

# Handbook of Coaching Psychology

A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

SECOND EDITION

Edited by  
Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow

“The *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is an essential guide to the theory and practice of coaching, across settings. Its strength lies in the wide range of contemporary approaches described and their application to a number of contexts. The book is underpinned by evidence-based practice and research, thereby emphasising the psychology of coaching practice. This excellent book, edited by Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow, has contributions from leading practitioners and should be essential reading for coaching trainees and practitioners alike.”

– **Professor Robert Bor**, Consultant Clinical & Aviation Psychologist,  
Dynamic Change Consultants Ltd, London, UK

“I highly recommend this second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*. This enormously useful update is a rigorous and complete compilation of a wide-range of models and approaches by excellent experienced professionals. Including issues such as the impact of new technologies in psychology coaching and the importance of supervision, it provides a current guide to the state-of-the-art and the latest trends of psychology coaching within an international framework.”

– **Victòria Conesa**, Psychological Coach; Board of Directors of Psychology Coaching at the Official Psychology College of Catalonia; trainer and presenter on ‘The Culture of Healthy Companies’, ‘Well-being at work’ and ‘Stress Prevention’

“Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow have produced a seminal and very significant *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*. They have brought together leading figures in this growing and important field, highlighting the various forms of coaching and their impact. This is a ‘must buy’ for anybody interested in coaching psychology...it will become the coaching bible for the field.”

– **Professor Cary L. Cooper**, Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Lancaster University, UK

“This handbook offers a comprehensive and integrative perspective over the field of coaching psychology. This new edition has significantly increased the substance and the range of contributors and contributions. It provides an overview to coaching psychology key concepts and addresses important issues relating to evidence-based knowledge in the coaching field, training, supervision and the profession of coaching. The reader is introduced to various approaches to coaching psychology, derived from both traditional psychotherapy and modern approaches in psychotherapy. The applications of coaching psychology explore features of an effective coaching practice in various contexts. An excellent resource for both students and coaching professionals seeking to understand the psychology of coaching.”

– **Dr Oana A. David**, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the International Coaching Institute at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and President of the International Association of Cognitive Behavioral Coaching

“This is a unique publication both in terms of depth and breadth. Whether you are new to the field, or an experienced practitioner, this second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* gives you thorough guidance for an evidence-based practice, and inspiring examples to take your practice as a coach and coaching psychologist to the next level. Definitely a must-read to anyone interested in a field that only grows in both academia and industry, and that can do so much to ensure the continual development of individuals and teams in our contemporary society.”

– **Dr Gisele Dias** PhD CPsychol; Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King’s College London, UK

“Bringing together some of the world’s leading experts on coaching psychology this book provides a thorough and highly interesting exploration of the field as it stands today. Undoubtedly this is a book you must read if you’re interested in the subject and want to stay up to date with its latest developments.”

– **Per-Olof Eriksson**, licensed psychologist, Sweden. Honorary Vice President of ISfCP and initiator and chair of the Swedish Association for Coaching Psychologists

“Looking for a framework to update your coaching practice? The long-awaited second edition of this milestone book offers inspiring ideas on how to improve the scientific foundation and enhance quality development in coaching. It holds great promise as a guide for critical evaluation and development and shows ways on how to link existing knowledge bases. The contributors highlight psychological processes and discuss perspectives to integrate approaches and techniques. This book will advance our understanding of applications and professional topics such as sustainability questions in coaching.”

– **Dr Lisbeth Hurni**, certified Coaching Psychologist, Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology;  
Honorary Vice President, International Society for Coaching Psychology

“The new edition is by far the most comprehensive and authoritative book on coaching psychology currently available. With 43 chapters written by prominent and respected experts in the field, the book provides rich insights and reports on new developments on different perspectives, approaches and applications in the field of coaching psychology. The book is indeed inspirational and an essential resource for both academic and coaching practitioners.”

– **Aletta Odendaal**, Professor in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa;  
Past-President, Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa;  
Founding Member, Interest Group of Coaching and Consulting Psychology

“Being intimately involved in the emergence and the development of the Coaching Psychology profession in Ireland, and also in the development and teaching of the First Masters in Coaching Psychology to be delivered in an Irish University (University College Cork), the first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* was ground-breaking and a necessary roadmap for teacher, scientist and practitioner. This second and more comprehensive edition is timely and will inform the ongoing and necessary conversation around the further development, teaching and practice of the subject area. I welcome that.”

