

REVIEW PAPER

CLARITY: A case study application of a cognitive behavioural coaching model

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We confirm that the paper has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration in any other publication. However, please note that a section of the case study will be reproduced in a chapter to be published in 2019.

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe the CLARITY model of cognitive behavioural coaching in more detail, and to provide practical guidelines for its use in coaching. An extended coaching case study is included to demonstrate the application of the CLARITY model in performance coaching. Suggestions are made for further research to validate the CLARITY model and to explore its integration with solution focused coaching models and techniques.

Keywords: CLARITY, cognitive behavioural coaching, imagery, identity, solution focused coaching

Abstrait

Cet article a pour objectif de décrire plus en détail le modèle CLARITY de coaching cognitivo-comportemental et de fournir des directives pratiques pour son utilisation en coaching. Une étude de cas sur le coaching étendu est incluse pour démontrer l'application du modèle CLARITY au coaching de performance. Il est suggéré de poursuivre les recherches afin de valider le modèle CLARITY et d'en explorer l'intégration avec des modèles et des techniques de coaching axés sur les solutions.

Mots clés: CLARITY, coaching comportemental cognitif, imagerie, identité, coaching centré sur les solutions

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive behavioural coaching (CBC) has been defined as 'An integrative approach which combines the use of cognitive, behavioural, imaginal and problem-solving techniques and strategies within a cognitive behavioural framework to enable coachees to achieve their realistic goals' (Palmer & Szymanska, 2007: 86). CBC evolved from the therapeutic approaches of cognitive behavioural therapy (Beck, 1967; 1976) and rational emotive behaviour therapy (Ellis, 1962), for use with individuals, teams and groups on non-clinical issues and goals (Neenan & Palmer, 2001). It is based on the premise that "The way you think about events profoundly influences the way you feel about

them" (Neenan & Dryden, 2002: ix). Beck (1967; 1976) described the existence of an 'inner dialogue', whereby a self-critical voice within oneself expresses performance inhibiting as opposed to performance enhancing thoughts (Neenan & Palmer, 2001). Since the 1990s CBC has continued to develop, integrating concepts from problem and solution-focused coaching approaches (see Williams, Palmer & Edgerton, 2014; Dias, Palmer, & Nardi, 2017).

Ellis (1962; 1997) developed the ABCDE model, which describes how an 'Activating event' triggers 'Beliefs', and how it is these beliefs that lead to emotional, behavioural and/or physiological responses, or 'Consequences'. The coachee is encouraged to 'Dispute'

Table 1: The CLARITY model – suggested questions

Step/Phase	Phase 1: Identification	Phase 2: Generation of Alternatives
Context	What is the overall situation, problem, issue or concern? What is the context in which this is happening? Taking a step back, is there anything else you would add to the description?	What, if anything, might be changed about the situation?
Life event/experience	What is the specific event or experience that is causing you difficulty? What is it that you would like to change? Is there a specific past, present or anticipated future event that may be used as an example to explore this further? Try to recall that experience; imagine yourself in that moment, as if it's happening now.	Have there been experiences when you handled things differently? What was different? What actions did you take? What were you thinking and feeling? What was the impact of this? What learnings may be applied to the current situation?
Actions	What are you doing/ not doing? What else?	How else might you choose to act in this situation? What could you helpfully do differently?
Reactions (emotional, physical)	How are you reacting to this situation? How would you rate the strength of those feelings on a scale of 1 to 10? What physical, bodily reactions are you experiencing [breathing, heart rate, perspiration, thirst, other bodily sensations]?	Discuss the feelings and how these interrelate to other actions, physical reactions and thoughts. Acknowledge these feelings, accept them, and let them go. Breathing exercises and relaxation imagery may also be useful. When new cognitions are in place, re-assess the strength of the original feelings on the scale of 1 to 10.
Imagery and Identity	What images are you holding? In the moment, what do you see/imagine happening? How are you identifying with this situation? continue with it? What might be a more useful and accurate. What aspects of the situation do you not identify with? How do you see yourself?	Challenge unhelpful imagery: What is the evidence to support this imagery? What is the evidence to challenge it? To what extent does it make sense? To what extent is it helpful to you to image? Develop coping imagery to generate helpful (imperfect) images of success Discuss the common thinking error of 'labelling', and how this can lead us to act or avoid acting in a certain way. Complete the Big I exercise (Hauck, 1991; Neenan & Dryden, 2002) to demonstrate how this aspect of oneself is only a small part and is not a helpful global label for oneself. Completing a table of self-descriptions, each with an effectiveness rating 1-10, may also be useful. What task might you set yourself in which you can 'act as if' you hold that useful identity?
Thoughts (thoughts, beliefs, assumptions)	What thoughts are you having? What are you saying to yourself or others? In the moment, what do you believe to be true? What else are you thinking or believing? If the cognition causing difficulty were true, what would that mean? Ladder down to identify unhelpful thoughts, beliefs and assumptions.	Challenge unhelpful cognitions: What is the evidence to support it? What is the evidence to challenge it? To what extent does it make sense? How helpful is it to think this way? What might be a more useful and accurate thought/belief?
Your future choices	What learning, or insights do you take away from this exercise? What three things are you going to do differently? What might be the first step to make a change? What will be most beneficial to you to focus on? This may be about working with new beliefs or images, accepting feelings, or behaving differently.	

