

**Coaching Tip of the Month for Staff**

**Putting Powerful Questions into Action**

**** **Scenario:** During emotionally charged moments, keep questions **neutral**.

**Powerful Questions:**

Instead of: “Are you angry?” … Ask: “How do you feel?”

**Why it works:** Asking “are you angry” carries with it some explicit assumptions. You assume you know the participant’s feelings. These “loaded” questions are less powerful than neutral questions. Effective coaches give the participant space to fully drive the conversation and avoid including their own perceptions and biases whenever possible. This leads to greater discovery and growth for participants.



**Scenario:** Ask **strength-based** questions early during your standard check-ins.

**Powerful Questions:**

Whatis a recent success that you have experienced?

Given our work so far, what have you felt best about?

**Why it works:** It is important to focus on crisis issues. But if the participant is ready for coaching in another area of their life, build on areas of strength. Allowing areas of momentum more “air time” has many positive effects. First, both you and the participant can learn about hidden opportunities that may not be leveraged to the fullest. Most importantly, the participant leaves the conversation with more hope that their life could to move in a positive direction. Remembering their accomplishments can help participants push through the hard times and set-backs.

**Scenario:** When working on goal setting, ask open-ended questions that encourage the participant to get very **specific**.

**Powerful Questions:**

“Which programs, specifically, would you sign up for?”

“What are you going to do today to get started on that?”

**Why it works:** When you are tempted to be directive, ask these types of questions instead. These questions help participants get practical, plan specific next steps, envision themselves actually doing the hard work, consider road blocks and consider what information you might have that they need.