infinitum LEADERSHIP

The Becoming Method

An Integrative Methodology of Executive Coaching for Capable Leadership across Individual, Team and System Levels

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About this paper. This is a practice white paper. It presents a coaching methodology — the Becoming Method, practised by Infinitum Leadership — together with the research programme that would test it. It is written for two readers at once: the sceptical prospective client or sponsor who wants to see what the approach rests on before buying it, and the scholarly reader who will test its apparatus. The doctoral standard of the evidence treatment and the references is retained throughout; accessibility is pursued through clarity of structure. Section 1 states what the Method is, what it rests on, and what it refuses to claim. No marketing language is used, and no claim in the paper exceeds the evidence grading printed beside it.

Declaration of interest and authorship position. The author devised the Becoming Method, practises it through Infinitum Leadership, and sells coaching under it; he also authored or commissioned the Infinitum instruments described in Section 7.3. The validation agenda in Section 9.4 is therefore designed and, in its first instance, run by the practice that would benefit from favourable results. The agenda's safeguards — independent evaluation as sample sizes permit, and publication of results including null results — are stated as mitigations of this declared interest, and Section 12.1 records the interest as a limitation of the model. The author's positionality for the Indigenous research in Section 10 is stated in his own terms in Section 10.1.

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1. Executive summary

Executive coaching has matured into a profession with a genuine evidence base, a codified ethics, and a growing shelf of competing schools. What senior leaders receive in practice still depends heavily on which school their coach happened to train in. A leader coached through a purely goal-focused lens may leave with sharper objectives and an untouched pattern of self-protection. A leader coached through a purely psychodynamic lens may understand that pattern deeply and still lack a practised route to different behaviour in the boardroom. The Becoming Method, the coaching methodology of Infinitum Leadership, was built to close that gap. It integrates the strongest available traditions of coaching practice — narrative, psychodynamic, somatic, strengths-based, systemic, and coaching-psychological — inside a single architecture of four movements worked at three levels, and it does so under the professional discipline of the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

The four movements name the client's curriculum: the work the engagement is organised to do. **Clarity** is the movement in which a leader comes to see their situation, their story, and themselves with greater accuracy: the narratives they inhabit, the data their assessments return, and the gap between the leader they intend to be and the leader others experience. **Courage** is the movement in which the leader faces what Clarity reveals — the anxiety, defences, and competing commitments that keep intelligent people repeating patterns they already understand — and acts while that material is live. **Commitment** converts insight into owned goals, designed environments, repeated practice, and agreements held over time. **Character** is the movement in which changed behaviour consolidates into identity: values practised under pressure, ethical judgement exercised in view of others, and a self the leader can stand behind. The movements are recursive. A coaching engagement enters them in the order the client's material demands, and returns to each as new material surfaces at deeper levels.

The three levels name where the work lands. Leaders exercise leadership as **individuals**, inside **teams**, and within **systems** — organisations, professions, communities, and the wider stakeholder ecology their decisions move. Capability at one level coexists routinely with difficulty at another: a self-aware executive may chair a team that cannot speak plainly, and a high-performing team may sit inside a system whose incentives quietly defeat its purpose. The Method therefore defines its outcome word with care. **Capability** means demonstrated capacity to act effectively and to keep learning in context, at increasing scope. The word is taken deliberately from the refreshed LEADS in a Caring Environment Framework (2026), which defines leadership in terms of capabilities — bundles of knowledge, skill, and judgement developed across a career and adapted to context (Dickson and Tholl, 2020; CCHL, LEADS Global, CHLNet and Royal Roads University, 2026). The Method's twelve-cell matrix, four movements by three levels, states the capability being built in each combination, and Section 6 maps the architecture onto LEADS' five domains so that leaders in health care and adjacent public systems can read their development in the framework language their sector already uses.

The evidence posture of this paper is stated here, at the front, because the Method's credibility depends on it. Across six syntheses, drawing on substantially overlapping primary literatures, coaching produces moderate positive effects, with overall estimates in the region of $g \approx 0.32–0.59$ depending on the strictness of the designs admitted and on whether publication-bias corrections are applied; effects are largest for goal-directed self-regulation and self-efficacy, smaller for observed performance, and asserted more often than demonstrated for organisational outcomes (Theeboom, Beersma and van Vianen, 2014; Jones, Woods and Guillaume, 2016; de Haan and Nilsson, 2023; Grover and Furnham, 2016). One finding in that literature is consistent with this paper's design: in Wang, Lai, Xu and McDowall's (2022) meta-analysis of psychologically informed coaching, approaches that integrated frameworks outperformed single-framework coaching on psychological well-being ($g = 0.71$), and the authors found no statistically significant difference between named coaching approaches. The finding corroborates principled combination; it does not discriminate between this architecture and any other integrative arrangement, and the paper uses it at that strength. The Becoming Method is presented throughout as an evidence-informed synthesis of components that carry support. Its integrated effects await direct evaluation, and Section 9 sets out the validation agenda the practice has committed to — an agenda that includes independent evaluation as sample sizes permit and the publication of results including null results. Three refusals belong in this summary, because a sceptical reader is entitled to them at the front: the paper claims no demonstrated effect for the Method as an integrated whole; it claims no adequate evidence for organisational-level outcomes (Section 9.3); and it uses every instrument developmentally, with no selection, promotion, or predictive use. Readers who want the Method's claims in one sentence can take this one: the components are evidenced, the integration is a principled design claim consistent with the best available synthesis, and the whole is offered for scrutiny on those terms.

Two further commitments distinguish the paper. First, assessment occupies a defined and disciplined place: instruments including the Birkman Method, an Infinitum assessment built on the LEADS capabilities, the Quarterly Snapshot, The Mindsets in Your Way, Write Your Story, and the Ad Infinitum Loop team assessment are used developmentally, inside coaching, to widen a leader's self-awareness. Assessments open conversations; they never deliver verdicts. Second, the paper carries a full section on Indigenous coaching and the PathWAYS framework, drawn from the

author's Master of Arts research at Royal Roads University: a peer-led narrative coaching program designed with Indigenous student peer mentors, grounded in Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall, 2012). That section states its evidence status with the same discipline applied everywhere else in the paper — designed and student-informed, with outcomes not yet measured — and observes the guardrails of community authority throughout.

2. The case for an integrative method

2.1 A fragmented field

Coaching psychology's own cartography shows a field of many legitimate territories. The SAGE Handbook of Coaching maps distinct research programmes in cognitive-behavioural, person-centred, positive-psychology, narrative, psychodynamic, and systemic coaching, each with its own journals, training lineages, and preferred outcomes (Bachkirova, Spence and Drake, 2017). The Handbook of Coaching Psychology presents a similar plurality from within the discipline's evidence base (Palmer and Whybrow, 2019). Plurality is a sign of health in a young profession. For the client, though, plurality without integration creates an arbitrary element in a high-stakes purchase: the developmental work a leader receives is shaped by the accidents of a coach's training biography. A sponsoring organisation buying coaching for twelve executives from twelve coaches may be buying twelve different interventions under one label.

The meta-theoretical literature in coaching psychology offers a disciplined response. Van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal (2016) argue that coaching psychology can hold multiple theoretical lenses coherently when the integration is principled: each lens is adopted with its assumptions visible, its evidence graded, and its boundaries against neighbouring practice maintained. Their volume also insists that coaching operates simultaneously at individual, group, and organisational levels, and that culture belongs inside the model from the start. The Becoming Method adopts exactly this stance. Integration here means a deliberate architecture in which each tradition is assigned the work it does best, under stated rules, with the joins visible to the reader.

2.2 What the outcome literature supports

The empirical record does not penalise that stance, and one synthesis is consistent with it. Wang et al. (2022), synthesising twenty studies of psychologically informed coaching (n = 957), found strong effects on goal attainment and a moderate effect on self-efficacy (g = 0.59); named approaches did not differ significantly from one another, and the integrative combinations outperformed single-framework coaching on well-being. Two distances must be kept in view: Wang et al.'s studies are largely non-executive samples, and their category of integration — multiple frameworks within psychologically informed coaching — is narrower than the Method's cross-tradition architecture. The finding is corroboration for principled pluralism, and the paper rests no architectural claim on it beyond that. Theeboom, Beersma and van Vianen (2014), across eighteen studies, found coaching's largest effect on goal-directed self-regulation (g = 0.74), with performance and skills at 0.60, work attitudes at 0.54, well-being at 0.46, and coping at 0.43. Jones, Woods and Guillaume (2016), in the most widely cited workplace-coaching meta-analysis in a leading journal, returned a more conservative overall estimate (≈ 0.36), with affective outcomes at 0.51 and skill-based outcomes at 0.28. De Haan and Nilsson (2023), admitting randomised

controlled trials only (37 trials, N = 2,528), estimated g = 0.59 uncorrected and approximately 0.32 after correction for the publication bias they detected in the same analysis. Cannon-Bowers et al. (2023), aggregating a wider and predominantly individual-level outcome record, concluded that workplace coaching is an effective intervention while calling for a more rigorous science of it; Section 9.1 adjudicates that conclusion against Grover and Furnham's stricter verdict on organisational outcomes, and the stricter verdict governs this paper's claims. Section 9 treats this literature in full. For the design argument, two conclusions suffice: coaching works moderately and reliably at the level of the individual leader's self-regulation, efficacy, and goal pursuit; and the field's synthesis offers no prize for school purity, with one positive signal for principled combination on well-being outcomes.

2.3 The leader's actual problem

Integration is also what the client's situation requires. Consider the shape of a typical executive engagement. A chief executive sees, accurately, that her executive team avoids conflict in the room and conducts it in corridors afterwards. That is a Clarity achievement at the individual level and a Courage deficit at the team level. Her sponsor, the board chair, wants visible progress on a transformation agenda whose incentives reward the corridor behaviour. That is a system-level condition no amount of individual insight will repeal. A single-lens coach must either shrink the work to fit the lens or improvise outside it. Systematic reviews of executive coaching outcomes make the same point from the research side: Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018), reviewing 110 peer-reviewed outcome studies, found positive results at individual and organisational levels alongside a literature that is largely cross-sectional, post hoc, and inattentive to context; they argue that outcomes are produced by the journey and its context, and that the field's focus on end-states misses this. A method designed for how outcomes are actually produced must therefore work the person, the team, and the system as one nested problem, and must carry more than one tradition of practice into the room. That design requirement is the Method in embryo.

The demand side of the argument comes from developmental theory itself. Kegan (1994) argued that the demands of modern working life — self-direction, ownership of one's work, the capacity to hold competing perspectives and to author one's own standards — presuppose a self-authoring order of consciousness, while a substantial share of adults are still making meaning at earlier orders, in which identity is authored by surrounding expectations and relationships. The gap between the order the role demands and the order the leader inhabits is not a deficit to be shamed; it is the precise shape of much executive difficulty, and it is why a method for senior leaders needs a developmental lens alongside its behavioural tools. The Method takes that demand-side analysis as the rationale for its Character movement and for the developmental register of Section 5.1, with the evidential discipline stated there: the lens interprets; it does not measure.

3. Foundations: the professional frame

3.1 The ICF definition, values, competencies, and code

The Becoming Method is practised within the professional frame maintained by the International Coaching Federation (ICF). It adopts the ICF definition of coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and

professional potential" (International Coaching Federation, 2025a). Its practitioners work to the ICF Core Competencies (2025) — eight competencies across four domains, from Demonstrates Ethical Practice and Embodies a Coaching Mindset through to Facilitates Client Growth (International Coaching Federation, 2025b) — and are bound by the ICF Code of Ethics (2025), including its commitments across the wider ICF ecosystem and its standards for the ethical use of technology and artificial intelligence (International Coaching Federation, 2025c). The Method is a model of practice operating inside that professional frame: where the two could ever be read to conflict, the Code of Ethics governs.

The 2025 competency model deserves a precise description, because loose claims about it circulate widely. The update, released in September 2025 after a fourteen-month global job analysis drawing on data from nearly 3,000 coaches, retains the same eight competencies in the same four domains as the 2019 model: Foundation (Demonstrates Ethical Practice; Embodies a Coaching Mindset), Co-Creating the Relationship (Establishes and Maintains Agreements; Cultivates Trust and Safety; Maintains Presence), Communicating Effectively (Listens Actively; Evokes Awareness), and Cultivating Learning and Growth (Facilitates Client Growth). The change sits underneath the headings: five new sub-competencies, eleven revised sub-competencies, one updated competency definition (Competency 2), and a new glossary (International Coaching Federation, 2025b). The Code of Ethics in force since 1 April 2025 widens its scope from credential-holders to all within the ICF ecosystem, reorganises its standards across the five sections of Part 4, Ethical Standards for ICF Professionals — Section 1: Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement; Section 2: Confidentiality and Legal Compliance; Section 3: Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest; Section 4: Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value; Section 5: Professional Integrity and Accountability — within a five-part structure (Purpose; ICF Core Values and Ethical Principles; Commitments for All Within the ICF Ecosystem; Ethical Standards for ICF Professionals; The Pledge of Ethics), and states a philosophical shift from doing no harm toward doing good (International Coaching Federation, 2025c). The ICF's four core values — professionalism, collaboration, humanity, and equity — are quoted in this paper's ethics section (Section 11) and operationalised there (International Coaching Federation, 2025a). Team coaching carries its own ICF competency model and the Advanced Certification in Team Coaching, which anchor the Method's team level alongside the core model (International Coaching Federation, 2021).

