

Leader as Coach: A Guide for Supporting Emerging Leaders

Your role as a manager is critical to the success of your direct report's leadership development. By acting as a coach, you help connect learning to real work, reinforce new behaviors, and accelerate growth. This guide outlines practical ways to support them throughout the program.

Why Your Support Matters

- Reinforcement drives results: Learners are more likely to apply skills if their manager acknowledges and encourages them.
- Delegation builds confidence: Giving emerging leaders stretch opportunities helps them practice new behaviors.
- Coaching creates accountability: Simple conversations before and after sessions ensure learning turns into action.

Your Role as a Coaching Partner

1. Set the Stage (Before the Program)

- Show enthusiasm: Let your direct report know you value their participation.
- Clarify expectations: Discuss what success looks like for them in this program.
- Align goals: Connect program learning to team priorities.

2. Reinforce and Coach (During the Program)

- Hold brief check-ins (10–15 minutes) after each learning week:
 - Ask: *What did you learn?*
 - Explore: *How can you apply this on our team?*
 - Support: *What can I do to help you practice?*
- Encourage experimentation: Create safe space for them to try new leadership behaviors (delegation, giving feedback, facilitating discussions).
- Share observations: Offer constructive, real-time feedback on what they're practicing.

3. Sustain Growth (After the Program)

- Reflect together: Ask what they're most proud of and what they want to keep developing.
- Provide opportunities: Delegate higher-level tasks or projects aligned with their growth areas.
- Recognize progress: Acknowledge visible improvements in their leadership behaviors.
- Continue the conversation: Make leadership development part of regular 1:1s, not just the program.

Sample Coaching Questions

Use open-ended questions to spark reflection and ownership:

- What's one thing you tried differently this week?
- What did you notice about the way others responded?
- Where do you feel most confident as a leader right now?
- What support do you need from me to keep growing?

Quick Reminders

- Be present: Your encouragement matters more than perfect coaching skills.
- Keep it simple: Short, consistent conversations are better than long, infrequent ones.
- Model growth: Share your own learning journey to show development never stops.