

Reflections on compassionate coaching with a UK social enterprise

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Abstract

In this paper we describe and reflect upon a case study of pro bono (free of charge) coaching with a UK youth justice social enterprise (a business with social objectives). The paper integrates principles of coaching psychology with those of compassion, self-compassion and well-being. We introduce a compassion-based framework for critically reflective practice in coaching and Work and Organizational Psychology. The coaching contract was built upon the concept of being equal thinking partners in co-created dialogue which involves 'leaving egos outside'. We did six coaching sessions over a period of six months which enabled Karl to develop new learning and transfer this into his role and relationships at work. We include poetry and photography as examples of how coaching can enable clients reframe their experiences and gain new perspectives. The paper is relevant for readers who may be unfamiliar with skills and approaches in coaching psychology and are seeking to understand how these can be applied in their practice. It will also be of relevance to those who engage in coaching and are interested in exploring how compassion-based approaches might influence their coaching practice.

Keywords: coaching psychology, compassion, well-being. critically reflective practice, social enterprises

About the authors

Kathryn is a Chartered Coaching Psychologist with wide-ranging higher education experience as a researcher and leader, and a particular interest in academic-practitioner research collaboration and practice. She has published widely in the field of organizational compassion, and the creation of compassionate cultures and practices in higher education. Her other main area of research is gossip, which is emerging as an important constituent component of organizational communication and knowledge. Kathryn values social justice, relational scholarship and cares deeply about research that makes a difference in practice. She previously led a reverse mentoring project, where minoritised undergraduate psychology students mentored senior university leaders.

Karl has been a youth practitioner for over 30 years and has witnessed how the impact of misdiagnosis, poor-education and socio-economic status can often lead to poor opportunities and negative lifestyles. He is dedicated to supporting young people and

helping them use creative media to find their voices and speak their authentic truths. His mission is to help young people look at the story of their lives differently and supportively challenge comfort zones and any unhealthy beliefs they may have about themselves. When studying at the University of Westminster Karl mentored a senior university leader and has taken learning from that experience into his practice as employability lead working with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

Introduction

In recent years the formation and recognition of social enterprises as models for addressing social problems has increased. Social enterprises are organizations and businesses that combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit and a focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives (European Commission, n.d.). Practitioners and researchers have pointed to the need for more attention to exploring the ‘social value creation process’ and social impact (Fowler et al., 2019, p. 665). This involves understanding how opportunities are developed, ideas originate, and social enterprises evolve to use resources in innovative ways to create social value and impact. The role of coaching however is less well understood in social enterprises. Weinberg (2022) for example suggests that coaching is typically something that senior leaders get, or which is offered to rising middle management as part of their reward and development package in the corporate sector. The focus in this context is one of enabling people to bring the best out of themselves as the key to driving performance, productivity, growth and engagement (e.g., Whitmore & Gaskell, 2024).

This paper describes a pro bono (free of charge) coaching case study with a UK youth justice social enterprise in London that specialises in working with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. ‘Wipers Youth’ (henceforth ‘Wipers’) is a Community Interest Company, which means it is a limited company whose purpose is primarily one of community benefit rather than private profit (Gov.UK, n.d.). We have written in a narrative style so our stories and reflections (interspersed throughout in italicised text) as client and coach are told authentically and ethically. The case study is based on Stelter’s (2019) narrative approach to coaching as a co-creative process between coach (Kathryn) and client (Karl). However Wipers, where Karl is the employability lead is also the client, and provides the organizational and leadership context of the case study. Therefore we start with the story of Wipers.