The movements and the competencies describe different units of analysis, and the paper keeps them distinct. The ICF competencies govern the coach: they specify coach behaviour and professional obligation. The four movements describe the client: they name the work the client's development requires. The relationship between the two is one of enabling conditions and dependencies. Clarity work in the client depends on the coach's active listening (Competency 6) and evoked awareness (Competency 7); the client's Courage work is made possible inside trust and safety (Competency 4) and the coach's presence (Competency 5); Commitment is carried by established and maintained agreements (Competency 3) and facilitation of client growth (Competency 8); and Character work by the client proceeds under the coach's ethical practice and coaching mindset (Competencies 1–2) and the ICF values of professionalism, collaboration, humanity and equity. No movement is a competency, and no competency is claimed as a client outcome.

3.2 Coaching psychology and meta-theoretical pluralism

Beneath the professional frame sits a disciplinary one. Coaching psychology supplies the Method's standards for what counts as a claim: constructs defined before use, interventions described at a level another practitioner could replicate, outcomes evaluated against designs proportionate to the claim (Palmer and Whybrow, 2019). Van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal (2016) supply the meta-theoretical permission and the meta-theoretical discipline for the Method's pluralism: lenses from cognitive-behavioural, person-centred, positive-psychology, and system-psychodynamic traditions may be combined when the combination is argued at the level of assumptions, and when culture is treated as a constitutive context of the work. The Method takes the volume's founding position on that last point — context constitutes the work — and it declines to rest on the more permissive suggestion, advanced in one of the volume's later chapters and contested within the volume itself, that some approaches travel across cultures by virtue of their neutrality. Chapter-level claims drawn from the volume in this paper are confined to its published contents. The paper follows their discipline in one visible way: each movement in Section 4 names its sources and grades its evidence. Clarity and the System level carry the heaviest sourcing, while Courage and Commitment are the Method's most integrative movements, where the synthesis itself is the contribution. The evidential weight across the model is uneven, and the paper leaves that unevenness visible. The discipline's own handbook — *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring* (Passmore, Peterson and Freire, 2013) — is cited in this paper chapter by chapter, at the points where its contributors' positions do work: contracting (Lee, 2013), ethics (Lowman, 2013), person-centred practice (Gregory and Levy, 2013), the psychodynamic approach (Diamond, 2013), narrative approaches (Stelter, 2013), developmental coaching (Bachkirova, 2013), team coaching (Carter and Hawkins, 2013), cross-cultural working (Abbott, Gilbert and Rosinski, 2013), and evaluation (Greif, 2013). One clarification of names belongs here, because the foundations passage that follows cites both: Jenny Rogers, the coaching author cited in this paper for practice precepts (Rogers, J., 2008), is no relation to Carl Rogers, the founder of person-centred practice.

3.3 Foundations: the humanistic and depth inheritances

Coaching psychology describes itself, in its own handbooks, as a discipline with several inheritances, and two of the oldest run through Carl Rogers and Carl Gustav Jung. Neither man wrote about coaching. Their presence in the field is genealogical: coaching absorbed their accounts of the person, of change, and of the helping relationship through the humanistic and psychodynamic traditions that formed its early practitioners, and the concepts coaching uses daily — the resourceful client, the alliance, the shadow side of an otherwise competent leader — carry their fingerprints whether or not the user knows it. A methodology paper gains nothing by pretending otherwise, and this section names the debts precisely so that later sections can spend them honestly.

Rogers' contribution is the relationship and the theory of the person it serves. In *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951) and *On Becoming a Person* (1961), Rogers proposed that persons possess an **actualising tendency** — an inherent directional movement toward growth and fuller functioning — which is obstructed when experience is denied to awareness because it conflicts with a self-concept built partly from **conditions of worth**: the introjected judgements of significant others

about which feelings and ambitions are acceptable. The resulting **incongruence** between self-concept and organismic experience is, in Rogers' account, the basic estrangement coaching clients still describe when a successful leader reports that the life they have built is no longer recognisably theirs. His therapeutic answer was relational in character: a helper offering congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding creates the conditions under which the client can lower the defences maintaining incongruence and resume self-directed change (Rogers, 1957). Coaching's debt is direct and documented inside its own literature. The humanistic and person-centred chapter of the field's handbook states the approach as one of coaching's recognised schools (Gregory and Levy, 2013); the practice tradition's benchmark texts restate its core precept — the client as resourceful, choice and self-responsibility as ground principles — as coaching's foundation values (Rogers, J., 2008); and the contemporary repertoire of *Coach the Person, Not the Problem* (Reynolds, 2020) and the Co-Active designed alliance are Rogers' conditions operationalised for a non-clinical contract: the person is worked with as the authority on their experience, and the relationship is the medium in which they think. The evidential grading must be exact. Rogers' conditions were tested, with substantial support, inside psychotherapy — the alliance and empathy literatures are therapy literatures — and de Haan's coaching findings (Section 8.4) show relationship quality matters in coaching as well. What Rogers gives the Method is therefore a *stance with a theory of change attached*, corroborated at the level of the working alliance, and no coaching outcome claim is rested on it.

Jung's contribution is the map of the interior the stance encounters. Jung's **individuation** — the lifelong process by which a person becomes an integrated, undivided self — supplies developmental coaching with its deepest telos: the progressive reconciliation of the person's disowned parts with their conscious identity, in place of performance measured against an external template (Jung, 1928/1966). Of those parts, the **shadow** has done the most work in coaching's lineage: the unacknowledged contents of the personal unconscious, including qualities the person's professional identity cannot admit — envy in the generous leader, cruelty in the caring one, ambition in the servant — which then act autonomously, in projection and in uncharacteristic behaviour under pressure. The **persona**, Jung's term for the social face a role requires, names the complementary problem: the leader who has become indistinguishable from their function, and who experiences any threat to the role as a threat to the self. These constructs reached coaching through the psychodynamic tradition treated in Section 4.2 — where they survive, disciplined, as the defence vocabulary of Sandler (2011) and Bluckert (2006) — and through narrative practice, where individuation reappears as the arc of a story being re-authored toward wholeness; Drake (2024) invokes individuation explicitly as the frame for a coach's maturation, and the author's own curriculum work treats shadow integration as essential to self-awareness in Indigenous storying practice (Evans, 2025). The Method's use is correspondingly bounded. Persona and shadow function in this paper as *hermeneutic lenses* inside Clarity and Courage — ways of noticing what a leader's story excludes, continuous with Bergquist's (2023) opaque pane and with the protective patterns named in Section 7.3 — and as the developmental horizon inside Character. They carry no psychometric standing, no outcome evidence is claimed for them, and the collective unconscious and its archetypes, the most speculative stratum of Jung's system, play no role in the Method at all. That boundary is the difference between inheriting a tradition and importing a metaphysics.

Read together, the two founders define the Method's centre of gravity. Rogers supplies the *how* of the relationship — trust in the person's directional growth, offered under conditions that make self-

examination safe. Jung supplies a *what* the relationship repeatedly meets — a self partly exiled from its own story, whose recovery is the long work the four movements organise. Coaching psychology's later inheritances — its outcome science, its systems theory, its assessment discipline — are this paper's other foundations, and they govern what may be claimed. Rogers and Jung govern what the work is *for*.

3.4 The integration, argued: the Method's meta-theoretical position

An integrative method owes its reader an argument at the level of assumptions, and this subsection states the Method's. The inheritances assembled in this paper appear to disagree about first things. Narrative practice treats the client's story as constitutive of identity; psychometrics treats behaviour as measurable from outside the story; psychodynamic formulation posits processes the client cannot report; Clean practice forbids the coach to impose content on the client's material; developmental theory orders the forms of meaning-making themselves. A method that merely allocates work among these traditions — narrative on Mondays, instruments on Tuesdays — has collage, and Section 2's case for integration requires more. The settlement below is the paper's claim to more, stated so that it can be examined and, in doctoral use, defended.

The settlement is critical-realist in its ontology and pragmatist in its criterion. Reality, on this account, is stratified. Mechanisms — defensive processes, habit circuitry, incentive structures, power relations — operate whether or not anyone narrates them, and they constrain what stories can be lived inside a given field. Experience of those mechanisms, however, reaches coach and client only through mediation: through language, story, relationship, and instrument. The two claims are held together deliberately. The Method is realist about the field and constructivist about access to it, and its formula from Section 4.4 — **whole person, real field** — is the meta-theoretical position in miniature: the person is worked with as a meaning-maker of full standing, and the field the meanings answer to is treated as real, resistant, and examinable.

From that settlement, each inheritance is assigned the epistemic work it can warrant, and confined to it.

Assessment data hold a dual status, declared openly. As measurements, they are fallible representations of behaviour: their reliability and validity properties are properties of the instruments, reported with psychometric discipline in Section 7, and their error structure is part of their meaning. As material, they enter the room as narrative: the client works with the story the data tell about them, tests that story against lived experience and other-ratings, and keeps or revises it. Neither status cancels the other. A score is a representation: partial, constructed for a purpose, and answerable to the person it describes, and the Method's debrief discipline (Section 7.2) exists to hold both truths in one conversation.

Psychodynamic formulation is a coach-side hypothesis. The coach's reading of anxiety, defence, and stalled contact is corrigible by design, and it is tested in exactly one court: the client's recognition, and the behaviour that follows recognition. Formulation governs the coach's listening and choice of move; the client's speech is governed by the Clean discipline of reduced and declared influence (Sections 4.1, 8.1), so that a hypothesis held privately never arrives in the room dressed as the client's own insight. A formulation the client cannot recognise, tested fairly, is withdrawn. That corrigibility is what separates listening literacy (Section 3.5) from interpretation as authority.

Developmental theory functions as a lens on demand and capacity. It interprets what a role is asking of a leader's meaning-making (Section 2.3) and what kinds of pattern a leader can currently take as object (Section 4.2). It assigns no stage to any client, it promises no order transition within an engagement's horizon, and its claims in this paper are interpretive claims, graded accordingly. Section 5.1 separates the two outcome constructs this discipline requires — capability, which the Method measures, and developmental capacity, which it treats as a long-horizon concern under the lens.

The pragmatist criterion closes the settlement: each knowledge form is judged by the disciplined work it enables and by whether the claims made with it survive contact with the evidence classes of Section 5.1. The settlement licenses plural method under single accountability. It also forbids three moves, and the paper polices itself against them throughout: a formulation printed as a fact about a client; a score treated as the person it describes; and a change of story, alone, reported as a change of outcome. Integration, on this account, is principled when every inheritance is confined to the work its warrant supports and the joins between inheritances are governed by stated rules — the professional frame of Section 3.1, the assessment discipline of Section 7, and the contracting architecture of Section 8. That is the sense in which the Becoming Method claims to be an integration, and the claim is offered for examination on those terms.

3.5 Boundaries: coaching, therapy, consulting, mentoring

An integrative method that borrows from psychodynamic and somatic traditions must police its edges with extra care. Three boundary rules govern the Method. First, coaching addresses the client's present and future functioning, goals, and choices; it does not diagnose or treat mental disorder, and material that belongs to therapy — including trauma processing and clinical symptom work — is referred to appropriately qualified professionals, with the referral itself handled as an ethical act (International Coaching Federation, 2025c; Palmer and Whybrow, 2019). Sandler (2011), the Method's psychodynamic source, is explicit that psychodynamic literacy serves coaching when the coach works with the emotional material that surfaces in role while holding the therapeutic boundary. The status of that material inside the Method is stated once and applied throughout: psychodynamic concepts enter as *listening literacy* — a competence for noticing anxiety, defence, and stalled contact in a client's present leadership behaviour, and for choosing better coaching moves in response. Depth, in the Method's usage, is a claim about the quality of the coach's seeing. Diagnosis, treatment, and excavation of personal history sit outside it, and the boundary literature inside coaching psychology (Bachkirova and Baker, in Palmer and Whybrow, 2019) treats that edge as a standing professional obligation with pre-agreed referral thresholds. Second, consulting advice enters a coaching engagement only inside a transparent, contracted shift of role, disclosed to client and sponsor, consistent with the 2025 Code's strengthened role-transparency obligations (International Coaching Federation, 2025c). Third, mentoring — the transfer of the mentor's experience — is a legitimate service and a different one; the Method's coaches may offer it under its own name and agreement, and the coaching record keeps the two distinct. These boundaries protect clients, and they also protect the Method's claims: an intervention that quietly becomes therapy or advice can no longer be evaluated as coaching.

