



The University of Sydney



Harvard Medical School

Coaching in Medicine and Leadership Conference 2009

“The Evidence for Coaching”

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What are the public (and or academia's) perceptions of a “coach”?



... Coaching Needs Critical Thinking ...

... We Need Rigorous Empirical Evidence



*“To me, the single most important thing for coaching (and positive psychology) to keep in mind is the necessity of collecting **rigorous empirical evidence**. This may be the only this that separates the field from earlier humanistic psychology and from current non-validated self-help books, while also dealing with difficult scientific issues concerning demand effects, placebo effects and just plain wishful thinking.*

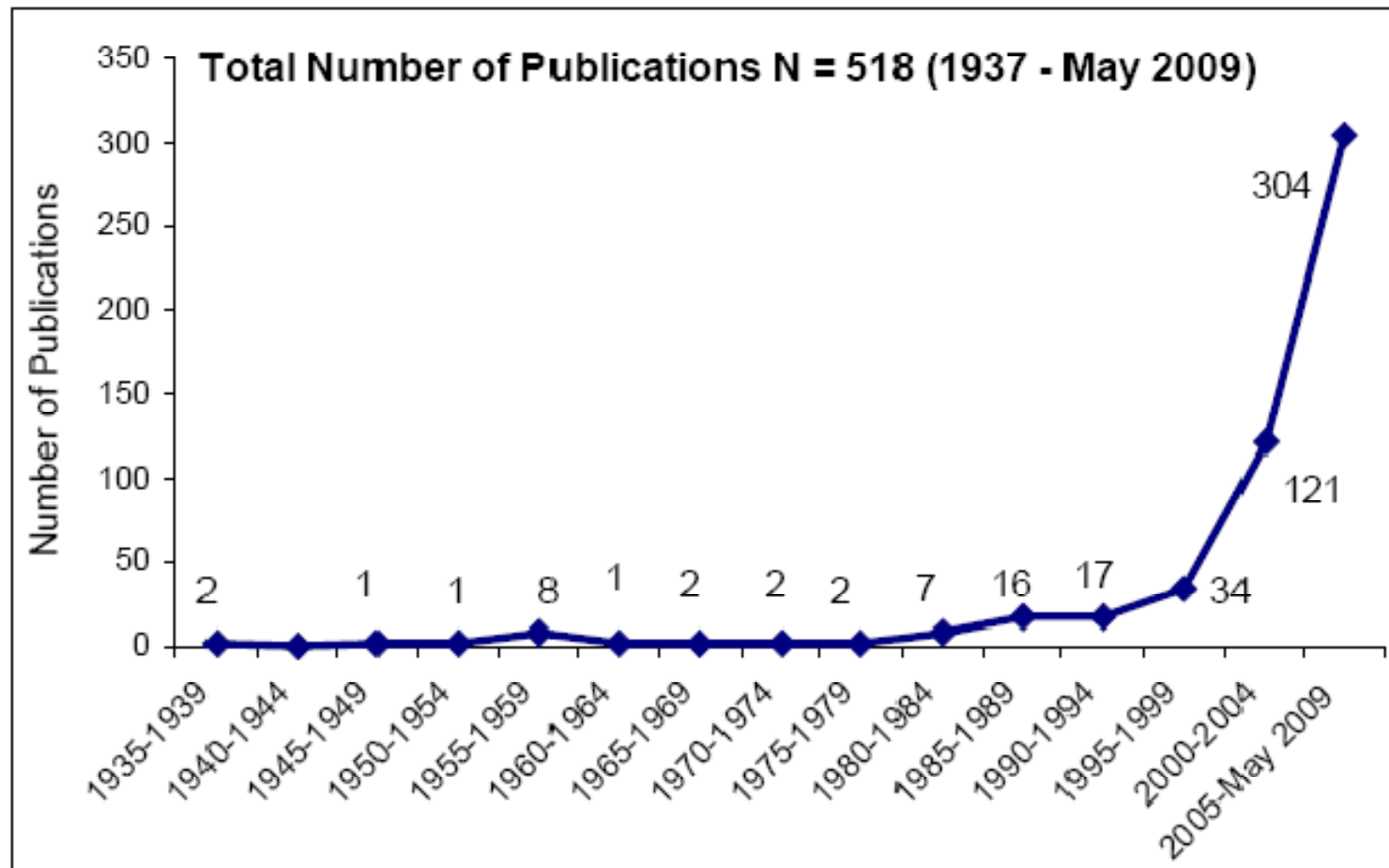
Coaching ... is especially vulnerable to these problems because of the commercial and money-making possibilities it presents.”

Ken Sheldon, 2007

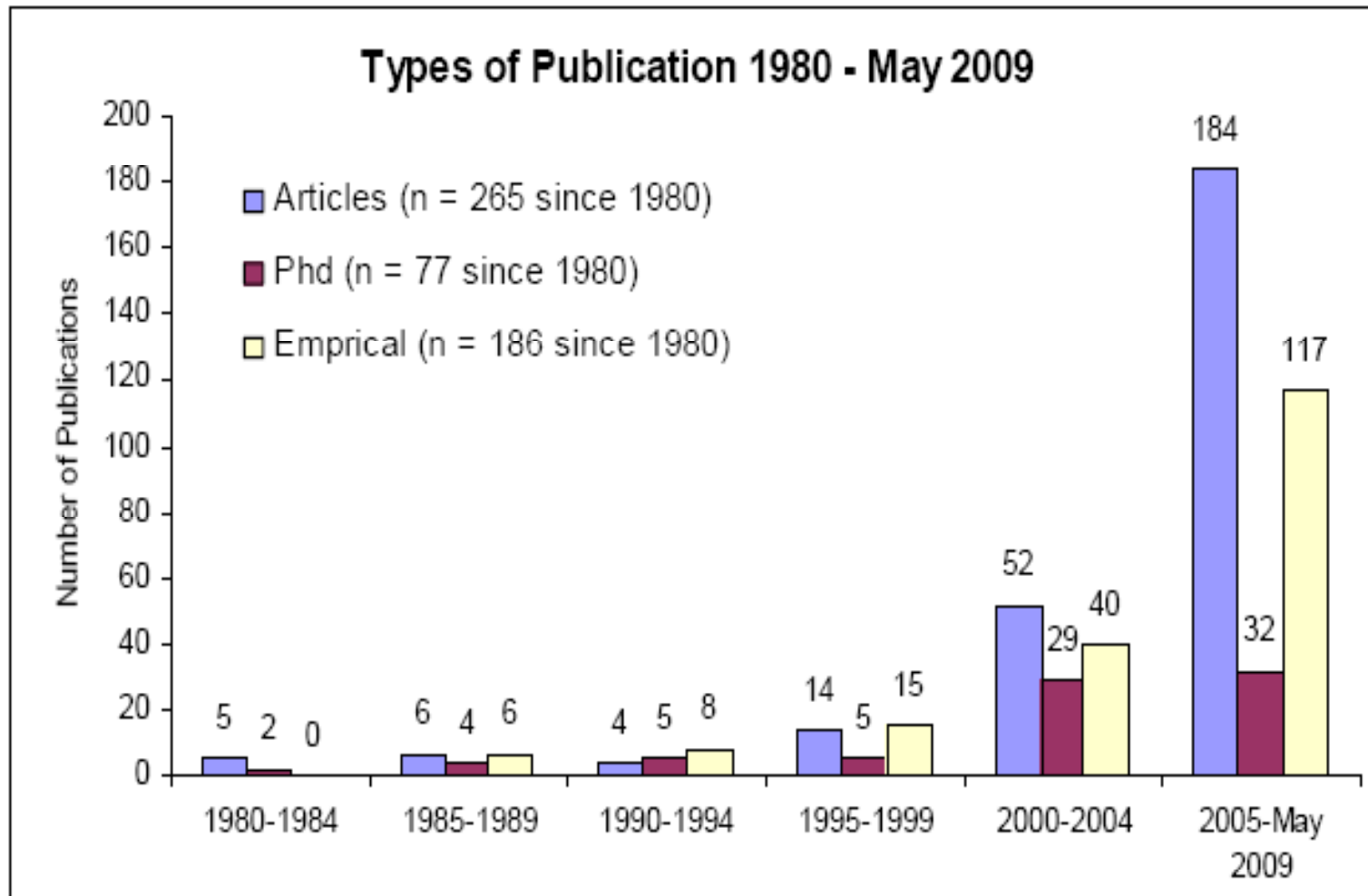
in Grant, A. M., & Cavanagh, M. (2007). Evidence-based coaching: Flourishing or languishing? *Australian Psychologist*, 42(4), 239-254.