The story of Wipers

Wipers began when its founder and managing director Sammy Odoi was working as a social worker with a Youth Offending Team in London (Wipers, n.d.). The defining moment came after working with a young man called Benny (a pseudonym). Benny had previous offences of assault, robbery and supplying class A drugs; he was on the verge of being sent to prison when the Court gave him one last chance. He was given a community order which required Benny to comply with an extensive and structured timetable of education and weekly activities (including weekends). During Benny's last Saturday session they took a drive around London in Sammy's car. The weather was terrible, the rain was really coming down, but they spoke for hours during that drive. Benny really opened up and shared much more freely than he had ever done before. As he prepared to get out of the car Sammy reminded him that his community order was over. He congratulated him in getting through it and encouraged him to stay focused in his head but reiterated that their sessions were ended. Benny paused before getting out of the car and said, "I'm going to see you again next week right?" Sammy repeated that the community order was over. Benny opened the car door, stepped out and said, "I'm going to do another move [commit a crime] so I can come back and see you!" They both laughed at this joke as Benny shouted "laters" [a shortened way of saying see you later] and disappeared into the rain.

Sammy sat in the car staring out of the window as the rain came down. He felt a distinct feeling of sadness for Benny who had no other constructive adult figures in his life. Behind his laugh was a sense of anxiety about no longer having a positive influence around him. It was with this insight that Wipers came into being.. Its name is inspired by the imagery and metaphor of car windscreen wipers, which represents its core purpose: *A clearer vision for a safer journey* (see Box 1).

Box 1

Wipers: Our beliefs and values underpin how we plan to fulfil our mission

Wipers (n.d.), reproduced with permission

- *Fairness:* We are committed to deliver excellence through fairness, diligence and equality for all. We embody a philosophy of seeing 'the young person' before 'the young offender'. We embrace diversity and challenge discrimination.
- *Discovery:* We believe that every individual has something positive to offer society. We are committed to empowering young people by supporting them to discover their own special contribution and realise their full potential.

- *Integrity:* We are committed to work practices that build up, stimulate and motivate a sense of self-worth and increase capability within every individual. We believe that focused quality engagement with young people can empower individuals and help them to make their own changes away from a destructive cycle of offending and towards more positive outcomes. This change is most effectual when we interact with one another on an individual personal level that communicates a genuine compassion and connection.

What Wipers offers young people

Wipers' mission is to engage with vulnerable young people to empower them by increasing their personal and social development, confidence and self-esteem; with offerings tailored to the demographic profile of the young people they work with. The Wipers Youth Annual Report (2022) profiles their young people as: 63% have been involved with youth offending or statutory children's services; 75% have experienced domestic abuse; 64% are 16 to 17 years of age; 47% are Black / Black British / Caribbean / African; and 71% are male. The range of services Wipers provide include specialist mentoring, support and supervision and employability workshops.

Karl's story

Karl is the employability lead at Wipers and has witnessed how the impact of poor-education and socio-economic status and misdiagnosis often offer young people limited opportunities and negative lifestyles. He facilitates workshops which encompass a central ethos of personal responsibility, independent and creative thinking and personal development skills. He role models this through his own experience of studying psychology (while also working at Wipers) as a 'mature student' (this refers to anyone going to university after a period of time out from full-time education in the UK). During his first year at university Karl was diagnosed with dyslexia. After graduating in 2019 with a BSc (Hons) Psychology he reflected on the impact this diagnosis had made on him in the poem 'Shamed' (see Box 2). Karl's poem has been shared on social media and extended into a mental health awareness campaign, illustrating how his practice embodies and role models vulnerability, empathy, compassion and support for young people.

Box 2

Shamed (© Karl Donaldson)

Something happened and made everything dark.
Exposed, vulnerable and embarrassed by the shame that weighs heavy on my chest.
Like a dark cloud looming over me.
The light fades as the demons start to seep through the crevices.
I'm unable to shake the heaviness that has clung to me.
My self-esteem was shattered before I knew who I was.
Harsh criticism for making mistakes.
Feeling inadequate.
Long for reprieve.
A moment of clarity to break through this darkness.
And lift the weight of shame from my shoulders.
I no longer wish to be imprisoned by this shadow.

Karl's reflections: Kathryn encouraged me to reflect on the impact of sharing the poem, and the strengths and value of poetry in the work that I do. There is something in it that everyone can relate to, but different parts resonate with different people. The line 'my self-esteem was shattered before I knew who I was' speaks to a lot of people, even though it's my story.

