

Psychometrics in coaching: a stock take of best practice

Invited skills session for 4th European Coaching
Congress, Edinburgh, December 2013

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Objectives for today

- Discussing the core value of psychometrics in coaching contexts
- Decision factors for choosing psychometrics in coaching
- Mapping assessment to contexts: starting with the context
- Understanding how to combine assessments
- Turning data into action
- Frequent challenges and how to address them

Q: Why do we need to reflect on best practice for coaches in particular?

1. Psychometrics and standards for practice

- Current standards (e.g. EFPA guidelines) for evaluating tests
 - Reliability, validity, norms
- What is missing?
 - Training
 - Practical application in specific contexts
 - Availability of best practice guides
 - CPD opportunities
 - Being clearer about role/ level of psychological knowledge in interpretation

2. Psychometrics and coaching

- Not all psychologists are trained in the practical use of psychometrics
- Not all coaches are psychologists
- Possibility of a skills gap when deciding to use psychometric assessments
- Existing best practice frameworks emphasize practice in occupational and educational psychology contexts
- Not all assessments sold in the UK require training
- Assessment not a 'one off', but part of a wider process
 - You can't just 'walk away from it'!

3. Recent trends

- Developmental use of assessments a growth area
- Generation of special profiles for developmental use, (e.g. more finely grained breakdown of behavioural indicators relating to traits)
- Self-supporting reports
- Bespoke mapping to frameworks (e.g. competencies)
- Testing to identify and retain talent and high potential (rather than deselect), engagement firmly on the agenda
- Focus on feedback for *specific* purposes: increasing self awareness but in organizational *context*, restructuring common backdrop
- A focus on Derailment risks, maladaptive behaviours

Q: Your experience of using
psychometrics in coaching?

Why use Psychometrics?

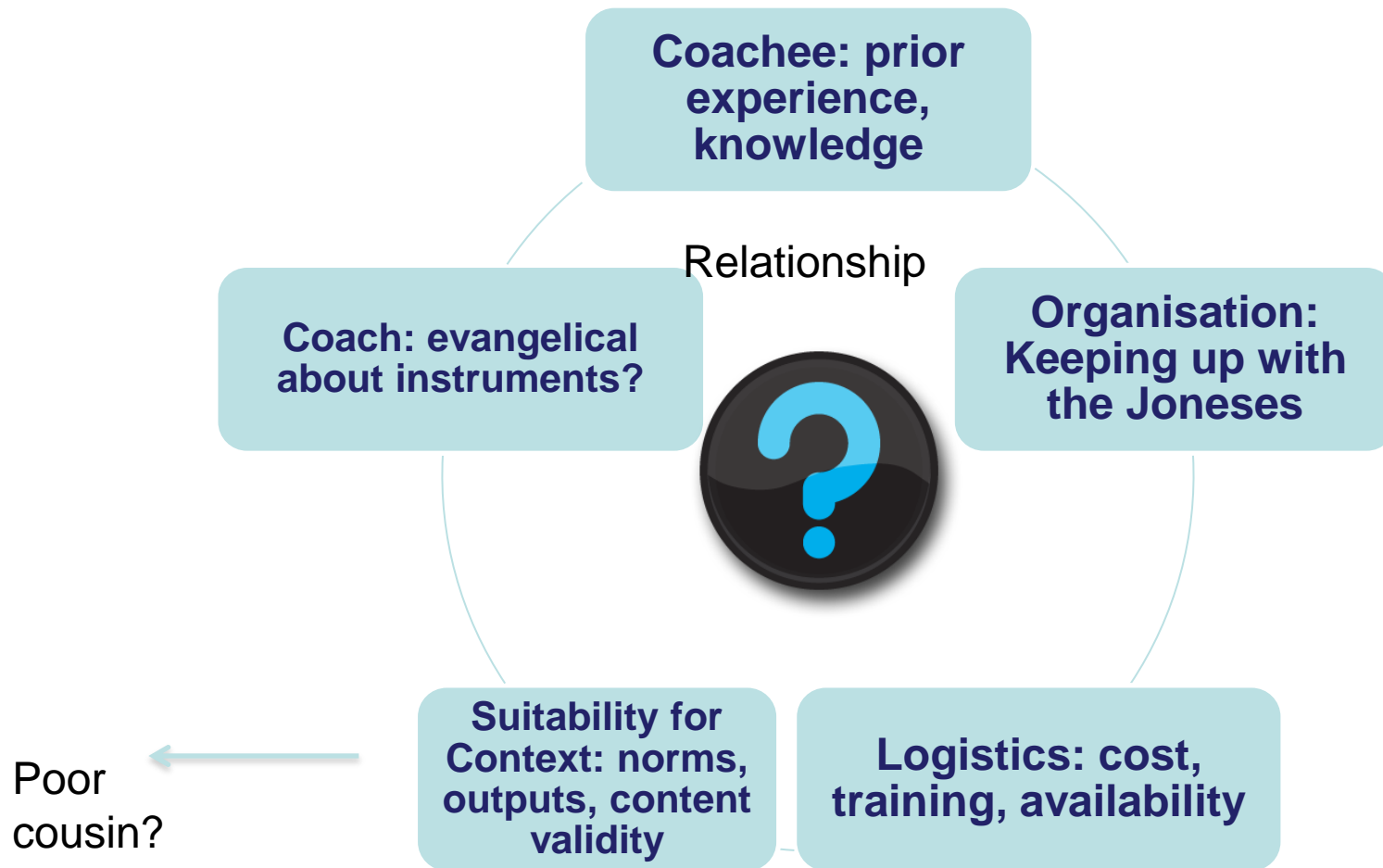
- Facilitate insight and self-awareness
- Discussion can be used as prompts for behaviour change
- Can pin-point or reflect a challenge or development need
- Assessments bring together self-concept and behavioural evidence
- Reports can graphically or structurally represent self-concept in an accessible way
- Feedback can help coachees understand personality and how it relates to behaviour

