

Academic Paper

Client-led coaching? First-time coaching clients' experience

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Abstract

This study investigates lived experiences of first-time coaching clients. Three clients of business coaching shared how they experienced their coachee role. Data was collected via participant-produced collage and in-depth interviews these visual and narrative data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology to understand first-time client experiences. The coachee role embodies expression of the individuality of the client. Clients adopt an adaptive construct of learner role, employing both pedagogic and adult-learning concepts. Although unaware of their influence at the time of coaching, clients used the role of speaker to manage the narrative and to keep themselves psychologically safe.

Keywords

coaching client perspective, individuality, learner, influencer,

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Introduction

Coaching research exists into skills, behaviours and the mindset clients bring to the coaching endeavour (Stokes, 2015; Gessnitzer and Kauffeld, 2015; Ianiro, Schermuly and Kauffeld, 2013; Ianiro, Lehmann-Willenbrock and Kauffeld, 2015). Indicating clients may be agentic, invested and influential, both within the coaching relationship and the coaching process. Perhaps even more so than they are given credit for in popular coaching literature (Rogers, 2016; Kimsey-House et al., 2011). Though client power and influence across the dyad, is another under-researched area of coaching (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014; O'Broin, 2016; Myers, 2017; Welman and Bachkirova, 2010). Despite calls for increased research activity into both coaching relationship and process (DeHaan and Gannon, 2017; Myers, 2017; Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014) gaps in the literature remain. Even where the subject of research or inquiry is the client the literature tends to take a coach's eye-view. It is acknowledged that a client-centric understanding of client role is under-represented in both coaching and psychotherapeutic literature (O'Broin, 2016; Fuertes and Nutt-Williams, 2017). Using the colloquial concept of role, meaning 'part played in life or any event', this study explores the lived experiences of three first-time coachees engaged in business and leadership coaching.

Relationship

Conceptualisation of coaching relationship, possibly influenced by the differing epistemologies of authors, is diverse; for Jowett, O'Broin & Palmer (2010, p.20) relationship is "a situation in which two people's feelings, thoughts and behaviours are mutually and causally interdependent", emphasising the involvement and investment of both parties in relationship.

Alternatively, applying a postmodern, social constructionist paradigm Du Toit (2014) introduces the idea that relationship evolves subjectively and experientially for both parties "Reality as we experience it is therefore the result of active interchange between people engaged in reciprocal relationships", creating more of a sense in which 'relationship' is dynamically created between two or more people, yet individually experienced. Therefore, client and coach may potentially perceive and conceptualise their coaching relationship differently to one another (de Haan and Nieß, 2012).

Both coaching and psychotherapeutic literature agree relationship is reliant on the mutual creation of trust and intimacy (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). Yet rather less is known about how coaching clients experience their role in establishing and maintaining mutuality and reciprocity in the coaching relationship and collaborative endeavour (DeHaan & Gannon, 2017; Fillery-Travis & Cox, 2014).

Academic and research literature, use of different synonyms to describe relationship; 'coaching relationship'; 'coaching alliance'; 'rapport', (DeHaan and Gannon, 2017), indicate shared conceptualisation and understanding of coaching relationship by clients and their coaches may be rather less secure than might be assumed through practice literature (Rogers, 2016)

By comparison definition of relationship in the therapeutic literature appears more overtly linked to the theory and practice of a particular approach (Nelson-Jones, 2015; Corey, 2013), recognising different expectations of 'being in relationship' for both client and therapist, can exist across the psychotherapeutic practice spectrum.

In practice, coaches from different approaches e.g. person-centred; CBT; Solution-Focused; NLP, may all espouse a client-coach relationship based on person-centredness in their model of practice (Bachkirova and Borrington, 2018). It is less clear from the literature if the expectations clients hold about their role in relationship mirror those of coaching practitioners representing different approaches.

Influence

A purpose of both coaching and therapeutic practice is to foster client empowerment, both within, and beyond the specific relationship and process (Crowe, 2017; Stokes, 2015; Welman and Bachkirova, 2010). An agentic client role implies exercise of power or influence, and though the concept is relatively understudied in the coaching literature, Stokes (2015) argues it is crucial to understanding both the relational dynamic and process. Exercise of power within the coaching dyad is under acknowledged (Welman and Bachkirova, 2010). Aspects of power within the coaching client role has been investigated (Stokes, 2015), still, evidence and sense-making of the client's 'influencer' role in person-centred informed coaching practice is scant.