Kathryn's story

Kathryn fits into Wipers' and Karl's stories as a Chartered Coaching Psychologist who previously worked with Karl when she was Head of Psychology, and he was an undergraduate student. The foundations of this case study lie in a 'shared story' of a reverse mentoring project between BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) psychology students and senior university leaders (Waddington et al., 2023). The term BAME was prevalent in the underpinning literature and evidence-base at that time (e.g., Universities UK, 2019). However we recognise the contested and problematic nature of this term in the way that it homogenises diverse communities.

In that project Kathryn was the academic lead and Karl mentored another senior university leader. The aims of reverse mentoring were for: a) senior members of staff to gain deeper insight into BAME students' experiences and incorporate that insight into their practice; and b) for students to gain access to resources and relationships to enhance their learning gain (i.e., improvement in knowledge, skills, work readiness and personal development). The mentoring was based on the assumption that students, academics and leaders were all 'equal thinking partners' (Kline, 2015). In the project

evaluation, Karl reflected on mentoring conversations with his mentee (a male academic head of school):

It needs to be an 'egoless' conversation, so as a student I had to leave my slightly fragile ego outside to be able to share a 'proper conversation' about the similarities and differences in our experience of growing up as men. I had always thought the grass was greener for academics, but now I think it's just cut differently. (Waddington et al., 2023, p. 8)

Our prior experience of working together in the reverse mentoring project formed the basis of the subsequent coaching contract and relationship. In practice this meant that we did not assume that we are equal in knowledge. For example Karl has practice-based knowledge about working with young people that Kathryn doesn't have. Instead, we see ourselves as equal in our ability to reflect and share thoughts and perspectives with mutual respect. This facilitates an environment of psychological safety where both parties can say what is on their mind without fear of judgement or reprisal (Edmondson, 2018). Psychological safety, trust and being equal thinking partners were therefore important underpinning principles of this coaching case study.

The coaching story

This case study focuses on the co-created coaching partnership between Karl (client) and Kathryn (coach). Although the coaching literature uses the term coachee (e.g., Passmore & Lai, 2020; Stelter, 2019) our preference is to use the term client because it feels less prescriptive and passive. It also emphasises a more collaborative approach to the coach-client relationship.

What is coaching?

Passmore and Lai (2020, p. 3) define coaching as a professional helping relationship and process that emphasises reciprocal actions and social-psychological perspectives as important elements in coaching. The International Society for Coaching Psychology (2023a) define coaching psychology as a process for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching that are grounded in adult and child learning or psychological theories and approaches. While the British Psychological Society's Division of Coaching Psychology (2024) offer a definition based on the scientific study and application of behaviour, cognition and

emotion to deepen the understanding of individual/group performance, achievement and well-being. In essence, coaching is an evidence-based, thought-provoking and creative process that optimises personal and professional potential.

We integrate the above definitions with Stelter's (2019) third generation approach to coaching; where first generation is based on a problem/goal perspective and second generation is based on a strengths-based approach. Stelter's third generation narrative approach to coaching is framed as a developmental dialogue and, importantly, a co-creative process between coach and client. Integrative themes in this case study are: a) co-creation and collaboration; and b) well-being in personal life and work. Theoretically the article draws upon literature demonstrating a positive relationship between self-compassion and well-being (e.g., McKay & Walker, 2021; Neff & Germer, 2017; Sinclair et al., 2017), and principles of coaching with compassion which involves noticing another's need, empathising and acting to enhance their well-being (Boyatzis et al., 2012; 2019).

Coaching skills and techniques

Our coaching conversations were guided by four core coaching skills (see Table 1), based on the International Coaching Federation (ICF, 2024) core competencies.

Table 1

Core coaching skills: adapted from ICF, 2024

Demonstrate ethical practice based on respect, competence, responsibility and integrity;
Embody a coaching mindset that is open, curious, flexible and person-centred;
Active listening based on three streams of attention: a) content; b) my response; and c) use of silence to create deeper thinking;
Maintain presence and evoke awareness using powerful questioning, metaphor or analogy.

