

Guidelines for Starting the Coaching Relationship on the Right Foot

Every WCUCS clergy coaching relationship will have a distinct starting point and a distinct ending point. When a pastor requests a coach, they will be matched with one of the available coaches based on what is shared in their interest form. The initial conversation takes place after the two parties are made aware of the match. It is intended to both explore the fit of the match and also to lay the groundwork for the subsequent 6 sessions of coaching.

What follows is a guide for the initial session with the person with whom you've been matched as a potential coach. Feel free to adapt this as you see fit so that it can be an authentic exchange between you and the person with whom you're speaking.

Plan to spend 30 to 45 minutes in this initial conversation. This conversation is NOT one of the 6 coaching sessions you will conduct with the person if you mutually decide to proceed with the coaching relationship.

Questions or areas to explore during this initial conversation:

- As a coach, share some things about yourself and your ministry experience – develop rapport
- Clarify the role of coaching vs. counseling and other people development approaches (things like client sets the agenda, conversations are kept between the two of you except if there is indication of self-harm or harm to church etc.) Refer to people development chart as needed for clarification.
- Ask questions about the person's life situation – get to know them a little bit (marital status, children, interests outside of ministry etc.)
- Ask questions for clarification based on what they shared in their Interest Form
- Review the Policies of the coaching program and the coaching agreement to clarify questions the person may have
- Ask them to tell you about their congregation/ministry context
- Explore questions like:
 - What do you hope to gain from this coaching relationship?
 - Where do you envision yourself being when we complete 6 coaching sessions?
 - What are the specific goals or areas of ministry you hope to work on?
 - Anything else you can think of that will help with getting started in the coaching relationship

Some additional things to explore in developing the coaching relationship:

- Is this a good match – can we work together?
 - If no, let Tisha know and she will suggest another match for the person requesting a coach
 - If yes, discuss:
 - Frequency of sessions – date for first session
 - Location of meetings phone, video chat, in person etc.