– **Hugh O’Donovan** CPsychol., Ps.S.I, Coaching Psychologist and Author of *Mindful Walking*

“For anyone interested in the field of individual, team and organizational learning in contemporary business environments, the new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* presents some of the most exciting developments in contemporary psychology. The expanded edition now includes chapters which highlight the fastest growing fields of today’s coaching, such as team coaching, coaching culture and the role of technology in coaching. Readers will find probably the most comprehensive answers to the questions about the research-based evidence, plurality of psychological perspectives and application contexts related to coaching. Finally, the *Handbook* fulfills a mission to grow the coaching profession by connecting it to the cutting edge thinking in psychological science.”

– **Jelena Pavlovic**, PhD, senior research associate at the Institute of Educational Research,  
founder of Koučing Centar, Serbia, and developer of ISCP recognized  
and ICF accredited coach training programs

“The first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* provided a momentous and valuable resource for researchers, lecturers and practitioners. As the discipline has been growing expansively since 2008 we welcome this second edition with readiness and excitement. The increase in overall chapters plus the expansion of the approaches part into six sections highlights the range of potential ways that coaching psychologists can offer innovative and evidence-based methods in their coaching practices. We are seeing a focus on new areas for coaching such as neuroscience as well as separate chapters for ontological and somatic coaching. As a positive psychology coach I welcome additional chapters on mindfulness in coaching and compassion-focussed coaching. It is indeed the significant second edition we have been waiting for.”

– **Dr Ceri Sims**, CPsychol. Programme leader for Leadership and Coaching courses  
and senior course lecturer on MSc Applied Positive Psychology, Buckinghamshire  
New University, UK; Director, Positive Minds Alliance Ltd

“The *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* is an excellent resource of psychological theories and best practice for anybody interested in coaching psychology. The second edition of this fantastic book offers an extensive overview of the latest trends in coaching, psychology and management in a VUCA world. This is a must have for coaching psychologists, coaches and those working within related fields.”

– **Dr Anna Syrek-Kosowska**, Executive Coach, Coaching Supervisor (CSA) and Honorary VP of the ISCP, Poland

“As practitioner and teacher of coaching psychology I’m always looking for books that provide answer to the whys and hows of coaching. There are many “how to” coaching books on the market, but coaching psychologists deserve more. The second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is for us. It provides a clear overview of the most important psychological coaching theories and approaches. I’m especially enthusiastic about the pluralistic coaching approach. It gives new perspectives to the fundamental questions of coaching, including the boundaries between coaching and counselling and the success criteria of the coaching relationship. The second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* is a must-have guide to being a coaching psychologist in today’s VUCA world, in which dealing with complexity and chaos is an unavoidable task and coaching goals could be achieved effectively when we consider bio-psycho-socio factors and their mutual interactions. The first edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* was the main reference of my university course. Now the second edition will be the first on the reference list.”

– **Dr Vince Szekely**, PhD, coaching psychologist; President, Hungarian Association for Coaching Psychology

“With a clear and practice-focused approach, this book provides a comprehensive and robust foundation for coaching psychology. It is essential reading for new researchers and graduate students who are interested in coaching psychology, and those who want to base their professional practice on the coaching approach.”

– **Dr Qing Wang**, Associate Professor in Educational Psychology at School of Psychology and Cognitive Science, East China Normal University

“A rich and exciting new text for all who are interested in expanding their knowledge, skills and vision of coaching and coaching psychology. This new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* builds extensively and seamlessly on the original handbook. Retaining all that was excellent in the original it shares yet further breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of theory, research and practice. In addition, there is a section focussing on those often tricky professional and ethical issues faced by practitioners. I recommend this comprehensive handbook as a core text for practitioners, trainers and trainees.”

– **Professor Mary Watts**, PhD, CPsychol.; Emeritus Professor, City, University of London, UK; Director, Meyler Campbell Mastered (Business Coach) Programme



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# Handbook of Coaching Psychology

*The Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A Guide for Practitioners* provides a clear and extensive guide to the theory, research and practice of coaching psychology.

In this new and expanded edition, an international selection of leading coaching psychologists and coaches outlines recent developments from a broad spectrum of areas. Part One examines perspectives and research in coaching psychology, looking at both the past and the present as well as assessing future directions. Part Two presents a range of approaches to coaching psychology, including behavioural and cognitive behavioural, humanistic, existential, being-focused, constructive and systemic approaches. Part Three covers application, context and sustainability, focusing on themes including individual transitions in life and work, and complexity and system-level interventions. Finally, Part Four explores a range of topics within the professional and ethical practice of coaching psychology. The book also includes several appendices outlining the key professional bodies, publications, research centres and societies in coaching psychology, making this an indispensable resource.

Unique in its scope, this key text will be essential reading for coaching psychologists and coaches, academics and students of coaching psychology, coaching and mentoring and business psychology. It will be an important text for anyone seeking to understand the psychology underpinning their coaching practice, including human resource, learning and development and management professionals, and executives in a coaching role.

