

WELLNESS COACHING

the new approach

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Well what is wellness coaching?

Coaching has become a normal part of the corporate scene in just the last 15 years. Executive coaching is now firmly established as a normal part of companies' employee personal-development programs.

Coaching is a collaborative partnership that provides inspiration, structure and accountability to help clients achieve their goals more effectively. It is now being applied to health, fitness and wellness goals as well as work behaviours.

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Coaches move people from potential to achievement by facilitating change.

In business, it is recognised that the best performers have often got the support of another person who recognises their unique employment potential.

Coaching is a professional alliance that empowers both personal and professional success. Wellness focuses on supporting people in lifestyle behaviour change and coaching excels at helping people change behaviour.

It is action-orientated, yet takes the form of a powerful line of questioning that is often enough to inspire the client to create change in their health behaviours. “What are you going to do about it?” is the message, rather than “Take my advice”.

Why would a person need wellness coaching?

- Demands of every day life have never been greater. We are expected to do more, know more, communicate more and work more (why else would we



carry all these mobile devices?).

- The vast array of wellness guidelines, products and services can leave busy people more inclined to do nothing rather than risk making an uninformed choice.
- The challenge of making a change, such as personal obstacles, resistance and ambivalence.
- Histories of repeated failures, which have led to a lack of belief in themselves.

Who becomes a wellness coach?

Wellness coaches are health, fitness, and mental-health professionals who have also completed wellness coach training and obtained certifications from leading organisations such as Wellcoaches Corporation, in partnership with the American College of Sports Medicine.

Wellness Coaching Australia offers workshops and seminars based on the Wellcoaches program and can provide executive wellness coaches to companies who require their services.

So how does it work?

The best way to explain how wellness coaching works is to look at the following case study.

Employee Jake had heard about a program offered by his company that assigned Wellness coaches to help staff manage their health. After deciding to try it, he completed a health questionnaire and was partnered with Susan. Susan was a Wellness coach who had a health and fitness background and had retrained in coaching psychology and practical communication skills.

Jake started the program slowly, with an initial exercise regimen that called for a total of three 30-minute walks each week. He eventually worked up to exercising four to five times a week in 45-minute sessions.

To fit the exercise in, Susan took a good look at Jake's schedule and designed a plan in which he would make exercising a priority and not an afterthought. In this way, exercise gradually became more of a routine in Jake's life, as it was when he was younger.

Together, they also began to improve Jake's diet by introducing healthier options, better hydration and regular eating patterns. Stress played a major part in Jake's working day and he began to learn techniques for reducing stressful

thoughts and physical sensations. Impulsive, comfort eating soon stopped.

With each session, Jake's progress was recorded and he was accountable to Susan for performance of the goals he had set for himself.

Six months later, Jake has met Susan only once. The other sessions were conducted on the phone.

The advantages of wellness coaching

- Coaching focuses on the "thinking" processes that produce change.
- The client is regarded as the expert about what works best for them, not the coach. The coach helps the client create structure to achieve objectives.
- Expert advice is offered only when the client cannot come up with his or her own answers.
- Many clients find it is not intrusive or intimidating.
- Changes last longer.

The future of wellness coaching

The intersection of coaching with the wellness industry will soon create a demand for the "coaching approach" to be available in a variety of delivery modes, such as online informative coaching, tele-coaching with an individual coach, in-person coaching and group coaching for people with similar goals.

Wellness coaching will be very similar to the growth in Personal Training. We believed that people needed trainers who would provide one-on-one support with a high skill level and that clients would pay for that service. They did. Wellness coaching will slowly be taken up by leading health clubs and it will be a new service that can be chosen as an option.

Wellness coaching is a methodology directed to the whole person, not just physical health, but to all aspects of living well.