

Supporting Employees' wellbeing: Exploring the Perspectives of Filipino Wellbeing Coaches and Implications for Workplace Interventions

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Abstract: The importance of wellbeing in the workplace is to promote wellness within the organization and to protect individuals' wellbeing. The study interviewed three wellbeing coaches, selected based on their professional licenses, and extensive field experience in coaching, with at least two years of counseling practice. Purposive sampling was employed to improve data accuracy and relevance selecting experienced individuals to ensure valuable perspectives. Using deductive thematic analysis, Filipino wellbeing coaches present their experiences, and the study used four predetermined key themes following the (ICF) Core Competencies Model which includes foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, and cultivating learning and growth. In addition, the key themes were supported by eight sub-themes from the same model. The study discovered that wellbeing coaches provide psychological wellness strategies, implement interventions that integrate various tools and approaches to meet client needs while adhering to ethical practices, and provide continuous individual support which can substantially strengthen organizational efficacy. Wrike (2024) mentioned that organizational development interventions help to improve efficiency and boost employee engagement and satisfaction. Personalized support plans can be created, which may increase engagement, foster a strong culture, and promote innovation. In addition, integrating mental health and wellbeing programs, such as counseling services, stress management workshops, and wellness initiatives, benefits employees' mental health, resulting in increased resiliency. Future studies should include longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of personalized support plans and diverse tools on employee performance and organizational outcomes. Comparative analysis of different instruments and approaches can provide insights into which methods are most effective.

Keywords: Employee Wellbeing Program; Wellbeing Coaches; Coaching Practice; Mental Health



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Introduction

There is an increasing prevalence of organizations providing employee assistance programs (EAPs). This trend gained traction during the COVID-19 pandemic when organizations started to realize the importance of maintaining wellbeing, especially with the current demanding and stressful workplace environment. Long and Cooke (2022) According to the EAP Association (EAPA), EAPs are defined as a "worksite-based program designed to assist work organizations in addressing productivity issues, and employee clients in identifying and resolving personal concerns, including but not limited to health, marital, family, financial, emotional, stress or other personal issues that may affect job performance (Joseph et al., 2017). This highlights the importance of supporting employees in physical, mental, and emotional health, leading to more supportive and thriving work culture.

In the Philippines, this growing issue of work and life balance has been further emphasized by the recent article published by GMA News, which, reportedly, the Philippines ranks second to last, with 60 countries having very low work-life balance. Almazan (2024) It was stated that the Philippines has relatively lower statutory annual leave and an average of 40.63 working hours per week compared to the average of 33-36 working hours per week in other countries. ("Work-life Balance Index: Philippines Ranks 59th of 60 Countries," 2024b) which can contribute to the trend of a concerning work-life balance. Additionally, the extended work schedule can also contribute to stress and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life, leaving less time for family, leisure, and other activities related to maintaining wellbeing, which can later on affect productivity in the long run. These findings underscore the need for further research on other contributing factors to poor work-life balance and the development of effective interventions to address this issue.

A number of organizations in the Philippines started to offer EAP to employees, with some extending to their immediate family members. EAP provides Filipino workers a way of accessing professional support to debrief, process, and work on personal and work-related issues. This can mean that the employees get appropriate interventions, develop coping strategies to manage their problems, and improve their resilience. This is where wellbeing coaches play a key role in delivering the EAP services.

While workplace wellness programs are gaining traction, there remain hesitations and gaps in the relevance of these programs and the contributions of wellbeing coaches, especially with the lack of study within the Philippines. Existing research on wellbeing programs is mainly in Western countries, which already highlights the impact of EAP in workplace culture. It was mentioned that individuals who have access to these programs were found to feel more supported and guided with information and are more likely to achieve satisfactory goals in life. Global Wellness Institute Wellness Coaching Initiative (2023) Additionally, wellbeing coaches promote healthy behaviors, lifestyles, and habits, especially for employees exposed to environmental challenges and who spend most of their time at work. Interventions provided

can occur in a variety of ways, ranging from stress management courses and mental health services to physical activity and wellness initiatives—this wellness intervention results in increased output, lower absenteeism, and a healthier work environment. In addition, organizations in partnership with coaches, empower employees to acquire the abilities and routines required to sustain their wellbeing both within and outside of the workplace by offering resources and encouragement for healthy behaviors. In the long run, workplace interventions are essential for encouraging a healthy lifestyle and raising workers' general quality of life (Torres et al., 2023)

A 2015 study by Richmond et al. examined the impact of employee assistance programs (EAPs) on workplace outcomes, finding a significantly more significant reduction in absenteeism and presenteeism compared to non-EAP employees and that these services are generally effective across different levels of anxiety, depression, and productivity but were particularly effective in reducing absenteeism for those with baselines depression and anxiety (Richmond et al., 2015). More recently, Attridge et al. (2023) further demonstrated the long-term effectiveness of EAPs, explicitly highlighting that mental health coaching from employee assistance programs improves depression and work outcomes. Furthermore, coaching intervention led to an 88% reduction in work absenteeism hours, a 32% increase in work productivity, and a 66% reduction in depression symptoms. Additionally, the percentage of employees with work productivity problems was reduced from 27% to 1%, and 94% of those with an initial productivity problem achieved reliable recovery with a significant increase in their productivity score (Attridge et al., 2023)

