

Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring: Key Distinctions

	<i>Coaching</i>	<i>Consulting</i>	<i>Counseling</i>	<i>Mentoring</i>
Who receives?	Individuals Teams Organizations	Individuals Teams Organizations	Individuals Family systems	Individuals
Focus	Future focus Identifying and achieving a desired future state	Problem-solving focus Fixing a known issue and achieving greater results	Healing the past Examining repeated patterns of behaviors	Advancing in the organization Networking Understanding politics
Role of the helper	Lead from behind: client chooses the direction forward	Lead from in front: offer advice and solutions	Lead the process through questions, feedback, observations, and advice	Share past experiences as they might benefit the recipient
Helper-client relationship	Partners working together to achieve a client's stated goals	Expert (consultant) who helps the organization fix problems and grow	Expert (counselor) who helps the client	Senior, experienced individual who helps the novice
Outcomes	Goals, vision, and plan Identified forward progress on action steps	Opinions, and recommendation provided	Greater insight Healing of the past	Understanding of organizational dynamics, networking
Length of relationship	Leader as coach: ongoing relationship External coach: six to twelve months to achieve significant change	Varies, depending on nature of assignment	Depends on approach of counselor; some foster ongoing relationships over years	May last over very long periods of time

Source: The Completely Revised "Handbook of Coaching", by Pamela Mc Lean with contributions from Fredric Hudson.