These core skills can also be used in a broader context beyond coaching, for example by managers and practitioners who wish to bring a coaching approach and mindset to their work and enhance the effectiveness of interactions with others. Jones (2021) summarises a coaching mindset as one of:

- Openness;
- Unconditional positive regard;
- Non-judgemental attitude;
- Growth;
- Authenticity.

We hope readers who may be unfamiliar with skills and approaches in coaching will find material and techniques in this case study helpful to develop an understanding of how these can be applied in their practice. Readers more familiar with coaching will appreciate the importance of a coaching contract that sets out the expectations and purpose of coaching.

Coaching and reflecting with compassion

Boyatzis et al. (2012; 2019) suggest that coaching with compassion leads to desired change, enhanced health and well-being, enabling a person to be open to new possibilities and learning. This is in contrast to coaching for compliance which emphasises how the coach and/or the organization believe the person should act. The hallmark of coaching with compassion is a focus on the client's vision of who they want to be, their goals, values and aspirations for the future. This is also core to one of the workshops that Karl facilitates at Wipers which involves participants writing a letter about the story of their lives thus far, and a letter to their future self in five years' time. As Gilbert (2015, p. 251, emphasis added) notes:

Genuine compassion means seeing into *the tragedy of humanity and the struggles of life-flow* ... we have evolved bodies and brains that are full of conflicting motivational systems and social mentalities, *easily hijacked by our social contexts and intelligence for good or bad*. The scientific understanding of what promotes the good in us and how to help it spread is the new focus for compassion.

Coaching with compassion provided a sound scientific evidence-based approach that is directly transferrable to the work that Karl and Wipers do with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who have struggled with their life experiences.

A compassion-based framework for critically reflective practice

McManus and Waters (2024) note that for coaches, the deliberate practice of examining and challenging ourselves, is a valuable tool to ensure our practice is ethically, physically and psychologically safe.

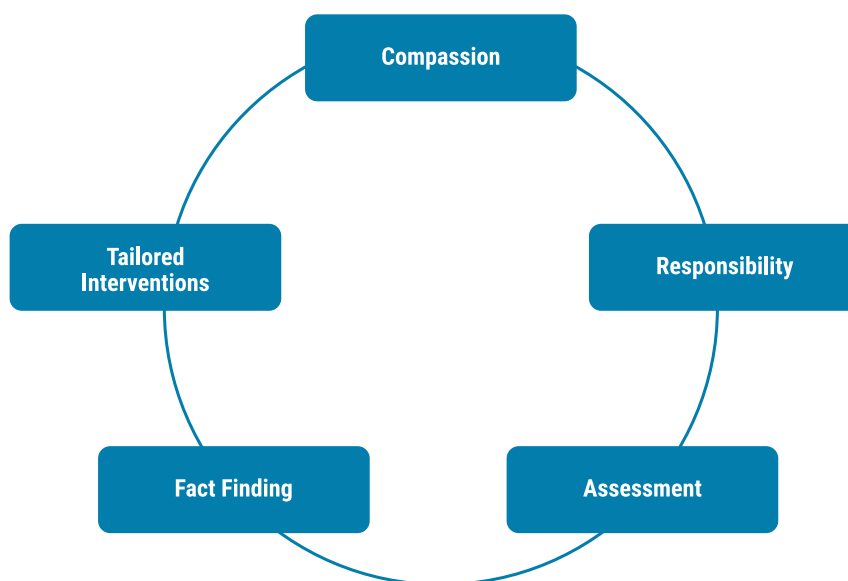
Kathryn's reflections: When I decided to offer pro bono coaching with Wipers I was very mindful of my professional identity and experience as a white woman, recently retired

from an academic role and career. I questioned the motivation and purpose behind my decision. I had no direct experience of working with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people from minoritised groups. I saw coaching as an opportunity to share my experience, resources, networks and ‘give something back to society’. But ... I didn’t want to slip into an unintended or unconscious role of ‘rescuer’ or ‘do-gooder’. Lady Bountiful [a figure used in scholarship and teaching to explore how white supremacy and idealised femininity have shaped the roles of women in helping professions] lurked in the back of my mind. I was challenged by Karl [and others] to focus on ‘what and who you are Kathryn, not what and who you are not’. This helped me to think further about my practice as a Coaching Psychologist in terms of being myself in an authentic way. It also reaffirmed the importance of critically reflective practice.