Sciegaj et al. (2001) study on employee assistance programs (EAPs) among Fortune 500 firms revealed that they had expanded their services and organizational structures over time. It was found that they have developed the range and depth of services they provide over time, that it offers a broader set of counseling services to employees, and that to meet demands, their EAP programs have become more complex as their numbers have increased (Sciegaj et al., 2001). This testifies to how employee assistance programs provide a more supportive and thriving workplace culture. Despite its business cost, it is found to be an investment as part of taking care of its employees.

Despite the increasing demand for such services, particularly in Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs), a sector often characterized by high stress and demanding work schedules, there is a limited understanding of the narratives, challenges, and opportunities faced by wellbeing coaches in their daily practice within the EAP services. This scarcity of research hinders the development of targeted training programs, the establishment of ethical guidelines, and the optimization of coaching interventions tailored to the specific needs of the Filipino workforce. Several factors may contribute to the lack of research, including the limited awareness of the importance of EAP and the cultural stigma surrounding mental health; a study in 2023 from the Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA) revealed that only 6-10% of employees actively use their EAP services annually. This underutilization is a missed opportunity for both employees and employers (Uprise Health, 2024b). The potential

consequence of this research gap includes ineffective EAP implementation, inadequate support for employee wellbeing, and training gaps for wellbeing coaches. This study aims to address the critical gap by exploring the experiences and professional practice of wellbeing coaches in the Philippines, contributing to a deeper understanding of the intricacies of this emerging field.

The Philippines currently has limited research about the impact of EAP in the Philippine setting and the perspectives of wellbeing coaches. These coaches are key implementers of Employee assistance programs. These professionals are typically licensed guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, and psychometricians. They provide guidance and support to employees seeking to improve their overall wellbeing, unlike traditional workplace coaches, who may focus on performance or skill development. Wellbeing coaches specialize in helping individuals enhance their mental, emotional, and physical health. They use evidence-based techniques to facilitate behavior change, build resiliency, and promote health habits. This holistic approach addresses various realms of wellbeing, including stress management, work-life balance, and healthy lifestyle choices (McCarty et al., 1998). The emerging field of wellbeing coaching in the Philippines has prompted researchers to initiate discussions and investigations in this area.

This study will employ the international core competencies of the International Coaching Federation in unpacking the professional practice of the wellbeing coaches. The ICF, which is the leading global organization for coaches and coaching, has a Philippine chapter that defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. (*The Gold Standard in Coaching / ICF - Core Competencies*, 2024b) ICF's core competencies are organized into four domains. (1) Demonstrate ethical practice; this first domain examines the coaches' adherence to their professional ethics and their application of a coaching mindset. This includes unpacking how they facilitate clients' processing and accountability for their choices, as well as how the coach maintains their demeanor during their coaching sessions.

The second domain, (2) "Co-creating the relationship," examines how coaches conduct their coaching sessions; this includes the scope and limitations of their coaching relationship. This domain explores how coaches establish rapport and trust in their clients, focusing on creating a safe space for them. It also assesses how the coaches demonstrate confidence in working with their clients. The third domain, (3) "Communicating effectively", focuses on coaches' skills in providing insights, practicing reflective listening, and fostering client self-awareness. Their questing techniques, ability to manage silence, and use of metaphor and analogy are also evaluated.

Finally, the fourth domain, (4) "Cultivating learning and growth", assesses the coach's skills in how coaches help their clients transform their experiences into the learning and how they facilitate the explorations of solutions and coping techniques. The researchers chose this

framework as a basis to evaluate their professional skill set and knowledge of the wellbeing coaches.

The study aims to address this critical gap by exploring wellbeing coaches' experiences and professional practices in the Philippines. This research particularly wants to answer two central questions. First is how wellbeing coaches in the Philippines perform their coaching approaches in supporting employee wellbeing and what challenges and opportunities they encounter in navigating the evolving landscape of wellbeing in the Philippines. The researchers seek to provide valuable insights for all the stakeholders of wellbeing programs. The findings of this research will be relevant to mental health professionals considering a career as wellbeing coaches, organizations wanting to develop more effective and comprehensive wellbeing programs, and lastly, policymakers and advocates to rally to promote a healthier and more productive workforce in the Philippines.

Method

Given the emergence of wellbeing coaching in the Philippines, this study adopts a more targeted approach. This allows for a more focused understanding of the profession's individual experiences, challenges, and best practices. The researchers aim to surface what wellbeing coaching is in the Filipino context—surfacing unique cultural factors and workplace dynamics that can influence the coaching practice.