Psychotherapy literature asserts an uncritical assumption of client empowerment, especially in person-centred approach practice, masks the reality of clients lived experience of therapy (McElvaney and Timulak, 2013; Harrison, 2013; Bowie, McLeod and McLeod, 2016). Whilst accepting the client populations of counselling and coaching have differences, it is accepted there are enough points of similarity exist to apply understanding from one discipline to inform gaps in the other (Crowe, 2017).

Psychotherapy and counselling literature indicate clients are not necessarily consciously aware of the potential influence they wield within relationship and process (Rennie, 2000; Manthei, 2007;

Knox and Cooper, 2011; Rolvsjord, 2016). Evidence exists to support the idea of client influence on both therapeutic relationship and process, exerting their personal power both unconsciously and consciously (Cooper, 2012; Rennie, 2000). Yet even within this more established discipline it is recognised significant gaps in understanding of client contribution exist (Fuentes and Nutt-Williams, 2017; Levitt et al., 2015).

This study focuses on client sense-making of their experience of a coaching client role within a specific coaching engagement and as an influencer across a series of coaching sessions.

Methodology

The aim of the study was not only to access participant's experience of coaching client role, but to enable meaning making both within, and across different, individual's experiences. Coming from a social constructionist perspective I acknowledge multiple interpretations of reality may be articulated by the participants. Narration of their experience of coaching client-role is potentially iterative, dynamic and interpretative. When considering methodological approach it was important to find a way to evoke and capture rich, first-person, accounts of 'coaching client role', both literal description (Willig, 2001) and metaphorical sense-making of experiences (Kearney, 2010).

The methodological strategy chosen, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Larkin and Flowers, 2009), allows that interpretations involve both literal and concealed sense-making (Shinebourne, 2011). I acknowledge participants may have a different conscious awareness of their role during the experience, compared to their sense-making of client role experience during retrospective, reflective, description via the research process. IPA as an interpretivist, idiographic approach is best suited to make sense of participants' lived experience of coaching client role. Typically, IPA uses data collection strategies heavily reliant on participant's and researcher's reflexive and linguistic skills. However a variety of data gathering tactics are permissible in IPA (Churchill and Wertz, 2015), and use of more than one method aids data rigour (Willig, 2001). Participants were therefore encouraged to represent their experience pictorially. Visual methods are common in organisation studies as a way to coax cognitive-affective responses about experience from participants (Davison, McLean and Warren, 2015). Anxiety around drawing skills is recognised as a potential disadvantage, (Kearney, 2010; Ward and Shortt, 2012). I chose a method which did not rely on these skills, viz. collage making.

Findings generated through IPA data analysis are acknowledged to be both interpretative and idiographic. Though meaning-making bias is intrinsic to the reported experiences of reality (Cresswell, 2013; Willig, 2001), reflexive practice during the research process was used to mitigate researcher assumptions within the interpretative process of analysis.

Research Participants

The population relevant to the research question 'How do coaching clients experience the role of 'client' and to what extent is their experience of coaching client-led?', required a 'universal' population (Robinson, 2014). Given the purpose of the study was to learn from the experience of the 'naïve coaching client', people trained in coaching, or practicing coaches and mentors, were excluded from the potential pool of participants.

The pursuit of a relevant and accessible population to secure a purposive sample for the study was very challenging, and approaches via 'gatekeepers', i.e. coaches, third party organisations, unsuccessful. Participants are drawn from individual contacts known to the researcher and who had previously shared that they had experienced coaching. In this sense they are self-selecting. Ethical implications, participant confidentiality, potential dual relationship issues were deliberated

with participants and in supervision. Boundaries were agreed with participants prior, during and after the data gathering process.

Three first time coachee participants were secured, their accounts for this study are based on coaching sessions completed within the previous 18 months. To protect the anonymity of participants minimal contextual information is provided and pseudonyms are used. Their experience of coaching was business development / leadership related, and either private or organisation sponsored. Two experiences were with an external coach, and one was an internal coach. Coaching sessions completed ranged from two to six, at approximately monthly intervals. Interview transcripts, combined with collage imagery, yielded sufficient data for subsequent thematic analysis.

Data collection and analysis

As a pre-interview, reflective exercise, participants were asked to create a collage in response to a question constructed following IPA guidance (Smith & Osborn, 2008);

'How do you experience your role when you are being a 'coaching client'?

