

DEDICATION

To my mother Leonora a scholar, learner, and teacher who shared with me her passion for discovery, my father Carl who believed and taught me that it was never too late to begin an adventure, and my darling baby brother Paul who showed me how it was possible to live a big life in a short time.

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CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS AND FRAMING

Introduction

Over the last ten years business, government, and non-profit organizations have adopted and promoted coaching practices to enhance accountability, effectiveness, and productivity for individual employees and amongst teams (Ellinger, Hamlin & Beattie, 2007). The principles of workplace coaching, much like that of effective leadership, are rooted in ability to establish, build, and sustain trust. (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003) As with leaders, when coaches and coachees interact from mutual trust they are able to realize positive outcomes (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Whitmore, 2002). These positive outcomes realized through coaching build leadership, self -efficacy, and motivation in the individual and the impacts are experienced at an individual, relational, and organizational level (Wales, 2003). At Providence Health Care (PHC) peer coaching resulted in a domino effect: coaching built individuals and individuals built more positive relationships. According to Wheatley (2007a) these positive relationships will build better organizations.

Armed with this knowledge of coaching and understanding of his team I began to dialogue in January 2009 with a former colleague, Wilf Humeny, at Providence Health Care (PHC) about coaching as a focus for my major project. After learning more about the potential benefits he became excited about the possibilities feedback and coaching might have for his team and wondered how coaching might impact communication and team building amongst his staff. On further investigation he discovered that PHC was looking to pilot a coaching program for their leadership group. Knowing that the organization was open to coaching, he approached Senior Leadership Team with my action research idea of introducing solution focused peer coaching to the Patient Clinical Information Services (PCIS) Team. After receiving approval to

proceed with my project from Barbara Trerise Vice President, Patient Safety, Quality and Information Management, Wilf then approached his team during their weekly meeting. They too, were eager to proceed with the action research. In the spring of 2009, with his team and Senior Leadership on board, Wilf asked me to present my proposal to the Operations Decision Group (ODG). It was at these meetings that the ODG membership saw the potential benefit peer coaching could have on the PCIS team and agreed to sponsor my project.

As a private consultant in Healthcare Information Technology (IT) and systems who specializes in project management and training delivery I immediately saw the difference between what I would call training: telling or giving someone information and connecting someone with their own potential or what I would call coaching. As I practiced coaching at work, school, and with former colleagues I saw significant changes myself and in those I coached. I was hooked. Not surprising, when it came time to consider a topic for my action research project coaching immediately came to mind.

In aligning my interests with that of PHC the research question explored in this project was: How does using coaching and feedback skills influence communication in the PHC PCIS team? My sub questions included: What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication? What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback? In what ways does coaching and feedback contribute to communication in the workplace?

The Opportunity and its Significance

Glesne (2006) spoke of community and the importance it played in her action research. In particular she wanted to contribute to what the community needed from her. She wanted to be useful. The participants in my research were part of a former workplace community at PHC,

Information Systems and Information Technology (IMIS) on the PCIS team, a department that was responsible for all the clinical systems across eight sites. From an organizational level it was important that team members have a tool to enhance communication and build strong relationships particularly since the group interacted with clinical, diagnostic and business services throughout the eight sites at PHC (W. Humeny, January 11, 2009). Wilf's belief, as the PCIS team leader, was that in building stronger relationships he would build a stronger more efficient team. DePree (1987) concurred and added that our workplace relationships are important because they "meet our personal need for belonging, for contributing, and for meaningful work" (p. 23).

From a PCIS team perspective members expressed that their interest in participating in coaching and feedback sessions was to improve their interpersonal communication and leadership skills (W. Humeny, personal communication, July 16, 2009). Acquisition of this skill set was also identified as a key development area in the results from a survey of Canadian IT professionals (Gunderson, Jacobs, & Vaillancourt, 2005). In this action research project peer coaching was the tool PCIS team members practiced to discover the impact it had on their communication and leadership skill development. The link then between my research and my leadership and learning in organizations is that coaching offered an opportunity to enhance communication and leadership skills.

After practicing coaching and feedback PCIS team participant volunteers found that they deepened their interpersonal skills through the use of "dialogue building questions" (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002, p. 100) such as "tell me more about it" (p. 101). Questions like these shifted the focus from finger pointing and advice giving to learning from each other. During the research coaching sessions were effective in as little as twenty minutes and this peer interaction provided

a unique learning opportunity, according to Kram and Isabella (1985), because it lacked a “hierarchical dimension” (p. 112), which made “it easier to achieve communication, mutual support, and collaboration” (p. 112). In fact when participants practiced coaching and feedback they worked “together to understand one another’s different communication or leadership styles” (Hunt & Weintraub, p. 168). This better understanding developed, in part, through active listening which was observation of what was being said and was not being said, as well as the choice of words, tone, gestures, and body language (Hunt & Weintraub; Whitmore, 2002). As active listeners the participants were present and noticed, they clarified their assumptions, and responded appropriately to the speaker (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith, 1994). What Wheatley (2002) named as good listening is actively listening. It is an art and takes practice.

In addition to actively listening, effective teams practice openness, honesty, and flexibility (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Some of the identified benefits of coaching from an individual, team, and organization include increased workplace accountability, productivity, motivation, focus, effectiveness, and efficiency (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Whitmore, 2002). It is the development and practice of these skills and behaviors that build communication and leadership capacity with individuals and organizations (Yukl, 2006).

Systems Analysis of the Opportunity

Senge (1990) spoke of how we are interconnected with each other through our communities, our organizations, and our larger world. When I applied systems thinking to my research I recognized as Short (1998) said

every relationship . . . constitutes a different system. Add someone to a relationship and you have another system . . . your system not only changes with different people, it changes when the same people converse about different topics. (p. 61)

At PHC the PCIS maintained many relationships and was uniquely situated within the larger organization because they supported and configured the Core Clinical System (CCS) used by clinical services to register, admit, discharge, transfer, and place orders on patients. The CCS was the system of truth for the organization, as diagnostic services of laboratory, pharmacy, and radiology relied on patient data from the CCS to act on clinician orders and populate key fields in their systems. Business services of Administrative Decision Support (ADS) and Finance used the CCS data to produce statistical analyses and billing, Health Records who maintained patient charts, and Client Registration Information Services (CRIS) were responsible for the integrity and veracity of the patient data entered (W. Humeny, May 16, 2009).

In addition to managing multiple stakeholders within PHC, the PCIS team reported across two organizations At PHC they reported to the Vice President, Patient Safety, Quality and Information Management and, since IMIS was a shared service through Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), the team also reported to VCH IMIS Regional Managers and the Chief Information Officer. This meant that the team operated under no fewer than three strategic plans. The first was the *PHC Strategic Plan 2005-2008* (2005), and the second was the *VCH Strategic Plan* (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2006). The third was the IMIS strategic plan entitled *Plan into Action* (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2005) and was based on ten goals which were focused on protecting patient privacy while providing seamless access to clinical information for health care providers. In operating under three strategic plans, two reporting structures, one core clinic system that provides data to 44 other computer databases and systems, across 35 clinical program areas, there could be tension between the differing goals, cultures, vision, values, and mission (W. Humeny, personal communication, May 16, 2009).

One of the strategies for managing this tension was to enable communication from an inter team and intra team perspective. Within the PHC PCIS team information was gathered and shared through informal walkabouts “to take the temperature of individuals” (W. Humeny, August 14, 2009) to a more formalized meeting schedule which included weekly team meetings and yearly performance reviews. Knowledge was transferred from more senior team members to the less seasoned on an as needed or as requested basis, but no formalized process existed. From a feedback perspective positive feedback was given in the weekly team meetings and during walkabouts by the team leader and team leads for the four areas CAAs, Programmers, Quality Assurance and Training and Support. However, the majority of staff were uncomfortable with feedback that may be interpreted as negative. To encourage feedback Wilf (the team leader) instituted ad hoc debrief sessions where team members were asked to share their lessons learned on various initiatives. Performance issues and development opportunities were addressed in the formal yearly performance review although Wilf and the team leads did provide balanced and constructive feedback to individual team members as required throughout the year. Several formalized and regularly scheduled meetings were in place to assist the PHC PCIS team in communicating with their multitude of stakeholders. From an intra team perspective the PCIS Team Leader had a dual role of advising and receiving direction from the IMIS Advisory Committee (IMISAC) and the Operations Decision Group (ODG). Regular monthly meetings between PCIS and the Technical Users Group (TUG) and the PCIS Users Group (PUG) also provided feedback to the PCIS team as well as an opportunity to communicate the planned work and direction set out by the IMISAC and ODG (W. Humeny, Personal Communication, January 11, 2009).

The challenge for the PHC PCIS team was to maintain the current level of staffing with a potential \$90 million in cutbacks at VCH looming (McLellan, 2009). With new CCS applications to support and the recent layoffs of three term employees, staff morale was low at the time this research was being launched (W. Humeny, August 14, 2009). In their favour was the culture at PHC, that was “guided by . . . timeless values, regardless of change and uncertainty” (Providence Health Care, 2005, p. 1). It was a culture with a long history of innovation and leadership development (Providence Health Care, 2005) where leaders actively “encourage the aligning and creation of systems, structures and processes that enable quality care and meaningful work to take place” (Providence Health Care, 2005, p. 1).

Organizational Context

PHC provides health care services in accordance with *Canada Health Act* (Wikipedia, 2009a). The Government of Canada transfers funds to the Government of British Columbia for the delivery of health care services within the province (Government of Canada, 2005). The BC Ministry of Health (MoH) organizes all health care facilities, which operated under the *Canada Health Act*, into Health Authorities. When this research was conducted BC had six health authorities: Fraser Health Authority (FH), Interior Health Authority (IHA), Northern Health Authority (NH), Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH), and Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) (British Columbia, 2007).

Providence Health Care (PHC) is a faith based organization that was founded on April 1, 1997 and is comprised of eight sites which delivered health care services in Vancouver. These sites are St Paul’s Hospital (SPH), Mount Saint Joseph Hospital (MSJ), Holy Family Hospital (HFH), Brock Fahrni (BF), Langara, Honoria Conway, Youville, and Marion Hospice. With the exception of Brock Fahrni, which was formerly operated by

Veterans Affairs, each site has a rich history of service to the community through the Catholic Church. PHC is proud of the contributions made by the founding Sisters. At the time of this research project, the PHC culture reflected the alignment with the principles and traditions of the various Orders who helped build and operate the various health care facilities (Providence Health Care, 2009b) and were evidenced by their organizational positioning statement which began “How you want to be treated” (Providence Health Care, 2009a, ¶2)

Within the PHC Senior Leadership Team is the Vice President, Mission, Ethics & Spirituality whose mandate is to ensure that everyone in the organization is aware of the positioning statement as well as the mission, values and vision. Other members of the Senior Leadership Team at PHC oversees the clinical, research, patient privacy, financial and business responsibilities for the organization and all reported to the President and CEO of PHC. Although it is not a health authority, it is a separate legal entity; as a result it operates in partnership with VCH, making PHC both a part of and separate from VCH. The current PHC CEO and President is part of the VCH Senior Leadership Team (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2009) and PHC shares leadership for services such as Information Management Information Services (IMIS), Pharmacy, and Radiology.

As discussed in the Systems Analysis of the Opportunity section the PHC PCIS Team Leader reports to the PHC Vice President, Patient Safety, Quality and Information Management as well as to the VCH IMIS Clinical Services Regional Manager, the VCH Executive Director, and the VCH Chief Information Officer. The primary work of the PHC PCIS team is the customization and maintenance of the CCS for clinical services and team members must engage clinical stakeholders to ensure that the system supported best practices. In addition the business

process for the CCS must be aligned with the policies and procedures and privacy requirements that governed the work of Client Information Registration Services (CRIS), Health Records (HR) and Administrative Decision Support (ADS) teams at PHC. For this reason CRIS, HR and ADS all report to the PHC VP, Patient Safety, Quality and Information Management

The PCIS team is responsible for the configuration and maintenance of the CCS which is a suite of four software applications named Access Manager, Enterprise Scheduler, Sunrise Clinical Manager and ED Manager. With over 3,800 clinical and administrative staff that use these applications to register, discharge, transfer and place orders for clients the software is considered core to the business of the organization. Additionally there are 44 separate computer programs at PHC which rely on data that exists in the PHC CCS suite. Some examples included pharmacy, radiology, health records, and laboratory services.

The PCIS team is comprised of programmers who configure the systems and reported specifications, trainers who teach end users how to use the systems, and clinical application analysts (CAAs) who work with end users to determine what changes need to be made in the systems. Although the programmers and training and support team are long term employees with considerable experience in both IT and at PHC; the CAAs are largely comprised of young (24-29) IT professionals. In fact at the time the research was launched, seven of the eight current CAAs graduated from the University of Victoria Health Informatics program and spent at least one of their work co-operatives at PHC (W. Humeny, Personal Communications, January 11, 2009).

As part of their job when CAAs start at PCIS, they have been tasked with engaging stakeholders, including senior physicians, nurses, and other healthcare leaders, to assess CCS requirements. To be effective the Clinical Application Analyst must understand business

processes and needs as well as CCS's limitations and be able to communicate them to the programmers and trainers. This was where introducing a more effective method to facilitate communication might be beneficial because both within the PCIS team and out to the organization effective communication becomes important. Over 3,800 people in the organization used the clinical systems that were supported by the PCIS team and thousands more were reliant on the data stored in the system (W. Humeny, Personal Communication, January 11, 2009).

Knowledge transfer, job satisfaction, retention, leadership development and communications were all concerns for the PCIS team (W. Humeny, Personal Communication, January 11, 2009). Adding to this is the current reality that IT professionals are in great demand in the current market (Gunderson et al., 2005). PHC, as a not for profit organization, cannot compete with the salaries offered by the consulting companies and software vendors. In fact in the last three years, six CAAs had left the organization upon being recruited by private consulting firms after working at PHC for two years (W. Humeny, Personal Communications, January 11, 2009). For all these reasons it was important for the PCIS team and the larger PHC organization to practice peer coaching and reap the benefits of improved communication, relationship and leadership capacity.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

My literature review is structured to explore my main research question which was: How does using coaching and feedback skills influence communication in the PHC PCIS team? My sub questions included: What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication? What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback? In what ways does coaching and feedback contribute to communication in the workplace?

To investigate these questions more fully I began by defining coaching and followed with a discussion on what was necessary for the coach and coachee to experience successful coaching. Next I examined the theoretical models which support coaching in the workplace and defined feedback and the differences between peer coaching and peer mentoring. Since learning is a key element of providing coaching and feedback I looked at adult learning principles and the benefits and challenges associated with using participatory learning, experiential learning, and collaborative learning amongst peers to facilitate communication. This discussion concludes with the role of leadership and the organization in establishing and sustaining a learning environment. Workplace communication is the last area of focus; specifically the factors that enhance or inhibit communication and the roles leadership and the organization culture have in creating an environment where effective communication can occur.

Establishing a Coaching and Feedback Environment

It has been my experience that within organizations the terms coaching and mentoring are often used interchangeably, and though there are similarities between the two, there are also differences. This review will define coaching and feedback and explore the behavioural models currently used in workplace coaching. In alignment with one of the principles of action research,

which is to bring benefit to the organization and the participants, I will discuss the benefits associated with establishing and sustaining a peer coaching and feedback environment.

Definitions of Workplace Coaching

Coaching has been used in workplaces since 1937 (Gorby, 1937 as cited in Grant & Cavanagh, 2004) and has roots in the disciplines of psychology, adult learning, and communication (Stober, Wildflower & Drake, 2006). As such it is often confused with other types of developmental relationships. D'Abate, Eddy and Tannenbaum (2003) held that there is no significant difference between “mentors, coaches, sponsors, peer and other developmental relationships” and that all should be placed “under one umbrella” and called “developers” (p. 364) because all these roles shared strength of relationship. Perhaps in this definition developers would share what Whitmore (2002) called the purpose of a coach which was “building awareness, responsibility, and self-belief” (p. 17).

However an argument might be made that not all mentors, sponsors, and peers follow a coaching approach. A coach approach, according to Ives (2008), was premised on the fact that, unlike mentoring which is instructional, coaching is non directive (p. 100). This non directive approach, according to Hunt & Weintraub (2002), involves establishing trust and confidentiality, active listening, and asking reflective and clarifying questions because “asking coachees about their ideas for change challenges them to keep thinking and to take responsibility for their own learning” (pp. 31-32). Coaching involves “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.” (Gallwey, 1986, as cited in Whitmore, 2002, p. 8). This learning occurs for the coachee when the coach “changes their mindset” (Hunt & Weintraub, p. 11) and “represents an act of caring and putting aside their own agenda, feelings, and frustrations to help another individual achieve his or her goals (p. 23).

Buckley (2007) suggested that coaching is a “helping by talking” (p. 17) practice which is used for personal growth and development and goal setting in the workplace and is commonly known as executive coaching or workplace coaching (Ives, 2008). Within the workplace, coaching can be offered to teams or individuals by a professional external coach (Rock & Donde, 2008a; 2008b), by internal managers or leaders to their direct reports and teams (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002) or by internal peers to peers (Kutzhanova, Lyons & Lichtenstein, 2009). In two recent studies (Donde, 2008a; Goldsmith, Morgan & Ogg, 2004) internal coaches have been shown to be less costly to the organization and have had a higher impact on retention, engagement and productivity throughout all levels of the organization than external coaches. While these findings seem to support a model of internal peer to peer coaching, the work of Kutzhanova et al. (2009) also found that peer coaching increased participant communication skills through their engagement in “a forum for sharing ideas, and receiving unbiased and trustworthy feedback” (p. 201).

Differences Between Coaching And Mentoring

In the fields of healthcare and education peer mentoring is commonplace within organizations (Busher, 2005; Holbeche, 1996; Stuttaford & Coe, 2007) but peer coaching is a relatively new phenomenon (Browne, 2006; Kutzhanova et al., 2009; Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008; Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004). D’Abate et al. (2003) found a distinct difference between workplace coaching and workplace mentoring in that the “timeframe for coaching is short-term performance, whereas traditional mentoring tends to relate to long-term development” (p. 376). Others (Cull, 2006; Beddoes-Jones & Miller, 2007; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000; Passmore, 2007; Terrion, Phillion & Leonard, 2007) suggested that it was not the length of time but rather the nature of the relationship; mentors dispensed advice, imparted their wisdom and experience to

their less seasoned mentee and coaches used open ended questions and a non-directive approach which allowed coachees to come to their own solutions (Grant, 2001; Ives, 2008; McDowall & Mabey, 2008, Stober et al, 2006). In other words mentors were described as experienced career guides with the answers while coaches guided coachees to their own knowing (Whitmore, 2002). Hopkins-Thompson suggested that coaching involved the “breaking down into behaviours, modelling them, observing them, and then providing feedback” (p. 30) and acknowledged that “both mentoring and coaching are important components of leadership development” (p. 30).

Theoretical Models Of Coaching

According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003, as cited in Behavioural Coaching Institute, 2008) business coaching models have four approaches:

Stages of change/transtheoretical model. Change Factors addressed: Readiness to change or attempt to change behavior varies among individuals and within an individual over time. Relapse is a common occurrence and part of the normal process of change.

Social cognitive theory/social learning theory. Change Factors addressed: Behavior is explained by dynamic interaction among personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior.

Theory of reasoned action/theory of planned behavior. Change Factors addressed: People are rational beings whose intention to perform a behavior strongly relates to its actual performance through beliefs, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Solution focused theory. Change Factors addressed: Assumes that the client has the answers within himself/herself. Recognising the critical role of trust and commitment in the partnership change is promoted by constructing solutions. (¶ 8-12)

As described above, the transtheoretical approach allows for various stages of participant readiness. Since coaching and feedback is an iterative process, participant learning occurs regardless of whether the identified goal is realized (Goldsmith, 2002; Hunt & Weintraub, 2002). In the social cognitive approach Dunn (2009) supported the idea that we are not easily separated

into work and personal identities, and that our behaviours and actions are shaped by our past experiences. The theory of planned behaviour aligns with how the coachee perceives herself and her openness to reflect. Finally the solution focused theory has the coachee in the driver's seat, making their own decisions on what is the best way forward (Hunt & Weintraub; Whitmore, 2002).

Grant (2001) suggested that because coaching impacted the “four dimensions . . . of human experience – thoughts, feelings, behaviours and the situation or environment” (p. 25) it fit better under the cognitive-behavioural approach (p. 25). Hill (1990, as cited in Peel, 2005) concurred and placed coaching in the cognitive-behavioural realm “based on an acceptance that people do not simply respond to stimuli but also act on beliefs, express attitudes and strive towards goals” (p. 22).

In considering a coaching and feedback model for this research I weighed the following factors: proven efficacy and ease of teaching the model to others. The GROW model was one of the first coaching models developed, is easy to learn and teach and is widely used by internal coaches in the workplace (Whitmore, 2002). As a model it also addresses what Griffiths (2007) and Whitmore (2002) identified as key components for successful coaching. The first such component is that the coach sets a time limit; second she does not offer advice and is non directive; third she actively listens; fourth she asks open ended questions to deepen the coachee's understanding and uncovering of the issue; fifth she has the coachee make and commit to a plan to resolving the identified issue; sixth she provides and asks for feedback. Given these characteristics of the GROW model, it can be seen that from a theoretical perspective, this model fits within the solution focus theory previously discussed. (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003 as cited in Behavioural Coaching Institute, 2008)

Importance of Feedback

In coaching both the coach and coachee give and receive feedback. In fact feedback is an essential part of a successful coaching relationship (Griffiths, 2007; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000; Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Truijen & van Woerkom, 2008; Whitmore, 2002). According to Ellinger et al. (2007), providing feedback and soliciting feedback facilitates learning, sets and communicates expectations, and allows for shifts in perspectives (p. 244). These shifts in perspectives, according to Quinn (2004), build “adaptive confidence ... the most powerful learning is found in improvisation” (pp. 151-152) making people “secure enough to push forward into uncertainty while seeking feedback on their successes as well as their failures” (p. 151). Stone, Patton, and Heen (1999) used the term “shift in our learning stance” (p. 21) to describe what was necessary to become successful at giving and receiving feedback. The shift that needs to occur

starts with understanding the ways in which we make ourselves vulnerable to being knocked off balance. The biggest factor that contributes to a vulnerable identity is "all-or-nothing" thinking: I'm competent or incompetent, good or evil, worthy of love or not. The primary peril of all-or-nothing thinking is that it leaves our identity extremely unstable, making us hypersensitive to feedback. (p. 114)

In other words, if we are able to shift our thinking and give and receive feedback as a learning opportunity we are more likely to experience self awareness, insight, and ultimately growth.