4. The four movements

The movements are defined here as constructs before they are described as practice. Each definition states what changes in the client, names the theoretical sources the construct rests on, and identifies the evidence that bears on it. The movements are recursive: engagements enter them in the order the client's material demands, and material worked at one movement reliably reopens work at another.

One mechanism organises the four movements, and it is stated here because the sections that follow keep returning to it. Drake (2018) traces how lived material becomes outcome along a chain: **Experience → Story → Identity → Behaviour → Outcome**. A leader encounters their leadership through the story they are living inside; the story consolidates into identity; identity generates behaviour; behaviour produces the outcomes the leader then experiences. The coaching implication is structural. Work addressed to behaviour alone leaves the generating story intact, and the story reasserts itself; work addressed to story and identity changes behaviour downstream. The Method's remaining conversational sources are placed at the joints of this chain. Reynolds (2020) works the moment the story becomes audible, through reflective replay (Section 4.1). Dunbar (2017) works the story's language and metaphor, under a discipline that keeps the landscape in the client's own words (Section 4.1). Starr (2022) supplies the session and engagement architecture inside which the work is contracted, sequenced, and completed (Section 8). Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl and Whitworth (2018) supply the designed alliance, the relational container the chain requires (Section 8.1). Two design rules follow from the placement, and the Method states them as rules. First, Drake's phases govern the engagement's developmental work. Two kinds of goal must be distinguished, because the paper's contracting architecture (Section 8.1) and this design rule pull in opposite directions until they are. The engagement's aims — its purpose, parties, sponsor outcomes, and review points — are contracted at the outset, as ICF Competency 3 requires. Developmental goals, the goals that name who the client is becoming, are not fixed until the story has been situated and searched; a developmental goal contracted before that work merely funds the existing identity. Second, goal-structuring grammar — the GROW sequence inherited from Whitmore (2017) — operates only inside Commitment, for bounded execution, once the story is settled and the task is delivery (Section 4.3).

The movements are also travelled as a loop, and the Method states the loop as a design principle, in full. Reflection and conversation alternate as the engine of the work: conversation surfaces the story, reflection consolidates what the conversation revealed, and the next conversation tests the consolidation against the field. Within a single engagement, a consolidation reached in Character reopens Clarity at a deeper level — the leader who now acts differently sees their situation differently, and the seeing starts the circuit again. Across engagements, the same circuit runs at longer rhythm through the review architecture of Section 8.3. There is no terminal state in the design: the Infinitum infinity mark, in which the Method's name and imagery are set, depicts exactly this — movements travelled repeatedly, each pass at greater scope or depth. This operating rhythm belongs to the Method as a whole; it is distinct from the Ad Infinitum Loop, the team model and assessment of Sections 5.3 and 7.3, which takes its name from the same mark.

4.1 Clarity

Definition. Clarity is the progressive correction of the picture by which a leader steers: their account of their situation, of the story they are living inside, and of how their behaviour lands on others. It is a property of the client's working model of self and context, and it is assessable through the convergence of self-report, other-report, and behavioural evidence over time — convergence treated as a working indicator, interpretable only alongside the known biases of each source, since self- and other-ratings can converge on a shared error (Section 7.2).

The construct's primary engine is narrative. Drake (2018) defines narrative coaching, paraphrased here, as an integrative and experiential approach that works with people's own stories as the medium of change: stories are surfaced, examined, and re-authored in live conversation, so that shifts in identity and behaviour follow from shifts in the story being lived (Drake, 2018, 2nd ed.; citations of Drake's framework in this paper are to the second edition throughout). Drake treats the stories clients tell as the material of identity itself: leaders act from within narratives about who they are, what their organisation is, and what people like them do, and durable change involves re-authoring those narratives in live conversation. Drake's four-phase arc — situate, search, shift, sustain — describes the movement of that work, and the philosophy-of-coaching literature locates its epistemological warrant: a coach's claim to know anything about a client is mediated by the accounts the client can give, which makes the quality of those accounts a proper object of coaching (Drake, Brennan and Gørtz, 2008). Narrative approaches hold a recognised place in coaching psychology's own handbook cartography (Stelter, 2013). Reynolds (2020) supplies a complementary mechanism at the level of the single conversation: reflective inquiry, specified in her five essential practices — Focus (coach the person), Active Replay (the client's own thinking played back in pivotal pieces, offered corrigibly, for the client's correction), surfacing the frame beneath the talk (identity and reality assumptions, values and needs), holding the desired outcome in view, and articulating insight as commitment. The mechanism is the client hearing their own thinking accurately enough to examine it; insight, on this account, is the client's recognition, and the coach's questions are subordinate to the replay that produces it. Within the Method, Reynolds' practices are treated as practitioner method supported by a plausible cognitive rationale; the paper advances no claim that reflective inquiry has been isolated as an active ingredient in controlled trials.

Two further sources discipline Clarity work. Bergquist (2023), reworking the Johari window (Luft and Ingham, 1955) for relational and postmodern conditions, frames interpersonal awareness as a continuing exchange of disclosure and feedback through which material moves from the opaque region of a leader's awareness into shared view; Section 7.1 sets out his revision in full. Assessment data enters Clarity through this door, under the conditions set out in Section 7. Dunbar (2017) contributes Clean Language questioning and emergent metaphor work: a low-imposition questioning discipline that follows the client's own metaphors, minimising the coach's vocabulary in the client's self-description. In practice, Clarity work in the Method combines narrative exploration, assessment debrief, reflective inquiry, and — where metaphor is live in the client's language — Clean questions, in service of a single outcome: the client can state their situation, and their part in it, in terms that survive contact with evidence.

4.2 Courage

Definition. Courage is the client's capacity to remain present to, and act within, material that their established patterns of self-protection would otherwise route around: anxiety, shame, conflict, grief, uncertainty, and the interpersonal risks of honest speech. The construct is behavioural as much as emotional — its signature is action taken while the aversive material is present.

Sandler (2011) provides the movement's depth psychology. A psychodynamic lens equips the coach to recognise unconscious anxiety, common defences such as avoidance and projection, and the transference and countertransference currents that run through senior-role relationships, and to work with that material inside coaching's boundaries, with explicit referral thresholds where the material exceeds them. The psychodynamic approach holds a recognised chapter in coaching psychology's handbook literature (Diamond, 2013). The claim advanced here is modest and defensible: patterns that Clarity makes visible frequently persist because they are doing protective work, and a coach literate in defence can address the protection respectfully, where a purely cognitive approach tends to argue with it. Sandler's stance follows from the theory: because defended behaviour is usually rooted in anxiety, the coach's first move is anxiety reduction — getting alongside the client, describing each side of the client's mixed feelings in terms the client can own — and challenge is sequenced after safety, in process, while content and decisions remain the client's. Her Emotional Profiles Triangle (Sandler, 2011, 2012) gives the movement a map of behaviour under pressure: three profiles — Tiger (driven, task-focused), Dolphin (warm, relationship-focused), and Owl (cool, analytical) — each tipping under threat toward a characteristic dysfunctional direction, fight, flight, and freeze respectively, with a corresponding developmental task for each. The Triangle enters the Method labelled for what it is: a **practice-derived heuristic**, distilled from two decades of leadership-development practice and used as a conversation map for targeting Courage work. It carries no psychometric validation, and the Method reserves measurement claims for instruments that carry them (Section 7). Bluckert (2006) adds the coach-side discipline of presence and psychological mindedness — the coach's cultivated capacity to stay in the room, attentively, when the material becomes difficult — and a process grammar for the movement: his Gestalt-derived Cycle of Experience reads stalled change as an *interruption to contact* at an identifiable point in the cycle, which gives coach and client a shared, non-pathologising language for where the work is stuck. The severity calibration is stated plainly: Sandler's published caseload sits near the clinical edge of the executive population, and the Method presents defences and anxiety as universal and usually proportionate features of leadership under pressure, escalating to her territory only sometimes.

Constructive-developmental theory names the deeper structure. Kegan and Lahey (2009) describe competing commitments: a leader sincerely committed to candour may hold an equally operative commitment to avoiding the humiliation of a failed confrontation, and the second commitment, unseen, governs behaviour. Surfacing and testing such commitments is core Courage work in the Method. The hinge of the protocol is the **big assumption**: the premise the immunity system protects, held by the client as simply the way things are — for example, that a failed confrontation would expose the leader as not up to the role, with humiliation following as a certainty. Until the big assumption is itself made object and tested, in small and safe designed experiments whose results the client can observe, the competing commitment continues to govern; from inside the assumption, the protective behaviour reads as prudence, and insight alone

changes nothing. The evidence discipline is stated plainly: the Immunity to Change protocol is theoretically grounded and case-supported, and no controlled outcome study of the protocol exists; the paper claims a rationale for its use and nothing further. Kegan's (1982, 1994) underlying theory — development as the progressive taking-as-object of what was previously subject — frames why such work is slow: the pattern under examination is, at the outset, the lens the client sees through.

Strozzi-Heckler (2014) gives the movement a body. Somatic coaching treats conditioned tendencies as held in posture, breath, and muscular pattern as well as in belief, and describes a somatic arc of transformation — opening, practices, a new shape — through which declared commitments become embodied capacity. In the Method, somatic practice enters as practice tradition: declaration, centring, and rehearsed physical practice are used because they give clients a trainable route to presence under pressure, and the paper attaches no physiological theory to them beyond the stress-physiology evidence reviewed in Section 9.2. The adoption is bounded in one further respect: the Method takes somatic *awareness* and somatic *practice*, and it leaves bodywork techniques from the wider somatic tradition outside the coaching contract and outside the Method's ethics.

Courage has a coach-side counterpart, and the Method names its practice authority for it. O'Neill (2007) describes the coach's **backbone**: the willingness to say what the coach actually sees, including to powerful clients, exercised with heart as signature presence. In the Method, backbone is practised inside the influence rule of Section 8.1 — the coach's seeing spoken in the coach's own voice, marked as the coach's, and offered for the client's correction — which is where her lineage and this paper's rule meet (Section 8.1).

4.3 Commitment

Definition. Commitment is the conversion of chosen direction into owned goals, designed conditions, and repeated practice sustained across time. Its unit of analysis is the client's behaviour between sessions, in the environments where leadership actually happens.

Goal-setting theory supplies the operating system. Locke and Latham's programme, summarised across five decades of research, finds that specific and challenging goals, held with commitment and accompanied by feedback, outperform vague exhortation, provided task complexity is managed (Locke and Latham, 2002). Self-Determination Theory supplies the motivational constitution: goals the client has internalised as their own sustain effort, and environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness support internalisation, whereas need-thwarting environments actively generate distress and disengagement (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Internalisation is also this movement's developmental-adjacent mechanism: the progressive taking of an initially external demand as one's own value describes movement in the person's relationship to their commitments, in the direction constructive-developmental theory would predict, and the Method notes the adjacency without resting any stage claim on it. Self-efficacy is the movement's mediating variable. Bandura (1977) identified efficacy beliefs as a proximal determinant of whether people initiate and persist in change; Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) meta-analysed 114 studies (N = 21,616) and found a weighted correlation of r = .38 between self-efficacy and work-related performance — a correlational finding, cited here with the authors' own caution against causal reading — and coaching itself moves self-efficacy at g = 0.59 in Wang et al.'s (2022) synthesis. The

design consequence is concrete: Commitment work sequences mastery experiences and early, genuine wins ahead of maximal challenge.

Habit research completes the construct. Graybiel (2008) reviews evidence that repeated behaviour in stable contexts shifts control toward automatic, cue-driven circuitry; Wood and Rünger's (2016) account of habit formation draws the practical corollary that context design outperforms resolve over time. Commitment in the Method is therefore engineered: cues, environments, and review rhythms are designed with the client, and Strozzi-Heckler's (2014) insistence that a commitment the body has not practised falters under pressure is honoured through rehearsal of the specific conversations and decisions the commitment entails. Hawkins and Turner (2020) extend the construct's object: in systemic practice, commitments are made within a field of stakeholders, and the value of the work is assessed against the wider system those commitments affect. Commitment at the individual level and commitment as a system-facing act are the same movement at different scope, which is the subject of Section 5.