One participant failed to produce a collage within the pre-interview time frame. The collage creation process promoted participant reflection and acted as an additional prompt alongside interview guide questions in the face to face interview. Exploration of visual imagery can lead participants to feel 'over exposed', (Ward and Shortt, 2012), this was indeed the case with one participant. The incident was fully discussed with the participant at the time and noted in the reflective research log kept by the researcher.

Face to face interviews, lasting between 45-60 minutes, and digitally recorded for later transcription. Both collage and interview data were subjected to a systematic analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Following advice of Smith et.al. (2009), analysis was completed on each transcript in turn, incorporating collage data where available. Once all transcripts were individually analysed a further iterative, interpretative analytic process was completed to generate the super-ordinate theme findings.

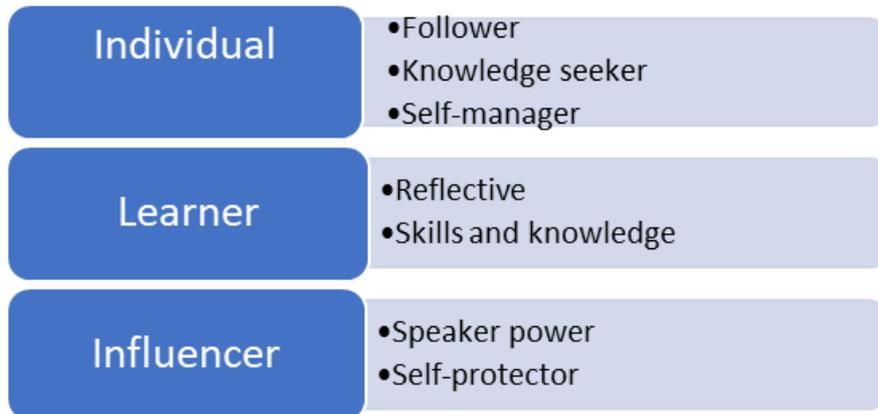
Findings

In this study into the experience of first-time coaching client role three super-ordinate themes emerged from the analysis; 'Individuality of client role'; 'Learner client role'; 'Client as influencer role' (Figure 1).

All participants reported their coaching relationship as positive, and though their perception of impact of coaching was muted, none were discouraged from engaging in coaching in future.

Participants related a diversity of experience, yet their expectations at the outset of their coaching client role had common features. For example; wanting to be perceived as a 'good client' by their coach; achieving their goals; learning knowledge and expertise from their coach; that the coach was in charge. Through reflection it became apparent a client's individuality, personal histories, and relational needs also emerged as factors in the coaching client role they developed and the affective feelings evoked within the specific coaching relationship and experience. Though outside of their awareness at the time of their coaching experience study participants were surprised by their post hoc realisation that they had, on reflection, exerted influence on their coaching experience.

Figure 1: Interpretative analysis of coaching client role: super-ordinate themes



Individuality

Avebury presumed the client follows coach's lead '[...] I think I didn't know what to expect, but I expected that the coach would be in charge'. With no prior experience of coaching Avebury relied on a more familiar construct of friendship to help make sense of both their coachee role and their relationship with the coach. Yet this client-coach interaction felt somewhat paradoxical, both familiar and different. The client-coach relationship was experienced as close and distant.

Avebury: [...] in a way one might speak with friends without feeling that anyone's controlling anything. Just exchanging. But there was no exchange [...]

The level of intimacy created by sharing information was not reciprocated by the coach; 'It didn't feel mutual at all. [...]. Avebury's experience in coaching client role highlights the potential difference in the concept of mutuality experienced in the respective relational roles of client and coach.

Barbury entered coaching focused on outcome delivery, taking responsibility for their client role, planning their contribution prior to each coaching session '[...] to prepare mentally what it is I want to talk about. What I want to get out of it.'. Barbary's collage imagery and narrative reflects a coach 'expert', client 'non-expert' construct.

Barbury: [...] whenever I thought about my coaching experience [...] the first image that came into my mind. Always that feeling of me small, coach big.

This perception endured through to the conclusion of all coaching sessions, impacting not only how they perceived themselves in coaching client role, but also colouring their view of coach expertise, and effectiveness.

Cherhill's coaching client role was initially influenced by assumptions around meeting expectations of their employing organisation and the internal coach assigned to them. Initially adopting a role of 'compliant client', with more experience they become increasingly aware of controlling the content they shared and depth of reflection they were drawn into by the coach. Cherhill exhibits caution and circumspection, '[...] I was certainly being very mindful of what I said.', indicating some awareness in the moment. This led them to make active choices about what to bring to light and what to hide from scrutiny of the coach. Through this self-management role the client maintained the appearance of engagement in the coaching process, to themselves, their coach and their employing organisation.

