

# Empowering Healthcare Leaders: Coaching for Leadership Development

Subjects: **Others**

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Coaching is a dynamic, evolving field that seeks to unlock individuals' potential to achieve their personal and professional best. It has gained widespread recognition across various sectors as an effective means of leadership skills development, including in the vital healthcare sector, which requires innovative strategies to build leadership skills that can sustain high-quality services and maintain patient safety. Many healthcare organizations have thus embraced coaching as a valuable tool for leadership development. This review presents the definitions, concepts, methodology, and applications of coaching, and identifies its salient characteristics in relation to other professions. The second section of this study focuses on a literature review, specifically examining coaching in the healthcare industry and its role as a method for leadership development. The outcome from the review offers insights and results from a review of related research, specifically identifying the potential for coaching within healthcare and its effectiveness in leadership development. The information gathered from this study provides valuable guidance to healthcare leaders and organizations seeking to implement coaching practices in their leadership development programs.

coaching

leadership development

healthcare

## 1. Introduction

In addition to providing effective biomedical care, healthcare professionals (HCPs) must provide, develop, and use strong leadership skills to effectively manage multidisciplinary teams in modern healthcare organizations <sup>[1]</sup>. Leadership is a multidimensional role that entails guiding, inspiring, and influencing others toward achieving collective objectives <sup>[1]</sup>. Leadership skills, however, refer to the specific competencies and actions that enable an individual to fulfill leadership responsibilities effectively <sup>[1]</sup>. Effective leadership is critical for maximizing organizational efficiency, navigating change, and improving the quality of healthcare <sup>[2]</sup>. Continuous professional development, including leadership training, is essential for HCPs to enhance their skills, improve organizational efficiency, and increase job satisfaction, while reducing stress, burnout, absenteeism, and other inefficiencies in healthcare <sup>[3]</sup>. Effective leadership can have a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction, self-esteem, confidence, and ability to provide quality patient care and support colleagues, leading to a more content and organized workforce with reduced potential for errors <sup>[1]</sup>. Furthermore, positive attitudes among employees can result in improved patient outcomes (i.e., quality of care) and satisfaction, in addition to increasing the efficiency of organizational resource deployment <sup>[4]</sup>.

Training leaders in organizational strategy and facilitating change can also lead to smooth transitions with minimized impacts on patient care, while offering effective feedback to team members can be used to identify targets and manage coordinated efforts <sup>[4]</sup>. Leadership skills are particularly critical in healthcare contexts, where HCPs face challenging and high-pressure situations, ranging from clinical emergencies to conflict management <sup>[5]</sup>. Leadership skills can help diffuse

disputes quickly and empower HCPs to make confident decisions in the best interest of patients <sup>[1]</sup>. Overall, leadership skills development (LSD) is a continuing concern for healthcare organizations and researchers around the world, with coaching being an important approach to enhancing leadership competencies <sup>[2]</sup>.

In recent years, coaching has been identified as an effective method for leadership development among HCPs. Research has shown that coaching can lead to improvements in HCPs' communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and overall leadership effectiveness <sup>[6][7]</sup>. Coaching is a personalized and focused approach to leadership development that can be tailored to the specific needs of each HCP. It involves a collaborative relationship between the coach and the HCP, with the coach helping the HCP to know their strengths and areas for development, set goals, and establish an action plan for improvement <sup>[8]</sup>. However, despite coaching's potential and even demonstrable benefits when applied to enhance the development of leadership in healthcare, more studies are needed to explain its role to decision-makers, and to translate coaching from theory into organizational practice.

Real organizations need insights into how they can deploy coaching to attain desired results that meet their needs, thereby attaining desired outcomes for both individuals and organizations. Increasing efforts are being made to develop research exploring specific deployments of coaching methods, including in the context of HCPs, and longitudinal research is underway to ascertain the effects of coaching over time on coachees' leadership skills and net employee efficiency. Such insights can inform specific and efficacious programs for the coaching of HCPs, and the current paper aims to offer insights to build knowledge in these areas (see [Supplementary Materials](#)).

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