**Stephen Palmer** is a leading coaching psychologist and is president of the International Society for Coaching Psychology. He is professor of practice at the Wales Institute for Work Based Learning and was the first chair of the British Psychology Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology.

**Alison Whybrow** has been involved in the development of the coaching psychology profession since the early 2000s. A past chair of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology, Alison is now an honorary research fellow at the ISCP International Centre for Coaching Psychology Research. She runs her own coaching and consulting business.



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A Guide for Practitioners

Second Edition

*Edited by Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow*



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To Josh, Sam, Harry, Aniket, Tejal and Maggie, of course. (SP)

To all those yet to dwell on this one beautiful earth. (AW)

To all who have supported and continue to support the development of the theory, research, practice and profession of coaching psychology around the world.  
(AW and SP)



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# Editors

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## Stephen Palmer

Professor Stephen Palmer, PhD, is founder director of the Centre for Coaching, London, UK. In 2004 he became the first chair of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP) and in 2005 he launched the Coaching Psychology Unit at City University, London (now City, University of London). In 2016 he became adjunct professor of coaching psychology at the Coaching Psychology Unit, Aalborg University, Denmark and in 2018, he became professor of practice at the Wales Institute for Work Based Learning, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. He is honorary consultant director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and co-ordinating director of the ISCP International Centre for Coaching Psychology Research. He is honorary president and fellow of both the International Society for Coaching Psychology and the International Stress Management Association. He has written or edited over 50 books on a range of topics and co-edits a number of journals in the field including the *European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*. In 2008 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award in Recognition of Distinguished Contribution to Coaching Psychology from the BPS SGCP. His interests include jazz, astronomy, coastal walking and art.

## Alison Whybrow

Alison, together with colleagues in the UK and internationally, was at the forefront of the development of coaching psychology in the early 2000s. She has contributed papers, chapters and books on the subject of coaching psychology, led research into developing coaching culture and, for many years, directed accredited programmes in coaching practice with i-coach academy. As a consulting editor to coaching and coaching psychology journals and a contributor to the International Society for Coaching Psychology as well as university programmes across Europe, Alison maintains a keen focus on developments in the coaching psychology field whilst running a practice as a coach, consultant and coaching supervisor located in London, UK. Alison specialises in leadership coaching, senior team development and system change.

She holds a degree and PhD in psychology from the University of Liverpool and a number of professional qualifications related to her work as a coach and consultant. Alison works across sectors with both large and small organisations. As a coach and facilitator, Alison integrates a range of psychological and philosophical underpinnings, leadership frameworks and an ecological world view. Alison's interests continue to emerge as her family and community grow around her. She is deeply passionate about the possibilities for transforming our human-earth relationship.

# Contributors

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**Eunice Aquilina** has spent 30 years in the field of organisation development, working with leaders across the globe. She has studied somatics for over a decade and is an accredited coach and coach supervisor. Eunice is the author of *Embodying Authenticity: A Somatic Path to Transforming Self, Team and Organisation*. Email: [eunice@eaconsult.co.uk](mailto:eunice@eaconsult.co.uk)

**Hannah Azizollah** is a chartered occupational psychologist and has worked in the field of assessment, development, OD and change for many years. Most of her current work involves coaching individuals and teams through a wide range of changes or transitions.

**Tatiana Bachkirova** MEd, MSc, PhD, CPsychol, AFBPsS, is professor of coaching psychology and director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies at Oxford Brookes University. Her area of expertise is developmental coaching and coaching supervision. She is a recognised author, international speaker and convener and chair of the International Conference on Coaching Supervision.

**Sarah Baker** PhD, is a chartered psychologist and coaching practitioner. She works as an academic at the University of Bedfordshire, where she teaches coaching psychology to undergraduate students. Her PhD research investigated coaching and counselling practitioners' experiences of managing boundaries in practice.

**Helen Baron** is a chartered psychologist. She has over 30 years experience in providing training and consultancy to organisations in formulating equal opportunities policy and promoting fairness in staff assessment and selection. In addition, she designs and develops assessment tools. Email: [helen@hbaron.co.uk](mailto:helen@hbaron.co.uk)

**Alan Bourne** PhD, is an experienced Chartered Psychologist. He specialises in innovative assessment, development and client-centred change management solutions. Previously, he has worked as a consultant with psychological consultancies, and as part of an internal consultant team for Royal Mail Group. He is CEO and founder of SOVA Assessment. Email: [alan.bourne@sovaassessment.com](mailto:alan.bourne@sovaassessment.com)

