

5. What have other organizations experienced with Coaching Boosters?

Partners in Care, a not-for-profit organization, offers a wide range of comprehensive home care services, including private pay, in all five boroughs of New York City, as well as Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, and Rockland Counties¹. It is an affiliate of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, the largest home healthcare agency in the nation. Composed of more than 6,500 home health aides, RN's, and LPN's, Partners in Care provides quality services to over 20,000 clients every year. Since 1983, Partners in Care has provided consumers with certified in-home caregivers who are experienced, compassionate, reliable, and highly attentive to the individuals they care for. The in-home team is supported by well-trained staff members who help coordinate schedules and doctors' orders, as well as provide continuing education and on-the-job training.

Coaching supervision was first introduced at Partners in Care in 2007. Since then, the agency's four coaching trainers have offered the 2-day "Introduction to Coaching Supervision" training to 97 Home Health Aide Supervisors, along with their Unit Managers and Assistant Managers. Additionally, the trainers are offering a 1-day version of the curriculum (focusing on communication skills) to all staff, including home health aides.

Because Partners in Care is such a large agency, and because it has a vision of rolling coaching training out to all staff, the trainers knew that their booster approach would have to take into account the very real limits on their time. At the same time, the trainers felt strongly that the people they trained would need regular and on-going support if they were going to realize the organization's goal of establishing coaching as the normative model for communication throughout the organization.

¹ Partners in Care is accredited by Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP) and licensed by the New York State Department of Health. Partners provides quality services to over 20,000 clients every year. For more information call 1-888-9-GET-HELP or visit <http://www.partnersincareny.org>.

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Maria Guzman², Unit Manager Bronx Unit and coaching supervision trainer, described to us how her training team developed a booster strategy with FOUR main components:

- *Coaching Skills Fliers and Gifts.* In the first four weeks after a participant is trained, he or she receives a written reminder of one of the four coaching skills each week (see Section 6 for a copy of these fliers). These fliers cover: active listening, pull back, open-ended question and paraphrase lead-ins, and the three rules for present the problem. Each flier is accompanied by a small gift that the trainers purchase from a 99-cent store. The gifts have included a magnetic memo pad, a small binder with a memo pad in it, candles, and little picture frames with the words “Coaching Supervision Makes a Difference” inside. “They like to get these gifts,” explains trainer Maria Guzman, “because it lets them know that we appreciate their efforts to use the skills and it motivates them to try.”
- *Classroom-Based Boosters.* One month after a participant is trained, the HHA Supervisors attend a 45-minute classroom-based booster designed to help them manage a challenge they have faced in using their coaching skills. In this booster, the trainers present an original demonstration role play that illustrates the challenge the participants are facing. In order to create this role play, the trainers interview the manager of the unit before the booster. “The managers are the ones who see the HHA Supervisors every day,” Maria explains, “so they’re really in the best position to know how their HHA Supervisors are using the skills and what is getting in their way.” For example, in one unit HHA Supervisors were struggling to “pull back” on the phone with Home Health Aides. The trainers created a role play that demonstrated a coordinator not “pulling back,” and used this role play as a catalyst for discussion with the HHA Supervisors about the importance of pulling back. Maria notes, “Usually, after we review the coaching skill, we end the booster by asking a volunteer to come back to the role play and try to see if they can use the coaching skill correctly.”

² The other coaching supervision trainers are Gary Kong, Assistant Manager Brooklyn Unit; Luz Flores, Quality Assurance Nurse Coordinator; and Pauline Shepherd, Assistant Manager Queens Unit.

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- *On-going Monthly Booster Sessions.* The trainers recognized that HHA Supervisors need on-going opportunities to practice using their coaching skills in situations that are challenging for them, even after the one-month post-training booster. For example, the trainers conducted learning circles with several units after their initial booster session (see Section 6 for a description of learning circles and for directions about how to conduct them). “We asked them to share a success story in using coaching skills, and to also share a skill that they were struggling with,” says Maria.

However, as the number of people trained has grown, it has become clear that the four trainers do not have the capacity to offer classroom-based boosters to all the participants on a continuing basis. “That’s when we decided that the managers and assistant managers were going to need to take over this responsibility,” says Maria. “We had their support for this because we had been including them all along. They were trained alongside their HHA Supervisors, and we had already been talking to them about the challenges their HHA Supervisors were facing. We decided the next step was to offer a training session for the managers and assistant managers to teach them how to run their own booster sessions.”

At this training session, the trainers taught the managers how to design their own demonstration role plays and how to debrief the role plays. The trainers also let managers know that the trainers would be available to them as resources. “We’ve had managers ask us to meet with them to help them plan a booster,” says Maria, “and we’ve also had them ask one of us to sit in on a booster if they feel like they need that support. But it’s clear that these boosters are their responsibility, and each manager has committed to organizing one booster a month for their unit. They follow through on this commitment because we ask them to report what they have done every month at our Cross Functional Team meeting³.”

- *Coaching Skills Cards.* The trainers at Partners in Care believe that, in addition to booster sessions, HHA Supervisors need some way to hold each other accountable

³ Partners in Care formed a Cross Functional Team in order to make all decisions pertaining to the introduction and sustainability of coaching supervision in the organization. The Cross Functional Team was one of the requirements that Partners in Care fulfilled as a selected “comprehensive site” in PHI’s Center for Coaching Supervision and Leadership (CCSL).

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to using their coaching skills on a day-to-day basis. To that end, the trainers created small index-sized cards that each reviews a coaching skill. These were distributed to the HHA Supervisors, their managers, and assistant managers. “Our HHA Supervisors overhear each other in a lot of their interactions, especially on the phone,” says Maria. “We encourage them, if they hear each other not using a coaching skill, to support each other with a “there-and-then” reminder by giving them a coaching card. We really emphasize that this is a way to support each other—coaching takes practice. We’ve emphasized that even us trainers need to be reminded to use our coaching skills from time to time. We want to set the tone that we’re all in this together—we’re all learning.”

The Partners in Care booster strategy demonstrates the benefits of using more than one approach to reinforce the use of coaching supervision skills. It also shows how the impact can be broadened within an organization by sharing the responsibility for designing and running boosters with managers.