

# Coaching psykologi

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Ansvarshavende redaktør Ole Michael Spaten

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Coaching Psykologiske forsknings Enhed

Aalborg Universitet

Krogh Stræde 3

9220 Aalborg Ø

Tlf.: 9940 9082

oms@hum.aau.dk

coachingpsykologi.org

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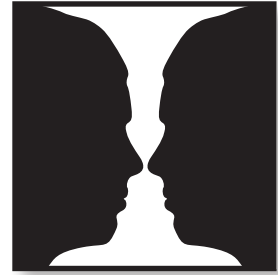
**Alanna Henderson O'Broin**

Birckbeck University / Produc-

tive Living Limited, Surrey, UK

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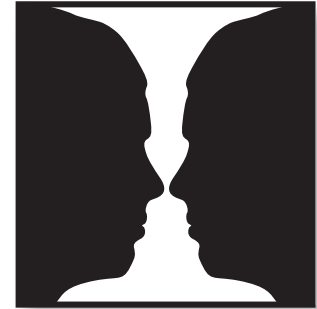
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## Introduktion til klassiske studier og nyeste forskning

By Ole Michael Spaten

Klassisk coaching forskning og det nyeste frontlinje forskning præsenteres i dette nummer af tidsskrift for Coaching Psykologi. Præsenteres side om side med coaching forskning i ordets videste forstand samtidig med artikler der konkret peger på øvelser, der let kan anvendes i den daglige coaching psykologiske praksis. Suppleret med interview med nogle af de mest fremtrædende forskere inden for coaching psykologien og coaching relationen. Med andre ord et nyt nummer af det danske tidsskrift for coaching psykologi til inspiration for akademikere, studerende og coaching praktikere.

Den klassiske forskning er i dette nummer et helt nyt kvalitativt studie, hvor ledere interviewes om deres erfaringer med Executive Coaching. Executive Coaching er et betydningsfuldt og stort arbejdsfelt for coaches og coachingpsykologer, der er store værdier på spil hvis ledelsen af en virksomhed ikke er toptunet og fungerer optimalt. Det er dog relativt få psykologer der arbejder inden for området, selvom det er en kilde til betydelig indtjening – ledelsesrådgivning og ledelsestræning er højt lønnet (Spaten, 2013). Artiklen præsenterer en fænomenologisk undersøgelse af hvordan seks danske ledere oplever det at modtage executive coaching. Undersøgelsen er baseret på interviews med seks danske mellem- og topledere, som er ansat hhv. i en større dansk region og ved en større

privat virksomhed. Der findes ganske få kvalitative studier inden for feltet og studiet er et af de første af sin art på dansk grund.

Frontlinje forskning er det relativt nye felt hvor det undersøges hvilken virkning naturen og naturcoaching har på menneskers stress, angst og velbefindende. For et år siden blev der publiceret en opsigtsvækkende undersøgelse af betydningen af at være i naturen, hvad enten det var skoven eller ved vandet, såkaldt "green or blue exercise": Hvis man blot befandt sig i naturen i to (2) timer om ugen havde det signifikant betydning for menneskets sundhed og velbefindende (White et al., 2019). Flere forskere har fulgt op med større eller mindre undersøgelser og har dermed replikeret disse fund, se f.eks. en artikel i dette tidsskrift sidste år (Palmer & O'Riordan, 2019). Artiklen i dette nummer repræsenterer et bud på denne tradition og er en mindre empirisk undersøgelse af coaching sessioner i nature. Undersøgelsens forskningsspørgsmål er om naturen har en positiv indflydelse på en lille gruppe mennesker i forhold til stress, tilhørsforhold og velbefindende.

Coachingpsykologi har berøringsflader med en række andre interventionsformer, som f.eks. psykoterapi, mentoring, supervision, coaching, instruktion m.v. (Spaten, 2015). Grænsefeltet er vigtigt at undersøge når vi nærmere skal udforske

hvad der samler og adskiller de forskellige interventionsformer fra hinanden. Mentoring har de senere år været genstand for en betydelig opkvalificering og tilsvarende kastet empiriske undersøgelser af sig, men mentoring programmer for nye ansatte er trods alt underbelyst. Sådanne programmer er tidsbestemte og har til formål at den (ny) ansatte kan fortsætte mere kvalificeret efter en tid, men uden hjælp fra en mentor (Garvey et al., 2018). Artiklens særegne tilgang præsenterer analyser af en videoobserveret mentorsamtale og gennem interviews præsenteres punkt for punkt og konkret hvordan mentoring kan finde sted med planlagte mentorsamtaler. En række vigtige forudsætninger skitseres som baggrund for at dette kan ske: Deltagerne skal respektere gensidig fortrolighed, og input og professionel rådgivning skal gives fra et synspunkt af ægte interesse for mentee – herved bliver en følelsesmæssig og kognitiv anerkendelse af den nyansatte mulig (Honneth, 2006).

Endvidere er der en artikel der med titlen ”Exploring Coaching Style Preference”, som rummer resultaterne af en blandet metodeundersøgelse, der udforsker coaches perspektiver på virkningen og hjælpsomheden af personlighedsteori og anvendelsen af forskellige coachingstile. Psykologisk Assessment betjener sig ofte af instrumenter som DASS 42 og BIG Five Faktor teorierne (Judge & Zapata, 2015) og således også i tilfældet med denne artikel. Deltagerne i undersøgelsen var 20 personer af forskellige nationaliteter og med arbejde inden for en række af forskellige typer af virksomheder. Alle deltagere var tidligere blevet coachet og deltog både i de kvalitative og de kvantitative undersøgelser. Forskningen giver et førstehåndskendskab for

trænere, der er interesserede i at anvende personlighedsp psykologisk teori og psykologisk assessment i deres coachingpraksis. En anvendelse, som kan hjælpe dem med at træffe informerede beslutninger om den type af coaching eller ”coachingstil”, der skal tages i anvendelse i forhold til at opnå en frugtbar coachingrelation og en optimal effektivitet af coaching. Der findes relativt få mixede metode studier med anvendelsen af psykologisk assessment sat i forhold til hvilken type af coaching eller ”coachingstil” der mest frugtbart skal anvendes og studiet er derfor af stor interesse.

Endelig rummer dette nummer af tidsskriftet artikler og interview, hvori man kan læse en række vinkler på et andet vigtigt forskningsfelt, nemlig forskning i coaching relationens betydning. Flere forskere har rejst spørgsmålet om hvorvidt coaching relationen er en af de ”vigtigste aktive ingredienser i terapi og coachingspsykologi?” (O’Broin, 2019; Spaten, 2020). Gennem artikler og interview (Palmer, 2020; Henderson, 2020; Gyllensten, 2020) præsenteres dels en kort introduktion til forskningsfeltet efterfulgt af tidslinje for forskning inden for coaching-relationen. Artikler og interview diskuterer endvidere definitioner af forskningsfeltet. Endelig påpeges at coaching relationen er en vigtig ingrediens i forhold til effektiviteten og resultatet af coaching. Komplexiteten af coaching relationer betyder dog at der bør søges efter en ny syntese af teoretiske ideer og at yderligere forskning bør gennemføres.

Læserne af dette nummer ønskes godt nytår og god læselyst

Ole Michael Spaten, ansvarshavende redaktør

## Introduction to classical studies and newest research

Classical coaching research and the latest front-line research are presented in this issue of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Presented side by side with coaching research in the broadest sense of the word at the same time as articles that specifically point to exercises that straightforward can be used in daily coaching psychological practice. Complemented by interviews with some of the most prominent researchers in the field of

coaching relationship and coaching psychology. In other words, a new issue of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology is published for inspiration for academics, students and coaching practitioners open access.

The classic research in this issue is a brand new qualitative study, where executives and managers are interviewed about their experiences with Executive Coaching. Executive Coaching is an

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important and large field of work for coaches and coaching psychologists; great values is at stake if the management of a company is not top-tuned and functions optimally. However, relatively few psychologists work in the field, although it is a source of considerable profits – management consulting and management training are highly paid (Spaten, 2013). The article presents a phenomenological study of how six Danish managers experience receiving executive coaching. The study is based on interviews with six Danish middle and top managers, who are employed respectively in a larger Danish Region and at a larger private company. There are quite a few qualitative studies in the field and the study is one of the first of its kind on Danish soil.

Frontline research in this issue is investigations of the effect of nature and nature coaching on people's stress, anxiety and well-being. A year ago, a startling study was published on the healthy importance of being in nature: whether it might be in the forest or by the water, so-called "green or blue exercises": If you were only in nature for two (2) hours a week, it had significant implications for human health and well-being (White et al., 2019). Several researchers have followed up with larger or smaller studies and have thus replicated these findings, see e.g. an article in this journal last year (Palmer & O'Riordan, 2019). The article in this volume represents a bid for this tradition and is a minor empirical study of coaching sessions in nature. The research question of the study is whether nature has a positive influence on a small group of people in relation to stress, belonging and well-being.

Coaching psychology has interfaces and borderlines with a number of other forms of intervention, such as psychotherapy, mentoring, supervision, coaching, instruction, etc. (Spaten, 2015). The borders are important to examine when we have to explore in more detail what brings together and separates the different forms of intervention from each other. Mentoring has in recent years been the subject of considerable upskilling and similarly has shed significant empirical research, but mentoring programs for new employees are, after all, under-illuminated. Such programs are time-bound and aim to enable the (new) employee to continue more qualified after a period of time, but without the assistance of a mentor (Garvey et al., 2018). The article's distinctive approach presents

analyses of a video-observed mentor interview and through interviews is presented point by point and concretely how mentoring can take place with planned mentor interviews. A number of important prerequisites are outlined as a background for this to happen: Participants must respect mutual confidentiality, and input and professional advice must be given from a point of view of genuine interest in the mentee - thereby making emotional and cognitive recognition of the new employee possible (Honneth, 2006).

Furthermore, in this volume, the reader will find an article entitled "Exploring Coaching Style Preference", which contains the results of a mixed methods study exploring coaches' perspectives on the impact and helpfulness of personality theory and the application of different coaching styles. Psychological Assessment often makes use of instruments such as the DASS 42 and BIG Five Factor theories (Judge & Zapata, 2015) and this is also the case in this article. The participants in the study were 20 people of different nationalities and working in a number of different types of companies. All participants had previously been coached and participated in both the qualitative and the quantitative surveys. The research provides first-hand knowledge for coaches who are interested in applying personality psychological theory and psychological assessment in their coaching practice. An application that can help them make informed decisions about the type of coaching or "coaching style" that should be applied in relation to achieving a fruitful coaching relationship and an optimal effectiveness of coaching. There are relatively few mixed method studies with the use of psychological assessment in relation to which type of coaching or "coaching style" should be used most fruitfully, and the study is therefore of great interest.

Finally, this issue of the journal contains articles and interviews with a number of approaches and perspectives on another vital field of research, namely research into the importance of the coaching relationship. Several researchers have raised the question of whether the coaching relationship is one of the "most important active ingredients in therapy and coaching psychology?" (O'Broin, 2019; Spaten, 2020). Through articles and interviews in this volume (Palmer, 2020; Henderson, 2020; Gyllensten, 2020), a brief introduction to the field of research is presented, followed by a timeline for research within the coaching relationship.

Articles and interviews also discuss different definitions of the field of research. In conclusion, it is jagged that the coaching relationship is an important ingredient in relation to the effectiveness and outcome of coaching. However, the complexity of coaching relationships means that a new synthesis of theoretical ideas should be sought and that further research must be conducted.

We wish the readers of this issue a happy new year and a good read

Ole Michael Spaten, Editor-in-chief

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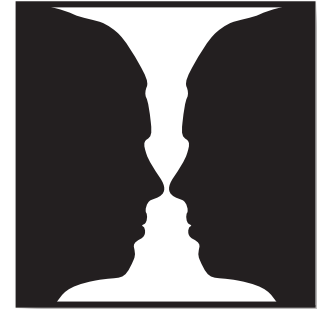
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## Exploring coaching style preference through conversations about coaching and personality

By Farheen Jeelani, Gregory Fantham and Marais Bester

### Abstract

*This paper presents the results of a mixed method study exploring coachees' perspectives on the impact and helpfulness of personality theory and assessments in applying different coaching styles. Participants included 20 individuals who had been coached in the past, of different nationalities and from various industries, who took part in both the qualitative and the quantitative studies. The following consistent themes emerged from the qualitative study: the importance of personality validity, the impact of the coaching relationship, the perceived effectiveness of coaching, reflecting on past experiences and moving forward toward the future, while the quantitative results showed that individuals with certain Big Five personality traits preferred certain coaching styles over others. The study provides preliminary insights for coaches seeking to apply personality theory and personality assessments in their coaching practices and may assist them to make informed decisions about the coaching style to adopt in order to improve coaching relationships and coaching effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** coaching; Big Five personality traits; coaching styles; coaches; trait-based personality assessments.

### Objectives

The study aimed to explore the application of trait-based personality theory and assessments in the coaching context as a means to enhance the coaching relationship by providing practical guidance for researchers and coaching practitioners. This study hopes to build on the existing body of research related to the use of trait-based personality theory and assessments in coaching relationships.

### Introduction

A recent study found that the international coaching industry is worth more than \$2 billion every year with just over half of the coaches globally working in the fields of executive, leadership and business coaching (ICF, 2016). The study estab-

lished that coaches are experiencing an increase in the number of clients they see, the number of sessions they have and the fees they charge (ICF, 2016). The popularity of coaching as a learning approach or style can be explained by the fact that it is highly interactive, challenges the coachee to

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take action and can be adapted to accommodate the coachee's natural traits, abilities and preferences (ICF, 2016).

Subsequent to its global popularity and effectiveness, coaching has become accepted by organisations as one of the most popular learning and development interventions (Hawkins & Turner, 2017). Coaching is typically used in occupational settings to enhance individual, team and organisational performance and to assist individuals to improve their learning agility, speed of onboarding, job satisfaction, adaptability, co-worker relationships and leadership skills (Williams & Offley, 2005).

The style applied by the coach in a coaching session and a coaching relationship has a major impact on the long-term success of coaching (MacLennan, 2017). Several studies have shown that coaches who can adapt their coaching style to the natural learning style and preferences of their coachees tend to have more successful coaching relationships (Bell, 2014; Blanton & Wasylyshyn, 2018). De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011) found that coaches are perceived as being more helpful when they are focused on the needs of the coachee, as opposed to driving their own agenda or approach. However, the challenge that coaches face is that they do not always know which approach or style to use as they do not necessarily know from the outset which coaching style the coachee would prefer. This study hoped to highlight the importance of understanding a coachee's personality preferences before and/or during the coaching relationship in order to understand the best coaching style to adopt. The study also hoped to give practitioners insights into best practices associated with personality assessments in the coaching relationship and to build on the existing body of research that focuses on assessments in coaching and the respective coaching styles that are available.

### Personality and learning styles

Studies consistently show that personality preference is strongly associated with learning style preference, as individuals learn quicker and more effectively when the style of learning is aligned to their natural inclinations and strengths (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). Several studies have explored the relationship between personality and preferred learning style (Li & Armstrong, 2015; Tlili, Essalmi, Jemni, & Chen, 2016). Learning styles

represent enduring and stable approaches that individuals prefer to use for processing information and acquiring knowledge (Snyder, 2000). Komarraju et al. (2011), who adopted Schmeck, Ribich, and Ramanaiah's (1977) model of learning styles, found significant positive relationships between the Big Five personality traits of conscientiousness and agreeableness and the four learning styles of synthesis analysis, methodical study, fact retention and elaborative processing. Komarraju et al. (2011) also found that neuroticism was negatively associated with all four of the above-mentioned learning styles and that extraversion and openness to experience were positively associated with elaborative processing.

Other studies have found that individuals who tend to take a deep-processing approach to learning are more likely to be conscientious and extraverted (Furnham, 1992; Zhang, 2003), as well as emotionally stable (Geisler-Brenstein, Schmeck, & Hetherington, 1996). In turn, individuals who seem to experience high levels of anxiety prefer more structured and intuitive learning approaches (Zhang, 2003), whereas individuals who prefer a more relaxed and pragmatic learning approach tend to be more extraverted (Furnham, 1992). As learning style preference and personality traits appear to be closely associated, it is argued that associations would also exist between different styles of coaching and personality.

### Personality and coaching

Although theories and assessments of personality are widely used throughout the employee lifecycle and in particular within the learning and development space, McDowall and Smewing (2009) found that not all coaches use personality theories and assessments in their coaching practices. Coaches who do not use psychometric assessments regularly as part of their practices cited lack of training in personality theories and assessments, as well as the lack of perceived effectiveness of the assessments in terms of providing adequate data, as the primary reasons for not using personality theories and assessments (McDowall & Smewing, 2009).

Personality plays an important role in shaping work-related behaviour such as problem-solving ability, learning orientation, productivity, job satisfaction and intention to leave (Burch & Anderson, 2008; Conte, Heffner, Roesch & Aasen, 2017; Judge & Zapata, 2015). Subsequently, personality

profiling can have a multitude of benefits in the workplace coaching relationship. Coaches have reported that the traditional approach to workplace coaching, which focuses on overcoming challenges such as skill shortages, performance issues, change initiatives and strategic objectives (Witherspoon & White, 1997), does not always provide an adequate path to sustainable behavioural change (McCormick & Burch, 2008).

Personality-focused coaching allows the coach to understand the coachee's primary behavioural needs, strengths, development areas and objectives, which then allows the coach to take a more focused approach to the coaching relationship (McCormick & Burch, 2008). To comprehend personality-focused coaching, it is vital to explore the nature of contemporary personality assessments and the research on the impact of personality-behaviour linkages on coaching effectiveness.

### Personality types and traits

The most popular way of determining personality in the workplace is by means of self-report psychometric assessments (Saville, MacIver, Kurz, & Hopton, 2008). Scoular and Campbell (2007) state that psychometric assessments can add much value to the coaching relationship in terms of assisting the coach to understand the needs of the coachee and in turn assisting the coachee to develop greater self-awareness.

Personality-based workplace self-report psychometric assessments have expanded massively over available that supports the capabilities of these assessments in terms of predicting job performance, job role and organisational fit, leadership potential and individual training and development needs (Saville et al., 2008; Weiner & Greene, 2017). Two approaches to personality assessment are generally used in the occupational setting, namely, personality type-based assessments and personality trait-based assessments.

Most studies that have analysed the association between personality and coaching effectiveness have made use of the much-scrutinised type-based approach to personality assessment as opposed to the more valid and reliable trait-based personality assessment approach (De Haan et al., 2011; Palmer, & Whybrow, 2008; Scoular & Linley, 2006; Scoular & Campbell, 2007; Saville et al., 2008).

Personality can be conceptualised as the intra-individual structuring of experience and behav-

our (Asendorpf, 2002). Therefore, personality type refers to individuals with similar intra-individual structures of their experience and behaviour (Asendorpf, 2002). However, research on type-based perspectives on personality have consistently pointed out that such a variable-centred approach may neglect an essential part of personality, namely, the development of traits in an individual (Allport, 1937; Block, 1995; Hampson, 2019; Mervielde & Asendorpf, 2000; Stern, 1911).

Although personality-type assessments have lost much of their appeal in most personality-related research studies and usage in occupational settings, as they are described as being too reductive, many practitioners, especially career counsellors and coaches, find them useful in the occupational setting to help coachees crystallise their comprehension of their own personalities (Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Hampson, 2019).

A type-based questionnaire that is still frequently used in coaching practice is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which is loosely based on the research of Carl Jung (Furnham, 1996; Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998). The MBTI categories are based on four dichotomies, namely, sensing (S) and intuition (N), feeling (F) and thinking (T), perceiving (P) and Judging (J), as well as extraversion (E) and introversion (I). The MBTI system further classifies 16 personality types based on a combination of the four dichotomies.

Personality theorists have consistently argued that trait-based personality tools are more valid for use in occupational settings as they believe that job requirements are more complex than specific types or "boxes" of personality (Block, 1995; Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Hampson, 2019; Saville et al., 2008). The Five Factor Model, or the Big-Five Factor Model of personality as it is commonly known, has been accepted as the most widely used taxonomy for studying the relationship between trait-based personality and work-related outcomes (Salgado & De Fruyt, 2017).

The Big Five Factor Model of personality emphasises individual personality traits and the differences between people as opposed to the similarities between people which can be seen with the type-based approach to personality (Digman, 2002). Scholars argue that the Big Five Factor Model of personality allows the practitioner to gain more detailed information about the client's personality and potential behaviour (Digman, 2002).

The primary factors of the Big Five Factor Model of personality include a) openness to experience; b) conscientiousness; c) extraversion (or interpersonal patterns); d) agreeableness; and e) neuroticism (emotional stability) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It should be noted that certain scholars have criticised the trait-based researchers' pursuit of a universal scheme for personality such as the Big Five model, as scholars state that individual personality exists in the limitless multidimensional space (Hough & Ones, 2001; Mischel, 1981).

Most of the research that has been done on the use of personality in the coaching relationship has focused on the personality match between the coach and coachee and how it would influence the effectiveness of coaching. For example, Scoular and Linley (2006) found that (dis-)similarities between the personality types of the coach and coachee, as measured by the MBTI, had a significant impact on the perceived effectiveness of the coaching sessions. It was also established that a coach's personality style would either consciously or subconsciously affect their choice of coaching style, which would in turn affect the coachee's perceived effectiveness of the coaching experience. Boyce, Jackson and Neal (2010) found that the effectiveness of coaching was not necessarily dependent on the behavioural compatibility between the coach and coachee but rather on the style that the coach adopted toward the coaching relationship.

When using the Big Five personality traits questionnaire (Digman, 1990), Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, and Kerrin (2008) found moderate positive relationships between conscientiousness, openness and emotional stability and perceived coaching style effectiveness.

## Coaching styles

Owing to the growing popularity and the expansion of research within the field, several coaching styles have emerged over the past few years. Stober and Grant (2006) categorise the most popular approaches/styles of coaching into nine distinct categories as follows:

*The humanist approach to coaching.* This type of coaching applies the person-centred principles of Carl Rogers (1951, 1959), which view positive transformation and self-actualisation as key motivators within the human psyche (Stober, 2006). This coaching approach attempts to use people's need to self-actualise in order to stimulate the coachee's

inherent growth potential. This style of coaching builds on the core principles of psychotherapy by emphasising the coach-coachee relationship while suggesting that the relationship itself is key to stimulating growth. As the humanistic perspective requires the coach to take a holistic approach it challenges the coach to address all aspects of the coachee.

*Behaviour-based approach to coaching.* This approach attempts to recognise the complexity of the human psyche, as well as the environment in which the coachee finds him/herself, while attempting to facilitate practical change over psychological adjustments (Peterson, 2006). This approach to coaching challenges the coachee to take action in real-life situations, to look to the future and to create sustainable positive change. It emphasises the importance of personal development and continuous learning and, to a lesser degree, adopts a therapeutic approach to the coaching relationship.

*Adult development approach to coaching.* This coaching style has its roots in several constructivist-developmental theories which state that when coachees become more open and aware of their own authority and responsibility, they tend to become more goal-orientated, more tolerant and more structured in their own development, as well as their approach to themselves and society (Bergner, 2006).

*Cognitive approach toward coaching.* This approach to coaching stems primarily from the idea that coaching needs to address the multiple complex facets of the individual, that is, it is fundamentally a cognitive process (Auerbach, 2006). This approach to coaching holds that a coachee's emotions and reactions are primarily a result of their cognitions, perceptions, interpretations, beliefs and mental state. It has its roots in cognitive therapy which assists clients to replace their derailing and incorrect thoughts with positive and accurate thoughts about themselves and their environments (Burns, 1980). When applying this approach to coaching, the coach challenges the coachee to change their negative and inaccurate thinking patterns (Auerbach, 2006).

*Adult learning approach to coaching.* This coaching style makes use of several adult learning theories which focus on deep learning and reflecting on experiences such as reflective practice (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1994) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Cox (2006) indicates that coaching

is very close to these learning approaches as it is based on goal-focused behaviour, self-learning and teaching the coachee to use previous experiences to overcome challenges. Gray (2005), in turn, states that to facilitate transformative learning, coachees need to be assisted to critically reflect on past experiences.

*Positive psychology approach to coaching.* This approach to coaching postulates that coaches should support coachees in identifying and building on their strengths to assist them to overcome challenges, experience greater satisfaction and have hope for the future (Kauffman, 2006). Positive psychology assists individuals to identify, prioritise and dwell on the positive things in their lives, as positive emotions allow individuals to readily access their cognitive and psychological resources which results in better performance (Kauffman, 2006). The positive psychology approach to coaching focuses primarily on general performance enhancement, changes in attitudes and perceptions and creating balance in different aspects of the coachee's life.

*Adventure-based approach to coaching.* Kemp (2006) maintains that there are similarities between coaching and adventure education, as both approaches to learning seek to push boundaries and challenge the status quo. Kemp (2006) further states that both coaching and adventure education start with an analysis of the learner's current state, define a desired outcome and then develop a way of achieving this outcome. Both coaching and adventure education involve the learner needing to accept some risk and ambiguity (e.g. psychological injury in coaching) in order to move to the edge of their physical or psychological comfort areas. Kemp (2006) states that growth takes place when people take risks and stretch themselves. The adventure-based approach to coaching accordingly asks the coachee to stretch themselves in either an emotional, a cognitive or even a physical way in order to stimulate growth and behavioural change (Kemp, 2006). The learning that takes place during the coaching adventure is defined and then applied in real-life settings.

*Systemic approach to coaching.* This approach to coaching assists the coachee to identify previously undefined patterns of behaviour and feedback in order to make positive changes in their lives (Cavanagh, 2006). The coachee is challenged to take a holistic view of their patterns of experiences and

behaviours as different thoughts and feelings may be interlinked. The systemic approach to coaching acknowledges the fact that life is challenging, unpredictable and ambiguous and that goals can be achieved by making small changes and by being open to growth and creativity (Cavanagh, 2006). Growth takes place when the delicate balance between stability and instability is recognised and maintained (Cavanagh, 2006).

*Goal-oriented approach to coaching.* Coaches who apply this method assist coachees to develop and identify goals and action plans. The coach plays an integral part by stimulating ideas and actions and ensuring that these goals and actions are aligned to the coachee's values (Grant, 2006). This approach to coaching is also referred to as brief coaching as it sets out to achieve a very specific goal within a relatively short space of time (Berg & Szabo, 2005).

Palmer and Whybrow (2008) argue that most occupational coaches tend to either follow a mix of the above-mentioned approaches or take a positive psychology or a behaviour-based approach to coaching. Subsequently, this study focused on the positive psychology approach and behaviour-based approach to coaching.

## Methods

### Participants

Participants consisted of an opportunity sample of working adults from various industries and of different nationalities (Indian, Trinidadian, Irish, Ugandan, Syrian and Malaysian). A total of 20 individuals took part in the study all of whom had received some type of coaching in the past. Participants were informed of their rights to confidentiality and that their participation was voluntary before the research commenced and subsequently gave their written consent to taking part in the research.

### Procedure

The research design consisted of a cross-sectional mixed method approach which made use of a survey (psychometric measure), followed by a face-to-face interview/feedback session to validate the results from the psychometric measure and to explore the respondents' opinions on personality and the respective coaching styles and, finally, participants were provided with a coaching scenario to determine their coaching style preference. There is wide agreement that mixing different types of research method can greatly improve the quality

of a study (Kumar, 2019). As all methods of data collection have limitations, the use of multiple research methods can counterbalance the disadvantages of certain methods (e.g., the detail of qualitative data can provide insights not available from general quantitative surveys) (Kumar, 2019).

### Ethical considerations

Participants' rights to confidentiality were explained, and their informed consent to use the results for research purposes was attained before they took part in the research. Participants were also informed that their participation in the research was of their own free will and that they were allowed to opt-out at any time. The ethical committee of the researchers' affiliated university provided clearance for the study.

### Psychometric tool

Rammstedt and John's (2007) self-report Big Five Inventory (BFI-10) was used to measure the Big Five personality traits of the participants. As Rammstedt and John (2007) found sufficient reliabilities for the measure it was deemed appropriate for use in the current study (average test-retest reliability of .72). When completing the BFI-10, respondents are asked to rate their preference regarding the way they see themselves on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Disagree Strongly" to "Agree Strongly". Examples of questions include: "I see myself as someone who is reserved" and "I see myself as someone who is generally trusting". The psychometric tool was administered in a face-to-face format by the researchers which allowed the participants to ask questions if necessary. Participants' rights to confidentiality were explained, and their informed consent to use the results for research purposes was attained before they took part in the research.

### Face-to-face interview and psychometric validation

Furnham and Schofield's (1987) advice on the importance of providing feedback on a person's results after they have completed a personality questionnaire, in both research and practice, in order to validate the results was followed as part of the interview/feedback session. Interviews were transcribed verbatim.