However giving and receiving feedback is focused on past behaviours or events and Goldsmith (2002) argued that “as such, feedback can be limited and static, as opposed to expansive and dynamic” (p. 1). Instead he encouraged the use of feedforward when participants are given suggestions for their future based on an issue they self identify (p. 2). Although feedforward aligns with the future focus element of coaching it is in opposition to the non

directive approach used by coaches. The challenge is to provide balanced and constructive feedback which “serves as a source of information to coachees, helping them assess the gap between desired and current performance” (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002, p. 29). This model of feedback includes both positive and critical information and when offered within “a coaching friendly environment... is taken less personally, particularly if it is directed at the learner’s actual goals” (p. 30).

In summary, the literature supports that establishing a coaching and feedback environment in the PCIS team will enhance communication. (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Whitmore, 2002). Where feedback exposed and identified the gaps (Hunt & Weintraub) solution focused coaching allowed for the individual to close the gaps by determining a plan of action (Whitmore). It is through this identification and adaptation that new learning is possible (Quinn, 2004) which is the focus of the next section.

Supporting a Learning Environment

Implementing a coaching and feedback environment as part of a research project is significantly different from sustaining that environment post research. This section focuses on the principles of adult learning and how the peer coaching learnings from the initial research can be enhanced through the creation of learning communities and leadership involvement. My purpose in sharing the critical success factors to sustaining these practices with the participants was to open authentic dialogue and develop a plan for continued learning and practice with the individual, the team, and the organization.

Adult Learning

Knowles' (1984) *Andragogy in action* built on his earlier work in adult learning and used the term andragogy to distinguish adult education and learning from pre adult schooling and learning" (Cheren, 2002, p. 190) and offered the following seven principles:

1. Establish an effective learning climate, where learners feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves.
2. Involve learners in mutual planning of relevant methods and curricular content.
3. Involve learners in diagnosing their own needs – this will help to trigger internal motivation.
4. Encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives –this gives them more control of their learning.
5. Encourage learners to identify resources and devise strategies for using the resources to achieve their objectives.
6. Support learners in carrying out their learning plans.
7. Involve learners in evaluating their own learning – this can develop their skills of critical reflection. (Kaufman, 2003, p. 213)

The work of establishing, involving, encouraging and supporting learners in the Knowles' (1984) model is the role of the teacher who is a facilitator and the learner actively participates in their learning. The learner is not passively receiving information; rather their role is active and involved. In addition to the seven principles, Knowles offered the following five assumptions about adult learners:

1. Has an independent self-concept and can direct his/her own learning.
2. Has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning.
3. Has learning needs closely related to changing social roles.
4. Is problem centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge.
5. Is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (Cheren, 2002, p. 190)

“Our reservoir of life experiences” (Cheren, 2002, p. 190), according to Schön (1983) can serve as a barrier to new or deeper learnings. He referred to “knowing in action” (p. 51) as tacit learnings, those which we know and act upon without thought; those that we may be “unaware of having learned” (p. 51). To deepen our learning Schön suggested “reflection can

serve as corrective to over learning. Reflection can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences” (p. 61).

Goleman (1997), in his work on emotional intelligence, called the ability to reflect for new understanding, self awareness and self management and stressed that competencies in these areas “are not innate talents, but learned abilities” (p. 16). Short (1998) concurred with learning through reflection and stated that “if you intend to learn, you must accept that you create your interpretations, attributions, and feelings; they belong to you and reside inside you” (p. 88). Knowing and reflecting then become part of the cyclical process of learning because “if exposure is essential, still more so is the reflection. Insight doesn’t happen often on the click of the moment like a lucky snapshot, but comes in its own time and more slowly and from nowhere but within” (Welty, 1980 as cited in McHaney, 2005, p. 199). As in adult learning, coaching and feedback also requires self reflection, self knowledge and self management (Goleman; Short). To fully integrate learning, learners must be willing to engage in the process. Their participation in learning process is the focus of the next subsection.

Participatory Learning

Wheatley (2007a) held that “learning occurs in community” (p. 170) and that we “learn best when in relationship with others who share a common practice” (p. 172). Participatory learning “is where a group of people are trying to learn together, although that does not mean that all have equal power to direct or shape that learning process” (Busher, 2005, p. 461).

Wheatley might argue that the power of participatory learning lies in the opportunity to develop relationship with oneself, the community, and the larger world and experience collective change.

This change happens through relationships.

We have the opportunity many times a day, every day, to be the one who listens to others, curious rather than certain. But the greatest benefit of all is that listening moves us closer.

When we listen with less judgment, we always develop better relationships with each other. It's not differences that divide us. It's our judgements about each other that do. Curiosity and good listening bring us back together." (Wheatley, 2002, p. 36)

In developing learning and listening relationships the community becomes a powerful learning environment where King's idea of "whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly and I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is how the interrelated structure of reality" (Martin Luther King, as cited in Wisdom Quotes, 2009) is actualized.

Within this interrelated structure of participatory learning the learner actively participates in their learning; the teachers and other learners are "viewed not as the transmitters of knowledge but as guides who facilitate learning" (Kaufman, 2003, p. 214). According to Campbell (1994, as cited in Groot & Maarleveld, 2000) facilitation roles in the learning process differ based on whether "facilitators are operating merely as teachers with the transfer of a technology paradigm" or as "those who encourage individual and collective learning with the participating paradigm" (p. 6). From the participatory paradigm facilitators encourage individual and collective learning as more than the transfer of knowledge because they understand learning is complex and interconnected and requires generative thinking (Senge, 1990). This systems approach to learning, according to Senge, results in

real learning where we are able to get to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we recreate ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we were never able to do. Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning. (pp. 13-14)

Learning Organizations

Learning organizations operate from the understanding that "organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning.

But without it no organizational learning occurs” (Senge, 1990, p. 129). According to Senge there are five disciplines necessary for organizational learning: personal mastery; shared vision; mental models; dialogue; and systems thinking (p. 394). Within teams the five disciplines might be framed as three core learning capabilities: “Aspiration – personal mastery and shared vision; Reflective conversation – mental models and dialogue; Understanding complexity – systems thinking.” (Senge, p. xiii) Within the five disciplines there are three levels of learning: “practices: what you do; principles: guiding ideas and insights; essences: the state of being of those with high levels of mastery in the discipline” (Senge, p. 383). Practices and principles are necessary because “learning always involves new understanding and new behaviors, ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’... both are vital” (p. 384). At the essence level the learner has achieved personal mastery which integrates practices and principles.

Quinn (2004) concurred and stated that “when we take the time to integrate action and reflection, we begin to behave differently. In reflecting deeply on our behavior, we travel to the center of our existence. There we find our best self.” (p. 100). In other words organizational learning begins with the individual or team. In their work on collective learning Argyris and Schön (1996) identified three loops in which:

the different levels refer to the type and degree of change brought about by the learning process. Single loop learning occurs when the intervention brings about changes in people’s existing practices without significantly changing their vision, objectives, norms or values. Changes of behavior are at the level of ‘more of the same, but better’. In double loop learning, changes take place not only in existing practices, but also in underlying insights and principles. It strives to achieve collective knowledge and understanding by learning about assumptions and goals behind routines. Triple loop learning occurs when essential underlying principles are questioned to the extent that it includes (re)designing the norms and protocols that govern single and double loop learning. Thus it entails learning about single and double loop learning. (Groot & Maarleveld, 2000, p. 7)

The learning in each loop connects well with what Senge (1990) referred to as “reactive, responsive and generative” (p. 52). Single loop learning allows the learner to understand and react to similar events in a different way. The double loop learning allows the learner to consider the events, and because of a deeper understanding, be responsive and change the patterns of behavior. In the third loop, generative learning is possible because the learner understands the actual patterns of behaviors and events. Generative learning occurs in coaching conversations when the coachee changes their behavior or mental models based on their identification and understanding of their patterns. For example, instead of reacting or responding to a chronically late employee, the coach understands that their fear of conflict and/or assumptions about why people are tardy is actually keeping them from finding resolution. “Complexities and ambiguities of organizational life require more powerful and comprehensive approaches” (Bolman & Deal, 2003) like coaching, which allow for generative learning.

Critical Success Factors to Sustaining Learning Within Organizations

In order to sustain learning within organizations training and development programs must be in place (Yukl, 2006, p. 191) and include “observing role models, challenging job experiences, coaching, mentoring, and practice sessions” (p. 199). Senge (1990) identified the following eight practices in sustaining learning organizations:

1. Integrating learning and working – learning should be part of the everyday workday, where events are seen as learning opportunities.
2. Starting where you are with whoever is there – do what you can, with who you can, from where you are.
3. Becoming bicultural – not losing sight of the larger organizational environment
4. Creating practice field – offer environments to practice newly learned skills
5. Connecting with the core of the business – connect learning to organizational core values
6. Building learning communities – ways for learners to dialogue with each other to implement change
7. Working with “the other” – connecting learners with learners outside their department, organization or field.

8. Developing learning infrastructure – provide learners with the tools to constantly improve their department, organization or field (pp. 290 – 312)

In learning and practicing peer coaching the PCIS team aligns with all nine of these principles. If coaching is implemented amongst the team the opportunity to sustain a learning environment is all but guaranteed.

Learning organizations begin from where they are and from there build a culture of learning. According to Short (1998) “a learning culture begins with one person deciding to tell their truth” (p. 11). Moreover creating a learning culture is not fully the responsibility of leaders. In fact “contrary to our assumptions about how leaders create change, deep change at the organizational level is not managed or controlled. It spreads like a contagious disease in a nonlinear fashion.” (Quinn, 2004, p. 62) Creating this change is what Senge (1990) called “the feedback perspective and suggests that everyone shares responsibility for problems generated by a system. That doesn’t necessarily imply that everyone involved can exert equal leverage in changing the system.” (Senge, p. 78) Leaders hold the lever and are instrumental in encouraging and supporting learning within their organizations. As Bellman (1990) suggested “the future is built upon the past. The chances are that the resources that move the organization forward will be largely drawn from the same resources that brought it to where it is today.” (p. 74). Learning, like the “existence of an organism cannot be understood solely in terms of behaviour of some fundamental parts. Parts are interrelated and influence each other. The end result is a whole organism that exhibits emergence.” (Flood, 2001, p. 134).

In summary sustaining learning organizations requires the resources and commitment of leadership and therefore must be clearly communicated to individuals within the organization. In addition to building leadership capacity within the organization, some of the other benefits of supporting a learning organization are that in increasing the individual learner’s capacity. There

is also an increase in the collective capacity of the organization as the learner generates new learning through sharing with others (Senge, 1990).

Organizational Culture as a Driver for Workplace Communication

The focus of this section is the role of workplace communication within organizational culture. Specifically explored is how culture and leadership contribute and support change and generate new learning. In addition to the alignment of coaching and feedback with the organizational values, mission, and vision, I was interested in the role leaders have in communicating and supporting change, new learning, and skill development at the organizational, team and individual levels.

Organization Culture

Organizational “culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors bind together into a coherent whole and this patterning or integration is the essence of what we mean by culture” (Schein, 1992, p. 10). According to Bolman and Deal (2003), to understand the patterning or integration of culture we must see that “culture is both a product and a process” (p. 217) because “as a product, culture embodies accumulated wisdom from those who came before us. As a process, it is continually renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old way and eventually become teachers themselves” (p. 217). This idea of culture adapting and integrating through learning is in keeping with Schein, whose definition of culture was:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems. (p. 12)

To understand and study culture Schein (1996) offered the following model: Artifacts: Observable structures and processes that are often difficult to decipher. Some examples might include dress code or jargon which are easily observed but may not be easily understood or

explained by individuals within the organization. Values & Beliefs: Exist underneath artifacts and are the conscious strategies, goals, and philosophies of the culture. Within the organization these act as a guide for what is good and bad and how to evaluate and align actions and behaviors. Basic Assumptions: These are hidden, deep, and unconscious. Our mental models, how really we see the world, relationships, and what we value (Adapted from pp. 36-40).

Adding another layer of complexity to Schein's (1992) three levels of culture is the concept of hidden values (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Hidden values often conflict with espoused values and cause actions which are not in keeping with the individual or the organization. An example of an espoused value might be a belief in collaboration and a hidden value might be to get work done quickly. If the employee is under time constraints and believes that collaboration will take more time, she may decide to do it herself, and in doing so is behaving incongruent with the espoused values of the organization and possibly with her own value system, but congruent with the hidden value. Kouzes and Posner (2003) held that "options that run counter to our value system are seldom acted upon; and if they are it's done with a sense of compliance rather than commitment" (p. 47). This aligns with Senge (1990) and his belief that "organizations work the way they do because of how we work, how we think and interact; the changes required ahead are not only in our organization but in ourselves as well (Senge, p. xviii).

The work of uncovering hidden values and aligning them with espoused values becomes the collaborative change work of the people within the organization. Although, according to Bolman and Deal (2003), "there is a controversy about the relationship between culture and leadership. Do leaders shape culture, or are they shaped by it?" (p. 348), they hold that establishing and maintaining culture is the responsibility of leaders. Further these authors contended that the process calls for "leaders to be deeply reflective, actively thoughtful"

(Bolman & Deal, p. 432) in challenging, creating, and communicating the organization's vision, purpose, core values and beliefs, all of which influence culture. Kouzes and Posner (2003) agreed that leaders must be “dramatically explicit about core values and beliefs” (p. 432) but differed in suggesting that leaders “can't impose their values on organizational members. Instead they must be proactive in involving people in the process of creating shared values” (p. 66). There is agreement that leaders must communicate vision, purpose, core values and beliefs throughout the organization (Bolman & Deal; Kouzes & Posner; Senge, 1990) “to make sure that what they see is also something that others can see” (Bolman & Deal, p. 252). Given the importance placed by the authors referred to above to the instrumental role communication plays in establishing and maintaining organizational culture, a further exploration of workplace communication follows.

Workplace Communication

From a social constructionist perspective communication happens as part of interactions with symbols, words, gestures, or actions and the purpose is to share and create meaning (Craig, 1999). Moreover, Craig proposed that our ideas, values, truths, and beliefs are altered or influenced during the process of communication and “our personal identities . . . forms and re-forms” (p. 125). Pikirayi (2007) concurred with the social constructionist theory in her work

Ceramics and group identities and stated that communication is:

the encoding, transmitting, and decoding of intended messages, words, symbols or actions, from one domain, e. g. the mental world of a person, to one or more domains through a medium. It is an important part of social behaviour, and enables reciprocal sharing with individuals of written, oral and non-verbal information according to a common set of signs, symbols and semiotic rules. It is therefore a process of creating and sharing social meanings and allowing access between persons or places. (p. 293)

Wheatley (2007a) added that observation has a part in how we interpret what is communicated, and that our interpretation is influenced by existing mental models in that:

We create reality through our acts of observation. What we perceive becomes true for us and it is our own version of reality that becomes the lens through which we interpret events. This is why two people can experience the same event or look at the same information and have very different descriptions of it. (2007b, p. 60)

As discussed earlier our ideas, values, truths, and beliefs are communicated in organizations at all three levels of culture: artifacts, values and beliefs, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1996). If we consider a systems view of communication where the parts are interrelated and interconnected we begin to understand that the people in organizations influence and are influenced by the prevailing culture (Senge, 1990). In other words

As agents, organizations are tools, often very powerful tools, for achieving the purposes of whoever controls them. But they are also inevitably dependent on their environment for needed support and resources. They exist, compete, and co-evolve in business or political ecosystem with cluster of organizations, each pursuing its own interests and seeking a viable niche. As in nature, relationships within and between ecosystems are sometimes fiercely competitive, sometime collaborative and interdependent. (Bolman & Deal, 2003. p. 238)

This systems view of organizations challenges us to look at the composition of organizations and how with “every relationship you have constitutes a different system. Add someone to a relationship and you have another system . . . your system not only changes with different people, it changes when the same people converse about different topics.” (Short, 1998, p. 61) Kouzes and Posner (2003) agreed and offered that “it is not the web of technology that matters most, it is the web of people” (p. 20). If this is true, then building a web of human “relationships are the very heart and soul of an organization’s ability to get any job done.” (Short, p. 16). The focus of how jobs get done in the face of organizational change follows in the next section.

Organizational Change

Organizational change, according to Kotter (1990), succeeds or fails based on the following eight step process outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Eight Steps for Organizations Success and/or Failure in Implementing Change

Change is successful when an organization:	Change fails when an organization:
1. Establishes a sense of urgency	1. Allows for too much complacency
2. Creates a coalition	2. Fails to build a substantial coalition
3. Develops a clear vision	3. Does not understand the need for a clear vision
4. Shares the vision	4. Does not clearly communicate the vision
5. Empowers people to clear obstacles	5. Permits roadblocks against the vision
6. Secures short term wins	6. Does not plan for short term results or realizing them
7. Consolidates and keep moving	7. Declares victory too soon
8. Anchors the change	8. Does not anchor changes in corporate culture

(Adapted from Kotter, 1990, pp. 20 -23)

Kotter's (1996) model was based on the assumption that "leadership seeks to produce organizational change by (1) developing a vision of the future and strategies for making necessary changes, (2) communicating and explaining the vision, and (3) motivating and inspiring people to attain the vision" (Yukl, 2006, p. 6). As leaders are successful in implementing change,

employees are more loyal because they believe that their values and those of the organization are aligned. The quality and accuracy of communication and the integrity of the decision-making process increase when people feel part of the same team. They are more creative because they become immersed in what they are doing (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 61)

From this creative space change happens. However, Quinn (2004) held that organizations

work very hard to preserve their current ego or culture. To give them up is to give up control. Normally we work hard to avoid the surrender of control. Instead, we strive to stay in our zone of comfort and control. (p. 6)

In other words it is our fear that keeps us from embracing change. What is clear is that "innovation requires more listening and communication than does routine work. Leaders guiding a change must establish more relationships, connect with more sources of information, and get out and walk around more frequently." (Kouzes & Posner, p. 177)

A more recent perspective is that change is emergent and emerges through relationships, networks, and communities of practice until

local efforts connect with each other as networks, then strengthen as communities of practice, suddenly and surprisingly a new system emerges at a greater level of scale. This system of influence possesses qualities and capacities that were unknown in the individuals. It isn't that they were hidden; they simply don't exist until the system emerges. They are properties of the system, not the individual, but once there, individuals possess them. And the system that emerges always possesses greater power and influence than is possible through planned, incremental change. Emergence is how life creates radical change and takes things to scale. (Wheatley & Freize, 2006, p. 1)

Emergence purports that change begins as a grassroots movement based on common needs. In organizations it is in relationships that “individuals discover a common interest or passion and they organize themselves and figure out how to make things happen. Self-organizing evokes creativity and results, creating strong, adaptive systems. Surprising new strengths and capacities emerge from new relationships.” (Wheatley, 2007b, p. 60).

Regardless of whether change happens at the grassroots or top echelon of an organization, learning, relationships, and leadership are the keys to successful innovation (Kotter, 1996; Quinn, 2004; Senge, 1990; Wheatley & Frieze, 2006). Leadership according to Kouzes and Posner (2003) “is not a gene, and it's not a secret code that can't be deciphered by ordinary people. The truth is that leadership is an observable set of skills and abilities.” (p. 339). If this is the case then individual and organizational learning of these skills and abilities is key to leadership and innovation. How to create leadership in learning organizations is discussed in more detail in the following subsection

Leadership in Learning Organizations

Senge (1990) held that in “building learning organizations there is no ultimate destination or end state, only a lifelong journey” (p. xviii). Leaders who are successful in building learning organizations have “the capacity to build and sustain those human relations that enable people to

get extraordinary things done on a regular basis” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 21). Building and sustaining relationships begins with trust; “it’s a reciprocal process - trust begets trust. By demonstrating openness to others’ influence, you contribute to building the trust that enables your constituents to be more open to your influence.” (p. 229) “Typically, if you lead, others will follow; if you risk, others will risk; and if you trust, others will also trust.” (Short, 1998, p. 123) Commitment follows in that “commitment is built on a foundation of mutual trust” (Weisbord, 2004, p. 362). From this place of mutual trust, as leaders,

We would identify a new role for ourselves: weaving a stronger, more diverse web, making and strengthening connections. We would focus institutional resources in support of those efforts that developed more connections. We would bring staff together more frequently to think together and to discern what we’re learning. We would seek difference--both people and ideas that offer new perspectives. We would keep expanding the web, including new and different people in all activities. We would support more local efforts and innovations, then insist that staff and faculty take them out into the world and connect with others. We would offer financial support for practitioner gatherings that provided opportunities for real exchanges. (Wheatley & Freize, 2006, p. 6)

In learning organizations “leaders are learners. They learn from their failures as well as their successes.” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 17). They understand that “the most direct path to learning, and then leading, through conflict is to listen to points of view that challenge our own.” (Gerzon, 2006, p. 124). Leaders understand that “for organizations to be transformed, communication must be transformed” (Senge, 1990, p. xiv). Part of that communication begins with leaders having a deep understanding of organizational culture and aligning actions with organizational vision, purpose, values, and core beliefs to create a sense of belonging and understanding (Kouzes & Posner). This sense of belonging and understanding develops through relationships which are “the basic building blocks of life. Nothing exists on its own or has a final, fixed identity. We are all bundles of potentiality.” (Wheatley, 2007b, p. 60).