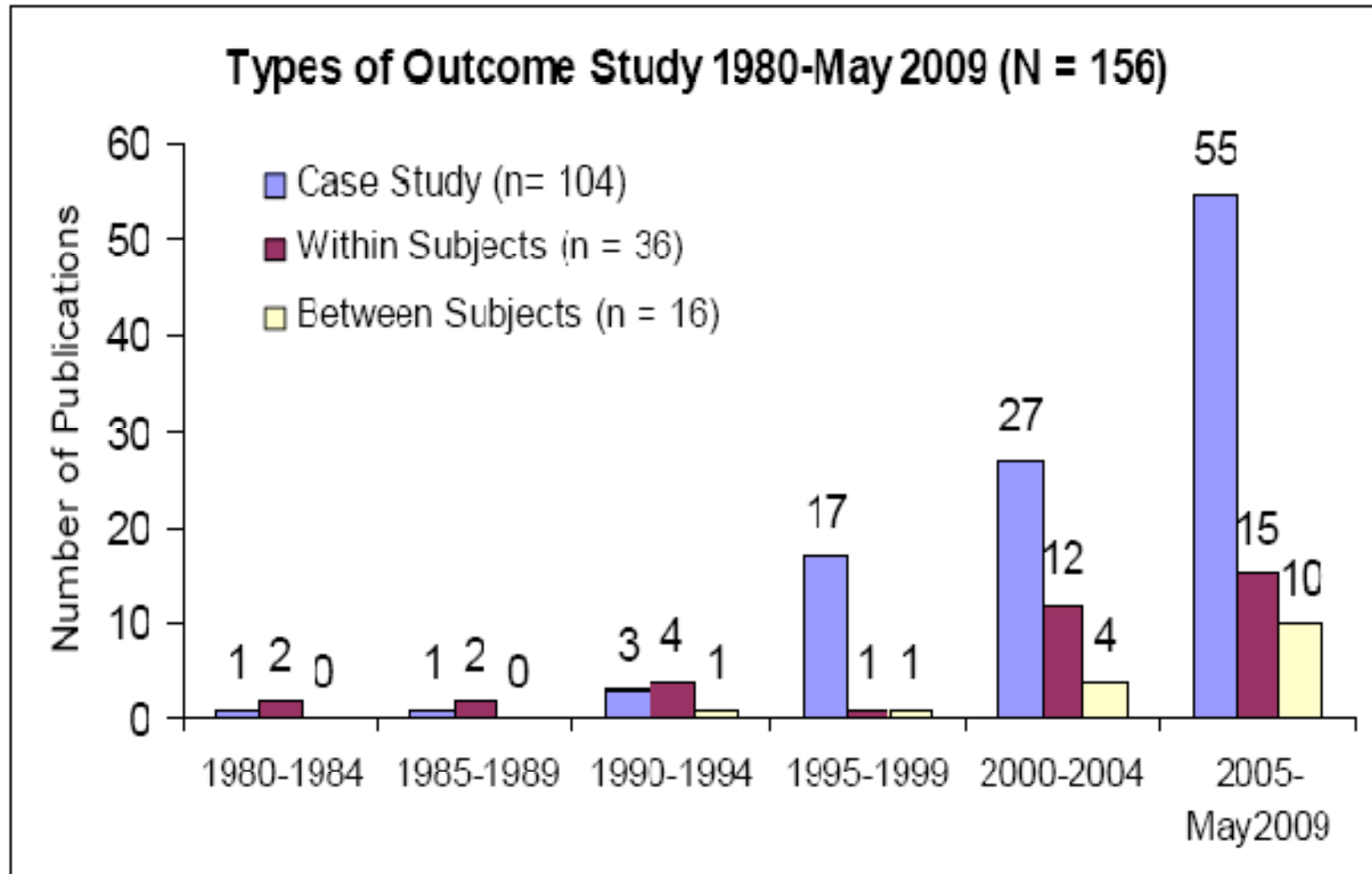
What is the evidence-base?



What is the evidence-base?



What is the evidence-base?



Is this good? How to compare?

Coaching Studies (1980-2009)

- 36 Within-Subject studies
- 16 Between-Subject studies (RTC/quasi: U.Syd = 6)

Solution-focused Therapy

SFBT Outcome Studies (1985-2006)



- 22 Between-Subject studies (RTC or quasi, inc unpublished work: Kim ,2008)
- 10 Between-Subject studies (RTC or quasi, only used published work; Corcoran & Palillai, 2009)



Aims of the U.Syd Coaching Research Program since 2000

- Further develop evidence-based approaches
- Study the development of the coaching industry
- Examine effectiveness of coaching
 - Range of populations (adult, workplace, schools)
- Use coaching as real-life experimental methodology: “psycho-mechanics of change”
- Develop more sophisticated coaching frameworks
 - Integrate coaching and PP, use of mindfulness, adult developmental frameworks, etc