The interviews were semi-structured, and participants were advised that they would last approx-

imately 30 minutes. The researchers prepared six questions as a framework for the interview/feedback session but allowed for a flexible response to the answers from participants:

- Question 1. How would you describe your individual personality?
- Question 2. Do you agree with the results of the personality questionnaire?
- Question 3. Is it important for a coach to consider your personality during the coaching relationship?
- Question 4. How would you describe your coaching experience?
- Question 5. What did you enjoy about the coaching experience?
- Question 6. What did you not enjoy about the coaching experience?

Open questions were used to encourage participants to respond freely using their own words without prompting from the researcher. Questions 1 and 2 were based on Furnham and Schofield's (1987) advice to validate the results of a personality questionnaire. Questions 3 to 6 were used to ascertain the individual's opinion on coaching and to gain insights regarding their coaching style preferences.

### Research scenarios

After the completion of the psychometric measure and the interview, participants were provided with two written coaching scenarios to read through. A research scenarios or vignette is a powerful research method that can be used to measure participants' attitudes to certain topics or research variables (Hughes & Huby, 2012). It is, however, paramount that these scenarios are well constructed to allow the researcher an opportunity to clearly measure the respective constructs (Hughes & Huby, 2012). The first scenario adopted a positive psychology coaching approach, while in scenario 2 a cognitive behavioural approach was followed. In both of these scenarios, which were extracted from the rigorous research of Palmer and Whybrow (2008), participants were provided with the coachee's problem and key extracts from the coaching conversation. The outcome and coaching style used in the fictitious scenarios were not shared with the participants so as not to influence their thinking.

Table 1: Qualitative interview themes

Theme	Description
Personality validity	Accuracy of the personality psychometric tool used. Importance of personality in the learning/coaching experience.
Coaching relationship	Importance of working well with the coach.
Effectiveness of coaching	Coaching as an effective tool of learning.
Reflecting	Coaching allowing a person to reflect on past experiences.
Moving forward	Coaching helping someone to set goals and take actionable steps.

## Analysis

Rammstedt and John's (2007) guidance on scoring the BFI 10 was followed in terms of calculating a participant's highest Big Five personality preferences based on how each item loaded on each of the Big Five personality scales. The mean scores of each of the Big Five personality traits were calculated to determine the predominant personality preferences for the sample.

The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis which is a rigorous qualitative data analysis method where interview transcripts are examined and classified in a highly structured way in order to identify patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The scenarios were analysed by asking participants which of the coaching styles in the scenarios they preferred and why, based on the coaching conversation extracts they were provided with. Coaching scenario 1 was coded as '1' and coaching scenario 2 was coded as '2', which allowed the researcher to conduct frequency analysis.

## Results

### Qualitative results

A systematic procedure was implemented to code and classify the qualitative data from the interview transcripts in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. Themes from individual participant responses and across the entire data set were revised and refined. The data set was then reread to establish the validity of the emerging themes and to assess whether they were reflective of the entire data set. During this stage of the process, themes and subthemes were defined and refined further to determine which part of the data each theme represented. Five key themes

emerged from the analysis: personality validity, the coaching relationship, effectiveness of coaching, reflecting and moving to the future. These themes were observed in the data obtained from all the research participants and are defined in the order of the frequency in which they occurred. Table 1 provides a summary of these themes.

### Personality validity

After receiving feedback on their Big Five Personality trait results, as measured by the BF-10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007), and after asking interview questions 1, 2 and 3, all participants shared their opinions on their own personalities and how personality plays a role in the coaching relationship. All participants agreed with the results from the BF-10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007).

... the results are very accurate ... the tool describes what I am like most of the time ... I agree with the results (D11-D13) ... it was useful to learn more about myself (D6-D7) ... I think personality is important to consider in any learning experience (F61-F66) ... personality can show you or someone who is helping you what your natural strengths and development needs are (D6-D8).

### Coaching relationship

All the participants indicated that the relationship with the coach plays a significant role in the effectiveness of coaching.

... I need to like my coach so that I can feel it works (C23-C36) ... My coach needs to understand me well for the

coaching to work well ... As you are spending a lot of time with the coach, I think that it is important that you enjoy each other's company (A5-A9) ... I need to feel that I can trust the coach with all of my obstacles and secrets (A3-A4).

### Effectiveness of coaching

Diverse opinions on the effectiveness of coaching emerged from the data:

... coaching works for some people, but does not work for others ... not everyone understands coaching which may impact their willingness to be coached ... some people prefer to learn through other things like classroom training (G3-G9) ... coaching had a major impact on my effectiveness as manager ... I would recommend coaching to anyone who wants to grow (H1-H3).

### Reflecting

Many participants spoke about the fact that the coaching process allowed them to reflect on past events, decisions and situations.

... it made me think about different ways that I could have approached the situation (B17-B19) ... it made me think about using my past experiences and learnings to overcome challenges (B21-B22) ... the coach asked me to reflect on my learning (I16-I19).

### Moving forward

Participants highlighted the fact that coaching assisted them to look to the future and set specific goals.

... my coach helped me to set goals for myself and my career ... most of our conversations were focused on the future ... I enjoyed talking about different possibilities (J7-J9) ... my coach advised me to not dwell on the past, but rather to move forward ... coaching helped me to make small changes to my life (K1-K3).

### Quantitative results

The results of the BF-10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007) and the scenarios were placed in a frequency table to indicate which personality preferences most frequently aligned to which coaching style preferences. The frequency analysis consequently indicated that the majority of the sample were high on openness to experience (18 out of 20), conscientiousness (18 out of 20), extraversion (15 out of 20), agreeableness (18 out of 20) and neuroticism (11 out of 20). The majority of the sample preferred scenario 1 (11 out of 20) which adopted a positive psychology approach to coaching over scenario 2 (9 out of 20) which adopted a cognitive behavioural approach. Table 2 summarises the frequency analysis of personality preferences in relation to coaching style preferences.

The results of the frequency analysis showed that the majority of individuals who reported a high preference for openness preferred the positive psychology approach, while individuals who reported a low preference for openness reported preferring the cognitive behavioural approach. The same number of individuals who were high on conscientiousness reported a high preference for both the positive psychology approach and the cognitive behavioural approach. The majority of individuals who saw themselves as low on conscientiousness reported a high preference for the positive psychology approach. Further, the majority of individuals who were both high and low on extraversion preferred the cognitive behavioural approach. The majority of individuals who were high on agreeableness preferred the positive psychology approach while individuals low on agreeableness seemed to prefer the cognitive behavioural approach. In addition, individuals who reported high on neuroticism mostly preferred the positive psychology approach while individuals low on neuroticism mostly preferred the cognitive behavioural approach. It should be noted that no direct correlations or causation could be determined due to sample size between personality and coaching style preference. This was a key limitation to the study.

### Discussion

The study aimed to provide preliminary insights on the validity and utility of using personality theory and assessments in the coaching process. It also highlighted the appreciation that coachees have



Table 2: Frequency analysis of personality preferences in relation to coaching style preferences

Personality preference	Coaching style preference	
	Positive psychology approach scenario	Cognitive behaviour approach scenario
High preference for openness (N=18)	F = 10	F = 8
Low preference for openness (N = 2)	F = 0	F = 2
High preference for conscientiousness (N = 18)	F = 9	F = 9
Low preference for conscientiousness (N = 2)	F = 2	F = 0
High preference for extraversion (N = 15)	F = 7	F = 8
Low preference for extraversion (N = 5)	F = 2	F = 3
High preference for agreeableness (N = 18)	F = 10	F = 8
Low preference for agreeableness (N = 2)	F = 0	F = 2
High preference for neuroticism (N = 11)	F = 9	F = 2
Low preference for neuroticism (N = 9)	F = 4	F = 5

*F = Frequency*

for coaching as a learning tool and more specifically for the coaching relationship. The importance of the coaching relationship and the style that the coach adopts during this relationship for the effectiveness of coaching was also found in this study (De Haan et al., 2011; MacLennan, 2017).

Reflecting on past experiences to facilitate self-insight has been found to be essential in terms of supporting personal growth (Augusttijen, Schitzer, & Van Esbroeck, 2011). The current study showed that coaching is a powerful tool that can be used to facilitate growth as it allows individuals to reflect on past experiences. Moreover, the results supported previous research which found that learning and more specifically coaching is perceived as being more effective when specific goals and action steps are set for the future (Greif, 2016).

In this study, similar findings were made to those of previous studies which showed that personality plays an important role in individuals' learning style preferences (Komarraju et al., 2011; Li & Armstrong, 2015; Tlili et al., 2016). The importance of clearly understanding a coachee's personality traits before or during the coaching relationship was highlighted, as the study showed that particular personality traits may potentially prefer either

the cognitive behavioural approach or the positive psychology approach to coaching. This finding is consistent with the work of Komarraju et al. (2011), who established clear associations between the Big Five personality factors and individuals' learning preferences, for example a preference for learning through deep cognitive processing and understanding (e.g. a cognitive behavioural approach to coaching) or through systematic goal setting (e.g. a positive psychology approach to coaching).

Stewart (2006) proposed that client, coaching, personality, and work environment factors are all associated with coaching success and the perceived relationship match between the coach and the coachee. Personality may impact on coaching success via moderating the influence of these variables. It should thus be noted that personality is not the only variable that may impact the outcomes of the coaching relationship and that several other variables should be taken into account to fully understand the dynamic relationship between coach and coachee.

Coaching practitioners could utilise the preliminary findings presented in this study to better prepare themselves for the coaching relationship. Coaches who take the time to assess their coachees'

preferred personality styles may be in a better position to alter their coaching styles in accordance with the needs and preferences of their coachees (Stewart et al., 2008). Knowledge on the coachee's personality preferences may also assist the coach in building a stronger coaching relationship with the coachee as they will know what the individual's behavioural and learning preferences, strengths and development needs are.

The relationships between the application component of coaching success and the studied personality variables may suggest that certain individuals could benefit from support interventions to encourage the successful implementation of development activities as a result of coaching. Stewart et al. (2008) advise that individuals who do not score highly on conscientiousness, openness, and emotional stability, may require further development interventions to assist them in finding their coaching relationship useful. Stewart (2006) developed a Coaching Transfer Facilitator Framework to guide such interventions. For example, this framework recommends the formation of a champion-client partnership for developmental action, in which the champion is someone senior to the coachee with an interest in the client's development. Future research could explore the relative effectiveness of development interventions across personality characteristics.

#### Limitations and areas for future research

Similar to other studies in the field of coaching this study was limited by a small sample size. This impeded the researchers' abilities to utilise advanced statistical analysis techniques in the quantitative analysis and the potential generalisability of the results. Participation in the study was voluntary which means that it could be argued that self-selected candidates view coaching in general as more positive and the results were enhanced as a consequence. The personality questionnaire that was used is dependent on participants' self-knowledge, hence low self-perceptions of the participants could also have skewed the results. Owing to time and resource limitations, the entire coaching relationship and dialogue could not be communicated via the scenarios that were used which meant that participants were not able to gain a full picture of the coaching styles that were used before they had to make a decision on their preferred scenario.

This study was positioned as a preliminary step in exploring the potential relationship between personality preferences and coaching style preferences. Future research should include larger and more diverse samples and various data gathering and statistical processing techniques and should potentially be longitudinal in design so that cause and effect may be established. Future research could also explore other coaching styles in relation to personality preferences as this study was limited to two coaching styles only.

#### Conclusion

As personality plays a significant role in the learning experience (Komarraju et al., 2011), this study proposed that coaching practitioners and researchers should consider paying more attention to the application of personality theory and assessments in coaching practices. It was argued that personality theory and data from trait-based personality assessments would provide the practitioner with valuable insights into the coachee's preferred coaching style, which would subsequently have a positive impact on the effectiveness of coaching. The study highlighted the fact that coachees experience coaching as more meaningful as a learning intervention when coaches adapt their coaching style to the coachee's natural personality preferences.

It should be noted that the current research was a preliminary study on the relationship dynamics that potentially exist between personality preference and coaching style preference. The results from this study could be used to guide further research in the field of coaching psychology.

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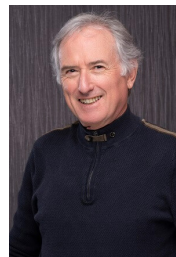


Farheen Jeelani  
Harriot Watt University,  
dubai branch  
Email: farheen.jeelani@hotmail.  
com  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## Farheen Jeelani

Farheen Jeelani is a Masters of Science graduate in Business Psychology - Heriot Watt University, Dubai, UAE. She is an Associate Consultant - Occupational and Educational Psychologist with Momentum Coaching and Consulting. A speaker at the 2017 International Psychological Conference where her MSC Dissertation was presented. She is also a member of British Psychological Society and is a certified occupational Test User of Ability and Personality.

## Contact



Gregory Fantham  
Email: g.fantham@hw.ac.uk

## Gregory Fantham

Gregory holds degrees in MSc (Econ) International Relations and MSc (Psych) Occupational Psychology. He is an Assistant Professor at Heriot Watt University in Dubai, UAE. He has written articles on psychology-related current affairs topics in most of the UAE's national newspapers, and presents workshops in Dubai on innovation, AI, leadership and coaching. Previous research at King's College London, examined popular images of nuclear war. Formerly a secondary school history teacher for over 30 years, he now conducts a range of community outreach programmes for pupils and teachers in secondary schools in Dubai.

## Contact



Marais Bester  
Department of Psychology,  
Heriot-Watt University, Dubai  
Campus, United Arab Emirates  
ORCID ID: [https://orcid.  
org/0000-0003-2144-4105](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2144-4105)  
Email: [maraisbester@gmail.com](mailto:maraisbester@gmail.com)  
Postal Address: P.O Box 502271,  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

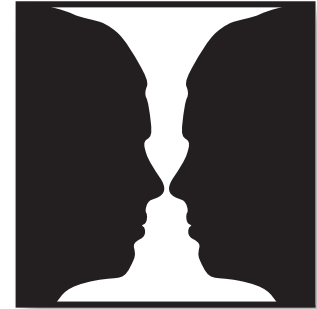
## Dr Marais Bester

Dr Marais Bester holds a PhD in Industrial Psychology. He is registered as a Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society, and is a registered Aviation Psychologist with the European Association for Aviation Psychology. Marais works across the globe on talent assessment, talent management and talent development projects. His research interests lie in the fields of career wellbeing, personality, and aviation psychology.

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## Executive coaching

Et kvalitativt studie om seks danske leders oplevelse af at modtage executive coaching

Af Tanja Ryberg Jensen, Anne Dalgsgaard Keis og Ole Michael Spaten<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*Executive coaching er en disciplin, som over de sidste tre årtier er blevet mere og mere populær. Alligevel er empirisk litteratur på området mangelfuld. Efter at have udført et systematisk review siden af kvalitative studier som undersøgte effekterne af executive coaching, blev det fundet, at kun 7 studier over en periode på 10 år levede op til de opstillede kriterier. Formålet med denne fænomenologiske undersøgelse er derfor at undersøge hvordan seks danske ledere oplever det at modtage executive coaching. Undersøgelsen er baseret på interviews med seks danske mellem- og topledere, som er ansat hhv. i en større dansk region og ved en større privat virksomhed. Dataene er blevet analyseret ved hjælp af den kvalitative analysemetode Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).*

**Keywords:** Executive coaching, kvalitativ undersøgelse, IPA, ledelsesudvikling, forskning, ledelsesstil, coaching relationen

Executive coaching defineres i litteraturen generelt som en kort til mellemlang relation imellem en leder og en konsulent, hvor det primære fokus er at optimere lederens præstation og effektivitet i dennes nuværende stilling (Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 829; Spaten, 2012, p. 43). Ifølge Richard Kilburg defineres executive coaching således:

*(...) a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to*

*help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement (Kilburg, 1996, p. 142)*

En anden definition af Hall, Otazo og Hollenbeck (1999), beskriver executive coaching således: *(...) a practical goal-focused form of personal one-to-one learning for busy executives. It may be used to improve performance, to improve or develop executive*

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*behaviors, to work through organizational issues, to enhance a career, or to prevent derailment.*”. Begge definitioner lægger vægt på, at executive coaching er en individuel og målfokuseret intervention, som fokuserer på udvikling hos ledere som har autoritet over medarbejdere samt ansvar i en organisation.

## Manglen på empirisk forskning inden for executive coaching som felt

Anvendelsen af executive coaching har over de sidste tre årtier været i markant fremgang (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015, 2018). Ifølge en undersøgelse udført af International Coach Federation (ICF) fra 2016, omsætter coaching på globalt plan for ca. 2 milliarder og 356 millioner USD, svarende til omkring 15 milliarder danske kroner (ICF Global Coaching Study, 2016). Siden 2012, hvor ICF publicerede en lignende undersøgelse, har omsætningen inden for coachingverdenen således oplevet en stigning på 19%. De adspurgte coaches i ovenstående studie identificerede de 3 stillinger som deres klienter oftest besat: 1) Mellemledere, 2) Topledere og 3) Virksomhedsejere (ibid.). På trods af den voksende popularitet og implementering af executive coaching, kæmper feltet stadig med at manifestere sig som evidensbaseret praksis. Boomet inden for executive coaching har affødt et stort område af praktikerlitteratur, men den empiriske forskning halter stadig bagud (Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 829; Osatuke et al., 2017, p. 172f). Årsagen hertil kan muligvis være, at executive coaching hurtigt bliver flydende i sin form og desuden skræddersyes til den enkelte klient og organisations behov. Derudover fokuserer executive coaching på såkaldte 'bløde' faktorer som kan være svære at måle objektivt (Osatuke et al., 2017; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015). I efteråret 2017 udførte forfatterne til denne artikel et systematisk review med det formål, at undersøge hvor mange kvalitative artikler der var blevet udgivet inden for området executive coaching. Reviewet fokuserede på en 10-årig periode fra 2007-2017, og inkluderede udelukkende artikler hvor de deltagende havde modtaget individuel coaching i deres nuværende stilling, samt besad autoritet og ledelsesmæssigt ansvar for medarbejdere. Derudover inkluderede reviewet kun artikler, hvor de deltagende havde modtaget coaching af eksterne konsulenter. Sidstnævnte er som kriterie blevet revuderet i dette studie, hvilket vil blive uddybet

yderligere senere i nærværende artikel. Ud fra disse kriterier var der i perioden fra 2007-2017 blot udgivet 7 artikler på verdensplan, som kvalitativt undersøgte effekterne af executive coaching.

## Intern eller ekstern coaching?

Som det ses i citaterne af hhv. Kilburg og Hall et al., tages der ikke stilling til hvorvidt coachingen udføres af en intern eller ekstern konsulent. I litteraturen fremgår det dog, at executive coaching oftest udføres af *eksterne konsulenter, som ikke har nogen formel autoritet over deres klienter. Brugen af interne konsulenter som udfører executive coaching er dog steget de senere år* (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015). På trods af en stigning i brugen af intern coaching, virker denne tilgang dog ikke til at have fået den samme anerkendelse som ekstern coaching. Et review udført af Schalk og Landeta fra 2017, undersøger dog forskellene, fordelene og ulemperne ved netop intern og ekstern coaching. På trods af manglen på litteratur som undersøger forskellene, viste resultaterne fordele ved både intern og ekstern coaching. Fordele ved brugen af ekstern coaching viste sig bl.a. at være bedre udgangspunkt for objektivitet ift. virksomheden, at eksterne coaches ofte er bedre uddannede samt bredere erfaring inden for en række forskellige virksomheder. Fordele ved intern coaching viste sig derimod at være tilgængeligheden og fleksibiliteten, at det er mere omkostningseffektivt idet coachen er ansat af organisationen, samt bedre kendskab til organisationen. En fordel som hang sammen med både intern og ekstern coaching var en høj grad af staff retention – altså fastholdelsen af vigtige og dygtige ledere (ibid.). I nærværende studie er det blevet besluttet at inkludere ledere, som har modtaget enten intern eller ekstern coaching, idet de deltagende som havde modtaget intern coaching ikke delte arbejdsplads med deres coach. Den pågældende coach var derimod ansat af en større dansk region, som også agerede arbejdsgiver for tre af de deltagende, dog på forskellige arbejdspladser.

## Metode

Som beskrevet indledningsvist blev interviewene analyseret ved hjælp af Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA blev som kvalitativ analysemetode udviklet af Jonathan Smith i 1990'erne, som senere videreudviklede metoden i samarbejde med Mike Osborn (Langridge 2007). Smith og



Osborn betoner metodens hermeneutisk-fænomenologiske rødder ved at lægge større vægt på fortolkning end det ses ved den traditionelle deskriptive fænomenologi (ibid.). Forskeren bør søge at sætte parentes om sin egen forforståelse i så høj grad som muligt, men samtidigt anerkende, at han eller hun er en uundgåelig og fundamental del af forskningsprocessen. Forskeren tager derfor del i en dobbelthermeneutisk proces, hvor formålet er at udforske informantens livsverden, men samtidig anerkendes det, at denne analyse nødvendigvis må være forskerens fortolkning af den deltagendes oplevelse (Willig, 2013). Forskerens forforståelse ses dog ikke som biases som skal elimineres, men som en nødvendig omstændighed for at muliggøre den meningssskabende aktivitet gennem fortolkning. Den analytiske proces i et IPA-studie tager udgangspunkt i de indsamlede data, snarere end i eksisterende teoretiske perspektiver (Langridge, 2007). Ifølge Smith og Osborn kan IPA inddeles i seks faser, som ser ud som følger (Smith & Osborn, 2008):

1. fase: Gennemlæsning og genlæsning af transskriptionen;
2. fase: Lav indledende noter af interessante emner i venstre margin;
3. fase: Identificér og notér opståede temaer i højre margin;
4. fase: Dokumentér temaerne fra 3. fase i et separat dokument;
5. fase: Sammenhold de opståede temaer på tværs af transskriptionerne – nogle vil være subkategorier til hovedtemaer, hvorimod andre vil blive sorteret fra;
6. fase: Lav en liste over hovedtemaer og subtemaer i en sammenhængende orden

## Informanter

Størrelsen på undersøgelsens sample i fænomenologiske studier er ofte relativt små og homogene, idet IPA kræver at forskeren indgår i en dybdegående og derfor også tidskrævende proces. Informanterne i dette studie bestod af seks danske ledere: 3 fra den offentlige sektor i en større dansk region som havde modtaget executive coaching af en intern coach, og 3 ledere fra en større privat virksomhed som havde modtaget coaching af en ekstern coach. Forskerne havde ikke kendskab til nogen af informanterne på forhånd. Alle seks ledere var mellem 45 og 55 år gamle, og bestod af 1

mand og 5 kvinder. Informanterne blev rekrutteret ved hjælp af e-mails, som forskerne sendte ud til forskellige virksomheder i jagten på informanter. Lederes tid er både sparsom og dyrebar, hvorfor ledere som gruppe kan være svære at indfange. Af denne årsag blev der ikke sat andre demografiske karakteristika op, udover at informanterne skulle være ledere som havde modtaget individuel executive coaching.

## Procedure

Informanterne deltog alle frivilligt i semistrukturerede interviews. Minimum to dage før interviewet skulle udføres, modtog den enkelte en samtykkeerklæring som kort opridsede undersøgelsens formål, at deltagelsen var frivillig, at den deltagende frit kunne trække sig på ethvert tidspunkt, samt at genkendelige træk blev anonymiseret. Der blev aftalt tid og sted for interviewene, som alle blev udført på ledernes respektive arbejdspladser, og varede mellem 45-60 minutter. Alle interviews blev optaget, transskriberet og analyseret ud fra IPA-metoden.

## Resultater

En systematisk, dybdegående analyse som tog udgangspunkt i de seks faser i IPA-metoden resulterede i fem hovedtemaer. Temaerne vil blive præsenteret individuelt og i kronologisk orden, dog med forbehold for at temaerne relaterer sig til hinanden og derfor overlapper.

### Tema 1

#### Ledelsesstil

Samtlige informanter påpegede vigtigheden af at reflektere over egen ledelsesstil og tilgang til medarbejderne. Dette involverede at etablere et godt arbejdsmiljø, stærke evner inden for kommunikation og viden om hvordan de håndterer medarbejdernes verbale og non-verbale signaler, som informant 3 beskriver: ”*[igennem coachingen] fik jeg nogle redskaber til og måske forstå de signaler personen kommer med, jamen det kunne godt være jeg skulle takle den person HELT anderledes*”. Lederne brugte ligeledes coachingen til at reflektere over egen ledelsesstil, her beskrevet af informant 4:

(...) det første år arbejdede [coach og jeg] meget med at jeg skulle finde mig selv som leder (...) hvad var [min] ledelsesstil, hvem var jeg og hvordan

agerede jeg (...) [for] de var vant til at se mig i en anden rolle, og det i sig selv var noget af en udfordring (...) at få ændret deres synsvinkel på mig, og det krævede jo, at jeg var nødt til at træde i karakter

Refleksioner over egen ledelsesstil inkluderede også overvejelser omkring hvordan medarbejderne og disses opgaver blev mødt i hverdagen. Informant 1 beskriver det således: "(...) *det er ikke mig der skal have løsningen (...) men jeg kan (...) sige det er inden for den her ramme du skal løse opgaven (...) men det her er målet og (...) så er det dig, der løser opgaven*". Informant 3 påpeger ligeledes vigtigheden af at lære hvordan medarbejderne kan coaches:

(...) i stedet for bare at overtage opgaven  
 (...) som jeg kunne finde på at gøre før  
 (...) jamen så hellere coache dem til  
 (...) at gøre tingene anderledes (...) og  
 de arbejder jo meget mere effektivt, når  
 de får lov til at tage noget ansvar selv

I relation til at reflektere over egen ledelsesstil, kommer tre af de seks informanter ind på vigtigheden af at bruge coachingen som en hjælp til at facilitere et godt arbejdsmiljø på deres respektive arbejdspladser. Informant 5 udtrykker det således:

(...) da jeg overtog afsnittet var der et fuldstændig ødelagt arbejdsmiljø (...) jeg startede med at lave teambuilding (...) sagde vi skal have en maskot (...) som så skal være på (...) vores badges (...) det var de små steps (...) og ifm. det (...) var der rigtig god effekt, også at [...] du er en del af vores afsnit (...) og også at snakke om det, hvad er egentlig vores værdier?

Tre af de seks informanter kom derudover ind på, at de relationelle aspekter ved det at være leder, ikke var naturligt for dem, og at de havde brugt coachingen til at arbejde med netop dette område, som informant fem siger: "(...) *der er dele (...) som er medfødt, som er meget let for mig at varetage, og så er der dele som jeg har valgt ud af min coaching (...) og det er i hvert fald den (...) relationelle del*". Informant 3 påpegede ligeledes vigtigheden af at

være personlig med medarbejderne, men beskriver også hvordan det ikke faldt det hende naturligt: "(...) *det har været en svær proces for mig at skulle være personlig med mine medarbejdere*".

Samtlige informanter beskrev således en oplevelse af, at coachingen hjalp dem til at implementere en specifik ledelsesstil, eller implementere arbejdsgange som understøttede deres individuelle ledelsesvisioner. De kom ligeledes ind på vigtigheden af at blive i stand til at facilitere et godt arbejdsmiljø med klare rammer for kommunikationen leder og medarbejder imellem. I relation til at facilitere et godt arbejdsmiljø kom informanterne desuden ind på det at være personlig med medarbejderne, samt give medarbejderne plads til at have en dårlig dag indimellem.

## Tema 2

### Coaching i relation til medarbejderen

Det andet hovedtema der opstod på tværs af de seks interviews handlede om, hvordan lederne havde brugt coachingen til at reflektere over tilgangen til deres medarbejdere eller andre ledere på arbejdspladsen. Informant tre beskriver således hvordan hun, vha. coachingen, er blevet bedre til at involvere sit personale:

(...) jeg er også blevet bedre til at forklare  
 (...) personalet (...) økonomien omkring  
 hvordan man planlægger (...) og  
 der (...) bruger jeg rigtig meget tid på at  
 fortælle dem: "Jamen altså, der er bare  
 nogle dage, hvor det hele vælter (...) og  
 det er faktisk ingens skyld

Andre informanter lagde derimod mere vægt på at tale om de svære ting medarbejder og leder imellem. Informant 2 fortæller om, hvordan coachingen har hjulpet hende til at blive bedre til at komme ind på de elementer hun er utilfreds med på en respektfuld måde:

(...) i stedet for bare at gå hen og sige:  
 "Det er så nok ikke skide godt det der",  
 [så skal] jeg lige vente med at sige noget,  
 som jeg har lært [i coachingen] og (...) så prøver jeg at angribe det velovervejede og måske sådan lidt forsigtigt, hvor min natur i høj grad kalder på, at jeg bare går derhen og siger et eller andet

Tre af de seks informanter kom derudover ind på, hvordan de er blevet bedre til ikke at tage medarbejdernes frustrationer personligt. Informant 5 beskriver det således: (...) så jeg var også som person mere involveret [før coaching] (...) men (...) [nu] kan man trække sig ud af den situation og tænke (...) der er noget hos den person, der er en frustration. Informant 4 udtrykker ligeledes hvordan hun er blevet bedre til at lytte til medarbejdernes frustrationer, og påpeger hvor vigtigt det er for hende at tage disse frustrationer alvorligt:

(...) man skal altid bruge brokkeriet til noget (...) [fordi] hvis man fuldstændig lukker døren til det (...) så mister man noget information, fordi der er altid information i brokkeri, det er i hvert fald noget af det, jeg synes, jeg har lært [igennem coaching]

Informant 5 påpeger også vigtigheden af at bruge medarbejdernes frustrationer konstruktivt: "(...) frustrationer er den bedste (...) motivation til forandring (...) fordi egentlig siger en frustreret medarbejder også, hvor det hænger".