Learning organizations develop potential by cultivating a culture of learning and reflection, by fostering communication, feedback and relationships (Senge, 1990), by providing training and development programs including coaching, mentoring, and practice sessions (Yukl, 2006) because “developing leaders is not about getting them to imitate the thinking and behaviors of other people who have been successful. It is about attracting people to the decision to enter the unique state from which their own great thinking and great behaviors emerges” (Quinn, 2004, p. 226).

In summary, the literature supported coaching and feedback as a tool that enhanced communication, leadership, and learning (Senge, 1990; Senge et al., 1994, Wheatley, 2007a) and that effective communication builds relationships which are the cornerstone to organizational effectiveness (Peavey, 2000; Wheatley, 2007b). The literature also offered that the existing organizational culture must support the new learnings (Schein, 1992) and the necessity of leadership support and team engagement in any successful change initiative (Kotter, 1996). In other words, to successfully introduce and sustain coaching and feedback the organizational culture must not only align with the principles of coaching and feedback, but leadership must actively support a culture of learning.

CHAPTER THREE: CONDUCT OF ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Research Approach

This Chapter focuses on the research approach that was used to capture the experiences of the PHC PCIS Team in answering my research question which was: How does using coaching and feedback skills influence communication in the PHC PCIS team?

My sub questions included: What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication? What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback? In what ways does coaching and feedback contribute to communication in the workplace? In this section I addressed how, through qualitative action research, I engaged my project participants and the research methods I employed including the tools, study conduct, and data analysis. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of any ethical issues that potentially impacted participants in my study.

My research approach of qualitative action research falls within the hermeneutic tradition of post modernism. Unlike the positivist approach where “science findings are validated by logic, measurement and the consistency achieved by the consistency of prediction and control” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007, p. 6) post modernists believe “that there is no objective or single knowable external reality” (p. 6). Palys and Atchison (2008) also explored this comparison of philosophic approaches and stated that, unlike quantitative data which tends to focus on objective facts, qualitative data mines the subjective experiences of the individual. I took a qualitative approach to benefit our participants and our organization and gathered and interpreted their experiences and their learning (Glesne, 2006).

Philosophically action research is concerned with transformational learning (Stringer, 2007) and according to Senge (1990) this type of learning occurs through a cycle of thinking,

doing, and being. This aligns with one of the PHC values of “*Excellence* - We achieve excellence through learning and continuous improvement” (Providence Health Care, 2009b, ¶ 9) as well as the principles of action research where the focus is on bringing positive and meaningful change (Stringer, 2007) to the researcher, the participants, and the organization. The questions asked at each cyclical phase are: Diagnosing - How will/did the research benefit the participants and organization? Planning Action - How, where, when, and with whom will/did the research occur? Taking Action - Research happens/happened. Evaluating Action - What happened? (Adapted from information provided in Coghlan & Brannick 2007; Glesne, 2006; Stringer)

The complexity of action research is in understanding the content, process, and premise, in which this cyclical inquiry is experienced, reflected, interpreted and acted on by the organization, participants, and researcher. It is this complexity that produces “greater insight into the ways people interpret events from their own perspective, providing culturally and contextually appropriate information assisting them to more effectively manage problems they confront” (Stringer, 2004 as cited in Stringer, 2007, p. 237). In other words this meta learning occurs as everyone engaged in the action research process reflects first on content - what is being researched; second on process – how is the research being conducted; and third on premise – why is the research being conducted in the way it is (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007) and contributes to learning at the organizational, participant and researcher levels.

Participants

Action Research Team

For this research project, members of my action research team were chosen based on their affiliation with the PHC PCIS team, their interest in the research topic, or their knowledge of action research. In research this is known as a purposive sampling (Palys & Atchison, 2008, p.

124), the individuals I invited to join my research team were a sampling of the area and focus of my study and included myself as a researcher, the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny, and my organizational sponsor at PHC, Ann Brown, Senior Leader with Change Initiatives. Wilf was emailed an invitation (Appendix A) to be part of my research team and he signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix B) before assisting me with the research. Ann signed and returned a letter of agreement to Royal Roads. I also employed a transcriptionist to transcribe four and a half of the eight interviews. Before receiving any of the audio tapes she signed and returned a confidentiality agreement. (Appendix B)

My interest as researcher and participant with PHC stems from my experience as a former external contractor who worked closely with the PCIS team for three years. In my role as researcher I facilitated the workshops on coaching and feedback, was the interviewer and transcribed for the one on one audio taped interviews, and facilitated the focus group. The PCIS Team Leader Wilf Humeny attended both the workshops and focus group based on his interest in coaching and feedback as a communication tool for his team. My organizational sponsor, Ann Brown is with Change Initiatives and a senior leader for PHC and has a history of affecting positive change within the organization; she was invaluable in supporting my research. Moreover, as a former RRU MA-Leadership graduate she was familiar with the action research cycle of look, think, act (Stringer, 2007) and believed it to be a good fit for the PHC culture. Ann and Wilf assisted me throughout the research process by providing me with feedback and advice on the design of questions, tools and data collection and assisted at the focus group.

Participants in Workshops, Journaling, and Interviews

The PCIS team was chosen because I wanted to explore the impact coaching and feedback had on communications for IT professionals at Providence Health Care. I limited

participation to include only those who worked within this sample group and chose to recruit eight volunteers because the Operations Decision Group (ODG) graciously offered me up to ten hours work time for eight PCIS participants to take part in my study. Ann Brown, my organizational sponsor, sent an email invitation (Appendix C) to all seventeen PHC PCIS team members giving them five business days to decide on whether they wanted to participate. Within the time frame I received emails from eight volunteers and forwarded an informed consent (Appendix D) and requested they read it carefully and ask any questions before signing two copies of the document; all eight brought these copies along to the first workshop.

While I recognized the limitations of sampling a homogeneous group I was also aware of the depth and quality of data produced in qualitative research through sustained involvement of a small group of participants (Symon & Cassell, 1998). These PCIS volunteers were engaged in the data collection process through their participation in private journal reflections, workshops on coaching and feedback, interviews, and, for half of them, the focus group.

Focus Group Participants

The focus group with four Operations Decision Group (ODG) leaders and four PCIS participants discussed the themes which emerged from the one on one interviews and observation notes. The purpose of their involvement was to produce meaningful and valid solutions to affect positive change within the participant group and the larger organization (Glesne, 2006) knowing that “valid data comes from engaging participant researchers” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007, p. 99) and should “reflect their view of their truth” (Stringer, 2007, p.192). This group was chosen because of their interest in the impact coaching and feedback had on communication within the team. As an organization, at the time this research was conducted in 2009 PHC had plans to roll out a coaching program in 2010 and was interested in the

recommendations from this research. Accordingly, in marrying the needs of the organization, the principles of action research, and my own interests, participant selection for the focus group was limited but constituted what Palys and Atchison (2008) referred to as purposive sampling (p. 124).

The ODG was comprised of ten PHC leaders who represented business, clinical and diagnostic services at PHC. Ann Brown, my organizational sponsor, sent an email invitation (Appendix E) to all ten ODG members giving them five business days to decide on whether they wanted to participate. Within the time frame I received emails from four volunteers and forwarded an informed consent (Appendix F) and requested they read it carefully and ask any questions before signing two copies of the document; all four brought these copies along to the focus group. The other six ODG members were unable to make the focus group due to vacation or operational requirements.

Ann Brown also sent an email invitation (Appendix E) to all eight PHC PCIS team volunteers giving them five business days to decide whether they wanted to participate in this phase of the research. Within the time frame I received emails from four volunteers and forwarded an informed consent (Appendix F) and requested they read it carefully and ask any questions before signing two copies of the document which all four brought along to the focus group. The other four PHC PCIS participants were unable to make the focus group due to vacation or operational requirements.

Research Methods

Glesne (2006) said that good qualitative researchers ensure trustworthiness, reliability and validity through: engagement, triangulation, peer review, negative case analysis, and reflection on researcher bias, member checking, descriptive writing, and an external audit (pp.

37-38). Engagement is the establishment of trust (p. 37) and “prolonged engagement” (Stringer, 2007, p.58) with the research participants. To engage participant’s trust I relied on my pre-existing relationships with the PCIS team and my data collection tools of one on one interviews and the focus group. In transcribing the audio recordings and reviewing my observation notes and my personal journal entries triangulation occurred as I compiled multiple sources of the data (Stringer, p.58). Trustworthiness, in particular confirmability, was addressed as the audio tapes and notes provided evidence that the interview occurred and that the participants had the opportunity to validate the accuracy of the transcriptions from these interviews. (Stringer, pp.58-59). My research team was my peer review as they assisted and advised me throughout the research process.

Beginning with my proposal and literature review and continuing through the final project submission I continued to research negative case analysis. My reflections and biases were recorded in my proposal, research journal, and observation notes which I reviewed and discussed with my research team during the research cycle including the piloting of tools, the data collection and data analysis phases. Relevant reflections are included in my final project. Member checks of transcripts increased credibility and authenticity of my data as I checked in with the interviewees and determine if I accurately reflected what they said, confirm my understanding of what they said, and captured what was missed. To encourage readers to fully enter into the “research context” (Glesne, 2006, p. 38) my final project has endeavored to be compelling from a readers perspective using “rich, descriptive language” (Glesne, p. 38). An external audit was conducted as my sponsor and supervisor who both provided direction and feedback on the research process and final project.

Research Tools

Journaling

The purpose of the journal entries was to assist the eight peer coaching participants to privately record and evaluate their experiences with coaching and feedback. I began with a draft of four weekly reflective questions and then asked my research team to attempt to answer the questions and provide me with feedback on how the questions might be best phrased. Based on their feedback I updated the questions and emailed one each week for four weeks to all eight participants (Appendix G).

In the process of journaling their private reflections participants experienced personal learning as they understood and clarified their peer coaching experiences (Glesne, 2006). This reflective process is also a component of coaching (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002) and action research (Stringer, 2007). To ensure maximum honesty and benefit for the participants, journal entries were not collected as part of the study data and were solely for their own learning and understanding. However, at their one on one interview all participants chose to bring along their journal entries and referred to them while responding to the questions.

One on One Interviews

Interviews were chosen because of the qualitative data they produce, because I could watch and listen to what was and was not being said, and because I could ask for clarification in the moment and probe for a deeper understanding. My experience was similar to Glesne's (2006), in that individuals seemed more comfortable sharing their experiences in a private setting and because they trusted me. The interviews offered privacy and allowed for exploration that is not always possible in larger group settings. A strong case for me to perform the interviews was

that I had intimate knowledge of the research, interview questions, topics, participants, and organization (Palys & Atchison, 2008).

Glesne (2006) warned that differentiating your research question from what you want to understand from the participants' perspective can be a challenge. As part of the interview design process I piloted my interview questions and the recording devices with my research team for feedback on content and answerability and to ensure that the recording equipment and procedures were working as they should. As with any skill, practice improved performance (Glesne) and once I was comfortable that I was capturing the data I produced a final list of five questions that assessed how participant researchers rated their communication before, during, and after using coaching and feedback as well as to illicit their perceptions, feelings and experiences during the study. These questions were emailed to the participants prior to the interview (Appendix H).

Focus Group

A focus group allowed for an open discussion amongst a diverse group of participants (Palys & Atchison, 2008) and was chosen as a way to explore the themes that emerged from the interviews. Initially I drafted an agenda and protocols for my focus group (Appendix I) and had my research team provide me with feedback. After the one on one interviews were complete I integrated their feedback and the themes into a presentation which I used at the focus group.

The purpose of the focus group was to assess the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within the PCIS team and make future recommendations to the organization. I chose to use the focus group as a way of involving the participant researchers and leaders to collaboratively generate the recommendations to the organization with the intention that it would increase their ownership of the process (Schein, 1995). Initially I was concerned about having

the participants and leaders in the focus group together because Palys and Atchison (2008) warned that perceived power differentials can impact the discussions and honesty within focus groups. I discussed the potential power differential issue with my Action Research Team. Both had experienced PHC as a collaborative working environment that “supports research and new knowledge integration” (Providence Health Care, 2005, p. 1) and felt that the risk was minimal particularly since the purpose of the focus group was to make recommendations to the organization. I also asked the eight volunteer workshop/coaching/interview participants about perceived power differentials if they were asked to participate in a focus group along with members of the Operations Decision Group (ODG) and they had no concerns.

Procedures/Study Conduct

Phase One – Action Research Team Formation and Orientation

My study began once ethical approval was received from Providence Health Care and Royal Roads University ethics boards. I invited potential members of my research team to a one hour meeting. The agenda for this meeting included a discussion of my research, the ethical considerations, and each research team member’s potential role in assisting me with this research. At the meeting I asked my team to read the confidentiality agreement and sign two copies should they choose to join the research team. My research team assisted me with wording of questions for journal reflections, interviews, and focus group, piloting the workshops, supporting me in the focus group, and helping with the data gathering and analysis.

Phase Two – Solicitation of Volunteers and Coaching Workshops

At the workshop facilitated by me participant volunteers received instruction in Feedback and Active Listening and Coaching (Appendix J; Appendix K). The sessions concluded with a reminder to expect weekly private and individual emails containing a reflective question on

which they should journal. They also formed into their coaching dyads for the remainder of the study. All participants received my contact information and were encouraged to contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Phase Three – Peer Coaching and Participant Journaling

Beginning in week one and continuing once a week for four weeks participants were prompted by a private and individual email with a reflective question and asked to make a journal entry. Participant volunteers continued in their dyads which were established in the workshops and coached each other. Each weekly session was agreed to by the dyad members and involved 20 minutes of coaching and 20 minutes of being the coachee.

Phase Four – One on One Interviews

The one on one interviews were scheduled in week three of the study and took place in weeks four and five. By week three a finalized copy of the interview questions was completed. In week four I sent a reminder of the scheduled interview time and location individually to each participant along with the interview questions. Also included was a reminder to review their journal entries prior to the interview and a suggestion to bring these notes with them to the interview to assist them in answering the questions.

The private boardroom was booked for 90 minutes for each 60 minute interview to avoid participants running into each other. I taped the entire interview using a digital recorder. It took me approximately ten hours to transcribe each interview, and after transcribing three and a half interviews I decided to hire a professional transcriptionist for the remaining four and a half interviews. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement, did not personally know or work with the participants, and each tape she received was given a pseudonym PCIS 4 to 8. Before sending off the transcribed interviews for member checking I listened to the tape and

compared it to the transcription for accuracy. Participants received their own transcription via email and had five business days to return it to me with any changes. All eight participants returned their updated copies to me within the time frame allotted. When I received the final copies back I began to review the data for themes to inform the focus group.

Phase Five – Focus Group

The focus group invitation was sent out on week five by Ann Brown to the original eight participant volunteers of the PCIS team as well as to the ten Operation Decision Group (ODG) members. Within five business day I received emails from eight volunteers who I sent an informed consent and requested they read it carefully and ask any questions before signing two copies of the document which they brought along to the focus group.

The focus group began with a presentation where the themes from the one on one interviews and three questions were presented to all eight participants. After being separated into two teams with equal numbers from each group (PCIS team members and PHC leaders) participants began brainstorming ideas and recording them onto flip charts. This was followed by a sharing of ideas across teams and a recording of any additional thoughts.

After the focus group I transcribed the flip chart notes and sent them by email for member checking by participants. All eight participants returned their updated copies to me within the time frame allotted. When I received the final copies back I began to review the data for themes to inform the findings, conclusions and recommendations for my paper.

Data Analysis

Symon and Cassell (1998) suggested that researchers consider their data analysis with a system view to see both the interconnectivity – “groupings and patterns” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 130), and the ways in which ideas and themes are clearly different or singularly original.

As the researcher I used integration and separation and approached the data from all sides, reviewing the data for common and outlying themes within an individual member account and between members.

In reviewing the data, time and reflection were key to meaningful analysis; this was not a process to be rushed (Glesne, 2006, pp. 154- 156). Both Glesne and Kirby and McKenna (1989) agreed that researchers must spend time and live with the data; that the researcher's experiences, insights, biases, thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reflections will influence interpretation throughout the process. This iterative approach to data analysis is based on inquiry and is known as "grounded theory" (Glesne, p. 27). In other words, grounded theory is based on comparison and seeks to explain data from an inductive rather than deductive perspective. My data included my observation notes from my interactions with participants, my research journal, and the transcripts from the one on one interviews and the focus group.

In keeping with grounded theory principles I took an analytic approach (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 130) to my data analyses. My first exposure to the data was in the one on one interviews and focus group. Following each interaction I made observation notes which I referred to later in the process. Before I or the transcriptionist transcribed the data I assigned a pseudonym to each interviewee and focus group participant. The pseudonym, interview date, place, start and end time, contact name, number, address, telephone and contact were entered onto an index card and kept under lock and key and known only to me as the researcher.

My second encounter with the data was as I transcribed the participant audio tapes from the interviews and focus group. Each transcript was member checked for accuracy and intent and all transcripts and audio tapes were identified with the pseudonym, not the actual participant name. Each transcribed and member checked interview identified only with the pseudonym was

stored as softcopy on a thumb drive and a hardcopy on site at PHC in Ann Brown's office in a locked filing cabinet.

A second hardcopy was printed to allow me to use Kirby and McKenna's (1989) "comparative method for coding" (p. 135). This method involved cutting the second copy of each transcript into "bibbits" (p. 135) or pieces of information and assigning a number to each piece which linked it back to the participant who made the statement and the question that prompted that response. Once I had all the pieces numbered I placed them into as many "properties or themes" (p. 137) as applied. From there properties were sorted into categories; again properties might have been placed in more than one category. At the category level some substantive theories began to emerge until a grand theory emerged. In this process some bibbits emerged that did not have a property, category, and/or substantive theory. When this happened I labelled them as satellites or outliers. It was important for me to recognize that with 12 participants I did not dismiss these satellites as they may have been representative of a larger majority. The coding and sorting was an iterative process and involved my spending time with the data, my observation notes, and making entries into my research journal. This sorting, in accordance with Kirby and McKenna, occurred until I ran out of ways to sort the data.

With the data sorted I made a list of data categories and coded the actual data. In this process Glesne (2006) cautioned that I "learn to be content with... my early simple coding schemes, knowing that with use they will become appropriately complex" (p.150). Because the process was iterative I continued to reflect on the sorting and coding of the data, particularly as I began analysing the data between categories. It was important that I gave myself time as the "coding, categorizing, and theme-searching process took time and reflection" (Glesne, p. 154) and that I "experiment with . . . my data, reflect, re-read, display it in tables, line graphs, make

the links” (Glesne, pp. 154-156). To help me make these links Kirby and McKenna (1989) suggested I cross reference bibbits across categories as common words and themes emerged; allowing for a deeper understanding of the data. Recording and storing these emergent themes from the one on one interviews assisted me in determining the topics of discussion for the focus group; while other themes formed the final recommendations for my project.

The analysis is never really complete (Glesne, 2006, pp. 150-154); instead they reached a point where I made a decision on what to include and what to leave out. To assist me in understanding when that point was reached I relied on the relevant literature, my research team and my academic supervisor to provide me with advice and counsel.

Ethical Issues

In my role as an action researcher engaged in research with human participants I adhered to the eight guidelines outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (1998), the *Royal Road University Research Ethics Policy* (1997), and the *PHC Research Institute Research Ethics Policy* (2007).

Respect for Human Dignity

My overarching commitment as a researcher was to ensure I structured my research on the principle of respect for human dignity. Implementing this moral imperative required me to consider my research from a participant perspective and protect the interests of that person and not from what I wanted to gain from the research or as a researcher (Palys & Atchison, 2008). I maintained respectful, open, and honest interactions with all participants and asked that they agree to treat each other by this same standard.

Free and Informed Consent

Each participant was given a invitation to participate which included a description of action research, coaching and feedback, the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary, that they could choose to leave at any time without consequence or penalty, the potential benefits and risks associated with the research, how privacy and confidentiality would be protected, and what would be done with the data collected. Interested participants signed and returned the invitation. Informed consent forms detailing the above information were read and signed by all study participants prior to the commencement of the coaching workshops and the focus group.

Respect for Vulnerable Persons

As part of this study participants did not receive medical treatment or therapy, were over the age of majority, of sound mind, and were all able to speak and write English. However, I have a personal friendship with their boss. To alleviate concerns the invitation and informed consent stated that participating in this research would not have a positive or negative effect on their relationship with their boss or their organization.

Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

In each encounter with participants I stated that I would maintain their confidences. To encourage freedom of expression and to respect their privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the reporting of the data. I publicly asked participants to honour the confidentiality of the identity and the contributions of other participants.

Respect for Justice and Inclusiveness

As a researcher, in respect for justice and inclusiveness I ensured that the processes were fair for all participants. I gave all members of the sample groups equal opportunity to volunteer

to be a part of the coaching/interview process and/or the focus group. I also maintained a journal and self monitored to make a conscious effort not to bring my biases into the research process.

Balancing Harms and Benefits

Although research supports that coaching and feedback is beneficial for individuals, teams, and organizations what is shared within coaching and feedback sessions can be personal and confidential (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002). To balance harms and benefits I asked participants to honour the confidentiality of the identity and the contributions of other participants and only those who agreed to maintain confidentiality were permitted to participate in the research.

Minimizing Harms

My desire for a positive outcome for the team and organization could not guide the process. Within this framework my role was to be authentic and open with Wilf, the team, my sponsors, and the organization. In fact, Block (2000) warned that persuasion should not be confused with engagement.