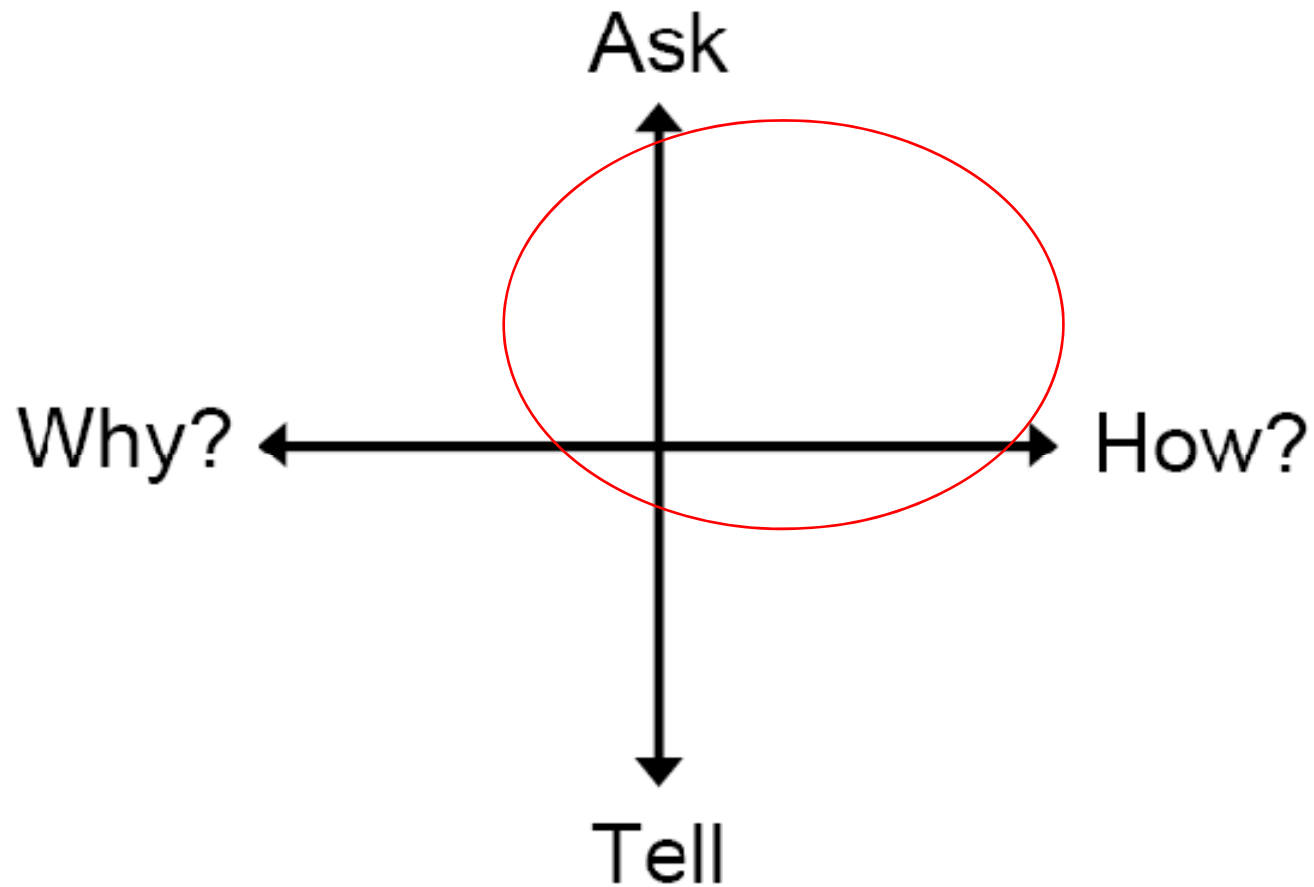


U.Syd Coaching Research Program

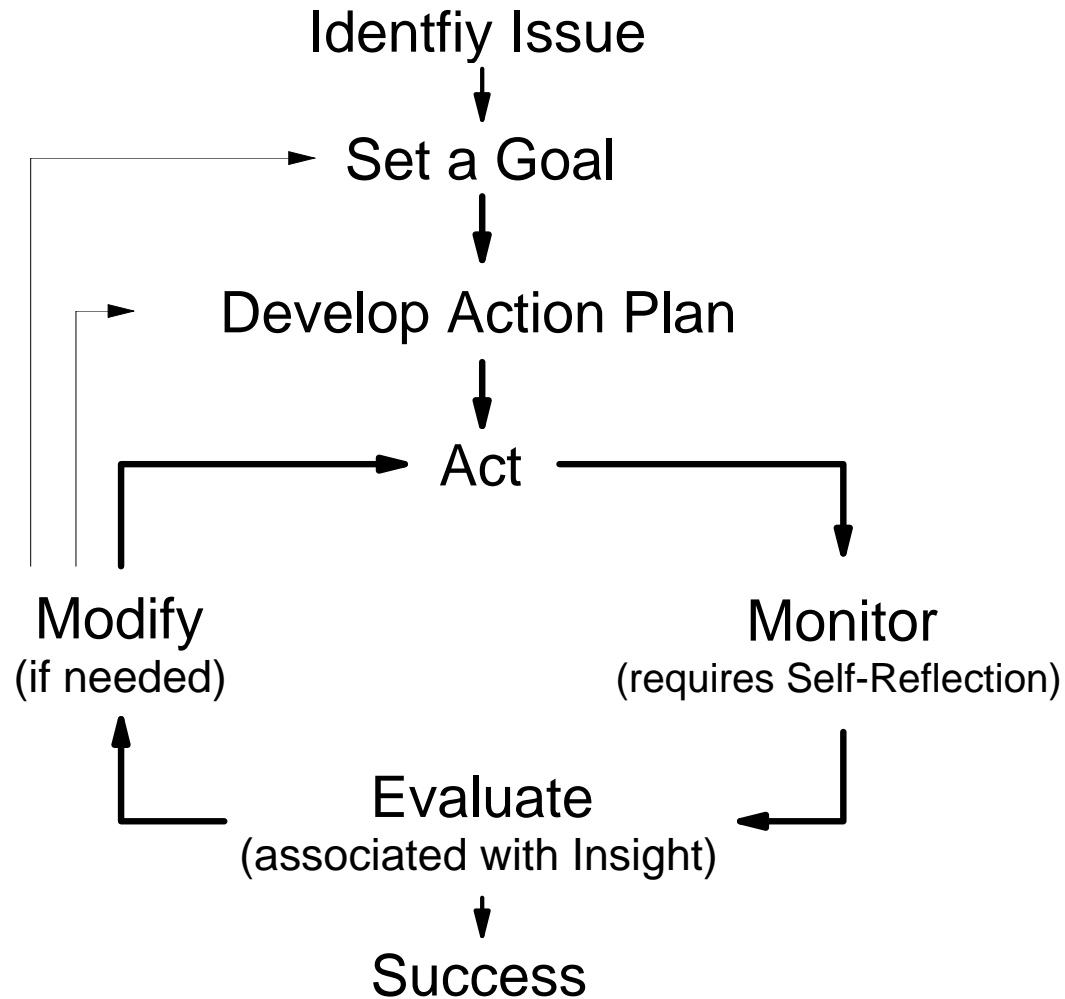
- **Eight Outcome Studies:**
 - 6 Randomised; 2 Between-subject
- **Four Coaching Industry Studies**
 - Large scale international survey (ICF) (N =2,500)
 - Australian Life and Executive coaching industry surveys
- **Range of Theoretical Papers**
 - Coaching Models; Mental Health and Goal Attainment; Commentary papers
- **Additional Coaching-related Empirical Work**
 - Self-reflection and Insight; Stages of Change; Solution-focused vs. Problem Focused Coaching; Mindfulness and Perspective-taking in Leaders; Over 100 articles and book chapters, reports and > 100 conference presentations



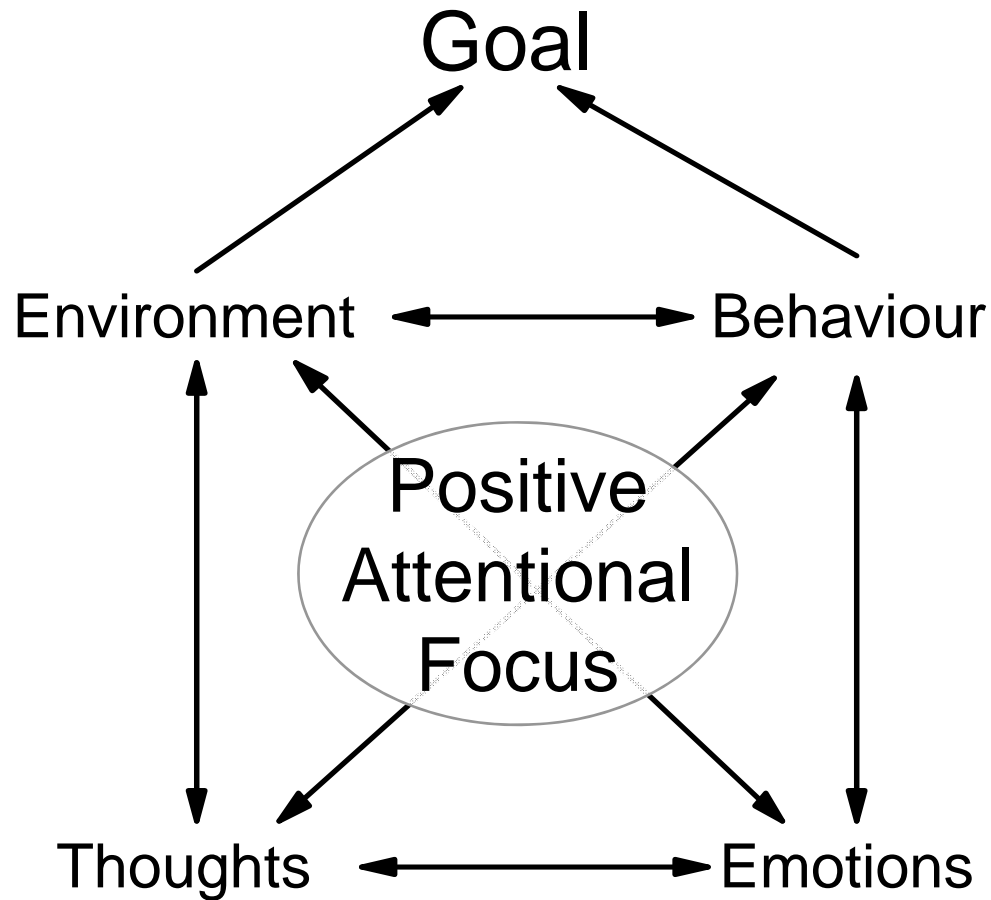
Ask-Tell Matrix



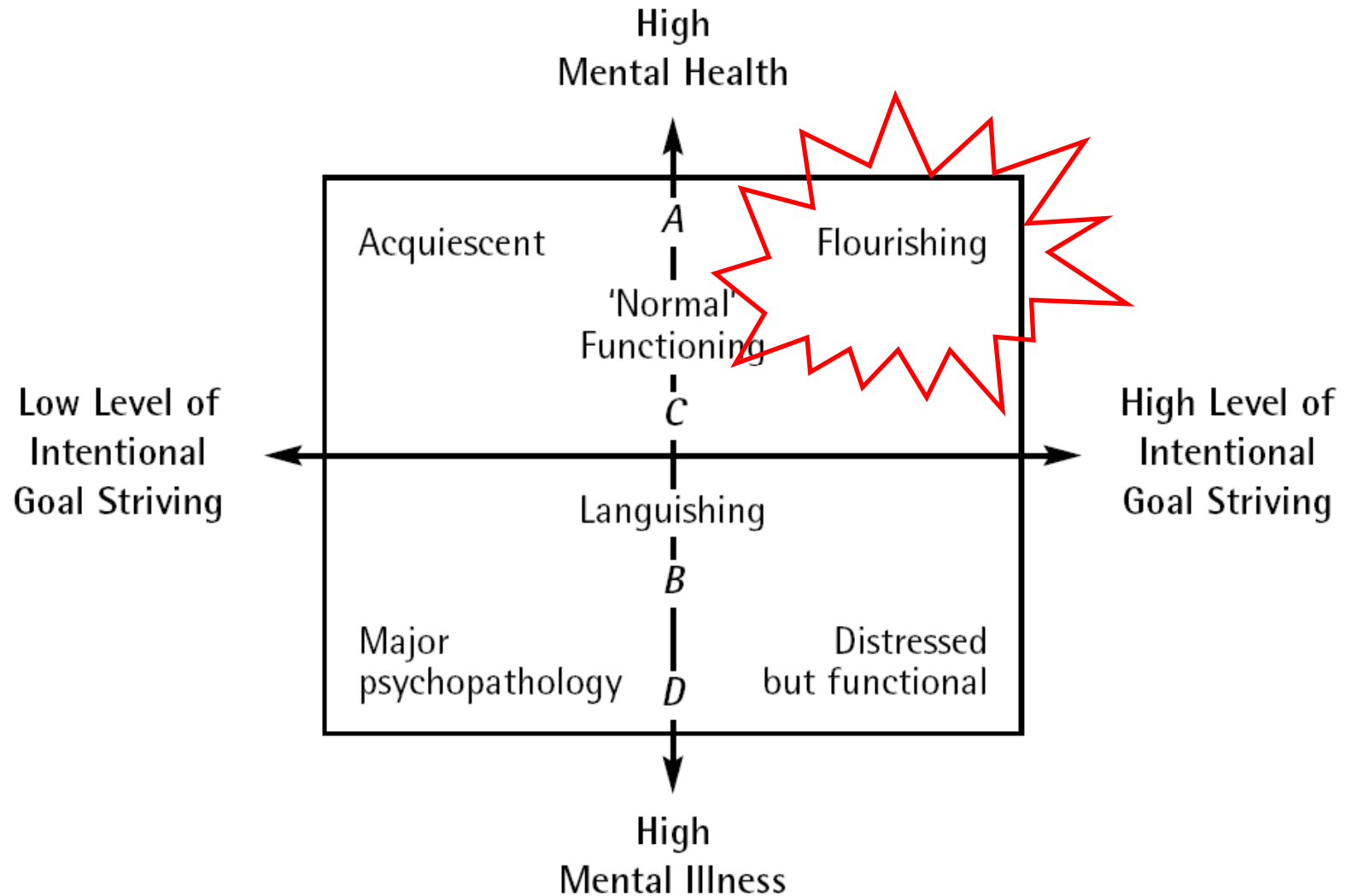
Generic Model of Self-regulation



The Solution-focused Cognitive-Behavioural Model

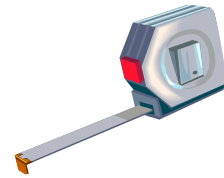


Goal Striving and Mental Health



Measuring Coaching Outcomes

- **Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)**
 - Simple scaling; Levels of attainment
- **Presence/Absence of Mental Distress**
 - DASS: Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale
- **Presence/Absence of Well-being**
 - QOLI; PWB; SWB; PANAS; Hope; Cognitive Hardiness; Workplace Well-being Index
- **Metacognitive Processes**
 - Self-reflection and Insight Scale



Question:
Does Coaching Really Work?