Learner

Data analysis affirms the concept 'learner' is part of the client's construct of coaching, although from a client perspective learning via coaching is both reflective and functional. Previous learning roles and learner self-concept might influence both expectation and experience of the coachee-as-learner role.

For Avebury coaching positively enhanced their reflective learner role experience. Supporting the notion of reflective learner coaching client role (Cox, 2013), their learning was more multifaceted than the functional learning anticipated. Client and coach co-created a learner role, which Avebury believed led to deeper self-discovery, than independent reflection.

Analysis of both recorded testimonies and collage imagery finds participants also conceptualised their coaching client learner role in terms of 'student' or 'apprentice'. These first-time coaching clients entered coaching with an expectation of coach as 'expert' or 'teacher' and maintained this view despite contradictory experiences in practice.

Participants tended to associate coaching with a self-assessed skill or knowledge deficit, and a belief that the coaching experience would mitigate that deficit. Coaching was acknowledged as a joint endeavour, for knowledge-seeking first-time clients, this was twinned with an expectation that delivery of coaching outcomes was shared with the coach. Barbury had a sense of opportunities missed and that they had chosen the wrong coach to work with, 'I guess [...] delivering the results that I was after, which I don't think I ever achieved.'. Although sometimes Cherhill felt their coach was in tune with their learning needs this wasn't always the case; '[...] I was on one level agreeing but inside thinking "I'm never going to do that" [laughter]'.

Influencer

Analysis of data revealed that although it was outside their awareness at the time, these coachees managed and regulated both the content they shared in the coaching session and the actions they took between sessions. Analysis indicates active engagement in regulating behaviours, both for their own psychological safety and maintenance of relationship with the coach. Keeping safe, managing affective feelings in relation to perceived vulnerability impacted both their engagement in the relationship and how they adapted and tailored their responses as the coaching experience unfolded.

All participants identified an enigma, whilst on the surface a speaker client role suggested a position of empowerment, this was not necessarily how they experienced their coachee-as-speaker role at the time. For Avebury the experience generated mild anxiety 'I think I had thought in advance 'oh god I'm going to have to go in and talk about myself, how awful [...]'. Within their notion of reciprocity Avebury anticipated they and the coach would take turns to share stories, as experienced in other apparently mutual social-interactions like talking with a colleague or friend. The absence of coach contribution in this regard left Avebury slightly discombobulated, '[...] talking entirely about myself [...] with somebody who I didn't know but who said almost nothing seemed like a surprise [laugh]'.

Experience of speaking, for Barbury was more associated with accountability 'It's like a bit reporting back that I've done this, and I've not done this and this is the reason I've not done this [...]'. Their visual representation of speaker role, shows the client as small relative to the image of coach, implying lack of empowerment through the coaching process. Cherhill consciously uses the role of speaker to influence coaching content 'I was deciding what we were talking about most of the time actually'. Leading the coach towards content matters they wished to explore and diverting attention from subjects they preferred to keep hidden.

These findings suggest coachee role as speaker may, or may not, be experienced as empowering. At moments where speaking and knowing one had been heard, coincided, participants were more likely to feel personal empowerment.

The extent to which participants influenced the coaching experience only became apparent on reflection. At the time of their experience, they were unaware of holding any sway within the coaching relationship or coaching process. Client influence was most obviously demonstrated through their decisions and actions outside the coaching session.

Barbury: [...] some paths that we maybe verbally explored [...] either practically followed or I didn't follow through with such [...] vigour.

Interpretative analysis of the data identified more subtle ways in which participants protected themselves from close scrutiny or from areas of vulnerability which they were either not ready, or confident, to explore within this coaching experience.

The role of story teller becomes important in this context. All accepted the role of the client is to share information with the coach, nevertheless they were minded to maintain control over the narrative.

Cherhill: Although it was an informal conversation, I think it was left to me to dictate the conversation. I think I decided actually what we talked about.

Avebury acknowledged the content and trajectory of their story was dictated by them to a certain extent.

Avebury: Since I did most of the speaking I must have been in control [...] because I was making the choices about the words that were spoken.

Yet, confidence on this point of control over the narrative was not ubiquitous, sometimes awareness of a sense of loss of control emerged,

Avebury: [...] I didn't experience it as me deciding to say things it was a much more – kind of, going on saying this stuff [...].

