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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical screening checklist can be used to determine the ethical considerations for studies involving human participants. Before completion, please consult the BPS code of Human Research Ethics:

http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf

If you answer 'yes' to any item on the checklist, then your proposed research might be considered to be more than 'minimal risk', and you will want to consider how you proceed. This might include asking trusted colleagues for a thorough ethical review, partnering with a colleague who works in an organisation (such as a University) with access to an Ethics who can review and approve your proposed research, or paying for an independent ethical review through a private organisation.

Even if you consider your research to be 'minimal risk' it is still good practice to ask trusted colleagues with expertise in research ethics to review your proposed research and ethical considerations, to ensure that any assumptions, biases or blind spots are considered.

Research checklist

	NO	YES
1. Does the study involve vulnerable participants (including, but not restricted to, children aged 16 and under; those lacking capacity; or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Will the study require the cooperation of a gatekeeper for access to the groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g., school pupils, residents of nursing homes)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent (e.g., covert observation of people in public places)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g., sexual activity or drug use)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are drug placebos or other substances (e.g., food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the participants, or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is physical pain or mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10. Will financial inducements be offered to participants?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



- 11. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?
- 12. Will any of the researchers involved with the study have conflicts of interest (e.g., funding from an external source) that may influence the research?
- 13. Are there any other reasons the research may conflict with the BPS codes of ethics or be considered unethical?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



Ethical Considerations in Reviewing Coaching Philosophy Documents

Research Project Title

The Impact of Psychological Knowledge and Skills on Coaching Practice: A Thematic Analysis of Coaching Philosophies in Applications for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society

Introduction

This paper outlines the ethical considerations for a research project that reviews Coaching Philosophy documents written by Coaching Psychologists seeking Chartered Status. The primary aim is to conduct a thematic analysis to understand how an academic foundation in psychology influences coaching practices. The audience for this paper includes Coaching Psychologists and other coaching professionals working in the field. Further details on the research can be found here: www.garybuxton.co.uk/research

Key Ethical Principles

We will treat each submission in accordance with GDPR regulations. The Coaching Philosophy Document will only be used for the stated research purposes, and any personal identifying information will be redacted either by the individual prior to submission or by the research team upon receipt before analysis. The Consent Forms and contact details of contributors will be held separately from the Coaching Philosophy Documents. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and individuals have the right to withdraw their consent and their documents from the study at any time up to the point of analysis (end of August 2024). The documents, which should not include any personally identifiable information, will undergo thematic analysis to identify similarities among a diverse range of professionals who are seeking Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society (BPS) through Coaching.

Informed Consent

The research project aims and procedures will be shared with any Coaching Psychologist interested in submitting their Coaching Philosophy Document. Informed consent will be obtained through a digitally signed consent release form. This form will outline the nature of the research, the questions we seek to answer, and the measures in place to ensure privacy, such as encouraging the redaction of personal identifying information before submission or redacting it before analysis.

Confidentiality

The original Coaching Philosophy Documents will be shared only among the research team. The thematic analysis results and quotes will be included in the research paper in a non-attributable manner. Participants will receive a copy of the final research piece. The research team members are regulated by the British Psychological Society, with one



researcher additionally regulated by the International Coaching Federation. All researchers are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and comply with GDPR legislation. Each team member holds professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

Competence

The lead researcher, Gary Buxton, is a psychology graduate with postgraduate qualifications in Coaching. He is currently conducting additional research as part of his submission for Chartered Status with the BPS as a Coaching Psychologist. Gary is a Lead Tutor for the Postgraduate Certificate and Masters in Business and Personal Coaching at the University of Chester (delivered through Barefoot Coaching). He has extensive experience working with academics and has served on the Board of Governors at the University of Manchester for nine years. Dr Marie Stopforth, the previous Chief Assessor for the Division of Coaching Psychology with the BPS, supervises Gary's work.

Integrity

The potential ethical dilemmas in this research are minimal, as the documents being collected were originally submitted to the BPS and are expected to contain information that individuals are comfortable disclosing to other professionals. However, the research team will be able to identify who submitted each document, which could create familiarity with other professionals in the field. This could have commercial implications by revealing how others deliver their services and the factors influencing their practice. Additionally, there is a risk of disclosing personal values, motivations, or client-related information, underscoring the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality.

This piece of research is self-funded and will be used as part of Gary Buxton's application for chartered status (Standard 4). Gary has already written and shared his own Coaching Philosophy and the acquisition of other philosophies will be gathered for the purpose of this research only.

Professional Boundaries

To maintain professional boundaries, the team will detach the names of submitters from the documents before reading or analysing them. The documents will be held in a secure repository, and a research team member will initially redact any remaining identifiable information before thematic analysis. This process maximises confidentiality and anonymity.

Ethical Decision-Making

We will use the Action Model for Ethical Decision Making in Coaching, as described by Jonathan Passmore in 2009. This model involves steps such as Awareness, Classification, Time for Reflection, Support and Advice, Initiation, Option Evaluation, and Novate (ACTION). Dr Marie Stopforth will provide supervision and serve as a point of referral for questions regarding ethical decision-making, professional boundaries, or research integrity.

Cultural Sensitivity

The lead researcher, Gary Buxton, has a strong background in inclusive practice and leadership. He has worked extensively with minoritized communities and has a well-



developed understanding of Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, Equity, and Equality. Gary has been published by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council on age inclusivity and has written about allyship and authenticity for coaching magazines. While the research will not collect demographic information due to the small data set, the thematic analysis will be conducted with an awareness of cultural sensitivity. Future research may explore intersectionality more comprehensively.

Legal Considerations

There are no additional legal considerations beyond GDPR compliance. The research will adhere to all relevant legal requirements to ensure data protection and participant privacy.

Challenges and Emerging Issues

One challenge is that many of the documents may have been written in response to the Standards for Coaching Psychology, potentially influencing their content and composition. The extent of diversity in the submissions is unknown prior to analysis, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the understanding gained from the research. Future studies could explore more detailed demographic factors to provide a broader understanding of coaching practices.

Conclusion

This paper outlines the ethical considerations involved in conducting a thematic analysis of Coaching Philosophy documents. By adhering to stringent ethical principles and legal requirements, this research aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of coaching psychology while safeguarding the rights and data of participants.

Contact for further information

For more information or to discuss any concerns, please contact:

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We thank all contributors to this important research. We hope that this research will contribute to practitioner and service user understanding of the benefits of working with a coaching psychologists, and contribute to the development of our profession.