unhelpful beliefs, with the aim of identifying and adopting an ‘Effective new approach’ (Ellis, 1997). Palmer (2002, 2009) added F, ‘Future focus’ to the model, to facilitate coaching conversation around learning and next steps. The ACE model (Lee, 2003) represents Actions, Cognitions and Emotions. Edgerton developed the SPACE model (Edgerton & Palmer, 2005), representing Social context, Physiological reactions, Actions, Cognitions and Emotions.

Lazarus (1973) proposed the BASIC-ID model, identifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for achieving lasting therapeutic change, across seven distinct but inter-related modalities: Behaviour Affect, Sensation, Imagery, Cognition, Interpersonal relationships and Drugs/biology. The role of Imagery in shaping people’s responses to an event has received significant attention, particularly in the field of stress and stress management research, and techniques such Coping imagery and Goal-rehearsal imagery have been found to be highly effective for stress management (Lazarus, 1981; Palmer & Dryden, 1995; Palmer, 2008a; Palmer & Cooper, 2010).

In a separate field of research, the potential role of self-identity in predicting an individual’s behaviour has been highlighted and evidenced (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2006; Hamilton & White, 2008; Rise, Sheeran & Hukkelberg, 2010). Oyserman (2009) considers the concept of and evidence for identity-based motivation, whilst Murtagh, Gatersleben and Uzzell (2012) found threat to self-identity to be a contributing factor in resistance to change.

The CLARITY model is a seven-step CBC model that represents an adaptation of these other widely used and recognised REBT and CBC models (Williams & Palmer, 2010; Williams, Palmer & Edgerton, 2014). In a recent survey conducted for the Handbook of Coaching Psychology, 10.71% of coaches and 5.77% coaching psychologists responding to the survey reported using the CLARITY model in their coaching practice (Palmer & Whybrow, 2017). The acronym CLARITY represents seven important elements of the coaching conversation as follows (Williams & Palmer, 2010):

C	Context
L	Life event/experience
A	Action
R	Reaction
I	Imagery and Identity
T	Thoughts/beliefs
Y	Your future choice

A two-phased approach is recommended to facilitate the coaching conversation (Williams & Palmer, 2010). In the first phase of Identification, the coach encourages the coachee to describe the broader context and specific life event or experience that is causing them concern, to detail and note down all relevant actions/inactions, thoughts/beliefs, imagery and physiological and emotional responses, considering the ways in which they identify with the life event or experience, and to identify what is causing the most difficulty or concern. In the second phase, Generation of alternatives, the intention is to consider options for change, exploring ways of thinking and behaving differently, using Socratic questioning to challenge the logic, evidence and helpfulness of performance inhibiting elements and using CBC tools to generate alternatives.

Table 1 offers suggested coaching questions and probes for the seven steps of the CLARITY model. The CLARITY model may be utilised for coaching in a range of contexts including skills and performance, management and leadership, health and wellbeing, stress management and personal/life coaching. The remainder of this paper offers an extended practitioner case study to demonstrate how the CLARITY model may be used in stress management and performance coaching.

METHOD: A PRACTITIONER CASE STUDY

The coachee agreed to the anonymised content of the coaching engagement to be used for publication of the CLARITY coaching model. The face to face coaching sessions were recorded, and the recordings transcribed. Excerpts from the coaching transcripts and session notes are presented here with a brief description of the topics being discussed and of the coaching interventions used.

Phase One – Identification

Context

At the time of the coaching engagement the coachee was in a Director level role for an international company and was being considered for promotion. With the interview process forthcoming, the coachee sensed that her performance was continually being assessed, undermining her confidence, and leading to higher levels of stress.