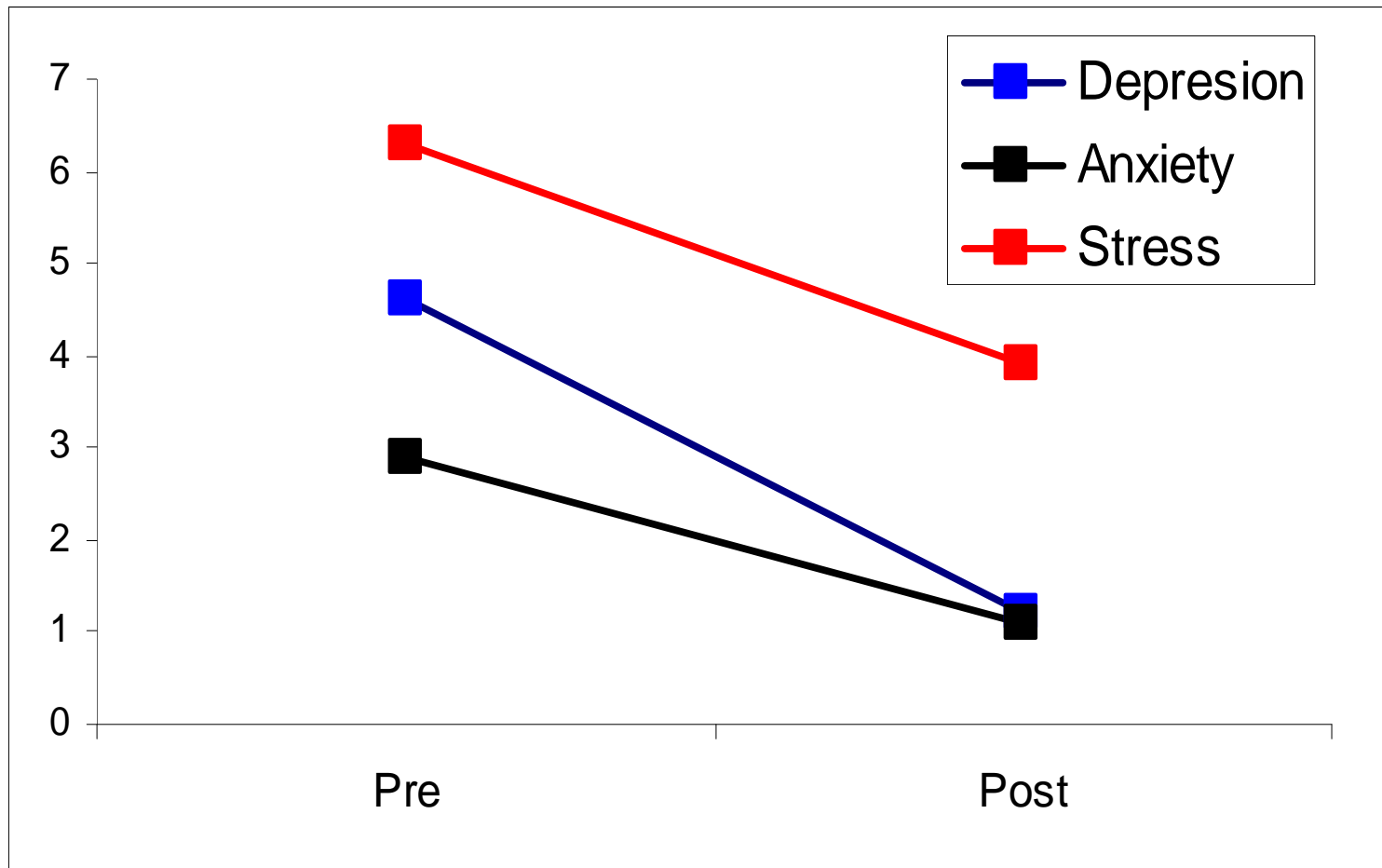
Coaching as Applied Positive Psychology

- **First Study: Solution-focused, coaching group program**
- **Q: Does Coaching “work”, and how does it impact on self-reflection and insight?**
 - Within subjects; N = 20 (Adults 35.6yrs)
 - 13 wks, 50 min weekly, group-based “GROW” sessions
- DVs: Self-Reflection & Insight Scale; Quality of Life; Mental Health; Goal Attainment

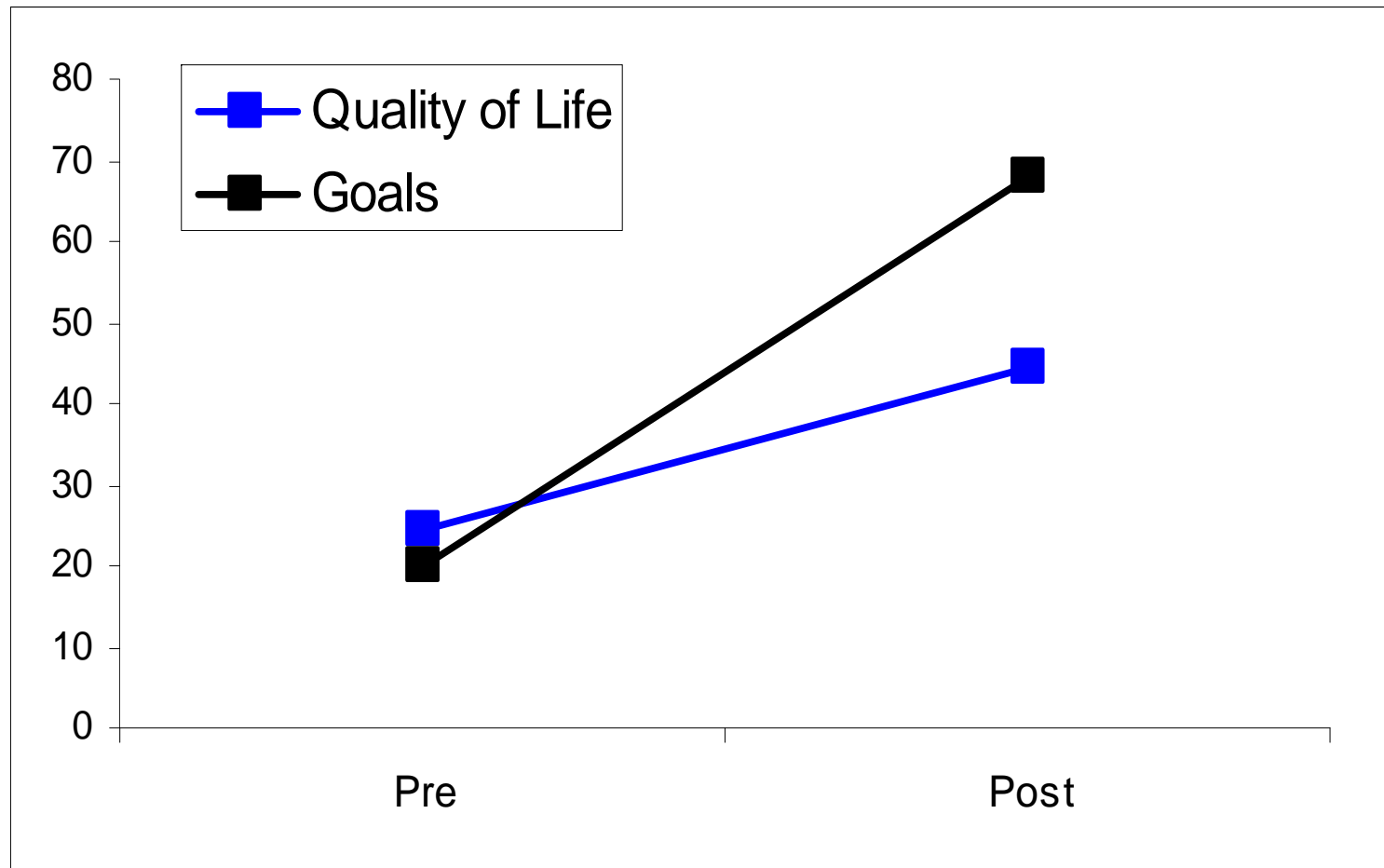
(Grant, 2003)