Das and Waddington (2020) outlined core components of a framework for the development of critically reflective practice in the field of domestic violence. The framework is based on doctoral research into working preventatively with domestic violence and abuse, which is central to Wipers’ work as 75% of the young people they engage with have experienced domestic abuse. The framework, known as ‘CRAFT’, is built upon the key principle of compassion, which acknowledges the commitment and hard work of practitioners who work in this field (Das, 2023). In addition to the core component of compassion, other elements include: responsibility, assessment, fact finding and tailored interventions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Compassion-based CRAFT framework: adapted from Das (2023, p. 149)



As equal thinking partners in a co-created coaching process and relationship we shared power and responsibility, which: a) reflected the concept of coaching as an empowering experience (Louis & Fatien Diochon, 2018); and b) mirrored Wipers' mission to empower young people by supporting them to discover their own special contributions and realise their full potential. This enabled Karl to develop new understandings and learning and transfer this learning back into his role and relationships at work.

The coaching process

Peter Hawkins' CLEAR model (Hawkins & Smith, 2006) was used to structure our coaching conversations, encompassing the following stages:

- **Contracting:** opening the discussion, setting the agenda, establishing the desired outcomes and agreeing ground rules.
- **Listening:** using active listening (see Table 1) to facilitate the client's understanding and generate personal insight.
- **Exploring:** a) developing an understanding of the personal impact the situation/issue is having on the client; and b) challenging their thinking, moving through possibilities for future action in resolving the situation/issue.
- **Action:** supporting the client in choosing a way forward and deciding the next step.
- **Review:** closing the conversation, reflecting on ground covered, decisions made, and value added.

When using the CLEAR model the Action component can be enhanced by using the coaching questions in Table 2 for 'planning for action' (Jones & Hannell, 2024).

Table 2

Coaching questions for planning for action: adapted from Jones & Hannell EAWOP WorkLab (1 November 2024)

What action/s are you going to take to work on this situation/issue?
When and where will this happen?
What resources (including other people) do you need to make this happen?
What might get in the way and what will you need to do to stay on track?
How will you monitor your progress?
How will you know when you have achieved your action/s?
What/who has helped you in the past?
What/who has hindered you in the past?
How will you stay accountable for your action/s?
What role would you like me to play?

Tools for self-compassion

Self-compassion involves offering ‘nonjudgemental understanding to one’s pain, inadequacies, and failures, so that one’s experience is seen as part of the larger human experience’ (Neff & Germer, 2017, p. 371). This clearly aligns with Jones’ (2021) components of a coaching mindset of unconditional positive regard and non-judgemental attitude discussed above. The core components of self-compassion are: a) self-kindness; b) common/shared humanity; and c) mindfulness and acceptance of the present reality. Neff and Germer’s (2018; see also Neff, 2024) tools and practices, such as exploring self-compassion through writing, were used as coaching resources for action.

The coaching contract

The purpose of coaching was to use an evidence-based, thought-provoking and creative approach to optimise personal and professional potential. We developed a coaching contract for six sessions, over a period of six months, which enabled Karl to:

- Create space for reflection;
- Develop new understandings and learning from his experiences at work;
- Transfer this learning back into his role and relationships at work.

Kathryn’s responsibilities were to:

- Maintain psychological safety and trust in the coaching process;
- Practise in accordance with the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2022) standards for Chartership in Coaching Psychology;
- Undertake regular professional and reflective coaching supervision.