**Halina Brunning** is a chartered clinical psychologist, freelance organizational consultant and accredited executive coach. She has published extensively on clinical and organizational issues and edited several books for Karnac including *Executive Coaching: Systems-Psychodynamic Perspective* (2006), which was translated into Italian in 2009. Between 2010 and 2014 she conceived of and edited a trilogy of books which analyses the

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## Contributors

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# Foreword

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## The new millennium in coaching psychology

I am really pleased to see in this volume the massive growth and development of the field of coaching psychology. In the first edition of this book there were only 22 chapters, setting out the newly created field of coaching psychology, whereas in this volume we have 43 chapters which now reflect the further development of concepts and research that has matured this important discipline. We now have a full range of coaching psychology approaches, from cognitive behavioural techniques to humanistic ones (e.g. person-centred therapy), from existential approaches (e.g. gestalt coaching, mindfulness) to constructive techniques (e.g. NLP coaching, personal construct psychology) and systemic approaches (e.g. Transactional Analysis, psychodynamic coaching).

In addition, there is a section on ‘the profession and ethical practice of coaching psychology’, which explores issues of the boundaries between coaching and counselling, the use of psychometrics in coaching, the role of technology, coaching psychology supervision and diversity issues. In developing a new field, these are fundamental issues that need to be articulated, debated and consolidated in creating a vision and understanding of the field.

This new edition has further solidified and defined the field of coaching psychology and provided a strengthened platform for helping people with their personal, work and relationship difficulties. Hopefully, this will help society resolve the issue laid out by Henry David Thoreau in 1853: “How prompt we are to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our bodies; how slow to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our souls”.

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# Preface and acknowledgements

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Why has it been necessary to publish a second edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology*? After the comprehensive first edition was published back in 2007 and became a key text on many coaching and coaching psychology programmes, is this revision valid and necessary?

Between 2000, when Dr Anthony Grant announced that coaching psychology had come of age, and 2007, when the first edition of this handbook was published, the frameworks establishing coaching psychology as a psychological sub-discipline had rapidly emerged in the UK and in Australia. Since 2007, the pace of development within the field of coaching psychology has been maintained. These frameworks include: coaching psychology professional bodies; subgroups in the national representative professional psychology bodies; conferences; university programmes offering coaching psychology in undergraduate programmes through to PhD programmes of study; peer-reviewed publications; and professional practice qualifications and accredited status for coaching psychologists. There have been more countries establishing coaching psychology as a sub-discipline within their national frameworks. As a result of this continued focus on coaching psychology, the depth and breadth of coaching psychology programmes, practice and research has continued to grow with benefits for individual coachees and wider client stakeholders.

The coaching and coaching psychology professions continue to inform each other and co-evolve, occupying similar and yet different aspects of the landscape. Although the questions of what is the same and what is different between these areas of the wider profession are less frequently a concern as both are more established and grounded in their own fields.

The International Society for Coaching Psychology and the International Congress for Coaching Psychology forum have emerged as useful collaborative vehicles, connecting researchers, students, practitioners, academics and many national coaching psychology bodies in this ever-emerging global field.

Some considerable thought has gone into the framework of this edition, the structure of each section and the content and flow of each chapter. The book is in four parts that cover a broad range of aspects and approaches that relate to the development of a professional area of practice such as this. They include: Perspectives and research in coaching psychology; Coaching psychology approaches; Application, context and sustainability; and The profession and ethical practice of coaching psychology. Each part is broken into relevant sections, grouping themes that sit together in the landscape of practice. Additionally, each chapter follows a clear flow to enable comparison across different approaches and frameworks. We have very specifically used the word 'client' to indicate organizational clients and 'coachee' to indicate the individual being coached.

A book of this breadth and depth is the result of significant collaboration from colleagues across the globe, our clients and coachees and our publisher, each of whom had a pivotal role in enabling this volume to become a reality. We would like to thank each of our contributors for their inspirational partnership and the incredible work that they do that enables them to make the contributions that they have.

## Preface and acknowledgements

We would like to thank our contributors and our publisher for their patience in the production of this volume. In addition, this book would be nothing without the clients and coachees who have brought the practices to life through their stories and the sharing of applications in order that others, too, may learn and benefit from their insights. Finally, we would like to thank the ISCP for coming on board as a partner in placing this book as one of the way stations on the unfolding journey of coaching psychology on the international stage.

# International Society for Coaching Psychology

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## Foreword

The International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) strives to further the discipline and profession of coaching psychology around the world. This includes encouraging the development of the theory, research and practice in coaching psychology and supporting coaching psychologists in their work. Thus, the opportunity to collaborate with this seminal publication aligns and resonates with our key objectives and strategy.