Depression, Anxiety & Stress

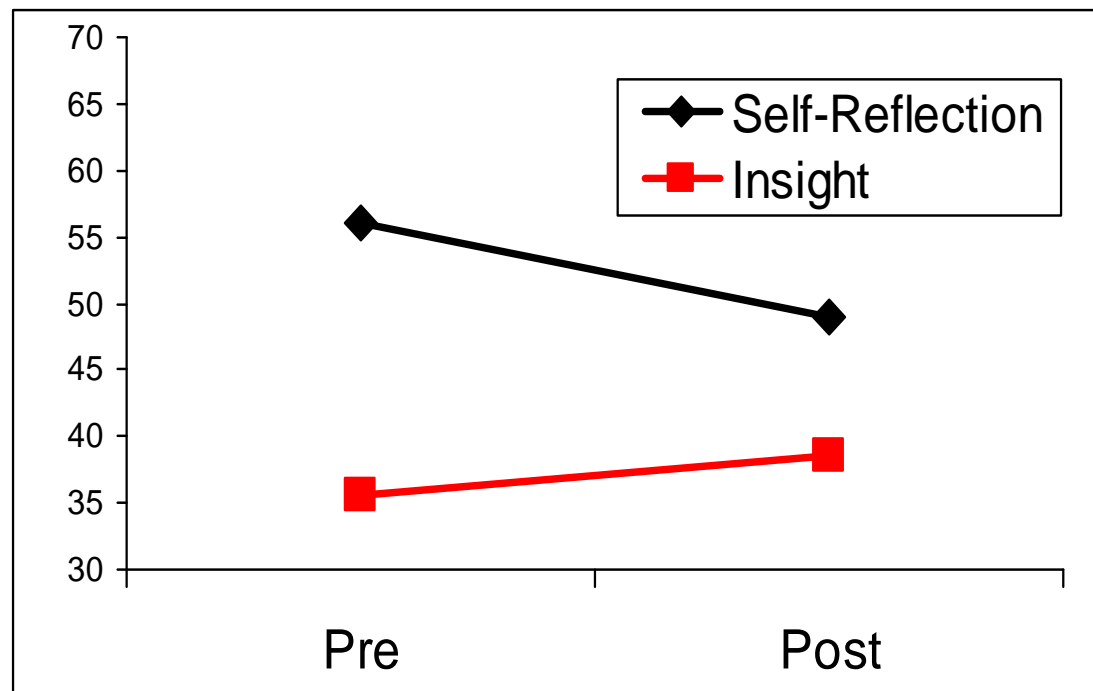


Goals and Quality of Life



Self-Reflection & Insight

	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
Self-Ref	56.05	49.05	<i><.01</i>
Insight	35.65	38.60	<i>.02</i>



Correlational Relationships

Goal Attainment

Self-Reflection

$$r = -.36 \quad (p = .01)$$

Insight

$$r = .28 \quad (p = .04)$$

As participants moved through self-regulation cycle towards goals, they became less self-reflective & had greater insight



Key Points

- Positive psychological benefits even though focus of program was on goal attainment
- Self-reflection may not facilitate goal attainment
- Insight is important factor in change
- Coaching should be solution-focused & generate insights & goal-oriented actions, rather than self-focused reflection



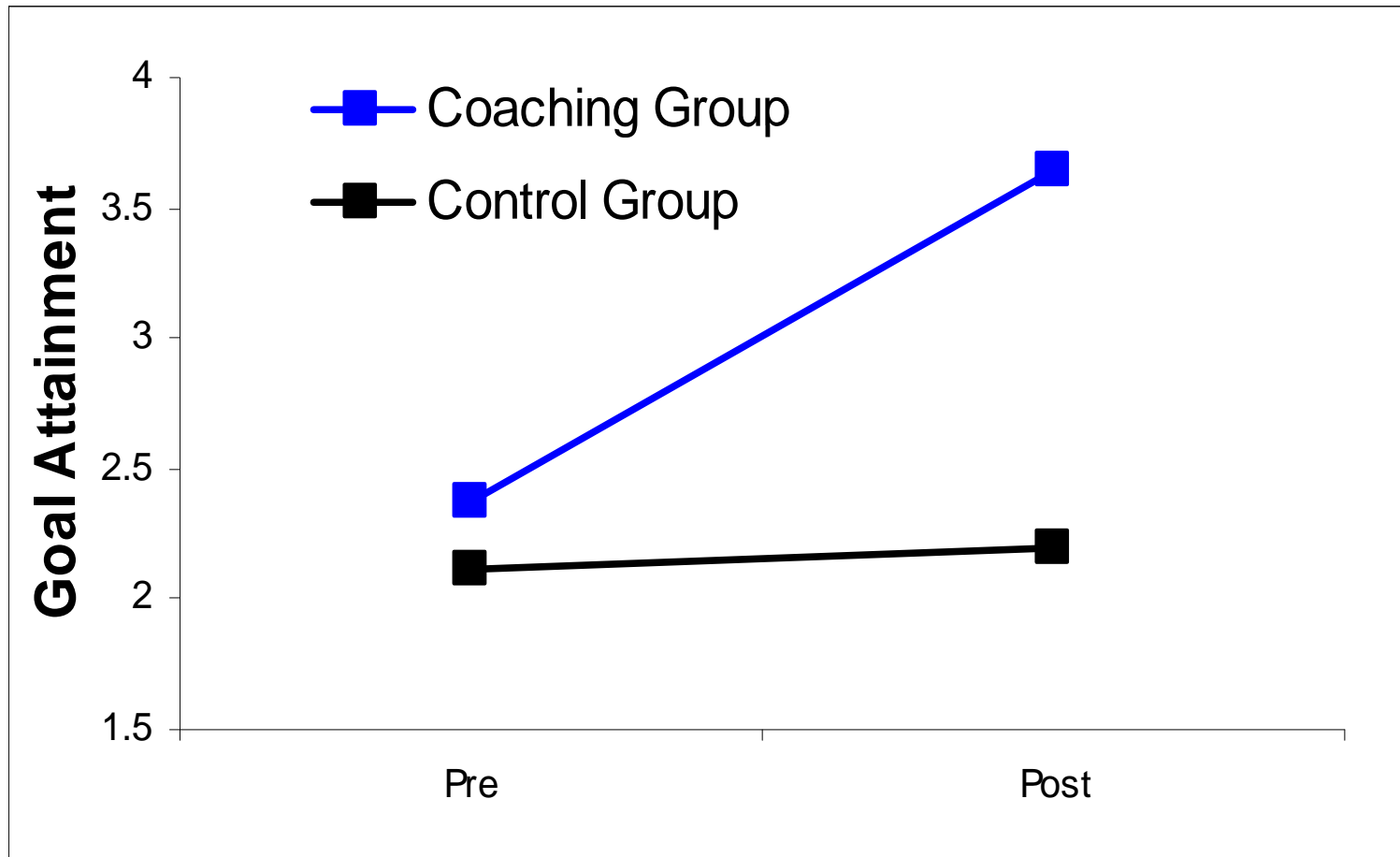
Coaching as Applied Positive Psychology

- **Solution-focused, Cognitive-behavioural coaching individual program (RCT)**
- **Q: Does coaching work when screening/excluding participants for mental health issues?**
 - Randomised controlled study; N= 67 (Adults 38.5yrs)
 - Screened for mental health problems – 22 excluded (25%)
 - Intro. evening, 10 wks 45 min weekly individual coaching
- DVs: Goal Attainment; Psychological Well-being, Mental Health, Subjective Well-being; Emotional Intelligence