Maximizing Benefit

In order to maximize the benefits associated with coaching and feedback participants were given instruction on coaching and feedback and an opportunity to practice these skills with their peers. As well, senior decision makers from the ODG were invited to be a part of the focus group sessions to enhance the sense of shared ownership of and commitment to the follow-up actions being recommended based upon this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: ACTION RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Study Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore my research question which was: How does using coaching and feedback skills influence communication in the PHC PCIS team? My sub questions included: What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication? What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback? In what ways does coaching and feedback contribute to communication in the workplace? Presented in this chapter are the study findings, study conclusions and the scope and limitations of this research.

The majority of the data that supported the study findings were collected from eight volunteers who were members of the PHC PCIS team. As outlined in Table 2 below, overall the team consisted of relatively equal numbers of males (9) and females (11). However, when I considered the study members by gender a significant fact emerged. Although there were six women and two men who participated this was not representative of the gender distribution on the team.

Table 2

Study Participants and PHC PCIS Team by Gender

Gender	Male	Female
Study Participants Number (Percent of Total)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Total PHC PCIS Members Number (Percent of Total)	9 (45%)	11 (55%)

As mentioned in Chapter 3, each volunteer attended two one hour workshops on coaching and feedback and then participated in four peer coaching dyad sessions over a four week period. At the beginning of each coaching week a reflective question was sent out via email. After the last coaching session participants were asked to consider bringing their reflections as a reference

in responding to questions I posed in their one hour one on one interviews. All eight participants referred to their reflections during the interview. Each interviewee was randomly assigned a number from 1 to 8 and their words are referenced in this document as PCIS 1 through PCIS 8.

Additional data were collected during a focus group which was held after the one on one interviews and was attended by four PHC PCIS team members who took part in the first phase of the research as well as four PHC leaders who are members of the ODG. In the focus group two teams with equal numbers from each group (PCIS team members and PHC leaders) began brainstorming ideas and recording them onto flip charts. This was followed by a sharing of ideas across teams and a recording of any additional thoughts. Since these data existed on flip chart paper none was attributable to a specific individual and therefore was credited in this document to Team 1 (T1), Team 2 (T2) or Team 1 and 2 jointly (TJ)

This Chapter begins as an exploration of themes and sub-themes rooted in the words of study participants and presented as findings and are followed by the study conclusions which are supported in both the words of the participants and the relevant literature. The chapter then concludes with an exploration of the scope and limitations of this action research project.

Theme One: Coaching Deepens Communication

Talking to Understand the Other

“Getting along well with other people I think that this is one of the, if not the most important, aspects of leadership. You need to be able to talk to people.” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 25) During their coaching sessions participants shared that they were able to talk to each other about issues. They said that coaching:

Allowed us to be more open. We just felt like there’s no restriction to the conversation. We could just talk and have regular conversations. We were able to share ideas. I didn’t feel inhibited to say whatever I wanted. (PCIS7)

On a personal learning level one participant said the power of a coaching conversation for them was when:

You think you know but until you say it out loud, it's not influencing your life. You're not actually acknowledging that until you say it out loud. It just kind of exists somewhere. (PCIS5)

Other participants spoke of to the power of talking with their peers and their movement from a place of interest to a deeper understanding. Some of their ideas are captured in these quotes:

I think you know talking, removing yourself from the workplace and talking about different situations and being more, what's the word? More interested. (PCIS2)

Once a week you could talk about whatever you wanted and I don't know what other people talked about but I can only imagine . . . and I had the opportunity for her to understand. (PCIS5)

It kind of made me feel better too. To talk with someone who was sort of going through the same issues. (PCIS6)

Sometimes the things that you think are the problem are not always really the problem and talking through them helps you determine if it's more than just that. (PCIS1)

Perhaps these experienced are best summed up in the following words:

I think we both just sort of have a better understanding of each other. I guess before I would kind of just talk at someone but I wouldn't really be asking anything in return, it was a bouncing board. But since doing this, I have actually noticed myself stopping and asking, instead of doing that, I will ask a question, so why do you think that? (PCIS3)

It is in talking with others from a place of curiosity, interest, and desire for understanding that communication deepens (Stone et al., 1999). Listening was an integral part of how that curiosity was manifested and is the subject of the next sub-theme.

Listening to Hear Ourselves and Others

As important a leadership and communication tool as talking is, it is our ability to enter into dialogue and truly listen to the other because doing so significantly enhances our ability to communicate effectively (Kahane, 2002; Gerzon, 2006; Senge, 1990). Covey (1989) referred to

this ability to listen from the perspective of the other, empathic listening. For the participants what began as talking deepened when they practiced listening, and some of their observations as they fine tuned their listening skills were:

I had more of a feeling that, because you're listening to someone else's problems and you sometimes will feel similarities; I learned that I'm not alone. (PCIS4)

Furthermore in being listened to:

You notice as the other person is really listening to you and trying to help you. (PCIS4)

According to the focus group the impact of listening is that it:

Makes you feel valued to have someone listen to you. (T2)

As one participant stated it also changed their conversations:

I feel like I'm listening more now because before, I used to think about, my God, what am I going to say now? It's definitely different now. Just the way that I feel in a conversation, I'm more at ease, like I can listen more and I can (pause) I don't feel pressured any more. (PCIS6)

The focus created in this place of listening and ease is explored as the next sub-theme.

Focus Creates Space to Explore Solutions

This space to explore solutions was described by one participant as feeling like:

I've been running really hard through the rain with my head down for a long time and in an effort to feel productive and feel like I'm growing. And that it's taking some time and really sussing out what it is that's important and focussing on those things, that was where I can influence change in my life. I can use up the same amount of energy if I want to. I can still get into a total tizz and get really excited about it or freak myself out but, as long as I'm focusing on those things that are really important instead of on everything, it's just a matter of taking the time to actually be coached and establish with myself where those priorities lie. Yeah, and then feeling successful at those just kind of spawns on the next step. (PCIS5)

Another participant described their experience of focusing on the coachee as realizing that

I don't always have to provide someone with solutions that there is a way to coach them through and coming up with their own solutions. I can ask questions to help them come up with solutions as opposed to just trying to figure out what should they do. (PCIS1)

Focus group participants agreed that:

Coaching assisted us in solution finding rather than problem finding. (T2)

Still another participant connected with how the model of coaching maintained focus:

It keeps the focus on the person who is speaking, it doesn't shift it to you and you just start spewing off your advice. They are able to talk and you can ask questions and kind of more lead them rather than just throwing your ideas on them. (PCIS4)

Another chose to focus on the questions and said that:

The communications process is always impeded by other (pause) I mean, it's all about people's perceptions and it can be impeded by how other people think. So if I want to make sure that I can communicate clearly, the ideal situation would be for me to understand how a person thinks. So it's more important to deliver a single question that gets them thinking. (PCIS8)

The types of questions that inspired thinking are the focus of the next sub-theme.

Open Ended Questions Expose Deeper Knowing

In her work, Peavey (2000) found that asking open ended questions created movement and change. Likewise, participants shared their challenges and reactions to asking open ended questions in their interviews. With respect to open-ended questions one participant offered:

It's how asking those open-ended questions was not easy, it's really easy to simply ask a question that has a yes or no response, but then you aren't getting as rich of an answer from the person . . . I was trying to be very aware of how I posed questions and making sure that they were open because then the person was able to speak more and the conversation could flow more naturally. (PCIS4)

Another stated that:

Having somebody trigger those questions triggers you to think about things. (PCIS2)

The power of being asked open ended questions is described by one participant as:

I think how effective question-asking led to the decision-making. I think that really surprised me because I came to the some conclusions for myself . . . self revelations. (PCIS7)

In being coached another said:

I really liked it when I was being asked the right questions . . . and could look at it from a wiser point of view. It's the way that the questions are being asked, the pattern, like it feels like when there is a pattern of right questions, it takes me to the right path. I don't know. I can't really explain it. But it makes me think about the issue deeper as well. (PCIS6)

Occasionally, noted another:

In coaching others and in receiving coaching, in both ways, it made me reflect on myself. (PCIS7)

In other words, in asking open ended questions, self reflection occurred for both the coach and coachee. As participants related to each other they developed a deeper understanding of self and others. This relatedness with others and how relationships were strengthened is the subject of the next theme.

Theme Two: Coaching Strengthens Relationship

Trust Nurtures Relationships

Short (1998) offered that trust is a reciprocal process: "if you trust, others will also trust" (p. 123). In addition trust is also the cornerstone of authentic leadership and is a necessary component of developing effective relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Interestingly, developing trust and relationships emerged in discussions with participants. In discussing their coaching dyad, one participant shared:

I would call it a relationship building thing and I watched as the trust slowly built in every session, you know. It was damned near non-existent really in the first bit and then the second one, you know, I just slowly watched it melt away. . . . The metaphor is a glacier melting. So you need those shared experiences, those shared thoughts and ideas that build that trust. Then it's by going down, deeper and deeper in levels that trust gets to build. (PCIS8)

The idea of trust and relationships deepening was captured by one participant as:

You just have that new found relationship with a co-worker; you build trust and respect and see someone in a whole new light when you have those discussions with them. It did feel really good to talk to one of my co-workers who is not one of the closer people to me at work. It was really kind of neat to take down that wall between us and have that

different relationship. If I took anything out of this I think I have a better relationship with her which is really cool. (PCIS2)

Others spoke to vulnerability, trust, and relationship in the following words:

You do establish that trust and you are able to talk about things that are really personal and that trust kind of develops. Having that new relationship was impacting. (PCIS4)

In coaching each other one interviewee felt that in coaching conversations:

You're making yourself vulnerable to them in the session and for every other circumstance. You kind of have that to rely on that. You can trust each other, given that you have kind of given up that vulnerability to each other. (PCIS5)

In this case trust and vulnerability created a relationship that extended outside of their coaching interactions. Creating a safe place to express vulnerability is the focus of the next sub-theme.

Relationships Need a Safe Space

Even though some participants had established relationships with each other prior to participating in this research they spoke about the importance of feeling safe.

I knew this person before so we were able to build that trust right away. Like, where I felt a little bit more guarded initially as to what I wanted to discuss. So later on, I realized, you know, this is going to stay within the room, I can talk freely and not be judged or have any opinion formed on me or anything like that, so I spoke freely. (PCIS7)

One participant offered that their worries of exposure were allayed because of confidentiality:

What if people find out that I'm having this challenge at work? It's a bit tricky . . . the trust was there because of the confidentiality agreement. (PCIS6)

Another participant concurred and reminded themselves during the process to:

Talk about a problem that has been bugging you. Let it out and know that you're in like a safe zone. (PCIS4)

Yet another described their peer coaching relationship in the following terms:

It was like acceptable to do it so I just laid everything out. It was confidential. I felt like I could be a bit more candid. I felt because it was confidential I was very open. And I probably would have never done that. It was a safe place. (PCIS3)

According to the research participants it was from this safe place and through:

Building relationship through trust and confidentiality that we gained a better understanding on our colleagues. (T1)

In addition to safety and trust, participants noted that coaching relationships developed over time and because of leadership support. Their thoughts on these concepts are captured in the next sub theme.

Relationships Deepens Over Time and With Leadership Support

One participant shared their thoughts on the challenges and benefits of making time to coach:

If you didn't have that first session and we didn't have these interviews and the expectation that we would have the four sessions completed before the interviews we would have kept putting it off and putting it off. It was really hard to find the time in both people's calendars that we could sit down for an hour and chat. Yet it was very beneficial for team relationships. (PCIS2)

The issue of time was raised in relationship to the deep organizational change.

In times of change and uncertainty coaching was both a challenge and a benefit. A challenge to find the time and a benefit because we found solutions. (T1)

In spite of the benefits they derived participants struggled not only with the time but with the idea that coaching was not real work. Leadership support mattered.

Experienced guilt about time used so support from leadership for coaching is important.(T1)

When considering the impact that leadership support had on their coaching relationship one participant shared that

Giving staff the opportunity to have time during the workday to connect with another staff member and have an open, safe conversation, especially in a time like right now, it was hugely helpful. It's one thing to gossip in the hallways and to go out for a drink with the girls to talk about what's going on at work but it's another thing to sit down alone in a room and discuss and list out the reasons that you're scared and list out the areas of opportunity and really talk constructively about it instead of destructively about it. I think that's what coaching allowed us to do. (PCIS5)

Another noted that time spent coaching led to a friendship.

I feel like it's more of a friendship but just because we have shared personal things and have spent an hour with each other each week. I am very comfortable with her now and it's more of friendly work relationship rather than a work relationship. (PCIS4)

This coaching relationship, said another, deepened over time.

About talking and relating to another human being. We had a chance to talk about more stuff and the depth of the issues was a little bit more. The depth of the issues was considerable; I mean we started out with something as simple as time management. I think the bond between me and *name removed* is a little bit tighter and I think that we need to do that to our department in a big way. (PCIS8)

Still another coach noticed that changes their relationship with the larger team.

I did find us being a little more chatty about things these last few weeks. I had a couple of people come to me and say I like to come and ask you questions. You always give me, you know, tell me what I want to hear. Nobody has ever told that to me before. I kind of thought that was sort of interesting. (PCIS3)

The participants expressed their belief that coaching was possible because of leadership support and confidentiality. From this place building relationships in their dyads and the larger team was easier. In addition participants shared how coaching impacted their relationships with themselves. Their self reflections are discussed in the next section.

Theme Three: Coaching Paves the Way to Discovery and New Learning

According to Senge (1990) learning requires reflection. As part of this study participants were encouraged to journal after each coaching encounter. The purpose of journaling was to introduce self reflection. Also of interest from a learning perspective was as they considered and reflected would they be more likely to integrate and act on their new learnings. The following sub themes explore participant views on reflection as well as their new learnings.

Introspection Through Journaling

In addition to journaling being a powerful learning tool, Baptista (2007) offered that “by engaging in reflective practice, the practitioner’s critical inquiry of a particular situation,

problem, or behaviour can enhance individual and organizational performance” (p. 1). What follows are participant responses and experiences with introspection, learning and journaling.

One participant shared that in spite of the learning they would not continue to keep a journal yet they clearly saw the value in reflection for learning

I know that a lot of people keep journals but I can actually never see myself actually keeping a journal. But I think that the writing does actually help you think about things and discover things that you didn't realize . . . What I learned is that it's more natural for me to reflect on things. I think I do reflect on things afterwards on what I can improve on and what went well and what didn't go so well. I think sometimes in reflecting, and forcing yourself to think about it helps you to come up with things you didn't even realize at the time but it came up in the reflection. (PCIS1)

Another participant seemed to come to a deeper self understanding while talking about journaling during their interview. The conversation began with:

In my journal I would say this was the challenge I had today and how I could make it easier next time and how I could improve on that. I would refer to my journal before my next session so it was fresh in my mind. I have never been a journaling type and to be honest I don't know if I would. I struggle to stay motivated. Looking back at it, it's invaluable having those journals. But you only think about doing it when you are travelling because you are experiencing so much but you know in your day to day life. It's true I should journal more. (PCIS2)

In the statement above the participant began by identifying the benefits they experienced while journaling then moved to discover their issue of motivation, and in the end decided to journal.

Another participant shared her learnings about journaling by expressing her old belief and new understanding as:

It's funny my *name removed* is a journaler, writer person. He writes down thoughts and stuff. (laughs) I tend to make fun of him. Then I was journaling and I was like oh, it's kind of just good to write down what's on my mind. (PCIS3)

In speaking of the power of their journaling one participant revelled in a deeper connection with their peer.

I like the coaching because it was like a release kind of and same with the journaling, but the journaling is more (pause). It was more a personal purpose because I knew it

was kind of my own. I wasn't going to be like handing it over to anyone. I could write whatever. And just kind of when you're writing something down, you kind of like, oh wow, like *name removed* and I spoke about this, like wow, that was really a personal thing like this is neat how we're able to share stuff like this and, yeah. (PCIS4)

Another participant shared that journaling put things into perspective for them.

Yes, the act of writing, I did try once to write it down and as soon as I wrote it down, I felt like it's not as big deal as I thought it was for some reason. It was bigger in my head and when I wrote it down it felt like, oh, I might be able to do something about it. Like, as soon as it was off of my mind and on paper, I could look at it clearer for some reason. (PCIS6)

In addition to writing down their thoughts and experiences participants also noticed a difference in how and where they applied coaching methodology and the impact of using their newly learnt skills. Their musings are captured in next sub theme.

Noticing Changes and Applying New Learnings

Weisbord (2004) shared that learning climates are created in organizations where “conditions fertilize growth, excitement, creativity, joy, energy, and commitment . . . so that all of us find dignity, meaning, and community in work. (pp. 348-349). As part of this research coaching and feedback was introduced to discover the impact on communication within the PCIS team. What follows are some of the changes and new learnings experienced by the participants.

Overall participants noticed that coaching offered a more effective way to communicate:

Coaching was a more effective and less volatile way to communicate. Universally the coaching sessions would often carry over into other areas of our lives. It helped us deal with other issues because we brought up what we were coached on with partners at home and could talk through issues. (T1)

One participant shared their behavior prior to coaching as:

I am just going to vent and then I will walk away but there was never really any resolution. (PCIS3)

And after their coaching experience was complete they related:

I found that just doing these sessions I usually was just like okay. I felt a lot calmer. (PCIS3)

Overall according to focus group participants the motivation resulted in less:

Venting and decreased stress and allowed us to focus on work and not ruminate on our frustrations. (T1)

Others identified issues and solved them within their coaching sessions and felt the impact in both their professional and personal lives:

I was sort of bringing it home and was fixing in multiple areas. Not fixing but I would kind of have never said anything before. (PCIS3)

Coaching is more important from a personal issue perspective than a workplace issue perspective. (T2)

Another participant became aware of their improved skill in relating to others:

I'd say I'm aware of it more now because, well, having gone through this exercise. I kind of feel like I know which questions to ask in certain situations. I'm a little bit more equipped to ask the better questions, I guess, without making the other person feel like they're being attacked or anything like that. I certainly found a lot of use for it and, you know, have a different perspective on how to approach others and try to help them through things, I think it's a useful tool coaching. (PCIS7)

According to participants in addition to learning to focus on solutions they also experienced some very real outcomes from adopting a coaching culture. These outcomes are the subject of the next sub theme.

Outcomes of Learning to Adopt a Coaching Culture

Ultimately participants felt their workplace changed as they practiced coaching. Their individual experience of increased accountability, motivation, productivity, efficiency, openness, and focus through their peer coaching is supported in the literature (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002; Whitmore, 2002). As a result of their sessions and in keeping with the coaching literature mentioned above, participants reported other benefits such as empathy, empowerment and team building skills. Their findings on these outcomes are the focus of this sub theme.

Participants shared that their deepening relationships and ability to practice their new communication skills through peer coaching changed their work environment in the following ways:

Made the individual accountable. (T2)

Increased motivation in all aspect of person. (T2)

Fostered individual empowerment during change. (T2)

Increased productivity as we had a plan by the end of the session. (T2)

Because we had dedicated time to deal with stressors so when coaching was done we often felt that a burden had been lifted and could better focus on our work and therefore our productivity was increased. (T1)

We became a more efficient team because you are working as a team. (T2)

One participant shared that coaching conversations were:

So much more than just the surface, which I think is such a huge opportunity for everybody. If everybody was open with each other that would be incredible. So, when she's grumpy or when I'm stressed out and short with people there's so much more empathy and compassion there (PCIS5)

In the focus group participants linked increased empathy and compassion at a peer to peer level as spreading out and developing

Empathy within the team. (T2)

The coaching culture also played a significant role for participants from this place of working together because it:

Built relationships within team. (T1)

Helped staff work better together. (T2)

Created a common language and common practice with implications for team building and team development. (TJ)

Provided benefits which spilled out to other participants and non participants. (T1)

Changes the definition and direction of water cooler discussions. (TJ)

With respect to team building opportunities, participants observed that:

If everyone is a coach it allows us to go to different people on the team for different things. (TJ)

We are talking about quality improvement and increasing our skills (TJ)

Coaching is solution focused. We had a plan not just discussing problems, but coming up with solutions which is much more beneficial. Coaching is a conscious effort in the way that I resolve my problems and is part of how we improve and become better as individuals and as a team. (TJ)

These benefits were based in part on their ability to influence or control the change they wanted to implement. In other words they learned about locus of control which is the focus of the next sub theme.

Understanding Locus of Control

This research occurred while the organization and PCIS team were experiencing deep change. Participants shared that this change was the focus of many of their peer coaching conversations. Moreover that as they took a solution focused approach they began to understand what was in and out of their power to change. For example one participant said:

Control sometimes when we struggle with something it's because we don't have any. (PCIS1)

Another understood locus of control as the fact that they could not fix everything.

There are other aspects of issues which are out of my control that, you know, you just will have to deal with. I don't know how else to say it, not everything can be fixed as much as you want it to be fixed. I realize that we were able to develop the session a little bit better and use the model more effectively when I was more specific as opposed to having a problem that didn't really have a solution. I want world peace so what am I going to do? The person that wants world peace and it's out of his control, but if you can coach that person to contribute towards world peace. (PCIS7)

The focus group concurred and offered that:

Understanding locus of control and learning we had to accept and what we could change. (T1)

Another participant offered their experience in a situation which they thought they had no control over. Through coaching they actually managed to alter the outcome of the encounter.

In my coaching session I ended up talking about that there are some high test stressors in this group and a lot of the times, they need to release this pressure gauge that they feel. And that happens by walking around and starting these little fires around the office. Not necessarily making people angry or upset, but just kind of like needling. So I kind of came up with this strategy whereby, when that happened that was an opportunity for coaching. It was like, well you're all fired up, it's all in response to things that none of us can solve. Then the exact situation that I discussed two weeks prior was going on. And it was kind of like, okay, we can work together to just shift the focus. Getting him to come back down to earth and as soon as his feet were back down on earth, like yes, he might fire up again but it wasn't, he was getting the same payoff by being happy and grounded instead of being frustrated and loud. (PCIS 5)

This coach approach to team members and the behaviour and challenges associated with influencing outcomes was summarized by the focus group as

This is about workplace behaviours and challenges and is focused on peers assisting each other to find solutions for workplace challenges; e.g. difficult conversations, meetings, clarity with a team member or client. (TJ)

In addition to locus of control, research participants spoke of the importance of not giving advice and allowing for individual knowing which is discussed in the next sub theme.