Feelings around personal vulnerability surfaced, together with genuine concerns about the extent to which a coaching client role might expose clients to the judgement of the coach. Generation of uncomfortable feelings was a concern. In one case resulting in the client feeling compelled to protect themselves psychologically.

Cherhill: [...] it didn't feel like a safe place [...] I was hesitant to, to present some of these, sort of, limitations of the self.

This study indicates these participants in coachee role were able to unconsciously assess a potential threat, quantify the level of risk and unconsciously manage their engagement with the coaching situation. From the perspective of coachee they exercised a choice; to stay silent, or to manage their narrative in such a way as to keep themselves safe. These first-time clients responded to their lived experience of coaching, prioritising self-protection over goal attainment, where they perceived the coaching experience in some way unsafe for them.

Discussion

Individuality

The experience of these first-time coaching clients is of the coach tacitly leading them, consciously or not, into a 'client role'. As coaching progressed over time the client seems to react to their experience, sense-making their coaching client role and adjusting to the experience 'on-the-job'. Coaching clients appear to navigate their coaching to both maintain a positive relationship with their coach and a safe sense of self, similar to findings in therapeutic contexts (Rolvjord, 2016). Whilst participants did not conceptualise coaching experience in terms of 'client role', exploration of coaching from this perspective heightened their awareness of the impact their contribution had had on the experience and could have in future coaching.

Study participants were aware of negotiating the 'what' of coaching content and the 'how' in terms of process. However, contracting 'how to be a coaching client', more specifically 'me' as a coachee, was not apparent. Throughout the data the individuality of each participant comes across, creating a sense of 'me' as coachee within the specific coaching context. Fillery-Travis & Cox (2014) note the notion of client 'uniformity myth' persists, indicating the impact of client individuality within coachee role and coaching relationship is perhaps under-acknowledged in coaching practice.

The notion that coaches perhaps implicitly 'teach' clients a 'coachee. role' via relationship, approach and process, is worthy of further investigation. It perhaps also challenges coach concept and practice of contracting, e.g. themes, timing, parity of negotiation or clients prior experience of coachee or other 'client' role.

Learner role

Cox (2013) recognises knowledge exchange between client and coach is a legitimate coaching activity. Though coach as 'teacher', is not explicit in practise literature, coach as 'subject expert' may be implied to first-time coaching clients through descriptions like 'business coach' (Williams, Palmer and Edgerton, 2014, p. 44), 'executive coach' (Peltier, 2010) possibly even, 'life coach' (Grant and Cavanagh, 2014). Characterisation of coaching clients as learners is reinforced in practice literature, as is division of 'learning labour' between coach and client roles (Rogers, 2016). In this study all participants entered coaching with an expectation of a more instructional style of learning, client 'student' to coach 'expert'. This contrasts with coaching literature which tends characterise coaching within a adult-learning theory approach (Bennett & Campone, 2016) as opposed to these clients more a pedagogical one.

Clients in this study hold different constructs of learning simultaneously during the coaching process. Their concept of client-as-learner role, may be influenced by prior experiences of learning in formal learning settings. Yet at the same time, seeing themselves as experiential, self-motivated' adult learners, (Cox, 2013). Where coachees are expected to adopt a more developmental learner role it is argued they need the ability to 'hold an uncomfortable level of uncertainty' (Cox and Jackson, 2014) as part of the learning process. As echoed in the psychotherapy literature (Levitt, Pomerville and Surace, 2016), findings from these first-time clients suggest absence of necessary client-coach relational factors, prevented Cherhill from accessing a more developmental learner role.

It appears that coaching clients can, and do, adapt their learning role in response to specific coaching conditions. Flexibly using both pedagogic and adul-learner constructs within their coachee-learner-role. This may present a challenge for coaches where their espoused coaching approach or practice is out of synch with a client's learning rhythm through a cycle of coaching.

Contracting may need to encompass the needs of a coaching client who at times wishes to be 'taught', and at others prefers supported self-directed reflective or developmental learning.

Influencer

Participants expressed varying degrees of ambiguity about their role as speaker. Although at times finding the speaker role a discomfiting experience, coachees valued the opportunity speaking up provided in terms of feeling heard and validated. It would be inaccurate to assume coachees perceive their speaker role as benign, client ambiguity around narrative sharing may be somewhat reflective of development of the working alliance (Knox and Cooper, 2011; Simonsen and Cooper, 2015; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007).

Concern about what they said in coaching role was apparent in all naïve participant accounts. Speaking out loud had consequences, for how they saw themselves and how they perceived others saw them. Being judged is a concern, more so when working with an internal coach.

