



Submodule 5.2 - Establishing a Trusting Relationship with the Client

The bond of trust is the beating heart of coaching, the fertile ground where the client's journey can flourish. Without trust, there can be no real openness, authentic sharing, or engagement in the process of change. That is why establishing a trusting relationship with the client is an absolute priority for the coach, from the very first moments of the encounter. In the context of grief coaching, this trust alliance takes on a particular dimension, as it must offer bereaved individuals a safe emotional space and unconditional support, during a period of vulnerability and profound upheaval.

To establish a trusting relationship with the client, the GRIEF COACH must first and foremost embody a benevolent, empathetic, and authentic presence. This means being fully present to the other, deeply listening and unconditionally welcoming what they are experiencing and who they are. This is a presence that does not seek to judge, interpret, or direct, but rather to understand and value the client's unique experience. For example, when a client arrives in tears at the first session, the coach can gently welcome him and say, "I'm here for you, take the time you need, you are safe here." This simple phrase, said with sincerity and warmth, can help the client feel heard and supported, and be more willing to open up.

Confidentiality is another pillar of the trust relationship. The coach must clearly explain the ethical framework that guarantees professional secrecy, within the limits of the law. He must reassure the client that everything shared in the sessions will remain strictly confidential, except where legally required otherwise. This ethical commitment allows the client to feel safe discussing sensitive and delicate topics, without fear of exposure or judgment. For example, at the first session, the coach might tell the client, "What you

confide in me here will stay between us, this is a protected space where you can express yourself freely, without taboo or shame."

Empathy is another essential skill for building a trust relationship. It involves putting oneself in the client's shoes, feeling and understanding their emotional experience, without living it for them. This is a form of emotional resonance that allows the client to feel deeply understood and validated in their experience. In grief coaching, empathy is crucial in order to accommodate the intense and sometimes contradictory emotions of the bereaved, without startling or diminishing them. For instance, if a client expresses their anger at the doctors who failed to save his wife, the coach can empathetically reflect: "I sense how much you are angry with them, and it's so understandable in your situation. You have a right to this anger, it's part of your grief."

Authenticity is another key to the trust relationship. It entails the coach being genuine, consistent, and transparent in their posture and interventions. This is a form of congruence between what the coach thinks, feels, and expresses, that inspires trust and respect. The coach does not play a role, does not hide behind a professional façade, but dares to be himself in the relationship, with his strengths and limitations. For instance, if the coach is moved by the client's story, he can share it simply: "What you're telling me deeply affects me, I admire your courage in this ordeal." This authenticity encourages a human and frank relationship, conducive to mutual trust.

Reliability and consistency are other ingredients of the trust relationship. The coach must be reliable in his commitments, respect the session framework, and keep his promises. He must also be consistent in his posture and interventions, aligned with the objectives and needs of the client. This reliability reassures the client and permits him to rely on the coach like a stable and caring reference point, during a chaotic emotional period. For example, the coach can strive to be punctual, not to cancel the sessions at the last moment, and to follow the main thread of the exchanges while adapting to the client's pace. This consistency reinforces the client's sense of safety and continuity.

Finally, the trust relationship is built through the duration and regularity of the exchanges. It's a bond that is woven session after session, throughout the client's sharing and progress. The coach must make sure to maintain and deepen this alliance throughout the accompaniment, always listening to the client's needs and feedback. He can propose regular assessments to adjust the relationship and the process, celebrate advances, and clarify challenges. For example, during a review session, the coach can ask the client: "How do you perceive our collaboration so far? What's helping you the most in our discussions? Is there anything you would like to change or deepen?" This feedback allows for a lively and evolving relationship, serving the client's path.

In sum, establishing a trust relationship with the client is the foundation of coaching, and even more so in accompanying bereaved individuals. It is a subtle and demanding art,

requiring the GRIEF COACH to embody qualities of presence, empathy, authenticity and reliability, within an ethical and caring framework. By patiently weaving this trust alliance, the coach offers bereaved individuals a safe and nourishing haven, where they can rest, share and rebuild, respecting their pace and uniqueness. The trust relationship then becomes the leitmotif of accompaniment, the foundation on which the client and the coach can lean to journey together towards healing and resilience, in the face of grief and beyond. It's a profoundly human and transformative bond, honoring the vulnerability and strength of each person and leading the way to a renewed life, even in loss.

Key points:

- The trust relationship is essential in grief coaching to offer a safe emotional space and support to bereaved individuals.
- The coach must embody a caring, empathetic, and authentic presence, welcoming the client without judgment and valuing their unique experience.
- Confidentiality is a pillar of the trust relationship, assuring the client a space where they can express themselves freely.
- Empathy allows the coach to understand and validate the client's emotional experience, especially the intense emotions associated with grief.
- The coach's authenticity, consistency, and transparency inspire trust and respect in the relationship.
- The coach's reliability and consistency reassure the client and offer them a stable point of reference in a period of emotional chaos.
- Trust is built over time and through regular exchanges, by maintaining attentive listening to the client's needs.
- Establishing a trust relationship requires the coach to embody presence, empathy, authenticity, and reliability qualities, within an ethical and caring framework.
- This trust alliance becomes the foundation on which the client can lean to journey towards healing and resilience in their grieving process.