

COVID-19 ACADEMIC COACHING GUIDELINES

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This template accompanies the slide deck “Coaching Sessions for Coping with Covid-19”

<i>Week 1: Introduction to the Group (1 session 1.0 hour)</i>			
<i>Week 1: Session 1 (Coaching Session 1: Introduction) *Week 1 only has one session</i>			
Info Type / Time Estimate	Topics	Slides	Comments
Introduction	<i>Welcome and brief introductions</i>	Slides 1, 2	Go “around the Zoom room” so coaches and participants can do brief introductions. Basics of who you are, what your position is, what your current situation is (e.g., caretaking, homeschooling, quarantined, etc.). This is your opportunity to begin establishing connections with your group participants and them with each other, so consider how you can create a warm, safe, friendly atmosphere that encourages everyone sharing. The extent of sharing/amount of time available per participant will largely be a function of the number of participants.
Goals & Format	<p><i>Discuss goals/expectations/format of coaching sessions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to cope with the pandemic more effectively • Creating a safe and supportive space • Clarify that this is coaching not therapy and that referrals for therapy can be made if necessary/desired • Four weeks of sessions with two sessions per week, first weekly session is didactic and second is discussion 	Slide 3	Attend to any multiple roles you may have in the group (e.g., are you the leader of the group but also a colleague, supervisor, etc.). Name these and discuss how you will work to protect the safety and confidentiality of the coaching sessions, to the extent possible within your professional system(s).

Homework	<i>Pick a self-care behavior</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eating, sleeping, exercising• Something enjoyable <i>Schedule timing for next 4 weeks' sessions</i>	Slide 4	This is meant to be a simple exercise to get participants to start thinking about the importance of self-care and get used to doing homework after sessions. Let participants know you will be discussing everyone's experiences with this exercise during your next meeting—this will help set the expectation that “homework” assignments will be discussed each week and therefore build accountability.
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<i>Week 2: Working Smart during COVID-19 (2 sessions 1.0 hour each)</i>			
<i>Week 2: Session 1 (Coaching Session 2: Didactic)</i>			
Info Type / Time Estimate	Topics	Slides	Comments
<i>Welcome and Homework Review</i>	<p><i>Review how participants did with self-care homework</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did they try? • What helped? • What got in the way? 	Slide 5	First sharing exercise. Take care that all participants have a chance to talk. Monitor length of responses for time management. Encourage / praise efforts.
<i>Overview of two domains to be covered</i>	<p><i>Working during COVID-19</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good work habits • Daily structure and routine • Revising plans and goals <p><i>Mental and emotional well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfectionism • Worry and fear • Challenging emotions • Self-care 	Slide 6	Simple didactic overview of the two key topics that will be addressed during the coaching; these topics were based on feedback from our piloting of the coaching curriculum.
<i>Optimizing Work Potential</i>	<p><i>Aim to work smarter, not harder</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands on our time are higher • Resources are lower <p><i>Overarching skill is to be effective/doing what works</i></p> <p><i>Review list of suggestions (Slide 9) and discuss how they contribute to working smart.</i></p>	Slides 7-9	<p>Can elicit strategies that have been helpful for participants.</p> <p>Emphasize that what works one week might not work the next, need to regularly revise what is effective.</p> <p>Discuss challenges of having to shift set when working from home. No clear demarcation between work and home (may be doing laundry and giving a presentation at the same time or in a meeting with your kids on your lap). Acknowledge how difficult this is and how</p>

