



Practical Guide for finding a coach for your ADHD

This guide provides information to those who would like to know more about ADHD Coaching and possibly want to work with an ADHD Coach.

Existing treatment for ADHD in Europe

Some countries in Europe can provide suitable treatment for adults with ADHD; even some coaching. In other countries, recognition and treatment is still rarely available. A most common treatment for ADHD is pharmacological treatment, access to other options differs per country, despite evidence-based research confirming that 'Multimodal Treatment' accounts for the highest efficacy in treating ADHD. The reason for this is, not lack of knowledge, but a lack of resources. Multimodal treatment is when more than one type of method/treatment is applied at the same time.

ADHD Coaching can be effectively applied as a stand-alone method or used as part of a multimodal package involving various treatment methods. For example; medication and ADHD Coaching, or psychotherapy and ADHD Coaching. Two or three of the methods can be used at the same time as parts of a treatment plan. Some countries have official guidelines for treating ADHD.

Adults with ADHD

Approximately 60-70% of children with ADHD will have persisting symptoms into adulthood. This means there are adults who no longer meet the criteria for a diagnosis when their symptoms will have changed as they've transitioned into adulthood. It does not mean, however, that they no longer have impairing challenges. There are, obviously, many adults with ADHD who can significantly benefit from ADHD Coaching.

What is ADHD Coaching?

ADHD Coaching is a form of life coaching where the coach is specialised in ADHD. It has emerged as a profession during the last 25 years. According to The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) ADHD Guidelines:

"Coaching is an intervention that aims to help people with ADHD identify and draw on their personal strengths as well as to negotiate their problems and cope with life on a daily basis. The coaching relationship has a collaborative focus with the coach and client working together in partnership. The aim is to change old behaviour patterns by developing new ones, as well as to identify personal goals and generate strategies to counter potential obstacles to achievement and success"

ADHD Coaching is a psycho-educational and a psycho-social method where clients learn about themselves, their diagnosis and how it affects their functionality in daily life. The client learns how to apply individually customised tools and coping strategies to lessen the consequences of symptoms. ADHD Coaching is pragmatic, solution-focused and strength-based. ADHD Coaching aims to support the client towards finding strategies, building skills and empowers them to manage ADHD symptoms and traits better; it also explores and identifies the client's areas of strengths and passion. Compared to psychotherapy it's focus is the present and the future, rather than the past. ADHD Coaching is clearly distinguished from other interventions and methods such as psychotherapy, mentoring, supervision, counselling and teaching.

Who can benefit from ADHD Coaching?

Adults who have been diagnosed with ADHD or not been diagnosed yet, but who identify themselves as sharing similar traits and challenges as someone with ADHD.

Experience and qualifications of an ADHD Coach

An ADHD Coach can have had specialised professional ADHD Coach training, or may have received training as a generic life-coach and in other ways have acquired additional knowledge and experience within the field of ADHD and ADHD Coaching.



Practical Guide for finding a coach for your ADHD

The client-coach relationship

The coach-client relationship is a collaborative partnership where the client and coach work together towards pursuing the client's goals. It is built on mutual trust and respect where the ADHD coach regards the client as always being resourceful, whole and capable. ADHD Coaching can only be beneficial when clients voluntarily participate in the process. The coach follows the client's agenda during ADHD Coaching sessions and throughout the coaching relationship. An ADHD Coach may make suggestions of appropriate strategies and effective systems that will assist the client in achieving their goals. The ADHD Coaching conversation takes place in a calm and safe environment. It has an outer structure at the same time as it is totally adapted to the client. It is important that the client and the ADHD Coach are a good match, so that they can communicate well and work together. If the coach or the client do not find the coaching relationship beneficial for the client anymore, the coaching relationship should be terminated and the coach should try to find another ADHD Coach for that client (if that is the client's wish).