From a feminist perspective, giving 'voice to' and 'being silent' are, according to Simpson & Lewis (2005), ways in which meaning and interpretation are 'privileged or suppressed', a signal to others of one's relative powerlessness, worth or status (ibid.). In a coaching client role, vocalising makes one 'visible' to others. Findings in this study show, making oneself visible may not always be perceived, or experienced, as positive. Speaking up, increased client's exposure to coach scrutiny, meaning-making and interpretation. Fear of mis-interpretation, as the accounts of Barbury and Cherhill attest, suggest client perception of the strength of working alliance and trust in coach-client relationship are important, especially in situations where coachees feel vulnerable.

Clients' need to keep themselves psychologically safe is well documented in psychotherapeutic literature (Knox and Cooper, 2011). One of the unanticipated themes emerging from this study was the extent to which the coaching client as 'influencer role' is self-protective. Investigations into coaching client-role self-protective strategies is rather under-reported in coaching literature with the exception of Stokes (2015). He reports coaching clients have a range of self-protective strategies at their disposal, likely developed through everyday inter-relational experiences. He found clients able to both protect themselves and accomplish influence over the coaching relationship and process, Stokes (2015). To an extent these findings appear to support Stokes, particularly the experience of Barbury and Cherhill. He argues strategies are unconsciously deployed by coaching clients, hinting that coaching clients are unaware of both their behaviours and their intent, i.e. to self-protect. Similarly, in this study, participants only became aware of their 'self-protective' behaviours through post experience reflection.

Levitt et. al. (2016) find therapy clients require specific factors be in place to feel safe enough to lay bare their vulnerabilities and engage in 'risky work'. Namely; relational connection; authenticity; trust; exploration of 'difference' within the dyad (ibid.).

Coaching clients who wish to work at this level of vulnerability may also need a coach capable of creating an environment in which the coachee can relinquish their need to self-protect (Cox and Jackson, 2014). Yet even with the necessary relational factors in place, Knox (2008) and Knox & Cooper (2011) emphasise the importance of the therapist explicitly inviting the client to explore, rather than assume the client will take themselves into this area of work automatically. In a similar circumstance requiring the coach to be alert to the possibility in order to re-contract with the coachee.

With this in mind coaches, like therapists, may benefit from more explicit awareness of being in 'relationship' with their client, as is suggested within counselling contexts (Fuertes and Nutt-Williams, 2017). This may have implications for coach training in terms of a coaches' responsibility to be consciously mindful of their client's psychological 'safety'. Noticing when a client's narrative

appears to expose areas of vulnerability, or even expression of affective feelings during the coaching process, and being confident to re-contract as necessary.

Implications for coaches and coaching practice

This research provides insight into the coaching experience from a naïve client perspective. Participant's experience indicates the coachee role evolves experientially. Recognition of this phenomena may encourage coaches to explore; 'what kind of coachee do my clients learn to be through my coaching practice'? Potentially generating new awareness to inform continuing practice development.

The client-centric approach highlights the significance of 'contracting', there is no indication that coaches did not contract with the clients, however, these first-time clients were unaware of negotiating how they might influence coaching beyond stating their goals at the outset.

The study underscores the challenges involved in negotiating a coaching contract, with a first-time client who may have little sense of their role, or a different expectation than their coach. This may be especially so for coaches who espouse a person-centred, client-led practice (Joseph & Bryan-Jefferies, 2008).

The research draws attention to re-contracting during coaching. Coaches may help naïve clients develop awareness into how they can, and do, influence their own coaching via the contracting process. Supporting their clients to hone negotiation skills in this context, so they genuinely feel they are 'in-charge', rather than either consciously or pre-consciously relinquishing their power to the coach.

Limitations and opportunities for future research

Lack of generalisability, the small number of participants and interpretative analytic methodology are obvious limitations of this research. Whilst accepting the concept of 'role' is not shared within the literature, this colloquial term allowed participants to focus attention on their contribution to the coaching experience.

Adoption of a client-centric perspective has introduced insights, in particular working with first-time coaching clients has highlighted areas worthy of further exploration, for example; do clients learn experientially how to be coachees; explore the concept of 'coaching contract' and client empowerment to negotiate at different stages in the coaching process. Client participant recruitment for research studies is a challenge, however meta-analytic studies (Levitt et.al, 2016), suggest ethical qualitative methodologies have developed within psychotherapeutic research, from which coaching might learn and borrow.

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