Absence of Advice Leads to Individual Knowing

Participants shared that although they were initially sceptical about not giving advice during coaching conversations, their actual experience taught them this approach worked. In solution focused coaching the premise is that individuals know the best way forward if the coach asks open ended questions to provoke deeper knowing (Whitmore, 2002). One participant, although initially sceptical, had the following to say about non advice giving

At the beginning of this I would have said I just like someone to tell me what to do. After actually going through the process I was like no, no. It's okay I can be coached and come up with my own solutions. (PCIS1)

Another participant experienced their non advice coach approach as

When I was being coached, the individual did have a lot of experience and was able to speak on personal experience and without giving advice, you know, kind of made me think about my issue a little bit more. (PCIS7)

Still another shared the differences that were possible in coaching conversations when advice giving was suspended.

You have an objective in normal conversation, you offer up your advice and you put your own personal spin. Putting up space between you in coaching liberates the other person to make their decision free of anybody else's judgments, which is so valuable. I think especially in an environment like this when so much time is spent in meetings, hearing other opinions, weighing in on it, kind of debating over these things to actually have the freedom to sit there and say, hey, this is what I want to do, this is how I know I can do it, let's get going. You know, I think it was really rewarding to feel like you could influence change right away in your own life, and without judgment because it's all coming from you for you. (PCIS5)

Another participant spoke to the shift that occurs when advice is suspended.

People have the opportunity to have this shift in their mind, that if they slow down, if they think about their challenge and with the right questions, they might be able to come up with what they could do to overcome that. I know that when I'm giving somebody advice, I'm an individual, the other person is an individual, people have different ways of handling their challenges. My advice might not work for you. (PCIS6)

What was clear to me as I listened in the interviews and focus group, reviewed and sorted the data, and recorded these finding was that introducing coaching and feedback had had an impact on the PCIS team. The conclusions section which follows organizes the impact of the study into four areas of learning experienced by the PCIS team.

Study Conclusions

After consideration of study findings and what was unearthed during the literature review what follows are the four major learnings that emerged as study conclusions.

Conclusion One: Coaching Enhances the Effectiveness of Communication

With the introduction of coaching and feedback, research participants had a framework within which they committed to enter into conversations and communicate with each other. The components of this solution focused coaching framework included active listening, not giving advice, asking open ended questions, providing feedback, and private journal reflections.

Coaching conversations such as these have the components of what Kahane (2002) called reflective dialogue and Gerzon (2006) referred to as “conscious conversations” (p.158).

According to Kahane “reflective dialogue calls on us to be empathetic. To see the world through the eyes of others - and self reflective - to understand how we influence the world around us”

(p.3). One participant shared her understanding of how coaching conversations elicited empathy and understanding because they were

so much more than just the surface. Which I think is such a huge opportunity for everybody. If everybody was open with each other that would be incredible. So, when she’s grumpy or when I’m stressed out and short with people there’s so much more empathy and compassion there. (PCIS5)

This development of empathy was captured during the focus group, and was experienced as a “benefit which spilled out to other participants and non participants” (T1). In fact empathy helped in “building relationships within the team” (T1). The other component of entering into reflective dialogue, much like a coaching conversation, is the requirement of self reflection (Kahane, 2002; Whitmore, 2002).

Senge (1990) also spoke to a value of self reflection as “slowing down our thinking processes so that we can become more aware of how we form our mental models and the ways they influence our actions” (p. 175). From this awareness we can then make choices on how we want to act in the present and future (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). With respect to self reflection, one participant shared their experiences in the following way:

What I learned is that it's more natural for me to reflect on things. I think I do reflect on things afterwards on what I can improve on and what went well and what didn't go so well. I think sometimes in reflecting, and forcing yourself to think about it helps you to come up with things you didn't even realize at the time but it came up in the reflection. (PCIS1)

This consciousness of self should be extended as we enter into conversation with others and includes "respect, fairness, listening, openness, privacy and commitment" (Gerzon, 2006, p. 158). As participants entered into this place of conscious conversation they shared that "I was trying to be very aware of how I posed questions and making sure that they were open because then the person was able to speak more and the conversation could flow more naturally." (PCIS4)

In solution focused coaching the inquiry is focused on what the individual wants and how they might accomplish their goals (Whitmore, 2002). The power of marrying reflection and action according to Quinn (2004) is that "when we take the time to integrate action and reflection, we begin to behave differently. In reflecting deeply on our behavior, we travel to the center of our existence. There we find our best self." (p.100)

Our best self, according to Wales (2003), is found in coaching conversations where "effective communication is a vital component in all human interactions: it is also the channel for interactions between inner and outer development" (p. 281). In other words our best self emerges as we learn to communicate with ourselves - reflection, awareness, and choice - and from interacting with others – inquiring, listening, and feedback. With their practice of these effective communication methods participants noticed that they were more accountable, motivated, positive and productive, all of which are the subject of the next conclusion topic.

Conclusion Two: Coaching Enhances the Work Environment

Think for a moment, about what you know about knowledge, not from a theoretical or organizational perspective but from you own experience. In myself, I notice that

knowledge is something I create because I am in relationship – relating to another person, an event. (Wheatley, 2001, p. 30)

It was the relating to others, according to participants, which deepened their coaching conversations to the point that they noticed “increased motivation in all aspect of person” (T2). According to participants what began as venting in the workplace took on a solution and goal oriented approach. In moving from venting to solutions participants were changing their work environment with what Senge (1990) noted as engagement or “when people become more engaged in and committed to their work, they are usually willing to confront more difficult issues. They are willing to risk doing things beyond their comfort zone.” (p.282)

In leaving her comfort zone, one participant shared her behavior prior to coaching as “I am just going to vent and then I will walk away but there was never really any resolution” (PCIS3). After their coaching experience was complete they related “I found that just doing these sessions I usually was just like okay. I felt a lot calmer.” (PCIS3). Overall, according to focus group participants, the motivation resulted in less “venting and decreased stress and allowed us to focus on work and not ruminate on our frustrations” (T1).

Wales (2003) claimed that once this shift in focus occurred the benefits of coaching moved from influencing only the individual to having the potential of influencing the larger team and organization. Specifically Wales noted that “communication skills facilitates the effective delivery and receipt of ideas, concepts, knowledge and vision (self awareness and confidence) into the behaviors and competencies of leaders and management (assertiveness, understanding differences, stress management and work/life balance)” (p. 276).

Participants shared that their workplace was altered in the following ways as they coached their peers and practiced their new communication tools: “made the individual accountable” (T2); “became a more efficient team because you are working as a team” (T2);

“helped staff work better together” (T2); “fostered individual empowerment during change” (T2); “increased productivity as we had a plan by the end of the session” (T2); “because we had dedicated time to deal with stressors so when coaching was done we often felt that a burden had been lifted and could better focus on our work and therefore our productivity was increased” (T1); and finally that coaching created a common language and common practice with implications for team building and team development (TJ). Ultimately, participants felt their workplace changed as they practiced coaching. And it is the practice of coaching that is the focus of the next conclusion.

Conclusion Three: Coaching Takes Time, Practice and Support

Team learning is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire. It builds on the discipline of developing shared vision. It also builds on personal mastery, for talented teams are made up of talented individuals. (Senge, 1990, p. 218)

As with any new learning “coaching requires work – specifically, the development of new skills” (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002, p. 11) and acquiring these new skills takes time, practice and support.

One participant shared their thoughts on the challenges and benefits of making time to coach:

If you didn't have that first session and we didn't have these interviews and the expectation that we would have the four sessions completed before the interviews we would have kept putting it off and putting it off. It was really hard to find the time in both people's calendars that we could sit down for an hour and chat. Yet it was very beneficial for team relationships. (PCIS2)

Interestingly this issue of time was raised in the focus group as “in times of change and uncertainty coaching was both a challenge and a benefit. A challenge to find the time and a benefit because we found solutions” (T1).

In spite of the benefits they derived, participants struggled not only with the time but with the idea that coaching was not real work and “experienced guilt about time used so support from leadership for coaching is important” (T1). Gerzon (2006) concurred and noted that in times of change and uncertainty leadership support is integral to the innovation’s success and that “something must change the way people think or act. It must make a difference in their lives. In order for this to occur, the innovative idea, plan, or process must be adopted by those who are driving.” (Gerzon, p. 207).

Lastly, as depicted in Figure 1 below, acquiring a new skill such as entering into coaching conversations takes practice, according to Hunt and Weintraub (2002, pp. 76- 80), and is more likely to be successful if it is supported in the following ways, as illustrated within Figure 1 below.

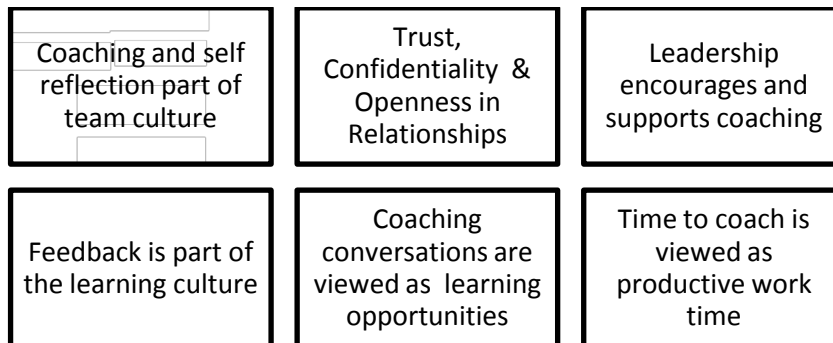


Figure 1 Practices that support coaching

What is clear from the figure above, the research findings and the conclusions is that commitment at the individual, team, and leadership levels will determine success or failure of coaching and feedback at PHC. Ultimately learning, having effective communication and relationships operates at two levels “the formal, agreed-upon structure of rules, roles and goals

which needs to be supported by the informal structure; that is, the repetitive patterns of here-and-now interaction” (Short, 1998, p.65). A similar sentiment by Weisbord (2004) stated

one critical piece of learning possible in groups is how all of us exacerbate our own problems. Another is that each group member has unique contributions to make. A third is that we are more likely to modify our behavior with group support than without it. (p. 92)

In other words we learn from where we are, who we are with and through whatever lens we choose to view ourselves and others.

Scope and Limitations of Research

What follows is a discussion on the scope and limitations of this action research project.

In my discussion I will use the framework outlined below by Weisbord (2004)

Every action-research project is different. You can't expect to repeat my procedures and get my results. Why? First; my procedures are not repeatable - exactly. They change with the people, facilities, history, local traditions, and unique problems. Real life is not a chemistry lab where all the beakers are the same. Second, you may change the sequence in which you approach a problem, or involve other people, or collect information. Since you can't just change one thing, the first change changes everything. Third, the itch you scratch will always be your own. If you try to scratch my itch nobody will believe you. In action research, you are part of the action. You cannot stand outside as an objective observer, telling people what's going on and what to do. (p. 204)

On the first and second points I agree that my research is not exactly repeatable However that does not mean that it is not relevant for PHC and other organizations. The findings and conclusions of this research on the benefits of peer coaching align with those in existing literature on communication, coaching, relationships, learning, change and leadership. Where I do agree with Weisbord is that due to the fact that I chose to do my research on coaching and its impact on communication I had an interest in and understanding of this topic, as well as this team and organization that is not repeatable. Other significant factors such as my research time

frame and those who participated are also part of that unique, unrepeatable moment in time that was this project.

I also concur with Weisbord's third point, in that I did indeed hold a deep and passionate interest in coaching as a communication tool which made my ability to be a detached observer more difficult. However if the point of action research is to bring value to the participants and to the organization I believe that was accomplished regardless of my own or my participants' attachment to a coaching approach to communication.

Each of eight IT professionals who participated in this study were from a public health care organization and had existing relationships with me and each other prior to the research. As a result I am unclear on the degree to which my previous relationship with them or their relationships with each other had an impact on the outcomes of this research study.

It is also significant to note that although only 55% of the team was female, they represented 75% of study participants. In addition to gender, age was also a limiting factor, in that seven of the eight participants were under the age of 30. Again I am unclear as to how this might have impacted the study findings.

There were, however, two issues that arose due to a lack of time. The first was that the long delay of my ethics approval impacted the number of weeks, from six to four, that participants could practice coaching. This may or may not have influenced their experience, and hence the outcomes of this research. Secondly and also related to time was the fact that I was limited by the organization to a maximum of ten hours of intervention with each participant. In factoring in journaling, interviewing, and coaching time, I am not sure if I left enough time for instruction on coaching and feedback. At the same time, I believe this limitation was somewhat

mitigated by providing all participants with a handout and weekly email check-ins on their progress and concerns.

In the final analysis I believe that my action research findings and conclusions are applicable to the research group and to their larger team. This belief is based upon my experience in completing my professional coaching certification, my practical experience in coaching and feedback, and my twenty years work experience in team building, leadership and management. Of equal impact on this belief was my engagement and feedback from my organizational sponsor, the PCIS team, and Senior Leadership at PHC. In considering the findings and conclusions of this study and comparing them with existing literature it is also likely that this peer coaching and feedback study, if implemented elsewhere, may produce similar outcomes with other work teams.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

In action research and from an organizational perspective this may be the most significant chapter as the discussion that follows offers recommendations on the research findings, conclusions, and literature. Moreover because these recommendations and the section that follows on the organizational implications are specifically tailored to the experiences of PCIS team, Senior Leadership Team and the larger PHC organization, they are more relevant to the organization. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the implications for future research.

Study Recommendations

As discussed in detail in Chapter Four, the findings from this study suggest that peer solution focused coaching offered participants three significant opportunities which were: a more effective way to communicate, a way to deepen relationships with themselves and others, and a way to manage themselves and their work environment. The recommendations that follow are based on the assumption that these findings are an authentic and trustworthy analysis of the experiences of the PCIS team.

Recommendation One - Adopt a Coaching Culture

In his work on learning and change Gerzon (2006) offered the following observation

If we want language to lead toward healthier, stronger communities and more vibrant, effective organizations we need language that promotes progress – not language that maintains the status quo. We need language that lifts us toward higher levels of discourse, not language that turns civic and corporate life into a verbal battlefield. (p. 170)

This idea that, in changing the way we talk and listen, we are able to build an effective community within an organization was supported in the literature (Peavey, 2000; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 2002) as well as by the research findings. When participants spoke of the fact that “coaching gave us a common language” (TJ), they were reshaping what Schein (1992) defined as

existing cultural norms. In other words, in changing the way they related to each other, they established a new culture with new rules. These new rules involved “establishing a coaching culture that is solution focused” (T2).

During their interviews participants shared that the key elements of establishing that coaching culture included “building trust and respect” (PCIS2) through honouring “confidentiality” (T1), practicing “active listening” (PCIS8) and posing “open ended questions” (PCIS4). As they practiced being in their new coaching culture they found themselves shifting their mental models from giving advice (PCIS1) or telling someone what to do (PCIS1) to a belief that everyone knows what is best for them (PCIS1). The power in that shift was through participants’ openness to foster relationships which is the focus of the next recommendation.

Recommendation Two - Foster Relationships With Each Other

The longer I live and the more I see of organizations, the more I'm forced to the conclusion that at the heart of our organizations is always this matter of competence in relationships. I'm convinced that competence in relationships remains most important in making organizations places of realized potential. (De Pree, n. d., ¶ 3)

Ultimately the value participants saw in their coaching experiences was the “relationship building through trust and confidentiality to gain a better understanding of our colleagues” (T1). In taking the time to enter into coaching conversations with each other participants discovered what Wheatley called “life’s second imperative which propels individuals out from themselves to search for community. Life is systems seeking; there is the need to be in relationship, to be connected to others” (2007a, p. 46). In engaging with others, participants built rapport and began to see similarities between their lives and the stories others shared. One participant experienced coaching as an opportunity to relate to her peer “it kind of made me feel better too. To talk with someone who was sort of going through the same issues” (PCIS6). It is that connection with

others through oneself that participants began to question how their deeper understandings fit into the larger world; or, what Senge (1990) referred to as systems thinking.

One of the benefits of taking a systems view is that “as more people become involved with understanding and improving whole systems, the circles get bigger and the potential for making things better increases” (Weisbord, 2004, p. 464). From their peer interactions participants took a systems view and realized the web of interconnectivity, the possibilities for themselves, their team, and PHC. These views were expressed as imagine “if everyone is a coach it allows us to go to different people on the team for different things” (TJ) and that helps in “building relationships within team” (T1), developing “empathy within team” (T2) and we “become a more efficient team because you are working as a team” (T2). Effective relationships build stronger teams and stronger teams positively impact the effectiveness of organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Working as a team involves relationships which are at the heart of what makes us human and help to build communities of practice (Wheatley, 2007a). These communities offer learning, growth and support. As leaders work

to get people together in the workplace, to involve people in the control of their own lives, work, and destinies, to keep meeting like this, and to validate shared goals is existentially right, no matter what the outcome. I can think of no higher form of leadership. (Weisbord, 2004, p. 426)

In other words, relationships provide us with a sense of belonging and give our lives meaning as we practice trust, openness, integrity, and honesty. In relationship we also begin to receive a clearer picture of who we are and what we value as an individual. (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) Participants learned “in coaching others and in receiving coaching, in both ways, it made me reflect on myself” (PCIS7). Reflection then is another way we develop a deeper relationship

with others and self (Short, 1998). It is how we learn what is important and why it is important and is the focus of the next recommendation.

Recommendation Three - Encourage Time for Reflection

This concept of knowing oneself is perhaps the single most impactful relationship we can nurture and is achieved in large part through reflection (Short, 1998). During the interviews participants would often initially respond that they did not know how to answer questions asked regarding their learnings during the study. However, when asked to consult their private journal reflections they were able to share deep and significant learnings and shifts in their mental models. One participant noticed a major shift in the way they experienced their problems pre and post coaching as:

At the beginning of this I would have said I just like someone to tell me what to do. After actually going through the process I was like no, no. It's okay. I can be coached and come up with my own solutions. (PCIS1)

Others focused on self discovery "I think it was really rewarding to feel like you could influence change right away in your own life, and without judgment because it's all coming from you for you" (PCIS5). Another said

people have the opportunity to have this shift in their mind, that if they slow down, if they think about their challenge and with the right questions, they might be able to come up with what they could do to overcome that. PCIS6)

Still others identified locus of control as their biggest learning and expressed their views as "I want world peace so what am I going to do? The person that wants world peace and it's out of his control, but if you can coach that person to contribute towards world peace." (PCIS7). The focus group offered that in "Understanding locus of control and learning we had to accept and what we could change. (T1)

These learnings occurred after reflecting. According to Senge (1990) the “skills of reflection concern slowing down our thinking processes so that we can become more aware of how we form our mental models and the ways they influence our actions” (p. 175) and this process takes time. Furthermore once we reflect and notice our beliefs, behaviors, and actions we create options for new discovery and learning (Short, 1998). In other words when we know ourselves we are more receptive to learning and change which is the focus of the next recommendation.

Recommendation Four - Embrace Learning and Change as Never Ending Realities

During the research period participants experienced significant change in their work environment: their management team was going through reorganization; there was a great deal of uncertainty on the security of the PCIS team positions within the organization; and they were physically moving to a new location. Participants shared that “in times of change and uncertainty coaching was both a challenge and a benefit. A challenge to find the time and a benefit because we found solutions” (T1). Wheatley (2007a) captured this paradox of learning and change in the following way: “as our dance partner, life insists that we put ourselves in motion, that we learn to live with instability, chaos, change, and surprise” (p. 112). In other words learning is change and change is learning.

Introducing coaching as a model for communication had, as Kotter (1990) offered, expected and unexpected consequences. Some of these consequences were expected like “increased productivity as we had a plan by the end of the session” (T1). Or “we had dedicated time to deal with stressors so when coaching was done we often felt that a burden had been lifted and could better focus on our work and therefore our productivity was increased” (T2). Others

were unexpected like when participants identified coaching as being “more important from personal issue perspective than a work place issue perspective” (T2).

Regardless of whether the learning and change experience were intended or not the underlying truth according to Wheatley (2007a) is that it

is a gradual process that requires patience, generosity, and time. No one is able to act in new ways because they decide to. We all get yanked back to old ways of doing things, especially when we feel tense or confused. All groups need to keep alert to their process, their learning and how the change effort is unfolding and emerging. (p. 111)

In addition to holding creative tension as the change and learning emerges and unfolds, teams also need to be able to rely on leadership support in order to experience successful and ongoing learning and transformation (Senge, 1990). This need for leadership support is explored in more depth in the next section which discusses the organizational implications of these recommendations.

Organizational Implications

The recommendations emerged from the study findings and conclusions. In this section each of the four recommendations in the previous section are analysed through the lens of the PCIS team and the larger PHC organization. The purpose of this analysis is to consider the potential impacts to PHC for implementing or failing to implement each recommendation.

Implications of Recommendation One - Adopt a Coaching Culture

The benefits of adopting a coaching culture are well documented in the study findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as in the literature. Leadership support and team engagement (TJ) are key to reaping the rewards of peer coaching which include increased workplace accountability, effectiveness, motivation, and productivity on both an individual and team level. What is clear from the study is that adopting a coaching culture will require change and successful change initiatives require leadership support and team engagement (Kotter, 1990).

Some of the ways that leadership could support this initiative would be to begin by “starting where you are with whoever is there (Senge, 1990, p. 290) “do what you can, with who you can from where you are” (p. 310) In other words build on the coaching culture that developed between the eight PCIS participant volunteers during the study. Table 3 below is framed from the perspective of Kotter’s (1990) organizational change process and captures the actions and consequences that leadership and the larger PCIS team might consider as they adopt a coaching culture.