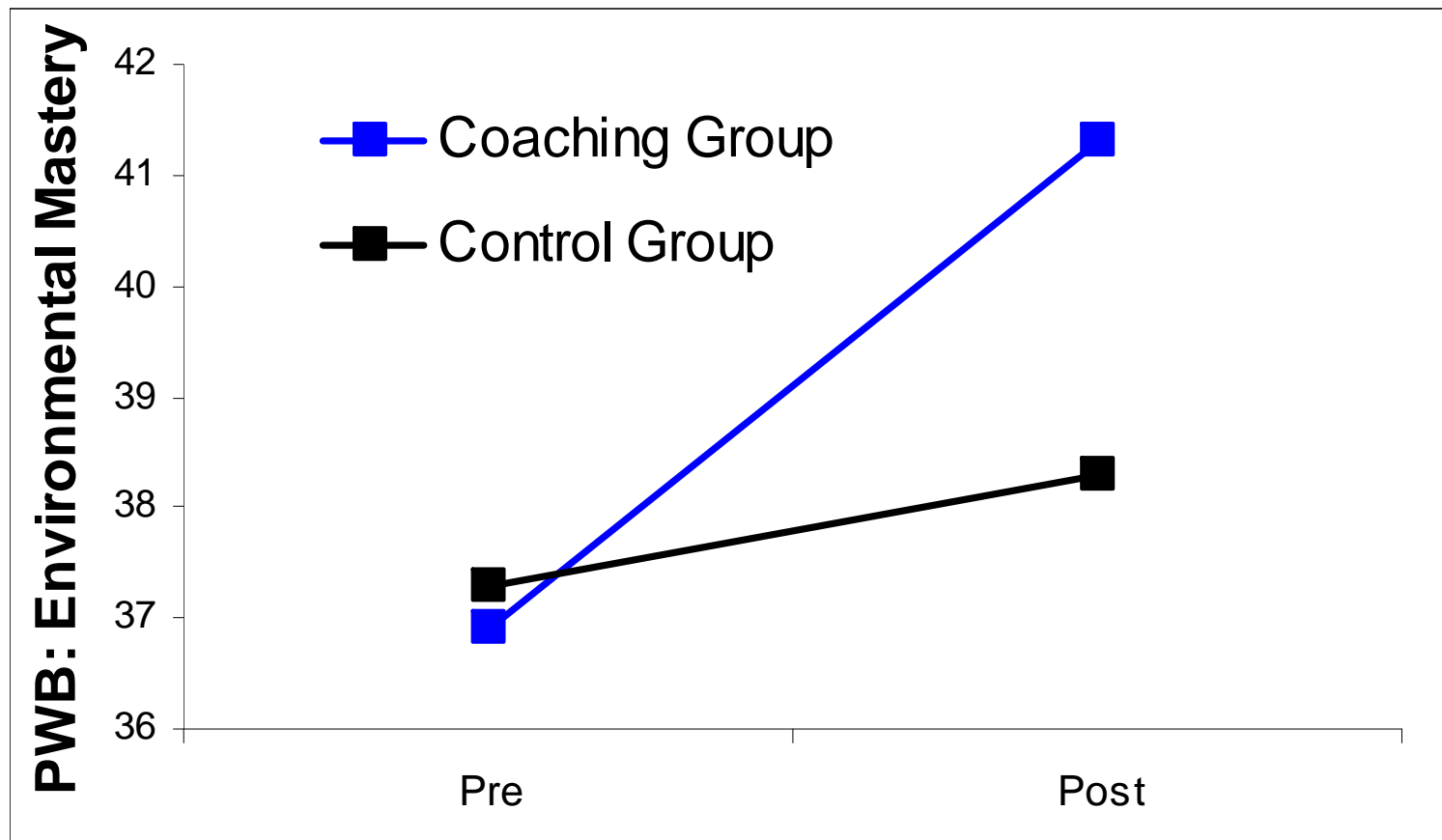
(Spence & Grant, 2005)



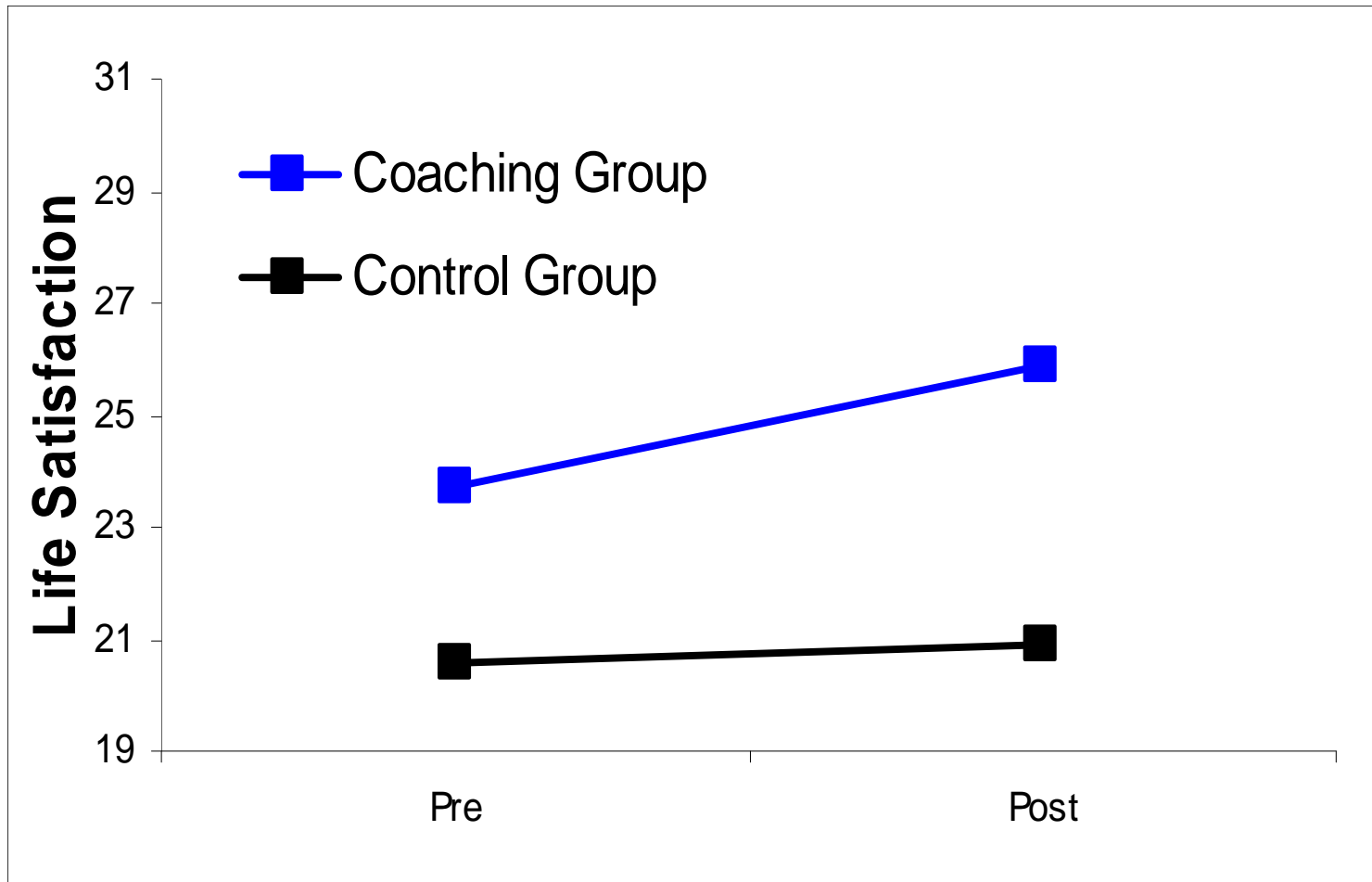
Goal Attainment



Psychological Well-being



Life Satisfaction



Key Points from Study

- Individual coaching can be effective
- Coaching not an “infallible” panacea
- Not all outcomes measures significant
- Mental Health screening may reduce chance of significant outcome on well-being measures
- Related problems with measuring “wellness” in non-clinical populations – ceiling effects?



Coaching as Applied Positive Psychology

- **Executive coaching during organisation change (RCT)**
- **Q: Is executive coaching effective at enhancing workplace well-being?**
- Solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural executive coaching with 360 feedback
- 45 executive and senior managers from large public health service
- Quantitative and qualitative measures used

(Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, in press)



Executive Coaching & Well-being

- Half-day leadership development w/shop
- Organisation in major change process
 - 360 feedback (HS-LSI)
 - Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)
 - Cognitive Hardiness Scale
 - Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale
 - Workplace Well-being Index
- Four coaching sessions over 8 to 10 wks.



Goal Selection Process

- **Problem:** How to ensure coachee's goals meet both individual and organisational needs
- **Solution:** Following consultation with organisational sponsors and coachee, seven broad goals drafted
- Coachees select two of seven broad goals to focus on in coaching

