

micro article
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Using the GROW model in a community setting

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"It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it. And that's what gets results."

(Fun Boy Three and Bananarama)

One of the most used and accessible coaching models is the GROW model popularised in John Whitmore's *Coaching for Performance**. With a strong focus on achieving a specific goal, the approach has thrived in sport and business. But how about when the goal is less specific?

A brief overview of GROW

The GROW model is an acronym for:

goal - reality - options - will

The simple, yet effective, approach helps to structure coaching conversations to ensure the focus is on helping the coachee achieve what they want. But this is where it becomes more complex in its use in the community context.

Do we always have goals?

When working with people in the community or wellbeing setting, defining goals can be complicated. Often people will come knowing what they don't want rather than what they do want. As Jonathan Passmore has previously pointed out, the danger of being goal oriented is that it avoids more philosophical questions about life, meaning and purpose which can be related to areas such as living well and choice of career. In areas such as these, developing specific goals can become less relevant than developing a larger meta life narrative.

Adapting the model

None of this is to say that the GROW approach can't be used in the community context. However, it does lead to redefining our understanding of what is a goal.

When framing community-based coaching using the GROW model, initial sessions will have a much greater fluidity between goals, reality and options. Conversations will often be less specific in terms of finding a desired outcome and more related to developing a clearer understanding of the person and the bigger picture.

This can then lead to the development of micro goals. Small steps which can then allow the bigger picture to become clearer, reviewed and reorientated. And returning to the GROW approach suggests a cyclical continued use of the model rather than a progression.

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