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COACHING IN HEALTHCARE

Darelyn "DJ" Mitsch, Mark Greenawald and Cindi Ackrill



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HEALTHCARE

COACHING IN HEALTHCARE



AUTHOR

Darelyn “DJ” Mitsch, MCC

Darelyn “DJ” Mitsch is an author, CEO of the Healthcare Coaching Institute, and president of The Pyramid Resource Group, a corporate coaching company. She also is a global past president of the International Coaching Federation.

Mark Greenawald, MD

Mark Greenawald is a family physician, physician leader, coach, speaker, educator, workshop facilitator, writer, and faculty member at the Healthcare Coaching Institute.

Cindi Ackrill, MD

Cindi Ackrill is a leadership coach who combines her experience in primary care with a decade of work in applied neuropsychology. She is certified in wellness coaching and leadership coaching.

Community Manager, Healthcare

Ryan Changcoco

Project Manager, Healthcare

Gabriela Ammatuna

Editor, TD at Work

Patty Gaul

Managing Editor

Teresa Preston

Production Design

Iris Sanchez

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American surgeon, writer, and public health researcher Atul Gawande writes in *The New Yorker*, “Providing health care is like building a house. The task requires experts, expensive equipment and materials, and a huge amount of coordination.”

The complexity and chaos of providing healthcare can be likened to building a very large house. Today, we’re at a crossroads in healthcare, navigating enormous waves of change, creating tensions within us and between us all. Yet, the far edge of complexity is often where there is the greatest potential for creativity and growth. Chaos may seem like a void, but it can be a field of discovery where we ultimately deconstruct and re-create.

In this cycle of conscious evolution from chaos to creation, coaching creates a common language that fosters self-awareness and an ability to shift from being stuck in a rut to possessing ownership and free-flowing creativity. Through coaching, all of the players in the complex world of healthcare learn to lead more productive and balanced lives and to work together in bold new ways to accelerate leadership development in a world where science has been longing for heart.

Human systems are complex, but we can explore all of humanity’s primary needs—health, well-being, and happiness—in the context of coaching. These shared personal and organizational needs are central to the focus of coaching and its effectiveness for transformational leadership development.

Coaching also has become a calling for many talent development professionals. Healthcare as an industry needs us and the discipline of coaching because, to many professionals, healthcare seems to have lost its soul. Coaching is rooted in partnership, generous listening, curiosity, direct communication, and extreme care. It has the power to reawaken the human spirit at work.

Given this context, in this issue of *TD at Work*, we explore:

- the greatest talent development challenges in healthcare today
- the possibility of a culture shift from transactional to transformational leadership and care

- important mindset shifts and points of entry for coaching
- keys to simplifying and scaling coaching for impact.

COACHING IS ROOTED IN PARTNERSHIP, GENEROUS LISTENING, CURIOSITY, DIRECT COMMUNICATION, AND EXTREME CARE. IT HAS THE POWER TO REAWAKEN THE HUMAN SPIRIT AT WORK.

CHAOS TO CHANGE THROUGH COACHING

Simplification, exploration, discovery, interconnectivity, intuition, meaning-making, context, reframing, possibility thinking—these are what coaching brings to help the healthcare industry move out of chaos and find the creative edge. Healthcare leaders desperately need a creative partnership that gives them access to these competencies. Continuing education in the form of coaching for leadership development and teaming can transform their work and provide more career satisfaction.

The gap between chaos and the creative edge is a space where the executive problem-solving brain can be most active. See the *The Complexity-Creativity Gap* on p. 2 for a visual of how this works. Through coaching, leaders can learn to make the best use of that space.

3 TOP CHALLENGES FOR HEALTHCARE TALENT DEVELOPMENT

In our preparation for writing this issue of *TD at Work*, we surveyed Association for Talent Development members and other healthcare professionals and received 133 valid responses to three questions. Our goal was to understand the biggest healthcare talent development challenges for organizations, how healthcare organizations currently perceive and use coaching, and what is

most needed now to bring the power of coaching to the forefront in healthcare.

The themes were consistent with what we have found in our coaching and educational experiences, pointing to three key challenges:

- complexity and a loss of hope that conditions will improve
- culture and how to retool providers to become leaders
- the high cost of caring, with nearly 70 percent of respondents choosing lack of self-care and burnout as a top challenge.

