

Coaching

Coaching is the universal language of change and learning. – CNN

What it is

The day-to-day, hands-on process of supporting people to achieve, maintain, and improve health and safety performance and culture. The focus of the support can vary – from supporting the development of knowledge and recognising safe practice, to addressing unsafe practices. Coaching skills include active listening and questioning, setting goals and expectations, observing behaviour, and providing feedback.

Why do it

Setting mutually agreed health and safety goals and expectations, encouraging and engaging individuals to achieve these, providing feedback on how they are tracking, recognising positive practices and outcomes, and holding people accountable for achieving agreed goals and exceptions, drives and improves health and safety performance and culture, reducing harm and strengthening engagement in health and safety, as well as wellbeing.

How to do it

- ▶ Observe everyday work and look out for examples of both safe and unsafe practices
- ▶ Set clear expectations as to what safe practice looks like
- ▶ Provide immediate, clear, and if possible face-to-face feedback
- ▶ Recognise good work
- ▶ Base all feedback on specific behaviours, rather than generalisations or personality
- ▶ Use feedback to reinforce helpful beliefs and behaviours, or to correct unhelpful beliefs and behaviours
- ▶ Listen for both the content and emotion of what is said
- ▶ Focus on what you want, not what you don't want
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions to explore and understand issues
- ▶ Monitor body language (e.g., eye contact, tone, facial expression).

Track it

Use the following checklist to track whether your coaching practices are on track or need action.

In our crew/team, we...	Seldom	Sometimes	Always
Set clear expectations for working safely			
Discuss what is needed to meet expectations			
Are praised for working safely			
Hold each other responsible for our actions			
	Urgent action required	Action required	On the right track

Remember...

Never underestimate the power of positive reinforcement.