Research Locale

Metro Manila, the bustling capital of the Philippines, serves a critical role in the nation's economy and its global connections (Porio, 2009). The city serves as a major hub for government, business, and culture with a concentration of corporate offices (Lambino, 2010). Metro Manila has emerged as a key location for business process outsourcing (BPO) companies, which contributes significantly to the country's economic growth and global competitiveness. These BPO companies, often characterized by demanding work environments and high-stress levels, have been among the early adopters of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to support their employees' wellbeing.

The study focuses specifically on the experiences of Filipino wellbeing coaches working in Metro Manila who provide non-clinical support to employees. These coaches are mental health professionals who offer guidance and support in the workplace. By examining their experiences, this research aims to shed light on their unique perspectives, challenges, and opportunities in this demanding and culturally diverse environment.

Participants

Wellbeing coaches were sought for this study using specific selection criteria to achieve the research objectives. The inclusion criteria for selecting a wellbeing coach included being a licensed professional (Registered Guidance Counselor, Registered Social Worker, Registered Psychologist, or Registered Psychometrician), currently employed as a wellbeing coach providing non-clinical coaching sessions, and having at least two years of experience in this

role. These criteria ensure the study's suitability and reflect accurate data on their coaching practice and how they provide mental health support to their clients. Individuals who do not meet these criteria or cannot provide consent will be excluded.

The selection of participants was conducted through purposive sampling, a non-probability technique used in qualitative research to select knowledgeable informants for in-depth interviews (Tongco, 2007). It is particularly effective when studying specific cultural domains or phenomena of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). It can be applied in both qualitative and quantitative research, offering efficiency and robustness comparable to random sampling (Tongco, 2007; Guarte & Barrios, 2006). Purposive sampling can help achieve a manageable amount of data while prioritizing studies from diverse settings with rich data (Ames et al., 2019). While purposive sampling has limitations due to its subjective nature, it can be valuable when randomization is impractical, resources are limited, or the research does not aim for broad generalizations (Etikan et al., 2016). The quality of data gathered depends on the careful selection of informants, ensuring their reliability and competence (Tongco, 2007). In this study, purposive sampling allowed the researchers to gather in-depth information from experienced wellbeing coaches who could offer unique perspectives on their practice and the challenges and opportunities they face in supporting employee wellbeing in Metro Manila.

While the initial goal was to recruit five coaches, due to the limited availability of qualified coaches who met the inclusion criteria and could commit to participation, the final sample consisted of three wellbeing coaches. Two of the participants were registered guidance counselors with over 10 years of professional experience in academic settings and more than 3 years of experience as wellbeing coaches. The third participant was a licensed psychologist with 2 years of experience as a wellbeing coach. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, following the six-phase framework outlined by Clarke and Braun (2017), familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This systematic approach allowed for a rigorous and comprehensive examination of the interview transcripts, enabling the identification of recurring themes and significant insights related to the research questions (Evans & Lewis, 2018; Jugder, 2016).

The researchers started by becoming more familiar with the data, reading and re-reading transcripts. This helped to get a better sense of the participants' experience and points of view. The generation of initial codes followed this familiarization stage by identifying significant features of the data. Codes were, therefore labels for segments of text that shared common ideas or concepts.

After which the codes were combined into possible themes, then further reviewed and refined using an iterative approach of data analysis and discussion among researchers. This process made sure that the themes reflected accurately on the data as well as captured the nuances of the participants' experiences. Once the themes were finalized, they were defined and named in a clear and concise manner.

Finally, the findings were presented in Table 1, highlighting the ICF core competencies, sub-competencies, and the coaches' approaches in relation to the ICF competencies. This table provides a clear and organized overview of the key themes identified in the data and their alignment with the ICF framework. This process enabled the researchers to identify and interpret patterns of meaning within the data, ultimately highlighting the intricacies of being a wellbeing coach in the Philippine workplace.

Data Gathering Procedure

The recruitment of participants for this study involved a purposive sampling approach to identify and select potential participants who met specific criteria and could provide in-depth information about their experiences as wellbeing coaches. Potential participants were contacted via Facebook Messenger. The initial contact included an introduction to the study, its objectives, and the potential participant's role in the research. If the individual expressed interest in participating, they were provided with an informed consent form that outlined the study's purpose, procedures, and list of questions. Upon obtaining informed consent, interviews were scheduled at the participant's convenience. The interviews were conducted through a combination of online platforms, primarily Google Meet and face-to-face meetings.

Material

To obtain the perspectives and approaches of the coaches, data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews, a widely used qualitative research method in social sciences that allows researchers to explore subjective viewpoints and gather in-depth information (Evans & Lewis, 2018; Adams, 2015). This approach offers flexibility while maintaining focus on specific themes, making it more powerful than other interview types for qualitative research (Mashuri et al., 2022). The interview guide was developed based on the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Core Competencies, ensuring that the questions covered key areas of coaching practice. The interview guide also included open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their personal experiences and perspectives on wellbeing coaching in the Filipino workplace. As Ruslin et al. (2022) suggest, interviews offer a powerful method of inquiry for rich discovery.