Fire af de seks informanter kommer derudover ind på specifikke områder de har arbejdet med i coachingen – områder som tidligere kunne have en negativ effekt på dem selv og deres medarbejdere. Som informant 3 beskriver det:

(...) jeg tænker mere over, hvordan jeg er overfor mit personale (...) jeg har bare været lukket før (...) også måske haft lidt svært ved at tage konfrontationer (...) hvor jeg nu i stedet for bare at lukke af og lade dem mærke, at "jamen nu er altså chefen lidt sur, gad vide hvad jeg har gjort forkert?" jamen så tager vi den derfra

Tre af de seks informanter beskrev ligeledes en tendens til at tænke på deres medarbejdere som maskiner frem for mennesker før de modtog coaching. For at forebygge denne tilgang beskriver informant 5 hvordan hun søger at spørge personligt ind til sine medarbejdere: "(...) og høre "hvad laver i privat?" (...) [fordi] for mig var [det] tidligere bare fabriksarbejde, de skal fungere og producere". Alle informanter beskrev således en oplevelse af, at coachingen hjalp dem til at blive bedre til at invol-

vere deres medarbejdere i diverse procedurer på arbejdspladsen, samt tale om ting som kunne gå både medarbejderne og den respektive leder på. Informanterne beskrev ligeledes en oplevelse af at blive bedre til at tilgå medarbejderne ud fra disses individuelle forskelligheder, samt vigtigheden af at lytte til medarbejdernes frustrationer og derigennem se dem som mennesker frem for maskiner.

### Tema 3 Personlig udvikling

Det tredje hovedtema relaterede sig til informanternes oplevelse af at gennemgå en personlig udvikling i forbindelse med coachingen. Samtlige informanter beskrev hvordan de begyndte at reflektere over sig selv som ledere såvel som mennesker, og kom herunder ind på at de opnåede en højere grad af selvindsigt. Informant 4 beskrev hvordan coachingen hjalp hende til at tænke tingene igennem:

(...) [i coachingen] har jeg været tvunget til at tænke tingene rigtig godt igennem (...) og det giver mig den viden om, og et mod på at arbejde med mig selv (...) sådan at jeg synes jeg kan udvikle mig (...) både som leder men også som menneske

Informant 3 fortalte ligeledes om, hvordan denne højere grad af selvindsigt hjalp hende med at ændre sin adfærd udadtil:

(...) med det samme man får noget selvindsigt og arbejder indad, så lærer man også, hvordan man skal være udadtil (...) fordi det er min egen udstråling og måde at være på, og det kan jeg kun ændre, hvis jeg kigger indad på mig selv

Informant 3 og 4 beskriver således denne personlige udvikling i relation til medarbejderne, hvori informant 1 i højere grad beskriver hvordan hun er blevet bedre til ikke at bebrejde sig selv når tingene går galt:

(...) hvem er det jeg punker når det ikke lykkes? Det er altid kun mig selv, og de vil ikke engang opdage det, hvis jeg sænkede overlæggeren 80 %, altså

og (...) det er faktisk det, [coach] har lært mig

Lederne beskrev således ikke blot en oplevelse af at have gennemgået forskellige former for personlig udvikling, men påpegede også vigtigheden af at acceptere forskelligheder dem selv og medarbejderne imellem, samt at bruge disse forskelligheder til at lære mere. Informant 6 beskriver det således:

(...) ét er man har sit eget verdensbillede, men det er man nødt til at udvide hele tiden, og det gør man jo kun ved at kigge ind i andres verdensbilleder og sige: ”Hvad fanden sker der herinde? Kunne jeg lære noget af det?”

Alle informanterne beskrev således en oplevelse af at lære af de personlige forskelligheder i deres respektive teams. De tre offentligt ansatte ledere beskrev ligeledes en oplevelse af, at denne viden hjalp dem til at distancere sig fra stærke reaktioner fra medarbejdere og ledere, og deraf håndtere disse reaktioner mere professionelt, her beskrevet af informant 4:

(...) det er den [coach] giver mig (...) det er netop den psykologiske forståelse for, hvad det egentlig er, der gør, at en leder højt placeret reagerer, som han gør (...) når jeg får den viden (...) så bliver det nemmere for mig at være i

Informant 2, også ansat ved det offentlige, påpegede at denne viden om mennesker hjalp hende til at tilgå medarbejderne anderledes:

(...) allerførst spørger [jeg] mig selv, HVEM er det jeg har med at gøre (...) og det er nok noget af det, som jeg konkret har lært af [coach] (...) Kierkegaard sagde det her, hvis du vil flytte et menneske, så skal du vide hvor de er, og det talte [coach] og jeg meget om, for jeg ville jo flytte de her mennesker

Samtlige informanter beskrev således en oplevelse af, at coachingen hjalp dem til at opnå en større forståelse for sig selv, deres medarbejdere og ledere. Informanterne beskrev ligeledes hvordan denne viden hjalp dem til at vedblive at udvikle sig

selv som ledere såvel som mennesker, og hvordan forskellige reaktioner håndteres så professionelt som muligt.

#### Tema 4

##### Relationen mellem coach og coachee

De tre temaer som er behandlet i de forudgående afsnit, har hovedsagligt fokuseret på informanternes oplevelse af coaching i relation til egen ledelsesstil, inklusive attitude og adfærd på ledernes respektive arbejdspladser. Det fjerde tema som opstod på tværs af interviewene, relaterede sig imidlertid til vigtigheden af relationen mellem coach og coachee samt et tillidsfuldt rum at tale i. Fire af informanterne nævner eksplicit vigtigheden af at have tillid til coach, her beskrevet af informant 4:

(...) jeg har jo fået en meget stor tillid til [coach] (...) den skal være der (...) og hun fordømmer mig heller ikke (...) så det [er] med at udnytte, at der er et menneske her, som møder en og gerne vil arbejde med alt det, som er svært

Informant 1 beskriver desuden, at vigtigheden af arbejdsalliancen og det tillidsfulde rum bliver tydeligt, når der er behov for at tale om ting som ikke er passende i en gruppe-setting: ”(...) der er nogle ting, man ikke kan diskutere, når der er nogle andre nogen, det kan man bedre gøre i det der fortrolige rum med en coach (...) det har været vigtigt for mig”. Ovenstående tegner således et billede af, at tilliden til coachen og det fortrolige rum er af afgørende betydning for informanternes oplevelse af at modtage coaching.

Fire af informanterne beskrev også en oplevelse af at få flere perspektiver på deres individuelle arbejdsområder i coachingen. Et af hovedområderne blev af informant 2 beskrevet som værende en simplificering af problemerne: ”(...) der er en tillid og en fortrolighed, og det kommer ikke videre (...) så man får bearbejdet lynhurtigt nogle ting og får også hurtigt parkeret nogle ting, som slet ikke er vigtige”. Informant 5 og 6 kommer ligeledes ind på hvordan perspektiverne kan bruges aktivt uden for coachingssessionerne. Som informant 5 beskriver det: ”(...) [coach] kommer altid med flere (...) perspektiver (...) det er det vigtigste [redskab] jeg bruger”. Informant 6 beskriver ligeledes hvordan disse perspektiver også bruges til at reflektere over sin egen rolle i konfliktsituationer:

(...) jo mere [coach og jeg] fik snakket (...) jo mere kunne jeg også begynde at se, hvad er det der skinner igennem her? Og der er jo rigtig mange fingre der peger indad også, med ting jeg skulle arbejde med

Informanterne påpeger således vigtigheden af at få flere perspektiver på forskellige situationer, særligt konfliktsituationer, og hvordan de undgår at tage tingene personligt, her beskrevet af informant 4: ”(...) der løfter [coach] op i helikopterniveau (...) når jeg har brokket mig (...) så får vi det samlet til sådan en mere teoretisk forståelse af ”hvad er det egentlig der sker her?” (...) [og] det er virkelig meget hjælpsomt”. Fire af informanterne kom ligeledes ind på vigtigheden af at have en uvildig at tale med om problemer som relaterede sig til deres ledelsestil eller arbejdsplads. Informant 6 beskriver det således: ”(...) det var [vigtigt] at jeg kunne komme ind til en fuldstændig udefra og bare kunne fortælle, hvordan fanden hænger min verden sammen”, og uddyber senere i interviewet: ”(...) det er jo igen det der med at have et frirum, hvor man kan sige: ”her kan jeg læsse af””.

Tre af informanterne kommer derudover ind på forskellene ved at tale om problemer med ledere, kolleger eller venner og familie, og tale om de samme ting med en coach, her beskrevet af informant 2:

(...) for jeg tror ikke man får det hjemme ved køkkenbordet med sin mand eller kone (...) selvfølgelig kan man godt få et godt råd og sådan noget der, men når man først begynder med sådan en som [coach] (...) altså det er jo noget helt andet

Dette perspektiv uddybes af informant 1, som i modsætning til informant 2, i højere grad relaterer det til sine overordnede:

(...) der [har] været nogle udfordringer på, hvor jeg synes, det har været rigtig givtigt med, hvordan skulle min egen organisation se ud over tid (...) og så få det vendt i et anderledes perspektiv, der vil man sige: ”Det kunne du bare dele med din chef” (...) og det gør jeg også, men det kunne jo være der var nogen,

der havde nogle andre input end bare det, vi selv ser, fordi vi hele tiden bliver blændet eller er en del af problemet

Samtlige informanter kom således ind på vigtigheden af et tillidsfuldt rum og dét, at have en uvildig at tale med. Derudover beskrev de, hvordan disse to faktorer bidrog til flere perspektiver på de respektive ledesers problemstillinger, hvordan problemerne blev simplificeret samt at de fik redskaber som de kunne bruge uden for coachingsessionerne. Slutteligt påpegede informanterne, at det at tale med én som stod uden for organisationen, venner eller familie bidrog med flere perspektiver på de individuelle problemstillinger.

## Tema 5 Coaching kontra andre ledelsesudviklingsværktøjer

Det sidste tema som opstod på tværs af de seks interviews relaterede sig til, hvad det var der gjorde, at informanterne havde så givtig en oplevelse af at modtage coaching. Samtlige informanter kom ind på dette tema, men med forskellige foki, som fx at finde sine skjule potentialer, udvikle sig selv som ledere, udvikle organisationen eller at blive sikker i at konfrontere medarbejdere og overordnede. Fælles for informanterne var en oplevelse af coaching som værende nødvendigt for denne udvikling. Dette beskrives her af informant 1: ”(...) når jeg havde en god coach, så var [jeg] faktisk i stand til at udvikle min egen organisation”, som uddyber senere i interviewet:

(...) det er det bedste ledelsesværktøj og udviklingsværktøj for mig, det er at have en man kan vende problematikkerne med og få et andet perspektiv (...) og [jeg] skal blive ved med at udvikle mig (...) og sætte den rigtige HR-organisationen, og det kan jeg kun ved, at der er nogen, der hjælper mig (...) det kan jeg ikke gøre selv

Fire af informanterne sammenligner derudover eksplicit executive coaching med andre ledelsesudviklingsværktøjer, og udtrykker en oplevelse af, at coaching har været mere givtigt. Som informant 5 beskriver det: ”(...) jeg foretrækker, tror jeg generelt, one-til-one (...) [fordi ellers] så synes jeg, jeg keder mig. At høre alle de historier omkring, hvor jeg sy-

nes *de gentager sig (...)*”, et perspektiv som uddybes yderligere af informant 1:

(...) min oplevelse af og deltage i de der netværk har tit været, at det får jeg simpelthen for lidt ud af (...) fordi det er jo ikke mine udfordringer, der er i centrum, hvor jeg har jo oplevet ved at være til coaching, så var det faktisk det, jeg bragte ind, som vi kunne vende eller diskutere, og så (...) kunne jeg arbejde med det (...) så for mig har det været meget mere givtigt

Tre af informanterne beskriver en oplevelse af coachingen som værende så givtig, at du mener det burde være obligatorisk for medarbejdere når de avancerer til lederstillinger, her beskrevet af informant 2:

(...) der er et KÆMPE lederpotentiale og MASSER af ledere i regionen (...) hvis de fik at vide, [at] nu skal du have i hvert fald tre coachingsamtaler, inden vi slipper dig løs i det her lederrum (...) jeg tror det ville kunne gøre en hel masse for rigtig mange mennesker, som lider under halvårlig ledelse

Informanterne beskriver således en oplevelse af coachingen som værende en nødvendighed for at kunne blive mere effektiv og afklaret ift. egen ledelsesstil og måde at tilgå medarbejdere og overordnede. Fire af de seks informanter fortæller desuden om en oplevelse af coachingen som værende nødvendig for at undgå sygdomsmeldinger eller opsigelser, her beskrevet af informant 6: *”(...) på et tidspunkt var jeg jo på vej ud af virksomheden fordi (...) det kunne jeg ikke se nogen fremtid i, og så var det [anden leder] foreslog: ”jamen prøv da [coaching]”*”. Informant 3 beskriver ligeledes, hvordan coachingen hjalp hende til ikke at falde tilbage til gamle, destruktive arbejdsmønstre:

(...) fordi jeg kan godt se jeg er gået lidt tilbage i mit gamle mønster med at arbejde 70 timer i ugen og ikke lige kunne slippe det (...) [og] de var rimelig rolige, så siger de: *”(...) du skal til en coach, og det sætter vi i gang med det samme”*

Informanterne beskriver således ikke alene en oplevelse af coaching som værende givtig ift. deres egen udvikling som ledere, men også som en nødvendighed for at kunne håndtere diverse udfordringer som de møder i deres respektive stillinger.

## Diskussion

Nærværende studie har undersøgt hvordan seks danske ledere oplevede det at modtage executive coaching igennem et kvalitativt design. Ved at analysere dataene ud fra IPA opstod fem hovedtemaer. De overordnede resultater tegner et billede af, at informanterne har oplevet coachingen som værende givtig, både ift. ledelsesmæssige, relationelle og interne aspekter. Det følgende vil beskæftige sig med resultaterne ift. relevant litteratur, samt hvordan dette studie kan bidrage til forskningslitteraturen inden for feltet executive coaching.

## Forandringer i ledelsesstil

Som påpeget i det første tema, opstod ledelsesstil generelt som værende et arbejdsområde for samtlige informanter, både ift. at kunne takle overordnede samt refleksioner over egen ledelsesstil og hvordan forandringer hertil implementeres. De tre offentligt ansatte informanter, påpegede i særlig grad hvordan coachingen hjalp dem til at acceptere organisatoriske omstændigheder som de ikke havde indflydelse på. Samme tre informanter beskrev en oplevelse af coachingen som værende givtig ift. egen ledelsesstil, i overensstemmelse med begrebet transformerende ledelse. Teorien om transformerende ledelse er oprindeligt udviklet af James McGregor Burns (1978), men er senere videreudviklet af Bernard M. Bass (1999) (Elmholdt et al., 2015; Andersen et al., 2017). Bass beskriver den transformerende leder som en rollemodel, som inspirerer medarbejderne til at bevæge sig udover umiddelbare egeninteresser. Elmholdt et al. (2015) beskriver tre konkrete processer, hvorved en leder kan motivere medarbejderne: 1) ved tydeliggørelse af arbejdets betydning, 2) ved selv at vise samt opfordre til at sætte teamets og organisationens interesser over egne interesser, eller 3) ved at stimulere udviklingsbehov for social anerkendelse og selvaktualisering. Omdrejningspunktet for den transformerende leder bliver dermed at skabe en ønskværdig fremtid og artikulere hvordan denne opnås, hvorefter lederen selv agerer rollemodel ift. implementeringen af disse ønskværdige forandringer.

ger. Ifølge Bass, vil medarbejderne med tiden ultimativt ønske at identificere sig med en sådan leder, overskride egeninteresser og stræbe efter at leve op til organisationens værdier og vision (Bass, 1999). Forskning har tidligere tegnet et billede af transformerende ledelse som værende særligt effektivt i den offentlige sektor (Andersen et al., 2017), hvilket stemmer overens med resultaterne i nærværende undersøgelse. Årsagen hertil menes at være, at offentligt ansatte ledere nemmere kan bruge organisationens vision til at beskrive vigtigheden af medarbejdernes arbejde, og dermed tydeliggøre hvilken positiv effekt arbejdet har på samfundet og befolkningen når der arbejdes hen imod organisationens mål (ibid.).

## Personlig udvikling og selvbevidsthed

Samtlige informanter beskrev hvordan coachingen gav anledning til at reflektere over selvet og egen adfærd, og derved skabe øget selvindsigt og forståelse for egen og andres reaktioner. Som et resultat heraf, beskriver informanterne hvordan de igennem coaching i højere grad er blevet i stand til at håndtere relationer til kolleger og medarbejdere. Dette diskuteres ud fra Objective Self-Awareness Theory (OSA), udviklet af Duval og Wicklund, som beskriver hvordan individet bliver objektet for egen bevidsthed, når opmærksomheden rettes indad og individet er fokuseret på selvet (Silvia & Duval, 2001). Nyere forskning inden for OSA viser, hvordan øget objektiv selvbevidsthed kan resultere i forbedrede interpersonelle relationer, og er blevet knyttet direkte til ledelse idet selvbevidsthed er en af de grundlæggende emotionelle kompetencer som alle andre emotionelle kompetencer bygger på (Hultman, 2006). Ken Hultman (2006) argumenterer for, at et primært udbytte af øget selvbevidsthed er en dybere forståelse for den menneskelige motivation, et område, som menes at være væsentlig for succesfuld ledelse. Udviklingen af selvbevidstheden er dog en længerevarende, dybdegående proces, som ikke altid passer ind i et komplekst og hurtigt forandrende samfund. Hultman peger derfor på en-til-en coaching som en måde hvorpå selvbevidstheden kan øges og hvormed individet kan bibeholde en positiv forandring gennem selvansagelse (ibid.). I overensstemmelse med ovenstående undersøgelse kan der argumenteres for, at den øgede grad af objektiv selvbevidsthed har affødt en forbedring i informanternes in-

terpersonelle forhold, forståelse for eget ansvar i konfliktsituationer og accept af medarbejdere og overordnede. Et andet studie af Dionne M. Kress (2009) peger også på øget selvbevidsthed som værende essentiel for ledelse, og kobler det sammen med performance. Hun fremhæver, at når individer når et højt niveau i organisationer, forringes deres muligheder for at få ærlig og konstruktiv feedback. Som et resultat heraf mister de ofte evnen til at sammenligne deres præstation med andre, hvilke kan lede til at de udvikler en forvrænget oplevelse af dem selv. I tråd med nærværende studie, kan executive coaching skabe rammerne for, at lederne kan indsamle viden om selvet og egne visioner for ledelse, herunder individuelle styrker, svagheder, ønsker, motivation o.l. Viden som antages at være essentiel for personlig og professionel udvikling. Der kan derfor argumenteres for, at executive coaching også kan fungere som en setting hvor lederne kan modtage konstruktiv feedback.

## Læring om selvet og andre

Idet informanterne beskriver en oplevelse af at blive mere bevidste om selvet, egne tanker, reaktioner og adfærd, kan der argumenteres for at der har fundet læring sted i forbindelse med coachingen. I nærværende studie indfanger Theory of Action, udviklet af Argyris & Schön i 1978, de specifikke foki på organisatorisk læring og interaktionen mellem individ og omgivelser (Laursen, 2010). Theory of Action er inspireret af Gregory Batesons læringsniveauer, som var en af de første teorier der anerkendte vigtigheden af kontekst og kommunikation når det kom til læring (Nielsen & Tanggaard, 2011). Theory of Action fokuserer på single-loop og double-loop-læring, hvor single-loop-læring opstår når et individ opfanger en uoverensstemmelse mellem selv og omgivelser og korrigerer denne, men uden at ændre på de underliggende værdier og årsager. I modsætning hertil, opstår double-loop læring når individet opfanger en uoverensstemmelse, og korrigerer denne ved netop at ændre på de underliggende værdier og årsager. Dette syn på læring fordrer, at læring først kan opstå, når forståelse, indsigt og forklaringer kædes sammen med decideret handling (Argyris, 2003). Ifølge Argyris (ibid.) er feedback dog essentiel for at læring kan finde sted, et element, som i forudgående afsnit blev beskrevet som en mangelvare når ledere avancerer. Hall, Otazo og Hollenbeck (1999) beskriver i den forbindelse executive

coaching som en læringskontekst, som fokuserer på adfærdsmæssig udvikling hos den travle leder. Der argumenteres for, at siden ledere ofte er travle, har de en tendens til at trække på allerede tillært adfærd eftersom tiden til refleksion er sparsom. Informanterne i nærværende studie beskriver i den forbindelse netop en oplevelse af at have anvendt coachingen til at reflektere over selvet samt egne handlinger og adfærd, ligesom de beskriver den feedback de får fra deres respektive coach som værende af afgørende betydning for denne refleksive proces. Der kan derfor argumenteres for, at coachingen har fordret to ting for lederne i denne undersøgelse hvis resultaterne sættes i relation til et læringsperspektiv, nemlig at: 1) Lederne modtager ærlig og konstruktiv feedback fra en uvildig og udefrakommende, og 2) At der er tid og rum til netop at få mulighed for at vende blikket indad mod selvet.

## Relationen til coach

Samtlige informanter i denne undersøgelse lagde vægt på betydningen af relationen til deres respektive coach, og fremhævede i den forbindelse coachens evner til at skabe et tillidsfuldt rum. Litteraturen inden for den terapeutiske relation favner bredt (Ardito & Rabellino, 2011), men idet coaching stadig er et forholdsvis nyt felt, er forskningen inden for netop denne relation stadig forholdsvis sparsom. Bordins teori om Working Alliance er dog ofte blevet anvendt til at undersøge coachingrelationen (Grant, 2014a; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010). I den forbindelse forekommer coachingrelationen vigtig og indflydelsesrig på coachingens udfald, ligesom det gør sig gældende i den terapeutiske relation (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; Baron & Morin, 2009). Andre studier i coachingrelationen indikerer dog, at coachens evner er mere tungtvæjende for coachingens udfald end relationen i sig selv (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013; Grant, 2014b). Anthony Grant (2014b) påpeger i den forbindelse, at der mangler studier som undersøger de forskelligheder i udfaldet som baserer sig på coachens evner og coachingrelationen, hvorfor han i 2014 gennemførte et sådant studie. Tidligere studier tilskriver den terapeutiske relation 30% af variansen i terapiens udfald, hvorimod teori og anvendte teknikker blot tilskrives 15%. Studiet gennemført af Grant (2014b) var dog direkte modsat, hvor teori og teknikker blev tilskrevet 18,49% og en støttende relation blot 8,4% (ibid.). Grant fandt

desuden, at des mere målfokuseret coachingen var, des mere succesfuld var den også. Dette skyldes muligvis forskellene i klientellet i coaching kontra i terapi, samt den generelt mere målfokuserede tilgang som coaching kan siges at have (ibid.). I relation til nærværende studie kan der ikke konkluderes på hvorvidt informanterne tilskriver relationen større betydning end coachens teoretiske udgangspunkt og teknikker, både grundet det kvalitative design og et andet undersøgt genstandsfelt – nemlig oplevelsen af at modtage coaching. Der kan dog argumenteres for, at informanterne finder relationen væsentlig for coachingens udfald, hvorfor nærværende studie giver anledning til yderligere forskning inden for coachingrelationen.

## Kan executive coaching erstatte andre ledelsesudviklingsværktøjer?

Tre af de seks informanter sammenlignede eksplisit coaching med andre ledelsesudviklingsværktøjer, og beskrev coaching som værende det bedste til formålet. Samtlige informanter beskrev ligeledes coaching som værende en nødvendighed for at kunne navigere i det ledelsesmæssige rum, undgå arbejdsrelateret sygdom som stress eller endda for at kunne vedblive i deres nuværende stillinger. Dette findes yderst interessant, da ledelsesudvikling er på dagsordenen i mange organisationer og grundet det faktum, at denne branche årligt omsætter for milliarder (Kaiser & Curphy, 2013). Kaiser og Curphy (2013) samt Law og Aquilina (2013) peger dog begge på manglen på videnskabelig evidens som støtter antagelsen om, at investeringer i ledelsesudvikling giver bedre ledere. Ifølge Gill (2006) er der en lang række problematikker forbundet med traditionelle ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer, herunder en tendens til at fokusere på meget begrænsede aspekter ved det at være leder og implementeringen af en forudbestemt ledelsestil-, model- eller teori. En anden udfordring ved ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer er desuden tilsyneladende det Ford og Weissbein (1997) kalder for the transfer problem (Law & Aquilina, 2013). Dette indebærer det svære i at overføre læring fra diverse kurser til den praktiske arbejdssituation grundet manglen på opfølgning og implementering (ibid.). I den forbindelse kan der argumenteres for, at en af styrkerne ved coaching er at der netop er fokus på opfølgning samt praktisk implementering af den viden der opnås i coachingssessionerne. Atkinson (2012) påpeger desuden, at coaching har



en styrke i at være skræddersyet, og derfor i højere grad er i stand til at imødekomme de udfordringer som den enkelte leder bringer med sig ind i coachingrummet. Netop dette punkt påpeges af informanterne i nærværende studie, som beskriver en oplevelse af, at det netop er deres individuelle problematikker som er omdrejningspunktet i coachingen. Der argumenteres ikke for, at coaching bør erstatte traditionelle ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer, eftersom disse ofte genererer basal viden inden for ledelsesfeltet. I stedet argumenteres der ud fra resultaterne i nærværende undersøgelse for, at individuel coaching kan fungere som en vigtig parallel til virksomheders eksisterende ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer. Schalk og Landeta påpeger derudover i et review fra 2017, at både intern og ekstern coaching hang sammen med fastholdelse af medarbejdere. Dette stemmer overens med resultaterne i nærværende studie, som peger på, at coaching netop kan fungere som en effektiv måde at fastholde lederne i deres stillinger, og forebygge arbejdsrelateret sygefravær som fx kan skyldes stress.

## Konklusion

I dette studie har fokus været på at undersøge seks danske lederes oplevelse af at modtage coaching ved hjælp af et kvalitativt design. Ved at analysere dataene ud fra IPA, opstod 5 hovedtemaer, som tegnede et billede af at informanterne ikke alene oplevede store fordele ved at modtage executive coaching, men så det som en nødvendighed for at navigere i det ledelsesmæssige rum og bibeholde deres stillinger. De gav udtryk for, at coachingen hjalp dem til at ændre eller implementere en faktisk ledelsesstil samt forbedrede deres kommunikationsevner, både ift. medarbejdere og overordnede. For de offentligt ansatte ledere bidrog coachingen til en ledelsesstil, som stemte overens med elementer fra teorien om transformerende ledelse. Ligeledes gav informanterne udtryk for en oplevelse af at opnå større indsigt i egne tanker og adfærd. Nogle informanter gav udtryk for at blive mere bevidste om egen rolle i konfliktsituationer, hvorimod andre gav udtryk for at identificere negative adfærdsmønstre og få redskaber til at forebygge disse. Informanterne påpegede også vigtigheden af at have et sikkert og tillidsfuldt miljø, hvor de kunne modtage feedback og reflektere over sig selv som ledere. I den forbindelse beskrev de en oplevelse af coaching som værende den bed-

ste form for ledelsesudvikling i forhold til traditionelle ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer. Dette kan skyldes at informanterne i hverdagen mødte meget specifikke udfordringer, som de oplevede blev imødekommet igennem coachingens skræddersyede tilgang. Der kan derfor argumenteres for, at coaching kan fungere som et givtigt supplement til individuelle virksomheders eksisterende ledelsesudviklingsprogrammer.

Studiet er et forsøg på at bidrage med empirisk funderet forskning til et hurtigt voksende felt som executive coaching må siges at være.