A well-educated ADHD Coach should also know when it is necessary to refer the client to other mental care professionals, or when to bring up the case in his/her supervision. The ADHD Coach should work towards the client's autonomy so that the client is not dependent on the coach.

The coaching agreement

Before ADHD Coaching sessions start, a coaching agreement should be established where the coach and client together:

- state the overall goals, plans and purpose for the sessions
- agree on duration, frequency and cost
- decide how the sessions are held; over the phone, meeting in person, over video-conference (or a combination of these).

In each coaching session, there is also an agreement on what the goal for that particular session is. This goal should be initiated by the client and not by the coach. The coach is there to support the client to articulate and clarify the goal for the session.

What can you expect from an ADHD Coach?

An ADHD Coach should be:

- Non-judgmental and neutral, with the client's best interest and wishes at heart.
- Highly knowledgeable of ADHD and co-existing conditions.
- Up to date on new research regarding ADHD and share only evidence-based facts.
- An active listener; with a deep understanding of how ADHD may have been impacting the client.
- Ethical at all times and follow rules of conduct (such as confidentiality).
- Encouraging and supporting the client with strategies to keep momentum and stay motivated on the client's objectives.

What to expect from ADHD Coaching?

When working with an ADHD Coach a client can expect to learn more about him/herself and his/her ADHD; meaning how ADHD symptoms and traits are manifested and presented individually in the client. ADHD Coaching as a psycho-educational and psycho-social intervention, can be very pragmatic when collaborating to find new strategies and routines tailored to each person, enabling them to achieve the desired outcomes.

ADHD Coaching can also be about the client's wish for clarifications and strive towards change in behaviour, communication skills, thinking patterns and also exploring options. Whatever the client's goals and aspirations are - the ADHD Coach is there for the client as a valuable support in finding their own solutions that can work for them.



Practical Guide for finding a coach for your ADHD

An ADHD Coach may also provide other services apart from ADHD Coaching, such as:

- Lecturing, training and workshops regarding ADHD
- Supervision, consultation, advice/training for care-providers working with people who have ADHD.
- Sharing general information to schools, employers, managers and colleagues regarding appropriate accommodations for ADHD.

Would you like to work with an ADHD Coach?

If you would like to go ahead with learning more and also find the right ADHD Coach for you; here are some questions you can ask a prospective ADHD Coach. You can contact more than one and ask them the questions that are relevant to you.

Possible questions you could ask the ADHD Coach

About the coach:

1. How long have you been coaching people with ADHD?
2. What is your personal/private experience of ADHD?
3. What education did you take related to ADHD and ADHD Coaching?
4. What made you decide to become an ADHD Coach?
5. How long have you been working as an ADHD Coach?
6. How many clients have you previously worked with as an ADHD Coach?
7. Who are you accountable to? (a relation with a multidisciplinary team, an employer, a professional network or an association; or taking part in structured supervision)

About the coaching:

7. What can I expect from you as my ADHD Coach?
8. Do you specialise in a particular area of ADHD Coaching or have a specific age group you often work with?
9. What do I commit to as your client?
10. What are your commitments as my ADHD Coach?
11. What related organisation are you a member of?
12. How do you stay updated on research and continuous education regarding ADHD and ADHD Coaching?
13. How do you work with clients? meet in person? over the telephone? video calls?

About the terms:

14. How much do you charge per session/package of sessions?
15. How do I pay and what is the payment scheme?
16. What happens if I need to terminate our agreement before time?
17. How many sessions do you usually recommend to people? What frequency?
18. What if I have to cancel one session at short notice?
19. What happens if I miss a session without notice to you?
20. What about your confidentiality?
21. What are your working arrangements like? Are you working independently for yourself or are you employed?

This guide is made for ADHD Europe by the coaching-committee:

Hans van de Velde (chair), Marie Enback, Linda Fox, Beverley Nolker, all experienced coaches who work with ADHD.

For more information : Hans.van.de.Velde@adhdeurope.eu