

It's good to talk

Dr Brian Hemmings outlines the benefits of peer mentoring

The PGA professional needs a wide range of practical knowledge and competencies plus, because of the variety of people they meet, high level communication skills to be a successful coach.

Furthermore, he or she must continue to strive for new knowledge and innovative skills that will impact on the delivery of their coaching programmes and lessons to meet the changing needs of players.

However, while golf now has a more established coach education/development programme as a result of the PGA's input, the use of peer mentoring is relatively rare.

Peer mentoring, at its simplest, is a process whereby two coaches meet regularly (usually monthly) for one to two hours to discuss their coaching practice, exchange views and ideas, especially the current challenges and issues they face with specific players and situations.

This type of mentoring is suggested to promote good practice in the psychology professions and is mandatory to maintain professional registration.

It has also been widely adopted in other sports where it is viewed as a sound approach to promoting excellence among coaches through increasing positive change, engaging energy, imagination and commitment, and by instilling resourcefulness.

For the PGA professional, it may also offer another viable form of activity for continued professional development (CPD).

Why does regular peer mentoring work?

- It helps the coach to assess strengths and

weaknesses before forming ongoing plans for personal development

- It identifies the most relevant challenges and opportunities facing the coach
- It provides guidance on how to influence and manage different pupils and players at different times
- It gives impetus to the coach to explore and exchange new ideas
- It enables coaches to use self-reflection to inform their coaching practice
- It provides an ongoing relationship to discuss individual coaching issues

How could I start this process?

- Talk to a like-minded coach locally
- Choose somebody who you feel is a good match to you in age/experience; someone you respect as a coach
- Timetable a regular one to two hour slot on a monthly basis to have a sit down discussion/phone call/practical session at a convenient venue (perhaps away from your club to avoid interruptions/distractions)
- Avoid playing together initially as this is time-intensive and might not be conducive to in-depth discussions/demonstrations

So why not give peer mentoring a go, it could transform your coaching practice!



Dr. Brian Hemmings has been lead psychologist to England golf for more than a decade and helped develop the mental skills of the likes of Ross Fisher, Danny Willett, Tom Lewis, David Horsey and Chris Wood.

He is also the author of *Mental Toughness for Golf: The Minds of Winners* and a regular presenter on the PGA's CPD programme. To that end he has devised a highly-regarded online Golf Psychology Coaching Certificate course that carries 100 CPD points. Because it is online, the course can be completed at home – all that is needed is a player to work with.

For full details log on to www.golfpsychologycoaching.co.uk

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