Feedback from coaches

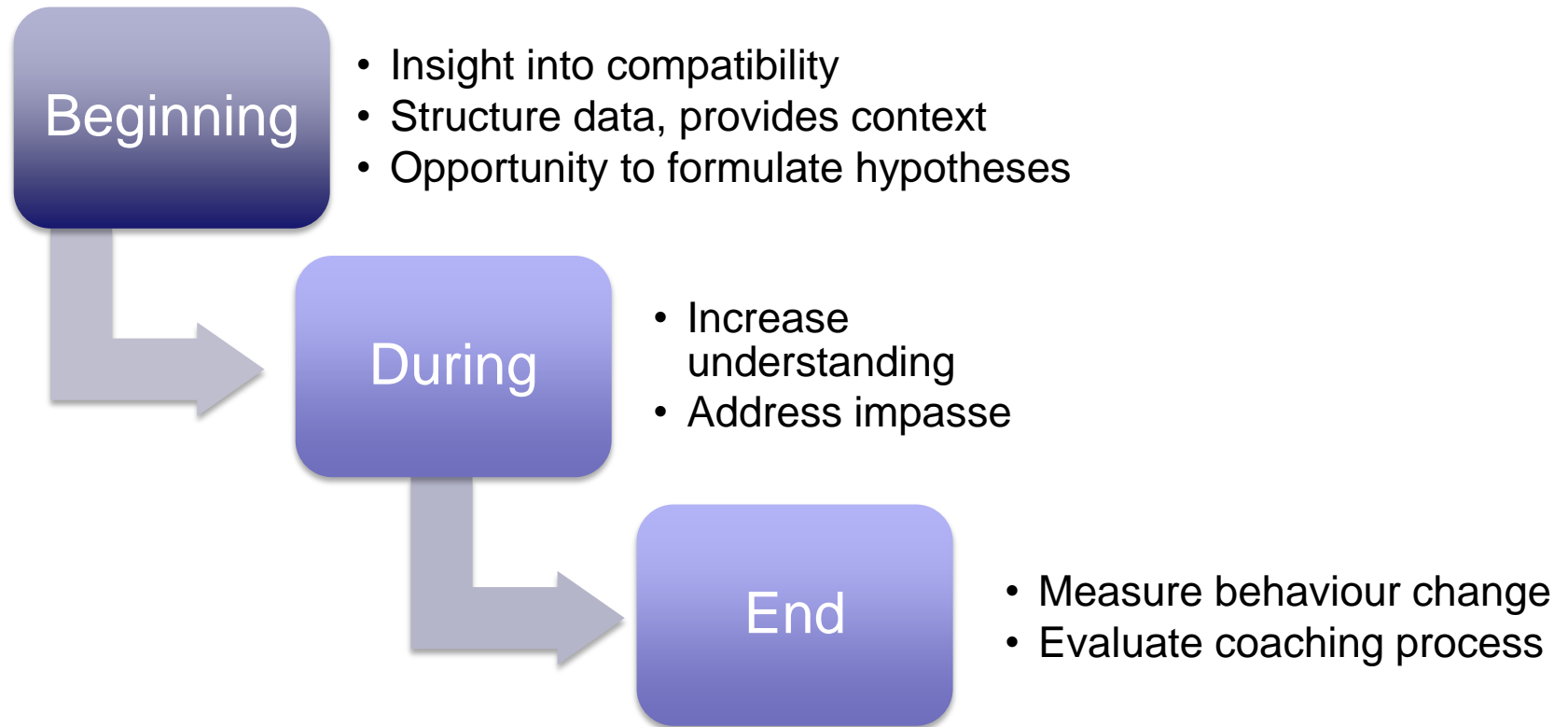
- Good psychometrics can streamline the initial diagnostic stage, and significantly shorten this from two sessions to one
- Psychometrics can provide both parties with an accessible and agreed lexicon for thought, behaviour and attitudes.
- Psychometric assessment can lend credibility to coaching activities, when aligned with the result of the assessment.

