GROUP COACHING HQ®

The DOLIX Model®

A Research-Based Framework for Transformative Group Coaching

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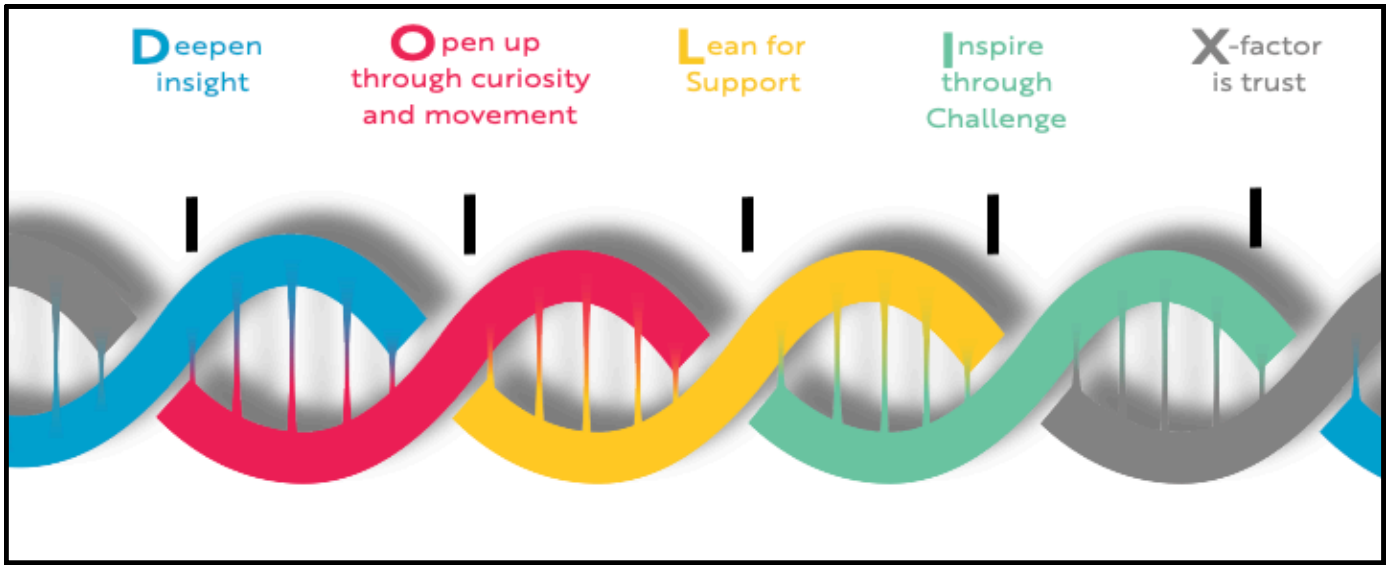

Overview

The DOLIX Model® is a dynamic, interconnected framework that identifies 5 essential actions for cohesion and transformation in group coaching settings:

Deepen (insight)
Open (Curiosity and Movement)
Lean (Support)
Inspire (Challenge and Storytelling)
X-Factor (Trust)

Grounded in psychological safety research, adult learning theory, and coaching best practices, this model helps coaches intentionally design sessions that foster connection, transformation, and impact.

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D – Deepen Insight

Definition: Members deepen self-awareness and internal clarity.

Key Outcome: Cognitive transformation and reflection.

Research Base:

- Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory highlights critical reflection as a key to adult learning and mindset shift.
- Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Insight emerges from concrete experiences and reflective observation.

Practices:

- Encourage reflection with peer coaching activities.
- Ask questions like "What are you learning about yourself from this conversation?"
- Use reflection prompts between sessions.

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O – Open Up through Curiosity and Movement

Definition: Members engage openly, fueled by genuine inquiry towards each other creating forward action.

Key Outcome: Exploration through using coaching skills and behavioral change.

Research Base:

- Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory identifies curiosity and autonomy as key motivators.
- Motivational Interviewing principles affirm that change begins with curious, non-directive questioning.

Practices:

- Encourage the group to ask "What else?" and "How?" questions vs. "Why"
- Use the participants' metaphor or creative tools to unlock exploration.
- Help participants to go from advice to question.
- Prompt members to articulate actions at different times in the session, not just at the end.

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L – Lean for Support

Definition: Members remember, reflect, and cheer each other's journeys.

Key Outcome: Emotional connection and belonging.