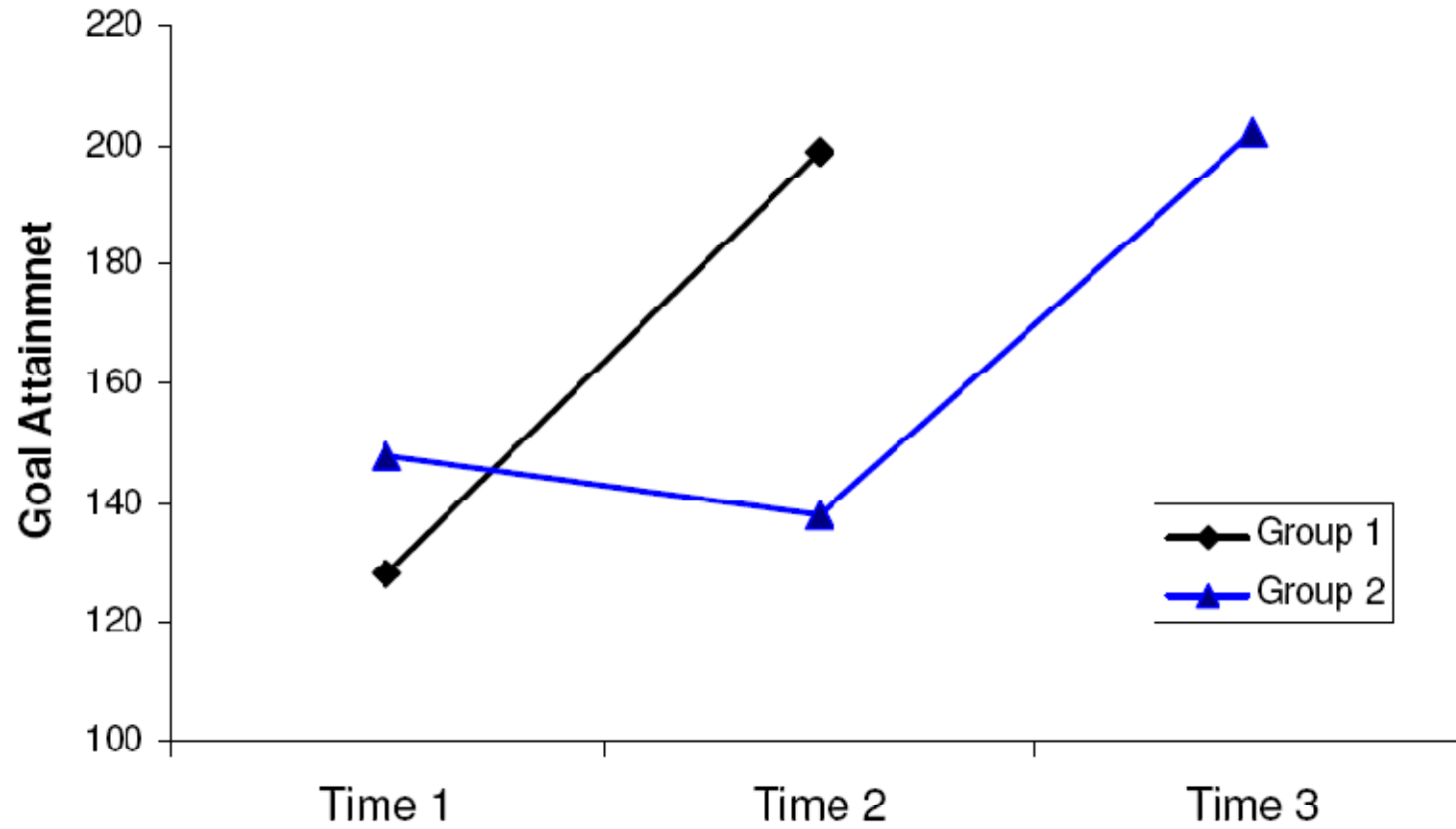


Executive Coaching & Well-being

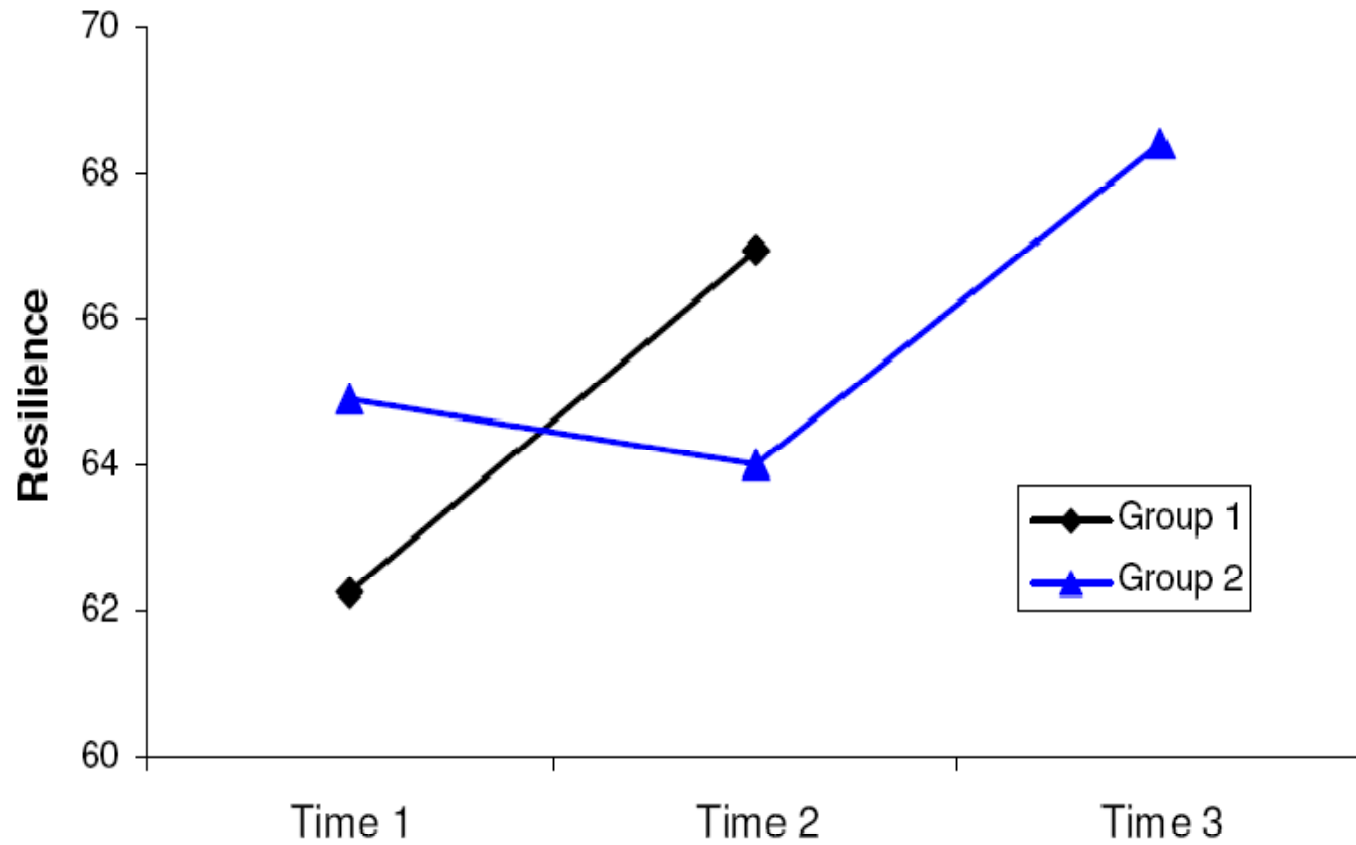
	Time 1 Baseline	Time 2 10 weeks	Time 3 20 weeks
Group 1	Training workshop Begin coaching	Complete coaching	No measures taken
Group 2	Training workshop Begin waitlist	Begin coaching	Complete coaching