In this second edition, the scope and diversity of topics now available in the 43 chapters of this timely contribution will not disappoint. The structure reflects what's topical and of interest, the evidence base and practice base and the general patterns of coaching psychology observed internationally by the ISCP in the course of our activities such as publications, social media, events and conferences.

Providing a significant contribution to the field, this second edition offers value, whether you are a qualified psychologist, coaching psychologist, coach, student or perhaps someone with a broader interest in the field. The areas covered set out coaching psychology perspectives and research as well as coaching approaches and explore more systemic interventions, professional aspects and ethical practice.

Looking back to the emergence of the field of coaching psychology, I am left with a reflection that we might have thought at the time that many of the goals coaching psychology has actually achieved in recent years were aspirational, if not impossible. This new edition of the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* symbolically represents the many milestones achieved during the development of the profession. The future is exciting, and we can now look forward to the potential influence of coaching psychology on the wider psychological profession.

Siobhain O'Riordan  
Chair, International Society for Coaching Psychology



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**Part 1**

Perspectives and research  
in coaching psychology

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# Introduction

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In Part 1 the context is set with an overview from the editors of this handbook; 'Past, present and future' takes a view of the history, current state and future potential of the profession of coaching psychology. The wealth of development in the field of coaching and coaching psychology over the last decade and a half has been significant. Building forward, we see that coaching and coaching psychology is well placed as areas of practice challenge existing assumptions about how the world is and offer a full range of evidence-based methodologies to support the emergence of new narratives and ways of being as leaders, teams and whole organisations across the for-profit and not-for-profit landscape. This first part continues with a look at some of the more recent developments in the field of coaching psychology. We explore neuroscience (Chapter 2) and how that body of work might be used in coaching practice. In 'Coaching and neuroscience', Patricia Riddell explores how much we might need to know about the brain in order to contribute to an understanding of how coaching works, and how we might apply this with our coachees and clients. Diana Aguiar Vieira and Stephen Palmer take us into a more established area of psychological understanding in their chapter, 'Self-efficacy within coaching and coaching psychology: an integrated Self-efficacy Coaching Model' (Chapter 3). They note that the construct of self-efficacy has been capable of explaining and predicting human behaviour and/or change in several domains and that coaching psychology is not an exception. Goal-focused coaching, a mainstay of coaching practice for both coaches and coaching psychologists, is explored by Anthony Grant in 'Goals and coaching: an integrated evidence-based model of goal-focused coaching and coaching psychology' (Chapter 4). Considered by some as the forefather of modern-day coaching psychology, Anthony notes that although coaching is inherently a goal-focused activity, it is only of late that there has been interest in applying the considerable body of literature on goals and goal setting in the psychological literature to coaching practice. Through this chapter he aims to add further impetus to that trend. The growth and development of positive psychology has paralleled that of coaching psychology and has been an important influence in the growth and practice of coaching and coaching psychology. Positive psychology forms a significant thread in so many coaches' practice. In their chapter 'From positive psychology to the development of positive psychology coaching' (Chapter 5), Sheila Panchal, Stephen Palmer and Suzy Green bring together this rich framework and explore its application as a coaching approach.

The final part of Part 1 is dedicated to understanding the research base underpinning practice, and how to evaluate emerging research to understand its application in practice. The attention to what works, with whom, and in what context is an ongoing quest for coaching psychology research as it is with other

## Introduction

branches of psychological practice. This focus is also important in the wider coaching world. Whilst an exhaustive illustration is neither possible nor the goal of these two chapters, they do illuminate some key aspects and some ways of making sense of the current research landscape. In 'Research and the practitioner: getting a perspective on evidence as a coaching psychologist', Annette Fillery-Travis and Sarah Corrie bring to the fore the importance of the research evidence to facilitate the provision of excellent, sustainable and individually tailored services to coachees and their organisations (Chapter 6). Building on those principles, Yi-Ling Lai and Stephen Palmer (Chapter 7) bring us up to date with the evidence base of coaching psychology in 'Understanding evidence-based coaching through the analysis of coaching psychology research methodology'.

