



COACHING FOR
VALUES

AT VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH



INTERNATIONAL COACHING FEDERATION
PRISM
Award

Vancouver Coastal Health

Driven by the vision of healthy lives in healthy communities, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) knows that this is only achievable with a healthy organization at the helm. As a British Columbia-based health authority responsible for the delivery of community, hospital and long-term care to more than one million people — patients, their families and the community at large are the primary focus. However, it is critical for any organization navigating the challenging and complex realities of health care to also take care of the people responsible for delivering this care.

When the results of an Organizational Health Index (OHI) survey in 2017 indicated an opportunity for greater investment in leadership skills and development within the organization, VCH decided to take a coaching approach aligned with its values to improve culture and support meaningful and sustained change.

“At Vancouver Coastal Health, we are always learning and believe in staying curious and open to innovative ideas and ways to advance health care. Investing in the learning and development of our leaders enhances our ability to attract, engage and retain high-performing talent with the right skills and abilities to deliver exceptional services at the forefront of health care,” said Parm Hari, Executive Director, Talent & Culture.

With the full support of its Chief Executive Officer and the senior executive team, VCH implemented a new professional coaching program, starting with its

leaders. This enabled them to model and support constructive shifts in leadership approaches, thereby facilitating a trickle-down effect throughout the rest of the organization. Following this foundational first step, additional support was provided to both leaders and employees through one-on-one as well as team coaching. Very rapidly, VCH began to see improved morale, increased retention and a positive culture change.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) celebrated VCH’s commitment to a values-driven coaching program by awarding the organization an honorable mention in the 2020 ICF International Prism Award program. ICF’s Prism Award program honors organizations that have achieved the highest standard of excellence in coaching programs that yield discernible and measurable positive impacts, meet rigorous professional standards, achieve key strategic goals, and shape organizational culture. (Learn more at coachingfederation.org/prism-award).

A Program Built on Values

The coaching program at VCH launched in 2018, in alignment with ICF best practices and standards. Goals were defined at the inception of the program to develop consultative leadership capabilities and to enhance the education and awareness of the effects of various leadership styles. Above all, the program set out to empower leaders and teams to live the organization’s values.

Coaches partnered with leaders across the organization to enhance leadership-specific skills such

as seeking and receiving feedback, leading change and effective communication, as well as to support individual growth.

“We believe that learning and development is a key factor of performance and motivation at work. Enabling this through a coach approach across VCH was positively received,” said Neil Brown, PCC, Leadership Coach.

One participant, for example, noted that they were able to identify blind spots and properly navigate difficult situations as a result of the coaching they received: “The amount I have learned about leadership and coaching others in such a short period of time is incredible.”

And the learning didn’t stop there. Both leaders and coaches themselves received ongoing, proactive training support and resources to further refine their skills. Coaches also received frequent feedback through informal and formal channels.

Every VCH coaching engagement involves an introductory meeting between coach and client to discuss the nature of coaching and program structure. This is then reinforced by a written agreement that defined the roles, responsibilities and rights of each party, fully aligned with the ICF Code of Ethics.

With strong executive support including the allocation of appropriate resources and a comprehensive, targeted plan, 10% of the organization was engaged within the first year of the coaching program, including half of the leadership.

Defining and Measuring Impact

“It’s important for us to track and understand the impact of coaching on employees, leadership and the organization as a whole, as it informs how we move forward to continue driving our strategic priorities,” said Simone Alberts, Manager, Leadership Team

Development. “Our client satisfaction scores consistently exceed 85%, with 9 out of 10 agreeing they would recommend coaching to others in the organization, which is a strong indicator of high return on expectations.”

Other measures of success include employee engagement scores and direct feedback from all stakeholders.

One VCH leader said, “I do not have enough words to express the extreme impact coaching has on my team and my personal professional development...the tension in our team went down considerably as a result of team coaching, and I’ve personally been able to see my own blind spots and learn to deal with difficult situations.”

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*Parm Hari
Executive Director, Talent & Culture*

Another VCH team member said, “Since my team leader has engaged in leadership team coaching, they are far more collaborative and truly listen during meetings. This has had a great effect on us as a team. Now we find better solutions to problems.”

VCH has also bolstered its OHI scores for both consultative leadership and employee motivation by five points, marking a significant increase from the 2017 results.

A Values-Driven Force for Good

If these various measurements of progress to date weren’t enough, there could be no greater test of the organization’s culture or leadership strength than the

challenges of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year.

As VCH leaders, physicians, front line clinicians and support staff all stepped up to tackle the public health crisis, the coaching team stepped up alongside them. Through remote sessions, coaches helped leaders become more agile, adjust to working virtually and manage their wellness under unprecedented conditions. They also created a daily newsletter offering inspirational content and self-care tips to humanize the pandemic and provide much needed

moral support specifically for those leading teams on the front lines.

Now in its third year, the coaching program has played a significant role in enhancing leadership competency and transforming culture for the better at VCH. The organization and its people continue to be committed to their collective journey of fostering a supportive, coaching approach to growth. Through it all, VCH stayed true to its vision of healthy lives and healthy communities by caring not only for the people they serve, but also the people within. 🍌

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the world's largest organization leading the global advancement of the coaching profession and fostering coaching's role as an integral part of society. Founded in 1995, its 35,000+ members located in more than 140 countries and territories work toward common goals of enhancing awareness of coaching and upholding the integrity of the profession through lifelong learning and upholding the highest ethical standards. Through the work of its six unique family organizations, ICF empowers professional coaches, coaching clients, organizations, communities and the world through coaching. Visit [coachingfederation.org](https://www.coachingfederation.org) to learn more.



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