

Workplace Coach interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for workplace coach roles tend to focus on your coaching process, how you handle sensitive situations, and your ability to build trust quickly. Employers want to see that you can draw solutions out of clients rather than giving advice, and that you understand the boundaries between coaching, mentoring and line management.

- **Process questions:** These ask you to describe how you run a coaching engagement from start to finish, including goal setting, assessment, development planning and review.
- **Behavioural questions:** These ask for a specific example of when you helped someone improve performance or work through a challenge, often using STAR.
- **Scenario and judgement questions:** These present a difficult coaching situation, such as a resistant client or a confidentiality dilemma, and ask how you would respond.
- **Technical and tool questions:** These probe your familiarity with DISC, 360-degree feedback platforms, learning management systems and how you apply them ethically.
- **Ethical and confidentiality questions:** These test your understanding of boundaries, consent and what can be shared with managers or HR sponsors.
- **Client-facing and stakeholder questions:** These assess how you manage relationships with the person being coached and the organisation paying for the coaching.

The interview usually starts with a phone or video screen with a recruiter or HR representative, covering your background and why you coach. A second interview is often with the hiring manager and may include a practical element such as a mock coaching session or a discussion of a case study. Some employers include a panel with a potential client or stakeholder to assess your client-facing style. Expect to talk through your coaching philosophy and how you measure progress.

1. Walk me through how you structure a coaching engagement from the first session to the final review.

Why they ask

This is a process question that reveals your ability to plan and maintain momentum.

How to structure your answer

Use a chronological walk-through. Start with contracting and goal setting, then assessment and feedback, then development planning, regular check-ins, and finally review and closure.

Example answer

"In the first session I focus on building rapport and clarifying the client's goals. I ask what success looks like and what's getting in the way. I also explain confidentiality and the coaching agreement. Then I might suggest a DISC assessment or 360 feedback to give us data. Once we have that, I draft a development plan with two or three specific actions and a timeframe. We meet fortnightly to check progress, and I adjust the plan if something isn't working. Near the end, we review what's changed and I help the client identify how to sustain the new behaviours without me."

2. Tell me about a time you helped a client overcome a performance issue.

Why they ask

A behavioural question that tests your coaching skills in a real situation.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on your actions as a coach, not on doing the work for the client.

Example answer

"A client was missing deadlines and her manager had raised it. In our sessions, she initially blamed workload, but through open questions she realised she was avoiding a particular task because she felt out of her depth. We broke the task into smaller steps and she agreed to ask a colleague for a quick tutorial. I also helped her set a realistic timeline. Over the next month, she met her deadlines and her manager noticed the improvement. The key was letting her find the solution rather than telling her what to do."

3. A client is resistant to feedback from a 360 review. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

A scenario question that assesses your judgement under pressure and your ability to stay neutral.

How to structure your answer

Acknowledge the client's reaction, explore it without judgement, then guide them towards curiosity and a small experiment.

Example answer

"First I'd validate that it can be hard to hear feedback that doesn't match how we see ourselves. I'd ask what specifically feels unfair or surprising. Then I'd invite them to consider one piece of feedback as a hypothesis rather than a truth: what might it look like if it were partly true? I'd suggest a low-risk way to test it, like asking a trusted colleague for a specific example. The goal is to move from defensiveness to curiosity, not to force agreement."

4. How do you use DISC or another personality assessment in your coaching?

Why they ask

A technical question that checks your familiarity with common tools and how you apply them ethically.

How to structure your answer

Explain your approach, the tool's purpose, and how you avoid pigeonholing clients.

Example answer

"I use DISC as a conversation starter, not a label. I explain that it describes preferences, not fixed traits. After the client completes it, we look at their profile and discuss where they might flex their style to communicate better with others. For example, a highly dominant client might practise more listening in meetings. I always emphasise that the assessment is a snapshot and that the client is the expert on themselves."

5. How do you manage confidentiality when a manager asks for updates on a coachee's progress?

Why they ask

An ethical question that tests your understanding of boundaries and trust.

How to structure your answer

State the principle, then give a practical approach.

Example answer

"Confidentiality is the foundation of coaching. I explain at the start what will and won't be shared, and I get the client's agreement. If a manager asks for updates, I focus on themes or attendance rather than specific content. For example, I might say the client is engaged and working on communication skills. If a manager needs more detail, I would ask the client to share it themselves or arrange a three-way conversation with the client's consent."

6. How would you facilitate a workshop on giving feedback for a team with poor dynamics?

Why they ask

A group facilitation question that probes your ability to handle conflict and keep the session productive.

How to structure your answer

Outline your preparation, ground rules, activities, and how you handle tension.

Example answer

"Before the workshop, I'd speak to a few team members to understand the issues. In the session, I'd set ground rules like confidentiality and speaking for yourself. I'd start with a short exercise on what makes feedback helpful or unhelpful, then introduce a simple framework like situation-behaviour-impact. I'd have pairs practise with a low-stakes example, then bring it back to the group. If tension arose, I'd acknowledge it and remind everyone of the shared goal. I'd finish by asking each person to commit to one feedback action."