# Past, present and future

*Alison Whybrow and Stephen Palmer*

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When we first edited this handbook in 2007, the world was a very different place. The global financial crash in 2008, the shift in global power, the Arab spring, the centrality of the digital world, Big Data, the imminent rise of machines, the changing nature of war, diabetes as a fully fledged global health crisis – these events had yet to happen. Prior to these changes, coaching and coaching psychology were flourishing. Now a decade later, we find that coaching and coaching psychology are still flourishing. Increasing complexity in the global landscape, future uncertainty and greater ambiguity mean the need for deeper self-awareness, psychological flexibility, deep collaboration, curious conversations and co-creation is growing. The need for coaching and the skills of coaches and coaching psychologists is certainly not diminishing, but it is changing. There is a maturity and confidence in the field that is reflected in the growth of coaching, its depth and its breadth in particular, moving coaching from a primarily 1:1 focus to a much more holistic and systems focus. A profession, however, is not merely defined by practice. Other aspects have also matured. The development of professional frameworks and standards, an evidence base to underpin practice and take us into new areas of thinking and robust learning and development pathways, including advanced degrees and doctorates, all combine to build the foundations of the professions of coaching and coaching psychology.

Whilst coaching and coaching psychology maintain distinctions, their paths are aligned; walking together rather than divergently, each learns from and is informed by the other. And whilst a particular practitioner may have a preferred professional ‘home’, clients and coachees themselves benefit from a rich collaboration of which this handbook is an example.

In this chapter we build from the first edition, sharing the historical roots of coaching psychology, key aspects of the current state of play and some exploration of the trends of the last decade with a view to useful assumptions we might make at this point in the evolution of this sub-discipline of psychological practice.

## **From Socrates to the twenty-first century**

It could be argued that Socrates’ dialectic method of inquiry, the Socratic method, was an early account of what we would now call a coaching technique being used. This method, stimulating critical thinking through logical questioning, has been used in different professions, including psychology and therapy, for

many years. In essence, psychologists have been practising coaching for decades (Filippi, 1968). If we look back, it was in the 1920s that the father of sports psychology in the United States, Coleman R. Griffith, associate professor of educational psychology at the Laboratory for Research in Athletics, University of Illinois, wrote his groundbreaking book, *The Psychology of Coaching: A Study of Coaching Methods from the Point of View of Psychology* (Griffith, 1926).

The laboratory was established in order to look at three key areas which clearly reflected psychological principles: “a) toward the discovery of pure psychological fact and theory, b) toward the discovery of facts about human behaviour that have a bearing upon athletic skill and athletic mindedness, and c) toward increasing the effectiveness of coaching methods” (Griffith, 1930, p. vii). Griffith’s work focused on the psychology of coaching in the sports field. Griffith believed a coach was more than an instructor. “He is a teacher, in the ancient sense of the word . . . a character-builder; he molds personalities” (1926, p. 2). Griffith believed that the coach should be an athlete, a physiologist and a psychologist. In his book *The Psychology of Coaching* (Griffith, 1926), Griffith covered aspects of coaching such as handling spectators, sports stars and ‘jinxed’ players, the problems of over-coaching teams and the laws and principles of learning. Griffith was very productive academically. His publications and work in the field were rediscovered by the sports psychology fraternity in the 1960s as proponents attempted to establish sports psychology as a discipline of psychology in America. Griffith’s use of psychological theories emphasising the importance of psychology in coaching, which informed coaching practice based on his research, can be considered the springboard to coaching psychology many years later.

Grant (2005, 2006) reviewed papers from the behavioural sciences and scholarly business databases, focusing on executive, workplace and life coaching papers. An early scholarly paper was by Gorby (1937), who described how newer employees were coached by older employees to reduce waste and thereby increase profits, which would maximise profit-sharing programme bonuses. Grant noted the exponential escalation in peer-reviewed research and studies from 1995 to 2005, indicating an emerging body of empirical support for the effectiveness of workplace and life coaching. The impact and effectiveness of psychological principles in coaching and coach training has not always been clearly considered. Some coach training courses may have been based on psychological principles, but more implicitly than explicitly (Linley & Harrington, 2007). Additionally, some proprietary models and frameworks developed by early coach training providers were not subject to rigorous research. Grant (2007) suggests influences on the emergence of coaching psychology as we know it today include: humanistic psychology (e.g. Maslow, 1968), the 1960s human potential movement (HPM) and, more latterly, the positive psychology movement (e.g. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The turn of the twenty-first century marked a pivotal period in the development of coaching psychology. The positive psychology paradigm, with its focus on well-being (rather than ill health) underpinned by research, provided psychologists who coached from a scientist practitioner background with an alternative perspective, differing at that time from clinical, counselling and organisational psychology. By 2005, there were coaching psychology interest groups established within the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

## A global movement

We can now say that the development of coaching psychology theory and practice is global. There are at least 21 formal interest groups including those in the APS and BPS (see Table 1.1). In some countries, a separate coaching psychology group has not been formally developed, yet the interest exists within psychological bodies. For example, in the US, the American Psychological Association’s Division 13 has become actively involved in coaching psychology, although it currently does not have a specific interest group.