## Begrænsninger

Resultaterne i dette studie peger, i overensstemmelse med litteraturen inden for feltet på, at tillid og fortrolighed i coach-coachee relationen er af afgørende betydning for et positivt udfald for coachingprocessen. Informanterne nævnte imidlertid ikke noget om vigtigheden af coachens teoretiske udgangspunkt og anvendte teknikker, hvilket ikke stemte overens med resultaterne i andre, dog kvantitative, studier. Dette tegner et billede af, at der stadig er behov for at forske i betydningen af coach-coachee relationen, samt hvilken betydning coachens viden og teknikker har for coachings udfald. Dette tydeliggør den mangelfulde forskning der er i executive coaching. Endvidere er det potentielt en begrænsning, at det er svært at måle på effektiviteten af executive coaching, i hvert fald hvis det skulle gøre efter klassiske såkaldt objektive kriterier.

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## Kontakt

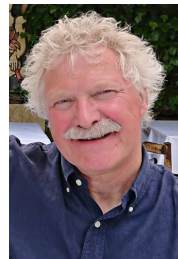


Tanja Ryberg Jensen  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Aalborg University  
T: 30 52 00 38  
M: tanj0135@hotmail.com

## Tanja Rybjerg Jensen

Tanja Ryberg Jensen (b. 1992) is a psychologist, M.Sc. (in Danish Cand. Psych.) graduated from Aalborg University's master programme in work- and organizational psychology. She has been specializing in executive coaching and has particular interest in optimizing the psychological working environment in organizations through executive and employee coaching. She has clinical experience from coaching university-students with the aim of reducing symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. She is currently working as a scientific assistant in association with senior-researcher Ole Michael Spaten at the Department of Communication and Psychology. Together with Dr. Spaten Tanja is working on coaching-psychology research projects and have already presented research on international conferences.

## Kontakt



Kontaktforfatter<sup>1</sup>  
Ole Michael Spaten  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Kroghstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: oms@hum.aau.dk  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

## Ole Michael Spaten

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCPAccred Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.

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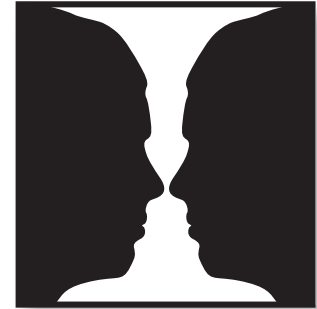
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## Mentoring Rådgivning eller hjælp-til-selvhjælp?

Af Louise Bak Søndergaard og Poul Nørgård Dahl

### Abstract

*Workplace mentoring programmes for new employees are time limited and aim to end with the mentee continuing on the job without the help of a mentor. But how can a mentor both give professional advice and experience-based instructions and at the same time facilitate the mentee's own problem understanding and problem solving? This would entail helping both as an expert adviser and as a coach, which – according to Schein's (1999; 2010) theory on helper conversations – cannot happen simultaneously. However, through analysis of a video-observed mentoring conversation and through interviews, this article shows how this can be done in practice when mentoring conversations are scheduled, when participants respect mutual confidentiality, when the mentor has knowledge of and is skilled in facilitating helper conversations, and when inputs and professional advice are given from a standpoint of genuine interest in the mentee, so that both emotional and cognitive recognition of the newly employed person is possible (Honneth, 2006).*

**Keywords:** Workplace mentoring, mentoring, coaching, onboarding, mentorship, mentoring conversation, social worker, video observation, interviews, analysis of conversations, role asymmetry, human symmetry, recognition, mentor roles.

### Mentoring på arbejdspladsen er mere end coaching

Coaching og mentoring anvendes i mange betydninger og i forskellige sammenhænge. Garvey, Stokes og Megginson (2018) afviser således at definere begreberne: "there can be no 'one best way' in mentoring or coaching and therefore no one definition" (s. 20), da definitionerne er kontekstafhængige (s. 19). Man kan dog godt komme med et bud på forskelle mellem mentoring og coaching i

en organisatorisk kontekst, nemlig at en coach primært stiller spørgsmål, mens en mentor også kommer med svar, forslag og råd (Stelter, 2002, s. 29-31; Poulsen & Wittrock, 2012, s. 398). En mentor kan således beskrives som:

a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period of time, especially at work or school (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

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En coach hjælper typisk fokuspersonen med selv at undersøge sin udfordring og finde sin løsning. Coaching i en organisatorisk kontekst kan forstås

som en asymmetrisk ikke-styrende hjælpertale, hvor en coach hjælper en fokuspersone med at reflektere en fagpersonlig udfordring mhp. at udvikle ny forståelse (læring) og nye handlemuligheder (Alrø & Nilles, 2015, s. 34).

Hjælperen i denne dialogiske tilgang til coaching har således ikke en rådgivende rolle, men "en faciliterende rolle, og fokuspersonen bestemmer, hvad der er hjælpsomt i processen" (Alrø & Nilles, 2015, s. 34).

En væsentlige forskel fra denne og andre former for coaching er, at mentor har og skal have mere specifik faglig viden og arbejdsmæssig erfaring end den, hun<sup>1</sup> hjælper. I stedet for indgående kendskab til mentee's faglighed har en coach typisk kompetencer i procesfacilitering. Det har en mentor ikke nødvendigvis. Trods større faglig viden har hun typisk ikke den hierarkiske magt, som findes i bl.a. ledelsesbaseret coaching (Søholm, Storch, Juhl & Molly, 2006), eller den kontrolfunktion eller afrapporteringsforpligtigelse til ledelsen, som findes i nogle former for supervision og konsulentarbejde (Lund, 1997; Schilling, 2020).

## Datagrundlag og metodologi

Denne artikel tager udgangspunkt i mentoring i en specifik arbejdsmæssig kontekst: En videooptaget mentorsamtale i en kommunal familieforvaltning, hvor mentee'en, Meck, er nyansat socialrådgiver og mentoren, Mona, er den erfarne socialrådgiver. Gennem næranalyse af dels mentorsamtalen og dels to efterfølgende individuelle interviews vises, hvordan en mentor kan hjælpe en nyansat socialrådgiver med at finde sig til rette i og håndtere et belastende arbejde i en kommunal familieforvaltning ved at agere i rollen både som coach/facilitator og som ekspertrådgiver. I artiklen vil vi med afsæt i Schein (1999; 2010) betegne disse hjælperoller som hhv. proceskonsulent og ekspert/læge<sup>2</sup>.

Samtalen og interviewene er en del af datagrundlaget i Søndergaards (2019) speciale<sup>2</sup>, der består af samtaler mellem tre forskellige mentorer og mentees og efterfølgende individuelle interviews. Datamaterialet er unikt, da en gennemgang af forskningslitteratur om mentoring ikke finder

nogen næranalyser af mentorsamtaler inden for socialrådgiver-området (Søndergaard, 2019). Gennemgangen viser endvidere, at observation af mentorsamtaler kun sjældent bruges i organisatorisk mentorforskning – fx finder Allen, Eby, O'Brien og Lentz (2008), at kun ét ud af 178 studier brugte observationsmetode (s. 351).

Metodisk trækkes der i det følgende på pragmatisk sprogbrugsanalyse ud fra en hermeneutisk analysemodel og tilgang (se Alrø, Dahl & Schumann, 2016), da vores videnskabsteoretiske ståsted er hermeneutisk og ikke positivistisk, etnometodologisk eller socialkonstruktivistisk (se Juul, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

## Baggrunden for mentorordningen for socialrådgivere

Særligt for nyuddannede socialrådgivere kan det første job være en udfordring, da socialrådgivere er den ud af 74 jobgrupper, der oplever mest uoverskuelighed og føler sig mest stressede (Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø, 2019, s. 63), og der har den næstlaveste score på spørgsmål om kollegial hjælp (Tal og fakta om arbejdsmiljøet, u.å.). Endvidere er socialrådgivere iblandt de 5 jobgrupper, der er mest trætte efter en arbejdsdag (Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø, 2019, s. 56), og hvor "arbejdet tager mest energi fra privatlivet" (s. 22).

Socialrådgivere er således en presset faggruppe, så hvordan kommer nyuddannede bedst ind i jobbet, når mange af dem får "et praksischock, når de starter i deres første job" (Jensen, 2015, s. 8)? Kommunernes Landsforening og Dansk Socialrådgiverforening aftalte under overenskomstforhandlingerne i 2011 at adressere problematikken i projektet 'Nøglen til en god start for nyuddannede socialrådgivere i kommunerne', som resulterede i fem fælles publikationer om introduktions- og mentorordninger for nyansatte (Introduktions- og mentorordninger, u.å.; Jensen, 2015, s. 8).

Mentorordningen lægger op til samtaler mellem en erfaren og en nyansat socialrådgiver, som hhv. mentor og mentee (Dansk Socialrådgiverforening & Kommunernes Landsforening, 2015a, s. 5). Indholdet i samtalerne kan variere – fra mentee's personlige udfordringer i jobbet til mere tekniske spørgsmål om systemer, lovgivning og procedurer, hvor mentor kan trække på sin egen faglige viden og erfaring. Alle samtaler er dog en form for hjælpertale, dvs. "en professionel samtale, hvor en fagperson hjælper en patient, klient, pårørende el-

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ler kollega med at få afklaret en situation eller løst et problem” (Alrø & Kristiansen, 2006, s. 202).

## Rammer for mentorsamtalen i den kommunale familieforsvaltning

Mona og Mecks afdeling har de sidste år arbejdet med en introduktions- og mentorordning for nyansatte, som minder om Dansk Socialrådgiverforening og Kommunernes Landsforenings (2015a; 2015b). I interviewet siger Mona, at hun dog ikke bevidst har benyttet sig af dette materiale:

Den her plan, vi har for at tage imod nye medarbejdere, den er jo lavet i samarbejde også med vores ledelse og vores TR (tillidsrepræsentant, red.) og vores AMiR (arbejdsmiljørepræsentant, red.). ... Så indirekte kan man sige, at det også er et produkt af det, der kommer fra Dansk Socialrådgiverforening; men det er ikke noget, jeg sådan har arbejdet ind i bevidst.

Mona har ikke været på deciderede mentorkurser, men af interviewet fremgår det, at hun har viden om og erfaring med ”procesarbejde” fra sin uddannelse og fra en række kurser, bl.a. i procesfacilitering.

Baggrunden for ordningen er ifølge Mona, at arbejdet for nyansatte tidligere var meget individuelt og psykisk belastende:

Der har lidt været en forventning om, at jamen man starter, så ’Værsågod her er din sag. Og så må du finde ud af det på bedst mulig vis’. Altså et MEGET individuelt fag, hvor der er blevet meget mere fokus på, at det er et fælles ansvar. Det er ’vores’ sager, ellers er det bare for tungt. Man dør i det, hvis det er sådan, man bare er derude på egen hånd. (Interview med Mona).

Ordningen kan således også ses som en del af at styrke det fælles ansvar og forebygge, at nyansatte forlader området. Meck siger i interviewet, at den har været altafgørende for, at han har fundet sig til rette:

Det er altafgørende. ALTAFGØRENDE. Jeg tror LYNHURTIGT, at man kan få

en fornemmelse af, at det her, det kan jeg ikke: ’Jeg lærer det aldrig!’. Og du ved, at så bakker man. Og jeg er blevet kastet ud i en sagsmappe med nogle tunge sager, men jeg har AL den hjælp og opbakning i ryggen, som gør, at jeg kan være i det som ny. ... Ellers så ved jeg ikke, om jeg havde været her. (Interview med Meck).

Ordningen indebærer, at der er sat en halv time af om ugen fast i de første tre måneder. Meck har også mulighed for at få en ’pind’ på de ugentlige teammøder og løbende sparring. Det sidste er muligt, fordi der er sat to mentorer på, hvis den ene skulle være optaget af en presserende sag. Den på forhånd fastlagte tid har for Meck været afgørende for, at ordningen har fungeret:

Jeg kan huske, da jeg var i praktik, der havde vi den første tid ikke noget fastlagt. Og jeg kunne mærke, der begyndte tingene at hobe sig op, ... selv om man siger ’Du kommer bare lige’. I en travl hverdag kan det være rigtig, rigtig svært ... og så kan man jo godt sidde der og tænke ’Jeg vil heller ikke forstyrre dem’. Når jeg VED, at jeg har den her fastlagte tid, så ved jeg, uanset hvor travlt vi alle sammen har, så er der et rum for det. ... Man går måske og noterer spørgsmål ned, som man er i tvivl om, og så ved jeg, at der har jeg et rum, og hvor jeg på ingen måde forstyrrer nogen. (Interview med Meck).

Samtalerne foregår i et fortroligt rum, hvor det er mentee, der bestemmer emnet ud fra, hvad der fylder for ham. Det forudsætter en relation, hvor mentorerne ikke skal vurdere mentee – heller ikke mentee ift. hans tre-måneders prøvetid, da det er et ledelsesansvar. Det er derfor vigtigt, at mentorerne ikke er ledere eller har nogen afrapporteringspligt opad i systemet:

Der er ikke noget, der går ud af det rum, med mindre vi har aftalt det ... Hvis man skal kunne bruge det rigtigt, skal man også kunne vise de steder, hvor man er sårbar, og hvor man synes, det er svært. Og hvis man har en bekymring om, at

det er noget, der går videre, så bruger man det jo ikke, som man skal ... Det er her, hvor man ligesom godt må lade paraderne falde lidt og vise, at man er lidt sårbar. (Interview med Mona).

Mona giver her udtryk for, at en mentee skal kunne bruge mentorsamtalerne til åbent at kunne få vendt det, der bekymrer ham. Mentee skal turde være sårbar, hvilket forudsætter et fortroligt rum mellem mentor og mentee.

## Mentor som ekspert, 'læge' og/eller proceskonsulent?

Mentorordningen er tidsafgrænset og skal ende med, at mentor og mentee fungerer som kolleger på lige fod (Dansk Socialrådgiverforening og Kommunernes Landsforening, 2015b, s. 15). Det er derfor interessant at se, *hvordan* en mentor støtter en mentee i at komme ind i jobbet: På hvilken måde, i hvilket omfang og med hvilket indhold byder hun ind med sine faglige erfaringer og viden, uden at mentee bliver 'afhængig' af mentors hjælp?

Balancen mellem hjælp som faglig-erfaringsmæssig rådgivning og som hjælp-til-selvhjælp kan forstås ud fra Schein (1999; 2010), der sætter lighedstegn mellem konsultation og hjælp, og som opererer med tre hjælperoller: *ekspert*, *'læge'* og *proceskonsulent*. De to første handler om at give hjælp og den sidste om at give hjælp-til-selvhjælp. *Eksperten* giver faglige råd og anvisninger, *'lægen'* stiller en diagnose af udfordringen og foreslår en behandling, mens *proceskonsulenten* faciliterer, at den, der efterspørger hjælp, undersøger sin udfordring og finder sin egen løsning.

Hvis hjælperen agerer som *ekspert* eller *'læge'*, vil den, der får hjælp, ofte blive afhængig af hjælperen (Schein, 2010, s. 92-97). *Proceskonsulent*-rollen bygger derimod på en antagelse om, at hvis en hjælper "teaches the client to diagnose and remedy situations himself, problems will be solved more permanently and the client will have learned the skills necessary to solve new problems as they arise" (Schein, 1999, s. 16). *Proceskonsulenten* har således fokus på, at modtageren skal blive selvkværende ved at *lære-at-lære* (Schein, 1999, s. 9-10, s. 18-19). Følger man denne artikels forståelse af mentoring og coaching, kan en mentor trække på alle tre roller, mens en dialogisk coach udelukkende indtager *proceskonsulent*-rollen.

Schein (2010) skelner "skarpt" mellem de tre roller (s. 212). Hjælperen kan ikke *samtidigt* agere ud fra flere roller, men kan skifte mellem dem undervejs i en samtale (Schein, 1999, s. 22). Det kan imidlertid være forbundet med kommunikative vanskeligheder og uklartheder at veksle mellem de tre roller (Dahl, 2018). Hvis mentor som *proceskonsulent* fx begynder at spørge ud fra sine forudfattede meninger, agerer hun reelt som *ekspert*. Følger man Schein (2010, s. 218) vil mentee fornemme det og let lade sig styre ind på mentors domæne i stedet for at løfte sløret yderligere for, hvad der nager ham.<sup>4</sup> Mentor kan indtage en sådan uhensigtsmæssig *ekspert*-rolle uden at være bevidst om det, hvorfor rollebevidsthed er hjælperens allervigtigste kompetence (Schein, 2009, s. 7). Når der er tale om rolleskift, skal den, der hjælpes, ifølge Schein (2009) "involveres i beslutningerne og bifalde dem" (s. 6). Hjælperen bør derfor metakommunikere om, hvorvidt hun skal skifte rolle fra fx *proceskonsulent* til *ekspert/'læge'* (Schein, 2010, s. 212).

Selv hvis en mentor er eller bliver bevidst om de forskellige hjælperoller, er spørgsmålet stadig, hvordan hun håndterer sin faglige ekspertviden (som lægger op til at agere som *ekspert/'læge'*), når hun *samtidigt* skal støtte mentee i selv at undersøge og finde løsninger på egne udfordringer (som lægger op til at agere som *proceskonsulent*), da endemålet som nævnt er, at de to kan indgå i jobbet på lige fod *uden* mentorsamtaler.

I alle hjælpersamtaler handler det ifølge Schein (2010, s. 35) først og fremmest om at fremme en tillidsfuld og *ligeværdig* relation, hvilket ikke er det samme som *ligestillet*. Relationelt handler ligeværdighed om symmetri på det mellem menneskelige plan, mens *ligestilling* handler om symmetri på det rollemæssige plan, fx ift. faglighed, erfaring eller beslutningskompetence, jf. Juul (2010), Alrø, Dahl og Kloster (2013) og Møller (2019). I mentorsamtaler er der per definition en asymmetri qua mentors rolle som hjælper og som mere faglig erfaren, mens der ift. beslutningskompetence er en symmetri, når mentor og mentee er på samme organisatoriske niveau.

Følger man Schein (2010) kan en mentor ikke hjælpe, hvis mentor og mentee ikke ser hinanden som ligeværdige, da mentee i så fald vil have svært ved at være åben om sit problem. Mentor kan endvidere tro, at hun (som *ekspert*) på forhånd kender problemet og løsningen bedre end mentee. Hun

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kan ifølge Schein (2010) være faldet i ”en af de farligste fælder” (s. 219), som ”er at lade sig forføre af indholdet, og det gælder især, hvis hjælperen tilfældigvis er ekspert på det pågældende område” (s. 219). For at undgå det, skal hun altid starte samtalen som *proceskonsulent* (Schein, 1999, s. 19). Hvis hjælpen skal være relevant og hensigtsmæssigt, skal hun ifølge Schein (2010, s. 212) fremme en tillidsfuld og ligeværdig relation ved at starte i denne rolle.

## Mentorsamtalen mellem Mona og Meck

Både analysen af samtalen og interviewene underbygger, at det lykkes for mentoren Mona at bidrage med sin faglighed i samtalen, *samtidig* med at hun hjælper menteeen Meck med selv at undersøge og finde handlemuligheder i en meget kompleks og vanskelig sag i familieforvaltningen; men hun gør det hverken – som det vil fremgå af analysen – ved at holde rollerne skarpt adskilte eller ved at meta-kommunikere om sine rolleskift.

Sagen ligger i ”den tunge ende”, som der bliver sagt i samtalen, og handler om et barn på under 18 år, der efter egen henvendelse er blevet tvangs-anbragt på et opholdssted uden forældremyndighedsindehaverens samtykke, men nu ønsker at komme hjem. Barnets trussels- og sikkerhedsniveau er af flere alvorlige omstændigheder højt.

I det følgende skal vi se nærmere på, hvad Mona gør i samtalen, og hvordan det bidrager til, at den fungerer.

## At finde samtaleens emne

Det følgende uddrag fra mentorsamtalen viser, hvordan Mona indleder mødet:

- Mona Nå, men godmorgen Meck.  
 Meck Tak.  
 Mona Jamen, jeg tænkte lige på, om vi, skal vi lige lave sådan en lille fælles på, hvad vi lige skal igennem (Meck: Ja) i dag? (Meck: Ja) Har du sådan lige?  
 Meck Jeg har en sag med.  
 Mona Du har en sag med? Ja.  
 Meck Yes. Det er jo en af de nye sager, som jeg har overtaget ... Og det er en kompleks sag, og der er nogle ting, som jeg godt kunne tænke mig noget sparring i forhold til (Mona: Ja) ja.

Mona Har du andet ud over den sagsdrøftelse eller sparring, som du tænker, at vi lige skal have på i dag?

Meck Jeg tænker umiddelbart, at det er det, der fylder lige nu. (Mona: Ja). Ja, det er en af dem, hvor der er noget at arbejde med, og ja, hvordan jeg håndterer arbejdet med den (Mona: Ja) ja.

Mona Okay. Så ellers sådan lige ift. sådan det generelle, daglige arbejde, der tænker du, at der sådan er den sparring, du har brug for sådan løbende?

Meck Ja, det tænker jeg. Nu har vi jo afsat tid til det, og i sidste uge fik vi jo vendt det, der fyldte. Og det jeg tænker, der fylder lige nu, det er den her (Mona: Ja) ja. Og ellers så tager vi jo altid løbende, hvis det er, jeg har brug for hjælp. Så der er ikke noget ud over den (Mona: Nej) nej.

Mona tager initiativet ved at spørge ”skal vi lige lave” en dagsorden (”sådan en lille fælles på, hvad vi lige skal igennem”) efterfulgt af et direkte spørgsmål til Meck: ”Har *du* sådan lige?”. Meck bekræfter løbende med ”Ja” og svarer, at han har en sag med, som han beskriver som ”en kompleks sag”, han ønsker ”sparring i forhold til”. Allerede fra start fremgår det, at det er en hjælpersamtale, hvor Mona som *proceskonsulent* signalerer, at det er Meck, der skal bestemme emnet for samtalen, og det gør han ud fra, at han har et behov (”hvordan jeg håndterer arbejdet med den”). Mona bekræfter indirekte, at emnet skal være sagsdrøftelsen, samtidig med at hun tjekker, om Meck har andre emner: ”Har du andet udover sagsdrøftelse eller sparring ...?”. Hermed bliver Meck gjort ansvarlig for, hvad han vil bruge samtalen til. Meck svarer, ”at *det er det, der fylder*”. Alligevel spørger Mona indirekte, om der også er noget ift. ”det generelle, daglige arbejde”. Hun giver hermed Meck mulighed for at reflektere over, at han startede sit svar med: ”Jeg tænker *umiddelbart*”. Det får Meck til efterfølgende at sige, at ”der er ikke noget ud over” sagen. Mona er således meget opmærksom på Mecks kommunikation og får herved som *proceskonsulent* sikret sig, at Meck bliver helt tydelig om, hvad samtaleens emne skal være.

Ved fra start - og i overensstemmelse med Schein (1999, s. 19) - at agere som *proceskonsulent* giver Mona Meck mulighed for at dele, hvad der reelt

nager og fylder for ham. Hun undgår herved at falde i fælden med at tro, hun kender problemet og løsningen, selv om hun også er *ekspert* på området. Af interviewet fremgår det, at Mona med sin viden om at procesfacilitere hjælpesamtaler er bevidst om, at ”når man arbejder med mennesker, at man lige tjekker ind, hvor er vi i dag, hvad er det, der er vigtigt, så man sammen får lavet en god dagsorden for, hvad er det, man skal”. Meck er tilsvarende bevidst om – og glad for – at det er ham, der vælger emnet, så han kan få sagt, hvad han ”går med”:

Det her mentorforløb er i høj grad til for mig. ... Det gør en forskel, at det er mig, der har taletid ... for ellers tror jeg hurtigt, man kan komme ind i en rytme, hvor man IKKE får sagt det, man går med. (Interview med Meck).

## At vælge undersøgelsesmetode

Efter emnet er fastlagt, tager Mona igen ordet:

- Mona Skal vi ikke bare så køre den igennem?  
[Tager papiret foran hende]
- Meck Lad os gøre det.
- Mona Og så bruge den her sagssparringsmodel, som du jo også har stiftet bekendtskab med på vores teammøder?
- Meck Ja.
- ...
- Mona Så det gør vi. [Mona begynder at skrive på tavlen]

1: Fakta oplysning	4: Handlinger
2: Perspektiver	3 Muligheder

Figur 1: Gengivelse af model fra tavlen.

Brugen af ”vi” indikerer, at Mona lægger op til en fælles undersøgelse, og ”ikke bare”, at det er ment som en opfordring. Da Mona spørger, har Meck dog i princippet mulighed for at svare ’Nej’ eller komme med et andet forslag. Mona foreslår, at de bruger ”den her sparringsmodel”. Modellen består af fire kvadrater og forløber fra fase 1 til 4. Den

er ifølge interviewet med Mona inspireret af Karl Tomms (1992) model, men tillempet afdelingens sagsanalyse. Mona siger indirekte til Meck, at han ved, modellen også anvendes i deres afdeling: ”... som du jo også har stiftet bekendtskab med på vores teammøder”. Meck bekræfter, hvorefter Mona konfirmerer, at de bruger den.

Mona er i ovenstående styrende i den forstand, at hun med et ledende spørgsmål foreslår afdelingens specifikke metode til en fælles sagsanalyse. Hun bringer således (som *ekspert*) sin faglige viden fra afdelingen i spil ved som *proceskonsulent* at foreslå den anvendt i mentorsamtalen. Det ville en udefrakommende coach uden kendskab til afdelingen ikke gøre. I interviewet siger Mona, at hun er helt bevidst om, at hun i forhold til sagen bringer sin faglighed i spil, men at den ”træder lidt mere i baggrunden, når man vælger at bruge en metode som denne”. Formodentlig vurderer Mona ud fra sin erfaring, at metoden her er oplagt og effektiv, da samtalen ikke er berammet til mere end en halv time, og da Meck i løbet af mentorsamtalen så også kan få flere erfaringer med at bruge den model, som afdelingen anvender til sagsanalyse.

## At få mentee til at præcisere sin udfordring

Hvor Mona ud fra sin faglige viden om afdelingen foreslår undersøgelsesmetode, overlader hun som *proceskonsulent* det til mentee selv at præcisere sin udfordring:

- Mona Og grunden til, at du har den på her i dag, det er, fordi du tænker, at? [Kigger på Meck]
- Meck Jeg tænker, hvordan jeg skal arbejde ind i en sag i forhold til, at jeg har med et barn at gøre, som ikke ønsker at samarbejde med mig. Og jeg jo samtidig repræsenterer hans talerør (Mona: Ja). Og sat i forhold til, [Mona begynder at skrive på tavlen] at der er det her trusselsniveau, som der er.
- Mona Ja, [Skriver imens] så ’hvordan kan jeg som rådgiver’, [Stopper med at skrive] og når du siger arbejde, ’hvordan kan jeg som rådgiver arbejde?’, eller var det, det du sagde?
- Meck Ja, altså, hvordan jeg arbejder ind i den her sag, du ved. På den ene side så har jeg både ham og forældremyndighedsindehaveren, som ønsker hjemgivelse, og

- samtidigt er jeg jo også nødt til at arbejde i forhold til hans trusselniveau og sikkerhed. Så det er jo det der spændingsfelt imellem at imødekomme et ønske, egentligt også fra barnet selv, men samtidig sætte mig udover det i forhold til at sikre ham.
- Mona [Skriver] Så imødekomme barnet holdt op mod sikkerhedsniveauet.
- Meck Ja [Mona skriver på tavlen] ja.
- Mona Okay, så det er egentligt dit dilemma, eller hvad skal man sige?
- Meck Ja, det er det.

Mona spørger om grunden til, Meck har sagen på, og lægger op til, at han skal fuldende sætningen om, hvad han tænker. Meck følger Mona og siger, hvad han tænker, nemlig 'hvordan han skal arbejde ind i sagen', når barnet 'ikke ønsker at samarbejde med ham'; når han skal være 'hans talerør'; og når 'der er et trusselsniveau'. Mona starter med på tavlen at formulere Mecks udfordring, men stopper og spørger ind til, hvad han præcist sagde: "eller hvad var det, det du sagde?". Hermed signalerer hun, at Mecks egen formulering er vigtig(st). Det får Meck til gradvis at præcisere sin udfordring. Først med ord som "På den ene side..." og "samtidigt", og dernæst endnu skarpere: "spændingsfelt mellem at imødekomme et ønske, egentlig også fra barnet selv, men *samtidigt* sætte mig ud over det i forhold til at sikre ham", hvor det bliver tydeligt, at Meck ser dette som en fagpersonlig udfordring for ham selv – den handler ikke (længere) om forældremyndighedsindehaveren. Det fanger Mona og sammenfatter det kort på tavlen. Meck bekræfter. Mona bekræfter med et "Okay", konstaterer "Så det er egentlig dit dilemma" og tjekker, om det er korrekt forstået: "eller hvad skal man sige?", hvilket Meck bekræfter helt entydigt.

