

Taking care of those who care: How coaching can make a difference in Education



Pictured left to right:
Jennifer Lynn, Stephanie Potter, Helen Kay-Davy,
Mia Eng, Marilyn Osborne

Havergal College is an independent boarding and day school for girls with the mission of “Preparing Young Women to Make a Difference.” Since 2009, Havergal’s Strategic Plan has been focusing on Self-Efficacy and Global Capability – two aspirational goals to pave the road ahead for young women to claim their spots in an ever-changing and challenging world. To do that effectively, Executive Management knew that they had to start with the

Faculty and Staff first, encouraging them to participate in a unique Professional Development program.

Teachers are called upon each and every day to teach a variety of things, ranging from academic subjects such as math and science to basic life skills such as tying shoelaces. They are called upon to teach morals and to role model good citizenship. Teachers are expected to perform and give care even when they themselves need care – thus running the risk of caregiver burnout.

The Strategy

Havergal College had noted this concern and recognized how important it is to develop capacity of their Faculty and Staff for resilience. A unique Leadership Coaching Program was conceived in 2009 with the intention of promoting Self-Efficacy and Global Capability, in coordination with coach Stephanie Potter. To date, over 100 individuals have volunteered to participate in this unique form of Professional Development.

This coaching program is delivered within a simple, yet effective, structure: an

introductory session that takes about 2 hours, followed by seven one-on-one sessions that take 30 minutes each. Each participant chooses one goal from his or her learning plan to be the focus of the coaching engagement, which typically lasts for 6 months.

The flexibility of this coaching program is one of the secrets behind its success. While it was initially developed for faculty, it was later opened to all faculty and administrative staff across the College, regardless of their position or experience level. In addition, opting into the program has been totally voluntary, which has had the effect of increasing engagement and commitment throughout the whole process. Participants usually choose their own goals, which coach to work with and when to start. In other words, they have complete ownership of their participation all the way.

The Results

The results of this coaching program have been remarkable. Along the 6 years of implementation, the program has been helping participants reach a range of goals, including engagement during the last few of years in service, growing from being a classroom teacher into a department head, and bridging the gap of knowledge or skills for new hires.

Coaching helped faculty and staff alike see their struggles as opportunities for growth. One of the teachers stated: “I achieved goals I did not even realize I would set out to achieve,” while another one emphasized: “More than anything else, this work made me feel fantastic – energized and empowered.” Many of them ranked it to be one of the most beneficial means of professional and career development, thus recommending it to their peers.

Congratulations, Havergal!

ICF-Toronto Coaches was founded in 1999 to promote awareness and public recognition of the value and positive impact of coaching, and cultivates a collaborative, inclusive community for Greater Toronto Area coaches from all schools and traditions. It is one of the five leading international chapters and the home of the PRISM Award, launched in 2001 and then adopted by the ICF Global in 2005.



info@icftoronto.com

T: 416.960.4791 x3 | F: 416.929.5256