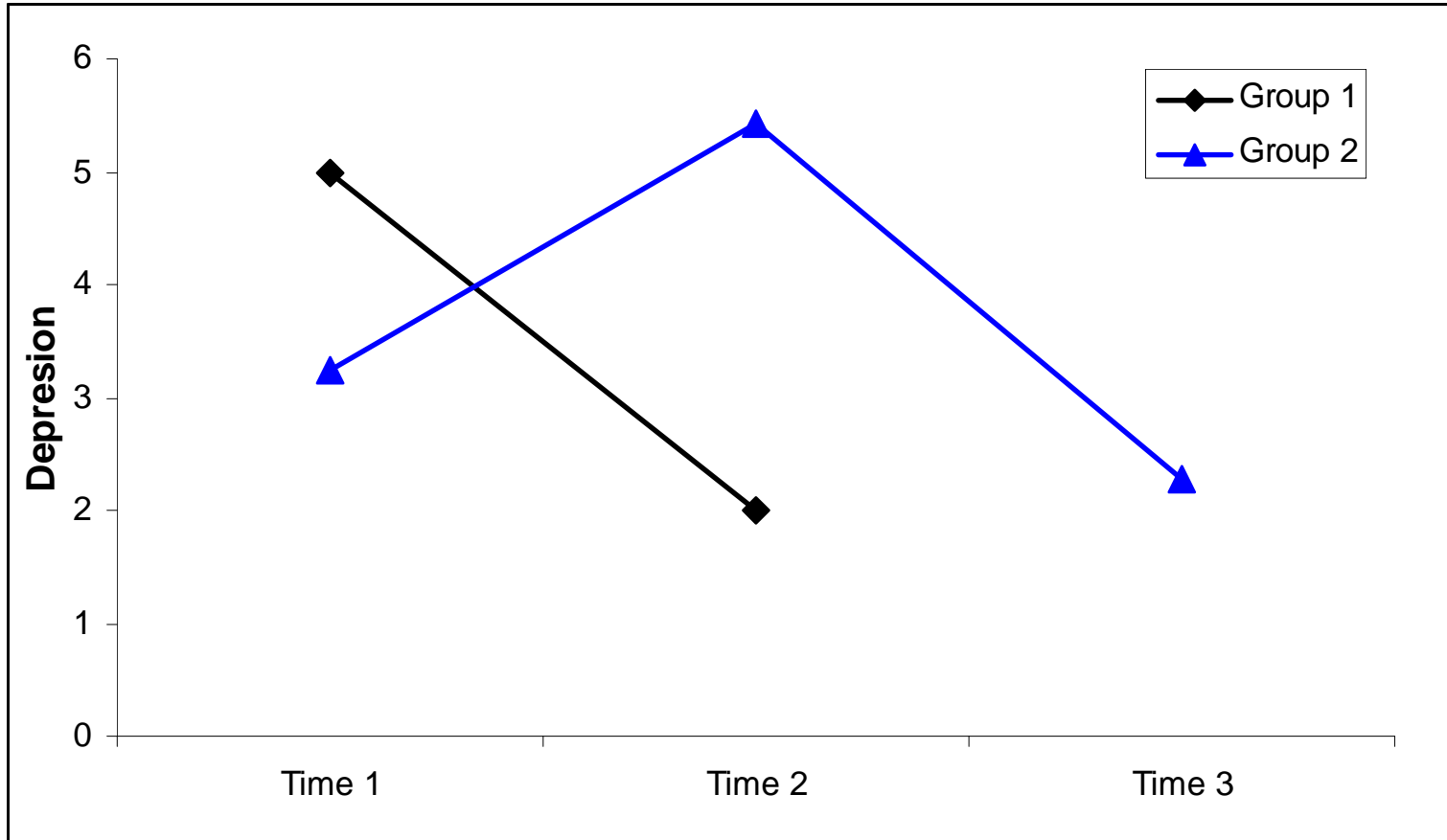
Goal Attainment



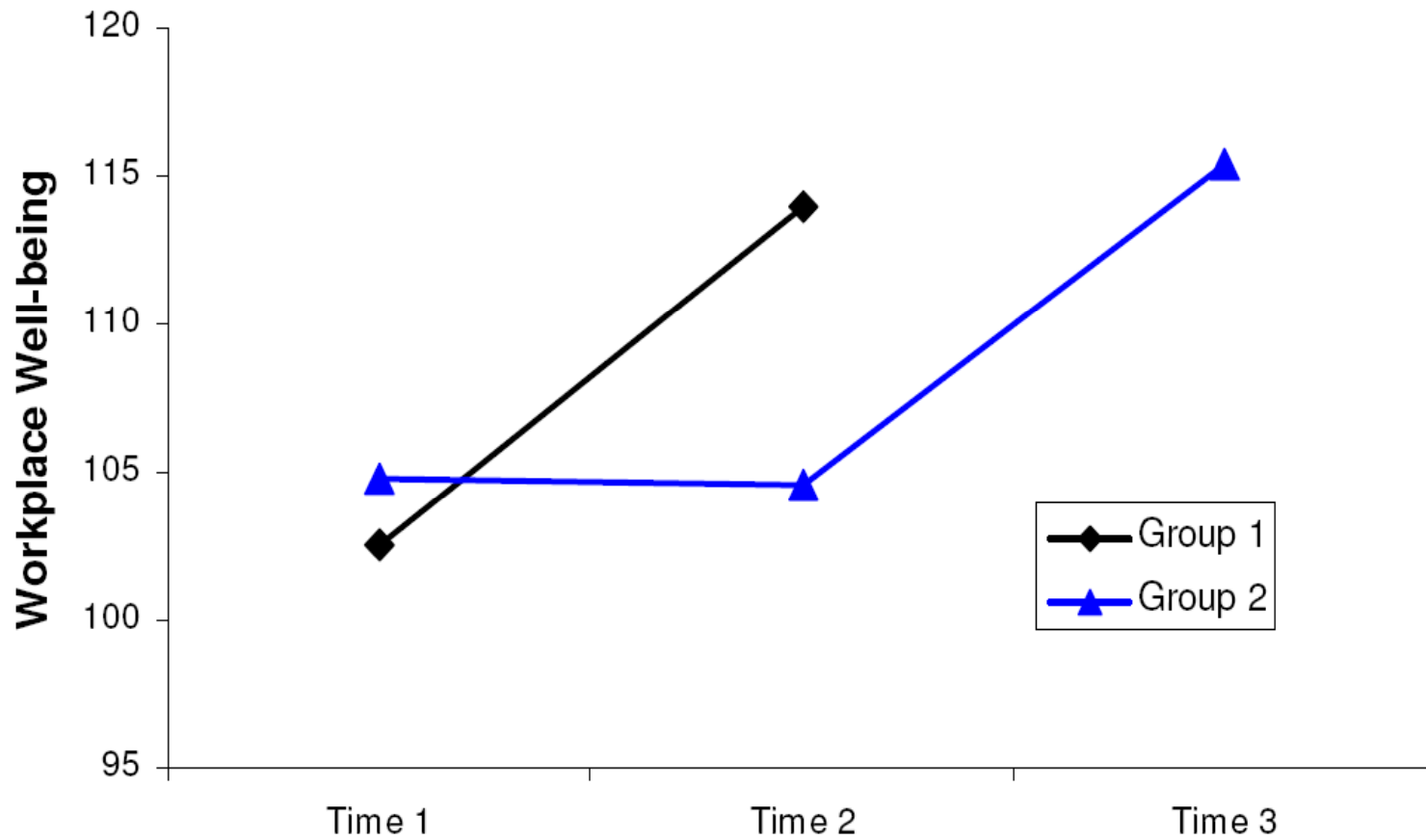
Resilience



Depression



Workplace Well-being



Key Points of Study

- Short-term executive coaching can be effective
 - 4 sessions over 8 to 10 weeks
- SF-CB executive coaching can help deal with pain of organisational change
 - Open-ended qualitative comments indicated coaching helped participants deal with change stress
- Workplace well-being enhanced through coaching – good potential tool for change



Other U.Syd coaching outcome studies

- **Solution-focused, cognitive-behavioural coaching group program (RTC)**
 - Group coaching effective & effects of coaching maintain over 30 weeks (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006)
- **Peer vs. professional coaches (RTC)**
 - Professional coaches more effective than peer (Spence & Grant, 2007)
- **Mindfulness and Health Coaching (RTC)**
 - Mindfulness pre or post coaching vs health education only
 - Both coaching programs better than education only
 - Mindfulness before coaching can increase impact of coaching (Spence, Cavanagh & Grant, 2008)



Other U.Syd coaching outcome studies

- **High school students (RTC)**
 - Life coaching enhanced resilience and hope (Green, Grant, Rynsaardt. 2007)
- **High school teachers (RTC)**
 - Workplace coaching enhanced well-being, goal attainment and hope (Grant, Green, Rynsaardt, 2007)
- **Personal Life Coaching for Coaches-in-training (WS)**
 - Life coaching enhanced goal attainment, resilience, insight and deepened learning (Grant, 2008)

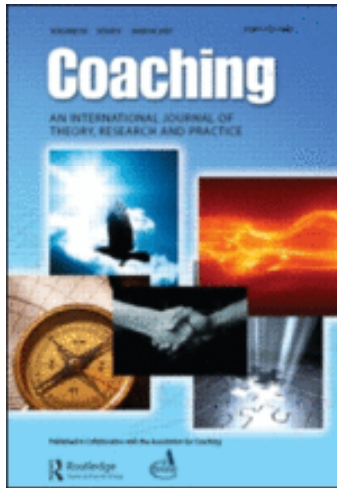


Future: Coaching *is* an Applied Positive Psychology!

- We need
 - More Randomised Controlled Studies
 - Longitudinal studies
 - Better outcome measures
 - Sophisticated theoretical frameworks
 - Models that integrate P.P. with SF-CB
 - Solid scholar-practitioner training
 - More well-written research papers!!

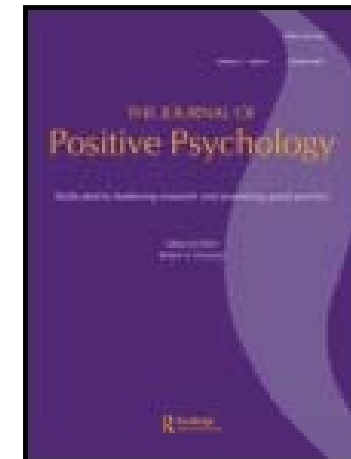
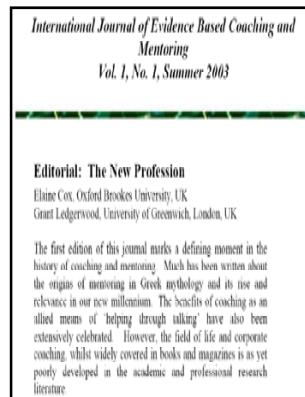
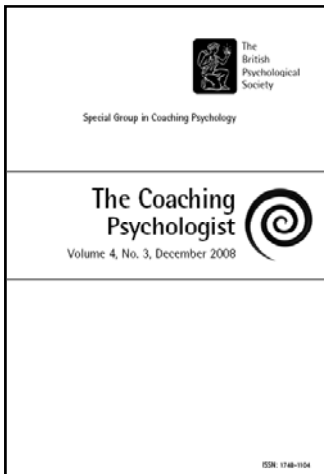
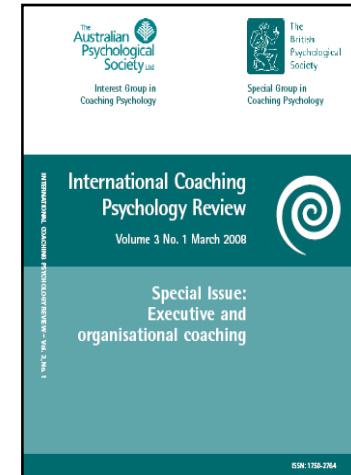


Coaching is now decidedly mainstream



The Realities of Executive Coaching

January 2009



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Download Annotated Coaching Bibliography
on Evidence-based Coaching at

<http://tiny.cc/12Uxn>

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