Semi-structured interviews are particularly valuable for understanding motivations, attitudes, and impacts of policies or events on people's lives, often providing unanticipated information (Adams, 2015). This method allows researchers to adapt their questions while maintaining focus on the study's objectives (Mashuri et al., 2022).

Ethical Considerations

Prior to participating in the study, all participants provided informed consent. They were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. To ensure confidentiality, all data was collected and stored securely. Participants' names were not directly mentioned, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Result

The deductive thematic analysis of the Filipino wellbeing coaches' perspective and approaches to their role, as observed during the interviews, were organized based on the 2019 International Coaching Federation (ICF) Core Competencies model, which yields four (4) predetermined key themes, consisting of foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, and cultivating learning and growth. These core competencies are supported by eight (8) sub-themes that include demonstrating ethical practice, embodying a coaching mindset, establishing and maintaining agreements, cultivating trust and safety, maintaining presence, listening actively, evoking awareness, and facilitating client growth. Table 1 presents core competencies from the ICF as the themes, and each one is further defined with corresponding sub-competencies as the sub-themes. The interviews have been analyzed and revealed that the approaches and experiences of Filipino wellbeing coaches align with the ICF Core Competencies model and are likewise presented in the table and elaborated in the succeeding sections, showcasing how they perceive their role, navigate challenges, and implement strategies to support employee wellbeing.

Foundation

The foundation refers to the basic principles of wellbeing coaching that coaches must possess. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines these principles or core competencies as mainly the demonstration of ethical practice and the embodying of a coaching mindset.

Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Being possessed by this principle means understanding and consistently applying coaching ethics and standards of coaching. The participants consistently emphasized their adherence to ethical guidelines and professional standards. They ensure a safe and respectful environment for clients of diverse backgrounds, uphold ethical boundaries and use structured coaching methods. P3 stated, *"First we have to inform the client that this is a safe space and all discussed will be treated as confidential,"* which describes the importance of confidentiality and responsible coaching practices. Furthermore, they recognize their limitations and refer clients to appropriate professionals when needed. P3 also highlighted, *"We will not handle clinical cases and if there will be clinical concerns, we will refer them to EAP counselors [Clinical Psychologists]"* This statement emphasizes their values of staying within the ethical limits of their role.

Table 1.

Thematic analysis of Filipino Wellbeing Coaches' competencies based on ICF Core Competencies

ICF Core Competencies	Sub-competencies	Approaches
Foundation	Demonstrates Ethical Practice	Recognizes and respects cultural diversities Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty Maintains confidentiality and ethical boundaries Refers clients to other support professionals, as needed
	Embody a Coaching Mindset	Prioritizes client needs while fostering accountability Commits to lifelong development Upholds the ability to regulate emotions
	Establishes and Maintains Agreements	Clearly defines coaching boundaries Collaborates on goal-setting Respects client autonomy in engagement Adapts to client availability Provides ongoing support
	Cultivates Trust and Safety	Creates a safe and trusting space Adapts to client needs Observes and respects individuality Demonstrates genuine care and empathy Build rapport over time
	Maintains Presence	Demonstrates curiosity about the client's emotions Manages own emotions to maintain presence Embraces uncertainty and focuses on the present Respects the client's pace in sharing
	Communicating Effectively	Considers the client's context and experiences Uses reflective listening to ensure understanding Observes verbal and nonverbal cues Provides space for emotional expression
	Evokes Awareness	Promotes self-reflection and awareness Encourages perspective shifts Fosters present-moment focus
	Facilitates Client Growth	Fosters self-awareness and learning from experiences Supports goal setting and action Empowers decision-making and autonomy

ICF Core Competencies	Sub-competencies	Approaches
		Provides psychoeducation and self-management tools
		Boosts self-esteem through progress recognition

Being culturally sensitive is one of the most important competencies a wellbeing coach must possess to foster building trust, create a supportive environment, and tailor coaching strategies to effectively address unique needs and challenges. P2 shared, *"The thing I always mention to them when it comes to mindfulness, actually, it's a Bible verse that I always incorporate within me, though I'm not telling them na [that] it's a Bible verse because I need to respect the diverse religion or faith of every person. But I'm telling them in a sense that it is being delivered as a personal statement..."* The wellbeing coach expresses his belief to the client in a way that is still beneficial while respecting the client's own culture, environment, values, and beliefs.