Table 3

Actions and Intended Consequences for Leadership and PCIS of Adopting a Coaching Culture

Actions	Intended Consequences
Identify coaching champions	Establishes excitement necessary for successful change.
Share learnings and successes	Builds a team through sharing experiences and stories based on research.
Engage in discussion	Identifies a vision of who, what, where, when and why a coaching culture is significant.
Dialogue regarding outcomes	Clarifies the purpose of the change; allows for open, honest dialogue.
Listen and adapt	Gives people the power to address objections that may emerge from the newly shared purpose and vision.
Share learnings and successes	Celebrates small wins through sharing experiences and stories.
Monitor and adapt	Creates momentum to adapt, to align with those new learnings.
Report and share	Root change in culture and monitor in measurable ways like surveys and performance evaluations.

(Consequences based on Kotter’s Eight Stages of Change, 1990, pp. 21-23)

It is important to note that Table 3 reflects the intended consequences and as with any change initiative there will also be unintended consequences (Yukl, 2006). In addition to a

successful change strategy, leadership would have to consider how to best teach coaching and feedback and support the PCIS team in their peer coaching encounters. The focus group suggested that the workshop and handout developed as part of this research was a good starting point (TJ). Their recommendations were to increase the practice time within the workshops, have an experienced coach check in with peers on a weekly basis and add a list of appropriate topics for coaching sessions (T1). Learning is an iterative process and Senge (1990) offered the following wisdom for teams and leaders to consider: “learning infrastructures that effectively integrate working and learning do not emerge wholly formed. Rather, they develop over time in ways that depend on leaders who appreciate and are comfortable with an open, iterative design process.” (p. 322). In other words adopting a coaching culture within the PCIS team requires flexibility and adaptability on the part of leadership and the team.

If the decision is against adopting a coaching culture then the following benefits identified by participants in Table 4 may never be realized with the team or organization.

Table 4

Research Participant Identified Benefits of Adopting a Coaching Culture

Benefit	Manifestation
Accountability	Felt accountable to deliver on their goals because they self identified them as important Peer relationship increased accountability
Awareness	Deepened understanding of self and others Noticed what they did and why Discovered choices and options from the place of noticing
Communication	Experienced a new way to communicate and found it beneficial to themselves, their dyads, the research participants and larger team Offered common language and practice in conversations Helped staff work better together
Effectiveness	Felt more effective in communication with others Believed coaching would improved effectiveness of team
Efficiency	Coaching conversations reduced venting and focused on solutions Relationships built better communication and resulted in higher team efficiency

Table 4 continued

Benefit	Manifestation
Empathy	Developed empathy for others through sharing in relationship
Empowerment	Based on ability to identify solutions and set and meet goals
Listening	Adopted active listening techniques and found it built relationships
Leadership	Coaching is a key manager/leader skill that prepares team member for leadership roles
Locus of Control	Experienced acceptance and clarity of what they could and could not change
Motivation	Felt more motivated to accomplish goals
Productivity	Increased with the opportunity to vent resulted in increased focus on solution, goals, and plan
Quality Improvement	Moved from problem finding to solution finding
Reflection	Led to learning about themselves and others
Relationship	Deepened in conversation with others in their dyads Expanded out include research participants and larger team Helped staff work better together
Self Esteem	Increased as others listened they felt valued
Skill Development	Coaching and feedback offered a new and more effective way to communicate with others
Trust	Built trusting, open, honest relationships with team members

It is important to note that these learnings were experience by the participant volunteers and not by the entire PCIS team. Those who did not participate may “devise creative and maddening ways to resist, divert, undermine, ignore, or overthrow change efforts” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 228). For peer coaching

to become an innovation, something must change the way people in a conflict think or act. It must make a difference in their lives. In order for this to occur, the innovative idea, plan, or process must be adopted by those who are driving the conflict. (Gerzon, 2006, p. 207)

Leadership then must not make “the usual mistake in assuming that the right idea (as perceived by the idea’s champions) and legitimate authority ensure success” (Gerzon, 2006, p.

228). As with any significant change, introducing peer coaching will alter the existing PCIS team culture. There will be resistance and leadership will need to help set and reinforce the vision for the team. (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, pp. 13-15). As these authors would suggest, the role of leaders in the peer coaching visioning is twofold “to envision the future” and “to enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations” (p. 15). In other words, this would involve working with the PCIS team to establish the value and purpose of peer coaching. Then once the peer coaching vision is established, the work of leadership is to empower and encourage the team by providing the necessary support in the form of time and also celebrating their successes. The direct benefit for the organization is that “when people are trusted and have more discretion, more authority, and more information, they’re much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results (p. 18)

To a certain extent the three other recommendations: foster relationships with each other; encourage time for reflection; and embrace learning and change are intertwined with what has been shared in Table 4 above and throughout this section. However, what follows are three short summaries that speak to the organizational implications of the remaining recommendations. These are followed by Table 5 which outlines some concrete suggestions to embed a coaching culture within the PCIS group.

Implications of Recommendation Two - Encourage Time for Reflection

Taking time to reflect is already valued in PHC as evidenced by the weekly email reflection that is sent to all staff and volunteers from the Mission, Ethics & Spirituality department at PHC. As one travels to various offices on site, staff have printed off these weekly reflections and posted them on desks and communal bulletin boards. However, “most of us . . . are engulfed in action, at the expense of contemplation and reflection. This extreme is just as

isolating as the extreme of contemplation divorced from action.” (Quinn, 2004, p. 98).

Determining that balance between reflection and action is difficult especially knowing that in order to learn and change, individuals must be allotted time for reflection (Senge, 1990; Short, 1998). The leadership challenge then becomes how much time is enough to learn.

For this study participants spent about fifteen minutes a week journaling their response to a reflective question that was sent to them. Surprisingly this seemingly insignificant amount of time resulted in immense learnings which are outlined in the previous chapter at length, in the previous section of this chapter, as well as in Table 4 above. In considering the benefits as a return on investment, the cost seems a small price to pay particularly since reflection results in learning (Senge, 1990). Perhaps journaling success stories which were part of this change could be shared at weekly meetings. Since there is already a process by which participants receive weekly reflections, this might be another way to encourage journaling within the team.

Reflection, as evidenced by the interviews, was an important part of learning for the participants in this study. It was also beneficial for the organization because, as this team reflected, they shared their learnings with each other. It is the benefits of those relationships that are the focus of the next implication.

Implications of Recommendation Three - Foster Relationships with Each Other

Wheatley (2002) offered that “conversation is the natural way we humans think together” (pp. 42-43) and that “what becomes available to us when we greet each other as fully human . . . is that a hopeful future is possible” (p. 75). Peer coaching allowed for deeper relationships to develop within the PCIS team, the benefits of which are outlined in Table 4. Again from a leadership perspective the issue of implementing peer coaching becomes resources and time versus benefits. Some benefits outlined in Table 4 such as awareness and trust in and through

relationship are known to increase leadership capacity (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). What follows in the next section are ways to leverage coaching relationships while building adaptability in learning and resiliency to change within the PCIS team.

Implications of Recommendation Four - Embrace Learning and Change

There is a way of managing and organizing work that is superior in both pragmatic and human terms, that significantly improves performance and creates the types of workplaces in which most of us would truly like to work. (Senge, 1990, p. 273)

Ultimately the volunteer participants found coaching with their peers to be a beneficial learning experience and identified a strong desire in the focus group to implement peer coaching within the larger team. According to Senge (1990) engaged employees who are learning are likely to be “more engaged in and committed to their work” (p. 282) which results in better teams and organizations.

Clearly introducing peer coaching within the PCIS team based on the summary of benefits in Table 4 has the potential to have significant impact on learning and ultimately leadership development at PHC. What follows in Table 5 are some leadership considerations for implementation that emerged in the focus group discussions and from the literature.

Table 5

Considerations for Implementation of Peer Coaching to Embrace Learning and Change

Issue	Leadership Considerations
Leadership Commitment	Model the way (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and encourage team efforts by implementing peer coaching Reinforce that coaching time is work time Demonstrate support in all interactions/communications with team Celebrate wins by sharing coaching success stories throughout organization
Measure Success	Staff satisfaction surveys before and after introduction of coaching Measure sick time Communicate results to leadership
Team Engagement	Identify coaching champions within team and PHC leadership Share success of research at weekly PCIS meeting Make it part of the culture and require full participation from

Table 5 continued

Issue	Leadership Considerations
Team engagement	Identify coaching champions within team and PHC leadership Share success of research at weekly PCIS meeting Make it part of the culture and require full participation from everyone on the team.
Type of Coaching	Introduce One on One Peer Coaching
Ongoing Training and Support	Document process including coaching model, questions and a menu list of coaching session topics (ex. struggling with a presentation, concern over my performance review, dealing with a difficult client). Deliver workshop to introduce coaching to team Follow up with one on one sessions to check in with peer teams Coaching champions to educate new team members Have a “coaches corner” during weekly PCIS meeting to share success stories

In order to embrace learning and change through peer coaching, focus group participants identified their need for leadership to support their efforts and the literature is equally clear on the importance of leadership in implementing and sustaining successful change initiatives (Kotter, 1996; Quinn, 2004; Weisbord, 2004). Implementing peer coaching with the PCIS team is a significant change and

change in routine practice and procedure undermines existing knowledge and skills, and they undercut people’s ability to perform with confidence and success . . . creating ambiguity, confusion, and distrust. People no longer know what is expected or what to expect from others. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, pp. 273-274)

Leaders mitigate the ambiguity, confusion, and distrust through setting a clear vision and celebrating success (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). In order to be successful in these efforts “leaders must be convinced of the value of the shared vision and share that genuine belief with others. They must believe in what they are saying.” (p. 152) They must also “create community and sustain team spirit; by basing celebrations on consistency with key values and attainment of critical milestones, leaders reinforce and sustain people’s focus.” (p. 329) Through belief, vision

and celebration PHC leadership can implement peer coaching within the PCIS team and tap into “people’s natural desire to work in community; our human need to seek supportive relationships; the fact that learning is social and flourishes in relationship” (Wheatley & Frieze, 2006, p. 6), and in doing so reap the benefits of a more effective, efficient, productive and motivated team.

Implications for Future Research

This action research project focused on the impact introducing coaching and feedback had on communication within the PCIS team. Future opportunities for research might take a comparative approach to discover whether giving time to team members to talk to each other weekly would have similar results as introducing the GROW solution focused model (Whitmore, 2002). What is unclear from this research is whether the motivation participants felt after coaching session was influenced by the “Hawthorne Effect” (Franke & Kaul, 1978) where the control group of research subjects reported increased motivation. Hawthorne hypothesised that the act of having the researcher check in with them impacted their motivation. Further research could begin to examine the extent to which this effect was at the root of the changes reported by the participants of this research.

I question whether the fact that the research took place during deep organizational change impacted the results. In other words, what would the results have been at a calmer, more stable time in the organization? Future research may want to focus on an organization and participants who are not undergoing major restructuring or, alternatively, an organization undergoing change to discover if similar outcomes occur.

Also of note was the fact that participants had existing relationships with me and each other prior to the research which may have increased trust and openness. Future research may want to survey participants regarding existing relationships within the team and then pair peers

who have reported the least developed relationship. The purpose would be to discover if similar outcomes occur between peers who have an existing relationship as those that do not.

The gender imbalance and age of the participants might have impacted results and future research might address this by ensuring sufficient numbers of males and females as participants so that the impact of gender could be systematically examined. Likewise, by involving participants from all age groups and not just the under 30 group would provide the opportunity to examine the impact of age, of particular interest at a time when generational differences is a prominent issue in many workplaces.

Finally, because of the compressed timeline I wonder what the results would be if the coaching happened over a longer period of time and with different partners. In my study participants coached in dyads once a week for four weeks. Future research may want to discover the impact on communication and relationships with self, others, team, and organization that occurs with a more significant peer coaching engagement duration. In that longer term engagement period researchers would also have the opportunity to consider what impact switching partners has on communication and relationships.

In the end this research offered findings, conclusions, and recommendations that supported the implementation of a peer coaching model into the PHC PCIS team. Before this model is implemented, PHC may want to consider the implications for future research in designing their peer coaching model. This would also be true for future research into peer coaching.

CHAPTER SIX: LESSONS LEARNED

The answer must be, I think, that beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there . . . Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of mystery, like the idle, curved tunnels of leaf miners on the face of a leaf. We must somehow take a wider view, look at the whole landscape, really see it, and describe what's going on here. Then we can at least wail the right question into the swaddling band of darkness, or, if it comes to that, choir the proper praise. (Dillard, 1998, pp. 10-11)

This journey to complete my Master of Arts in Leadership has been about being there, in the present, during my deep personal growth. As I revisit my learnings through conversations with others and in my journal entries I am able to see my emergence and connection with my authentic self. Sitting here today it is obvious to me that establishing my core values and personal vision was the start of many deeper and more powerful experiences. My world was altered once I knew what was important and where I wanted to go. I was able to align my actions and behaviours with my values and vision. What I did not fully understand was the changes and challenges that would occur for me internally and externally as I re-aligned to be more congruent with my emerging authentic self. What follows are some of the lessons I learned along the way about leadership and working within an organizations to complete an action research project.

Begin With Passion

Do what you love because it will make the process so much easier. In other words, before you decide on a topic, or engage your organization, or recruit your volunteers make sure you care about the focus of your research. Choosing a topic that I was passionate about made all the difference on the nights and weekends that I had to turn down time with my partner, a sleep over with my nephew, or a dinner with my best friends. Passion also got me through some tough times in the research process like the apprehension that I felt after sending the invitations. What would happen, I thought, if no one volunteered? For me it came down to passion, because I was

excited, others felt my excitement and wanted to support my learning and participate with me in action research.

Trust Intuition

Prior to arriving at my first residency in the spring of 2008 I was prompted by my intuition to gather pictures and quotes to bring along with me. What I did not know at the time was that these pictures and quotes would be instrumental in eliciting my values and vision statement. Moreover as I shared my process others were inspired to use it to unearth their own values. Intuition for me manifests as a feeling not an understanding, it is that idea that pops into my head; it is not based in understanding; it cannot be immediately explained; and often does not make a whole lot of sense at the time.

When I acted on these intuitive promptings wondrous events unfolded. For example my intuition prompted me to attend a coaching demonstration at first residency where I first became inspired with the focus my action research. It prompted me to approach my former workplace, PHC, as my sponsoring organization and not my then current workplace. It prompted me to remain at PHC and not switch organizations when research approval delays threatened my convocation date. It prompted me to check in with my organizational sponsor, my research participants, and my academic supervisor. Tapping into my intuition and following its promptings was integral to completing my research.

Reflect on Learnings

If exposure is essential, still more so is the reflection. Insight doesn't happen often on the click of the moment like a lucky snapshot, but comes in its own time and more slowly and from nowhere but within. (Eudora Welty as cited in McHaney, 2005, p. 199)

I found that my learnings came fast and furiously as I was exposed to new authors and concepts. In order to remember them so that I could integrate them into my daily life I kept a

journal where I could record my new thoughts and ideas. What was really powerful and ultimately most beneficial was that I could then revisit my learnings. Throughout this process, particularly when I felt stuck or unmotivated, I explored my journal entries to verify my progress. Often as I trolled through my old journals I found learnings that I had forgotten; that with the benefit of time, experience, and new knowledge I was able to understand at an even deeper level. These deeper learnings were invaluable in completing this project.

Conversations also offered me an opportunity to reflect and deepen my learnings. In sharing with others I learned to consider my learning through their eyes, to alter my beliefs, to “shift my mental models” and move toward “self mastery” (Senge, 1990). In these conversations I also built important support networks the value of which are discussed in more detail in the following section.

Build Support Networks

Sitting at lunch with my partner in our hotel restaurant before being dropped off at first residency I had the fortune to meet up with a former MAL graduate. She offered that completing her Masters was possible because of the support networks she built with others in her cohort. As I near the end of my Royal Roads experience I could not agree more. For me, the thirty two strangers who met two years ago have become friends. They provided broad shoulders and inspiration. They read the same books and spoke the same language. They gave honest feedback and challenged me. My academic supervisor became a part of my network; she was the perfect balance of supportive mentor and wise critic. In truth, this research and the completion of my Masters would not have happened without their belief and support.

At my sponsoring organization it was the support networks that made the action research possible. I had existing relationships with the volunteer participants and they were committed to

the study in part because of their trust in me. It was through my relationship with their team leader that I was able to receive ethical approval on a Tuesday and schedule the first phase of the study, a workshop, on the following Monday. It was through my relationship with my organizational sponsor, a MAL graduate, that I was able to present an action research project of value and importance to the organization. I was inspired and inspired others through these relationships. Appropriately the value and importance of inspiration is the next topic.

Share Learning and Inspire Others

I learned that in aligning with my authentic self I was willing to share my learnings with others in my personal and workplace life. In my personal life, my leadership books became a lending library for friends and family who began their own explorations to discover their values and purpose. At work, one of the benefits was that as others were exposed to my passion for leadership development and coaching they asked me to present my new learnings to their teams. Ultimately it was through one of these workshop presentations that my opportunity for my action research project was realized.

Trust the Process

What I learned is that there will be bumps along the way but if I am in alignment with my authentic self, connected to my passion, following my intuition, reflecting on my learnings, relying on my support networks, and inspiring others I will prevail. As I look back on the last two years I see the interconnectedness; how I was able to trust the process because I was aligned. This does not mean that I did not experience doubt in my abilities or that I never felt like giving up. Quite the opposite is true. I did doubt and I had trust in the process.

For me, this journey was about trust. Trusting myself and believing in what I was doing. Trusting my partner, friends, and families would forgive me for missing their many birthday

parties, celebrations, and for not being available to connect as often. Trusting they would still love and support me. Trusting that my support network would be there when I needed to be talked down off the ledge. Trusting this action research project produced learning for my participants. Trusting my sponsoring organization found value in the study and will implement my recommendations.

I learned I agreed with March (2003) that in leading this action research project the

Critical concerns of leadership are not technical questions of management or power but the fundamental issues of life. Life is to be challenged . . . that passion and discipline of a wilful human spirit is a vital element of being a leader. Quixote does not accept reality he imposes his imagination, his commitment, and his joy on it. He produces a world of beauty and of meaning. (References Films on Demand Media Group & March, 2003)

My final learning is that in adopting a Quixote like demeanour I too have the potential to create more beauty and meaning in my life and the lives of others.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AS A RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER

LETTER OF INVITATION RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher:

Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
XXX-XXX-XXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part as a member of the research team in this study because you are a member of the Royal Roads University (RRU) Master of Arts Leadership (MA-L) 2008-2 program. The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit the individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a research team member working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the RRU MA-L Program, or the larger RRU organization.

If you wish to participate as a research team member, you will be asked to notify the researcher. If you do decide to take part as a research team member in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to

participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the MA-L program or the larger RRU organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of the Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate as a research team member in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study assist the researcher Zayna Kunic.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxxx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

In phase one, the researcher Zayna gathered data through one on one interviews about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This occurred in the context of up to 8 PCIS team members who had volunteered in the phase one research which included workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team members volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arise from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the up to eight member PCIS Team who participated in phase one of the study which included the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Included in Phase two are the recruitment will of ten members of the ODG the up to eight PCIS team volunteers from phase one. Although invited, it is not a requirement that they participate in the research. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 PCIS Team members who participated in phase 1 of the study and 4 ODG members.

Zayna would like to have 4 volunteers from the PCIS team and 4 volunteers from the ODG for the focus group. Should more than 4 PCIS team members and 4 ODG members volunteer to participate, 4 from each group will be selected by random draw. The identity of those not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by Zayna. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 of the 8 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study, and 4 of the 10 ODG members.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This invitation is solely for your participation as a member of the research team.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered ten hours for participants to take part in the entire research cycle and the researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time.

As a member of the research team you may choose from the table below how you will participate and in what areas. It is anticipated that your participation may include up to 30 hours of your time.

PHASE 1

The first two hours of participant time in the study will be spend in two one hour workshops held in the first week of the study to introduce feedback and active listening and the GROW model for coaching. In the workshop participants will form a dyad with a team mate of their choosing. The two participants will give and receive coaching and feedback to each other in 20 minute increments for a four week period. Also beginning in week one and continuing for five weeks participants will receive reflective journal prompts by email asking them to privately record their thoughts, experiences and feelings regarding coaching and feedback. The one hour interview will occur in week six and will be audio taped to maintain accuracy and produce verifiable data for the research. A transcription of the interview will be sent to each participant to verify their portion for accuracy, and completeness and participants may request that edits or deletions be made. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

PHASE 2

The focus group is in the design of a guided conversation and will be approximately one and a half hours long and will be held at a private and quiet location during which time participants will have the opportunity to determine recommendations for the organization regarding the following themes which emerged from the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview phases of this study. The final themes may include issues related to:

What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication?

What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback?

In what ways does coaching and feedback impact communication in the workplace?

The focus group will not be tape recorded flip charts will be used to capture thoughts and ideas from the group. The first 60 minutes will concentrate on gathering potential recommendation and the final 30 minutes will solidify which recommendations will go forward to the ODG and in the final report. A transcription of the focus group will be sent to participants to verify their portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and validate final recommendations. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording for the interview and flip charts of the focus group, will be completed by Zayna, participants will be given a pseudonym and their name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. All responses will be kept

completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide each participant with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. Participants will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer research team member you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the interview and focus group. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team.

Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, Wilf Humeny, Ann Brown organizational sponsor and a transcriptionist. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a Confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at xxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in and will be accessible only to the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

Research Team Member Role Description:

As a volunteer Research Team Member assisting the Researcher with this project, your role may include one or more of the following: providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation, supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating an interview or focus group, taking notes or analyzing data to assist the Researcher and the *Providence Health Care* organizational change process. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential research data.

Zayna would like to have 3 volunteers from the Master of Arts Leadership co-hort 2008-2 to participate in the research team. Please understand there will be no remuneration offered or provided to you for your participation in this research.