Q: How do you choose a psychometric instrument for use in coaching contexts?

Decision factors?



When / How to use Psychometrics

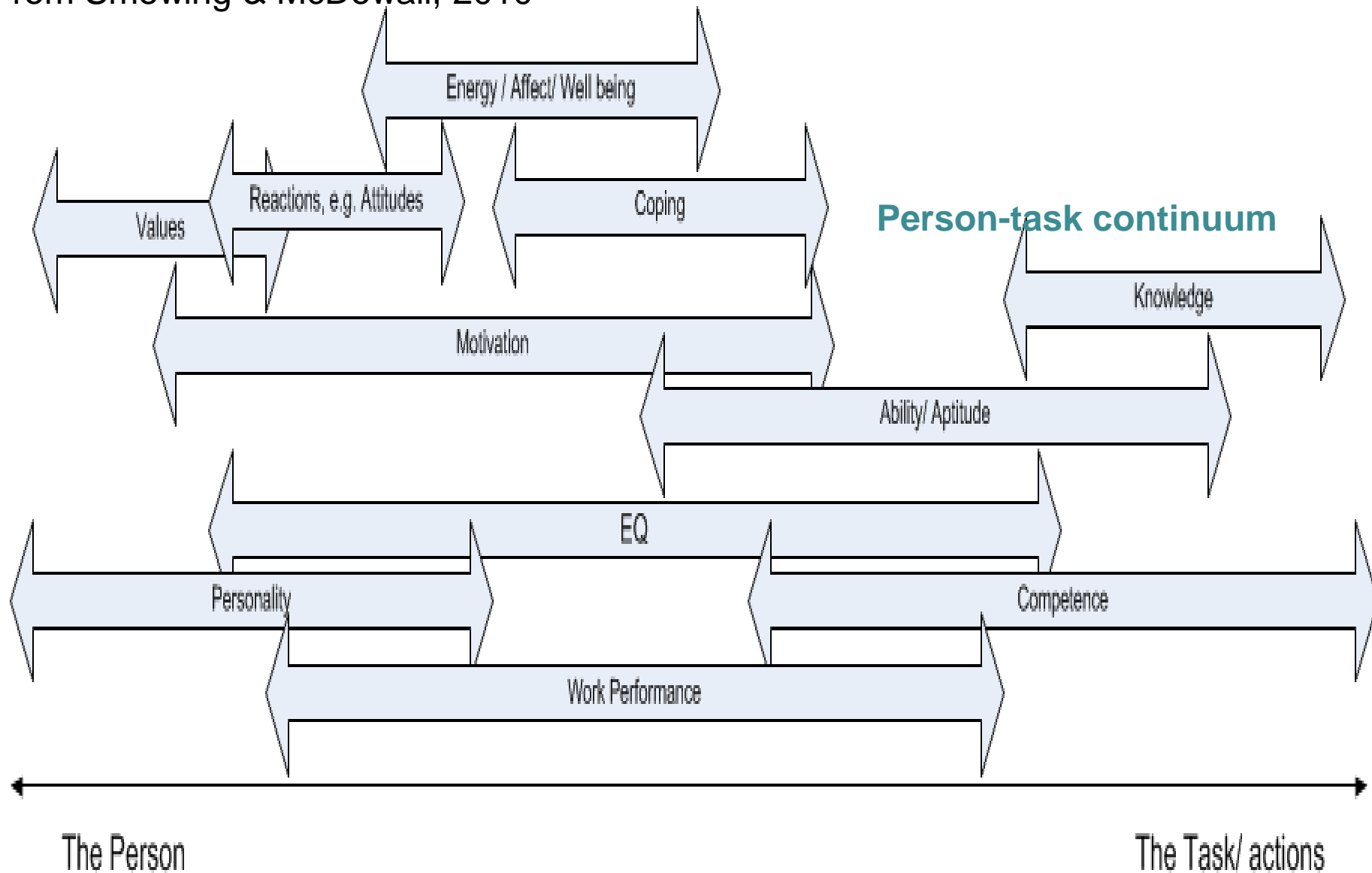


Psychometrics in Coaching - “Utility validity”

- Value of any tools goes beyond characteristics that can be easily measured