Two practice disciplines complete the movement. The first is the bounded use of GROW, and the bound is a stated design rule of the Method. Whitmore (2017) places Goal deliberately before Reality, on the argument that aspiration should be set before current state can cap it; Drake (2018) warns that a goal captured early is an artefact of the old story. The Method resolves the disagreement by level of work, and prints the resolution: **Drake's phases govern the engagement; GROW operates only inside Commitment, for bounded execution** — a stuck deliverable, a preparation, a decision carrying a deadline — after the story has been situated, searched, and shifted. Within that bound, GROW's discipline (goal, honest reality, generated options, owned will) is a serviceable grammar, used as a tool within a movement and never as the map of the territory. The second discipline is pairing: every commitment in the Method is twinned, an action forwarded and a learning deepened (Kimsey-House et al., 2018). Action without learning produces compliance; learning without action produces insight that evaporates. Reynolds (2020) marks the hinge between the two: the passage into Commitment is the client's own articulation of insight and commitment — spoken, heard, and recorded — and the Method builds that articulation into its session architecture.

4.4 Character

Definition. Character is the consolidation of changed behaviour into identity and conduct: the values a leader actually enacts under pressure, the ethical quality of their decisions as experienced by others, and the coherence between their professed and practised commitments. It is the movement most directly observed by other people, and the one over which the client has the least unilateral authority — character is attributed by communities on the evidence of behaviour over time.

Adult developmental theory frames the construct's depth. Kegan (1982, 1994) describes orders of consciousness in which the self's organising principle itself develops; Drake, Brennan and Gørtz (2008) examine what identity-level work implies for coaching's philosophy and ethics, including the obligations incurred when coaching touches who a client takes themselves to be. The field's own empirical verdict disciplines the language used here: McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor and Baker (2006), reviewing the application of constructive-developmental theory to leadership, found the support for links between developmental stage and leadership effectiveness to be mixed.

Developmental theory therefore functions in the Method as rationale and interpretive lens, and claims of stage progression are advanced nowhere in this paper as findings. Character, in the Method's developmental reading, is located at the growing edge of the self-authoring transition: the point at which a leader's values cease to be wholly authored by their surround and begin to be held, examined, and enacted as their own. The location is a reading, offered under the lens discipline of Section 3.4. The timescale discipline is stated once and applied throughout the paper: engagements of six to twelve months work within a client's current meaning-making and at its growing edge, and the Method claims subject–object shifts on specific patterns — a defence, a big assumption, a story — taken as object and worked with. Transition between orders of consciousness sits outside any engagement horizon the Method contracts for, and outside its evidence.

MacKie (2016) anchors the movement's constructive side, and his underlying research programme supplies the paper's strengths evidence hinge. In a controlled study of a manualised six-session strengths-based coaching protocol — 37 executives and senior managers in a large not-for-profit organisation, a waitlist comparison group, and 360-degree ratings of transformational leadership — participants showed statistically significant gains in transformational leadership behaviour after coaching, with adherence to the strengths protocol predicting the degree of change (MacKie, 2014). One finding in that study does double duty in this paper: the gains were perceived by raters at every organisational level *except by the coachees themselves*. Self-perception lagged observer perception — an instance, inside a coaching trial, consistent with the opaque region of awareness that Section 7's assessment architecture exists to clarify. The Method adopts the discipline the study embodies — development built substantially from *verified* strength, identified through assessment and other-ratings and deployed deliberately, governed ethically — as Character's growth mechanism, and it adopts the study's design (manualised protocol, comparison group, multi-rater outcomes) as the template for its own validation agenda (Section 9.4). The limits travel with the finding: one research programme, one organisational context, non-random assignment, and modest numbers. Rosinski (2003) adds the cultural dimension: character is judged within cultural frames, the Cultural Orientations Framework makes those frames discussable, and the coach's own cultural orientation is a variable in the room. Two practitioner lineages are acknowledged as formative influences on the Method's stance toward the client: Whitmore (2017), whose awareness-and-responsibility thesis shaped the profession's conversational floor (the Method adopts the thesis; GROW's place is the bounded one fixed by the design rule in Section 4.3, and the Method's process architecture is set out in Section 8), and Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl and Whitworth (2018), whose Co-Active model contributes the designed alliance (Section 8.1) and a premise about the client that the Method prints in repaired form. The premise in its original form — clients are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole — presumes a self-sufficiency that the Method's own narrative and systemic sources qualify: stories are co-authored by teams, institutions, markets, and histories, and constraint in a client's field is real. The Method's formula is **whole person, real field** (the resourcefulness precept in the practice tradition's own statement: Rogers, J., 2008). Resourcefulness names the coach's stance toward the person: a disciplined refusal to treat the client as broken, and the ground of the alliance's equality. Constraint names the paper's stance toward the field: power, incentives, health, discrimination, and history are named and worked with at every level, and they are the reason the Method has Team and System levels at all. In the Indigenous context of Section 10 the repair is non-negotiable: a coach who heard

only resourcefulness in a story shaped by colonial systems would commit the precise error the underlying research was designed against. Both lineages are cited as stance and lineage. Neither is cited as evidence, and the secondary literature's description of the Co-Active model as atheoretical — founded in practice, with theory mapped onto it afterwards — is accepted and recorded here, since the Method adopts the stance while accepting the obligation, stated in Drake, Brennan and Gørtz (2008), that a stance used professionally must be theoretically owned and examined.

4.5 The holding environment

Constructive-developmental theory names the condition under which the four movements can do developmental work at all: a **holding environment** (Kegan, 1982). A holding environment performs three functions in sequence and in balance. It *holds well* — confirmation: the person's current way of making meaning is met and recognised on its own terms. It *lets go* — contradiction: the person meets experience their current meaning-making cannot organise, at a dose that provokes growth. And it *stays* — continuity: the environment remains in place across the transition, so the person is neither abandoned to the contradiction nor rescued from it. The Method assembles its version of that environment from parts already specified in this paper, and states the assembly so the mechanism is examinable. Confirmation is carried by the designed alliance (Section 8.1) and by the trust governor on feedback (Section 7.1): the client is met accurately before they are challenged. Contradiction is carried by Courage work itself — feedback, the big assumption's designed tests, honest speech rehearsed and then risked — dosed inside the safety the alliance maintains. Continuity is carried by the contracted duration and review rhythm of the engagement (Sections 8.1, 8.3) and, one level up, by supervision holding the coach (Section 8.4). At the Team level the same environment takes its collective form: containment, the team coach's holding of the group's anxiety inside a learning space sturdy enough for in-depth work (Section 5.3).

The calibration rule follows from the theory. Challenge is pitched at what the client can currently take as object: enough contradiction to make the pattern examinable, held inside enough confirmation that examination stays possible. Too little contradiction, and the alliance colludes with the pattern it exists to surface; too much, and the defences the work depends on understanding consolidate against it. The sequencing discipline of Section 9.2 — threat-loaded weeks are poor weeks for identity-level work — is this rule applied to scheduling.

5. The three levels and the capability matrix

5.1 Capability, defined

The Method's outcome construct is **capability**: a leader's demonstrated capacity to act effectively, and to continue learning, within a specific context and scope of responsibility. The definition follows Dickson and Tholl (2020), for whom LEADS capabilities are bundles of knowledge, skills, and judgement that develop across a career and adapt to context, and the refreshed framework retains capabilities as its unit of account in the same sense (CCHL, LEADS Global, CHLNet and Royal Roads University, 2026) — a continuity between the 2020 articulation and the 2026 refresh that the paper records as its own reading of the two documents. Two implications follow. First, capability is indexed to scope: the same movement presents a genuinely different demand at wider scope,

which is why the Method treats level as a dimension of the work and not as a client category. Second, capability is demonstrated in action and attested by consequences and observers; self-report alone is insufficient evidence of it. The Method's assessment architecture (Section 7) and review architecture (Section 8) are built to that standard.

Two constructs must now be separated, because the paper's developmental language depends on the separation. **Capability**, as defined above, is performative: it names what a leader can demonstrably do, in context, attested by observers and consequences. It is the Method's outcome construct, and it is the construct its instruments measure. **Developmental capacity** names something else: the complexity of the meaning-making system from which the leader acts (Kegan, 1982, 1994) — the structure that determines what the leader can take as object and what still takes them. Developmental capacity changes slowly, is not measured by any instrument in Section 7, and functions in the Method as a lens (Section 3.4) and a long-horizon concern: the direction in which sustained capability work at the growing edge is expected, over years, to tell. Every use of the word *developmental* in this paper is auditable against that separation. Where a movement, a curriculum, or a matrix cell is called developmental, the claim is that the work is organised with developmental capacity in view; the outcome claimed and measured remains capability. No order-transition claim is made anywhere in the paper.

A terminology note prevents three confusions the paper's vocabulary invites. *Level* carries three senses, kept distinct by context and, where ambiguity threatens, by qualifier: **scope level** (Individual, Team, System — the width of the unit being worked with); **psychodynamic depth** (the degree to which defended and unspoken material is in view — a property of the coach's listening, Section 3.5); and **developmental level** (an order of consciousness in Kegan's sense — a property of meaning-making, invoked only under the lens discipline above). *Awareness* likewise carries distinct senses: perceptual accuracy about oneself and one's impact (the Johari sense, Section 7.1); the coach's evoking of client awareness as a competency behaviour (Section 3.1); and the client's recognition, in the room, of material previously unavailable to them (Section 4.1). The senses are related; they are not interchangeable, and no argument in the paper trades on sliding between them.

The four movements are **analytic distinctions within one process of change**. They are not offered as four latent traits, no factor-analytic or discriminant-validity claim is made for them, and their operational overlap is expected: an act of Courage is frequently also an act of Commitment, and the taxonomy's value is in the conversation it organises, examined as propositions in Section 5.6. One internal difference is declared openly: Clarity, Courage, and Commitment name client capacities, while Character names a capacity whose evidence is partly attributional — communities confer it on the evidence of behaviour over time (Section 4.4). The matrix in Section 5.5 is, accordingly, a **curriculum and contracting map**: it states what work is being undertaken and what capability it aims at. It is not a measurement model. The evidence classes the practice accepts as capability evidence are specified per level: other-ratings on the LEADS capabilities, with self-ratings in a supporting role, at the Individual level; condition and effectiveness ratings at the Team level; and contracted stakeholder-value indicators at the System level. The development of cell-level indicators for the matrix itself is a named item in the validation agenda (Section 9.4).

5.2 The Individual level

At the individual level, the client system is one leader: their meaning-making (Kegan, 1982, 1994; developmental coaching as a recognised approach within the discipline's handbook: Bachkirova, 2013), their narratives (Drake, 2018), their efficacy beliefs and goals (Bandura, 1977; Locke and Latham, 2002), and their embodied patterns (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). The evidence base is strongest at this level: the meta-analytic record reviewed in Section 9 is overwhelmingly a record of individually delivered coaching and individually measured outcomes (de Haan and Nilsson, 2023; Theeboom, Beersma and van Vianen, 2014). The Method's claim at this level is therefore its most conservative: structured, relationally sound coaching produces moderate improvements in self-regulation, self-efficacy, and goal attainment, and the four movements organise that work.

5.3 The Team level

A team, in the Method's usage, is a bounded group with a shared purpose, interdependent work, and collective accountability; the team itself is the client of team coaching, with its own purpose, stakeholder interface, internal dynamics, and learning over time (Clutterbuck et al., 2019; International Coaching Federation, 2021; team coaching as a recognised practice in the discipline's handbook: Carter and Hawkins, 2013). The conditions literature sets the level's first rule. Hackman (2002) and Wageman, Nunes, Burruss and Hackman (2008) locate team effectiveness primarily in enabling conditions — a real team, a compelling direction, an enabling structure, a supportive organisational context, and expert coaching — and in the senior-team programme the programme's own reporting attributes roughly sixty per cent of the variation in team effectiveness to design conditions and coaching utilisation jointly — its 60–30–10 formulation — in one sample of senior teams, by variance decomposition; the figure is associational, is attributed here to that programme, and is cited as such. Hackman and Wageman (2005) draw the coaching corollary: team coaching assists well-designed teams at beginnings, midpoints, and ends, and cannot substitute for absent conditions. The timing claim is a theoretical corollary of their model and is labelled as theory here; it is not an experimental finding. The Method accordingly assesses conditions before coaching conversations about team behaviour, a rule operationalised by the Ad Infinitum Loop assessment (Section 7). Two taxonomies from the Method's team sources divide the level's labour, and the division is stated so the level does not read as model-collecting: **diagnosis** at Team level uses Clutterbuck's PERILL determinants — Purpose and motivation, External processes and relationships, Relationships (internal climate), Internal processes, Learning, and Leadership as distributed functions — read as interacting elements of a complex system (Clutterbuck et al., 2019). PERILL's status is stated in the body of the paper, as its use requires: it is a **practice-derived model**, distilled from experienced team-coaching practice; its determinants carry no independent validation as constructs, and the Method uses them as diagnostic organisation, with claims graded accordingly. **Process** follows Hawkins' Five Disciplines of systemic team practice — Commissioning, Clarifying, Co-creating, Connecting, and Core Learning (Hawkins and Turner, 2020). PERILL says where to look; the Five Disciplines say how the work proceeds. The two taxonomies overlap at one joint, and the Method states its sequencing rule in full, because the split is not clean: Commissioning, which settles the team's mandate against stakeholder expectations, frames the engagement first; PERILL then structures diagnosis of the team's functioning; the remaining Disciplines govern the work that follows. Where the vocabularies name the same

phenomenon, the Five Disciplines govern process decisions and PERILL governs diagnostic attention.