This coaching contract therefore combined UK professional and ethical standards with Stelter’s (2019) view that a coach is both a ‘fellow human being’ and a ‘co-creative partner’ in a coaching conversation. This anchored our coaching conversations in Neff and Germer’s (2017, p. 371) approach to compassion and self-compassion as:

Understanding the shared human condition, fragile and imperfect as it is, as well as a willingness to extend that understanding to others when they fail or make mistakes ... [as] part of the larger human experience.

This content also elevated the coaching contract beyond that of an elite performance-orientated and goal driven agenda often used with senior leaders to one which enabled

us to use a compassion-based approach to guide reflection on the coaching process, its outcomes and impact.

What we did

After an initial exploratory meeting, sometimes called a chemistry session (Koh, 2020), we met monthly for six one-hour face to face sessions. As we had previously worked together we had already established rapport and a mutual understanding of working together as equal thinking partners. The purpose of the exploratory meeting was to: a) set the boundaries and expectations of the coaching programme; b) clarify the difference between coaching and professional supervision; and c) discuss the indirect benefits of coaching for the young people Karl works with. It also helped to frame what future coaching sessions would look like and set the context for the coaching contract.

The coaching sessions took place in Wipers' offices in a private meeting room where we were undisturbed. Hawkins and Smith's (2006) CLEAR model (see above) was used to structure the sessions, with Karl taking responsibility for 'setting the agenda' for the coaching meeting, and in some instances offering reflections on actions arising from previous sessions. Nancy Kline's (2020) 'thinking environment' question: *What would you like to think about, and what are your thoughts?* provided a powerful starting point for our coaching conversations. Sometimes an issue or situation that Karl brought to the session was based around a recent event, for example related to violence and intense emotions. Having a clear coaching contract and space for reflection enabled Karl to identify issues that we discussed in our coaching space; or those he would take outside of the session to his regular professional supervision with his line manager.

At the end of each coaching conversation we reflected on what was helpful about the process, what was difficult, and what might be done differently in future sessions. A coaching colleague Clara Kalu facilitated a coaching conversation (also pro bono) to help us think through and reflect on our work as equal partners with different backgrounds and appreciate the similarities we share about the importance of social justice and putting psychology into practice (personal communication, 2024). These shared reflections also enabled Kathryn to identify issues to take to her own coach supervision that related to working with intense emotions, and the importance of boundaries and protected time for reflection when working with issues related to societal violence (Das, 2023).

Coaching outcomes and next steps

Coaching with compassion and self-compassion was beneficial and achieved the International Society for Coaching Psychology's (2023a) definition of Coaching Psychology as a process for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains.

Karl's reflections: Self-compassion has helped me manage how I think, feel and respond to things, by being kinder to myself by not thinking about past failures I have developed a positive attitude to what lies ahead. Coaching has helped me manage the expectations of work colleagues and external services. Laying a foundation before starting anything makes it easier to stay on track, reflect or reset. Transferring what I know and do differently through coaching is reflected in what I do as a role model (pro-social modelling) for the young people I work with. Thinking about and spending time to plan what I want out of interactions has made how I communicate easier and better. Self-compassion has also enhanced my physical and social well-being, like going to the gym (and exercise, sauna and steam) and spending more social time with family, friends and colleagues.

Pro-social modelling refers to the process through which a youth worker acts as an effective role model to bring out the best in people (Cherry, 2010). This involves engaging the client in an empathetic relationship that actively reinforces pro-social (rather than anti-social) behaviour and attitudes. Karl's reflections illustrate how his learning and development through coaching and reflecting with compassion have been transferred back into his role and relationships at work, and the relationship between self-compassion and well-being.

Kathryn's reflections: One of my values as a coach is to be authentic and role model skillful practices of compassion along with the ability to care about others, show concern, and behave with generosity and a non-judgemental attitude. This required active and empathic listening on my part, and I found supervision was a valuable source of 'renewable energy' to ensure I didn't become 'compassion depleted'.