Research Base:

- Social Constructivism: Learning occurs through collaboration and meaning-making with others.
- Mirror Neuron Research: Observing others activates similar brain patterns, enhancing empathy.

Practices:

- Facilitate strength-reflection exercises (e.g., "Name a quality you see in this person").
- Regularly ask: "What do you want to acknowledge the group for today?"
- Use buddy or triad accountability structures.

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I – Inspire through Challenge

Definition: Members challenge one another to take bold action, explore inconsistencies, and grow.

Key Outcome: Stretch and growth.

Research Base:

- Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky): Growth happens at the edge of ability, with supportive scaffolding.
- Constructive Developmental Theory (Kegan): Individuals evolve through challenge and supported meaning-making.

Practices:

- Encourage the group to "say the hard thing with love."
- Model and reward challenge through your questions and celebration of the tough questions.
- Ask the group for their most challenging question for person X, add those to the chat and ask Person X which question they want to answer.

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X-Factor: Trust

Definition: A judgment-free environment where members feel safe thanks to their connection to one another, leading to group psychological safety.

Key Outcome: Psychological safety.

Research Base:

- Research on psychological safety confirms that trust is foundational for risk-taking and vulnerability.
- Social penetration theory (Altman and Taylor) focuses on the importance of gradual self-disclosure to build meaningful relationships.

Practices:

- Begin with shared agreements and confidentiality pacts.
- Ensure there are opportunities for group members to get to know each other in small breakouts to build connection.
- Create moments for deeper coaching. Remember to ask for permission first!

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Group Coaching Session Ideas Element

Element	Activity
Insight	• Peer coaching rounds • Moments of quiet self-reflection • Rounds of sharing takeaways
Curiosity	• Challenge assumptions exercise • Transform advice into questions • Question-storming
Movement	• Set actions at various moments in the session • Celebrate progress • Ask the group to observe and name others' achievements
Support	• Strength-mirroring circle • Ask each person to share what they most need help with • Decide when to focus on one person vs. the whole group
Challenge	• Accountability replay • Ask for their most challenging questions • Include challenge in the group agreements (and always check in for permission to challenge.
Trust	• Co-created agreements • Small breakouts • Invite depth in the conversation acknowledging and welcoming all emotions

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The DOLIX Model as a Living Framework

The DOLIX Model® is not a linear checklist. It's a dynamic helix of ongoing interaction among elements. In every session, you can check in:

- Is trust strong enough for challenge?
- Are we creating space for insight and movement?
- Is support being offered and received?
- Are we asking questions that inspire and stretch?

By designing for the DOLIX Model® intentionally, you set the stage for your group sessions to become cohesive, brave, and transformational spaces.

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The DOLIX Model® and the ICF Core Competencies

The DOLIX Model®	ICF Competency
Deepen Insight The DOLIX Model®'s focus on deepening insight directly reflects the role of the coach and the group in helping clients shift perspective, explore beliefs, and discover new meaning.	**C7**: Evokes Awareness This competency emphasizes facilitating client insight and learning through powerful questioning, silence, metaphor, or analogy.
Open through Curiosity and Movement Curiosity in the DOLIX Model® fuels exploration, while movement is about forward progress, a hallmark of this competency.	**D8**: Facilitates Client Growth This competency focuses on partnering with clients to transform learning and insight into action.
Lean for Support The DOLIX Model®'s support pillar is about being emotionally present, empathetic, and responsive, not just from the coach, but among group members.	**B5:** Maintains Presence This competency refers to the coach's ability to be fully conscious and create a spontaneous relationship with the client.
Inspire through Challenge In the DOLIX Model®, challenge emerges from deep listening and reflecting inconsistencies or avoided truths. It demands the courage to act on what we notice through listening.	**C6:** Listens Actively While listening may seem passive, this competency includes hearing what is said and not said to support the client's self-expression.
X – X-Factor: Trust Trust is the foundational layer in the DOLIX Model® and the ICF model alike. It holds the DOLIX Model® together, enabling safety and risk-taking.	**B4:** Cultivates Trust and Safety **B3:** Partners with the client to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship This element reflects the coach's responsibility to build a psychologically safe, judgment-free space where group members feel seen, heard, and respected. Competency B4 supports the foundational environment where vulnerability and growth can flourish, essential to any coaching relationship and particularly critical in group coaching contexts. Competency B3 emphasizes the importance of designing clear agreements around roles, expectations, boundaries, and confidentiality, key practices in cultivating trust within a group coaching setting.

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