Life event

The coachee was concerned about the need to deliver an upcoming presentation to a large-scale corporate audience. She

was anxious to appear credible when leading these presentations, and as such the prospect of doing so was starting to preoccupy her thoughts, keeping her awake at night and increasingly filling her with dread. Assessing the coachee's motivational state, it was clear she was in the planning and action stages of change: she was highly motivated to address how she was feeling and to find a way to prepare for and successfully deliver the presentation.

The coachee defined her goal as increasing confidence with making formal presentations, developing a more positive mindset and managing physiological and emotional responses. The coach shared a CLARITY model template (Williams & Palmer, 2010), which was used as a framework for discussion:

Coach: *Can you tell me more about the forthcoming presentation.*

Coachee: *I'm nervous about it because it is going to be quite a formal environment. I'm not used to presenting with a microphone standing up in a big formal situation, so that is adding to my worry... It's to a big external audience and will be very formal. The enormity of the situation is what makes me feel sick, I can feel the butterflies now!*

Coach: *Write those words down... You can capture the feeling sick and butterflies under the 'physiological reactions'. You said the enormity of the situation – how enormous is it?*

Coachee: *When you hear those words back, of course it isn't enormous. Actually, it is a relatively short presentation, 10 minutes, my boss will be there, and the content is not controversial so shouldn't lead to difficult questions.*

Coach: *These are good challenges you've made – note these alternative perspectives down in the next column.*

The coachee had very quickly been able to recognise exaggeration in her thoughts, challenging the 'enormity' of the situation and regaining some perspective on the size of the challenge at hand.

Actions, Reactions, Imagery/identity and Thoughts

In the CLARITY model, once the context and life event have been explored, the coach encourages the coachee to describe the situation, challenge or issue in more detail. The four elements of Actions, Reactions, Imagery/identity and Thoughts may be explored in any order, led by the natural focus and attention of the coachee. As the coachee describes what has happened, and their thoughts, feelings and imagery, the coach can encourage them to make notes in the relevant places on the CLARITY template. During phase one the coachee may well describe helpful alternatives that they already utilise effectively. These

may be usefully reflected back to the coachee and captured in the relevant section of the 'Generation of alternatives' column.

In the current case study, exploration of the situation highlighted key performance inhibiting thoughts (PITs) (Palmer & Cooper, 2010) and negative imagery that seemed to trigger the coachee's stress response:

Coach: *What would you say that you're doing or not doing in anticipation of the presentation?*

Coachee: *I'm probably trying not to think about it and when I do let myself think about it, I feel very, very anxious, so then I try to block the thought rather than dealing with it... I do feel a bit sick and have butterflies in my tummy and, I don't know how to describe it, but a feeling, a sort of rush... of adrenaline probably, just feeling kind of nervous.*

Coach: *Yes, do note all of that down.*

Coachee: *When I think about it I think 'It won't be good, but I just need to get through it'. And that's not a great sort of thing to be thinking. I'd rather be thinking, I'm going to be a bit nervous but it's going to be brilliant. It's going to be good enough, it's going to go well... and people are going to say well done at the end of it.*

Coach: *What you're saying links to the concept of 'good enough'... The idea of not striving for perfection... instead we strive for good enough... what are your thoughts about that?*

Coachee: *That's the thing. One of the other things I do sometimes think is, oh, no one will be interested in hearing what I'm saying because it's dull, and sometimes that makes me go through things a bit too quickly. Quite often, actually, people are surprisingly interested in some of those things... This audience, they do actually want to hear the numbers.*

Coach: *Let's note those helpful thoughts down under alternatives – they do actually want to hear the numbers.*

Coach: *What else happens when you think about delivering the presentation? Maybe you can get into that moment now.*

Coachee: *I imagine getting up from my seat which will be facing the screen... I imagine standing up and turning around to face the audience and then – eeeugh – oh my gosh.*

Coach: *Ok. Let's note that down... So, you just took a deep in-breath.*

Coachee: *Yes, quite terrified.*

Coach: *And what else is going on in that moment?*

Coachee: *I can feel my mouth getting dry and my hands feeling a bit sweaty and shaky.*

Coach: *So, we have the emotion of feeling terrified, and some physiological reactions there too.*

Coachee: And then I imagine having to speak and it being quite difficult to get the words out properly because I'm feeling nervous. I'm worried that then other people will pick up on the fact that I'm nervous, and that makes me more nervous.

Coach: So, there's nervousness. And you imagine yourself trying to speak and not being able to. You also describe being frustrated with yourself for being nervous.

