Team Coaching Tools and Resources

Examples of tools, models and exercises you can use in a Systemic Team Coaching programme

Systemic
Team Coaching

There is a huge variety of tools, models and exercises that team coaches can use during a systemic team coaching programme and good team coaches are always on the look-out for new exercises which might assist their clients.

The AoEC's accredited **systemic team coaching training** is built around Peter Hawkins' Five Disciplines model of high-performing teams which cover aspects of a team's roles, purpose, value creation and ways of working which contribute to its success.

Following are some examples of exercises and experiments which can used with a team when inviting them to consider each of these five areas during a team coaching progamme.

Many of these are explored in more detail in our:
* **Systemic Team Coaching® Certificate (Practitioner)**, and
* **Systemic Team Coaching® Diploma (Senior Practitioner).**

The client-led nature of team coaching means that team coaches are discouraged from approaching a project with a plan to facilitate a number of pre-determined exercises. Rather, these are useful tools to have up your sleeve when the need arises.

On our ICF and EMCC accredited team coach training programmes, participants have the opportunity to experiment with some of these tools and encouraged to develop their own unique model of team coaching.

If you use other exercises, we would love to hear about them – so please **get in touch**.

Commissioning

Models and exercises which can be used in this area include:

* **Team Connect 360**
  The AoEC's unique online 360 team diagnostic creates a report on the views of the team, its stakeholders and direct reports. TC360 is structured around the Hawkin's Five Disciplnes model and generates a report containing useful 360 data to share with the team, from which they can identify development areas on which to focus.

* **Stakeholder interviews** – conducted by the coach and the team themselves – potentially with some coaching for team members on interview technique and topics. The views

gained should be shared back with the whole team.

* **Stakeholder Mapping** – invite the team to create a visual map of who their internal and external stakeholders are and the team's relationship with them, asking them to:

  - Draw a circle in the middle of the paper with the team's name in it
  - Draw other circles around them representing each stakeholder
  - Make the circles big or small to represent how important the stakeholder is
  - Position them near or far to represent how closely the team currently works with them
  - Draw an arrow to represent the direction/s of influence

* **Role-play** – team members split into groups and role-play key stakeholders being interviewed about their 'commission' to the team and their relationship with it.

* **Picture sculpt** – invite the team to draw the relationship of the key stakeholder(s) and the team as a visual metaphor and ask the team to build the image together piece by piece.

* **Focus group** – invite representatives of key commissioning stakeholders into the team session for a focus group Q&A.

* **Sit in the chair of the stakeholder** – invite team members to take turns to 'become' key stakeholders (acting out their physicality, as well as what they would say) and answer questions from other team members about their thoughts and feelings about the team. Questions can explore what the stakeholder believes the team's role is or should be, and what it's like to work with them.

dialogue on topics such as team purpose, vision, values and behaviours. It involves inviting the team to individually write down bullet points to answer the question they want to focus on – such as 'What are our team values' or for their purpose 'What is it only we as a team can do which delivers value to this organisation?'. You then invite one person to start by sharing their top point only, and others build from here, adding additional points. By preventing one person from reading out all their thoughts at the start (which may often happen with a team leader), you avoid group-think and create a more generative dialogue.

- **Big Hairy Audacious Goals** – a team can really come together when they have a stretching goal to which they can all contribute. Sometimes called Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) – this is something far more ambitious, far reaching and impactful than a regular goal.

- **Team charter** – invite the team to create a team charter with a team purpose, vision, values and mission – and to attribute Key Performance Indicators to their main activities and deliverables.

- **SWOT Analysis** – A simple way of mapping out a team's Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats using a four-grid matrix. This can be helpful for encouraging objective thinking.

- **Envisioning futures** – using the space in the room, invite the team to consider the critical steps between the present and the ideal future. Invite them to find a space in the room to represent where they are now and explore how they feel standing there. Then invite them to choose a spot in the room which represents the ideal future and walk towards it. Once there, they can reflect on how it feels and then look back to the 'past' and consider – 'how did we get here?'. This can be enhanced using somatic work techniques to explore their feeling in the spaces representing where they are now, and the ideal future – and in between the two.

- **Appreciative inquiry** – Appreciative inquiry helps to identify 'what is' happening now which makes a positive contribution to the team's success and extending this through the team's imagination to 'what might be'. Through appreciative inquiry the team expands their vision for a future they can achieve together through their known skills and strengths.

- **Balance Scorecard** – can be used to translate top-line goals and visions into specific, measureable targets for individual departments – usually covering activities in the categories of financial performance, customer experience, business performance and learning/growth.

- **Thematic goals** – Patrick Lencioni talks about creating a thematic goal in an organisation – a single qualitative goal which is time-bound. A thematic goal aims to be a rallying cry for action; it's an unambiguous single common theme which becomes the key focus for the leadership team. It's not the same as a long-term vision or a tactical objective but sits somewhere between the two, making the vision more tangible and providing context for the tactics.

- **What would a journalist say?** – invite the team to write a story that could appear in the press about the organisation and the work of the team. The could work in two teams, with one asked to write a very positive version by the organisation's PR department – and the other writing an article by a highly critical journalist.

- **Desk-top research** – invite the team to spend time investigating their sector, market, business, competitors and the other external factors that are part of their system.

- **Reflecting back** – invite the team to consider how they feel and think about each of their key stakeholders and what that means about the commission that is unsaid or unclear. Possibly best done in pairs, before sharing back with the group.