Three taxonomies are now in play at this level — Hackman's conditions, PERILL's determinants, and the Ad Infinitum Loop's scales (Section 7.3) — and the Method states their concordance in full. **PERILL is the designated diagnostic spine**: findings from the Loop assessment are reported against PERILL determinants, and Hackman's conditions serve as the design standard against which a PERILL diagnosis is read. The framework-level correspondence is set out below.

Hackman condition (design standard)	PERILL determinant (diagnostic spine)	Five Disciplines (process)
Real team	Relationships; Internal processes	Clarifying
Compelling direction	Purpose and motivation	Commissioning; Clarifying
Enabling structure	Internal processes	Co-creating
Supportive organisational context	External processes and relationships	Commissioning; Connecting
Expert coaching available	No PERILL counterpart — a provision of the Method (Section 8.4)	Core Learning, in part
No Hackman counterpart	Learning	Core Learning
Distributed across the conditions	Leadership as distributed functions	Co-creating

Two gaps are named in the open. Hackman's expert-coaching condition has no PERILL determinant, because PERILL describes the team while Hackman describes its supports; and PERILL's Learning determinant exceeds Hackman's conditions, which are structural. A scale-level concordance for the Loop's eleven scales — the practice's own constructions, appearing in no published source — is a named item in the validation agenda (Section 9.4); the correspondence claimed here operates at the level of determinants. Beneath both sits the team coach's holding function, drawn from the systems-psychodynamic tradition: containing the team's anxiety inside a learning space sturdy enough for in-depth work, to a "good enough" standard (Wrogemann, 2016, in van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal, 2016). Containment is the Team level's form of the work Section 4.2 describes at the Individual level.

Within sound conditions, the team level has its own evidence. Psychological safety — the shared belief that interpersonal risk-taking will be met without punishment or humiliation — is associated meta-analytically with learning behaviour, information sharing, and performance across 136 samples, with leader inclusiveness among its primary actionable antecedents (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017; Newman, Donohue and Eva, 2017). Trust and team performance are associated at $\rho = .30$ across 112 studies and 7,763 teams, and the association runs in both directions: trust supports performance, and performing together builds trust (de Jong, Dirks and Gillespie, 2016). Team reflexivity — collective reflection on objectives, strategies, and process — facilitates performance, with psychological safety as a critical enabling condition (Leblanc, Harvey and Rousseau, 2024). The trial evidence for team coaching itself is young: Passmore, Tee and Gold

(2025) report the first randomised trial of team coaching against a credible comparison, finding greater gains in psychological safety and cohesion, on perception-based outcomes. Zink (2023) contributes a longitudinal case studied from team, leader, organisation, coach, and supervision perspectives, valuable as an illustration of the Team–System interface and cited as a single case. Whittington (2020) supplies the level's diagnostic vocabulary: belonging, order and place, and exchange name the positional dynamics — exclusion, misplacement, unbalanced reciprocity — that present as team dysfunction while belonging to the system's structure. The Method's grading of this source is explicit, because its author's own presentation is stronger than its evidence. Whittington presents the three principles in near-lawlike terms; the Method uses them as **disciplined heuristics** — lenses that generate systemic hypotheses a client can test in action — and uses constellation-informed mapping (spatial representation of a system's elements, worked phenomenologically) as a hypothesis-generating representational practice inside Clarity work at Team and System levels. The evidence position is printed with the borrowing: outcome research on constellation methods derives almost entirely from family-constellation settings outside coaching; a systematic review of that literature rates its overall quantity and quality as low and records that a minority of participants in some samples reported negative effects; and no controlled outcome studies of constellations in coaching exist (see Appendix). Constellations are therefore claimed nowhere in this paper as an evidence-based intervention.

5.4 The System level

The System level comprises the organisation and its wider ecology: stakeholders, governance, incentives, culture, and the communities affected by the leader's decisions. Hawkins and Turner (2020) define the level's coaching logic: engagements are contracted against value created for the stakeholder system, with multi-stakeholder contracting, systemic ethics, and supervision as quality infrastructure. Hawkins (2012) describes how coaching scales from engagements into organisational culture through strategy-linked infrastructure, with health-system case material of direct relevance to the Method's health-sector readership. The two Hawkins sources carry distinct jobs in the Method, assigned here to prevent their overlap reading as duplication: Hawkins (2012) describes *culture institutionalisation* — the seven-step path by which coaching stops being an intervention and becomes an organisation's predominant way of managing and learning, read in the Method as a maturity heuristic for the System level; Hawkins and Turner (2020) govern *contracting, systemic ethics, and evaluation* within engagements. The first describes the level's mature state; the second disciplines its present practice. Schein (2017) supplies diagnostic depth: culture operates at the levels of artefacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions, and interventions addressed to the visible levels fail predictably when the assumptions beneath them go unexamined. Senge (1990) is cited as intellectual lineage for the level's way of seeing — feedback structure over events — and is advanced as no part of the level's evidence.

The honesty clause for this level is stated here and developed in Section 9: coaching's organisational-outcome evidence is the weakest tier of the record. Grover and Furnham (2016), reviewing 52 studies, found no adequate empirical evidence confirming positive impact on organisational-level outcomes; Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018) concur on the methodological thinness of the organisational tier. The Method's System level is accordingly framed as design intent with a mechanism account — leaders acting on conditions, culture, and stakeholder value —

together with a commitment to outcome evaluation (Section 9.4). Any stronger present claim would exceed the literature the paper itself cites.

The level is worked with equipment, and the equipment is named, because a level with a matrix column owes its reader a diagnostic and a mechanism. At contracting, a System-level engagement produces a **stakeholder and incentive map**: the parties who can reward, block, or absorb the intended change, and the incentives each party actually faces (Section 8.1). Clarity work at this level takes the form of culture inquiry at Schein's (2017) three depths, with espoused values tested against artefacts and underlying assumptions surfaced through the leader's own decision history. The leader–culture relation is read with Nyukorong's (2016) FLOCC framework — congruence lenses spanning follower, leader, organisational, and contextual elements — used as a **heuristic with its status stated**: FLOCC is an untested conceptual framework, published in a low-tier journal, whose author concedes it awaits verification. Its sharpest clause is carried in substance wherever the Method draws on it: congruence is a diagnostic finding, and effectiveness outranks fit. Where the culture itself produces harm or waste, the culture is what may need to change, and a leader's comfortable fit within it is no defence of either. The level's change mechanism is stated as a chain, with its attribution limits attached: the leader acts on conditions — mandates, incentives, decision rights, review structures; changed conditions change the decisions the system produces and the behaviour it rewards; and the outcome class is stakeholder-attested value, contracted as indicators at the outset and reported on the system's own cycles (Sections 8.1, 9.4). Each link is observable. The chain as a whole is a mechanism account, claimed as design reasoning under Section 9.3's honesty clause.

Collective leadership follows from the level's logic. Where outcomes depend on leadership exercised across a network — the normal case in health systems — the unit of development widens from the individual leader to the leadership system, and the Method's team instruments and coalition-focused work (Section 6) are its current instruments for that unit. The widening is marked as a horizon: the Method's present instrumentation reads individuals and teams, and its claims for the leadership system as a unit are programme claims awaiting instruments of their own. Hawkins' (2012) maturity account, correspondingly, describes the maturity of a coaching *context* — an organisation's predominant way of managing and learning — and the Method does not read it as a claim about any client's capability.

One organisational form deserves a sentence of comparison. Kegan and Lahey's (2016) deliberately developmental organisation builds the holding environment of Section 4.5 into an organisation's ordinary practices — its meetings, feedback rituals, and handling of error — so that development becomes a property of the workplace itself. The Method shares the destination and differs in instrument: it works through contracted engagements with leaders and teams inside organisations as they are, and it treats the deliberately developmental organisation as a System-level horizon an engagement may help a client build toward.

5.5 The capability matrix

Table 1 states the capability under construction in each combination of movement and level. The matrix is the Method's curriculum and contracting map (Section 5.1); it is not a measurement model. Its cells are written in one ontological form throughout: capability claims about the leader — the leader becomes capable of the stated action, at the stated scope, with learning continuing in

context. System-column cells are attested differently from the rest: by stakeholder attestation and by movement on the stakeholder-value indicators contracted under Section 8.1, over periods longer than a single engagement.

Table 1. The Becoming Method capability matrix: four movements by three levels.

Movement	Individual	Team	System
Clarity	Accurate self-knowledge: the leader's story, patterns, and assessment evidence held in one view	A shared, evidence-based picture of the team's purpose, conditions, and dynamics	Reading the system: stakeholder, incentive, and cultural forces named and mapped
Courage	Facing defended material and acting while anxiety is present	Creating and sustaining the conditions in which interpersonal risk-taking happens in the room: candour, dissent, and error admitted aloud	Challenging the arrangements that produce harm or waste, including one's own part in them
Commitment	Owned goals, designed environments, practised behaviour between sessions	Convening and holding collective agreements on direction and working practices, and holding the team to their review rhythm	Making commitments in full view of stakeholders and holding them against the value created for those stakeholders
Character	Values enacted under pressure; conduct coherent with professed commitments	Building and sustaining a team culture in which ethical conduct is normal, witnessed, and correctable	Exercising ethical judgement over governance, equity, and long-horizon consequences, in public view, as the leader's own concern

5.6 Propositions

The Method asserts the following propositions. Each is stated in falsifiable form, with the comparison or observation that would count against it, so that a doctoral research programme can take them up directly. Two propositions carry printed health warnings — P4 is an extrapolation, and P7's measures are under construction — and the warnings are part of the propositions as stated. Section 9.4 assigns each proposition a tier and a design.

- **P1 (Integration).** Leaders coached under an integrative protocol combining narrative, goal-focused, and reflective-inquiry components will show larger gains in goal attainment and self-efficacy than matched leaders coached under a single-framework protocol of equal duration and coach experience. Falsified if a controlled comparison finds no difference, or a single-framework advantage. Two design facts are conceded in the statement itself. Coach allegiance is the proposition's known confound: an adequate design crosses coaches with protocols — the same coaches delivering both — or measures and models allegiance. And the proposition runs against the headwind of the named-approach literature, in which comparisons between approaches return null differences (Wang et al., 2022; de Haan and Nilsson, 2023); its positive expectation rests on the integrative-combination subgroup pattern in Wang et al. (2022), and on nothing broader.