Kathryn's reflections offer three key ethical points for coaching psychology. Firstly it reinforces the relevance and importance of supervision in maintaining and upholding the core skills of coaching (identified above in Table 1) in an ethical and professional manner. Secondly it illustrates how the BPS Division of Coaching Psychology (2024) standards and

aim for Coaching Psychologists to be effective, reflective and ethically sound practitioners were enacted in practice. Thirdly it extends the International Society for Coaching Psychology's (2023b) ethical principle to 'do no harm' to clients to include practitioners themselves. In other words supervision safeguarded against compassion fatigue in coaching, which is 'experienced as a sense of depletion on a physical, emotional and spiritual level' (Rosenfield, 2023, p. 92).

Next steps

To recap, the purpose of this coaching programme was to enable Karl to develop new understandings and learning and transfer this learning back into his role as employability lead at Wipers and to further develop his relationships at work with young people. At the end of our coaching sessions we wanted to do more for young people and proposed a coaching programme with youth ambassadors to enable them to share their stories. Wiper's youth ambassadors help design services and take action on important issues like mental health, homelessness, and equity for racial and minoritised communities and groups.

This work will be a tailored intervention, based on the compassion-based CRAFT framework offered in the form of a reciprocal mentoring scheme. Reciprocal mentoring is where one person with different experience shares their knowledge, experience and skills in a specific/agreed area with someone in a senior/influential role (Symonds, 2023).

The aims of the reciprocal mentoring scheme are:

- To create a psychologically safe space where stories of vulnerability, disadvantage and privilege can be shared;
- For youth ambassador mentors to gain access to resources and relationships to enhance employability (e.g., career advice and guidance) and develop employability skills (e.g., self-confidence);
- For mentees to gain a compassionate understanding of the lived experiences and stories of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and take appropriate action.

The social impact of the scheme will be evaluated as part of Wipers' longer-term strategic evaluation plan using a widely used tool called 'Youth Star'. This is one of a family of tools from the Outcomes Star™ (2024) series that was developed to support and measure change when working with young people. Youth Star has been developed

for young people in community-based youth work. The evaluation tool maps progress towards a future where young people are actively engaged in ways that are meaningful to them and are positive. It is tailored for young people with a range of needs and starting points, such as those at risk of exclusion from education or involvement in criminal behaviour. Key areas covered by the Youth Star tool that are particularly relevant for the evaluation of coaching interventions with young people are: a) well-being; b) hopes and dreams; c) choices and behaviours; and d) education and work.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper contributes to a wider debate and discussion on the role of coaching and other activities to support young people. An overarching intention of the paper was to illustrate and reflect upon the value of coaching as a social process with social impact (Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Social impact is defined broadly as the effect on people and communities that happens as a result of an action, activity, project, programme or policy (Good Finance, n.d.). Blackburn et al.'s (2024) recent evaluation study is an example of the social impact of coaching. Their work illustrates how a self-development and coaching intervention with schools in Devon, UK, enabled disadvantaged young women (13 to 14 years of age) with complex and multiple needs to develop confidence, self-awareness and independent thinking. It provides an excellent example of the value of an ambitious coaching programme for pupils in schools.

There are similarities between this case study and the work of Blackburn et al. (2024) in the shared insights, although in different contexts, of the value and social impact of coaching outside of the corporate world of executive and leadership coaching. But our case study differs in that it focuses on individual coaching with a social enterprise in London where the context and demographic details of the young people they work with are dissimilar: 71% are male; 64% are 16 to 17 years of age; and 47% are from minoritised groups. It illustrates the indirect impact of coaching through reflections on a co-created coaching process, rather than the direct impact of a coaching intervention with young people.

Coaching with compassion (Boyatzis et al., 2021; 2019) provides a way to help individuals change and learn that is creative and connects with a positive vision with themselves. This was an appropriate approach to take in this case study working with a social enterprise which believes that:

- Every individual has something positive to offer society;
- Empowering young people by supporting them to discover their own special contribution and realise their full potential;
- Change is most effectual when we interact with one another on an individual personal level that communicates a genuine compassion and connection (Wipers, n.d.).