- **PEST analysis** – a business measurement tool for understanding market growth or decline to help inform a business's opportunities for development. PEST is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors, which are used to assess the market for a business or organisational unit.

Clarifying

Models and exercises which can be used in this area include:

- **A Purpose Statement** – invite them to create a team purpose by reviewing their 'commission' and considering what unique value they can add to the organisation and the people they serve.

- **Collective Build** is a useful tool for creating generative

Co-creating

Models and exercises which can be used in this area include:

- **Psychometric tools and personality types** – including, for example, MBTI, DISC, **Heron Intervention Styles** and the **Nine Belbin Team Roles**.

- **Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team** – is often used as a way of helping teams understand the key behaviours for a functional team. Patrick Lencioni also developed a questionnaire for teams to assess themselves against this model.

- **Tuckman** – sharing Tuckman's 'forming, storming, norming, performing' model can be helpful for the team to assess which phase they are in, understand that teams develop in stages, and identify what they need to do to move towards strong 'performing'.

- **Team shield** – draw a shield with four sections in it, with headlines covering the team's strength, development areas, things to experiment with, and things to get feedback on. Invite the team to fill it out together. You can include any headline or category useful to the team.

- **Bringing the unspoken into the room** – invite everyone in the team to write down the unexpressed issue they have with the team and put their note in a box (using the same pens and paper for anonymity). Each person draws out one note and voices the issue as if it were their own. Themes are discussed and actions considered to deal with this team issue, without making any one person responsible. This can raise issues which generate a strong emotional reaction, so should be carefully set up carefully to create a safe environment.

- **Relational value chain** – invite the team to map the special and unique ways in which the team, through their own idiosyncratic interactions, support the creation of value in their organisation.

- **Start/Stop/Continue** – Using three flip charts, invite the team to capture what should they start doing, what should they stop doing, and what should they continue doing.

- **McGregor X & Y Leadership Theory** – can be interesting input for a discussion on leadership style.

- **Psychological Contracts** – can be interesting input for discussions about the team's expectations of their employer and each other, particularly the 'invisible' contract which is likely to be unspoken or even unconscious.

- **Johari Window** – can be useful as a simple tool for exploring and improving self-awareness.

- **Creative exploration** – creating art is a powerful way to connect with thoughts and feelings which may be obscured from your conscious awareness. There are many approaches a coach can take with a team – such as inviting people to quickly paint or draw a few random lines and squiggles on a page using different colours, and then asking them to create a picture from the existing marks with more shapes and colours to represent something you're working on in the session – such as a new product idea, how being in the team makes the individual feel, or what the team's ideal future could look like. More about the use of art in coaching can be found **here**.

Connecting

Models and exercises which can be used in this area include:

- **Interviews** – interviewing stakeholders can be undertaken by the team with objectives and questions for the interviews created collectively by the team in advance.

- **Role play** – can be helpful for the team coach to support team members in practicing and rehearsing conversations with critical stakeholders as preparation for interviews. Role play can also be used as a standalone exercise to explore relationships with stakeholders.

- **Gestalt empty chair exercises** – can be used for team members to role-play being a stakeholder answering questions about their needs, expectations and views about the team. This can include inviting participants to take the 'third position' to view – and comment on – the conversation objectively.

- **Focus groups** – with the right contracting in place, invite a group of stakeholders to be part of a focus group and explore their views and attitudes, with either team members asking the questions.

- **Network maps** – invite the team to create map of the key contacts they have across their company system and use a red/yellow/green traffic light system to identify flows and blocks in communication. This can be revisited to capture the emotions and energy in those connections, as well as highlight where changes should be made.

Co Learning

Models and exercises which can be used in this area include:

- **Learning reflection sessions** – encourage the team to hold dedicated sessions to reflect on what and how the team is learning. These can be facilitated by the coach, and scheduled regularly for the team to run by themselves.

- **Dashboard/scorecard** – the team can rate themselves (as a team) using either the Hawkins' Five Disciplines model or a competency/behavioural framework used in their organisation.

- **Live feedback** – contract with the team for 'time out' moments in a workshop or meeting for an observer to provide live feedback on what they notice about the dynamics. The team coach can be the observer, or team members can take it in turns.

- **Peer coaching** – support the team in developing the skills to coach each other, practicing in triads with an observer. Invite them to consider making this part of the agreed ways of working.

- **Peer feedback** – invite the team to consider how they could make regular, honest feedback between team members part of their team culture.

- **Scaling questions** – invite the team to rate key aspects of their work together, considering both task/delivery and relationships.

- **Video and playback** – contact with the team to video one of their meetings and then review it together to explore what they notice.

- **Anecdote circles** – this narrative technique can be used to guide participants in sharing stories in a relaxed manner resulting in the collection of meaningful anecdotes around a particular situation or the 'life of the team'.

- **The team at our best and worst** – a reflection exercise using two large flip-charts or sticky notes, ideally using two opposite walls, to collect examples of when the team has been at their 'best' and 'worst' for further discussion.

- **Feedback processes** – identify a useful feedback process for this team – peers/ third party/from coach/ from organisation.

Other learning models and theories which can be useful to share with a team include:

- **Conscious/unconscious competence** a popular model describing four stages of learning

- **Kolb's Learning Cycle**

- **Senge's five learning disciplines** which cover Shared Vision, Mental Models, Personal Mastery, Team Learning and Systems Thinking – each of which are made up of a set of tools and practices for building and sustaining learning leadership capability in organisations

Contact

For more information on:
team coaching and systemic team coaching programmes please contact **enquiries@aoec.com**