- **P2 (Multi-level formulation).** Engagements that open with a written multi-level formulation — a documented and revisable account of how the presenting difficulty is produced and maintained across the individual, team, and system levels, with the work addressed to the levels the formulation implicates — will produce larger improvements in stakeholder-rated leadership effectiveness than engagements formulated at the individual level only. The formulation protocol, and a study of its inter-rater reliability, are prior items in the validation agenda (Section 9.4); until they exist, the proposition is untestable, and the paper says so in the proposition's own text. Falsified if multi-level-formulated and individual-only engagements do not differ on stakeholder ratings.
- **P3 (Conditions precedence).** In team coaching, under repeated measurement at engagement beginning, midpoint, and close, measurable improvement in enabling conditions (team boundedness, direction, structure, context, coaching) will precede and predict subsequent improvement in team effectiveness ratings; coaching that leaves conditions unchanged will show no durable effectiveness gain. Falsified if effectiveness gains occur independently of condition change, with condition change required to exceed a minimum threshold fixed in advance of the test, so that trivial condition movement cannot satisfy the proposition.
- **P4 (Assessment-inside-coaching).** Leaders who receive 360-degree feedback debriefed inside a coaching engagement will show larger subsequent improvement in other-rated behaviour than leaders receiving the same feedback with a written report only. Falsified if the report-only condition matches the coached condition. The proposition is labelled an **extrapolation**: Smither, London and Reilly (2005) show that feedback followed by goal-setting and action improves ratings modestly; they do not compare coached debrief against report-only delivery, and the comparison arm this proposition requires belongs to the research-partnership tier of Section 9.4, run ethically through stepped-wedge or waitlist debrief timing.
- **P5 (Competing commitments and big assumptions).** The full sequence — mapping a competing commitment, identifying the big assumption that protects it, and running designed behavioural tests of that assumption — will predict reduction in a target pattern's recurrence over six months, beyond the effect of goal-setting alone. The variable is the sequence entire, because the protocol's own account holds that articulation stopping short of assumption-testing changes nothing. Falsified if goal-setting-only clients show equivalent pattern reduction. Design: an additive or dismantling comparison (Section 9.4).
- **P6 (Safety as team-level Courage).** Team-level gains in psychological safety during a coaching engagement will mediate the relationship between the engagement and subsequent team learning behaviour. The existing evidence for the safety–learning link is correlational (Section 5.3); this proposition states the causal form the Method's practice assumes, testable by three-wave longitudinal mediation with safety measured at engagement midpoint (Section 9.4). Falsified if safety gains and learning behaviour are unrelated within engaged teams.
- **P7 (Narrative mechanism).** Measured change in the coherence and agency of a leader's self-narrative across an engagement will correlate with independent ratings of leadership behaviour change. Falsified if narrative change and behaviour change are uncorrelated. The proposition's measures are construct-development work, named as such: coherence and

agency are to be scored with a coding scheme adapted from published narrative-identity coding traditions, with the adaptation and an inter-rater reliability study as the agenda's first task for this proposition (Section 9.4). Until that work is done, P7 stands as a programme proposition, retained in the set with its status printed.

- **P8 (Calibrational learning).** Self–other rating gaps at engagement outset will narrow over an engagement primarily through movement in self-ratings toward other-ratings, and the degree of narrowing will predict stakeholder-rated improvement. Falsified if gaps narrow through other-rating drift alone, or if narrowing is unrelated to improvement. The test must control regression to the mean — by modelling the expected shrinkage of extreme initial gaps, or by comparing gaps that begin moderate — because uncontrolled pre/post gaps narrow artefactually in exactly the direction this proposition predicts.
- **P9 (Alliance mediation and design).** Client-rated alliance quality at engagement midpoint, its task and goal components in particular, will mediate the relationship between engagement architecture (movement coverage, multi-level formulation) and outcome gains; and engagements that open with explicit alliance design and dual-language outcome contracting (Section 8.1) will show higher midpoint alliance ratings than engagements with standard contracting. Falsified if alliance quality does not mediate, or if designed openings do not differ. The proposition converts Section 8.4's settlement into a testable mechanism claim, which is the status the Method claims for it.

5.7 How change travels across levels

The three levels are nested, and the Method owes its reader an account of how change at one level moves the others, because the matrix's symmetry could otherwise imply a symmetry of mechanism that the paper does not claim. Change travels **upward** through behaviour: a leader who takes interpersonal risk first, and survives it, alters the team's conditions (leader inclusiveness is among psychological safety's primary antecedents, Section 5.3); a team whose conditions improve produces decisions and conduct that alter what its system experiences from it. Conditions precedence (P3) is the ratchet on this pathway: gains hold where conditions have actually changed. Change also travels **downward**, and downward causation is the pathway insight cannot repeal: mandates, incentives, decision rights, and workload structures set the boundaries inside which team behaviour and individual behaviour are chosen, whatever the leader has understood. A Method engagement therefore works downward deliberately where the contract allows — conditions are contracted with the sponsor, and Clarity at System level maps the incentives before behaviour is asked to change (Sections 5.4, 8.1). Where downward conditions cannot be moved within an engagement's authority, the Method contracts honestly for the individual and team work that remains possible inside them, and says so (Section 9.3).

The timescales differ by level, and the difference disciplines what an engagement may promise. Individual behaviour change is observable within an engagement of six to twelve months. Team condition change is observable across the same span, at its slower end. Culture change runs on multi-year cycles, through repeated engagements, leadership turnover, and structural decisions no single engagement controls. System-level deliverables inside one engagement are therefore stated in initiated form: conditions changed or set in motion, decisions reframed, stakeholder-value indicators baselined for reporting on the system's own cycles. The matrix's System column is a

direction of travel with contracted indicators, and the paper presents it in those terms wherever the column is used.

6. The Method and LEADS 2026

6.1 Why LEADS

Leaders do not develop in framework-free space; they develop inside the expectation structures of their sectors. For Canadian health care leaders, and increasingly for leaders in adjacent public systems, that structure is LEADS in a Caring Environment, refreshed in 2026 by the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL), LEADS Global, the Canadian Health Leadership Network (CHLNet), and Royal Roads University following an eighteen-month, evidence-informed process involving a comprehensive literature review, 176 participants, 65 key informant interviews, and 20 focus groups (CCHL, LEADS Global, CHLNet and Royal Roads University, 2026). The refreshed framework retains five domains of four capabilities each: Lead Self, Engage Others, Achieve Results, Develop Coalitions, and Shape Systems. Its 2026 revisions are substantive: self-awareness now names biases and privileges explicitly; healthy workplace cultures are specified as psychologically, culturally, and physically safe; decisions are anchored in equity alongside values and evidence; coalitions are purposefully built from diverse voices; knowledge mobilisation expressly includes Indigenous ways of knowing and lived experience; and the systems domain, renamed Shape Systems, orients leaders toward planetary health, digital innovation, and sustainable change that advances reconciliation (CCHL et al., 2026; Cass, Funnell and Pilon, 2026).

The Method's relationship to LEADS is one of fit and function. LEADS states what capable leadership comprises in the sector's own language; the Method states how such capability is developed in coaching. A leader working inside the Method reads their leadership behaviour through the five domains, and the coaching agenda is set where the domain picture and the movement work meet: the individual-in-the-system — leading self first and shaping systems as scope allows, in the Method's reading; LEADS itself prescribes no sequence among its domains, and the ordering here is the Method's developmental gloss, labelled as such.

6.2 Mapping

Table 2 maps the Method's architecture onto the LEADS domains. The mapping is interpretive: it asserts resonance and developmental relevance, and it claims no equivalence between the Method's movements and CCHL's constructs. Its rules are stated so the table can be audited. Each row names **primary emphasis**: the movements and levels where coaching work for that domain concentrates. A movement not named in a row remains in play for that domain; the table allocates emphasis, and allocates nothing exclusively. The mapping's **grain is the domain**, chosen deliberately: the mapping is a developmental mapping — it locates where development work is done — while the capability grain (twenty capabilities) belongs to assessment, where the Infinitum instrument of Section 7.3 operates. A capability-level mapping would assert a precision the developmental argument does not need and cannot yet defend. The mapping is itself a testable artefact: Section 9.4 includes a validation step in which independent expert raters sort the loci against the domain definitions and agreement is reported.

Table 2. The Becoming Method and the LEADS (2026) domains.

LEADS domain	Method locus	Developmental emphasis
Lead Self	Individual level; Clarity and Character movements	Self-awareness including bias and privilege; self-guidance and well-being; character demonstrated in conduct
Engage Others	Individual and Team levels; Courage and Commitment	Communication that creates space for dissent; collaboration; developing others; psychologically and culturally safe cultures. The domain is read at two grains: the leader's own communicative conduct (Individual level) and the climate that conduct produces (Team level)
Achieve Results	Team and System levels; Commitment (Clarity in support)	Vision brought to life; decisions anchored in equity, values, and evidence; conditions created for implementation; assessment and course-correction — the row's assessment and course-correction content is Clarity's contribution, in play under the mapping rule
Develop Coalitions	System level; Clarity, Courage and Character	Diverse voices convened with real influence; knowledge mobilised across evidence, lived experience, and Indigenous ways of knowing; socio-political environments navigated with acumen. Convening voices that can contradict the leader, and holding them in the room, is voice-across-difference work — Courage's contribution to the row, alongside Clarity's discernment of whom to convene and Character's conduct once convened
Shape Systems	System level; all four movements at widest scope	Adaptive systems thinking; conditions for learning and innovation; future orientation including planetary health and digital change; sustainable change advancing reconciliation. The row names all four movements with its discriminating weight stated: primary emphasis on Clarity and Commitment at widest scope — reading the system accurately, and holding long-horizon commitments inside it

6.3 Independence

The mapping above is Infinitum Leadership's synthesis, published for the use of its clients and readers. LEADS in a Caring Environment is the framework of the Canadian College of Health Leaders and its partners; the Infinitum assessment described in Section 7 is an Infinitum instrument built with reference to the framework's published capabilities, presented under the Infinitum name, and no affiliation with, endorsement by, or certification from CCHL is claimed or implied. The official LEADS 360 is a separate, licensed CCHL product. Cass, Funnell and Pilon (2026) ground the framework's Indigenous-knowledge and equity capabilities in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 18–24; the Method's treatment of Indigenous coaching (Section 10) is the author's own research contribution and is presented on its own evidence.

7. Assessment and the growth of self-awareness

7.1 The Johari logic

The Method's assessment philosophy can be stated in one sentence: assessment corrects the picture a leader is steering by, and change becomes possible — contingent, effortful, and frequently resisted — when the corrected picture is worked with inside coaching. The Johari window (Luft and Ingham, 1955; Luft, 1969) supplies the framing geometry: material known to self and others (open), known to others and unrecognised by self (blind), known to self and withheld (hidden), and known to neither (unknown). The Method uses the window in Bergquist's (2023) contemporary revision, which makes three load-bearing changes. First, each pane is **double-paned**: the self a leader presents and transacts outwardly, and the self as experienced inwardly, are distinct panes through which every exchange passes — a revision built for contextual, multiple selves. Second, the blind pane is renamed the **opaque** pane: leaders are rarely wholly blind to how others see them; the knowledge is present as outline and shadow, short on detail — which is why defensiveness before feedback is best explained by the anxiety of near-recognition, and why feedback's work is clarification of the opaque. Third, the unknown pane is reframed as a **resource**: a wellspring of surprise, learning, and material that gains power in proportion to its denial, to be respected and drawn on indirectly — through narrative, somatic signal, and behaviour observed over time — and never conquered by instrument. The two master processes that move material between panes are **disclosure** (hidden material entering the open by its owner's choice) and **feedback** (opaque material clarified by others' reports), and Bergquist's account makes **trust the governor on both**: a leader enlarges a pane when they trust the source's *competence*, their *intentions*, and their *perspectives* — whether the source understands the situation as the leader does. Assessment design in the Method is paced by that triad: how much feedback, from whom, at what speed, is a trust calculation before it is a measurement decision. The same governor protects the hidden pane: material moves by invitation and consent, and in the Indigenous context of Section 10 that protection hardens into an ethical rule. The window itself remains what it was in 1955 — a heuristic model from the human-relations tradition — and it is cited in that capacity. Its value to the Method is disciplinary: it states assessment's limits in the same diagram as its purpose.

The self–other agreement literature anchors the distinction in research: self-ratings and other-ratings diverge systematically, and the direction of divergence predicts outcomes (Fleenor, Smither, Atwater, Braddy and Sturm, 2010; Section 7.2). Eurich's programme of practitioner research refines the target in the form the Method uses: internal self-awareness (a clear view of one's own values, patterns, and reactions) and external self-awareness (an accurate understanding of how others see one) are distinct and largely independent, and external self-awareness in particular depends on solicited, specific feedback (Eurich, 2018). The distinction is cited as practitioner research grounded in survey work; the paper treats it as a well-supported working distinction and imports no prevalence figures from that programme as findings.

7.2 What the feedback evidence permits

Self-ratings and other-ratings of leadership agree only modestly, and the pattern of disagreement carries diagnostic weight: leaders who over-rate themselves relative to others show consistently poorer outcomes, while under-raters tend to fare better (Fleenor, Smither, Atwater, Braddy and

Sturm, 2010). MacKie's (2014) controlled coaching study supplies the same lesson from inside an intervention: coachees were the last constituency to register their own change (Section 4.4). Self-knowledge in the Method is accordingly routed through mirrors — other-ratings, structured debrief, observed behaviour — with introspection admitted as one input among several. The longitudinal evidence on multisource feedback is sobering. Smither, London and Reilly (2005), meta-analysing 24 longitudinal studies, found subsequent improvement in others' ratings that was small — corrected d of approximately .15 for direct reports, .05 for peers, and .15 for supervisors, with a slightly negative value for self-ratings — and the authors caution practitioners against expecting large, widespread improvement from feedback programmes. Improvement was most likely where feedback indicated change was needed, the recipient believed change was feasible and worthwhile, reacted constructively, and set goals and acted on them. Feedback Intervention Theory explains the underlying risk. Kluger and DeNisi (1996), across 607 effect sizes, found feedback interventions improved performance on average (d = 0.41) and decreased it in more than a third of cases (38 per cent); the theory locates the difference in attention — feedback directing attention to the task tends to help, and feedback directing attention to the self, to ego and identity, tends to harm.

