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# Resilience

Life beyond disruption

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# Resilience

## Life beyond disruption

What are the unexpected blessings and opportunities that have emerged as a result of recent world events? How do we now connect to our communities and our world differently and more deeply? How has our perception of reality changed? What is possible now as we explore our ongoing growth, learning and development? With this opportunity in our changing world, if we are creating a NEW world that embodies all we believe in, what would that world look like? Join us as we explore our emergent reality and how coaches can meet client needs in this time of rapid and unexpected change.



# Team COACHING

## The value of collective intelligence in moving from chaos to new order

By Michelle Chambers, MED, CTPC, CHRL, CTD, CSODP  
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**T**eams all over the world have faced many challenges over the last 18 months, and yet we have also experienced and witnessed levels of adaptability, resilience and creativity that many would not have expected pre-pandemic. Our reality is emerging and unfolding before us, creating challenges and opportunities for team coaches to support their clients during this time of rapid change. Many unexpected opportunities have also emerged, enabling us as coaches to support our clients in different ways as they explore their growth, learning

and development as well in support of their new reality.

There is no question that many teams were unprepared for a remote work environment. Many team members experienced isolation without face-to-face connection with their managers and peers. They missed the informal opportunities in the office to connect and build relationships. Also, many leaders were unsure how to manage performance virtually. Some were more comfortable in managing their teams by overseeing them in the office as opposed to setting goals and coaching their staff virtually.

Many teams were forced to learn to adapt to new technologies such as video conferencing and collaboration software, where different norms and behaviours and the opportunity to address them emerged. Team members were working from home environments in which boundaries between work and home life were unclear. Hours of work extended beyond traditional working hours further encouraging disconnect amongst team members. Furthermore, many suffered burnout and work was increasingly done in silos versus effectively collaborating with others. Mental health issues continue to grow substantially.

As team coaches, we had to shift in changing our own mindsets on virtual team coaching and to encourage clients to do team coaching virtually, assuring them that they would achieve higher levels of team effectiveness just as they would have in face-to-face coaching. Team coaches too needed to adapt new technologies such as zoom, MS Teams and Mural to ensure coaching sessions were engaging.

Patience was required as many adapted to technology, low internet speeds and other disruptions. This was very visible in cross cultural coaching situations. Many team coaches initially chose Zoom over MS Teams as it enabled them to view more team members simultaneously and therefore enabled them to observe team dynamics amongst team members.

Team norms of “camera on” became established to support this. Team norms around communication were also established to support better interaction (we remember displaying a visual cue card, “you’re on mute” instead of verbalizing it endlessly during the early days of technology adaptation). Virtual technology also presented cost savings for organizations and the opportunity to connect more frequently.

Many team coaches also had to transition approaches and team coaching activities that were designed for face-to-face interaction to new ways of doing them virtually. The use of annotation, polls, chat function, break-out

rooms and collaboration whiteboards all became critical to enhancing team discussions and achieving team goals. Yet essentially, the art of team coaching – of creating generative dialogue by asking thought provoking questions – still remained the same.

Conditions of team effectiveness also remained the same, including team purpose, team norms, size of team, shared team processes etc. One of the things that did change was the amount of time allocated to team coaching. Team coaching, typically held in half-day to full-day sessions, was now being done in “sprints” and often in 45- to 60-minute sessions to support newly created teams or specific team objectives.

## Many unexpected opportunities have also emerged, enabling us as coaches to support our clients in different ways.

In addition, team coaches needed to support teams to intentionally build in “connection time” such as check ins, team socials, and more 1:1s amongst team members to address trust and relationship building and encourage more collaboration.

Many team members were recruited and oriented virtually, encouraging leaders and teams to think of different ways of bringing them into the team. Additionally, teams needed to address the changing needs of their stakeholder partners as they, too, adapted to disruption. Team coaches continued to encourage teams to think of new ways of adapting to these challenges and to be curious and creative in their approaches.

New ways of ensuring “all voices heard” became critical to ensure engagement in problem solving and commitment to action. One parti-

cular check-in we learned was the “grapevine” idea, where team members came prepared to share their perspectives about other teams and stakeholders, and share their needs or concerns with the team.

Finally, team coaches had the opportunity to observe the “energy” of the team and to ensure their clients were creating a positive culture for themselves including specific attention to building team resilience.

As many organizations move to hybrid work models, the need for team coaching continues to increase. For example, how do we as team coaches encourage our clients to develop norms, communication and decision-making practices to ensure all are included when some team members are more visually present than others?

Whether on site or remote, many have already adapted individual technology log-ons so that everyone is given an equal opportunity to share their ideas. Chat and break-out rooms also encourage those who are more process oriented or introverted to participate. Many teams we worked with also appreciated the individual reflection time built in and the opportunity to capture ideas on stickies in MURAL so that everyone’s thoughts could be gathered and addressed!

Team purpose has also increased in value as many teams realize that to effectively collaborate together, they need to have a “common and shared purpose” that inspires and engages the whole team. Team coaches can play a critical role in facilitating these and other processes such as the development of team norms to encourage teams to address their desired behaviours and accountabilities as a team.

This also increases trust and relationship building, which are more critical when some members are working remotely. The disruption also brought opportunities for leaders to really get to know their team members, strengths and challenges. This presents a great opportunity to do a “team reset” and encourage teams to align around their value, purpose and goals. •

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— Dr. Julie Donley, EdD, MBA, RN, PCC



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