Coachee: Yes, it's sort of, the difficulty to overcome it, and then feeling frustrated and thinking, oh gosh, I'm doing a bad job, but actually, I've got it in me to say it [the presentation], I've got it, it's just it can't quite come out properly. And I'm worried about what other people think. I'm worried about them noticing that I'm nervous and then that makes me feel more nervous. And probably then I think that I'm failing, and everyone must think I'm hopeless at my job.

Coach: Do write those thoughts and images down. They sound like more fundamental thoughts. If you remember we talked about trying to get to some of the roots.

Coachee: I definitely feel failure at something, it's a big inhibitor in my life. So, there are lots of things – I only want to do things if I can be brilliant at them and if I think I'm going to fail, I'd rather not try. That's my natural reaction. And obviously there are lots of things I have to do, because you can't just say no, but that is definitely my natural reaction. Always wanting to get everything right and be perfect and be the best.

Coach: Okay, let's note those thoughts down. I think there's something there about wanting to be perfect and the best, to get things right. In terms of emotion, there's the fear of failure you mentioned... This is common for high achievers. There's something called the fraud syndrome or imposter syndrome... the person thinks that they're not as good as people think, that they're going to be found out, when in fact there's a lot of achievement they can take credit for.

Coachee: Yes... I went to a high-achieving school, it was that kind of environment... It wasn't until I started work that I realised I was reasonably bright. I'd always felt average... These things now that we're talking about are things that affect not just presenting but my life generally. So, it is probably mainly about speaking, but it is, some of these things do hold me back in meetings... I'm getting better at it but earlier in my career I was completely crippled by worrying about when to say something in a meeting... this meant I never said anything because it had to be right. Absolutely insightful and brilliant for me to say it and so then I'd say very little. And then I'd feel pressure that I wasn't contributing and then that would become a horrible, cyclical process. I've got a bit better because now I'm more relaxed about saying things that aren't brilliant all the time. I also

think with seniority you feel more confident anyway... Whereas at the beginning you don't feel like that. But I still have that sometimes.

From a cognitive behavioural perspective, there was a lot of useful content in this opening dialogue. The process of the coachee noting down the thoughts, imagery, physiological responses and emotions on the CLARITY template enabled the coach and coachee to revisit these insights again, and to share a non-judgemental, objective viewpoint on them (Grant, 2016). For example, the coach was later able to reflect back the coachee's inference chain of thoughts; from thinking others can see she is nervous, to thinking she is failing and hopeless at her job; enabling the coachee to refute these thoughts as being neither helpful nor logical, and to generate alternatives. Perfectionism was also discussed, the concept of 'flexible thinking' introduced and the 'good enough' concept revisited, the latter of which became a useful mantra for the coachee in managing expectations of herself and others at work.

Solution Focused Coaching (SFC) (O'Connell, 2004) advocates the technique of seeking exceptions to the challenge or issue that might highlight relevant strengths and skills of the coachee. In this case study, the coach echoed the coachee's description that not speaking in meetings was something she had largely overcome:

Coach: What might have been different for you, in the previous presentation you mention, where you were feeling more confident?

Coachee: It was something that I knew quite a lot about. It's something they were all quite interested in, they were asking lots of questions. And I had the feeling of, 'I want to tell you about how much work I've done about it' and 'I want to make you feel confident'... I just felt enthusiastic about it and wanted to give them some comfort that we were looking after things.

Coach: It might be worth noting these things down over here under alternative thoughts, if you think they're useful for the presentation... you said, 'I want to tell people', 'I want to make you feel confident'.

Coachee: Yes... It's feeling passionate about what you're doing and wanting to share it with others.

Coach: Let's note that emotion down too, under alternative reactions.

By exploring what was different in this recent presentation, the coachee was able to note helpful alternative thoughts that reflect a motivational state of wanting to make the presentations.

On stepping back to overview the notes made on the CLARITY template, the coachee commented "there are some

positives [in the second column, generating alternatives], when I look at it like that it feels more balanced than it does in my head". In this instance the process of note taking was instrumental in highlighting existing strengths and performance enhancing thoughts, which became apparent through review of previous positive experiences and through the awareness raised during the first phase of the coaching conversation" (Grant, 2016).