Three design rules follow, and the Method observes all three. First, every Infinitum instrument is debriefed inside coaching: the report is aimed at behaviour, the conversation is aimed at the person, and goal-setting follows the debrief as a structural step. The debrief evidence is graded in three steps, and the Method claims only the steps the evidence reaches. Structured, facilitated debrief of a shared task is directly supported as an active ingredient in the contexts studied: debriefs improved subsequent effectiveness at d = .67 across 46 samples (Tannenbaum and Cerasoli, 2013) and at d = 0.79 across a broader set of training criteria (Keiser and Arthur, 2021). The coached debrief of multisource feedback — the Method's actual practice — is supported indirectly, by that evidence together with the conditions identified by Smither, London and Reilly (2005); P4 is its direct test, and no after-action-review effect size is claimed for feedback debriefs anywhere in this paper. Second, use is developmental only: no Infinitum instrument is used for selection, promotion, or discipline. Third, reporting observes the suite's two-tier anonymity standard, aligned across all Infinitum instruments: scale scores are released for rater groups of n ≥ 3; item-level averages are suppressed below n = 5; and the manager's rating is excepted from the floors in 360-degree reporting. In small teams, where a floor cannot be met, protection is achieved by suppression and by aggregation across administrations over time. Self–other gaps are flagged at thresholds set in advance (the LEADS-based assessment flags gaps of 0.75 or greater on its seven-point scale — a provisional, practice-set threshold, to be recalibrated against pilot score distributions). Proposition P4 in Section 5.6 states the coached-debrief claim in testable form.

7.3 The instruments, in pathway order

Birkman Method (Step 1 — wiring). A developmental self-report instrument addressing interests, needs, and stress behaviour, with two psychometric records kept distinct, as this paper's standard requires: vendor-documented averages (test–retest averaging .85, coefficient alpha averaging .80), and the independent restatement by Maxwell et al. (2016), which reports scale ranges of test–retest 0.57–0.91 (mean 0.79) and coefficient alpha 0.54–0.88. Scales at the low end of the restated ranges are read in the Method as conversation openers, carrying interpretive weight only in convergence with other evidence. The Method uses it for self-insight and stress-behaviour

awareness at the opening of an engagement. Its claims boundary is stated in the practice's companion white paper: developmental use, with no predictive or selection claims.

Infinitum Leadership Capabilities Assessment (Step 2 — behaviour). A 60–item self-report and 360–degree instrument built on the twenty capabilities of the refreshed LEADS framework (2026): three items per capability, a seven-point behaviourally anchored scale with a "not observed" option, four proficiency levels (Foundational, Proficient, Advanced, Executive), a 20–item short form for domain-level snapshots, and sector-neutral and health-care overlays drawn from one item bank. At the time of writing the instrument carries content-validity and pilot-stage evidence under a published validation roadmap (expert panel review and cognitive interviews; pilot administration; structural and fairness analyses; norms only when sample size warrants). It carries no norms and supports no predictive claims, and its reports state both facts. Reporting follows a stated hierarchy: domain scores are the primary report, and capability-level scores are indicative only, as three items per capability require. The instrument's behavioural anchors are practice-drafted and enter expert-panel judgement in the roadmap's first phase; their provenance is stated here so no reader mistakes them for framework-issued anchors.

Quarterly Snapshot. A structured self-review across twelve areas of life and leadership, completed quarterly and worked inside coaching. Its warrant is **analogical**, and is labelled as such: the debrief evidence cited above (Tannenbaum and Cerasoli, 2013; Keiser and Arthur, 2021) concerns facilitated review of shared tasks and training performance, while the Snapshot is a solitary structured self-review; the shared mechanism — disciplined, periodic review of one's own recent performance — is the ground of the analogy, and no effect size transfers across it. The Snapshot's own evidence is pending under the Section 9.4 agenda. The Snapshot maintains self-awareness as a continuing rhythm across an engagement.

The Mindsets in Your Way. A developmental self-recognition instrument naming ten protective patterns. Its grounding is the defence vocabulary of the Method's psychodynamic sources: the ten patterns are protective strategies in Sandler's (2011) and Bluckert's (2006) sense — characteristic ways a leader routes around anxiety — named so that they can be examined. An earlier draft grounded the instrument in constructive-developmental theory; that grounding is withdrawn, because patterns of defence are not orders of consciousness, and the field's verdict on developmental-stage claims is in any case mixed (McCauley et al., 2006). Status, stated in the register the suite's other disclosures use: the Mindsets instrument is practice-derived, built from the patterns the practice's coaching repeatedly encounters; it carries no psychometric validation and supports no measurement claim. Its function in Johari terms is to make the opaque region discussable: a named pattern can be examined, tested, and worked with, where an unnamed one governs silently.

Write Your Story. A narrative module in which the client writes and re-authors their leadership story across the engagement. Its architecture enforces a data boundary described in Section 8: the coach sees progress metadata — completion, cadence, the client's chosen chapter markers — and the story content itself remains the client's. The module's outcome honesty is the most conservative in the suite: expressive-writing effects in the wider literature are small and mixed, and the module's claimed function is meaning-making and chapter-position — the precondition for Clarity work; symptom change sits outside its claimed function.

Ad Infinitum Loop Team Assessment. A team-level instrument of 33 original items across eleven scales, completed anonymously by every member rating the team as a whole. It reads the conditions and behaviours of the team as a system, giving the Team level the same evidentiary discipline the individual instruments give the Individual level: team self-awareness treated as a collective property. Status, in the same register: the Loop is an original, practice-built instrument. Its scales carry content grounding in the conditions literature of Section 5.3, its determinant-level concordance is stated there, its scale-level concordance is an agenda item (Section 9.4), and no norms are claimed for it.

The suite's ordering expresses the Method's logic. Wiring before behaviour, behaviour before rhythm, and individual instruments before team instruments — each step widens the unit of awareness in step with the client's demonstrated capacity to use what the wider view reveals.

8. Practice architecture

8.1 Contracting

Every engagement opens with a written agreement covering purpose, parties, confidentiality and its limits, data handling, and the review points at which the work will be assessed. Where a sponsor funds the coaching, contracting is multi-stakeholder from the outset (Hawkins and Turner, 2020): sponsor, client, and coach agree the engagement's aims, the information flows each party will and will not receive, and the boundaries that protect the coaching conversation. The boundary rule is absolute within the Method: sponsors receive structure and participation information — that sessions occurred, that agreed milestones were addressed — and individual assessment content, session content, and story material remain with the client. Bozer and Jones (2018), reviewing 117 studies of coaching effectiveness determinants, identify trust, feedback, supervisory support, self-efficacy, and goal orientation among the promising factors; contracting is where several of those determinants are set, and the Method treats it as clinical-grade infrastructure in its own right. Starr (2022) supplies the process discipline referenced in the practice's contracting and session documentation: contracting quality, listening levels, and session structure held to an explicit standard.

Team engagements contract among four parties: the sponsor, the team leader, the team as client, and the coach. The team leader's dual role — member of the client team and holder of its formal authority — is named in the agreement, as is the content rule for midpoint sponsor conversations: process and aim, reported at category level, with no individual's material attributed to them. Escalation is contracted in advance and bounded: where a coach encounters risk of serious harm or illegality — in health settings, risk to patient safety is the standing example — the duty to escalate, the person escalated to, and the notice given to the client are fixed in the agreement before work begins, inside the confidentiality limits of Section 11. The contracting lineage the Method works from runs from O'Neill (2007), whose account of the coach triangled between sponsor, client, and system remains practice authority for the three-cornered contract, through Hawkins and Turner (2020), with contracting's place in the discipline's handbook literature stated by Lee (2013). O'Neill's backbone (Section 4.2) and this paper's influence rule are the same discipline from two sides: her precedent is its senior statement — influence contracted, owned, and corrigible. Where an engagement reads leader and culture together, the commensurability discipline of Section 5.4

applies: the same lenses, at the same sitting, for the leader's behaviour and for the culture that behaviour must move.

Inside the written agreement sits a second, relational contract. Following the Co-Active tradition, the Method treats the working alliance itself as **designed**: an explicit, collaborative, and revisable agreement between equals about how coach and client will work, what each may ask of the other, and how ruptures will be repaired (Kimsey-House et al., 2018). The designed alliance is where the Method's rule for coach influence lives. Coach influence is unavoidable — question selection, replay, emphasis, and silence all shape what emerges — and the Method's discipline, drawing its default from Dunbar's (2017) Clean practice, is that influence be **contracted, owned, and corrigible**: permitted inside the alliance, spoken in the coach's own voice and marked as the coach's, offered for the client's correction, and followed by a return to the client's words. Contracting also has to settle an outcome-language divergence documented in the critical-moments research: clients and coaches identify moments of insight and attitudinal change as the engagement's critical moments, while sponsors identify moments of behaviour change (de Haan and Nieβ, 2015). The divergence is structural — a function of position — and the Method contracts for both languages from the outset, so that the Value Review (Section 8.3) can report insight and behaviour in their own terms. Contracting also observes Section 4's distinction: engagement aims are contracted at the outset, while developmental goals are contracted as direction and specified only as the narrative work situates them.

8.2 Session rhythm and between-session work

Sessions run on a contracted cadence, typically fortnightly or monthly across six to twelve months for executive engagements, with session structure following the movements as the material requires. The engagement's centre of gravity sits between sessions: experiments agreed in session — a conversation conducted differently, a decision process redesigned, a practice repeated — generate the behavioural evidence the next session examines. Bozer and Jones (2018), synthesising the determinants literature, identify goal-setting, feedback, the coaching relationship, and between-session practice among the factors associated with coaching's effects — the outcome record itself is stated in Section 9 — and the architecture described here is arranged so that all four are present by design. Narrative method runs through the rhythm as a continuous thread: the client's story is situated, searched, shifted, and sustained across sessions (Drake, 2018), and the Write Your Story module gives that thread a private written home between meetings.

Two reconciliations belong to the architecture. First, the evidence of Section 8.4 describes change concentrating in critical moments — episodes of heightened emotion and new realisation — while the movements describe a curriculum. The Method holds both by assigning each its office: the movements are the repertoire the engagement builds; critical moments are the occasions on which the repertoire is used and consolidated. Supervision examines the coach's sequencing judgement at exactly this joint — whether the coach answered the moment in front of them or the plan behind them. Second, O'Neill (2007) coaches live, inside the leader's actual meetings. The Method takes the lineage — practice in the real arena — and works it by contrast: the arena enters through between-session experiments in the leader's real meetings, designed in session and examined at the next.

8.3 Review

Review operates at two depths. Formative review is continuous and light: the Quarterly Snapshot rhythm, session-level checks against contracted goals, and midpoint conversations with the client (and, within the contracted boundaries, the sponsor) about whether the work is aimed at the right material. Summative review closes an engagement or a phase: **The Value Review** assesses the work formatively at mid-course and summatively at close, examining movement against the capability matrix, the client's and stakeholders' evidence of changed behaviour, and the Return on Becoming — the client's own account of what the changed capability is worth in role. The Value Review carries no fixed interval in its design; it is administered at phase boundaries set in the contract. Review findings feed the practice's evaluation commitment in Section 9.4: aggregated, anonymised review data are the raw material of the Method's practice-based evidence programme. The Return on Becoming follows O'Neill's (2007) return-on-investment method in one bounded respect: value is articulated by the client, against the engagement's contracted purposes. The bound is printed with the borrowing — client-articulated value is **testimony**, the client's account of what the work was worth. It is reported as testimony; it is never entered as outcome measurement, and it appears nowhere in Section 9's evidence register. Case material is otherwise withheld from this paper for confidentiality; the only first-person evidence printed in it is the author's own research record in Section 10.