Mona formår her som *proceskonsulent* at få Meck til selv at blive klar på sin udfordring. Hun gør det ved at stille åbne spørgsmål, både når hun spørger om grunden til, at Meck har taget sagen op i samtalen, og når hun tjekker sine sammenfatninger. Hun følger Meck tæt ved at bruge de samme ord som Meck: "arbejde", "sikkerhed", "imødekomme". Hun tilføjer dog "som rådgiver". Det kan være for som 'læge' at diagnosticere udfordringen som faglig og ikke kun som en udfordring for Meck. Hun omformulerer endvidere "spændingsfelt" til "dilemma", men signalerer, at det er hendes tolkning, og får det bekræftet hos Meck. Samtidig omformule-

rer hun "skal arbejde" til "kan arbejde". Det kan være for at signalere, at der ikke nødvendigvis er ét entydigt fagligt svar, men at de sammen kan undersøge og reflektere over et mulighedsrum. Dermed lægger Mona indirekte op til at fortsætte som *proceskonsulent* og ikke skifte til at være en *ekspert*, der giver Meck svaret på, hvordan han *skal* arbejde med sagen.

Herefter går Mona og Meck sammen i gang med at undersøge de forskellige perspektiver og muligheder, der er i ft. sagen. De kommer omkring barnets, søskendes, forældremyndighedsindehaverens, opholdsstedets, psykologens, støttepersonens, socialstyrelsens, (samværs)overvågerens, myndigheds og juraens perspektiver.

### At undersøge perspektiver og muligheder

Som eksempel på, hvordan de undersøger perspektiver og muligheder, har vi valgt opholdsstedet, da Meck i det efterfølgende interview siger, at det er et af de perspektiver, han har lært noget nyt om gennem samtalen:

- Mona Hvad er opholdsstedets perspektiv? [Kigger på Meck]
- Meck At, at der er en masse ting, der skal bearbejdes. ... de mener jo heller ikke, at han er klar til at komme hjem.
- Mona Nej. Så deres perspektiv er, at han skal forblive anbragt. [Skriver]
- Meck Ja, og den bliver lidt dobbelt der, fordi samtidig så siger de jo også, at de jo selvfølgelig vil arbejde med ham med henblik på en hjemgivelse, så den bliver faktisk lidt tvedelt der.
- Mona Ja, okay. Så de er faktisk ikke helt tydelige.
- Meck De er ikke tydelige, nej. Og det er der, der bliver endnu sværere for mig, fordi på den ene side kortlægger de rigtig, rigtig fint, hvor meget der egentlig bør arbejdes med, men de krøller den af med, at det jo selvfølgelig skal være med henblik på hjemgivelse (Mona: Ja). Det er det, der bliver italesat.
- Mona Så det bliver faktisk lidt utydeligt. [Skriver]
- Meck Ja.
- Mona Hm.

Når Mona spørger, "Hvad er opholdsstedets perspektiv?", svarer Meck, at der mener man heller

ikke, barnet ”er klar til at komme hjem”. Mona bekræfter med et ”Nej” og skærper perspektivet ved at sige: ”Så deres perspektiv er, at han skal forblive anbragt”. Det bekræfter Meck, men ytringen får ham tilsyneladende til at reflektere over forskellen på ’ikke at være klar til at komme hjem’ og ’skulle forblive anbragt’, da Meck nu siger, at ”den bliver faktisk lidt tvedelt”, da opholdsstedet arbejder med barnet ”med henblik på en hjemgivelse” – underforstået: uden at forholde sig til, om trusselniveauet også er højt på sigt. Mona siger: ”Så det bliver faktisk lidt utydeligt”, hvor ”det” må referere til opholdsstedets perspektiv, da hun skriver ”Utydeligt” ud for ”Opholdsstedet” på tavlen. Det bekræfter Meck.

I ovenstående lægger Mona ud som *proceskonsulent* ved at spørge Meck åbent, hvorefter han svarer. Monas tre efterfølgende ytringer kan også tolkes som spørgsmål. Hun bruger imidlertid andre ord end Meck, og hun skriver dem på tavlen, *inden* Meck responderer. Begge dele indikerer, at hun som ’læge’ er ved at give sin diagnose. Hendes afsluttende ”Hm” kan også tolkes som en bekymring over opholdsstedets manglende forhold-sig til trusselniveauet, dvs. som en faglig vurdering.

På et interviewspørgsmål om, hvad der dukkede op for Meck i samtalen, svarer han:

Opholdsstedet [skal] jo også bidrage ind i det her i forhold til at komme med deres vurdering (af trusselniveauet, red.). ... Og det havde jeg ikke set.

Ifølge Meck er det Mona, der har italesat det. Han påskønner her, at Mona bidrager med sin faglighed. Han siger i interviewet, at det fungerer godt ”når man bliver mødt og anerkendt med det, man kommer med, og samtidig også bliver udfordret”. Det kan ovenstående ses som et eksempel på.

På tilsvarende vis undersøges de øvrige perspektiver, særligt barnets og forældremyndighedsindehaverens perspektiv. Meck bliver gennem samtalen afklaret om, at hensynet til barnets sikkerhed har højeste prioritet, og finder frem til flere handlemuligheder.

På et interviewspørgsmål om, hvad Meck tager med fra samtalen, svarer han bl.a.:

Nu kan jeg handle på den (udfordringen, red.). Det giver mig en ro. Fordi da jeg gik herind, der vidste jeg ikke,

hvordan jeg skulle handle i det her. ... Så det handler også om at få stillet krav til opholdsstedet, og ja, blive ved med at række hånden ud til det her barn om, at ’selvom det her er svært, så er jeg her’, ’selv om du ikke ønsker at samarbejde, så er jeg her’.

Meck giver hermed udtryk for, at han nu kan handle på sagen, hvilket giver han ”en ro” i det videre arbejde. Roen og handlingsmulighederne står i kontrast i den tvivl, som han havde før samtalen, hvorfor samtalen ser ud til at have haft en positiv betydning for Mecks ageren i sit nye job. Samtalen har således fungeret for Meck.

### Hvorfor fungerer samtalen?

I mentorsamtalen veksler Mona mellem at være *ekspert/læge* og *proceskonsulent*. I overensstemmelse med Schein starter hun som *proceskonsulent*, men efterfølgende er rollerne *ikke* skarpt adskilte, og hun metakommunikerer *ikke* om sine rolleskrift.<sup>5</sup> Hvorfor fungerer samtalen så alligevel?

Svaret kan ligge i, at der er blevet etableret en tillidsfuld og ligeværdig relation mellem mentor og mentee, dvs. en symmetrisk mellemmenneskelig relation. Det kommer bl.a. til udtryk ved, at Meck i løbet af samtalen ikke lægger skjul på, hvad der nager ham.

Det tillidsfulde og ligeværdige får bedre vilkår, når Mona ikke skal vurdere Meck, da samtalen foregår i et fortroligt rum, hvor de er ligestillet ift. ledelse, dvs. der her er en symmetrisk rollerelation. De er dog ikke ligestillet ift. det faglige og erfaringsmæssige – her er der en asymmetrisk rollerelation. Det er Mona helt bevidst om:

Vi kommer jo ikke uden om, at jeg på en eller anden måde får en ekspert-rolle, ... som man ikke helt kan komme uden om. ... Men intentionen er at nedtone den, så det ikke kommer til at fylde. (Interview med Mona).

Det gør hun bl.a. ved at kombinere sin ekspertviden om det socialfaglige med sin viden om at procesfacilitere samtaler. I interviewet siger Mona, at det ”er godt at kombinere, så det ikke bare blive mit, men at han også kan finde sig eget”. Hermed kan Monas tilgang minde om coaching, men den adskiller sig alligevel, da hun også undervejs bidra-

ger med sine erfaringer og vurderinger ift. det socialfaglige. Meck er også opmærksom på den faglige asymmetri; men tør alligevel godt være åben i processen, når han bliver mødt (ligeværdigt) på det menneskelige plan:

Det handler også måske især som ny om, at man ikke altid føler sig fagligt tilstrækkelig, så jeg bliver også mødt på det menneskelige. Og det gør, at det bliver nemmere, at min faglighed måske lige nu ikke er på det samme sted som Monas. (Interview med Meck).

Trods Monas større erfaring kan de alligevel fagligt ”pinge-ponge noget frem”, som Meck siger i interviewet: Monas faglige input får ham til at tænke videre og også bidrage med noget fagligt i samtalen. Det kan ses som udtryk for, at han føler sig tryk ved Mona og ikke fagligt utilstrækkelig eller (be) dømt. Han forbinder det med hendes måde at være mentor på, som er *både* faglig og professionel og opmærksom og varm:

Hun gør det utroligt professionelt, samtidig med at hun er meget opmærksom på mig i det her. ... Jeg har en tæt relation til Mona ift. det her med at være mentor og mentee. ... En ting er, at jeg siger noget, og hun udfordrer mig; men også, at jeg har en fornemmelse af, at hun opfanger mine signaler, måske også de nonverbale, du ved. ... Hun har øje for mig i et helhedsperspektiv, og det er rigtigt rart. ... Det er jo ikke sikkert, jeg havde haft samme oplevelse, hvis det ikke havde været Mona. Jeg kunne jo lige så godt være mødt af knap så meget varme. ... Altså jeg kan også blive spurgt til ’Hvordan sover du om natten?’. Og ja, det har jo ikke noget med min faglighed at gøre. Og det sætter jeg rigtig stor pris på, fordi havde det kun være på det faglige, så kunne jeg måske hurtigere have følt mig utilstrækkelig. (Interview med Meck).

I interviewet påskønner Mona også, at Meck bidrager med noget fagligt, da hun heller ikke havde svaret på udfordringen. Hun forbinder det med, at den procesorienterede metode (når hun agerer

som *proceskonsulent*) tvinger dem til at være nysgerrige og kreative.

Meck anerkendes både fagligt-kognitivt og følelsesmæssigt som noget særligt i sig selv og som værdifuld for fællesskabet (Honneth, 2003, s. 109). Monas anerkendelse af Meck er på mange måder parallel med den anerkendelse, som Juul (2017) ud fra Honneth advokerer for, at socialrådgivere bør vise deres klienter ved at indgå i en ligeværdig, men ikke ligestillet relation (s. 7). Det lader også til at være tilfældet her: Tilsyneladende tilstræber Mona at være der for Meck, der tilstræber at være der for barnet (sin klient), jf. at det for ham fremover handler om at ”blive ved med at *række hånden ud til det her barn* om, at ’*selv om det her er svært, så er jeg her*”, som Meck siger i interviewet. I så fald kan der være en *parallelproces*, dvs. at det relationelle i én kontekst optræder i en anden (se Jacobsen, 2000; Lund, 1997).<sup>6</sup> Følger man Jacobsen (2005) kan det så være udtryk for rollemodelindlæring: mentee tager mentors ”eksempel til sig ved at agere på en tilsvarende måde” (s. 711) over for sin klient.

Inspireret af Lunde Frederiksen, Halse, Rosholm, Paaske og Krøjgaard (2019) og Frederiksen (u.å.) forskning inden for mentoring af nyuddannede lærere kan man endvidere tale om mentoring med et *bifokalt blik*, hvor mentoren fokuserer på både mentee og dem, som mentee hjælper (Lunde Frederiksen et al., 2019, s. 41). I samtalen har Mona således et bifokalt blik: Hun har både fokus på at hjælpe *Meck* (som *proceskonsulent*) og på sagen, dvs. hvad der er godt for *barnet* (som *ekspert* og ’*læge*’).

Når relationen medvirker til, at Meck ikke føler sig utilstrækkelig, men set som menneske, hænger det også sammen med, at Mona og kollegerne har givet udtryk for, at sagen også påvirker dem følelsesmæssigt. På det mellem menneskelige plan fremstår Monas relationen til Meck således ikke asymmetrisk og paternalistisk, men anerkendende og ligeværdig, og som en del af et kollegialt fællesskab:

Selv om jeg er nyuddannet, og hun har de her 10-12 års erfaring, så oplever hun det samme som mig. Så det er ikke kun noget, jeg sidder med som ny. Det er faktisk reelt. ... Det er ikke en følelse, jeg sidder alene med. ... Det er faktisk noget, vi alle sammen oplever. ... Og det

gør det meget, meget nemmere for mig.  
(Interview med Meck).

Mentorordningen har bidraget til, at en sag som i den her analyserede samtale ikke bliver et individuelt anlæggende for Meck, men at der er "fokus på, at det er et fælles ansvar. Det er 'vores' sager" (Interview med Mona). Det fælles ansvar for den fælles sag indebærer både faglige og mere følelsesmæssige dimensioner. Som Mona siger i interviewet: "Omsorg er også en mentors opgave tænker jeg. At drage omsorg for den, der er ansat. Og tjekke af, om vi gør det, vi skal", da mentees "trivsel egentlig også [er] afgørende for, at han får mulighed for at komme godt i gang, og at han får mulighed for at lave et godt stykke arbejde". Det kan ses som en "følelsesmæssig deltagelse for det individuelt særegne ved den anden person" (Honneth, 2006, s. 173), og denne anerkendelse bidrager ikke kun til, at mentee kan komme godt ind i sit job, men også til, at de fælles mål i afdelingen kan realiseres (s. 173).

## Afslutning

For Meck bidrager mentorordningen positivt til fagpersonlig udvikling generelt og til varetagelse af en udfordrende sag specifikt. Mentorsamtaler har tilsyneladende potentiale til at forebygge den uoverskuelighed og stress, som kan være forbundet med jobbet som socialrådgiver. For mentee kan i mentorsamtaler bruge de faglige input fra mentor som *ekspert/læge* OG samtidig få hjælp-til-selvhelp fra mentor som *proceskonsulent*. Tre sammenhængende forhold bidrager hertil: For det første, at de arbejdsmæssige betingelser giver mulighed for fastsatte mentorsamtaler med løbende sparring i et fortroligt rum. For det andet, at mentor har viden om at procesfacilitere en hjælpesamtale, som hun kan kombinere med sin ekspertviden om det socialfaglige. For det tredje, at der i arbejdsfællesskabet er mulighed for relationer, hvor såvel de faglig-kognitive som de følelsesmæssige dimensioner i arbejdet anerkendes. Alle tre forhold forudsætter, at mentorordningen bakkes op og prioriteres fra ledelsesmæssig side.

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## Noter

- 1 I denne artikel omtales mentor som 'hun' og mentee som 'han'. Mentors og mentees navne er anonymiseret i den analyserede samtale og i de to interviews. Samtalen og interviewene er udskrevet efter Dansk standard for udskrifter og registrering af talesprog (1992). Der er dog sat tegn. Ord, der er lagt særligt tryk på, er skrevet med VERSALER. Grin, smil, nik og andre markante nonverbale ytringer er markeret med firkantede parenteser, fx [Griner]. Har vi tilføjet forklaringer, er det angivet med runde parenteser, fx (tillidsrepræsentant, red.). Er dele af samtalen udeladt, er det markeret med tre punktummer . . . . Når vi i analysen ønsker at fremhæve bestemte ord, er de kursiveret i citaterne.
- 2 Enkelte aspekter af artiklen læner sig derfor op ad specialet.
- 3 Havde vores videnskabsteoretiske ståsted været etnometodologisk eller socialkonstruktivistisk, ville vi have trukket på en konversationsanalytisk tilgang (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2005) til analyse af socialrådgivernes hhv. gøren eller samkonstruktioner i samtalen, som fx Danneris og Dall (2017), Caswell og Dall (2018) og Jørgensen (2018) gør i de samtaler, de analyserer.
- 4 Selv når mentor er tydelig som ekspert, er det ikke givet, at mentee kan bruge et fagligt råd. I en anden af de samtaler, Søndergaard (2019) har undersøgt, kommer mentoren med en faglig anvisning, som mentee'en er uenig i grundet et større kendskab til klientens baggrund. Han vælger dog ikke at bringe det op i samtalen og antyder i interviewet, at grunden er, at han ikke vil tage sin mentors tid, da hun er meget presset af andre opgaver. Mentor skal altså også have tid og rum for, at samtalen kan blive lærerig – potentielt set også for mentor selv.
- 5 Havde Mona metakommunikeret om sine mange rolleskift, havde de næppe på under 20 minutter nået omkring 10 perspektiver og tilknyttede muligheder.
- 6 I systemteorien anvendes begrebet isomorfi om fænomenet parallelprocesser (Botelho, Seaburn & Harp, 1991).

## Kontakt



Louise Bak Søndergaard  
Cand.mag. i kommunikation  
Videnskabelig assistent,  
Institut for Kommunikation  
og Psykologi,  
Aalborg Universitet,  
Rendsburggade 14,  
9000 Aalborg.  
E-mail: lbak@hum.aau.dk



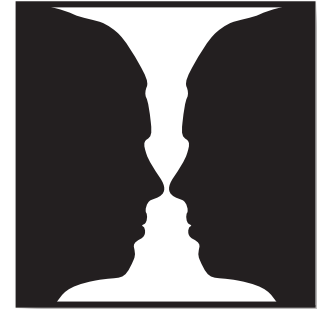
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Cand.mag. i samfundsfag  
og psykologi, Ph.D. i interpersonel  
kommunikation i organisationer  
Lektor, Institut for Kommuni-  
kation og Psykologi,  
Aalborg Universitet,  
Rendsburggade 14,  
9000 Aalborg.  
E-mail: dahl@hum.aau.dk



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## Dependent on trust and improved by transparency

### The coaching relationship

Stephen Palmer and Ole Michael Spaten

#### Abstract

*Ole Michael Spaten interviews Professor Stephen Palmer on the coaching relationship, newer findings and future research. In this interview, Palmer stated that there is no consensus in the precise definition of the coaching relationship. However, Palmer mentions his previous definition of the coaching relationship: 'a unique, co-created, evolving relationship comprising the coaching alliance plus additional client and coach contributions.' Likewise, Palmer pointed out that a fruitful coaching relationship is essential for coachees to accomplish their goals. According to Palmer, some of his key findings is that coaching relationship is dependent on trust and is improved by transparency. Additionally, Palmer declares that striving towards goals and enhancing performance are essential factors in coaching. Moreover, he acknowledged that the phenomena of virtual coaching that we encounter would benefit from further research.*

**Keywords:** Coaching relationship, Coaching alliance, Coachees, Coach

Ole: When and how did you realize that the alliance / relation between coach and coachee was an important and under researched topic?

Stephen: Having worked in psychotherapeutic field since the mid-1980s I had assumed that the coaching alliance and relationship were important in facilitating coachees in achieving their goals. However, how important is probably a key question.

Ole: What brought you to this research field?

Stephen: There were a number of factors. Doctorate supervision at City University, London was an important factor. I was supervising Kristina Gyllensten for her doctorate research and in one of her studies nine participants were interviewed about their experiences of coaching, and 'The coaching relationship' was identified as a main theme. There was limited published research into this area so we realised it was important to publish these research findings (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). I was also supervising and publishing articles and chapters with Alan-

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na Henderson (formerly O'Broin) for her doctorate research which focused on the coaching relationship. Later I teamed up with Almuth McDowall to co-edit *The Coaching Relationship: Putting People first*, which was published in 2010 (Palmer & McDowall, 2010).

Ole: How do you define the coaching relationship?

Stephen: There is no agreement in the precise definition of the coaching relationship. However, I still like our one sentence working definition for the coach-client relationship published in the Handbook of Coaching Psychology (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007: 296): *'a unique, co-created, evolving relationship comprising the coaching alliance plus additional client and coach contributions'*

Ole: What is some of your most important findings concerning the coaching relationship and the coaching alliance?

Stephen: Those early research findings published back in 2007 with Kristina were exciting (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007: 168): *'The coaching relationship' was identified as a main theme, which, in turn, comprised of three subthemes; valuable coaching relationship; trust; and transparency. These themes highlighted that the coaching relationship was very valuable for the participants and that this relationship was dependent on trust and improved by transparency.*

However, another important finding from that study which is sometimes overlooked was that: *'Working towards goals and improving performance were also valuable components of the coaching'* (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007: 168).

Ole: What do you think would be future key research areas for scholars interested in further understanding and development of this field?

Stephen: As we undertake more coaching in a virtual world, it would be useful to examine the coaching relationship.

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## Contact



Stephen Palmer  
Wales Academy for Professional  
Practice and Applied Research,  
University of Wales Trinity  
Saint David,  
Carmarthen Campus,  
College Road,  
Carmarthen,  
Wales.  
SA31 3EP  
Email: [stephen.palmer@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.palmer@uwtsd.ac.uk)

## Stephen Palmer

Prof Stephen Palmer PhD is Professor of Practice at the Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research. He is an APECS Accredited Executive Coach and Supervisor, International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) Accredited Coaching Psychologist and Supervisor, and a Chartered Psychologist. He is Adjunct Professor of Coaching Psychology at Aalborg University, Denmark. He is President and Fellow of the ISCP and former President and Honorary Fellow of the Association for Coaching.

## Contact

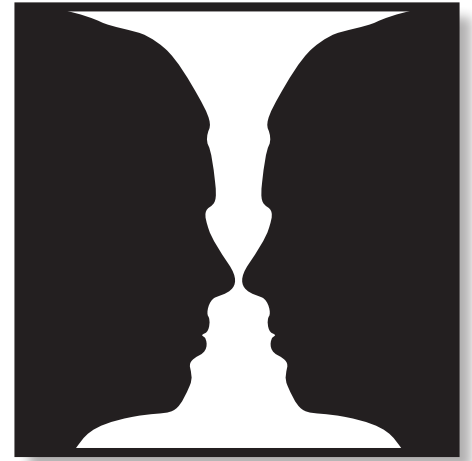


Ole Michael Spaten  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Kroghstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: [oms@hum.aau.dk](mailto:oms@hum.aau.dk)  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

## Ole Michael Spaten

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCP Accred Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.



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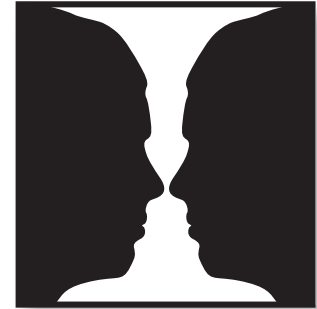
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## Relationship as one of the most important active ingredients in therapy and coaching psychology

By Ole Michael Spaten

### Abstract

*This article seeks to gain a clearer understanding of the coaching relationship through a specific question: “Is (the concept of) relationship one of the most important active ingredients in therapy and coaching psychology?” Firstly, a short introduction to the research field is presented, followed by a short timeline of how Palmer, (O’Broin) Henderson and Gyllensten found their way into researching in the coaching relationship field. This leads to a discussion of the definition of the coaching relationship and the notion that a more consistent definition would be very valuable. Lastly, the article points out that the coaching relationship is an important ingredient with respect to the effectiveness and outcome of coaching. However, the complexity of the coaching relationship construct calls for a new synthesis of theoretical ideas, and thus further research should be conducted.*

**Keywords:** *The coaching relationship, coaching, coaching psychology, working alliance in coaching*

Is (the concept of) relationship one of the most important active ingredients in therapy and coaching psychology? Relationship is not easy to define: From an overall point of view, Pearsall (1999) suggested that it is the ‘...way two or more people or things are connected’. Less broadly, Gelso and Carter defined the therapeutic relationship as the “feeling and attitudes that counselling participants have toward one another and the manner in which those are expressed” (Gelso & Carter, 1985, p. 159). From clinical research we know that “understanding and acceptance”, congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1975) are

crucial, and clients frequently state that the most helpful aspect of therapy is feeling supported and understood. For a long time transference and countertransference, the working alliance and the real relationship have been areas of research interest (Horvath et al., 2011). Hougaard (2004) remarked that the therapeutic relationship, therapeutic alliance, and so-called non-specific factors (therapist-client relationship, client expectations and common clinical strategies) are the most significant factors determining the outcome of therapy (Wampold et al., 1997).

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## When did the coaching relationship come into focus?

Stemming from the important research base noted above, when did the relation between coach and coachee come to be a focus of investigation? It is an extended history; inquiries in coaching are based on the hundred-year-long experience and systematic research in psychology, psychotherapy and adult learning (Grant & Palmer, 2002; Spaten, 2010). Professor Stephen Palmer, a pioneer in the field, who has been in psychotherapy since the mid-1980s and assumed that the coaching alliance and relationship were important in facilitating coachees in achieving their goals. In a similar vein, and from their knowledge base and training in counselling and psychotherapy, Gyllensten and (O’Broin) Henderson also supposed that the relationship in coaching was vital to its process and outcomes (Gyllensten, 2020; Henderson, 2020).

### A short timeline: Leading scholars in the research field of Coaching Relationship

Professor Stephen Palmer, Dr Alanna (O’Broin) Henderson, and Dr Kristina Gyllensten were among the first scholars to investigate this important research area. In the early 2000s, Stephen Palmer was doctoral supervisor to Gyllensten and Henderson, and their scientific curiosity led to years of subsequent research into the coaching relationship. Stephen Palmer (2020) states: “I was supervising Kristina Gyllensten for her doctorate research and in one of her studies nine participants were interviewed about their experiences of coaching, and ‘the coaching relationship’ was identified as a main theme. There was limited published research into this area so we realised it was important to publish these research findings (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). I was also supervising and publishing articles and chapters with Alanna Henderson (formerly O’Broin) for her doctorate research, which focused on the coaching relationship”, and a portion of these investigations was published in the same year (in O’Broin & Palmer, 2007). In a study from 2011 de Haan et al. found that executive coaches appreciated their coaching relationship and skills such as understanding, encouragement and active listening, more than specific coach interventions, as already discussed by Wampold et al. (1997). As early as 2001 McGovern et al. stipu-

lated that the quality of the “coaching relationship was perceived as critical to coaching success by 84 percent of coachee participants” (O’Broin & Palmer, 2019, p. 471).

### The beginning of the century

At the beginning of the century, Gyllensten was focusing on coaching and occupational stress in her research, as Palmer mentioned above, while Kristina was training to become a counselling psychologist. To this temporal introduction Gyllensten adds “...within the field of counselling and therapy the relationship between the client/patient and therapist has always been considered important” (2020).

As mentioned, Alanna (O’Broin) Henderson is another of the leading scholars in the research field of the Coaching Relationship, and a close collaborator with Stephen Palmer. The first question in my interview with Alanna was: “When and how did you realize that the working-alliance / relation between coach and coachee was an important topic”? Alanna answered: “My contact with the helping professions began when I retrained as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist in the UK, in 1998, following a career in the financial sector in Fund Management. Working with therapy clients showed me first-hand how important the relationship was as a common factor: in engaging clients, and supporting and underpinning the work, regardless of theoretical approach adopted. The psychotherapy research evidence-base has long supported this premise, with a moderate yet robust significant working alliance-outcome association across theoretical approaches being shown for decades across multiple studies...” (Henderson, 2020). This hundred-year-long heritage, and a strong research foundation in psychotherapy, is essential to keep in mind. In the 1990s, and at the beginning of the new millennium, the interpersonal relationship between coach and coachee garnered little attention (Greensfelder, 2012). At that point in time there were little or no dedicated coaching relationship research findings supporting the claim of its key importance in the coaching context. Precisely, this notion is robustly sustained by the broad research literature presented shortly here and extended in Spaten, 2020. The research methods which were prominent during this period – qualitative self-report studies or case studies – focused more broadly on coaching

variables: Whether coaching worked and how it differed from therapy.

## Active ingredients

Palmer, Henderson, Gyllensten and other scholars then brought the coaching relationship to and the fore as a timely topic of exploration. Since this pioneering time the number of inquiries surrounding the coaching relationship, as one of the *active ingredients of coaching*, has gained momentum. Alanna explains that, "... evidence, including meta-analyses (Graßmann et al., 2020), accumulating on importance of relationship quality (usually measured as Working Alliance) to coaching effectiveness, although exploration of mediating or moderating effects requires further research (see Zimmermann & Antoni, 2020), and is arguably likely to be equally relevant (see O'Broin, 2016) given the multifactorial complexity of coaching as a process" (Henderson, 2020).

Overall, we now know that coaching grows fast and is very effective. Since the early days of research, coaching psychology has found increasing evidence to support the idea that coaching is an effective form of intervention (e.g. Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh & Parker, 2010; Theeboom, Beersma & van Vianen, 2014; O'Broin, 2016; Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016; Graßmann, Scholmerich & Schermuly, 2020; de Haan, Molyn & Nilsson, 2020). According to Henderson there followed an increased emphasis on functional similarities between therapy and coaching in order to gain a better understanding of coaching practise (O'Broin, 2016). "Common factors", or non-specific factors, such as client factors, theory and techniques, and client expectations were identified (Wampold et al., 1997; O'Broin 2016; Spaten 2018).

Following the accumulation of research documenting the effectiveness of coaching, O'Broin and Palmer stated that research studies were seeking to "identify the *active ingredients* of coaching" (2019, p. 472). Alongside the apprehension of greater complexity comes the requirement for the "...development of research methods and strategies that are suitable in addressing coaching as a complex phenomenon" (O'Broin, Spaten & Olesen Løkken, 2016).