Should more than 3 volunteers from the Master of Arts Leadership cohort 2008-2 volunteer to participate, 3 participants will be selected by random draw. The identity of those selected or not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by Zayna. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between October 6, 2009 and March 5, 2010

Start	End	Description of commitment	Time	Check
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Team orientation and role of ethics	15	Required must attend
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Pilot feedback and active listening skills workshop and debrief	120	
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Pilot coaching skills workshop and debrief	120	
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Review reflective journal questions provide feedback	60	
12-Oct-09	16-Oct-09	Teach feedback and active listening skills workshop	120	
12-Oct-09	16-Oct-09	Teach coaching skills workshop	120	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Review one on one interview questions provide feedback	60	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Pilot one on one interviews	120	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Debrief and data collection process from pilot interview	120	
26-Oct-09	13-Nov-09	Provide feedback on data from actual one on one interviews	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Pilot focus group	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Debrief and data collection process from pilot focus group	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Preparation and hosting of focus group	300	
12-Dec-09	15-Feb-10	Provide feedback on data from actual focus group	120	
06-Oct-09	05-Mar-10	General advice	120	

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not participants will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to participants from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research you will contribute to organizational change assisting the researcher by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation as a member of the research team is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the RRU MA-L program or at RRU will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the research without prejudice. Those who wish to withdraw from the study need express their intent to this researcher. Contact, for the purpose of withdrawal, may be made in person during any time prior to or during the research, or by telephone, by email, by fax or letter up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL PARTICIPANTS TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Participant confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses their identity will not be released without their consent unless required by law or regulation. Research consent forms, audiotapes, observation notes, and master pseudonym list identifying participants may be inspected in the presence of the investigator or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the research. No records that identify participants by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researcher's office.

The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

Participants will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. Participants understand that information that directly discloses participant identity will remain only with the Researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ participant identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without participant knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that their choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on their position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between their identity and their data only Zayna have access to their actual identity. Zayna will maintain their confidentiality. In the transcription of the audiotape recording participants will be given a pseudonym and their name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before agreeing (or not) to participate as a research team member you can contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx

HOW DO I RESPOND TO THIS INVITATION?

Should you elect to participate as a member of the research team please respond to this invitation by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx or emailing Zayna [xxxx](#) within 5 days of receiving this invitation to register (or not) your willingness to participate as a member of the research team. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

When your response is received Zayna will email you the details about the date, time and location of the pilots, debriefs, workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, and focus group and a confidentiality agreement that you will be asked to sign and bring with you to the first team orientation on the role of ethics.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research team member and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services“ at xxx-xxx-xxxx or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx

Please send your response

Name of researcher:

Zayna Kunic

Telephone number:

xxx-xxx-xxxx

Email address:xxxxxx

Yours very truly,

Ann Brown, Project Sponsor
Change Initiatives

APPENDIX B: ACTION RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher: Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxx

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a member of the Royal Roads University (RRU) Master of Arts Leadership (MA-L) 2008-2 program who has received a letter of invitation and expressed an interest in participating in this action research. The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit the individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a research team member working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the RRU MA-L Program, or the larger RRU organization.

If you wish to participate as a research team member, you will be asked to sign this form. If you do decide to take part as a research team member in this study, you are still free to withdraw at

any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the MA-L program or the larger RRU organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of the Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate as a research team member in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study assist the researcher Zayna Kunic.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

In phase one, the researcher Zayna gathered data through one on one interviews about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This occurred in the context of up to 8 PCIS team members who had volunteered in the phase one research which included workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team members volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arise from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the up to eight member PCIS Team who participated in phase one of the study which included the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Included in Phase two are the recruitment will of ten members of the ODG the up to eight PCIS team volunteers from phase one. Although invited, it is not a requirement that they participate in the research. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 PCIS Team members who participated in phase 1 of the study and 4 ODG members.

Zayna would like to have 4 volunteers from the PCIS team and 4 volunteers from the ODG for the focus group. Should more than 4 PCIS team members and 4 ODG members volunteer to participate, 4 from each group will be selected by random draw. The identity of those not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by Zayna. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 of the 8 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study, and 4 of the 10 ODG members.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This invitation is solely for your participation as a research team member.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered ten hours for participants to take part in the entire research cycle. The researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time over and above the allotted 10 hours.

PHASE 1

The first two hours of participant time in the study will be spend in two one hour workshops held in the first week of the study to introduce feedback and active listening and the GROW model for coaching. In the workshop participants will form a dyad with a team mate of their choosing. The two participants will give and receive coaching and feedback to each other in 20 minute increments for a four week period. Also beginning in week one and continuing for five weeks participants will receive reflective journal prompts by email asking them to privately record their thoughts, experiences and feelings regarding their coaching and feedback. The one hour interview will occur in week six and will be audio taped to maintain accuracy and produce verifiable data for the research. A transcription of the interview will be sent to each participant to verify their portion for accuracy, and completeness and participants may request that edits or deletions be made. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

PHASE 2

The focus group is in the design of a guided conversation and will be approximately one and a half hours long and will be held at a private and quiet location during which time participants will have the opportunity to determine recommendations for the organization regarding the following themes which emerged from the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview phases of this study. The final themes may include issues related to:

What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication?
What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback?
In what ways does coaching and feedback impact communication in the workplace?

The focus group will not be tape recorded but flip charts will be used to capture thoughts and ideas from the group. The first 60 minutes will concentrate on gathering potential recommendation and the final 30 minutes will solidify which recommendations will go forward to the ODG and in the final report. A transcription of the focus group will be sent to you to verify your portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and validate final recommendations. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording for the interview and focus group, which will be completed by Zayna or a transcriptionist, participants will be given a pseudonym and their name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving

audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide each participant with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. Participants will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer research member you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the interview and focus group. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team.

Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, and Wilf Humeny and Ann Brown organizational sponsor and a transcriptionist. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a Confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at xxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in and will be accessible only to the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

Research Team Member Role Description:

As a volunteer Research Team Member assisting the Researcher with this project, your role may include one or more of the following: providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation, supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating an interview or focus group, taking notes or analyzing data to assist the Researcher and the *Providence Health Care* organizational change process. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential research data.

I would like to have 3 volunteers from the Master of Arts Leadership co-hort 2008-2 to participate in the research team. Please understand there will be no remuneration offered or provided to you for your participation in this research.

Planting seeds that grow
Version 08 Sep 2009

Should more than 3 volunteers from the Master of Arts Leadership cohort 2008-2 volunteer to participate, 3 participants will be selected by random draw. The identity of those selected or not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by me. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between October 6, 2009 and March 5, 2010.

Start	End	Description of commitment	Time	Check
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Team orientation and role of ethics	15	Required must attend
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Pilot feedback and active listening skills workshop and debrief	120	
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Pilot coaching skills workshop and debrief	120	
06-Oct-09	11-Oct-09	Review reflective journal questions provide feedback	60	
12-Oct-09	16-Oct-09	Teach feedback and active listening skills workshop	120	
12-Oct-09	16-Oct-09	Teach coaching skills workshop	120	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Review one on one interview questions provide feedback	60	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Pilot one on one interviews	120	
19-Oct-09	23-Oct-09	Debrief and data collection process from pilot interview	120	
26-Oct-09	13-Nov-09	Provide feedback on data from actual one on one interviews	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Pilot focus group	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Debrief and data collection process from pilot focus group	120	
02-Dec-09	06-Dec-09	Preparation and hosting of focus group	300	
12-Dec-09	15-Feb-10	Provide feedback on data from actual focus group	120	
06-Oct-09	05-Mar-10	General advice	120	

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not participants will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to participants from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research as a research team member will assist the researcher contribute to organizational change by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation as a member of the research team is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the RRU MA-L program or at RRU will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the research without prejudice. Those who wish to withdraw from the study need express their intent to this researcher. Contact, for the purpose of withdrawal, may be made in person during any time prior to or during the research, or by telephone, by email, by fax or letter up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL PARTICIPANTS TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Participant confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses their identity will not be released without their consent unless required by law or regulation. Research consent forms, audiotapes, observation notes, and master pseudonym list identifying participants may be inspected in the presence of the researcher or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the research. No records that identify participants by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researchers' s office.

The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

Participants will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. Participants understand that information that directly discloses participant identity will remain only with the researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ participant identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without participant knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that their choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on their position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between their identity and their data only Zayna will have access to their actual identity. Zayna will maintain their confidentiality. In the transcription of the audiotape recording they will be given a pseudonym and their name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research.

All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before agreeing (or not) to participate you can contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

HOW DO I RESPOND TO THIS?

Should you have any questions regarding the confidentiality agreement please call xxx-xxx-xxxx. or email Zayna at xxxxx If you elect to participate in the research as a research team member please forward your signed confidentiality agreement and return within five days in the self addressed stamped envelope provided to you.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research team member and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services“ at xxx-xxx-xxxx" or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER

I am clear that in signing this confidentiality agreement I have not given up my legal rights and my signature below indicates that that I have read, understand and appreciate the information concerning this study entitled Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals. Additionally:

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had satisfactory responses to my questions.

I understand that all of the information shared and collected must be kept confidential.

I understand that my participation as a research member in this study is voluntary and that I am completely free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from this study at any time without changing in any way my standing in the Master of Arts Leadership program or at Royal Roads University.

I understand that I am not giving up any of my legal rights as a result of signing this confidentiality agreement.

I have read this form and I freely consent to participate in this study as a research member. I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed and dated confidentiality agreement.

SIGNATURES

Printed name of subject Signature Date

Printed Name of Researcher Signature Date

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INVITATION FOR WORKSHOPS, COACHING AND
FEEDBACK SESSIONS, PRIVATE JOURNALING AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

LETTER OF INVITATION
WORKSHOPS, COACHING AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS, PRIVATE JOURNALING
AND INTERVIEW
PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS)

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher:

Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
XXX-XXX-XXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a member of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the PHC PCIS team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit you as an individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a participant working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the PCIS team or the larger PHC organization.

If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. If you do decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the PCIS team or the larger PHC organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of the Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study will help formulate the recommendations to the organization.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at XXX-XXX-XXXX ext XXXX or by email at xxxx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

The researcher, Zayna will gather data through one on one interviews and focus group about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This will occur in the context of 17 PCIS team members who will have an opportunity to volunteer (or not) to join in the research. Up to 8 PCIS team volunteers will participate in phase one including workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team member volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the

focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arose from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the 17 member PCIS Team each of whom is aware of the research and have expressed an interest in participating in the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Every member of the team will be invited but it is not a requirement that they participate in the research.

Should more than 8 PCIS team members volunteer to participate, 8 participants will be selected by random draw. The identity of those selected or not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by Zayna Kunic. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers will be limited to up to 8 PCIS Team members for participation in the in two workshops, private reflective journaling, one on one interviews and up to 4 Operation Decision Group (ODG) members and up to 4 PCIS team members for participation in a focus group.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This consent is limited to your participation in the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview components.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered ten hours for you to take part in the entire research cycle. The researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time over and above the allotted 10

hours. For this portion of the study the researcher Zayna has allotted 8 hours and it is not anticipated that it will take any additional time over and above the allotted 8 hours.

Two one hour workshops will be held in the first week of the study to introduce feedback and active listening and the GROW model for coaching. In the workshop you will form a dyad with a team mate of your choosing. The two of you will give and receive coaching and feedback to each other in 20 minute increments for a four week period. Also beginning in week one and continuing for five weeks you will receive reflective journal prompts by email asking you to privately record your thoughts, experiences and feelings regarding your coaching and feedback. The one hour interview will occur in week six and will be audio taped to maintain accuracy and produce verifiable data for the research. A transcription of the interview will be sent to you to verify your portion for accuracy, and completeness and you may request that edits or deletions be made. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide you with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer participant you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of your fellow participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the interview. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team.

Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, a transcriptionist, Wilf Humeny, and Ann Brown organizational sponsor. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at XXXXX or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

The information gathered from the interviews will be used with other data gathered (e. g. researcher observation notes) to identify any patterns which emerge regarding the impact of coaching and feedback on communication. Data and results from this study may be presented in future articles or presentations.

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in and will be accessible only to the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

Should you elect to participate in the workshops, private journaling, interview and respond to this invitation, Zayna will email you the details about the date, time and location of the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, and interview; a few reflection questions for your journal; and a letter of free and informed consent that you will be asked to sign and bring with you to the workshop.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Zayna via email xxxxx or phone xxx-xxx-xxxx

Please call or email Zayna Kunic within 5 days of receiving this invitation to register your willingness to participate in the workshops, private journaling, coaching and feedback session and the one on one interview.

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between November 23 and December 21, 2009

You agree to participate in a one hour workshop to learn how to provide feedback and active listening

You agree to participate in a one hour workshop to learn how to provide and receive coaching

You agree to journal weekly, for five weeks, on reflective questions provided by researcher

You agree that my journal reflections will not be submitted as data for this study

You agree to participate in providing coaching and feedback (4 sessions of 20 minutes per session)

You agree to participate in receiving coaching and feedback (4 sessions of 20 minutes per session)

You agree to participate in a one to one interviews

You agree to have the interview sessions audio taped and you understand that you can request that the audio recording device be turned off at any time

You agree to review the transcription of my interview to verify my portion for accuracy and completeness.

You grant permission for data to be used anonymously in publications and conference presentations

You agree to maintain confidentiality outside the collection of data by the researcher of other participants and of any information shared in the study workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, interviews, or discussions regarding the study.

Optional Focus Group

Even if you choose to take part in this study, the focus group is optional and requires that you to sign a separate consent form for the focus group. You can take part in the main study and not take part in the focus group. If you decide not to take part in the focus group your position within the PHC PCIS team or larger PHC organization will not be affected.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not you will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research you will as a participant contribute to organizational change by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the PCIS team or at PHC will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the workshops, coaching and feedback session, private journaling, or interviews without prejudice. If you who wish to withdraw from the study you need express their intent to the researcher Zayna Kunic. Contact, for the purpose of withdrawal, may be made by email or telephone to Zayna Kunic at any time or in person during any of the in the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, journaling, or at the one on one interviews, up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. At the time of withdrawal, you will be given the guarantee that the contributions you have made to the study to date will be destroyed and all references to your contribution will be deleted.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation. You will not be paid for your participation however for this portion of the study PHC has agreed to provide 8 hours of work time for you to participate.

The researcher Zayna has asked permission from my project sponsor Ann Brown and the Operations Decision Group (ODG) members to approach volunteers during regular business hours for the purpose of scheduling the workshops, private journaling, coaching and feedback session and the one on one interviews. These events may be scheduled either during or after hours at a time more convenient for you. I have received permission to approach you with either option.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL MY TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law or regulation. Research audiotapes, observation notes, master pseudonym list and identifying you may be inspected in the presence of the researcher or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the research. No records that identify you by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researchers office.

By signing this consent form, you are authorizing this access to the data for five years. The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. You understand that information that directly discloses your identity will remain only with the Researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ your identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without your knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that your choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on your position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between your identity and your data only Zayna will have access to your actual identity. Zayna will maintain your confidentiality. In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before or during participation, you can contact please contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Should you agree to participate, you may return this signed consent form in person to Zayna or by using the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services at xxx-xxx-xxxx or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx

Please send your response to

Name of researcher: Zayna Kunic
Telephone number: XXX-XXX-XXXX
Email address: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Yours very truly,
Ann Brown, Project Sponsor
Change Initiatives

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FOR WORKSHOPS, COACHING AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS, PRIVATE JOURNALING AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM
WORKSHOPS, COACHING AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS, PRIVATE JOURNALING
AND INTERVIEW
PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS)

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher

Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxx

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a member of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team who has received a letter of invitation and expressed an interest in participating in this action research. The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the PHC PCIS team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit you as an individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a participant working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the PCIS team or the larger PHC organization.

Planting seeds that grow
Version 16 Sep 2009

If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. If you do decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the PCIS team or the larger PHC organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of the Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study will help formulate the recommendations to the organization.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at xxx-xxx-xxxx ext xxxx or by email at xxxxx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

The researcher, Zayna will gather data through one on one interviews and focus group about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This will occur in the context of 17 PCIS team members who will have an opportunity to volunteer (or not) to join in the research. Up to 8 PCIS team volunteers will participate in phase one including workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team member volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the

focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arose from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the 17 member PCIS Team each of whom is aware of the research and have expressed an interest in participating in the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Every member of the team will be invited but it is not a requirement that they participate in the research.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers will be limited to up to 8 PCIS Team members for participation in the in two workshops, private reflective journaling, one on one interviews and up to 4 Operation Decision Group (ODG) members and up to 4 PCIS team members for participation in a focus group.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This consent is limited to your participation in the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview components.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered ten hours for you to take part in the entire research cycle. The researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time over and above the allotted 10 hours. For this portion of the study the researcher Zayna has allotted 8 hours and it is not anticipated that it will take any additional time over and above the allotted 8 hours.

Two one hour workshops will be held in the first week of the study to introduce feedback and active listening and the GROW model for coaching. In the workshop you will form a dyad with a team mate of your choosing. The two of you will give and receive coaching and feedback to each

other in 20 minute increments for a four week period. Also beginning in week one and continuing for five weeks you will receive reflective journal prompts by email asking you to privately record your thoughts, experiences and feelings regarding your coaching and feedback. The one hour interview will occur in week six and will be audio taped to maintain accuracy and produce verifiable data for the research. A transcription of the interview will be sent to you to verify your portion for accuracy, and completeness and you may request that edits or deletions be made. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide you with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer participant you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of your fellow participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the interview. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team.

Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, Wilf Humeny, Ann Brown organizational sponsor and a transcriptionist. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a Confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at xxxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

The information gathered from the interviews will be used with other data gathered (e. g. researcher observation notes) to identify any patterns which emerge regarding the impact of coaching and feedback on communication. Data and results from this study may be presented in future articles or presentations.

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will only be accessible only the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between November 23 and December 21, 2009

You agree to participate in a one hour workshop to learn how to provide feedback and active listening

You agree to participate in a one hour workshop to learn how to provide and receive coaching

You agree to journal weekly, for five weeks, on reflective questions provided by researcher

You agree that my journal reflections will not be submitted as data for this study

You agree to participate in providing coaching and feedback (4 sessions of 20 minutes per session)

You agree to participate in receiving coaching and feedback (4 sessions of 20 minutes per session)

You agree to participate in a one to one interviews

You agree to have the interview sessions audio taped and you understand that you can request that the audio recording device be turned off at any time

You agree to review the transcription of my interview to verify my portion for accuracy and completeness.

You grant permission for data to be used anonymously in publications and conference presentations

You agree to maintain confidentiality outside the collection of data by the researcher of other participants and of any information shared in the study workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, interviews, or discussions regarding the study.

Optional Focus Group

Even if you choose to take part in this study, the focus group is optional and requires that you to sign a separate consent form for the focus group. You can take part in the main study and not take part in the focus group. If you decide not to take part in the focus group your position within the PHC PCIS team or larger PHC organization will not be affected.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not you will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research you will as a participant contribute to organizational change by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the PCIS team or at PHC will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the workshops, coaching and feedback session, private journaling, or interviews without prejudice. If you wish to withdraw from the study you need express your intent to the researcher Zayna Kunic. Contact, for the purpose of withdrawal, may be made by email or telephone to Zayna Kunic at any time or in person during any of the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, journaling, or at the one on one interviews, up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. At the time of withdrawal, you will be given the guarantee that the contributions you have made to the study to date will be destroyed and all references to your contribution will be deleted.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation. You will not be paid for your participation however for this portion of the study PHC has agreed to provide 8 hours of work time for you to participate.

The researcher Zayna has asked permission from my project sponsor Ann Brown and the Operations Decision Group (ODG) members to approach volunteers during regular business hours for the purpose of scheduling the workshops, private journaling, coaching and feedback session and the one on one interviews. These events may be scheduled either during or after hours at a time more convenient for you. I have received permission to approach you with either option.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann

Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL MY TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law or regulation. Research audiotapes, observation notes, master pseudonym list and identifying you may be inspected in the presence of the researcher or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the research. No records that identify you by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researcher's office.

By signing this consent form, you are authorizing this access to the data for five years. The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. You understand that information that directly discloses your identity will remain only with the Researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ your identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without your knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that your choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on your position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between your identity and your data only Zayna will have access to your actual identity. Zayna will maintain your confidentiality. In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before or during participation, you can contact please contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Should you agree to participate, you may return this signed consent form in person to Zayna at the workshop.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services“ at xxx-xxx-xxxx" or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

CONSENT FORM
PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS)
WORKSHOPS, COACHING AND FEEDBACK SESSIONS, PRIVATE JOURNALLING
AND INTERVIEW

I am clear that in signing this consent form I have not given up my legal rights and my signature below indicates that that I have read, understand and appreciate the information concerning this study entitled Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Additionally:

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had satisfactory responses to my questions.

I understand that all of the information collected will be kept confidential.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am completely free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from this study at any time without changing in any way my position within the Patient Clinical Information Systems team or the larger Providence Health Care organization.

I understand that I am not giving up any of my legal rights as a result of signing this consent form.

I have read this form and I freely consent to participate in this study. I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form.

SIGNATURES

Printed name of subject

Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP

LETTER OF INVITATION
FOCUS GROUP
PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS) AND
OPERATIONS
DECISION GROUP (ODG)

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher:

Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxxx

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a member of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team or a member of the Operations Decision Group (ODG). The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the PHC PCIS team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit you as an individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a participant working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the PCIS team, ODG member, or the larger PHC organization.

If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. If you do decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the PCIS team, ODG member, or the larger PHC organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of the Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study will help formulate the recommendations to the organization.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at xxx-xxx-xxxx ext xxxx or by email at xx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

In phase one, the researcher Zayna gathered data through one on one interviews about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This occurred in the context of up to 8 PCIS team members who had volunteered in the phase one research which included workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team members volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arise from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the up to eight member PCIS Team who participated in phase one of the study which included the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Included in Phase two are the recruitment will of ten members of the ODG the up to eight PCIS team volunteers from phase one. Although invited, it is not a requirement that they participate in the research. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study and 4 ODG members.