The final step of the Identification phase of the model was to identify what was causing the most difficulty and disturbance:

Coach: *Let's focus now on what causes you the most difficulty in what we've talked about.*

Coachee: *I think it's the whole voice thing, that is definitely what worries me the most. Sometimes if I'm really nervous my breathing gets affected and then I worry about having to swallow... and my voice being affected. That's my biggest worry actually - people being able to see that I'm nervous through my voice... That's impossible to recover from. If I get to that point where I feel that nervous that my voice is a bit shaky or, I'm worried that I'm going to swallow at the wrong time or it's going to be obvious, then it's all over. I can't recover while I'm speaking if I'm thinking about that.*

Phase Two – Generation of alternatives

In the second phase of the CLARITY model, Generation of alternatives, the coach begins to explore and challenge the elements of the situation or problem causing the coachee the most difficulty, with the intention of helping them to generate alternative thoughts and actions:

Coach: *So, if the voice goes, it's all over. It will be impossible to recover from... [gentle smile] You might want to challenge that a bit.*

Coachee: *It's true!*

Coach: *Is it true?*

Coachee: *Perhaps. I do believe that. I think. It probably isn't true. But I am quite focused on that and that's obviously awful because the minute you start thinking about something that, then it is all over.*

Coach: *Let's imagine your voice does break. But if this belief that if that happens it's all over isn't true, what happens instead?*

Coachee: *Oh gosh, no, it's a disaster, that's the end of it! I don't know. Well, I suppose ... The best thing that could happen would be that I just forgot about it and took a deep breath, got on with it and did a good job, with more expression. Feeling more relaxed.*

Coach: *Note that coping imagery down. You say carry on with more expression?*

Coachee: *I think that physically helps with the voice. If you're concentrating on projecting your voice in a different way, then it can't be a quivering voice, you actively do something different with your voice.*

Coach: *What are you actively doing differently?*

Coachee: *I'd probably be breathing more normally, deliberately speaking more confidently and positively. More intonation, looking at people, using my hands more. Sounding more confident and authoritative. I almost believed in myself then!*

Coach: *I notice that you were also pacing your delivery then.*

Coachee: *And that links back to believing what I'm saying is interesting, because then it's easier to do all those things, because you do actually believe that they want to hear what you have to say.*

Coach: *Great. Have you captured all of that in terms of what this alternative response looks like?*

Coachee: *I think so - pacing words, emphasizing them, using hand gestures, intonation, looking at the audience, focusing on projecting my voice rather than letting something happen to it.*

Coach: *And the thought that 'they want to hear this'.*

Coachee: *Yes.*

Coach: *And you want to be the one to tell them?*

Coachee: *Yes.*

Through Socratic questioning the coach enabled the coachee to challenge the logic and evidence for her performance inhibiting thoughts. The coach took this opportunity to share the list of common thinking errors identified in CBC (Palmer & Szymanska, 2007). The thinking error of 'I can't stand it' or 'I can't handle it' was discussed ("If the voice goes, it's all over"). As the coachee continued to describe the thought process about her voice shaking, the coach was also able to explore the common thinking error of 'mind reading':

Coachee: *We've talked about the voice shaking and that's the worst of the physical signs, to be honest. It's probably all about other people. I'm worried about what other people will think rather than the physical symptoms that are happening to me... I can hear it in my voice and I'm sure other people can.*

Coach: *So that moment where you're thinking 'What are they thinking? They're thinking I'm not confident', to what extent do you know that they're thinking that?*

Coachee: *I don't know, no. I'm assuming that they are.*

Coach: *So, might it be more useful not to assume that?*

Coachee: *Yes, probably. Yes, it would probably be more useful to not*

think about them at all, actually, and just concentrate on other things.

Coach: Yes.

Coachee: And delivering it, rather than worrying about what those people think. That would probably be helpful.

Coach: Yes, especially as you said, you have an audience who want to hear what you're saying. Assuming what others are thinking is one of the common thinking errors, called mind reading.

Coachee: It's just pure speculation.

The coachee agreed to non-judgementally observe if/when she engaged in mind reading, and what impact that had on her confidence levels. Further dialogue highlighted the common thinking error of catastrophising, enabling the coachee to gain perspective by de-awfulising the situation:

Coach: What other aspects might you want to revisit and challenge, to generate alternatives?

Coachee: Doing it really well would be not feeling really anxious. To me that is the only thing that I feel really holds me back.

Coach: So, it's about feeling anxious and what impact this has – how it shows.

Coachee: Yes, exactly. And, if I'm being honest, the impact is probably – I do deliver better presentations when I'm feeling more confident. But the difference between when I'm feeling confident and when I'm not feeling confident is probably smaller in my performance than I perceive it to be, I would have thought. Because fundamentally I'm going to say the same words, I'm just going to be saying it in a slightly flatter tone or slightly more jittery or something. But fundamentally the words will be the same. It's not as if I ever go blank and don't have anything to say. It's all the delivery.

Coach: So, what you've just said there is that even if you are feeling anxious and it shows, it won't matter.

Coachee: It won't be – well no, it will matter, but it won't be awful.