- Importance of context
- Fit for purpose
 - Coach-tool fit _____> What determines ‘fit’?
 - Coachee-tool fit

Q: How could data from different assessments be combined to good effect?

From Smewing & McDowall, 2010



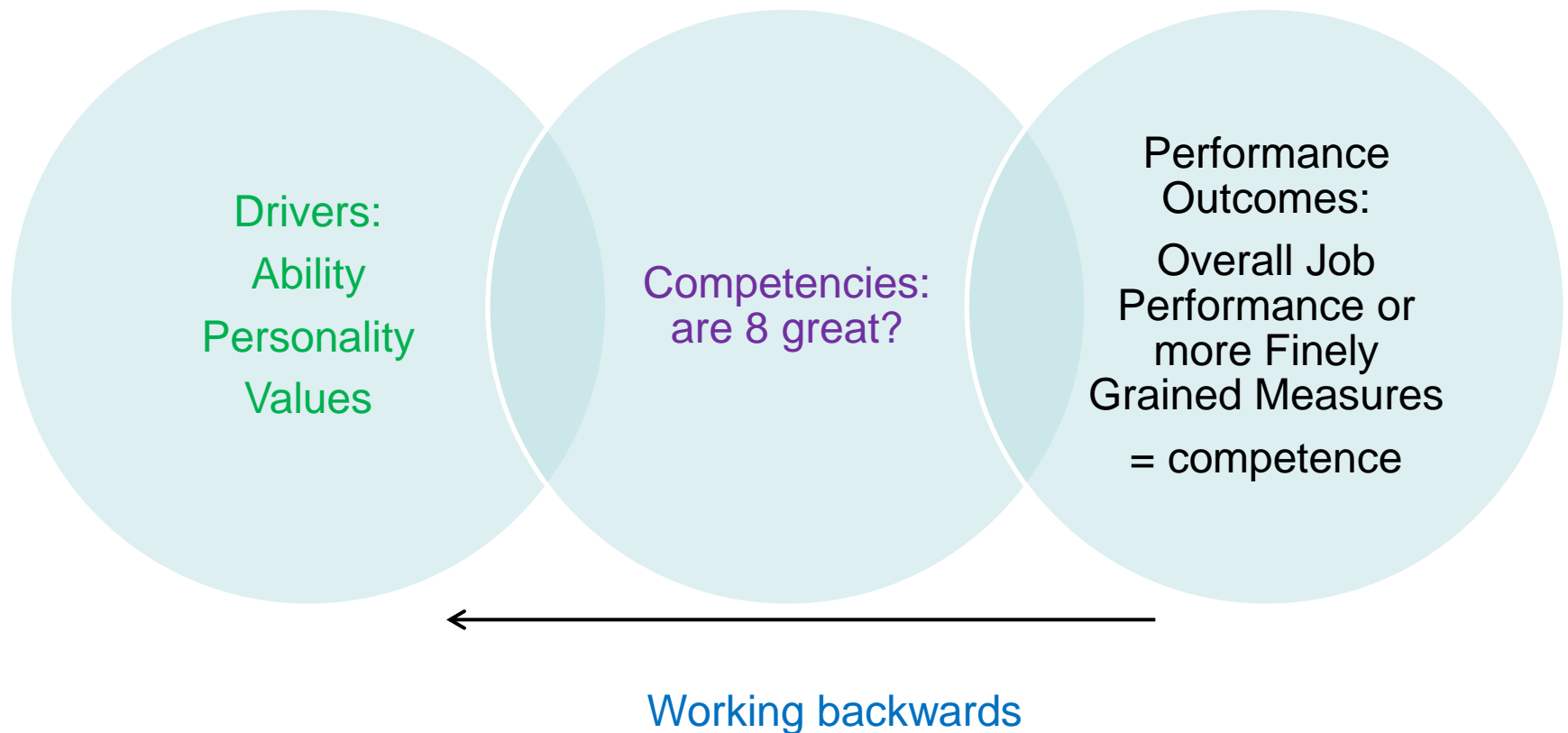
You prefer....?

