

# Peer Coaching Program: Overview

## THE SET-UP

1. You should schedule a minimum of 45 minutes for one-way coaching. That is, each of you should receive a minimum of 45 minutes of coaching. You may schedule your two sessions back-to-back or at different times.
2. To get the maximum benefit, you should each have a coaching session every two weeks (e.g. you receive 2 coaching sessions per month) between now and the next retreat.
3. Both of you should be in a space free from distraction and interruption – one that supports deep reflection and being present with each other. Privacy is also important so you feel safe talking about any subject.
4. Most coaching will likely happen over the phone, but if you happen to live or be in the same location, in-person can be an added treat.
5. The roles of ‘coach’ and ‘person being coached’ should be clearly delineated. In other words, it’s not simply a conversation. Have your **Role of the Coach and Tips for Getting Coached** worksheets handy to reference before your session.
6. For the coaching to work, it’s absolutely essential that people feel space to discuss anything and everything. The ground rule of confidentiality established at Rockwood trainings applies to the coaching session: *“What’s said here, stays here.”*

## THE FIRST SESSION

1. Affirm the ground rule of confidentiality.
2. Share expectations:
  - Overall, what you hope to get out of peer coaching
  - Preferences for being coached: what tends to work for me and what doesn’t
3. Discuss logistics: timing of calls, etc.
4. Set up several sessions. Setting up appointments can be one of the greatest challenges to successful peer coaching. Schedule a number in advance. Don’t leave the first call without doing this.
5. Review your learning contract and your goals from the last retreat. Identify the major things you would like to be working on over the course of the peer coaching.

## IMPROVING YOUR COACHING

Coaching is a critical leadership skill. Apart from the direct value received by the 'client', our peer coaching is a great opportunity to practice and improve our skill as coaches. At the end of your sessions, take a few minutes to evaluate how things went and what you can each learn to improve your coaching:

- **Clients:** give feedback to your coaches about what was most helpful, and what was less helpful.
- **Coaches:** talk about your experience as coach, what worked, and explore areas for improvement next session.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF PEER COACHING

1. **Be prepared!** Make sure to review your **Role of the Coach** and **Tips for Getting Coached**.
2. **Clients:** take charge of the coaching. If you're not getting what you need, take responsibility. Raise your questions, concerns, and dissatisfactions with your coach. Both of you work together to keep improving the quality of the peer coaching experience.
3. Maintain regularity of contact. If your coach is being unavailable or not keeping their appointments, have a courageous conversation.

I'm sometimes surprised to hear complaints from participants about their peer coaches that they never raised with the person directly. Your peer coaching needs to be a place where you can be authentic. Step up to it!

4. In between your formal meetings, it's nice to sometimes check in on each other via e-mail or phone . . . especially if you know something important or difficult is up for your partner. Offer them your support.
5. A challenge you may possibly have to confront:

What if the peer coaching really isn't working? What if I had courageous conversations and really tried to make it work, but I'm just not getting value out of the coaching? . . .

Why don't you suck it up, pretend things are O.K. and endure it until it's over, meanwhile be passive-aggressive and avoid making appointments?

No—seriously—consider dealing directly and authentically with the situation. Life is short. There's lots to do.

Have another courageous conversation: end the peer coaching early, learn what there is to learn, and try again with a new partner in the next session.

## ENJOY YOUR PEER COACHING!

It is a great blessing to have someone in your life who's there for you, someone who is also an experienced leader with whom it's safe to talk.

Bring your best to this relationship so that you can reap the full benefits of this opportunity.