Coach: Ok, it will matter but it won't be awful. Well that I think is worth noting.

The coach encouraged the coachee to consider the sequence of physiological signs to act as an early warning sign:

Coach: It might be useful to note the sequence, because they can act as your early warning signs. Do you have a feel for which happens first?

Coachee: Yes, the butterflies in the tummy. That's definitely first; feeling sick and butterflies. Then my throat going dry is the next thing. And then my voice.

The coach also asked the coachee to rate the emotions and physiological responses, revisiting these ratings during each coaching meeting to gauge progress towards confidence:

Coach: Monitoring emotions and physiological responses, labelling them, and rating on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is minimal and 10 is intense, can be a useful process to identify what the experience is and to gauge progress.

Coachee: Yes, I mean the butterflies are probably, in the worst moment... a six maybe? ... yes, and I'm feeling sick, that probably goes to about five. And the adrenaline rush is probably about four.

Coach: And I'd also written down anxious, terrified, nervous. Are any of those important too?

Coachee: Well the anxiety's probably the worst out of everything. Probably about seven... nervous is probably less, about five.

Coach: Okay, and then if we move to where you are now, acknowledging the highs and lows of the whole week, where would you say those ratings are now?

Coachee: I think the anxiety is still there, but it's probably gone down a couple of points. That's probably more like a five. And the nervousness again, you know, it's probably a four or a three. Butterflies, I have had moments, but again it's probably a four – so it probably has dropped a couple of points overall.

Coach: And the feeling sick?

Coachee: Yes, that's probably three.

Coach: Okay. How do you find that as a process in itself?

Coachee: Yes, that is useful. There have been ups and downs, definitely. To begin with I didn't have any positive thoughts about it at all. So, every time I imagined myself in the situation I felt horrible. Whereas now there are some moments on a bad day when I think 'can I get out of this?', you know, I still think that, and I still feel really nervous. But then I am definitely having some positive thoughts and images about it. So, there's a bit of correcting or a bit of slightly lessening the feelings. Even if it's just thinking 'I'm going to get up and actually I'm excited about this'... I'm quite excited that we have a positive story to talk about.

These ratings were revisited in a later session, which helped to identify important actions:

Coach: So, we've been rating the strength of some of the physiological and emotional responses. Would it be useful to revisit those ratings now?

Coachee: The butterflies are still there. So, they're probably a bit worse than they were before. Three or five or something. But I don't feel really

sick so that's probably close to a three. The anxiety's probably gone up to about a six. And nervous. I'm not so nervous, maybe three?

Coach: So, not so nervous, that's great. And for the butterflies and anxiety, what would you say are the key triggers for those going up?

Coachee: I think that's the lack of preparation. So, while I feel a bit less nervous in terms of having to do the presentation, the fact that I'm not quite where I wanted to be in terms of giving myself enough time to prepare is making me feel a bit anxious.

The coach revisited the concept of coping imagery and encouraged the coachee to generate an alternative, more helpful vision of preparing for the presentation:

Coachee: It'll probably be fine to begin with. It'll be nice to see everyone. We'll go through, do one run through, it'll all be fine and then there'll be forty minutes of people starting to come into the room and...

Coach: Yes, so what do you do from there?

Coachee: I'm just thinking, oh no, I'm going to be nervous and I'm going to have sweaty palms and a dry throat, and my voice is going to go, and I'll have butterflies in my tummy and be feeling physically very shaky and... I'm just waiting and by the time I start the presentation I'll be really, really nervous.

Coach: So, there's that image, of telling yourself you're going to feel all those things, which I think we've captured. But what would you like to see yourself do instead of that? What would you like to see yourself doing during that build up time before the presentation?

Coachee: I'd like to go through the rehearsal and for it to go well, and for me to feel confident about what I'm saying and then just be able to leave it and say, brilliant, I know this, this is going to be great. And then just sit down and not worry about it and get up and it'll be fine. Very optimistic!

Coach: But is that the start of an image that is more useful to you?

Coachee: I'd like to be able to leave it. I'd like to be able to rehearse... and then I'd like to be able to just park it and say, right, I know exactly what I'm doing; we've done a run-through and it's gone well and it's fine. I just need to stand up now and it'll come out. That's what I'd like to think.

Coach: Okay, yes. I like it. So, shall we keep working that image? I think there you've already got constructive thoughts, feelings and actions. I like what you said, 'and then park it'. That sounds assertive and in control.

Coping imagery for the actual delivery of the presentation was also developed, to counter-balance the negative imagery noted

early on in discussion, where the coachee stand ups, turns around and faces the audience:

Coachee: My major anxiety is that I turn around and sort of freeze.