We suggest that the compassion-based CRAFT framework for critical reflection (Das, 2023) has wider relevance in Coaching and Work and Organizational Psychology in two ways. Firstly, for Work and Organizational Psychologists, CRAFT offers a new framework for consultancy practice grounded in the principle of noticing the need for compassion and developing tailored interventions. Secondly, for practitioners who engage in coaching it offers a lens with which to explore how compassion-based approaches might influence their coaching practice by reflecting on:

- What questions could help clients gain perspective on how and why they do what they do?
- How might the reflective lens of compassion influence your coaching technique?

Concluding reflections

The coaching story continues beyond the six sessions described and discussed in this paper. Karl's practice as employability lead and workshop facilitator has been enhanced by Stelter's (2019) third generation narrative approach to coaching as a developmental dialogue and co-creative process. Figure 2 is a photograph taken by Karl at Hammersmith tube station (Metro equivalent) in London on route to facilitating an employability skills workshop. The workshop focussed on helping young people identify and navigate the multiple doors to the professionals (e.g., social workers, youth offending teams, mental health practitioners) who come in and out of their lives.

Figure 2

Doors and lights through and to the end of a tunnel. Photo credit Karl Donaldson, reproduced with permission.



Karl's reflections: It was a strangely synchronistic experience. I was thinking about the workshop I was going to facilitate. Finding my way to the venue on public transport and thinking about the 'in and out' doors that the young people I work with need to find, open, enter and exit. As I walked through this Christmas themed exit at the tube station it struck me as a hopeful and creative image and vision of what doors, and tunnels, and where they can lead to, might look like for the young people I work with.

The lighting display in Figure 2 was designed by Field and Lawn (<https://fieldandlawn.com/>) with the explicit intention of providing a welcoming, immersive and enchanting experience.

Kathryn's reflections: Karl shared his photograph and reflections on doors, lights and tunnels as we were working on the final draft of this paper in November 2024. It recalled for me a 'Through the door' workshop I participated in with the Climate Psychology Alliance (<https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/>, Sams, 2024). That workshop

enabled me to ‘step through the door’ from the coaching space to the world outside; a world where the climate crisis is creating change and uncertainty. Participants were encouraged to explore the vulnerability of holding anxiety, and thinking, or naming, the unthinkable to find new ways of feeling into the future of climate and ecological crises and involves leaving professional egos outside of the door.

Figure 3 is a different view of the Hammersmith tube station installation, showing the entrance and a new perspective on the brightly lit train.

Figure 3

Seeing a different perspective. Source: Field and Lawn©, reproduced with permission.



Leaving professional egos outside and exploring vulnerability may not necessarily be easy or comfortable for coaching psychology, especially if Weinberg's (2022, p. 73) challenging question: 'Does coaching psychology have status anxiety?' is taken into consideration. The key argument behind Weinberg's question is that coaching psychology (and coaching generally) perceives itself, and wishes to be seen as, a widely valued practice; professional status is important, and this can lead to status anxiety. Swiss-born British author de Botton (2005) explains status anxiety as a universal anxiety that rarely gets mentioned directly. It refers to anxiety about what others think of us and about whether we are judged a success or not; which will clearly depend upon what criteria are used to define success. In regard to coaching psychology, Weinberg argues that status anxiety can

either: a) spur coaching psychologists on in their practice; or b) cause them to behave in ways that are perverse and detrimental, leading to:

High-cost coaching, encouraged by the accreditation systems that have implicitly and explicitly cultivated an ethos where one's *value as a coach is simply a function of what you can charge*. (Weinberg, 2022, p. 76, emphasis added)

We hope that this case study has provided a counterpoint to Weinberg's critique by showing how coaching with compassion, collaboration as equal thinking partners and pro bono work can spur practitioners to explore further the social value creation process and social impact of coaching. Our work has illustrated the indirect impact of pro bono coaching through critical reflection on a co-created coaching process, grounded in the work of the social enterprise Wipers, and their work with socially disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

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