Combining assessments in coaching

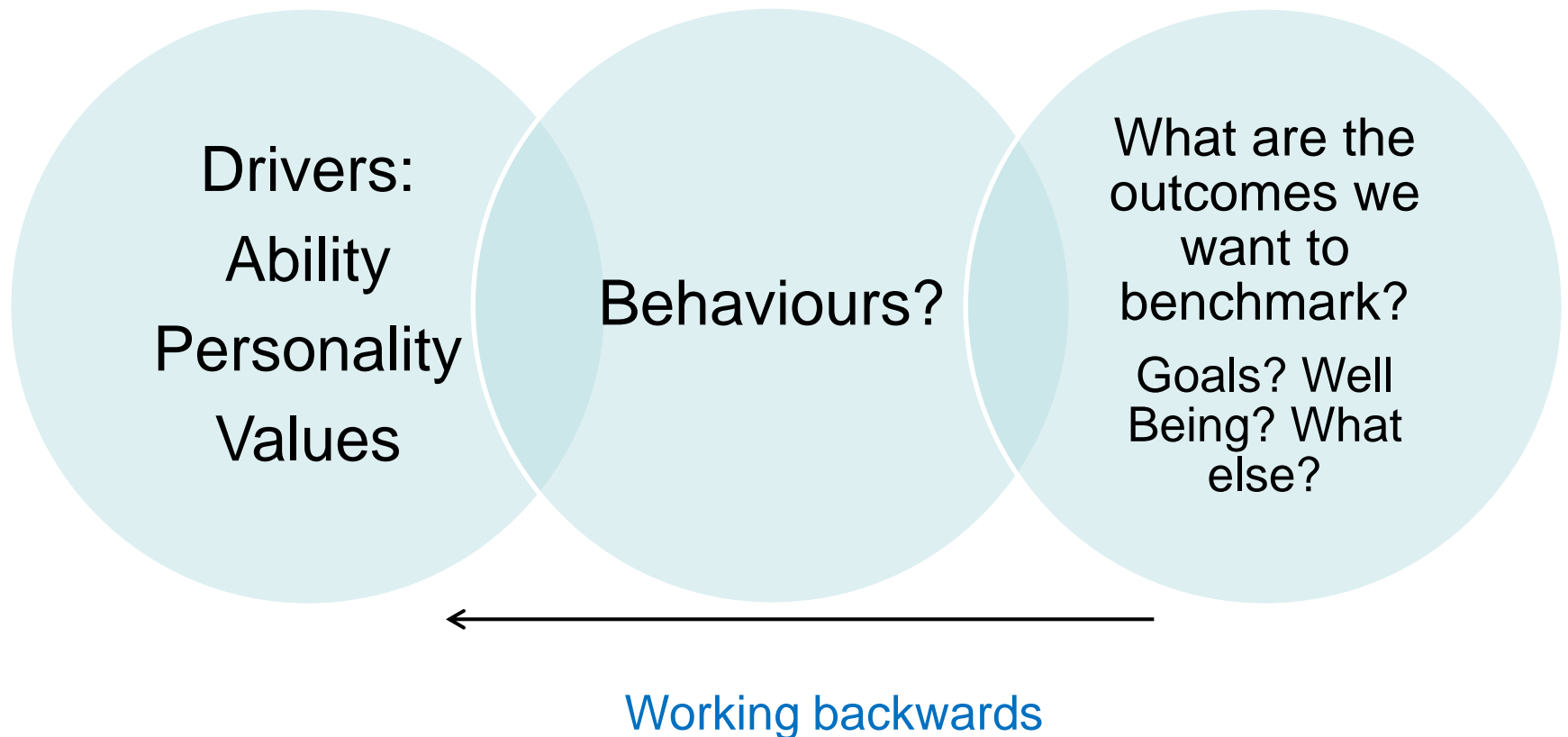
- Bartram (2005)
 - Criterion centric approach
 - Start with criterion domain
 - Then select predictors to understand drivers