Complexity: A Growing List of Stakeholders

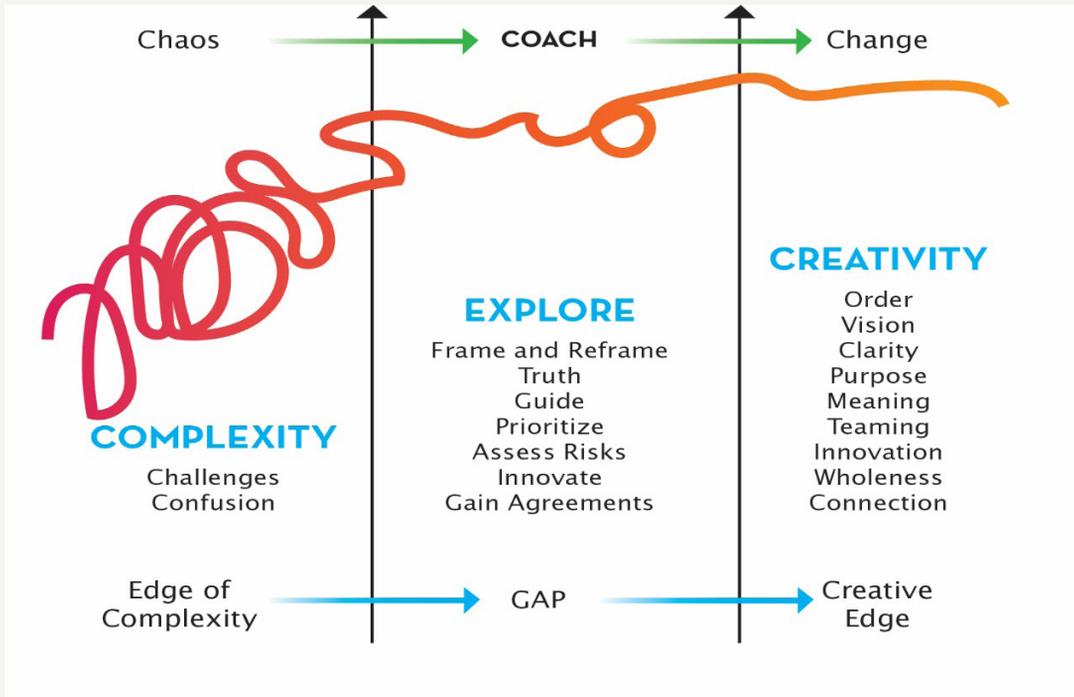
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Healthcare support occupations

and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations are projected to be the two fastest growing occupational groups during the 2014 to 2024 projections decade. These groups are projected to contribute the most new jobs, with a combined increase of 2.3 million in employment, representing about 1 in 4 new jobs.”

The World Health Organization similarly points to a great need—more than 40 million healthcare workers needed in 194 countries by 2024. As healthcare continues to grow, the list of stakeholders will mirror this growth. Currently there are at least 16 key players in the growing field. (See *The Healthcare System: A Galaxy With Many Players* on p. 4.)

Leaders in each of the 16 populations have vastly different needs, accountabilities, and business imperatives, as well as varying understanding of their and others’ responsibilities

THE COMPLEXITY-CREATIVITY GAP



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and obligations to patients. For instance, consider the dynamic tension between payers, purchasers, politicians, and providers when it comes to defining what is “best” for a patient.

The many points of entry for talent development make addressing the healthcare community a complicated endeavor. In our work, we’ve opted to introduce coaching at a high-level context and then take a deeper cut into the center to determine where coaching supports talent development professionals and executive sponsors in finding their own competitive edge.

Culture: From Transactional to Transformational

When a system feels chaotic, cultivating a culture of wholehearted engagement or teaching leadership skills can seem like a burden on already strained agendas, headspace, and budgets. Many leadership initiatives get labeled as nice to do but not necessary for survival.

We’re experiencing a time that some consider the most exciting in healthcare—a time when technology and innovation are leading to

ATD HEALTHCARE SURVEY QUESTION 1

What do you believe are the most pressing blocks to engagement and performance in healthcare (top challenges shared by healthcare leadership) from this list? Choose up to three.

Response	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Frequency	Count
Government oversight and looming change signaling loss of autonomy						30.8%	41
Self-care, work-life challenges, and burnout among employees						69.2%	92
Overwhelming growth in health challenges among the community (patient population) affecting compliance and outcomes						32.3%	43
Retooling for and balancing leadership and administrative needs with care of the patient						48.1%	64
Chaos, lack of clarity, negativity, cynicism about healthcare, and/or loss of hope that conditions will improve						44.4%	59
Accelerated mergers and acquisitions have blended cultures, adding to confusion and lack of focus						36.8%	49
Valid Responses							133
Total Responses							133

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