The collaborative development of coaching psychology around the world has been intentional. In 2009, Peter Zarris (chair IGCP) and Stephen Palmer (past chair, SGCP), in conversation with colleagues, developed

Table 1.1 Coaching psychology interest groups around the globe

The Australian Psychological Society, Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (APS IGCP)	Australia 2002
British Psychological Society, Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP)	United Kingdom 2004
Swiss Society for Coaching Psychology (SSCP)	Switzerland 2006
Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa, Interest Group in Coaching and Consulting Psychology (SIOPSA IGCCP)	South Africa 2006
Danish Psychological Association, Society for Evidence-based Coaching (SEBC)	Denmark 2007
International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) (Prior to 2011 known as Society for Coaching Psychology)	2008
Collegi Oficial de Psicologia de Catalunya, Section of Work and Organisational Psychology, Working Group in Coaching (COPC CGCOP WG) (The Psychology Coaching Section was formalised in 2012.)	Spain 2008
Psychological Society of Ireland, Division of Work and Organisational Psychology, Coaching Psychology Group (PSI DWOP CPG)	Ireland 2008
Hungarian Association for Coaching Psychology	Hungary 2008
International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP, Independent). Became 'International' in 2011	2008
New Zealand Psychological Society, Coaching Psychology Special Interest Group (CPSIG)	New Zealand 2009
Association of Coaching Psychologists* (Swedish Psych. Assoc. affiliated, 2018)	Sweden 2009
Israel Association for Coaching Psychology (IACP)	Israel 2010
Dutch Psychological Association, Work and Organisation Section, Coaching Psychology Group (DPA WO CPG) (The CPG ceased in 2015.)	Netherlands 2010–2015
Japan Society of Coaching Psychology (JCPA, Independent)	Japan 2011
Society for Coaching Psychology Italy (SCP, Independent)	Italy 2011
Korean Coaching Psychological Association (KCPA), Korean Psychological Association (KPA)	South Korea 2011
Society of Consulting Psychology (Division 13), American Psychological Association (APA)	USA 2012
Hungarian Psychological Association, Coaching Psychology Division	Hungary 2014
Coaching Psychology Special Interest Groups, Singapore Psychological Society.	Singapore 2016
Serbian Association for Coaching Psychology (Independent)	Serbia 2018

a proposal focusing on how coaching psychology could be further developed internationally. The International Congress of Coaching Psychology (ICCP, 2010) was set up to:

- promote the development of the coaching psychology profession around the world;
- bring together the coaching psychology community;
- share within the psychology community the theory, research and practice of coaching and coaching psychology;
- engage all professionals interested in coaching and coaching psychology.

This collaboration has had a positive impact. Chapter 43 builds a rich picture of the development of coaching psychology around the globe.

## Regulatory landscape

The development of coaching psychology has been influenced by regulation of the practice of psychology and the legal use of the term ‘psychologist’ around the world, with the use of the term limited to those appropriately registered, licensed, accredited or chartered, depending on the country of practice. In the UK, there are nine protected psychology titles; in the US the situation is more complex as licensing differs between different states. In some countries there is no legislation over who can call themselves a ‘psychologist’. Coaching is not a legally defined profession, so whilst coaching professional bodies hold standards of practice for coaches, the term ‘coaching’ is not restricted. This situation has positive impacts as well as challenges for both coaches and coaching psychologists.

The regulatory landscape for psychology has had a useful impact on the development of coaching psychology professional bodies. It is not possible for one professional body to govern at a global level; instead, collaborative development providing a holding global framework with local differentiation has been designed into the profession from the beginning. In this context, the International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) has become a touch point for most coaching psychology groups around the globe, but it does not replace or otherwise overshadow any one professional group. This is a systemic difference between the professions of coaching and coaching psychology that is interesting to observe.

## Defining coaching psychology

There is no one definition of coaching psychology. Similar to consulting psychology, counselling psychology and clinical psychology, the definition of coaching psychology was developed by each national professional body based on its general policies, committees and expert input and with reference to the legislation relevant to psychologists in that context.

The APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology was established in 2002. Its definition highlights a link between positive psychology and coaching psychology: *Coaching Psychology; as an applied positive psychology, draws on and develops established psychological approaches, and can be understood as being the systematic application of behavioural science in the enhancement of life experience, work performance and well-being for individuals, groups and organisations who do not have clinically significant mental health (sic) or abnormal levels of distress* (APS, 2016). Not all coaching psychology groups make the link with positive psychology so explicitly. Key themes to note include: psychological approaches, enhancement of life experience, work performance and well-being. In addition, the focus is on working with coachees who *do not* have clinically significant mental health problems. However, in practice a coachee may be suffering from a disorder such as panic attacks, and the coaching psychologist or coach may still be assisting the coachee through the coaching process to, for example, update their CV and seek a new job. The coachee may be seeing a therapist or medical consultant in parallel for treatment of a mental health problem. Case by case consideration of such circumstances is important.

The BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) was launched in December 2004. The definition of coaching psychology, based on and adapted from the work of Grant and Palmer (2002), became: *Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches* (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006, p. 8). The key themes relating to psychological approaches, enhanced well-being and performance are similar to the APS IGCP definition. The intention to be inclusive and to encourage membership from across the spectrum of psychological practice meant positive psychology was not explicitly stated in the definition by the BPS SGCP, although aspects of positive psychology informed the definition.

From 2005, more coaching psychology groups were established (see Table 1.1), their definitions reflecting their interpretations of coaching psychology in their particular context. For example, the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology (SIOPSA), Interest Group in Coaching and Consulting Psychology (IGCCP), South Africa, defines coaching psychology, practiced by a registered practitioner, as: *a conversational process of facilitating positive development and change towards optimal functioning, well-being and increased performance in the work and personal life domains, in the absence of clinically significant mental health issues, through the application of a*

*wide range of psychological theories and principles. The intervention is action-orientated with measureable outcomes, and is also reflective towards creating greater self-awareness and meaning, and is directed at individuals, groups, organisations and communities within a culturally specific context* (SIOPSA, IGCCP, 2016, p. 8). Comparing coaching psychology as defined by psychological professional bodies and coaching as defined by coaching professional bodies, the difference is the more likely the inclusion of psychology or psychological approaches on the one hand, and their absence on the other. This diversity of definitions of coaching psychology offers a richness to the field.

## Research – shaping factors

Coaching and coaching psychology research has flourished, with an increase in studies using randomised control trials (RCTs) and most research continuing to use a mix of qualitative and less stringent quantitative methodologies.

Coaching research has increasingly started to unpack some of the mechanisms by which coaching is effective, providing insight, for example, into the nature of the working alliance that might be more important in a coaching relationship. Whilst certain psychological frameworks have been demonstrated to impact positively (e.g. Green, Oades, & Grant 2006), the working alliance is considered a key component in the effectiveness of coaching as it is in therapeutic settings. Interestingly, emerging research into the qualities of the relationship indicates an important distinction: the strength of the bond or emotional rapport appears more important in a therapeutic setting (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003), whilst those aspects of the relationship that are associated with the goal and task appear more powerful in coaching settings (de Haan, Grant, Burger, & Eriksson, 2016). It seems that the working alliance or coaching relationship offers insight into how coaching techniques are transformed into effective interventions according to those most closely involved, yet it is by no means the whole story. Current research trends and themes are discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

## The practice of coaches and coaching psychologists

During 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006/2007, annual surveys were undertaken in the UK to explore the views and experiences of coaching psychologists as this fledging area of practice emerged (see Whybrow & Palmer, 2006a, 2006b). The early surveys were published, and, ongoing surveys by Whybrow and Palmer looking at the trends in practices have been undertaken on a regular basis over the past two decades. In the first edition of this handbook, Palmer and Whybrow (2007) reported more than 28 different psychological approaches used by coaching psychologists, of which 23 were used by at least 10% of those surveyed. A recent global survey of coaching psychologists (Palmer & Whybrow, 2017) identified more than 38 psychologically based approaches and ways of integrating approaches, 26 of which were reported used by more than 10% of coaching psychologists surveyed (see 1.2 below). Additionally, in a parallel survey, coaches (rather than coaching psychologists specifically) also reported using these psychological approaches in their practices. The prevalence of the different approaches among coaching and coaching psychology survey participants is shown in Table 1.2.

Interestingly, the six most frequently used approaches were the same for both coaching psychologists and coaches in this survey, with positive psychology at the top of that list for both sets of practitioners. This reaffirms the links between positive psychology and coaching psychology; however, that link is not explicit for everyone. Compared with a similar type of survey a decade ago, mindfulness approaches have become much more mainstream in both coaching psychology (48%) and coaching (46%) practice.

When forced to choose just one model as a core underpinning, 35 different psychologically based approaches and ways of integrating approaches were noted as core across the coaching psychologists who responded, with most respondents noting cognitive behavioural approaches (20%). Solution-focused cognitive behavioural (10%), positive psychology (8%) and solution-focused approaches (8%) were the next three most frequently cited core underpinnings. For coaches, 32 different approaches were noted as core, with solution focused (10%), cognitive behavioural approaches (9%) and positive psychology (9%) most frequently cited as the core model. Choosing one approach was not easy for everyone as this respondent