



Coaching, therapy, and counseling are three support approaches that all aim to help individuals overcome their difficulties and achieve their goals. However, these practices show significant differences in terms of framework, methods, and purposes.

Therapy mainly focuses on resolving psychological or emotional problems, often rooted in the person's past. It aims to alleviate psychological distress, to understand and heal old wounds that may hinder the individual's current functioning. The therapist, usually a psychologist or psychiatrist, uses specific techniques from various currents (psychoanalysis, cognitive-behavioral therapies, systemic, etc.) to help the patient explore their history, emotions, and thought patterns. Therapy often involves a long-term process, with regular sessions over several months or years.

Counseling, on the other hand, focuses more on providing information, recommendations, and solutions to a specific problem. The counselor, an expert in a particular field (legal, financial, marital, career guidance, etc.), analyzes the person's situation and provides advice and concrete action plans. The relationship between the counselor and the client is usually punctual and centered on a problem to be solved. The counselor shares their knowledge and experience to guide the person in their choices but does not necessarily accompany them in the implementation of the proposed solutions.

Coaching distinguishes itself from therapy and counseling by its pragmatic aim and focus on the present and the future. As discussed in the previous sub-module, the coach is not an expert giving advice, but a facilitator who helps the client clarify their goals, identify their resources, and implement concrete actions to achieve their goals. Coaching relies on the client's abilities and potential, considering them as the expert of their own life.

The coach uses active listening techniques, questioning, and feedback to stimulate the client's reflection and awareness. They encourage the client to step out of their comfort zone, experiment with new behaviors, and develop their responsibility and autonomy. Coaching is generally shorter than therapy, with sessions spaced over a few months and focuses on personal or professional development goals.

Let's take the example of a person suffering from social anxiety that hinders their ability to form relationships. In therapy, they could explore the origins of this anxiety, perhaps related to difficult experiences in their childhood, and work on the associated emotions and beliefs. A counselor might suggest relaxation techniques or strategies for dealing with social situations. In coaching, the focus would be on defining concrete goals, like daring to start a conversation with a person per week, and on developing relational skills like self-assertion.

It is important to note that coaching, therapy, and counseling are not incompatible, but can indeed be complementary depending on each one's needs and life moments. Some issues will require therapeutic work before benefiting from coaching. In other cases, a person may alternate between periods of coaching to achieve specific objectives and therapy periods to deepen their self-knowledge and address deeper issues.

The relationship coach must be able to identify the limits of their field of intervention and refer the client to a therapist or counselor when necessary. These could be situations where the person presents confirmed psychological disorders (depression, anxiety disorders, addictions, etc.), unresolved traumas, or issues that go beyond the coach's skills. Collaboration between coaches, therapists, and counselors, within confidentiality guidelines, can be a valuable asset for providing comprehensive and tailored support to each person.

Key points:

- Coaching, therapy, and counseling are three distinct support approaches that aim to help individuals overcome difficulties and achieve their goals.
- Therapy focuses on solving psychological or emotional problems, often rooted in the past, and is usually a long-term process.
- Counseling focuses on providing information, recommendations, and solutions to a specific problem, with a typically punctual relationship between the counselor and the client.
- Coaching distinguishes itself by its pragmatic aim, focus on the present and future, and its facilitating role in helping the client clarify their goals and implement concrete actions.
- The coach uses active listening techniques, questioning, and feedback to stimulate

reflection, awareness, and the client's autonomy development.

- Coaching, therapy, and counseling can be complementary depending on each individual's needs and life stages.

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