Embody a Coaching Mindset

Coaches develop and maintain a mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered. The interviews revealed that wellbeing coaches embody a coaching mindset as described by the ICF. They guide their clients in exploring options and making their own decisions, reflecting their acknowledgment of the client's autonomy. As P1 stated, *"I believe that to be effective, a course of action needs to know for himself how far he can go. If you're the one supplying what he needs to do, you can't assess if he can do it. He's the one who knows best. I always believe that the client knows best what he can do. And he knows himself better."* The coaches are also committed to continuous learning, development, and adapting to client needs. P2 shared, *"I am very passionate about this... That's why I always consider an opportunity to learn whatever possible hindrances might happen to our role as a wellbeing coach."*

In addition, coaches emphasized that taking care of their mental health and being self-aware is crucial for the job. They ensure mental and emotional stability before taking on or conducting sessions. For instance, P1 experienced losing a client due to completed suicide, she shared, *"Since I'm one of the grieving party, dahil nakausap ko siya, may effect yun sa akin (because I talked to him/her, it affected me). So, I asked my supervisor if it's okay to take a break for a while. And then, I really focused on my mental health... It was like after a week, medyo okay na ako (I'm feeling somewhat better), nakabalik na ako sa mga sessions ko (I'm back taking on sessions)."* Filipino wellbeing coaches practice rescheduling their sessions when not in the right emotional state, ensuring they can fully engage and provide quality coaching without emotional transference. P2 also pointed out, *"As we promote self-care, you should also know about self-care. As we promote coping skills, you should also know about... Your coping techniques and strategies. That's it, yun yung pinaka-personal (those are the most personal) things that I am applying in my life. Alam ko kung ano yung kailangan ko kapag nararamdam kong pagod na ako (I know what I need if I'm feeling tired already). It is more on self-awareness as well... So anytime na magkaroon na naman ng (that we'll have another) coachee, you are fully prepared."*

This highlights how coaches prioritize taking care of themselves with the belief that they cannot help their clients who feel lost if they, themselves as coaches, are not aware of their own needs and how to cope with their challenges.

Co-Creating the Relationship

This core competency is where the wellbeing coach builds partnership with their client in establishing and maintaining agreements, and cultivating trust and safety by maintaining presence during each session as well as communicating effectively.

Establishes and Maintains Agreements

This refers to partnering with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans, and goals. Coaches must establish agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session. The participants emphasized the need to set clear boundaries and agreements with clients to define coaching objectives and scope. As P2 explained, *"We cannot give diagnoses or clinical diagnoses. It's not for us to conduct the formal counseling. There are other entities that will do that for us... So, that's it. That's the nature of the concerns that we deal with here. More on day-to-day problems, work-related, personal, family issues."* This practice fosters clarity on the limitations of the coaching process. They also partner with clients to establish personalized coaching plans based on the client's needs and desired outcomes. P3 also shared, *"Tinatanong ko siya ng consent if (I'm asking him/her for a consent if)... he/she already needs it because one of the things I will be asking is... Among doon sa mga sinasabi niya (Among the things that he/she says), alin doon ang gusto niyang... gawan namin ng action plan (which one does he/she want us to make an action plan for). And if he/she says, 'ito po (this), ito pwede kong i-explore to (this one, I can explore) with you', then we'll do it."* If any adjustments need to be made in the coaching process, coaches seek the client's consent before taking action to allow them to decide the direction of their sessions.

Moreover, they monitor progress and stay connected with their clients to prevent potential issues and ensure a smooth transition if a client is reassigned to another coach. As P1 stated, *"I also tell the coachee that just in case you'll have a new assigned coach...you can share this with your next coach na meron kang gantong (that you have this kind of) assignment, na nandito tayo ngayon, ito yung goal mo ngayon (that we are here now, this is your goal at the moment), to fix your sleep-wake patterns."* This approach reinforces the continuity of the established agreement with the client despite the reassignment. Due to the rotating shift schedules and changes of coaches, the coachee can still have the option to continue their discussion with the next coach they will be meeting.

Cultivates Trust and Safety

This is where the wellbeing coach partners with the client to create a safe, and supportive environment that allows them to share freely by maintaining a relationship of mutual respect

and trust. Participants highlighted that creating a safe and non-judgmental space is critical in coaching, as it shows support, validates emotions, and prioritizes client wellbeing. As P1 noted, "*I think my best practice is, well, number one, to really establish that genuine relationship with the client. Feeling ko kapag nararamdaman nila na (I feel that when they are feeling) you genuinely care, and you're really interested with what they are sharing, nagkakaroon sila ng ganong klase ng feeling na, 'puwede kong sabihin sa kanya lahat'* (they are having that kind of feeling that 'I can tell her [coach] everything')." Similarly, P3 stated, "*what I can share as my best practice is, how I try to dig deep without them realizing that we're already there or without them feeling intimidated. Because it's hard when they feel intimidated or invalidated. I never ask 'why'. It's like counseling as well. You can never ask 'why' to the coachee or the counselee.*" They also adjust communication styles like adding humor to the session or whatever will match client preferences, ensuring comfort and understanding until they build rapport over time.