Coach: Has that ever happened?

Coachee: Well I've never stopped. I mean, I don't think I've ever had a really bad situation where that's happened. My voice might be a little bit shaky at times. Or maybe I have to breathe at a slightly inappropriate time or something, but again, it's not really the end of the world, I suppose.

Coach: Okay. Write that down please [smile]. There's a couple of things there. Firstly, it's never happened.

Coachee: I never stopped a presentation because I can't speak.

Coach: Okay.

Coachee: There's always a first time [smiles].

Coach: Do you believe it's something that could happen?

Coachee: Well no, I don't...

Coach: Okay.

Coachee: I know I will try and talk... because I've never frozen in the past, but I'm worried that my voice will be shaky, and I'll have sweaty palms, and I'll be feeling really anxious and everybody will be looking at me. I don't particularly like being the centre of attention in that sort of situation.

Coach: So, what might you do? Let's assume for a minute that the voice does go a bit shakier in that moment of turning around and first speaking. What can you see yourself doing to cope with that and move on from that?

Coachee: ...I'm imagining myself feeling very comfortable with what I'm going to say. So even if my voice goes a little bit shaky, I'll know what words I'm saying next. So I don't have to worry about thinking about what to say, and I can just concentrate on just speaking clearly and hopefully talk my way through my voice being a little bit shaky. And just get in to it.

The coachee described having used mastery imagery to help her complete marathons. The coach highlighted this skill as a strength the coachee could now apply to presenting, using her visualisation skills to develop new coping imagery. This dialogue also reminded the coachee of the benefits of exercise for her health and wellbeing, and an action was taken to start running again.

At various points in the coaching conversation the coach took the opportunity to discuss the extent to which the coachee identified with the role of giving presentations:

Coach: To what extent would you see yourself as someone who delivers presentations? Is this something you identify with?

Coachee: I don't. No.

Coach: On a scale of 1-5 perhaps, where 1 is you don't identify yourself as someone who gives presentations, and 5 is you do?

Coachee: I suppose probably 3. I need to. I need to rather than I think I'm suitable to do it... I'd prefer not to and there are other people better qualified, I suppose.

Coach: Identity is something that has been found in some research to be quite a strong predictor in terms of whether we intend to do something. A classic example is going to the gym: and if you see yourself as a sports person, as a fit person, a physically fit person, you're far more likely to persist with gym-going. But if you see yourself as someone who's not fit or if you use those labels, you're less likely to do it. It might be interesting to consider, you're at the point of transition, stepping in to the new role and beginning to see yourself as someone who gives presentations.

Coach: In the Board meeting example, your language showed you motivated towards and identifying with the task; 'I want to tell people'.

Coachee: Yes.

Coach: It may be helpful to 'act as if' you see yourself as someone who gives presentations. Does that make sense?

Coachee: Yes, yes it does.

In a subsequent coaching session this concept of identifying with the role or task at hand was revisited when the coachee was describing some successful presentations in team meetings:

Coachee: I think I feel I'm more confident about what I'm saying because I've planned it. it's easier. I felt more authoritative I suppose. If I feel authoritative, tend to do more, you know, expression, I just feel more confident.

Coach: So how might you transfer that to the upcoming presentation. That sense of feeling authoritative?

Coachee: I should remind myself that I know this better than anybody else and I should prepare in the same way and so these are the four or five messages that I want to get across. I'm controlling the message that goes out for a reason. Because it's important that everybody gets it. Think of myself more as a leader rather than me just doing a presentation.

Coach: How do you want to think of yourself as Leader? You said authoritative? Anything else?

Coachee: It's authoritative, confident, a good role model. Knowledgeable.

Coach: It links back to how you see yourself, your identity.

Coachee: Authoritative is really important. I do know more about my area than everyone else.

Coach: And if there was one word or short sentence that you could use to remind yourself of this?

Coachee: I think 'authoritative'. It makes me want to sort of stand up, put my shoulders back and stand up straight and think, you know, I'm in charge of this. To think, I'm delivering this rather than this is something that's happening to me. Remembering I know more, I know this inside out.

Your future choice

The final element of the CLARITY model, 'Your future choice', provides an opportunity for the coach and coachee to step back, review the discussion notes, and to highlight key insights reached. The coach may ask the coachee solution-focused coaching questions around first next steps and intended specific, measurable actions. This is also an opportunity for the coach to provide initial positive feedback on the efforts and achievements of the coachee during the coaching and coaching session to date.