- You can translate the overall approach into a coaching context!

Useful about Bartram Paper:



Translated to coaching context



Senior technical manager referred for coaching as follows:



Stop bullying
others in the
organisation



Build better
customer
relationships



Talent pipeline:
future board
member?

What would you want to assess and how would you do it?

Which assessments would you combine?

- Jane, 38, partner in law firm; returning to work after maternity leave, ‘struggling to get back in’, loss of confidence, “am I still in the right job?”
- John reports shying away from providing performance feedback to his direct reports, and tends to procrastinate to avoid the issue altogether.



Available Questionnaires

Trait-based

Type-based

Maladaptive
behaviours

360-degree

Coping
Styles

Values /
Motivation

Career /
Interest

Locus of
Control, Type
A/B etc.

Wellbeing /
Health

Reflective questions to ask

- Is this the right tool to use for this coachee, at this stage in the coaching process?
- What assessments can the coach use given their expertise and training?
- Is the coach the best person to use and interpret this assessment information?
- How can the coach best interpret and discuss the assessment information with the coachee, keeping a balance between objectivity and insight?
- How can the coach ensure that any assessment is not interpreted in an inappropriately subjective way depending on the coach's own preconceptions?
- How do all of the above impact on relationships in coaching?

Providing feedback using a psychometric:

- Discuss assessment/ psychometric output openly, and go through dimensions/ scales narratives together,
 - “Point by point open book”
- Discuss assessment together, but concentrate on certain aspects looking for linkages
 - “Open book linked approach”
- Get coachee to self rate themselves first, then compare with profile
 - “Self referenced comparative approach”
- Ask coachee to talk about pertinent general issues first, then link this to profile
 - “Narrative approach”

Reflections and close

- Learning from today?
- Stay in touch!
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References and bibliography

Bartram, D. (2005). The Great Eight Competencies: A Criterion-Centric Approach to Validation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1185-1203. doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1185](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1185)

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Useful web-links

- Publications by International Test Commission:
<http://www.intestcom.org/publications/index.php>
- Buros online reviews (not free...):
<https://marketplace.unl.edu/buros/>
- www.psychtesting.org
- Best practice guide by SHL:
<http://www.shl.com/assets/resources/Best-Practice-Guidelines-Management-of-Psychometric-Tests.pdf>
- Talent Q guidance on assessment:
<https://www.talentqgroup.com/resource-library/>