Maintains Presence

Maintaining presence means being fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident. The participants described the importance of being fully engaged and present during sessions as a wellbeing coach. P1 shared, "*Normally, I ask them, what do you feel when you experience something like that?*" This approach demonstrates curiosity and care about how the client feels about a certain situation. Similarly, P2 noted, "*For example, you asked the coachee... 'How are you?' And then, when the coachee responds, 'I'm okay, coach.' That's the usual response... If I will settle on that answer... That's it. The session is over... How can I possibly reply to that?... I will ask that coachee, 'How okay are you, [from] 1-10?'*" This stresses how wellbeing coaches are being challenged with their profession due to the client's hesitation to open up. Through P2's experience, he also shared how he strategizes on managing the client's one-liner responses. He explained, "*There are coachees that, if you want to build a rapport, they will just give you a one-line response. Like, it's okay. Not really. So, from there, your approach will be different other than those coaches that when you ask, 'Oh, how are you?', 'Oh, Coach, I'm happy.' So, that's where you get an idea on what you can do or what kind of approach, or how you can possibly get this person to tell you more so that you can really address the issue.*" They use follow-up questions and open-ended prompts to encourage deeper emotional exploration, not settling for one-liner responses while respecting the client's pace and giving them time to process their thoughts and feelings.

In addition, the coaches demonstrate how they help their clients keep their presence at the moment or during the session. P2 mentioned reminding his client, "*No matter how hard you think over and over and over about the past or the future, nothing will happen. It will just give birth to another stress. Just look at what's happening right now. Enjoy what's happening right now.*" This encourages clients to focus on the present instead of dwelling on the past or predicting the future, fostering a space for the client to explore his/her present experience without the pressure of needing to control the future or the stress of bringing back the past.

Communicating Effectively

Communicating effectively is the process of conveying a message and having the ability to understand the message clearly and concisely. Based on the ICF Core Competencies, it involves listening actively and evoking awareness as the sub-competencies that are needed to foster effective communication.

Listens Actively

ICF defines listening actively as focusing on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support the client's self-expression. The interview results of the wellbeing coaches yielded this skill among wellbeing coaches. P3 mentioned, "*I allow them to be calm, and hayaan nalang sila na umiyak muna (let them cry) but I always say after they have calmed down, na yung pag-iyak (that crying) is part of recognizing our emotions, and, emotions are meant to be felt, kailangan talaga siyang maramdam... wag siyang ideny (it really needs to be felt and not to be denied).*" This encourages the client to share openly, including expressing emotions as part of the process by paying attention to words, tone, and body language to grasp unspoken thoughts and unexpressed emotions. Moreover, P1 shared, "*There are coachees that if their concern has something to do with comprehension and the focus, what I always go to is sleep, sleep, and food. And when I find that they only get 4-5 hours of sleep, I ask them how long their sleep-wake patterns have been like that. Others say it's only been a week since they transitioned their schedule. And then, I ask them, in the past, when you were there in a better schedule, for example, in the morning, did you also experience this type of difficulty? And then, I realize that sometimes, they're even top performers. Sometimes, their mental process is fast.*" Coaches acknowledge external factors like client systems to understand their client's challenges better and tailor the coaching approach. Not only that, they use reflective listening by mirroring concerns, asking clarifying questions, and encouraging elaboration to deepen the conversation.

Evokes Awareness

Facilitating the client's insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy evokes awareness to the client. Filipino wellbeing coaches described their role in helping coachees gain new perspectives and insights. P2 stated, "*One of the most prominent answers other than 'okay lang' [I'm okay] that you can get from the coachees is their response of 'no choice.' I just told them that 'In the beginning of your journey in this company, no one pointed a gun at you. No one pointed a knife at your neck...' I told them, 'You move your own hands to input your own signature on the contract. So, from there, you have a choice. And it was your choice to sign... At the end of the day, no one can give you the right help but yourself. Sometimes, you just need to fix your own mindset. Whenever you keep on telling yourself that you have no choice, why are you doing this?' I said, then 'You also have the choice to finish what you should finish.*" This method challenges their restrictive thinking (e.g., the belief of having "no choice"), reframes perspectives, and encourages the client to explore alternative viewpoints. They use questions and creative techniques to help clients recognize patterns,

limiting beliefs, and emotional challenges to promote self-reflection and to stay focused in engaging with their current reality and emotions for awareness. P2 also shared what he usually says to his clients, *"Do you want to remain in this situation, in this problem? 'Of course, coach, no.' So they will respond like that. 'So what do you think you should do?' That's what I ask them. Though, of course, there will also be a response that 'I don't know, coach, what should I do?' So what I will tell them is 'What is something that can make you smile? What is something that you do that makes you happy no matter what you do?' So they will think again."*

Cultivating Learning and Growth

This means actively fostering a coaching session where clients are encouraged to continuously acquire new knowledge, skills, and experiences, leading to personal development where they can handle coping with challenges with autonomy. ICF defined this core competency as the facilitation of the client's growth over time.