In the current case study, the coachee committed to actions following each coaching session. Table 2 provides a summary of the coachee's observations and the alternative thoughts, imagery and actions generated across two coaching sessions. First steps were to non-judgementally observe her confidence levels, thoughts, imagery and physiological/emotional responses across meetings and presentations, and to practice expression when presenting. Next steps were to practice new performance enhancing thoughts and to continue to build on the positive coping imagery.

RESULTS

The coachee was very engaged and committed to the change process, attending presentation skills training, practising the performance enhancing thoughts and coping imagery, monitoring her response states, re-engaging in exercise and utilising breathing exercises. She experienced significant reductions in her stress and anxiety levels in advance of, and during, the delivery of the presentation, for which she received positive feedback from the presentation audience and company Board. The coachee was successful in her job promotion, and has since reported that these larger, more formal presentations no longer cause her concern.

Table 2: CLARITY coaching model case study

Step / Phase	Phase 1: Identification	Phase 2: Generation of alternatives
C Context	Uncertainty over promotion, see presentation as part of interview.	See it as an opportunity.
L Life experience	Big external audience, very formal. Enormity of the situation.	Relatively short, not controversial. 10 minutes and my boss will be there to co-present. It will be well-scripted and rehearsed.
A Action / inaction	Worried about forgetting or saying the wrong thing.	Focus on expression, practice in presentations. Pacing, eye-contact, gestures, actively project voice. Sound confident and authoritative. Observe the level of prep that is useful. Read book on how to present.
R Reaction (Physiological; Emotional)	Anxious, terrified, nervous. Sequence of responses: 1. Sick 2. Butterflies 3. Dry mouth/swallowing 4. Sweaty. 5. Voice going (worst thing as then others know).	Describe as 'Twitchy' instead of anxious, as saying I'm anxious triggers other physical reactions. Monitoring emotions and physical reactions; Recognise early warning signs. Be enthusiastic, passionate.
I Imagery / Identity	Trying to speak, not being able to. Voice going. Image of standing up, turning around, facing audience – intake of breath, Oh my goodness! Voice shaky, sweaty palms. Freezing, forgetting. Image of build-up, just waiting, pacing.	New coping imagery of the build-up to the presentation: See myself prepare, and then park it. Image of taking deep breath and carrying on. Breathing. Getting though it and it being good enough. Good enough being good enough!
T Thoughts	Not very good at presentations, worry others will see I'm not confident. Worried it will be failure. Thinking 'I'm doing a bad job'. Worried what others will think, see I'm nervous and think I'm failing and useless at my job. If the voice goes that's it - impossible to get over. Want it to be perfect, the best. Want it to be right. Thinking it's not interesting; dull. Thinking audience is thinking this isn't interesting. Judged. Will get through it but it won't be good Thinking 'I will be nervous; my voice will shake'	I want to do this presentation. I have information I want to share with you. I want to make you feel confident. I know the words. I know exactly what I'm doing. It is interesting to this audience, it's what the audience want to hear. It will be good enough. Even in the worst case scenario, if the voice goes, it won't be awful. It won't be the end of the world.
Y Your future choices	1. Monitor helpful and unhelpful imagery, develop new coping imagery of the preparation time, and of delivering the presentation 2. Practice expression 3. Plan how to co-deliver with boss.	

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The CLARITY model provides an explicit opportunity to explore imagery and identity as part of a CBC conversation. Further academic and practitioner research is required to continue to understand the benefits of the model. The concept of self-identity has not previously been so prominent in CBC models. Further research is needed to understand its role in determining goal striving behaviour and the importance of exploring this in the context of coaching for behavioural change.

There is a significant body of academic and practitioner research combining cognitive behavioural and solution-focused coaching (O'Connell, 2004; Cavanagh & Grant, 2010) resulting in an evidence base for a solution-focused cognitive-behavioural (SF-CB) approach (Grant, 2003; Green, Oades & Grant, 2006).

Further research would be beneficial to consider how the CLARITY model could be used within a broader Solution-

focused, cognitive-behavioural coaching framework such as the PRACTICE model (Palmer, 2008b) or SOLUTION model (Williams, Palmer & O'Connell, 2011; O'Connell, Palmer & Williams, 2013). It is possible that the model could also be used within counselling and psychotherapy for assisting with performance anxiety related problems.

CONCLUSIONS

CLARITY is a relatively new CBC model, adapted and developed from other widely used and recognised multimodal, rational emotive and cognitive behavioural models. Initial feedback from the practitioner case study application is positive with regards to the usefulness of the model. Further academic and practitioner case study research on the CLARITY model would be beneficial to support or refute these findings.

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