The importance of identifying how the coach contributes to creating an effective relationship with the coachee has also been shown to be of considerable importance (O'Broin et al., 2016).

## The need for a clear coaching relationship definition

A conceptual identification may well be that a coaching relationship is "two people engaging in a systematic process where different issues presented by the coachee are explored in collaboration between the coach and coachee" (Spaten et al., 2016). Stephen Palmer approved multiple statements – a nonexistence of shared agreement – and emphasised that there "...is no agreement in the precise definition of the coaching relationship" (Palmer, 2020). During my interview with Alanna (O'Broin) Henderson (2020) the following was identified about the lack of agreement on a definition:

The lack of consensus on a definition of the coaching relationship means that multiple referents are used for the term. This means use of the term can therefore range from a proxy for the whole coaching process, to more specific usages, such as a descriptor for rapport, or a component part of the coaching relationship, for example, Working Alliance. Whilst other component parts of the coaching relationship, such as the Real Relationship (Sun et al., 2013) have been posited as relevant markers. Recently other Common Factors, or active ingredients such as resilience and self-efficacy (de Haan et al., 2020) have tentatively been designated as putatively more important to coaching effectiveness. Working Alliance is the predominant component part of the coaching relationship that has usually been measured and found to be associated with coaching effectiveness in research studies". (Henderson, 2020)

Whereas this complexity of the field is significant a short and precise definition would be valuable for research purposes. Kristina Gyllensten (2020) delivers this by maintaining that "Alanna O'Broin and Stephen Palmer's definition is good: 'a unique, co-created, evolving relationship comprising the coaching alliance plus additional client and coach contributions'" (O'Broin and Palmer, 2007, p 295).

Kristina Gyllensten (2020) also leans towards this now classic definition: "The coaching alliance reflects the quality of the coachee's and coach's engagement in collaborative, purposive work within the coaching relationship, and is jointly negotiated and renegotiated throughout the coaching process over time" (O'Broin and Palmer, 2010a, p 4).

Despite the multiple usages and definitions of the term, different coaching backgrounds and conceptual approach variations, it is generally accepted

across different forms and approaches to coaching that the working relationship between coach and coachee should be an effective working relationship based on a coaching alliance.

## The coaching relationship

Among the broad range of scholars mentioned above a couple of central definitions should be pinpointed in this article. One of the first studies with important findings concerning the coaching relationship was conducted by Gyllensten & Palmer (2007). Their research was a qualitative study of coachees from two organisations considering their experiences of coaching. Their investigation showed that the participants identified the coaching relationship as a main theme and that this relationship was highly dependent on trust and transparency. The study led to a further conclusion that the coaching relationship was an important aspect of coaching, but that other aspects, such as the goal-oriented focus of coaching, were consistently identified as important components in the coaching alliance (O'Broin, 2016).

These studies sparked a myriad of articles and book chapters over the past decade (e.g. Kemp, 2008; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010a, 2010b), as well as further dedicated coaching relationship research studies (e.g. de Haan, 2008; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010c). Among other things they pointed to a) the importance of the negotiation of power in the coaching alliance, b) the coaching outcome and the relationship in general appears to depend on the coach's awareness of power issues and c) the ability to go beyond the asymmetry between coach and coachee, both in coaching and consulting psychology (Spaten et al., 2016; Sapezinskiene et al., 2016). Some of the differences between coaching and counselling have also been emphasised (Palmer & McDowall, 2009; O'Broin, 2009, 2010a).

Following the early articles by Gyllensten and Palmer, and O'Broin and Palmer the first book explicitly focused upon the coaching relationship was *The Coaching Relationship: Putting People First* edited by Palmer and McDowall (2010). This important book was followed by *Coaching Relationships: The Relational Coaching Field Book*, edited by de Haan and Sills in 2012. Later coaching research studies (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013), including a large-scale global outcome study (de Haan, Grant, Burger & Eriksson, 2016) have found significant links between the coaching relationship

(working alliance) and coaching outcomes (Baron et al., 2011). Lai and McDowall (2014), de Haan and Gannon (2017), and Graßmann, Scholmerich and Schermuly (2020) have identified similar connections in their examination of the field. The review by Lai et al. indicated that an effective coaching relationship could be associated with subsequent positive coaching outcomes. Another key point which was particularly prominent in their review was that the coaching relationship is a central focus of both coaching research and practise, and how it influences the effectiveness of coaching processes and outcomes. Forming a strong alliance/coaching relationship has also been a central component of a cluster of executive coaching, leadership coaching, and human development models of the mid-1990s (Henderson, 2020). With increased confirmation of this important association of the global coaching relationship with coaching effectiveness, interest in the coaching relationship is likely to continue (O'Broin, 2018; Henderson, 2020). However, the question of *how* the coaching relationship influences coaching outcomes remains largely unexplored (Palmer, 2020). Despite the increasing amount of accumulative literature in the coaching field (regarding both the relationship itself and the 'active ingredients' in the coaching relationship) it has been confirmed across research contributions that coaching (and the coaching relationship) is a complex process. We can sum up that coaching is an evolving, complex, interpersonal, multifactorial and multi-level activity. Because of its complexity it is recommended, and seems constructive, to conduct a broader investigation involving further systematically strict, empirical and evidence-based coaching research. In the search for the 'active ingredients' in the coaching relationship (de Haan et al., 2020) this exploration should encompass findings from all existing empirical research from the last twenty or twenty-five years, both in general and as an overview and presentation of the single studies and chapters alike (see Spaten, 2020).

## Findings

Some of the important research findings concerning the coaching relationship so far have been summarised below for clarity.

- Commitment to the coaching process and goals from both the coach and the coachee is central for a successful outcome of the coaching. The



goal-oriented focus is an integral part of coaching. The coach and coachee should establish mutually agreed upon goals.

- It is essential for the coach to have sufficient psychological education in order to understand the different emotional aspects of the coaching process and hence to be able to differentiate between diverse forms of intervention.
- The coach must pay attention to both behaviour and emotions in the relationship, with respect to both the coachee and the coach.
- The effect of the coach's personality and ability to be empathic, trustworthy and non-judgmental in the working alliance is highlighted as an important finding.
- The coach should pay attention to issues of power in the coaching process, including the asymmetrical relation between coach and coachee.
- It is important for the coach to have a solid theoretical foundation, but the coach's personality and the interpersonal relation has a vital impact on the coaching relationship and its outcome.
- The coach should continually reflect and develop upon their practice.

These are some of the most important research findings in the coaching relationship field which can contribute to a better and broader understanding of what is at play when we address the complexity of the coaching relationship.

## Conclusion

This article has drawn upon a variety of research within the field of the coaching relationship (Spaten, 2020). Throughout the article this field of research has been discussed, including how the coaching relationship may be defined. It has been made clear that the coaching relationship is understood in a variety of ways, and this has resulted in many different areas of research within the purview of this relationship. However, there is generally agreement that the coaching relationship should be based on a coaching alliance. Moreover, it seems that a short and specific definition for coaching relationship is of great value. The article began with a question regarding whether the coaching relationship is the most important active ingredient in coaching. The general answer is *yes* – much of the research points towards the coaching relationship being the most important ingredient with respect to coaching outcomes, such that it is associated

with effectiveness. In addition to this coaching is an ever-evolving, complex, interpersonal, multifactorial and multi-level activity.

With that said because of the complexity and multifactorial dimensions of the relationship it is not yet possible to say *what* specifically this ingredient is and *how* it affects the outcome of coaching. The research in this field is limited, and these questions should be investigated further with respect to systematically strict, empirical and evidence-based coaching.

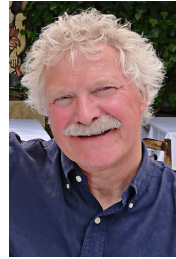
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## Contact



Ole Michael Spaten  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Krogstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: oms@hum.aau.dk  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

## Ole Michael Spaten

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCPAccred Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole’s research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.



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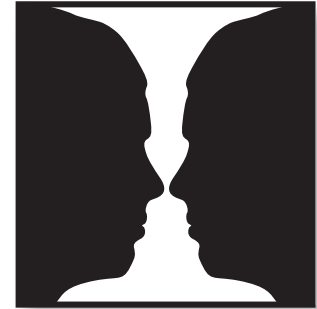
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## The importance of a working alliance between coach and coachee

Alanna Henderson and Ole Michael Spaten

### Abstract

*Ole Michael Spaten interviews Dr Alanna Henderson on the coaching relationship, newer findings and future research. In this interview, Henderson advocated that defining coaching alliance is useful since it emphasizes the coach and coachee engagement in collaborative and purposive work. Moreover, she pointed out four of her essential findings concerning coaching relationship, which includes; Collaboration, engagement, adapting to the individual coachee and measuring the Coaching Alliance. Lastly, she mentions two areas of research as critical for further investigation; coaching relationship as a mediating variable and video-mediated coaching relationship.*

**Keywords:** Coaching relationship, Coaching Alliance, Coachee, Coach, Engagement, Collaboration, Bond

Ole: When and how did you realize that the alliance / relation between coach and coachee was an important and under researched topic?

Alanna: First I would like to highlight the importance of the Working Alliance. My contact with the helping professions began when I retrained as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist in the UK, in 1998, following a career in the financial sector in Fund Management. Working with therapy clients showed me first-hand how important the relationship was as a common factor: in engaging clients, and supporting and underpinning the work, regardless of theoretical

approach adopted. The psychotherapy research evidence base has long supported this premise, with a moderate yet robust significant working alliance-outcome association across theoretical approaches being shown for decades across multiple studies (see Horvath et al., 2011).

It was an under-researched topic. Back in 2004, as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist new to coaching, I read many opinion pieces and coaching reviews attesting the importance of a good coaching relationship to process and outcomes of coaching. Counter-intuitively, I found there was little or no dedicated coaching relationship research findings at that time sup-

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porting the assertion of its importance in the coaching context.

Ole: Alanna, what brought you to this research field?

Alanna: It was a timely research topic. In 2006, on selecting a topic for my Doctorate research, I therefore chose to begin to examine this lacuna, with my mixed-method research study on *coachee and coach experiences of forming coaching relationships, and how the coach may adapt to the coachee*. This research study was one of few at the time to exclusively address the coaching relationship (see O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; O'Broin, 2013). Interest in researching the coaching relationship, as one of the *active ingredients of coaching* has gathered pace in the years since, with evidence, including meta-analyses (Graßmann et al., 2020), accumulating on importance of relationship quality (usually measured as Working Alliance) to coaching effectiveness, although exploration of mediating or moderating effects requires further research (see Zimmermann & Antoni, 2020), and is arguably likely to be equally relevant (see O'Broin, 2016) given the multifactorial complexity of coaching as a process.

Ole: How do you define the coaching relationship?

Alanna: First, this field is characterised by its lack of consensus on definition. The lack of consensus on a definition of the coaching relationship means that multiple referents are used for the term. This means use of the term can therefore range from a proxy for the whole coaching process, to more specific usages, such as a descriptor for rapport, or a component part of the coaching relationship, for example, Working Alliance. Whilst other component parts of the coaching relationship, such as the Real Relationship (Sun et al., 2013) have been posited as relevant markers, and recently other Common Factors, or active ingredients such as resilience and self-efficacy (de Haan et al., 2020) have tentatively been designated as putatively more important to coaching effectiveness, Working Alliance is the predominant component part of the coaching relationship that has usually

been measured and found to be associated with coaching effectiveness in research studies.

Ole: Do you think we are getting closer to a definition of the coaching alliance?

Alanna: I find that a working relationship or coaching alliance definition is useful, as it emphasises the collaborative, negotiable and client-led nature of the Coaching Alliance in coaching, as well as addressing the purposive task, goal, and bond aspects salient in goal-focused coaching: *'The coaching alliance reflects the quality of the [coachee] and coach's engagement in collaborative, purposive work within the coaching relationship, and is jointly negotiated and renegotiated throughout the coaching process over time.* (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007, p.305)

Ole: What are some of your most important findings concerning the coaching relationship and the coaching alliance?

Alanna: My PhD research was conducted and written up between 2006 and 2013, and it is interesting to assess its findings in the context of today's research on the coaching relationship. Since I began my research, there have been a succession of studies finding an association between the working alliance and outcome (eg Baron & Morin, 2009), including larger studies exploring the Working Alliance as a common factor contributing to coaching outcome (De Haan et al., 2013; de Haan et al., 2016). Latterly, reflecting an increasing recognition of the complex association between interactive variables in the coaching process, the coaching relationship has been conceptualised in various ways - as a mediating variable (for instance de Haan et al., 2016); in a process-outcome model as *emotional support*, (Zimmermann & Antoni, 2020); and Working Alliance construed as a *coachee propensity* to relate rather than a relational variable (de Haan et al., 2020). Further developments have also been a lack of convergence between data on self-report and behavioural observations of the Working Alliance in relation to coaching success, and findings of a lack of association of the bond aspect of the Working Alliance to coaching outcomes (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015; Grant, 2013), with the

latter study also emphasising the goal-focused aspects of the coaching relationship over the bond aspects. These latter studies are welcome in introducing a more detailed examination of the interacting variables at work in the coaching process, however are still some way off from making sense of, and understanding the direct and/or indirect role which the coaching relationship plays.

Ole: Could you tell me more about your most important findings?

Alanna: My main findings of interest were: 1) Collaboration a potential area for exploration

- a) Collaboration was found to be the central salient component of the coaching relationship.
- b) There were a variety of perspectives on the characteristics, and degree, of collaboration sought.
- c) Within the component of collaboration, respect (for the person of the coach), shared understanding, and support (both outside and within the coaching session) were aspects found to be particularly important.
- d) Collaboration in the Principal Component Analysis conducted in the study comprised Collaboration, Bond and Engagement, and Coach attitude and Characteristics aspects identified in sub-themes in phase 1 of the research study.

Bordin's conceptualisation of Working Alliance (1979;1994) focuses on collaboration between coach and coachee being achieved in three areas: Goals, Tasks and Bonds. Alliance is viewed as the result of a joint endeavour (collaboration) rather than something that a coach or coachee does or achieves per se, and Bordin's inference is therefore that collaboration results in the alliance, and that the alliance operates at a different conceptual level to other relationship concepts, such as empathy, genuineness, warmth, flexibility. As has been urged in the coaching research (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018) and psychotherapy research literature (Horvath, 2018), development of theoretical models dealing with coaching and psychotherapy processes respectively are necessary. The questions here are there-

fore (i) do we need to examine the different nature of alliance and other relationship variables, and (ii) how these variables relate to each other? Is collaboration, in coaching, for example a generic component? (see Horvath, 2018: pg. 512). Is the act of collaboration connected to the negotiated responsibility for deciding goals, and for planning and participating in coaching tasks, and should our emphasis be targeted on harnessing the coachee's Active Confident Collaboration identified in my research study (conceptualised elsewhere as the 'Client's enthusiastic participation' and the concept identified across Working Alliance measures as the common denominator variable (Hatcher et al., 1995).

Ole: You have had many years of research into this field. Can you tell us more about your findings concerning the coaching relationship and the coaching alliance?

Alanna: Another headline for my findings is 2) Engagement, dis-engagement, and re-engagement opportunities

- a) Respect for the coach suggested an alternative route for engagement with the coachee to the generally discussed aspects of liking and rapport (for instance in the Bond subscale of the Working Alliance.
- b) The Bond aspect of the coaching relationship was a broader concept than liking, and was linked to other aspects of engagement (such as openness, rapport, listening) and dis-engagement.
- c) Openness appeared to be an important aspect of both engagement and re-engagement on the identification of relational strains or disruptions to the coaching relationship.
- d) The Bond aspect was characterised in different ways by different participants, suggesting the relevance of adapting to the individual coachee.

Findings from my research study, and the coaching research suggest a more nuanced role for the bond in the coaching relationship, both in its composition, and its relation, and relative position to, Tasks and Goals, and for individual coachees. Variables at work in the cycle of engagement, disengagement, and re-engagement

are also suggested to be worthy of further investigation in terms of the management of alliance fluctuations and critical moments (see Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018: pg. 21; de Haan, 2019; pg. 238).

Alanna: A third headline from my research findings is 3) Adapting to the coachee.

- a) Adapting to the coachee, particularly in respect of coach style, was found to be universally applicable across coachee and coach participants. My research study found that both coachee and coach participants emphasised the importance of the coach adapting to the coachee, (see Dryden, 2017), although how to adapt, when, and in which way varied. Further studies are required to substantiate these findings and to further establish how and when the coach can most beneficially do so.

Alanna: My final headline and important finding is about how to measure the Coaching Alliance

- a) As part of the assessment of concurrent validity of the questionnaire developed in the second phase of the research (FCCRQ), a comparison was made of its Total scores with the WAI-S alliance which were highly significantly correlated ( $r = .67$ ) suggesting that the constructs measured by the respective instruments overlapped and were measuring some of the same thing.

An advantage of the concurrent validity process for the questionnaire in my research study (FCCRQ), was the opportunity to obtain a realistic estimate of the relation between it and the Working Alliance (WAI-S) ie by using both measures on coach participants at the same time. The individual item scores of my questionnaire had all been found to be relevant to the experience of forming the coaching relationship in my coach sample (N=368).

Ole: What do you think would be future key research areas for scholars interested in further understanding and development of this field?

Alanna: I have discussed suggested future coaching relationship research areas elsewhere (O'Broin, 2016), however I will briefly cover two areas

that I currently believe need to be urgently addressed:

- 1 Process models and mediating variables. We have seen evidence of researchers moving beyond a simple correlational coaching relationship-coaching outcome link to development of process models that are beginning to include how variables interact with each other to influence coaching outcomes (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015), and include explanations of causal mechanisms (Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018). We need more such models, and those proposed require further testing, as well as measurement over time in longitudinal studies. Part of this process includes greater examination of the coaching relationship as a mediating variable, and more precise definition of coaching relationship constructs (Lopez, 2017; O'Broin, 2016).
- 2 Video-mediated coaching relationships. With many coaches moving to online video-mediated coaching for the first time, or increasing the percentage of coaching hours using this medium with the onset of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, exploration of the role of the coaching relationship in video-mediated coaching needs to be urgently addressed in research studies. This is particularly because of mixed findings on the facility for creating rapport, and a lack of studies examining the equivalence of relational engagement using online video coaching to face-to-face coaching. There may be situations however where client preferences are for a video-mediated coaching programme (Deniers, 2019) or those where a blended coaching programme is most effective. Additional coaching skills in developing video-mediated, compared to face-to-face coaching relationships are likely to prove necessary. Such differences may also suggest that there are situations where video-mediated coaching is not the medium of choice and could cause negative effects (examination of this as a possibility could form an additional component of the recent focus on negative, or side-effects of coaching) (Schermuly & Graßmann, 2019; see also O'Broin, 2019).



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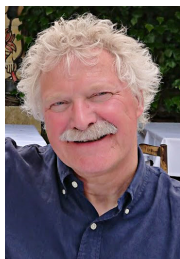
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## Contact



Ole Michael Spaten  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Kroghstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: oms@hum.aau.dk  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

## Ole Michael Spaten

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCP Accredited Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.

## Contact



Dr Alanna Henderson O'Broin PhD  
alanna@productiveliving.co.uk  
a.obroin@bbk.ac.uk  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4612-6958>

## Alanna Henderson O'Broin

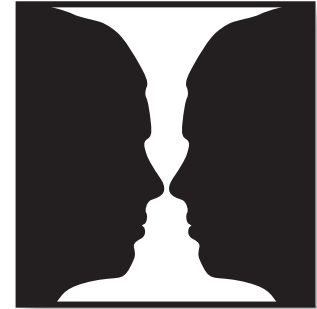
Dr Alanna Henderson O'Broin, PhD, CPsychol, MISCP Accredited, is a Chartered Psychologist and holds a PhD from City University London, UK. She is also an accredited member of the International Society for Coaching Psychology. Previously an investment analyst and Fund Manager for investment capital group 3i, Alanna is a practicing coaching psychologist, working with coaches in achieving their developmental, performance, and well-being goals.

Her doctoral research was on the experiences of the coaching relationship, and she has authored and co-authored a number of book chapters and peer-reviewed articles on this and related topics. Alanna was Co-editor of *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* until 2016, and is a Consulting Editor of *The Coaching Psychologist*. Alanna also lectures on the Career Management and Coaching MSc at Birkbeck University London.

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## Naturen som en vigtig part i coaching

En undersøgelse af naturens betydning for menneskets trivsel

Af Liselotte Bak og Ole Michael Spaten<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*This article investigates if coaching sessions in the nature have a positive impact on a small group of people in relation to stress, belongingness and wellbeing. Thirty-five participants took part of the study, 15 men and 20 women aged 18-65. A Likert scale questionnaire – measuring participant's level of stress, belongingness and wellbeing was completed before and after the coaching session. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test were conducted and the results shows that coaching in the nature was not significant, although the results indicates that the coaching session have had a positive impact on the participants level of stress.*

**Keywords:** Naturcoaching, interventionsform, coachingpsykologi, økopsykologi, positiv psykologi, "green-blue-space exercise"

And into the forest I go,  
to lose my mind and find my soul  
John Muir (1838-1914)

En af de største og nyeste undersøgelser af mental sundhed i Danmark blev gennemført af Statens Institut for Folkesundhed i perioden 2010-2017. Undersøgelsen viste en tydelig sammenhæng mellem individets mentale sundhed, forskellige helbredsmaessige og sociale forhold – hele individets livssituation var påvirket (SDU, 2017).

I rapporten er mental sundhed i overensstemmelse med WHO's definition, hvor mental sundhed betragtes som mere end fravær af psykisk sygdom. Mental sundhed rummer en oplevelsesdi-

mension og en funktionsdimension. Oplevelsesdimensionen indbefatter at have det godt med sig selv og sit liv, hvor livsglæde og selvværd er vigtige elementer. Funktionsdimensionen handler om, hvorledes individet fungerer i sin dagligdag, når og hvis vedkommende udsættes for belastninger, og endelig handler det om hvordan man fungerer med sine omgivelser og i relation til en selv (WHO, 2005).

### Naturen som intervention

Med en voksende sygdomsbyrde følger et stigende behov for behandling af mental lidelse (WHO, 2005). Der findes en vifte af interventionsformer, men der findes et voksende og pålideligt evidensgrundlag vedrørende sundheds-velværeeffekten af

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interventioner baseret på naturen. Der kan fremhæves fordele lige fra forbedringer af fysisk sundhed og mental velvære, stigning i sociale og kognitive funktioner, samt reduktioner i social isolation gennem stigning i mestringssevne, empowerment og arbejdsevne (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011). I en systematisk gennemgang af evidensbasen for (naturbaserede interventioner), det vi kalder Green Care i primærsektoren, analyserede Annerstedt og Währborg (2011) i alt 35 undersøgelser. Resultatet var at forskningen understøttede hensigtsmæssigheden og effektiviteten af naturassisteret terapi (NAT) som en relevant interventionsform i forhold til folkesundhed. Endvidere påviste undersøgelsen markante forbedringer for forskellige resultater i uensartede diagnoser/problemstillinger, der spænder fra stress til skizofreni (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011).

The European Centre for Environmental and Human Health har endvidere foretaget en systematisk gennemgang af artikler, hvor de fandt, at vedvarende aktiviteter i naturen var forbundet med positiv mental sundhed og velvære, øget livskvalitet og positiv social funktion. Undersøgelsen viste ligeledes, at størstedelen af deltagerne oplevede, at

deres psykiske helbred og mentale velvære blev bedre efter at de havde deltaget i naturaktiviteter. Ligeledes påviste forskningen positive effekter på det psykologiske helbred og velvære. Resultaterne var lavere stressniveau, højere selvværdsfølelse, følelse af ro og forbedret resiliens, idet aktiviteterne i naturen blev beskrevet som terapeutiske (Husk, Lovell, Cooper, & Garside, 2013; Lovell, Husk, Cooper, Stahl-Timmins, & Garside, 2015).

Endelig kan det tilføjes at Palmer og O'Riordan (2019) henviser til et systemisk review af Britton, Kindermann, Domegan & Carlin (2018), hvor der påvises, at *blue space* interventioner har en positiv effekt på individets psyko-sociale velbefindende samt mentale velvære. Ligeledes påpeger også sundhedsvæsenet effekten af naturen som sundhedsfremmende (Britton, Kindermann, Domegan, Carlin, & Britton, 2020; de Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen, & Spreeuwenberg, 2003; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Gärling, 2003). Aktiviteter i naturlige omgivelser kan have terapeutiske egenskaber med større fordele, som oftest opleves af dem der startede med lavere velbefindende, eksempelvis lavere selvtillid eller dårligt humør (Pretty et al., 2007). Vi kan altså konkludere at værdien af natu-

ren for vores psykiske helbred i et godt stykke tid allerede har været anerkendt, ligesom ovennævnte studier har undersøgt naturens virkning på den mentale sundhed, velvære og lykke.

## Naturen – det vigtige element

Maller et al. (2006) har gennemgået en række teoretiske og empiriske studier, der understøtter forestillingen om, at kontakten med naturen fremmer sundhed og velbefindende. Forskningen viste, at naturlige miljøer fremmer bedring af mental træthed. Når mennesker får et valg, foretrækker mennesker naturlige miljøer frem for bymiljøer, hvor de oplever et mere positivt syn på livet. Når mennesker er i nærheden af naturen og på ture i naturen, forbedres evnen til at klare sig og komme sig efter stress og sygdom. Endelig viser resultaterne at koncentrationsevnen forbedres gennem at observere naturen. Ydermere ses forbedring i mental sundhed, såsom øget følelse af ro og øget selvopdagelse (self-discovery), en følelse af velvære og lykke og en øget sans af tilstedeværelse (Berger og McLeod, 2006). Ud over mentalsundhed påvises kognitive fordele, som inkluderer øget kognitiv kapacitet og en forbedret evne til at reflektere over livsproblemer samt i det store hele forbedret trivsel (Pretty et al., 2007; Berger og McLeod, 2006). En viden som er vigtig og relevant inden for den terapeutiske, rådgivende og coachende verden, idet meget af litteraturen viser naturterapi som værende profitabelt for klienten i forhold til selv-coaching (Palmer & Di Blasi, 2019; Berger & McLeod, 2006).

Derfor kan det at bruge naturen, som facilitator for mennesker, være en naturlig og tryk fremgangsmåde, såsom socialt og terapeutisk havebrug, dyreassisteret terapi, walk-and-talk eller coaching.

Sådanne naturbaserede interventioner er blevet betegnet som: green care coaching, blue coaching eller eco-psychology/eco-coaching. Inden for psykologien er der flere grene som beskæftiger sig med naturen som et vigtigt element (Pretty et al., 2007, Palmer & Di Blasi, 2019). En interventionsform der kombinerer rådgivning, gåture og det at befinde sig udendørs, gør at klienten kan opleve fordelene ved fysisk aktivitet, natur og terapi samtidig. Inden for udendørsterapi er triangeln af klient, terapeut og et gavnligt naturmiljø ofte blevet beskrevet som et partnerskab. Naturlige miljøer og menneskeligt velbefindende er stærkt korrelerende i flere undersøgelser, samt i eksperimentel undersøgelse af specifikke behandlinger og stress

(Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis & Gärling, 2003). Et systematisk review af Thompson Coon et al. (2011) fandt at det at gå i naturen var forbundet med mere revitalisering, positivt engagement, energi, samt reduktion i følelsen af spænding, forvirring, vrede og depression. En anden undersøgelse rapporterede at vandring i nærheden af vand genererede endnu større effekt på selvværd og humør end blot at gå udenfor (Barton og Pretty, 2010). På baggrund af overstående udledes følgende forskningsspørgsmål:

*Hvordan oplever mennesker at blive telefoncoachet i naturen og er der sammenhæng mellem dette og deres oplevelse af velbefindende, stress og tilhørsforhold?*

## Økopsykologi

Der findes mange forskellige retninger inden for brugen af naturen i psykologien. Brugen af naturen i rådgivning og psykologisk behandling har roligt, men sikkert udviklet sig gennem de sidste årtier (Kellert, 1993). *Økopsykologi, naturterapi, vildmarksterapi og eventyrterapi* har alle skabt opmærksomhed om, hvordan naturen og udemiljøer kan forbedre menneskets fysiske og psykiske velbefindende. Ifølge evolutionær psykologi er menneskets sind og krop blevet formet gennem millioner af år, hvor mennesket har levet i små samfund i tæt kontakt med naturen, og dette kan være grunden til, at vi stadig tiltrækkes af naturlige scener der er frodige og trygge (rindende vand og vegetation, ingen farlige dyr/insekter og klippekanter) som en del af vores overlevelsesegenskaber (Kellert, 1993, Stevens & Price, 2015).

