

Co-facilitation

Introduction

Informal co-facilitation has long been a part of successful coaching. Less experienced coaches have acquired essential coaching knowledge and skills by watching more experienced coaches in action, performing similar coaching tasks, and getting feedback from their more experienced colleagues.

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) has established a structured version of this informal co-facilitation for use in all Coach Developer (CD) training and certification. The following sections:

- ❑ Define co-facilitation as it applies to Coach Developers
- ❑ Present the principles underlying Coach Developer Co-facilitation
- ❑ Describe the steps in Coach Developer Co-facilitation

Definition

Coach Developer Co-facilitation is a structured four-step process in which an experienced Coach Developer facilitates NCCP training with a less experienced Coach Developer.

Principles of NCCP Coach Developer Co-facilitation

Three key principles underlie NCCP Coach Developer Co-facilitation, and all three are designed to ensure that Coach Developer Co-facilitation nurtures less experienced CDs and helps them develop.

- ❑ **Co-facilitation emphasizes the professional development and training of the less experienced CD.** Successful co-facilitation improves the CD-awareness and CD-knowledge of less experienced CDs; it also develops their individual skills and talents, improves their capacity to facilitate NCCP training, and helps fulfil their CD aspirations. Co-facilitation is **NOT** about more experienced CDs cloning themselves — the focus is on less experienced CDs becoming, with the guidance of more experienced CDs, the facilitator they want to be.
- ❑ **The co-facilitation environment provides a positive and supportive setting for learning.** Creating a safe and supportive environment is one of the most important responsibilities of more experienced Coach Developers. For their part, less experienced Coach Developers focus on learning and trying new things, trusting that they will not be criticized or negatively judged. More experienced Coach Developers observe and provide feedback to less experienced Coach Developers, seeking always to learn from those they are mentoring and to ensure their full development as CDs.
- ❑ **The co-facilitation environment fully engages Coach Developers.** For less experienced CDs to learn and try new things (see the preceding principle), they must be fully engaged

in the co-facilitation process and ready to change some of their ways of thinking. More experienced CDs help these changes along by paying close attention throughout and asking less experienced CDs questions that guide them to realizations about and solutions to their facilitation methods.

Steps in Co-facilitation

Coach Developer Co-facilitation is a four-step process:

- 1 **Pre-planning meeting.** The purpose of the meeting is to plan the training to be co-facilitated. This involves the following:
 - a The two CDs divide up the module(s) they will co-facilitate.
 - b **Both** CDs outline the goals and actions for the module(s) they will facilitate. Together they determine the indicators they will use to gauge the success of the training and some adaptations they have made in the past to improve learning.
 - c The less experienced CD may use this time to ask the more experienced CD how he or she previously facilitated the module(s). The more experienced CD may also ask questions that will help the less experienced CD plan and facilitate his or her module(s). These questions usually focus on the goals and tasks of the module(s), the CD's actions, learners' actions, and the challenges associated with facilitating the module(s) or task(s).
- 2 **Observation.** The purpose of the observation step is to gather information that can be discussed in the third step in co-facilitation, the reflective conversation. The more experienced CD observes the less experienced CD, based upon the goals, processes, and indicators discussed in the pre-planning meeting. The less experienced CD then observes the more experienced CD and develops a series of questions to discuss in the reflective conversation. These questions should focus on how the more experienced CD facilitated the module(s)/task(s). For instance:
 - Why did you change the groups at a specific point in time?
 - Why did you deviate from your plan?
 - What did you learn about the group as you facilitated the training?
- 3 **Reflective conversation.** The reflective conversation serves two purposes:
 - a It gives the more experienced CD an opportunity to summarize and give feedback on the data gathered in Step 2, Observation, and to get the less experienced CD's reactions to this summary and feedback. This usually involves asking the less experienced CD questions that get him or her to analyze and reflect on what he or she learned and to think about how to transfer this learning to his or her next facilitation.
 - b It allows the less experienced CD an opportunity to present what he or she observed and to ask the more experienced CD about these observations. (See Step 2, Observation, for examples of such questions.)



- 4 Administration.** The experienced Coach Developer OR the governing organization enters the co-facilitation event in the NCCP Database (the Locker).