			<p>taxing it is mentally, emotionally, and even physically, include in this the role of being in virtual/online meetings, sessions, etc., and how much more taxing it may be to not meet in person.</p> <p>Validate that people are all having trouble focusing.</p>
<i>Homework</i>	<p><i>Implementing a smart work strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick one or two things from the smart working list and try implementing it before next session (as many times as possible) 	Slide 10	
<i>Week 2: Session 2 (Coaching Session 3: Discussion)</i>			
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<i>Review how the implementation of smart working strategies went</i>	Slide 11	<p>Give participants positive feedback for trying and expand on why attempts were or were not successful.</p> <p>Encourage input from other group members.</p> <p>If participants did not do homework, briefly explore what got in the way.</p>
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Discuss smart working strategies in depth and challenges participants are facing</i>	Slide 11	Important time for group to share current experiences and support each other.
<i>Homework</i>	<p><i>Continue implementing smart work strategies</i></p> <p><i>Start paying attention to when your thoughts are challenging</i></p>	Slide 12	<p>Encourage participants to continue implementing smart work strategies and perhaps add in a new one.</p> <p>Get participants to start being observers of their own thoughts in preparation for the next topic. Under what situations are their thoughts challenging (times of day, situations, around certain people, when reading/watching the news)?</p>

<i>Week 3: Thinking well during COVID-19 (2 sessions 1.0 hour each)</i>			
<i>Week 3: Session 1 (Coaching Session 4: Didactic)</i>			
Info Type / Time Estimate	Topics	Slides	Comments
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<p><i>Review how work strategy homework attempts went</i></p> <p><i>Review observations about challenging thoughts</i></p>	Slides 13, 14	<p>Support participants' attempts at working smart and problem solve attempts that did not work.</p> <p>Review of thoughts will begin to give you an idea of how aware participants are of their thought processes, and challenges they may be experiencing in this domain.</p>
<i>Basics of CBT</i>	<p><i>Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review basics of CBT <p><i>Review current nature of thoughts during pandemic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often many thoughts, judgments, thoughts about future • Make it difficult to focus on the present 	Slides 15, 16	<p>Briefly discuss core concepts of CBT—our experiences depend largely on the interpretations or thoughts we have about the events/situations we are in; and how we think influences how we feel emotionally and what we do behaviorally, which in turn influences how we think, and so forth.</p> <p>Provide examples (e.g., if canceled commitments seem like a <u>positive</u> to you, you might think, “This is great, I have been feeling overscheduled.” Then you may feel relief and enjoy the extra time you have. In contrast, if you see the cancelations as <u>negative</u>, you might think, “How disappointing, I was really looking forward to X, Y, Z” then you may feel sad and end up doing less because you are disappointed.)</p> <p>Elicit examples from participants about thinking challenges they are having during the COVID-19 crisis.</p>

<i>Thinking errors</i>	<p><i>Review 5 common thinking errors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe and give examples 	Slide 17	Ask participants which of the thinking errors ring true for them and elicit examples, be ready to provide examples as well.
<i>Thinking better</i>	<p><i>Become aware of thoughts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine thought—thought or fact <p><i>Examining Thoughts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Check the facts- can you trust this thought?</i> <i>Is it helpful to have this thought now?</i> Does this thought include a negative label? 	Slides 18-20	<p>Some basic CBT skills. Increasing awareness of thoughts; checking accuracy of thought; recognizing that you have the choice to continue your focus on a certain thought. If it is not helpful, you do not have to focus on it.</p> <p>Notice if your thought includes a global label or judgment such as “good, bad, smart, stupid, wrong, selfish, etc.” Can be helpful to re-describe these global labels with more specific language.</p> <p>Dealing with should thoughts- helpful tip: Notice “should” thoughts and practice re-describing with “I wish” thoughts, and consider the differences between these two thoughts.</p> <p>Overall, encourage participants to be mindful of judgmental thoughts and to work on being more compassionate with themselves. Elicit examples from group of times they have had judgmental thoughts and work on how they could be turned around to be less self-damaging.</p>
<i>Homework</i>	<i>Practice observing thoughts (in real time or afterwards) and use evaluation skills</i>	Slide 21	
<i>Week 3: Session 2 (Coaching Session 5: Discussion)</i>			
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<i>Discuss experience with observing and evaluating thoughts</i>	Slide 22	Similar to discussion meetings thus far, encourage sharing and reinforce insights, positive steps participants are taking, and trouble-shoot/answer questions.