Ifølge Stephen Palmer & O’Riordan (2019) kan økopsykologi defineres som:

*Ecopsychology applies ecological and psychological theory and research methodology to study the relationship between people and the nature.* En måde hvorpå psykologien opsummerer og sammenkobler den positive effekt naturen har på menneskets trivsel. Andre ser økopsykologi som en terapeutisk praksis der betragter mennesker ud fra en systemteori hvor alle elementer i verden hænger sammen og vores forhold til naturen er gensidigt (Berger og McLeod, 2006). Desuden bruger økopsykologer naturen til at lære klienterne om, hvordan mennesket er sammenkoblet med naturen, samt hvordan mennesket og naturen kan drage fordel af hinanden. Økopsykologi er en voksende bevægelse hvor filosofien er, at mennesket har brug for en forbindelse til naturen. På grund af industrialiseringen

og urbanisering har mennesket mistet kontakten til det dybe i sig selv og dermed opstår der en psykologisk ubalance (Berger & McLeod, 2006).\_

Disse udsagn og synspunkter understøttes af de kvalitative resultater i studierne, som viser, at uden-dørs terapi er mindst lige så effektiv, og måske mere effektiv hos enkelte klienter end ved de klienter der modtog terapi indendørs. Psykologerne og rådgiverne mener, at klienterne ikke kun drager fordel af samtalerne, men ligeledes af naturens ”genopret-tende” effekt (Berger & McLeod, 2006). Klienterne drager altså fordel af naturen på mange måder og aktivitet i naturlige grønne miljøer påvirker mennesket både fysisk og psykisk. Disse studier er – som nævnt – baseret på økopsykologisk forståelse og der ses en gavnlig effekt af at udøve terapi base-ret på en økopsykologisk forståelse.

### Green and blue exercise

Udgangspunktet er altså at kontakt med naturen påvirker positivt menneskets mentale sundhed og psykologiske velbefindende og det har tilmed mange fysiske fordele. Menneskets aktivitetsniveau er faldet på grund af stillesiddende livsstil, hvilket påvirker sundheden på både fysisk og psykisk plan. Pretty et al. (2007) antog, at fysisk aktivitet i direkte kontakt med naturen ville være fordelagtigt for klienten og dette kaldte de *green exercise/activity*. Green exercise består i, at klienterne er udendørs, i grønne miljøer, hvor de er aktive på forskellige måder. Det kan være vandring eller gåture, cykling og ridning (Pretty et al., 2007). Hvorimod *blue exercise/activity* refererer til aktiviteter i udendørs vandmiljø, hvilket henviser til, at aktiviteten foregår ved eller i vandet. Her kan det være en gåtur langs fjorden eller fiskeri. Ligeledes kan aktiviteterne foregå i vandet, såsom kajak og svømning (Palmer & O’Riordan, 2019).

I litteraturen findes betydelig dokumentation for, at walk and talk i naturen har en stor indvirkning på menneskets velbefindende og det at være aktiv i naturen er ydermere knyttet til fald i symptomer på stress, angst og depression (Barton, Pretty, & Barton, 2010). I en kvalitativ undersøgelse af Doucette (2004) blev fordelene ved walk and talk undersøgt og resultatet viste en forbedring i effekten af terapien, som kom til udtryk ved, at klienten oplevede en forbedring i forhold til problemløsning. Ved brug af uderummet til rådgivning og terapi oplevede deltagerne i sessionen at være ligestillede, eftersom både terapeut og klient delte samme op-

levelser. Klienterne oplevede at være ligestillet ved selv at kunne vælge, hvor de skulle gå, hvornår de holdt pauser, og i hvilket tempo de skulle gå i. Gevinsten var en følelse af, at formaliteten blev delvist brudt og dermed blev sessionen mere uformel og mindre skræmmende (Revell & McLeod, 2016).

Denne viden kan være relevant i forhold til nær-værende metode og design: Vil coaching i naturen vise en tilsvarende gevinst? Deltagerne i denne undersøgelse bliver dog ikke spurgt om hvorvidt de oplever formaliteterne bliver brudt og dermed er mindre skræmmende, men der bliver spurgt ind til deres forventning og oplevelse i forhold til coachingen i naturen.

### Coaching

Coaching handler om at opleve samt udnytte sit fulde potentiale ved at have fokus på forbedring af klientens præstationer, udvikling og velbefindende (Palmer, 2018). Coaching er en systematiseret struktureret tilgang, hvis formål er at hjælpe klienter til at nå deres mål og styrke deres velbefindende. Klienterne i coaching er ifølge Grant & Palmer (2002) ikke kliniske og klienterne er karakteriseret ved en lav grad af psykopatologi og et højt funktionsniveau. Bachkirova og Cox (2004) hævder dog at klienten har psykiske smerter samt et stort behov for at lykkes professionelt. Dog kan der argumenteres for begge synspunkter, men der ses i begge argumenter, at klienten ønsker en forbedring ved at sætte sig et mål som nås gennem en ændring. Desuden argumenteres der i Spaten (2015) for, at forskellen mellem coaching og terapi er, at der sættes et mål i coaching, hvor terapien arbejder for at forbedre psykiske problemer. Dermed adskiller coaching sig ved, at der arbejdes mod et personligt mål som klienten har valgt at arbejde med i forhold til sin egen udvikling og selvregulering (Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006). Effekten af at have et personligt mål er gennem de sidste 20 år blevet undersøgt. Resultaterne viser, at har klienten et personlig mål er det forbundet med et øget velbefindende, idet klienten tager ansvar for at opnå personlig selvændring ved at forbedre mening og formålet i livet (Green et al., 2006).

Coaching defineres dermed som den relation og det samarbejde, der opstår når klienten oplever en kreativ proces, hvilket inspirerer til at yde sit bedste på det personlige og faglige plan (Palmer & Di Blasi, 2019).

## Coaching med udgangspunkt i positiv psykologi

En gennemgang af litteraturen viser, at indenfor coaching psykologi findes mange forskellige tilgange, som bruger forskellige rammer, teorier, værktøjer og teknikker (Green et al., 2006; Hart, Blattner, & Leipsic, 2001; Manning & Kjær, 2016; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018a; Palmer & McDowall, 2010; Spaten, 2015).

I forhold til de forskellige coaching psykologiske metoder anvendes forskellige tilgange såsom kognitiv coaching, life coaching samt positiv coaching (Manning & Kjær, 2016; Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018; Spaten, 2019). Coachingtilgangen i denne artikel tager udgangspunkt i positiv psykologi, hvis fokus er klientens trivsel, hvor god trivsel kommer til udtryk ved, at klienten føler livet er værd at leve (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Green & Palmer, 2019). Forskningsområdet inden for positiv psykologi undersøger det der er meningsfuldt i menneskets psyke. Positive psykologiske forskningsgenstande er sundhed/usundhed, forebyggelse/sundhedsfremmende, udvikling, trivsel, optimal funktion og præsentation (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Dette går godt i spænd med psykologisk coaching, hvor coachen arbejder med udvikling og trivsel, hvilket er den metode som anvendes i nærværende undersøgelse.

### Forskningsspørgsmål

Tidligere forskning indikerer, at naturen har en indvirkning på mennesket, og at naturen kan bruges som en del af det terapeutiske arbejde (Doucette & Doucette, 2004; Revell & McLeod, 2016; White et al., 2019). Naturen kan bruges som terapi når klienten eksponeres for naturen i situationer, hvor vedkommende går en tur alene eller deltager i havearbejde, eller når klienten går en tur i naturen med en klinisk psykolog og har samtaleterapi. Begge former kan være terapeutiske, hvilket kan føre til øget mental sundhed (Barton et al., 2010; Doucette & Doucette, 2004; White et al., 2019). Derfor vil det ud fra gennemgangen af den eksisterende litteratur være interessant at undersøge om deltagelse i walk and talk i naturen som en coaching aktivitet vil medføre en ændring i deltagernes selvrapporterede resultater.

På den baggrund er første spørgsmål:

*Vil der ske en ændring i den selvrapporterede oplevelse af respondenternes stressniveau, velbefindende og følelse af tilhørsforhold, fra før til efter coachinginterventionen.*

Udover, at naturen bruges ved coachingen, vil interventionen foregå over telefonen. På grund af Covid-19 har det ikke været muligt at mødes fysisk. Varker et al. (2019) samt Coughtrey et al. (2018) pointerer, at telefoninterventioner kan have samme effekt som det fysiske møde, dog skal psykologen være bevidst om, hvilke emner og behandlinger, der egner sig til intervention over telefonen (Coughtrey & Pistrang, 2018; Varker, Brand, Ward, Terhaag, & Phelps, 2019)

Dette fører videre til det andet spørgsmål som er: *Der vil i den selvrapporterede oplevelse af telefoncoaching være en positiv eller negativ forventning, som efter samtalen har ændret sig.*

### Indkredsning af væsentlige begreber

Med viden om, at naturen har en positiv effekt, er det interessant at undersøge om coaching i naturen under danske forhold og via telefonen har en indvirkning på klientens velbefindende, oplevelse af stress, tilhørsfølelse og hvordan det opleves at blive coachet over telefonen i naturen.

### Hvordan er stress defineret og relevant i denne artikel?

Stress er et begreb der i psykologien kan forstås på mange forskellige måder. En af de klassiske forståelser af stress er Karasek og Theorells (1990) *krav-kontrol model*, der beskriver, hvordan oplevelsen af krav fra omverdenen kombineret med oplevelsen af kontrol er elementer, der påvirker, hvor stresset man føler sig. Denne model kom frem i 1980'erne og er udviklet med henblik på at beskrive, hvornår en medarbejder føler sig stresset i sit arbejde. Som det ses ud fra model 1, vil medarbejderen føle sig stresset, hvis der er høje krav på arbejdet kombineret med lav kontrol. Lav kontrol betyder, at medarbejderen har en lav indflydelse på sit job samt ringe muligheder for at gøre brug af sine færdigheder samt udvikle sig på sit arbejde. Medarbejderen kan godt have høje krav på arbejde forudsat at man samtidig har en høj grad af kontrol med sine opgaver, uden at blive stresset, men derimod bliver medarbejderen aktiv og præsterer bedre (Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

	Lave krav	Høje krav
Høj kontrol og indflydelse	Afslappet	Aktiv
Lav kontrol og indflydelse	Passiv	Belastet

*Model 1: Krav-kontrol model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990)*

Karasek og Theorell (1990) fokuserer altså på generelle forandringer i miljøet som havende betydning for om individet vil opleve stress. Dette aspekt kritiserer Lazarus og Folkman (1984) idet de argumenterer for, at der i krav-kontrol modellen ikke tages højde for de forskellige copingstrategier som et pågældende individ kan have samt det samspil der vil være til stede mellem individ og miljø. På baggrund af dette advokerer Lazarus og Folkman (1984) for, at stress skal forstås som et forhold mellem person og miljø, der af personen overskrider de ressourcer som vedkommende har, hvilket medfører, at individet belastes, hvorfor individets trivsel vil påvirkes negativt. Lazarus og Folkman (1984) argumenter yderligere for, at livsfaktorer vil påvirke forskelligt alt efter copingstrategier, hvorfor det er væsentligt at inddrage individets personlige karakteristika i forståelsen af stress. Lazarus og Folkman (1985) beskriver, at måden, hvorpå en person vurderer stressoren bestemmer, hvordan vedkommende reagerer eller tackler disse. En række personlige konceptuelle faktorer er grundlæggende for hvordan stressorerne opleves, herunder kapaciteter, færdigheder og evner, begrænsninger, ressourcer og normer. Stresshåndteringen beskrevet af Lazarus og Folkman (1985) indebærer dermed en mere specifik proces med kognitiv tilgang. Det handler om, hvorvidt personen har mentale ressourcer til at håndtere eller kontrollere den udfordring som vedkommende står over for (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus, 1985). I forhold til Karasek og Theorells (1990) forståelse af stress bliver dette således en mere kognitiv forståelse af begrebet. Begge disse forståelser kan dog siges at være mere klassiske forståelser som nyere forståelser bygger videre på. Et nyere eksempel på forståelsen af stress beskrives i denne model af Robbins et al. (2010) som viser de faktorer der kan påvirke mennesket indefra eller

udefra og som kan forårsage stress, hvis mennesket ikke er i stand til at håndtere kravene (Robbins, Judge, & Campbell, 2010 - næste side)

Stress er uundgåeligt, men ikke al stress er ubehagelig. Der er situationer hvor vi forholder os til behagelige situationer eller begivenheder, der forårsager stress: bryllupper, fødsler, genforeninger med gamle venner og mange andre lignende situationer (Robbins et al., 2010)

Spørgsmålet der i spørgeskemaet referer til stress, specificerer ikke hvorvidt det er positiv eller skadelig stress (DASS 42). Svarene vil kun indikere om der er en forandring af stressniveauet efter en coaching i naturen.

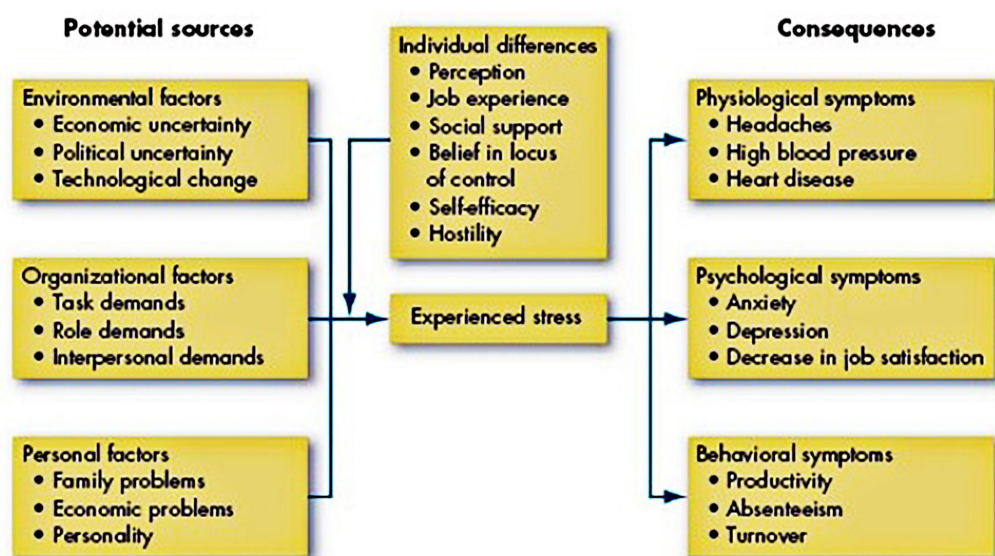
Ovenstående er alle eksempler på, hvordan man kan forstå begrebet stress. I denne undersøgelse forstås stress ud fra Robbins (2010) model, hvor forståelsen beskriver at nogle ydre eller indre uoverskuelige faktorer kan lede til at vedkommende oplever stress.

I nærværende undersøgelse bliver det undersøgt, hvor stresset deltagerne føler sig før og efter coaching i naturen. Herved bliver stress et væsentligt begreb i denne undersøgelse. Hvis coaching i naturen har en positiv effekt, kan der argumenteres for, at deltageres stressniveau vil falde efter de er blevet coachet i naturen.

## Hvordan er tilhørsfølelsen defineret og relevant i denne artikel?

Det lille spædbarn knytter sig til sin omsorgsperson fra fødslen. Denne kontakt danner grundlag for den tilhørsfølelse (oversat fra Belongingness), som mennesket søger for at undgå ensomhedsfølelsen eller følelsen af at være fremmedgjort. Tilhørsfølelsen kan forstås på mange måder, og begrebet er derfor beskrevet på mange måder i litteraturen.





Model 2: A Model of stress (Robbins et al. 2010)

I denne undersøgelse forstås Belongingness ud fra Lee og Robbins' forståelse, der i artiklen *Measuring Belongingness: The Social Connectedness and the Social Assurance Scale* fra 1995 beskriver belongingness som bestående af tre elementer: *kammeratskab*, *tilknytning* og *sammenhæng*. Modellen har sit udspring i udviklingsteoriene omhandlende tilknytning af Bowlby og Ainsworth (Lee & Robbins, 1995).

De tre elementer dannes tidligt i barnets liv og udvikles gennem barndommen. Kammeratskab udvikles når barnet som spæd danner et bånd til sin omsorgsperson. Her er ønsket, at denne kontakt skaber fundamentet for selvværdet gennem følelsen af sikkerhed og det at blive set/mødt af omsorgspersonen. Denne følelse følger barnet gennem dets opvækst og den ligger til grund for den kontakt barnet etablerer til sine venner. Hvis ikke denne etablering fra spædbarnsalderen er intakt, kan personen som voksen have svært ved at have et tilstrækkeligt selvværd samt sociale færdigheder, hvilket er en nødvendighed i forhold til sunde relationer (Lee & Robbins, 1995). Den næste følelse, behovet for tilknytning, opstår i ungdomsårene hvor barnet/den unge søger venner med præferencer lignende dets eget. At blive anerkendt af artsfæller fremmer og styrker den unges selvværd. Måden at opleve tilknytningen kan være gennem gruppeaktiviteter, eksempelvis sociale aktiviteter, sport og kulturaktiviteter. Unge der oplever disse aktiviteter som værende positive udvikler et godt selvværd, hvor de

unge som ikke oplever gruppeaktiviteter som positive, søger en-til-en relationen. En-til-en relationen betyder at den unge søger en anden ung som med sin tilstedeværelse beroliger, hvorved dennes deltagelse i aktiviteten i gruppen er forudsat at denne anden deltager. Aktiviteten presser deres selvværd og de kan føle at de ikke er høret til (Lee & Robbins, 1995; Spaten, 2014). Koblingen af de to førnævnte skaber en følelse af sammenhæng, som strækkes sig ind i voksenlivet. Er der balance mellem kammeratskabsfølelsen og tilknytningen vil den unge føle sig tryk blandt mennesker, der er anderledes end dem selv.

Behovet for at høre til, henviser til et menneskeligt følelsesmæssigt behov for at tilknytte sig og blive accepteret af medlemmer i en gruppe. Behovet for at høre til er dybere end blot at være en del af gruppen. Det centrale er at blive accepteret, få opmærksomhed og støtte fra medlemmerne i gruppen. I nærværende undersøgelse er der spørgsmål vedrørende behovet for at høre til i en gruppe og det er interessant at se om coaching i naturen påvirker følelsen, da behovet for at høre til i en gruppe kan påvirke ens adfærd, tro og holdning.

## Hvordan er velbefindende defineret og relevant i denne artikel?

I litteraturen er velbefindende (oversat fra well-being) et begreb, der tillige er undersøgt og forstået på mange forskellige måder. Eksempelvis beskriver

WHO (2014) sundhed som: ” Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Ud fra denne definition ses altså blandt andet, hvordan sundhed forstås som en tilstand af velbefindende, hvor det enkelte individ kan realisere sit eget potentiale og klare det normale stress i livet. Hvor Green, Grant & Oades (2006) beskriver ens velbefindende som det at opnå det mål man efterstræber. Det er gennem 20 år blevet undersøgt, at progressionen mod vigtige gøremål er forbundet med øget velbefindende. Med mål forstås en stræben efter personlig selvændring, forbedret mening og formål med livet (Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006). Et andet eksempel på definitionen af velbefindende, ses i undersøgelsen af Prochaska et al. (2012), hvor velbefindende inkluderer flere domæner, herunder fysisk helbred, følelsesmæssig sundhed, livskvalitet, lykke, sociale relationer og godt arbejdsmiljø (Prochaska et al., 2012).

I trivselsteorien menes det ikke at der er en definition på velbefindende, men det snarere er en konstruktion med flere målbare elementer, som hver bidrager til trivsel (Seligman, 2011). Elementerne består af tre egenskaber, der tæller som et element:

- 1 Det bidrager til trivsel
- 2 Mange forfølger det for dets egens skyld, ikke blot for at få noget ud af andre elementer
- 3 Det defineres og måles uafhængigt af det andet element. (Seligman, 2011).

Trivselsteorien har fem elementer og hver af disse fem har de tre egenskaber. De fem elementer er positiv følelse, engagement, mening, positive relationer og gennemførelse.

Man kan derfor summere at begrebet velbefindende er omfattende, men overordnet handler det om det enkelte individs trivsel, hvor fokus er på positiv sundhedsrelateret livskvalitet, hvilket betyder positive følelser, psykologiske ressourcer og mestring. Derfor forstås velbefindende i artiklen som det psykiske velbefindende, hvilket indebærer fraværet af generelle psykopatologiske symptomer, samt tilstedeværelse af positive følelsesmæssige og kognitive funktioner, en passende balance mellem positive og negative påvirkninger og evnen til at leve et fuldt og produktivt liv. PERMA skal ses som den model der bruges i coachingen.

## Coaching over telefon som interventionsform

Bredt & Knierim (2018) beskriver, hvordan de finder det gavnligt at benytte sig af telefoncoaching. I denne forbindelse argumenteres for, hvordan det er gavnligt ikke at kunne se coachee, da det visuelle indtryk kan reducere hørelsen (Bredt & Knierim, 2018). På baggrund af dette argumenterer Bredt & Knierim (2018) for, at man som coach oplever klienten mere intens samt en speciel form for nærhed, da man eksempelvis kan høre vedkommendes vejrtrækning på en anden måde sammenlignet med en almindelig coachingsession, hvor man sidder over for personen. Ligeledes mener Bredt & Knierim, at et trygt miljø kan være støttende i samtalen, hvilket telefoncoaching giver mulighed for (Bredt & Knierim, 2018).

Andre undersøgelser har ligeledes vist, at telefoncoaching kan have positive effekter. Eksempelvis har en undersøgelse foretaget af Mohr i 2012 vist, at telefoncoaching havde en lige så gavnlig effekt som, hvis coachingen havde fundet sted ansigt til ansigt. Yderligere viser resultaterne fra denne undersøgelse, at telefoncoaching reducerer nogle af de barrierer som klienten kan have ved coaching (Mohr et al., 2012).

Med viden om, at telefoncoaching har positive effekter på klienterne, forventes at når vi sammenholder begreberne stress, velbefindende og tilhørsforhold vil telefoncoachingen sammen med naturen kunne påvirke de selvrapporterede oplevelser.

## Metode

Det grundlæggende mål med denne undersøgelse er at finde ud af om coaching i naturen har en indvirkning på klientens velbefindende (trivsel), stress niveau og tilhørsforhold.

Det oprindeligt skitserede design har ikke kunnet lade sig gøre grundet Covid-19, da designet var tiltænkt at samle minimum 25 psykologistuderende fra 6. semester. De studerende skulle danne et fast par, hvor de to og to skulle coache hinanden i 15 minutter, hvorefter de skulle skifte. Selve designet var opstillet som en replikation af Palmer og O’Riordan’s undersøgelse fra 2019.

Da det ikke var muligt at gennemføre, blev designet ændret til coaching over telefonen af en kandidatstuderende, og klienterne var ikke længere psykologistuderende. Dette betød, at fokusgrup-

pen dækkede meget bredt med mænd og kvinder i aldersgruppen 18-56 år, studerende, arbejdsløse og mennesker på arbejdsmarkedet.

Udgangspunktet i undersøgelsen blev modificeret og tilpasset de omstændigheder som indtraf i forlængelse af Covid-19.

## Design

I studiet blev de samme deltagere testet to gange, hvor de udfyldte et selvrapporterings vurderingskema/holdningskema på tre parametre: *velbefindende, stress og tilhørsforhold*.

Deltagerne modtog en informationsmail, samarbejdskontrakt og en samtykkeerklæring, og kun de deltagere der indvilgede i kontrakten blev udtaget til deltagelse.

Herefter modtog den enkelte deltager et spørgeskema, som skulle udfyldes før coaching i naturen, gerne 2 døgn inden. Derved kunne det sikres, at skemaet var besvaret ved starten af coaching. Dernæst aftaltes en tid over telefonen, hvor potentielle emner – i forhold til tidsrammen på de 30 minutter – blev drøftet. Samtalen over telefon før coachingen dannede endvidere indtryk af emnet, samt skabte en kontakt, således at coachingen kunne starte uden brug af de afsatte 30 minutter.

Deltageren blev ringet op på det aftalte tidspunkt, og sessionen gennemførtes på ca. 30 minutter. Derefter blev spørgeskema to, sendt kort efter samtalen, besvaret af de enkelte deltagere elektronisk.

Respondenter blev bedt om at gå i blå områder, hvilket betyder, at de meget gerne måtte gå langs vandet eller havet og var dette ikke en mulighed, kunne skoven bruges. De måtte ikke gå i byen (bebyggelse) eller i villakvarterer. Eftersom coachingen er foregået over en telefon, er der ingen garanti for, at de har været i naturen, hvilket kan siges at være en fejlkilde, der må tages højde for.

Af etiske overvejelser i forhold til spørgeskemaet og den efterfølgende coaching er respondent i informationsmailen, samt i infoteksten gjort opmærksom på, at deres anonymitet vil blive beskyttet, samt at alle informationer vil være fortrolige. Ydermere blev der ved den indledende samtale spurgt om respondenter har læst og accepteret samarbejdskontrakten og samtykkeerklæringen. Desuden er respondenter gjort opmærksom på, at det til enhver tid er muligt at afbryde deltagelse i undersøgelsen uden konsekvenser.

## Deltagere

Deltagergruppen var i alt 35 respondenter spredt over hele Danmark, som blev fundet blandt venners venner og deres kollegaer. Gruppen af respondenter bestod af studerende fra både UCN og universiteterne, arbejdsmarkedet og arbejdsledige.

Der deltog 15 mænd i aldersgruppen fra 21 år til 65 år, hvor fem var studerende, ni var på arbejdsmarkedet og en var arbejdsledig.

Gruppen af kvinder, hvor der var 20 respondenter, var i aldersgruppen fra 18-54 år, otte af kvinderne var studerende, otte var på arbejdsmarkedet og fire var arbejdsledige.

Derudover blev ingen detaljer om deltagerne indsamlet. Det betyder, at ingen forhistorie vedrørende mentale tilstand, familiære baggrund eller sociale relationer foreligger.

## Materiale

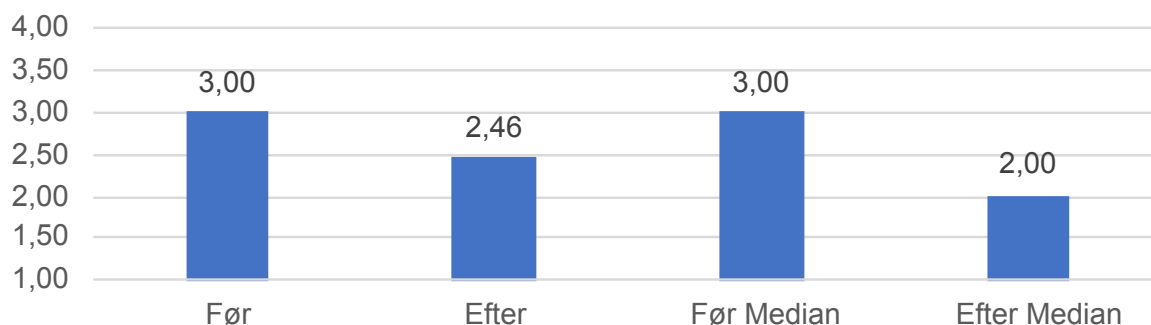
Deltagerne blev bedt om at udfylde to spørgeskemaer med Likert-skalaen, som tidligere nævnt både før og efter coachingen. Det første skema blev sendt på mail eller som link til deltageren inden coachingaktiviteten, hvor de blev bedt om at vurdere deres holdning til deres velbefindende, deres stressniveau og behov for social kontakt i den givende situation og ligeledes vurdere deres forventning til, hvordan en coaching over telefonen ville opleves.

Efter at respondenter var blevet coachet blev et tilsvarende spørgeskema sendt på mail eller link. Den eneste forskel i dette spørgeskema var spørgsmålet om telefoncoachingen. Her skulle respondenterne besvare, hvorledes de havde oplevet sessionen.

Der blev specificeret i infoteksten, at respondenter skulle læse hele udsagnet før besvarelse, samt at det var vigtigt at tage klar stilling til spørgsmålet, således respondenter så vidt muligt ikke benyttede svarmuligheden i midten, som er henholdsvis ”hverken enig eller uenig” eller ”indimellem”. Eftersom der er benyttet både en 5 og 7 Likert-skala, er det tydeliggjort i infoteksten, at svarmulighederne er anderledes ved disse besvarelser end de foregående.

Spørgeskemaet er inddelt således, at de første fem spørgsmål beder om respondenterens oplevelse af deres velbefindende, derefter følger et spørgsmål om respondenterens stressniveau. De to næste

## Stressniveau - Mean and Median scores



Figur 1. Likert skala 5-points ud fra spørgsmålet ”Jeg er anspændt og har svært ved at slappe af” 1 = Meget sjældent og 5 = Meget ofte

spørgsmål spørger ind til respondentens fællesskabsfølelse og det sidste spørgsmål er igen i forhold til oplevelsen af velbefindende. Alle svar bør tage udgangspunkt i nuværende situation. Til slut i spørgeskemaet er der et spørgsmål til respondentens forventning og oplevelse af telefon coaching.