Zayna would like to have 4 volunteers from the PCIS team and 4 volunteers from the ODG for the focus group. Should more than 4 PCIS team members and 4 ODG members volunteer to participate, 4 from each group will be selected by random draw. The identity of those not selected by random draw will be held in confidence by Zayna. Volunteers whose names are not drawn will be informed by way of an email. Those selected will be contacted by the researcher with further information concerning their involvement in the study.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 of the 8 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study, and 4 of the 10 ODG members.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This invitation is solely for your participation in the focus group.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered two hours for you to take part in the focus group. The researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time over and above the allotted 2 hours. The focus group is in the design of a guided conversation, will be scheduled between January 3-7, 2010.

It will be approximately one and a half hours long and will be held at a private and quiet location during which time you will have the opportunity to determine recommendations for the organization regarding the following themes which emerged from the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview phases of this study. The final themes may include issues related to:

What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication?
What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback?
In what ways does coaching and feedback impact communication in the workplace?

The focus group will not be tape recorded but flip charts will be used to capture thoughts and ideas from the group. The first 60 minutes will concentrate on gathering potential recommendation and the final 30 minutes will solidify which recommendations will go forward to the ODG and in the final report. A transcription of the focus group will be sent to you to verify your portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and validate final recommendations. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide you with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer participant you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of your fellow participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the focus group. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team. Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, and Wilf Humeny and Ann Brown organizational sponsor and a transcriptionist. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a Confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at xxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

The information gathered from the focus group (flip charts) will be used with other data gathered (researcher observation notes) to identify any patterns which emerge regarding the impact of coaching and feedback on communication. Data and results from this study may be presented in future articles or presentations.

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in and will be accessible only to the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between January 3-7, 2010.

I agree to participate in a one and a half hour focus group

I agree to review the transcription of my interview to verify my portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and identify the recommendation for the organization from the focus group.

I grant permission for data to be used anonymously in publications and conference presentations

I agree to maintain confidentiality outside the collection of data by the researcher of any information shared in the focus group.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not you will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research you will contribute to organizational change by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the PCIS team or at PHC will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the focus group without prejudice. Those who wish to withdraw from the study need express their intent to this researcher. Contact, for the purpose of withdrawal, may be made in person during any time prior to or during the focus group, or by telephone, by email, by fax or letter up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice. If you as a focus group participant wish to withdraw part way through a focus group you may do so with the understanding that once information has been collected, that information becomes part of the collectively generated body of findings.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation. You will not be paid for your participation however for this portion of the study PHC has agreed to provide 2 hours of work time for you to participate.

The researcher Zayna has asked permission from my project sponsor Ann Brown and the Operations Decision Group (ODG) members to approach volunteers during regular business hours for the purpose of scheduling the focus group. This event may be scheduled either during or after hours at a time more convenient for you. I have received permission to approach you with either option.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL MY TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law or regulation. Research consent forms, audiotapes, observation notes, and master pseudonym list identifying you may be inspected in the presence of the researcher or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads

University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the research. No records that identify you by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researchers' office.

The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic and for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. You understand that information that directly discloses your identity will remain only with the Researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ your identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without your knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that your choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on your position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between your identity and your data only Zayna will have access to your actual identity. Zayna will maintain your confidentiality. In the transcription of the audiotape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before agreeing (or not) to participate you can contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx

HOW DO I RESPOND TO THIS INVITATION?

Should you elect to participate in the focus group research please respond to this invitation by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx or emailing Zayna [xxxx](#) within 5 days of receiving this invitation to register (or not) your willingness to participate in the focus group.

Zayna will email you the details about the date, time and location of the focus group and a letter of free and informed consent that you will be asked to read, sign and return at the focus group.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services“ at xxx-xxx-xxxxx or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Please send your response to

Name of researcher: Zayna Kunic
Telephone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx
Email address:xxxxx

Yours very truly,
Ann Brown, Project Sponsor
Change Initiatives

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM
FOCUS GROUP
PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS) AND
OPERATIONS
DECISION GROUP (ODG)

DATE:

Title of Study

Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Researcher: Zayna Kunic
Royal Roads University Masters of Arts Student
xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxx

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a member of the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team or a member of the Operations Decision Group (ODG) who has received a letter of invitation and expressed an interest in participating in this action research. The study is concerned with the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within a group of IT professionals, specifically members of the PHC PCIS team. Action Research principles hold that the research benefit you as an individual participant and the larger organization. This action research will involve you as a participant working together with the researcher to generate learning through a continuous cycle of planning action, taking action, evaluating action and diagnosing.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, your decision is not binding and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to your position within the PCIS team, ODG member, or the larger PHC organization.

If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. If you do decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reasons for your decision. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to provide any reason for your decision not to participate nor will you lose the benefit of your position within the PCIS team, ODG member, or the larger PHC organization which you are entitled or are presently receiving.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and to discuss it with your family and friends before you decide.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY?

This project is being sponsored by Providence Health Care (PHC) under the direction of Ann Brown, Change Initiatives, and the leadership of the Operations Decision Group. You have been invited to voluntarily participate in this study to discover the impacts on communication when coaching and feedback is introduced and practiced within the PCIS team. Your experiences, thoughts, and perceptions through the course of the study will help formulate the recommendations to the organization.

The research is being conducted by Zayna Kunic in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Leadership degree at Royal Roads University. Confirmation of her status at Royal Roads University can be affirmed by contacting Dr. Stan Amaladas, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxx

BACKGROUND

The action research project will involve gathering data to learn the impact practicing peer coaching and feedback has on communication within the Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information Systems (PCIS) team. The PHC organization is considering implementing a coaching program and is very interested in the experiences and recommendations from the PCIS team and the research findings.

In phase one, the researcher Zayna gathered data through one on one interviews about the ways in which peer coaching and feedback contributes to workplace communication. This occurred in the context of up to 8 PCIS team members who had volunteered in the phase one research which included workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private reflective journaling, and one on one interviews.

Phase two is the focus group where the 8 PCIS team member volunteers and 10 Operations Decision Group (ODG) members are invited to participate and volunteer (or not). Up to 4 of the 8 PCIS team members volunteers from phase one and 4 of the 10 ODG members will attend the focus group to discuss recommendations for the organization based on the themes that arise from one on one interviews.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to introduce within Providence Health Care (PHC) Patient Clinical Information System (PCIS) team a coaching and feedback environment to discover the impact that practicing peer coaching and feedback has on a group of IT professionals and whether the application of these skills enhances communication in the workplace.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Recruitment will be from the up to eight member PCIS Team who participated in phase one of the study which included the two workshops to learn coaching and feedback, practicing peer coaching and feedback in dyads, recording private reflective journal entries, and attending a one on one interview. Included in Phase two are the recruitment will of ten members of the ODG the up to eight PCIS team volunteers from phase one. Although invited, it is not a requirement that they participate in the research. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study and 4 ODG members.

WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Anyone who is not a member of the PCIS team or the ODG will not be invited to participate. Volunteers in the focus group will be limited to up 4 of the 8 PCIS Team members who participated in phase one of the study, and 4 of the 10 ODG members.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study will be conducted on site at PHC. The entire study consists of five components: two workshops, four coaching and feedback sessions, four private journal entries, an interview and the focus group. This consent is solely for your participation in the focus group.

Overview of the Study

PHC has graciously offered two hours for you to take part in the focus group. The researcher does not anticipate this taking any additional time over and above the allotted 2 hours.

The focus group is in the design of a guided conversation, will be scheduled between January 3-7, 2010

It will be approximately one and a half hours long and will be held at a private and quiet location during which time you will have the opportunity to determine recommendations for the organization regarding the following themes which emerged from the workshops, coaching and feedback sessions, private journaling, and interview phases of this study. The final themes may include issues related to:

What are the barriers and enablers to coaching and feedback as tools for communication?
What are the characteristics and competencies associated with coaching and feedback?
In what ways does coaching and feedback impact communication in the workplace?

The focus group will not be tape recorded and flip charts will also be used to capture thoughts and ideas from the group. The first 60 minutes will concentrate on gathering potential recommendation and the final 30 minutes will solidify which recommendations will go forward to the ODG and in the final report. A transcription of the focus group will be sent to you to verify your portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and validate final recommendations. This should take approximately 30 minutes.

In the transcription of the tape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. The transcription will be done by either Zayna or a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist will not be an employee of PHC and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the audio recordings. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential. Once the study is complete, Zayna Kunic will provide you with an opportunity to view the results of the study. Data from this research will be stored anonymously. You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research which may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

As a volunteer participant you will be asked to agree to maintain the confidentiality of the identity and contributions of your fellow participants.

Only Zayna Kunic the researcher will have access to any of the anonymous individual responses from the focus group. Prior to these analyses Zayna will ensure that any information that could be personally identifying, either directly or indirectly, has been removed from the transcripts. Zayna will use these transcripts to analyze data and prepare a final report with some assistance of her research team.

Zayna's research team will consist of fellow learners from her MA cohort, Wilf Humeny, Ann Brown organizational sponsor and a transcriptionist. All members of Zayna's research team will be required to sign a Confidentiality agreement ensuring they will respect confidentiality prior to being given access to any data. Dr. Nancy Greer is the Faculty Supervisor for this research study and she can provide further details on this research or process if you wish. You may contact her at
xxxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx

The information gathered from the focus group (flip charts) will be used with other data gathered (researcher observation notes) to identify any patterns which emerge regarding the impact of coaching and feedback on communication. Data and results from this study may be presented in future articles or presentations.

In compliance with the Providence Health Care Research Ethics Board and Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated will be kept confidential. All research material will be kept in a locked filing and will be accessible only to the researcher Zayna Kunic.

If You Decide to Join This Study: Specific Procedures

Should you have any questions regarding the consent form please call xxx-xxx-xxxx or email Zayna [xxxxxx](#). If you elect to participate in the focus group research forward your signed consent form and return within five days in the self addressed stamped envelope provided to you.

As a voluntary participant in this project, you understand that you will be agreeing to participate in each of the following activities between January 3 – 7, 2010

I agree to participate in a one and a half hour focus group

I agree to review the transcription of my interview to verify my portion for accuracy, provide clarity, and identify the recommendation for the organization from the focus group.

I grant permission for data to be used anonymously in publications and conference presentations

I agree to maintain confidentiality outside the collection of data by the researcher of any information shared in the focus group.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No one knows whether or not you will benefit from this study. There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. Anticipated benefits from participation include learning and practicing a new method of communication. In participating in this research you will contribute to organizational change by providing recommendations to the organization on the utility of coaching and feedback as a communication tool at PHC.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO WITHDRAW MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and your future position within the PCIS team or at PHC will not be impacted.

You may withdraw at any time during the focus group without prejudice. Those who wish to withdraw from the study need express their intent to this researcher. Contact, for the purpose of

withdrawal, may be made in person during any time prior to or during the focus group, or by telephone, by email, by fax or letter up to the time when a final report on the outcome of the research project is prepared for distribution. You will be notified of that date. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice. If you as a focus group participant wish to withdraw part way through a focus group you may do so with the understanding that once information has been collected, that information becomes part of the collectively generated body of findings.

RIGHTS AND COMPENSATION

There will be no costs to you for participation in this study. You will not be charged for participating in this research. You will not incur any personal expenses as a result of participation in this study so there will be no reimbursement for your participation. You will not be paid for your participation however for this portion of the study PHC has agreed to provide 2 hours of work time for you to participate.

The researcher Zayna has asked permission from my project sponsor Ann Brown and the Operations Decision Group (ODG) members to approach volunteers during regular business hours for the purpose of scheduling the focus group. This event may be scheduled either during or after hours at a time more convenient for you. I have received permission to approach you with either option.

CAN I BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE STUDY?

If you are not complying with the requirements of the study, or for any other reason, the study researcher may withdraw you from the study.

AFTER THE STUDY IS FINISHED

Zayna the researcher will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of her findings and recommendations which she will make available to you. The presentation will be made in person by Zayna at an ODG meeting in February 2010. A copy of the entire report will be given to Ann Brown PHC organizational sponsor as well as the PCIS team leader Wilf Humeny. In addition if you are interested Zayna will offer a copy of the entire report to you.

WILL MY TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law or regulation. Research consent forms, audiotapes, observation notes, and master pseudonym list identifying you may be inspected in the presence of the researcher or his or her designate, by representatives of Royal Roads University and the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board for the purposes of monitoring the

research. No records that identify you by name or initials will be allowed to leave the researcher's office.

By signing this consent form, you are authorizing this access to the data for five years. The data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by Zayna Kunic for 5 years after which the hard copies will be shredded, the thumb drive erased, and the audio tapes demagnetized by Zayna.

You will not be identified in any publication resulting from the study and data from this research will be stored anonymously and may be used or published in future papers, seminars, and conference proceedings.

Data will not be transferred out of Canada. You understand that information that directly discloses your identity will remain only with the Researcher. Information that could be used to „link“ your identity ("Anonymized Identification") will not be released without your knowledge or consent unless required by law or regulation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I am a former contractor of PHC and personal friend of Wilf Humeny, PCIS Team leader. As participation in the study is limited to PCIS team volunteers I have obtained the assurance of Wilf that your choice to participate or not participate in the study will not positively or negatively impact on your position with PHC or the PCIS team. To further protect the links between your identity and your data only Zayna and Ann Brown will have access to your actual identity. Both Ann and Zayna will sign a confidentiality agreement to maintain your confidentiality. In the transcription of the audiotape recording you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not appear in the transcription or in any other material used in the research. All responses will be kept completely anonymous within the final project report and are strictly confidential.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY DURING MY PARTICIPATION?

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study before or during participation, you can contact please contact the researcher Zayna Kunic at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Should you agree to participate, you may return this signed consent form in person to Zayna or by using the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY RIGHTS AS A SUBJECT DURING THE STUDY?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the „Research Subject Information Line in the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services“ at xxx-xxx-xxxx or the Chair of the UBC-PHC Research Ethics Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

PATIENT CLINICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (PCIS) AND OPERATIONS
DECISION GROUP (ODG) FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

I am clear that in signing this consent form I have not given up my legal rights and my signature below indicates that that I have read, understand and appreciate the information concerning this study entitled Planting seeds that grow: Coaching conversations with IT professionals.

Additionally:

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had satisfactory responses to my questions.

I understand that all of the information collected will be kept confidential.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am completely free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from this study at any time without changing in any way my position within the Patient Clinical Information Systems team or the larger Providence Health Care organization.

I understand that I am not giving up any of my legal rights as a result of signing this consent form.

I have read this form and I freely consent to participate in this study. I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form.

SIGNATURES

Printed name of subject

Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: WEEKLY JOURNAL REFLECTION EMAILS

From: Zayna Kunic
Sent: 13-Dec-09 9:18 AM
To: XXXX
Subject: Action Research Coaching and Feedback - Week IV

Good Morning,

Week IV Dec 14 – 18 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - With your final coaching and feedback session completed what awareness do you have of ways in which coaching and feedback has influenced communication between you and your coaching partner outside of the coaching relationship? How about in other areas of your life, to what extent has how you communicated changed? In what ways has it changed?

I am absolutely available if you want to chat about coaching or your coaching experience. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support you!

Cheers,
Zayna
xxx-xxx-xxxx

From: Zayna Kunic
Sent: 6-Dec-09 11:01 AM
To: XXXX
Subject: Action Research Coaching and Feedback - Week III

Good Morning,

Week III Dec 7 – 11 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - As you practice using open ended questions in your coaching and feedback sessions what do you notice? How does allowing others the time to come up with their own solutions make you feel? How difficult is that for you? How might you make it easier?

I am absolutely available if you want to chat about coaching or your coaching experience. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support you!

Cheers,
Zayna
xxx-xxx-xxxx

From: Zayna Kunic
Sent: 29-Nov-09 2:18 PM
To: XXXX
Subject: Action Research Coaching and Feedback - Week II

Good Afternoon,

Week II November 30 – Dec 4 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - After your coaching and feedback session this week consider what happened during your session. How helpful was the model? To what extent were you able to accomplish the objectives within the allotted time? Describe anything that happened that surprised you?

Week IV & V – Dec 18 & 21 Interviews (Lisa will be booking rooms at City Square)

I am absolutely available if you want to chat about coaching or your coaching experience. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support you!

Cheers,
Zayna
xxx-xxx-xxxx

From: Zayna Kunic [mailto:zkunic@shaw.ca]
Sent: 25-Nov-09 8:52 AM
To:
Subject: Action Research - Coaching & Feedback Week I

Hello,

Thanks again for volunteering to participate in our Action Research project at PHC. As you begin to practice coaching and feedback this week I wanted to remind you all that I am available throughout by email or phone to talk, coach, listen, encourage so please take advantage of me as resource.

Schedule

Week 1 Nov 23 – 27

Week 2 Nov 30 – Dec 4

Week 3 Dec 7 – 11

Week 4 Dec 14 – 18

Coach dyad partner for 20 minutes

Be coached by dyad partner for 20 minutes

Write a journal entry based on reflection

Week I November 23 – 27 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - As you practiced coaching and feedback this week what were the challenges for you to remain present? What might you do in the future to assist you in being present?

Week II November 30 – Dec 4 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - After your coaching and feedback session this week consider what happened during your session. How helpful was the model? To what extent were you able to accomplish the objectives within the allotted time? Describe anything that happened that surprised you?

Week III Dec 7 – 11 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - As you practice using open ended questions in your coaching and feedback sessions what do you notice? How does allowing others the time to come up with their own solutions make you feel? How difficult is that for you? How might you make it easier?

Week IV Dec 14 – 18 Coach & Be Coached & Journal

Journal Reflection - With your final coaching and feedback session completed what awareness do you have of ways in which coaching and feedback has influenced communication between you and your coaching partner outside of the coaching relationship? How about in other areas of your life, to what extent has how you communicated changed? In what ways has it changed?

One on One Interview

I would like to schedule a one hour interview with each of you which can take place any time after your last coaching session in week 4 (Dec 14 – 18) or early week 5 (Dec 19 – 23). This conversation can happen in person or over the phone, at work or some other private location, during working hours or after – I think you get the picture.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support you!

Cheers,
Zayna
xxx-xxx-xxxx

APPENDIX H: EMAIL WITH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

From: Zayna Kunic [mailto:xxxxxxxxxxxxx]
Sent: 11-Dec-09 8:52 PM
To:
Subject: Action Research - Coaching & Feedback Interviews

Hello,

Thanks again for booking your one hour one on one interview with me. This is a quick reminder that our interview is scheduled for xxxxx at xxxxx.

To help you prepare for the interview I am including the interview questions below and asking that if you are comfortable doing so please bring along your weekly journal entries to assist you in answering the questions. Alternatively, you may want to review your journal entries before the interview.

1. As you know the focus of this research is to assess the impact of coaching and feedback on communication within the PCIS team.
 - Tell be about your experience using coaching as a communication tool?
 - Tell be about your experience using feedback as a communication tool?
2. I am interested to know more about how you communicated with others prior to learning coaching and feedback, would you share some of your experiences?
 - How did you communicate in your coaching and feedback sessions?
 - In what way do you feel you communicate differently today?
3. Often when we are learning new skills there are challenges.
 - Would you tell me about any challenges you had with coaching?
 - Tell me about any challenges you had with feedback?
4. As an organization PHC is interested in knowing what your thoughts and ideas on coaching and feedback. Let's begin with what you learned about yourself, if anything, through
 - Being coached or coaching someone else.
 - Providing or receiving feedback
5. What would you recommend the organization do around coaching and feedback?

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support you!

Cheers,
Zayna
xxx-xxx-xxxx

APPENDIX I: PROTOCOL AND AGENDA FOR FOCUS GROUP

Agenda

Introduction & Protocol (15 minutes)

- Explain the purpose of the study
- Purpose of focus groups
- Encourage honesty
- Share both positive and negative
- Be respectful
- No interrupting
- Confidentiality
- Assigning of pseudonyms
- Introduce research team
- Introduce each other

Questions and discussions (60 minutes)

Break (5 minutes)

Recommendations (30 minutes)

Debrief (5 minutes)

Questions and Answers (5 minutes)

APPENDIX J: WORKSHOP ON FEEDBACK AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Agenda for workshop

- Confirmation of signed informed consent (5 minutes)
- Introductions (5 minutes)
- Define trust in relationships (5 minutes)
- Trust building exercise and debrief (15 minutes)
- Define feedback and active listening (10 minutes)
- Active listening feedback exercise and debrief (15 minutes)
- Wrap Up and questions (5 minutes)

Proposed learning goals for the workshop

- To consider the climate of trust that supports feedback relationships.
- To explore the communication skills necessary for effective feedback.
- To have an opportunity to practice and discuss feedback skills.

Presentation will include

- Power point slides
- Handouts on
 - Building Trust
 - Feedback
 - Active Listening
 - Reflective journal questions
 - Dates for
 - Coaching Workshop
 - Coaching dyads
 - One on One Interviews
 - Focus group

APPENDIX K: WORKSHOP ON COACHING

Agenda for workshop

- Introductions (5 minutes)
- Define coaching (5 minutes)
- Introduce GROW model and demonstrate (15 minutes)
- Practice using GROW model (20 minutes)
- Debrief (10 minutes)
- Wrap Up and questions (5 minutes)

Proposed learning goals for the workshop

- To learn how to coach using the GROW method (Whitmore, 2002)
- To practice coaching using the GROW method (Whitmore, 2002)
- To discuss coaching and feedback skills

Presentation will include

- Power point slides
- Handouts on
 - Grow Model
 - Coaching Questions
 - Dates for
 - Coaching dyads
 - One on One Interviews
 - Focus group