Facilitates Client Growth

Wellbeing coaches partner with the client to transform learning and insight into action. they promote client autonomy in the coaching process, fostering the growth of the client. Participants emphasized their strategies for promoting long-term growth in coachees. The stepping stone would be guiding the client in identifying meaningful goals, integrating new perspectives, and developing strategies to move forward with confidence. P1 explained, *"Basically, my role as wellbeing coach is to help the client identify his or her goals, leverage and highlight the client's personal strengths, and eventually help the client take action."* This likewise fosters self-awareness and learning from experiences by helping the client uncover hidden emotions, reflect on challenges, and recognize failures as opportunities for growth.

As P3 highlighted, *"Yes, preventative care talaga siya (it is indeed a preventive care), and I think that is the purpose of [redacted - name of program]. It is not for a treatment plan, we give them the skills for them to apply, and in my experience, I feel happy because they mirror or mimic the terms that I use. Sila yung nagsasabi na ganito na ginagamit ko (They say that 'this is what I am using now') which I've never heard them say that before, but because of psychoeducation, natutunan na rin nila (they have learned it as well)."* This strategy equips the client with knowledge and coping strategies to understand themselves better and manage life situations effectively. Similarly, P2 shared what he says to his clients, *"You know what's good for you so, choose that one. Don't allow other people to make decisions for you... You can also use it to empower the client or to somehow make them realize that 'You have this, you have that, you have these quote-unquote superpowers to decide for your own good.'"* This highlights the client's "superpowers" to decide for their own good, suggesting that the coach encourages the client to take responsibility for their goals, actions, and progress, and come to their own conclusions without dictating solutions. More importantly, they work on increasing the client's sense of self-worth by recognizing their progress, which inspires them to celebrate their accomplishments and reaffirms their drive and self-assurance in their personal development.

Discussion

The importance of enhancing employee support in an overall aspect is crucial in establishing a culturally healthy environment. The Philippines was reported to have a very low work-life balance, ranked 59th out of 60 countries; it was found to be concerning ("Work-life Balance Index: Philippines Ranks 59th of 60 Countries," 2024b). The perspective of wellbeing coaches is presented using the ICF's four core competencies, which include demonstrating ethical practice (1), which indicates that wellbeing coaches adhere to ethical procedures, specifically in establishing self-awareness, setting boundaries as a coach, and being culturally sensitive. The research reiterated the need to emphasize client needs, such as supporting individuals in regulating their emotions and providing intuitive information that will be beneficial for their progress. Wellbeing is important in the workplace as it enables people to create a more inclusive and productive environment that promotes growth. Wellbeing coach participants stated that their role is to help clients identify their goals, highlight the client's personal strengths, and help them take action. Also, the participants mentioned that they encourage their clients to make their own decisions as they have the "superpower" to decide for their own good. According to CIPD, promoting wellbeing can help alleviate stress and create positive workplace environments wherein individuals and organizations can thrive. Employee engagement and organizational performance can be substantially strengthened through sustaining wellbeing.

Co-creating the relationship (2), wellbeing coaches also provide ongoing support, respecting the client's readiness to engage, as well as helping clients in setting their goals. Moreover, clients were informed that they are in a secure environment in which their information will be kept confidential, that their individuality will be respected, and that coaches genuinely care for them. As it takes time, effort, and the client's readiness to share, wellbeing coaches found these challenges, including the client's willingness to share and choosing the appropriate word to use when addressing the client's concern. Employees may find it hard to share and acknowledge their vulnerabilities, but this study allows individuals to recognize themselves and what they feel. One of the difficulties the wellbeing coaches encounter is a one-liner response from their clients, indicating hesitation to open up their thoughts and feelings. In this case, the wellbeing coaches use approaches that allow their clients to open up without feeling pressured, such as asking follow-up questions and open-ended prompts to encourage deeper emotional exploration, incorporating humor to help their clients loosen up while respecting the client's pace, and giving them time to process their thoughts and feelings. As the session proceeds, the client will eventually respond in detail, demonstrating the effectiveness of the applied approach.

This serves as an opportunity for the coaches to provide wellbeing-related programs to reduce work-related stress, promote work-life balance, and encourage employee engagement. Although problems in these aspects of a person's life are inevitable, they would recognize the opportunity to develop better methods for addressing them. They would also have to be cognizant of their employees, the procedure, and the coping mechanisms necessary for an individual. Communicating effectively (3), wellbeing coaches remain present throughout the session, allowing clients to share and focus on their needs. Coaches have developed specific methods and techniques for creating rapport and relationships with their clients based on their experiences while actively listening, observing the session, and allowing them to express their emotions. By doing so, they allow their clients to feel comfortable and safe during the coaching process. Clients will thus have the freedom to communicate their ideas and feelings, which is likely to help reveal their unseen challenges (Dejonghe et al., 2019).