### Resultater

Forventningen til denne undersøgelse er, at deltagere (n=35) som bliver coachet i naturen vil opleve en ændring i deres selvrapporterede velbefindende, stressniveau og tilhørsforhold fra før interventionen til efter. Det undersøgte sample består som nævnt af 35 personer og er fundet ved bekvemmelighedssampling. Som nævnt er der ikke indsamlet oplysninger om køn, alder eller andre demografiske oplysninger.

Til indsamlingen af data i dette studie er anvendt en Likert-skala, med data på ordinalt niveau. Der er ikke blevet testet for normalfordeling i datasæt-

tet. Respondenterne er blevet bedt om at angive deres oplevelse på en skala, hvor hvert niveau er inddelt i numerisk værdi, der normalt starter ved 1 og øges med en for hvert niveau (Jamieson, 2004).

### Deskriptiv statistik

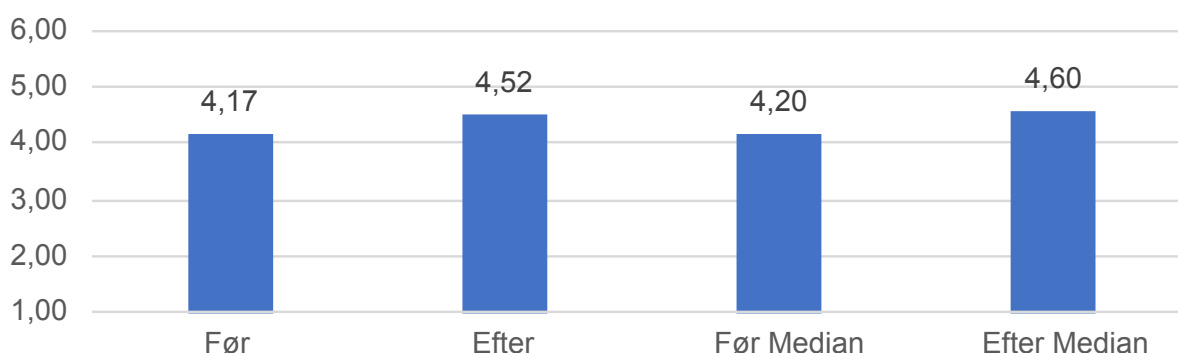
Med henblik på at kunne sammenligne resultatet af indeværende studie med Palmer & O’Riordan (2019), der behandler sine data som værende på interval niveau er der således både beregnet median og gennemsnitsværdier for indsamlede data.

Det fremgår af graferne for stress og velbefindende at interventionen har haft en effekt, da der sker et fald i stress og en stigning i velbefindende.

På figur 1 ses et fald 3,00 (pre) til 2,46 (post) i stressniveau.

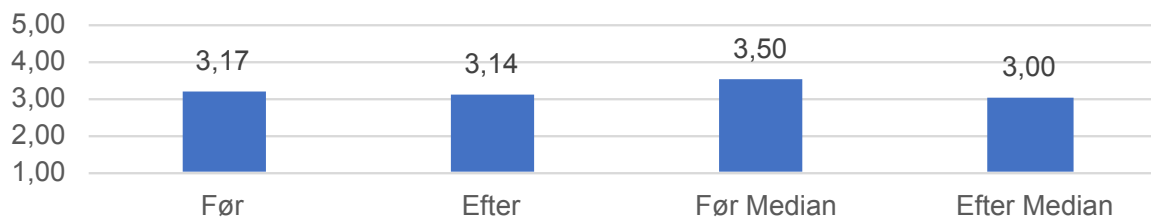
Ved velbefindende ses ud fra figur 2, at der sker en stigning fra 4,17(pre) til 4,52 (post) efter telefoncoaching i naturen.

## Wellbeing - Mean and Median scores



Figur 2. Deltagernes velbefinde målt på en 7-points Likert skala fra hvor 1 er mindst wellbeing og 7 er mest wellbeing

## Belongingness - Mean and Median scores



Figur 3. Følelse af belongingness: 1 = Ingen følelse af belongingness og 5 = Stor følelse af belongingness

I forhold til tilhørsforholdet (belongingness) ser der ud fra figur 3 en meget lille ændring i mean score/gennemsnittet pre 3,17 og post 3,14.

I forhold til forventning og oplevelse af telefoncoaching ses på figur 4, ligeledes en meget lille ændring af Mean score/ gennemsnittet. Før telefoncoaching i naturen vises værdien 1,85, hvor tallet er 1,79 efter gåturen.

### Inferentiel statistik

Som det ses ved deskriptiv statistik, er der en forskel i pre- og post-scorer for alle fire parametre. I indeværende studie anvendes Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test til at beregne, hvorvidt der forefindes en signifikant forskel i deltagerne velbefindende, stressniveau og følelse af tilhørsforhold før og efter interventionen. Der undersøges ligeledes, hvorvidt der er en signifikant forskel mellem deltagerne forventninger til telefon-coaching og deres oplevelse af telefoncoaching.

For deltagerne forventning til telefoncoaching (om de forventer at det bliver en positiv oplevelse) er der ikke en ændring ift. deres oplevelse af telefoncoaching (var det en positiv oplevelse) ( $Mdn_{før} = 2$ ,  $Mdn_{efter} = 2$ ), mens der ses en lille ændring i de beregnede gennemsnitsværdier ( $M_{pre} = 1,85$ ,  $M_{post} = 1,79$ ). Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test viste ikke signifikans ( $Z = -0,423$ ,  $p = .672$ ).

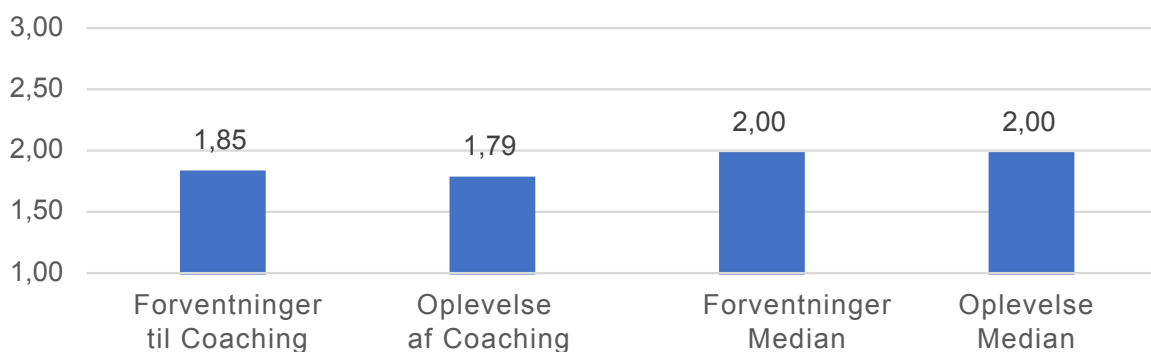
Undersøgelsen viser et tilnærmelsesvist signifikant fald i oplevelsen af stress hos deltagerne ( $Mdn_{før} = 3,00$ ,  $Mdn_{efter} = 2,00$ ,  $Z = -1,915$ ,  $p = .056$ ).

For deltagerne følelse af tilhørsforhold ses der en ikke signifikant ændring ( $Mdn_{før} = 3,50$ ,  $Mdn_{efter} = 3,00$ ,  $Z = -0,10$ ,  $p = .99$ ).

Ændringen i deltagerne velbefindende før ( $Mdn_{før} = 4,20$ ) og efter ( $Mdn_{efter} = 4,60$ ) interventionen nærmede sig signifikans ( $Z = -1,789$ ,  $p = .074$ ).

Resultaterne viser at ingen af ændringerne er signifikante, men ændringen i stressniveau er tæt på (0,056) og velbefindende (0,074) tilsvarende

## Oplevelse af coaching over telefon - Mean and Median scores



Figur 4. 4-points Likert skala (1 = Meget positiv - 4= Meget negativ)

Likert skala fra 1 til 4 hvor 1 = Meget positive forventning/oplevelse og 4 = Meget negativ forventning/oplevelse.

samme vej. Tilhørsforholdet ligger højt (0,99), det kunne måske tyde på at målemetoden, interventionen eller det samlede undersøgelsesdesign har været dårligt til at kigge på dette parameter.

## Diskussion

I det følgende diskuteres forskningsspørgsmål og analyseresultaterne i forhold til tidligere forskning inddelt efter stress, velbefindende og tilhørsfølelsen, samt oplevelsen af coaching

“People with access to nearby natural settings have been found to be healthier overall than other individuals. The longer-term, indirect impacts (of ‘nearby nature’) also include increased levels of satisfaction with one’s home, one’s job and with life in general” (Maller, Townsend, Pryor, Brown, & St Leger, 2006). Ovenstående citat fra Maller et al. (2006) vidner om, at naturen har en positiv indvirkning på mennesker. Resultaterne fra nærværende undersøgelse er ligeledes med til at understøtte denne pointe, idet der ses en positiv ændring i den selvrapporterede oplevelse før og efter turen.

Denne undersøgelse viser et positivt resultat, som ligeledes ses i andre undersøgelser, hvor respondenterne har modtaget intervention i naturen (Palmer & O’Riordan, 2019). Den korte eksponering for naturen har forbedret velbefindende og reduceret stressniveauet, uanset intensiteten, køn, alder og baggrund. Samme resultater fandt Britton et al. i sin undersøgelse fra 2020, hvor effekten af naturen på respondenternes velbefindende blev undersøgt (Britton et al., 2020). Resultatet i denne undersøgelse viste en positiv ændring i både stress og velbefindende. Dette kan tages til indtægt for, at den selvrapporterede oplevelse har givet en positiv forbedring af deltagerens stressniveau og velbefindende. Hvis dette holder svarer det overens med resultaterne i Palmer & O’Riordans undersøgelse fra 2019. Undersøgelsens resultater viste en stigning i meanscore fra 3,72 (pre) til 4,33 (post) i velbefindende. Stigningen er kun svagt højere end i nærværende undersøgelse, hvilket f.eks. kan skyldes, at coachingen i denne undersøgelse er foregået over telefonen, hvor coach og coachee i Palmer & O’Riordans (2019) undersøgelse var fysisk sammen i naturen. Herved er der altså en væsentlig forskel mellem nærværende undersøgelse og Palmer & O’Riordans (2019) undersøgelse.

Det er vanskeligt at vide hvad forskellen i resultaterne kan skyldes, men coaching over telefon gør det umuligt at afstemme kropssprog og emotioner,

hvilket er relevant og vigtig i udforskningsfasen. Det at have øjenkontakt, lytte nonverbalt med små nik er ikke muligt i telefoncoaching, hvilket kan gøre det sværere at skabe en god kontakt i udforskningsfasen (Hill, 2014). En anden udfordring i forhold til undersøgelsens intervention / coaching, er den sociale blanding af respondenter (gruppen består af respondenter med forskellige evner eller diagnoser), hvilket kan være en udfordring, når det ikke er muligt at skabe den kontakt, som gør sig gældende i udforskningsfasen (Britton et al., 2020).

Gennemførelsen har betydet en variation i coachings intensitet på baggrund af respondenternes behov og variationen af denne kontakt ses muligvis i resultaterne. Det samme gør sig gældende med de respondenter, som var mindre engageret. Deltagerens oplevelse af coaching, samt hvordan de tidligere har benyttet naturen, er aspekter der ligeledes kan påvirke resultatet (Britton et al., 2020).

I gennemgangen af forskningslitteraturen om at tilhøre en gruppe viser forskningen, at det at være en del af en gruppe, har en positiv effekt. Til tider kan det være mere effektivt end ved en-til-en-interventioner, da der rapporteres om fordele ved at få venner, være mindre socialt isoleret og føle sig mere afslappet i relationen med sine venner (Carrico, Rockefeller, Bega, & Mazur, 2018). Tilhørsfølelsen er den følelse som dannes i barndommen og som er personens grundlæggende følelse af lighed, tillid og samhørighed. I denne undersøgelse sås ingen målbar effekt på tilhørsfølelsen. Dette kan skyldes, det ikke var muligt at opbygge den tillid, som er en forudsætning for at mennesker føler sig socialt forbundet. Respondenterne kan, ifølge Lee & Robbins have tilstrækkelige sociale færdigheder til at opretholde tætte relationer, men nogle af dem føler sig måske frustreret og føler manglende forståelse fra coachen, hvilket kan påvirke deres selvrapporterede oplevelse (Lee & Robbins, 1995). Med hensyn til resultatet af tilhørsforhold, kan det ydermere skyldes, at respondenterne muligvis har oplevet en ensomhed, hvilket er relevant idet coachingen foregik over telefon og derfor kan det diskuteres om coaching over telefonen er den rigtige tilgang når der ønskes en ændring på tilhørsforhold. Yderligere kan man argumentere for, at tilhørsforhold er en udviklingsproces, hvilket ikke er muligt grundet designet i denne undersøgelse.

Stress påvirker ens velbefindende, og mange mennesker føler sig tilpas når de har et tilhørsforhold, i denne undersøgelse coachen, hvilket kan

være en blandt flere grunde til at resultaterne i denne undersøgelse ikke er signifikante.

## Konkluderende bemærkninger

Undersøgelsen som danner baggrund for denne artikel blev udført medens der i Danmark var nedlukning på grund af COVID-19. Nedlukningen gjorde, at designet måtte ændres og coachingen måtte udføres over telefonen. Disse ændringer betød, at det ikke længere var muligt at lave en direkte og intenderet replikation / gentagelse af Palmer og O'Riordans undersøgelse fra 2019. Således lyder forskningsspørgsmålet. *Hvordan oplever mennesker at blive telefoncoached i naturen og er der sammenhæng mellem dette og deres oplevelse af velbefindende, stress og tilhørsforhold?*

Formålet med undersøgelsen har været at skabe viden om på hvilken måde naturen har en indvirkning på respondentens selvrapporterede oplevelse i forhold til stress, velbefindende og følelsen af tilhørsforhold, efter at de er blevet coachet over telefonen ude i naturen. Der findes som tidligere nævnt en række undersøgelser på området og dermed findes teoretisk belæg for at hævde naturens positive påvirkning af mennesket. Det kan f.eks. være øget kreativitet, velbefindende og reducere af stressniveau (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011; Palmer & O'Riordan, 2019; Pretty et al., 2007). Men et andet aspekt er at coaching i naturen ændrer ved konstellationen mellem coach og coachee, da oplevelsen af den klassiske "formalitet" i sessionen bliver brudt (Revell & McLeod, 2016).

I nærværende undersøgelse sås ingen signifikante resultater, der kunne påvise at naturen havde en påvirkning på stressniveauet, velbefindende eller følelsen af tilhørsforhold. Der sås derimod et lille interessant fald i meanscore stress samt en lille stigning i velbefindende meanscore. Hvorimod både tilhørsforhold og telefoncoaching ingen ændring kunne påvises i meanscore.

Resultaterne i denne undersøgelse støtter således ikke utvetydig tidligere forskning på området (f.eks. Palmer & O'Riordan, 2019). Diskussionen har berørt at i denne undersøgelse har coaching fundet sted via telefonen, hvilket kan betyde at designet, specielt i forhold til tilhørsforhold ikke har været profitabelt. Det er ligeledes for respondenterne sandsynligvis en uvant situation at blive coachet, idet deltageren ikke har anmodet om coaching på grund af en problemstilling, men mere som en del af et eksperiment, hvilket muligvis kan

pege på at deltagerens selv rapporterede oplevelse er skævet af coachingen og ikke naturen.

Ligeledes viser resultaterne i denne undersøgelse ikke om coaching over telefonen bidrager til stigning i den selvrapporterede oplevelse, eller hvorvidt det er turen i naturen, som har en effekt. Ligeledes kan det at deltage i en fysisk aktivitet eller vejret i sig selv ikke påvises at være en positiv påvirkning. Ydermere har der i nærværende undersøgelse ikke været en kontrolgruppe, hvilket kunne have været relevant i forbindelse med spørgeskemaet i forhold til formuleringen af spørgsmålene og layout. Det er derfor relevant at fortage en større undersøgelse, med flere deltagere, mere detaljerede spørgeskemaer og et mere struktureret studie.

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## Kontakt



Liselotte Bak  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Aalborg University  
T: 53822218  
M: liselottebak@hotmail.com

### Liselotte Bak

Liselotte Bak is a psychologist, M.Sc. (in Danish Cand. Psych.), graduated from Aalborg University's master programme in coaching-, work- and organisational psychology.

Currently employed as psychologist, working with substance abuse treatment at the Hjulsoegaard Foundation. Former work and teaching experience includes General Manager 17 years, Assistant in legal psychiatry from June 2017 to current. Project manager "Måltidet, Mødrehjælpen" since June 2017 until now. Mentor for a young mother and her newborn since December 2017 until now. Assistant teacher for a young boy since May 2016 until now. Board Member, "Mødrehjælpen" since September 2017.

With Dr Spaten Liselotte Bak is working on coaching-psychology research projects and have already presented research on international conferences.

## Kontakt



Ole Michael Spaten  
Kontaktforfatter<sup>1</sup>  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Krogstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: oms@hum.aau.dk  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

### Ole Michael Spaten

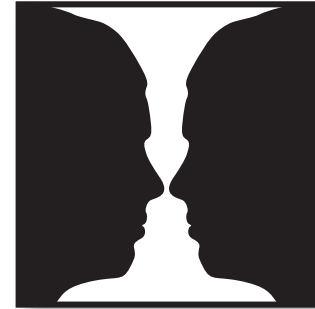
Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCPAccred Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.

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## The role of the coaching relationship in the coaching process

Kristina Gyllensten and Ole Michael Spaten

### Abstract

*Ole Michael Spaten interviews Dr Kristina Gyllensten on the coaching relationship, newer findings and future research. In this interview, Gyllensten emphasizes the importance of coaches being aware of and working with the coaching relationship since it is valuable to coachee's perception of the coaching process. Additionally, she states that Coaching relationship depends on trust and is improved by transparency. Moreover, Gyllensten defines coaching relationship as a unique, co-created and evolving relationship that consists of the coaching alliance and additional client and coach contributions. Finally, she suggested that future research could focus on the negative effect of coaching.*

**Keywords:** Coaching relationship, Coaching alliance, Coachees, Coach

Ole: When and how did you realize that the alliance / relation between coach and coachee was an important and under researched topic?

Kristina: When I started to plan my doctorate in beginning of the century (makes me feel old saying that), focusing on coaching and occupational stress, I was training to become a counselling psychologist. Within the field of counselling and therapy, the relationship between the client/patient and therapist has always been considered important. Therefore, it was natural to consider the relationship in coaching as well.

Luckily, Alanna O'Broin and Stephen Palmer (who was my supervisor) had started writing about it.

Ole: Could you further expand on what brought you to this research field?

Kristina: In my research I was not primarily focused on the coaching relationship, rather I wanted to find out more about whether coaching could be useful in dealing with occupational stress, considering the fact that coaching was becoming increasingly popular at the time.

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However, while doing the research interviews it became clear that the coaching relationship played an important role in how the coaching was experienced by the coachees.

Ole: It could be great if it is possible more clearly to define the coaching relationship?

Kristina: I think that Alanna O'Broin and Stephen Palmer's definition is good: "a unique, co-created, evolving relationship comprising the coaching alliance plus additional client and coach contributions" (O'Broin and Palmer, 2008, p 295). And they define the coaching alliance in the following way. "The coaching alliance reflects the quality of the coachee's and coach's engagement in collaborative, purposive work within the coaching relationship, and is jointly negotiated and renegotiated throughout the coaching process over time" (O'Broin and Palmer, 2010, p 4).

Ole: What is some of your most important findings concerning the coaching relationship and the coaching alliance?

Kristina: The coaching relationship is perceived as valuable by coachees, and it is dependent on trust and improved by transparency. So it is important that coaches are aware of, and are working with, the coaching relationship. Nevertheless, the relationship is not the only factor making coaching useful. Working towards goals and improving performance are also valuable components of coaching.

Ole: What do you think would be future key research areas for scholars interested in further understanding and development of this field?

Kristina: Being a therapist, as well as a coach, it is natural to look at the development of research within the therapy field, and the investigation of negative effects of therapy is growing. I think this is an important topic in coaching as well, especially considering the fact that some coaches are practicing coaching without much training. Finding out more about what happens when the coachee find the coaching unhelpful or even worse. I have not done a literature search on this topic so I am not aware of the

current research situation, so there may be good research on this in the coaching field.

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## Contact



Kristina Gyllensten  
kristina.gyllensten@gmail.com

### Dr Kristina Gyllensten

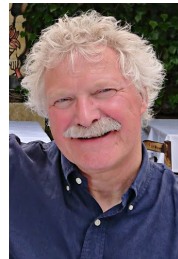
Kristina Gyllensten is a licensed psychologist, licensed psychotherapist with a CBT specialization, supervised in CBT and doctor of psychology. Active as chief psychologist in Gothenburg and supervisor of stage-1 educations in CBT. Kristina offers cognitive and behavioural therapy (CBT) to young people and adults in Gothenburg.

Kristina Gyllensten lectures regularly at CBT courses. She was previously principal and examiner at the stage-1 educations in CBT at the Centre for Cognitive Psychotherapy and Education in Kungälv. Kristina has also been the principal and responsible for training in psychological coaching at adSapiens.

Kristina Gyllensten has been a licensed psychologist since 2005 and a licensed psychotherapist with a cognitive focus since 2008. Kristina is moreover a supervisor trained in CBT and has since 2007 supervised students in cognitive and behavioural therapy in step-1 training in cognitive and behavioural therapy. Furthermore, Kristina offers psychological coaching to individuals and companies.

Kristina Gyllensten has been involved in introducing training in psychological coaching in Sweden and is among the leading scholars and practitioners and additional co-author of the book Psychological Coaching.

## Contact

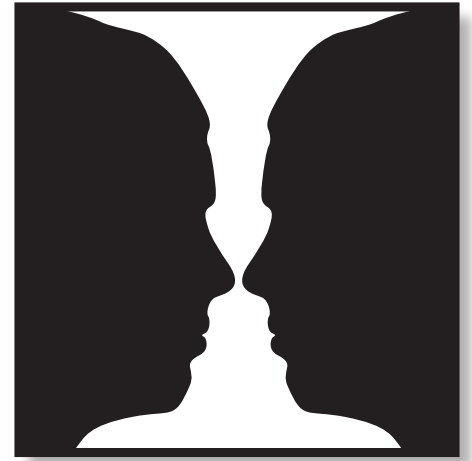


Ole Michael Spaten  
Aalborg University  
Coaching Psychology Unit  
Kroghstraede 3  
9220 Aalborg Øst  
E-mail: oms@hum.aau.dk  
Orchid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3402-9963>

### Ole Michael Spaten

Dr Ole Michael Spaten, Licensed psychologist, BA MA PhD Specialist Psychotherapy, MISCPAccred Supervisor, Fellow ISCP, Head of Psychology Master Program, Director of Coaching Psychology Unit and Senior Researcher at Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.



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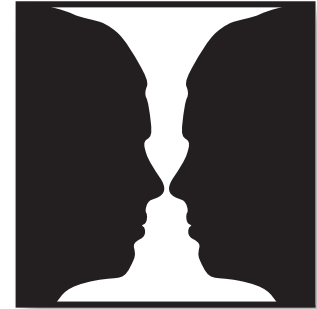
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## Visualisering

Af Stephen Palmer

### Abstract

*I en kort og fyndig form præsenterer denne artikel "coping imagery", som er en anerkendt visualiseringsteknik. På dansk kan udtrykket visualiseret mestring anvendes, som er en enkel og brugbar metode, der kan reducere stress og forøge selvtillid samt præstationsevne før udfordrende situationer.*

**Keywords:** Visualisering, Visualiseret mestring, stress reducering, forøget præstation

Visualisering er en velkendt teknik, hvor coachee visualiserer sig selv mestre en svær, præstationskrævende og/eller stressfuld situation (se Palmer og Cooper, 2007). Deraf benævnen visualiseret mestring. Det er afgørende at visualiseringen er realistisk, da coachee forestiller sig selv håndtere den udfordrende situation eller problemet på passende, men ikke perfekt vis. Det er endvidere af stor betydning at den visualiserede mestring udvikles i nøje overensstemmelse med og er afpasset coachee's fornemmelse for egne evner. Det drejer sig altså ikke om en visualisering med henblik på at overpræstere eller at overgå egne evner.

Praksis og undersøgelser har vist at visualiseret mestring kan reducere stress og forøge præstationer samt selvtillid, før udfordrende situationer mødes i hverdagen.

I løbet af coachingsessionen, kan coach og coachee udføre visualiseret mestring, ved at gennemføre fire distinkte og nøje adskilte faser.

### Visualiseringens fem faser

Metoden består af fire klart adskilte faser. Den femte fase er Praktisk opgave eller en opgaves som skal udføres i praksis, som udføres af coachee imellem de enkelte coaching sessioner. Nedenfor vil de fem faser blive beskrevet så konkret som muligt.

Fase 1: Coach og coachee diskuterer den kommende situation som coachee oplever som udfordrende.

Fase 2: Coach og coachee noterer på papir eller tavle de aspekter af situationen, som coachee oplever som mest udfordrende.

Fase 3: Coach og coachee udvikler måder, hvorpå disse udfordringer kan håndteres. Samtalen fortsætter indtil det fremtræder klart at coachee kan gennemføre de valgte løsningsmuligheder. F.eks. kan SMARTe mål anvendes til denne øvelse (NB: Coachen bør ofte assistere coachee i udviklingen af nye handle- og tanke-mønstre og tanke- og handlestrategier).

Fase 4: Coachee visualiserer stille og roligt sig selv ind i den udfordrende situation. Coachee forestiller sig langsomt at håndtere hver enkelt af de beskrevne udfordringer. Denne procedure gentages tre eller fire gange i løbet af coachingsessionen. Nogle coachee profiterer af at coachen første gang ”taler coachee igennem” forestillingsøvelsen, visualiseringen. (En lydoptagelse kan foretages af denne del af sessionen, som kan anvendes senere og selvstændigt af coachee, se trin 5)

Fase 5: Fase fire øves dagligt. Det er vigtigt at coachee planlægger et bestemt tidspunkt for øvelse af visualiseret mestring, da øvelsen ellers ofte undlades af coachee i hverdagen. Når coachee bliver stresset af tanken om den kommende situation eller udfordring, kan dette også tjene som mulighed for at anvende den visualiserede mestringsøvelse.

### Case eksempel

(tilpasset efter Palmer et al., 2003, pp.46-47). Robert skulle holde et oplæg den følgende uge. Han havde påtrængende forestillinger om sig selv, stående foran publikum og opleve at han hverken kunne huske præsentationen eller tale. Han anvendte visualiseret mestring for at modvirke de påtrængende forestillinger og opbygge sin selvtillid. Først visualiserede han sig selv forberede præsentationen og skrive sine nøgleord på kort. Han forestillede derefter sig selv ankomme en time før præsentationen for at tjekke at overheadprojektoren fungerede, gennemgå sin præsentation i rummet og derefter stå foran publikum og lave præsentationen. Han visualiserede sig selv, glemme hvad han skulle sige, men også at komme videre hurtigt, ved at se på kortet med nøgleord. Efter at have forestillet sig dette scenarium 10 gange, følte han sig mere selvsikker og var klar over at han kunne håndtere situationen og lave en acceptabel præsentation.

### Diskussion

Det er en relativt nem opgave at anvende en overheadprojektor. Havde Robert i stedet tænkt sig at anvende en powerpoint præsentation og var uerfaren med at anvende en sådan, kunne coachen have instrueret ham i at anvende power point programmet i løbet af coachingsessionen. I nogle sammenhænge kan coachee øve hele den handle-mæssige komponent med coachen, eksempelvis kan man ved hjælp af et rollespil øve at holde en god tale. Visualiseret mestring kan derfor anvendes til at hjælpe coachee med at håndtere frygtede problemstillinger, også udenfor coachingsessionen.

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### Kontakt



Stephen Palmer  
Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research,  
University of Wales Trinity Saint David,  
Carmarthen Campus,  
College Road,  
Carmarthen,  
Wales.  
SA31 3EP  
Email: [stephen.palmer@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.palmer@uwtsd.ac.uk)

### Stephen Palmer

Prof Stephen Palmer PhD is Professor of Practice at the Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research. He is an APECS Accredited Executive Coach and Supervisor, International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) Accredited Coaching Psychologist and Supervisor, and a Chartered Psychologist. He is Adjunct Professor of Coaching Psychology at Aalborg University, Denmark. He is President and Fellow of the ISCP and former President and Honorary Fellow of the Association for Coaching.