<i>Homework</i>	<i>Continue observing and evaluating thoughts Begin observing emotions and challenges you are facing related to them</i>	Slide 23	Encourage participants to continue monitoring and evaluating their thoughts and develop greater agency over them. Opening up their observations to also include their emotions will set the stage for the next week's topic.
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<i>Week 4: Managing Your Emotions (2 sessions 1.0 hour each)</i>			
<i>Week 4: Session 1 (Coaching Session 6: Didactic)</i>			
Info Type / Time Estimate	Topics	Slides	Comments
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<i>Review homework on cognitive strategies</i> <i>Explore how much they were able to identify emotions and the challenges they are posing</i>	Slides 24, 25	Similar to discussion meetings thus far, encourage sharing and reinforce insights, positive steps participants are taking, and trouble-shoot/answer questions.
<i>Common Covid-19-related emotions</i>	<p><i>Complex grief</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike typical bereavement grief, we are suffering not only losses of life, but many yearly, weekly, daily losses associated with the pandemic (paper cuts of grief) <p><i>Emotional lability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even people who are relatively stable emotionally are finding their moods to be highly variable often without identifiable triggers <p><i>Mixture of emotions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can feel as if all of your emotions are jumbled together “emotional stew” • Importance of pulling them apart one at a time and focusing on one emotion to understand and manage it 	Slide 26	Discuss common emotional challenges related to COVID-19, provide examples / illicit examples from participants; connect to observations and discussions from past meetings.
<i>Recognizing emotions</i>	<p><i>Becoming aware of and identifying emotions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a feeling or is this reality <p><i>Review ways of responding to emotions (introduce topics)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validating • Reducing vulnerability to negative emotions • Change our emotional experience • Tolerate the emotions without making them worse <p><i>Introduce emotion wheel</i></p>	Slides 27, 28	<p>Help participants distinguish between a feeling “I am <u>feeling</u> hopeless versus this is reality “Everything is hopeless”</p> <p>Introduce the emotion strategies.</p> <p>Review the emotion wheel and discuss where on the wheel people are often finding themselves during the pandemic,</p>

			acknowledging this may be different than their typical emotions.
<i>Reducing vulnerability to negative emotions</i>	<p><i>Self-care and building positive experiences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic self-care: sleep, food, exercise, medications, substance use • Acknowledge the challenges on caregivers • Building in attainable daily/weekly positives (even if small) • Long-term positives (even given limitations we have in being able to plan) 	Slide 29	Discuss strategies to reduce vulnerability to (or difficulty in dealing with) negative emotions. Self-care and building in positives both help to build up our psychological resources so that we have more “in the tank” when distressing events occur. Ask participants which of these strategies they may already be doing or have done in the past, and what has been helpful thus far.
<i>Changing emotions</i>	<p><i>Acting opposite</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the emotion • Identify the associated behavioral urge (i.e., what do you feel like doing) • Ask what is the opposite of that urge • Throw yourself into it • Remember you do not have to stop having the emotion, you just have to behave opposite to what it would normally lead you to do <p><i>Discuss various examples of acting opposite</i></p>	Slides 30, 31	<p>Acting Opposite to Current Emotion: Skill to help change emotion we’re having in the moment. Walk through the steps of the skill and provide examples.</p> <p>Good example for academics: Sitting in lecture hall wanting to ask a question but really anxious about raising your hand. The emotion is anxiety and the behavioral urge is to avoid, withdraw, stay quiet (and then later regret not having asked). The opposite urge would be to approach—so raising your hand and committing to asking the question. You’re still anxious, but you interrupted the emotion-behavior cycle.</p>
<i>Coping with intense emotions</i>	<p><i>Distraction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging activities • Contributing to others • Opposite emotions • Pushing away • Intense sensations 	Slide 32	Skills to help when emotion is really high and we’re just trying to “get through” the tough times without making matters worse. Provide examples of each strategy.