Cultivating learning and growth (4), the outcome also reveals the importance of fostering the client's growth and learning from their experiences, guiding them with decision-making, providing actionable plans for the client, and teaching them psychoeducation and self-management tools. This would help employees to better know their conditions and certainly allow them to recognize their emotions. Individuals who take part in wellbeing programs are able to attain satisfactory goals in their lives. (Blackwell et al., 2019). Wellbeing coaches ought to address people's emotional and psychological needs while helping the organization develop their trust toward mental health advocacies as well. The study recommends wellbeing coaches have additional resources in terms of materials and establishing interventions. This would also enable wellbeing coaches to impart more information about coaching, which would likely help people discover their coping strategies, integrate opportunities, address challenges, and promote organizational growth.

Implication to Practice

The results of this study reveal that wellbeing coaches do encounter challenges. They have obtained and applied various strategies to foster positivity and wellness in individuals. How they practice their expertise and understanding with the client displays their ability to recognize the situation. The study revealed the following implications:

Strengthened professional and cultural competency of wellbeing coaches. Wellbeing coaches should focus more on understanding individuals' psychological needs in order to provide the necessary support for their clients, recognizing their challenges and the value of organization and beliefs. The shared experiences of the wellbeing coaches demonstrate that coaches should engage in continuous development and training to stay informed on the most current wellbeing practices, techniques, and studies. This will ensure that they have the necessary tools to provide the most effective guidance and support for their clients. By continually gaining knowledge and expertise, Wellbeing coaches may better address individuals' different needs and guidance to them.

Increased support for employees. Fostering inclusivity and peace in the workplace can boost productivity, establish a healthier organization, and improve employee's wellbeing. Strengthening this, such as valuing cultural and experiential differences, can lead to a more harmonious and collaborative work environment. This can help the organization create an efficient working environment that allows individuals to balance their personal and professional lives in order to reduce work-related stress. Establishing support systems within the organization can also facilitate communication, support-seeking, and a sense of security for workers.

Implementing Wellness Initiatives and concentrated interventions for wellbeing. Prioritizing wellbeing is necessary in the workplace; there are specific practices to follow and some considerations. Aligning the principles with individual needs can still be enhanced and lead to positive outcomes for employees' wellbeing as well as the organization's growth. Access to counseling services, as well as training programs and seminars on wellbeing, can help coaches better support employees, manage stress, and maintain a work-life balance, which can contribute to their overall job satisfaction, productivity, and growth. Wellbeing coaches identified various coaching techniques and approaches, as well as insights that they obtained. This allowed the researchers to see individuals' unseen challenges and coping mechanisms. Improving and developing programs as well as plans can aid in the development of healthy, culturally sensitive organizations that cater to the individual's distinct needs. Effective interventions for wellbeing must demonstrate relevance to people by focusing on stress reduction, inclusivity, and increased engagement. Following these implications may strengthen overall organizational efficiency and coaching approaches. Increasing productivity and engagement while reducing the hindrances to growth and satisfaction.

Conclusions

Coaching has a crucial role in giving out a handful of valuable strategies that would aid an individual's psychological wellness. Wellbeing coaches described the importance of interventions in employees, such as applying a variety of tools and approaches as well as creating strategies to help build rapport with the client. There are challenges that wellbeing coaches deal with, including individuals who are reluctant to communicate and responses that are too short. This makes it difficult for them to pick out what questions are best to ask them and the next step to follow.

Despite this, wellbeing coaches also perceive it as an opportunity to engage in deeper strategic ideas. In addition, the coaching process must be client-centered while adhering to ethical procedures, making sure to empower their clients and provide valuable insights to help them manage themselves effectively, and providing continuous support, ensuring that the process progresses by attending to the client's needs. Collaborative, engaging, and respecting the client's autonomy while following coaching boundaries is also important. The coaching practices of the wellbeing coaches are compliant with the ICF Standards and incorporate Psikoislamika: Jurnal Psikologi dan Psikologi Islam

reflective listening to ensure that they are using appropriate actions based on the experiences of the client, implying self-awareness during the session, and allowing the client to share and engage at their own pace until they are ready.

The wellbeing coaches employ and promote psychoeducation, as well as self-management tools, to help clients develop coping skills and boost their self-esteem through progress recognition. A wellbeing coach encounters various cases from different people, but these are not centralized in one coping strategy or approach. There are still some factors to consider, such as the severity of an individual's condition and the level of support needed for each client, particularly when a referral is required. They encourage individuals to actively participate in setting their goals as well as tracking their progress in managing their own health. Given that there are still people in the Philippines who do not rely on these practices, wellbeing coaches serve as a guide for employees who are experiencing difficulties so that if circumstances arise, they may consider allowing themselves to develop coping skills and establish a healthier life.

This study recommends establishing training initiatives, such as seminars, coaching programs, and training services, that will help coaches strengthen their knowledge towards coaching and develop action plans, promoting employee engagement programs, as well as activities. Further studies should perform in-depth analysis in order to gain a greater understanding of the wellbeing coaches' narratives associated with fostering employee wellbeing and organizational success while applying this to a more diverse culture. The study shows that coaching, action plans, and wellbeing interventions are essential for preserving and enhancing mental health awareness for wellbeing coaches.

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