	<i>Radical acceptance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully accepting the situation instead of resisting 		
<i>Homework</i>	<i>Select emotion management skill(s) to practice</i>	Slide 33	Encourage group to select specific emotion management techniques to practice outside of session, noting what was helpful, what was challenging, and any questions they may have.
<i>Week 4: Session 2 (Coaching Session 7: Discussion)</i>			
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<i>Review strategies for managing emotions</i>	Slide 34	Similar to discussion meetings thus far, encourage sharing and reinforce insights, positive steps participants are taking, and trouble-shoot/answer questions.
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Discuss experiences with emotion management strategies</i>		
<i>Homework</i>	<i>Continue both cognitive and emotion management strategies</i>	Slide 34	Encourage attendees to continue practicing the strategies thus far, also consider what professional challenges they may like to discuss in the next meeting.

<i>Week 5: Managing Uncertainty and Planning the Future (2 sessions 1.0 hour each)</i>			
<i>Week 5: Session 1 (Coaching Session 8: Didactic)</i>			
Info Type / Time Estimate	Topics	Slides	Comments
<i>Welcome and homework review</i>	<i>Review how they did with emotion management strategies</i>	Slides 35, 36	Similar to discussion meetings thus far, encourage sharing and reinforce insights, positive steps participants are taking, and trouble-shoot/answer questions.
<i>Managing uncertainty</i>	<p><i>Navigating uncertainty is a certainty during this situation</i> <i>Will be an ongoing process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review when better/worse at managing uncertainty <p><i>Using your skills to manage uncertainty</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is certain/uncertain Radically accept uncertainty Distract from worry/focus Focus on what is certain 	Slides 37, 38	Make sure that participants focus on thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when working through certainty scenarios.
<i>Planning ahead professionally</i>	<p><i>Putting coaching to use professionally</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise expectations for next 6 months/ next year Problem solve how best to discuss this with your supervisor/boss/mentor/PI How will you manage not living up to what <u>you think</u> others expect of you How will you reconcile your revised expectations with your own pre-COVID expectations? How will you manage comparisons of your own work progress with that of others? (perhaps whose circumstances aren't as demanding). <p><i>Be proactive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even though it takes energy it is wise to be 	Slides 39, 40	<p>Many people in academe are highly achievement oriented and ambitious and perceive that others have higher expectations of them than they might in fact have. They don't like to disappoint others and they also don't like to not live up to their own standards.</p> <p>Supervisors across the board have encouraged people to talk with them about the challenges they face.</p>

	proactive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with supervisors • Build alliances • Do not hesitate to have back up plans as uncertainty is a reality 		Repeated acts of self-compassion will be necessary as you have to revise expectations.
<i>Planning ahead personally</i>	<i>Impact of covid-19 on your personal life</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there some changes that have been positive? • What sources of support do you need to move forward? 	Slide 41	Encourage participants to reflect on changes that have occurred in their personal lives, work/life balance, time with others, etc. that they may want to maintain or build upon, as well as practical steps they may need to take to build in greater social support, financial aid, etc.
<i>Homework</i>	<i>Practice strategies for managing uncertainty</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate professional and personal next steps • Reflect on how coaching has or has not been helpful and where/how you would like to continue to make gains 	Slide 42	
<i>Week 5: Session 2 (Coaching Session 9: Discussion and Wrap Up)</i>			
<i>Homework review</i>	<i>Review homework on strategies for uncertainty and managing the future</i>	Slide 43	Similar to discussion meetings thus far, encourage sharing and reinforce insights, positive steps participants are taking, and trouble-shoot/answer questions.
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Discuss strategies to be used to address uncertainty</i>		
<i>Reflections on coaching sessions</i>	<i>Review process of coaching sessions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What was helpful?</i> • <i>What are goals moving forward (what will you take with you?)</i> • <i>Are you interested in continuing informally?</i> • <i>Feedback</i> 	Slide 43	Ask members for reflections, feedback on what has been helpful (and less so) from the group, what they will continue building on moving forward from here. Assess interest in group's desire to continue meeting on their own (i.e., weekly or bi-weekly) as an ongoing source of support.