8.4 Supervision and the coach's development

The Method's quality infrastructure includes regular coach supervision, treated as a condition of practice. Supervision examines the coach's work at all three levels of the model — including the coach's own parallel process with client systems — and the team-coaching literature treats supervision as integral to competent practice at the Team level (Clutterbuck et al., 2019). Beneath supervision sits the finding that disciplines the whole architecture, and the Method states its settlement with that finding explicitly, because the finding pressures any named methodology. De Haan's empirical programme — from Relational Coaching (de Haan, 2008), through the critical-moments studies, to a large-scale outcome study of 1,895 coach–coachee pairs — converges on a common-factors account: coachee-perceived effectiveness is related to the quality of the working alliance as the client experiences it (its task-and-goal components predicting more strongly than its bond components) and to coachee self-efficacy, while coach and coachee personality, and personality match between them, show no such relation; the alliance statistically mediated self-efficacy's contribution in that study's model (de Haan, Grant, Burger and Eriksson, 2016). Change within engagements is episodic as well as cumulative: it concentrates in *critical moments* of heightened emotion, typically moments of new realisation for the client, whose navigation depends on the coach's containment of anxiety and on supervision as the coach's sense-making resource (de Haan, Bertie, Day and Sills, 2010). No alliance effect size is printed in this paper; the findings are used qualitatively, at the strength their designs support.

The settlement is a division of labour, stated here and applied again in Section 9. **The four movements name the client's developmental curriculum and the engagement's contracting architecture. The alliance is the medium in which they operate.** The Method claims the first two; de Haan's programme governs the third. On those terms the common-factors evidence disciplines the Method's investments without supplying its proprietary mechanisms: task-and-goal

agreement and contracting quality are components of the alliance itself in de Haan's findings, and the Method claims no ownership of them. The Method's distinctive residue — what it adds to a sound alliance, and the only addition its propositions may test — is fourfold: level-matching through multi-level formulation (P2); conditions precedence in team work (P3); the matrix as a contracting language shared by coach, client, and sponsor (Sections 5.5, 8.1); and assessment conducted inside coaching, under the debrief discipline of Section 7.2 (P4). What the Method may not claim follows with equal clarity — that its named architecture outperforms a sound alliance built on another architecture. Its claims for the movements are claims about structured relational work, and a method that could be delivered by script would be a different, and lesser, intervention.

The coach's development has a direction as well as a floor. Drake (2024), in a report from his own Moment Institute — **grey literature**, flagged with the inventor-interest caution this paper applies to its own author in the front matter — proposes five maturities for coaches: psychological, systemic, methodological, relational, and spiritual maturity, with professional competencies treated as the floor of practice and maturity as the trajectory beyond it. The Method adopts that settlement: the ICF competencies govern the floor (Section 3.1), and maturity names what supervision develops across a career. Drake's spiritual maturity is reported as part of his fivefold structure; the Method does not adopt it as a practice requirement, because a method may govern supervision, reflective practice, and trigger-awareness, and may not govern a coach's spirituality (Section 11). Drake's further vocabularies in that report are not imported; their terms collide with the Method's own load-bearing vocabulary. The practice tradition's corroboration of the trust-and-relationship emphasis runs through Rogers, J. (2008) alongside the Co-Active lineage above.

9. Evidence and its limits

9.1 The outcome record, stated in full

The Method's evidentiary foundation is the coaching outcome literature, and the paper states that record at its actual strength. Theeboom, Beersma and van Vianen (2014) meta-analysed 18 studies and found significant positive effects across five outcome classes, largest for goal-directed self-regulation (g = 0.74) and smallest for coping (g = 0.43). Jones, Woods and Guillaume (2016), analysing 17 studies in the field's most cited workplace synthesis, estimated an overall effect of approximately 0.36, with affective outcomes at 0.51, skill-based outcomes at 0.28, and a large estimate for individual-level results outcomes (1.24) resting on few studies and quoted here with that base attached. De Haan and Nilsson (2023) restricted their synthesis to randomised controlled trials — 37 trials, N = 2,528 — and estimated g = 0.59 uncorrected and approximately 0.32 after correction for the publication bias they detected, noting larger effects for self-reported than for observed outcomes; the corrected figure anchors the strict end of the band this paper prints (Sections 1, 9.4). Wang et al. (2022) found goal attainment at g = 1.29 in psychologically informed coaching, a figure the paper treats as an upper-bound artefact of an outcome type usually self-rated against self-set goals; their integration finding (g = 0.71 for well-being) and self-efficacy finding (g = 0.59) are corroboration for the design — a subgroup pattern within psychologically informed coaching, in largely non-executive samples — and the Method's architecture rests on the design argument of Sections 2 to 5, with Wang et al. cited at corroborative strength throughout. Cannon-Bowers et al. (2023) concluded, aggregating the recent record, that workplace coaching

is an effective intervention while calling the underlying science underdeveloped. One adjudication is owed at this point, because Section 9.3 adopts a stricter verdict. Cannon-Bowers et al. aggregate predominantly individual-level outcomes across a wide inclusion window; Grover and Furnham (2016), applying adequacy criteria to organisational-level outcomes specifically, found no adequate evidence of impact at that level. The two conclusions address different outcome classes under different standards of adequacy, and for organisational claims this paper follows the stricter verdict, which governs Sections 5.4 and 9.3. Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018) supply the methodological texture: a large, positive, and predominantly cross-sectional and context-insensitive literature. The record also disciplines the Method's self-description, under the settlement stated in Section 8.4: the movements are the client's developmental curriculum and the engagement's contracting architecture, the alliance is the medium in which they operate, and the efficacy figures in this section belong to coaching as a practice. They are not figures for this Method as a named intervention, and the paper does not spend them as if they were. One resonance is recorded and given no work to do: Besika (2023) proposes a nomothetic theory of well-being built on functional abilities, whose shape rhymes with this paper's capability construct. The theory is untested, no claim in the paper rests on it, and it is noted so that the resemblance is on the record.

9.2 Neuroscience, under discipline

Neuroscience enters the paper under a stated rule: it may support mechanism plausibility at the level of attention, stress physiology, and habit circuitry, and it is never cited as proof that coaching works. The discipline statement is as follows. This paper uses neuroscience the way a careful clinician uses an anatomy atlas: as a guide to the terrain of practice. Where brain research genuinely constrains practice — stress degrading the prefrontal capacities leadership requires (Arnsten, 2009), habits consolidating into cue-driven automaticity (Graybiel, 2008), social threat commanding attention (Eisenberger, Lieberman and Williams, 2003) — the Method's design follows it. The Method's claim to work rests on the behavioural evidence of Section 9.1, and on nothing else.

Three qualifications travel with the sources named. Arnsten (2009) reviews evidence — a narrative review resting largely on animal and pharmacological work — that acute, uncontrollable stress impairs prefrontal functions — working memory, flexible thinking, inhibition — while strengthening habitual responding; the design consequence is that Clarity and Courage work is sequenced with regard to the client's actual cognitive availability, and threat-loaded weeks are poor weeks for identity-level work. Eisenberger, Lieberman and Williams (2003) demonstrated that social exclusion engages threat-related circuitry; subsequent multivariate work found social and physical pain representations to be separable (Woo et al., 2014), and the paper accordingly cites the 2003 study for the salience of social threat, for no stronger identity claim. Jack et al. (2013) report the only imaging study of coaching conversations known to the authors: coaching toward a personal vision produced different activation patterns from coaching toward compliance with external criteria, in a sample of 20 undergraduates, one session per style, with activation measured days later and no behavioural outcome. The paper records the study as hypothesis-generating and consistent with the Method's vision-first Clarity work, and builds nothing further on it. Constructs in wide practitioner circulation that fail the paper's standard — amygdala-hijack language, brain-domain threat models presented as findings, neuroplasticity cited as efficacy, hormone shorthand — are excluded from the Method's vocabulary, and the exclusion is deliberate.

9.3 The organisational-outcomes gap as honesty clause

Grover and Furnham (2016), in a systematic review of 52 studies, found coaching effective overall, with positive effects on self-efficacy and psychological outcomes, mixed results for work performance and satisfaction, and no adequate empirical evidence confirming positive impact on organisational-level outcomes. The Method adopts that verdict as its own honesty clause. The System level of the model (Section 5.4) is design intent with a mechanism account. Sponsors are told, in contracting and in writing, that the evidence they are buying is strongest at the level of the leader, promising at the level of the team, and unproven at the level of organisational outcomes — and that the engagement's own evaluation is part of what closes that gap over time.

9.4 The Method's validation agenda

The Becoming Method is presented as an evidence-informed synthesis whose integrated effects await direct evaluation. The agenda is tiered, with a named design for every proposition, because a doctoral reader judges an agenda by whether each claim has a design that could falsify it. Four commitments frame the tiers. Practice-based evidence: every engagement generates pre- and post-engagement data through the instruments in Section 7, reviewed under the Value Review architecture and aggregated across engagements under the data boundaries of Section 8.1. Delivery fidelity: *delivered as designed* is operationalised by five markers — contracted aims documented; multi-level formulation completed where the engagement's scope requires it; alliance measured at midpoint; the Section 7.2 debrief discipline observed; review held — so that outcome data can be read against what was actually practised (the discipline's handbook treats organisationally based evaluation in the same spirit: Greif, 2013). Independent evaluation: the practice will seek external evaluation of aggregated outcomes as sample sizes permit meaningful analysis. Publication: results will be published including null results.

Three prior steps precede proposition testing, because the agenda's load-bearing measurement acts do not yet exist. First, the **level-formulation reliability study**: a written multi-level formulation protocol (Section 5.6, P2), tested by independent coaches formulating the same engagement material, with agreement reported. Second, **mapping validation** for Table 2: independent expert raters sorting movement and level loci against the LEADS domain definitions, with agreement reported. Third, **measure development** for P7: adaptation of a published narrative-coding scheme to leadership narratives, with its own inter-rater reliability study.

Tier 1 — practice-observational tests (practice data, with artefact controls): P6, run as three-wave longitudinal mediation with safety measured at midpoint; P7, once its measures exist; P8, with regression-to-the-mean controls as the proposition specifies; and P9, through midpoint alliance measurement across engagements.

Tier 2 — practice-embedded comparisons the practice can ethically run: P4, through stepped-wedge or waitlist debrief timing, in which every client receives the coached debrief and the comparison is created by timing, with nothing withheld; and P3, through the repeated, time-ordered condition and effectiveness measurement the proposition itself specifies.

Tier 3 — partnership-only experimental tests (academic partnership required): P1, under the crossed design its statement concedes, with coach allegiance measured and modelled; P2, once

the formulation protocol's reliability is established; and P5, as an additive or dismantling comparison against goal-setting alone.

Three further commitments complete the agenda. **Developmental measurement:** in a research subsample, and only there, meaning-making complexity will be assessed with an established instrument of the sentence-completion and subject–object tradition, so that the paper's developmental register (Section 5.1) acquires an observable referent; the barriers are named — trained administration and scoring, cost, and the partnership requirement — and until the subsample exists the developmental claims remain lens claims. **System measurement:** System-level engagements define their stakeholder-value indicators at contracting (Section 8.1) and report against them on cycles longer than the engagement itself. **Instrument development:** the LEADS-based assessment proceeds through the phases of its published roadmap, with claims in client-facing material revised as each phase completes; the matrix's cell-level indicators and the Loop's scale-level concordance (Sections 5.1, 5.3) are named development items in the same programme.

Until that agenda matures, the paper's summary of the whole stands: across six syntheses, drawing on overlapping primary studies, coaching produces moderate positive effects (overall $g \approx 0.32$–0.59, the strict end carrying the bias-corrected estimate), largest for goal-directed self-regulation and self-efficacy, smaller for observed performance, and — on the current record — asserted more often than demonstrated for organisational-level outcomes; publication bias is present in the randomised-trial literature; and the Method is an evidence-informed integration of components that carry support, whose integration is a design claim, consistent with the integration pattern in Wang et al. (2022) at corroborative strength, awaiting its own evaluation.

10. Indigenous coaching: the PathWAYS framework

10.1 Positionality

This section begins where the underlying research begins: with the author's stated position. The author writes as a researcher of mixed race, of Mapuche matrilineal heritage and Welsh settler paternal descent, acknowledging privilege carried by white-passing appearance, Canadian citizenship, postsecondary education, middle-class position, cisgender and heterosexual positioning, and acknowledging the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, on which he lives and works as a guest. His stance in the research was to use his role — at the time of the study, Indigenous Advisor at the British Columbia Institute of Technology — to foster solidarity and allyship. Two clarifications follow from that statement and govern everything in this section. His Mapuche heritage is South American; it confers no authority over First Nations, Métis, or Inuit knowledge in Canada, and no such authority is claimed. Indigenous coaching, mentoring, and storying practices predate Infinitum Leadership and exist independently of it, in community-led programmes the research cites with respect; PathWAYS is presented as one researched synthesis, offered under the guardrails of Section 10.5.

10.2 The problem the research addressed

Indigenous students in Canadian postsecondary education complete their programmes at markedly lower rates than their non-Indigenous peers, within institutions shaped by a colonial history that includes residential schools and the Indian Act. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) named the remedy's direction in Call to Action 7: eliminate educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. The author's Master of Arts research at Royal Roads University (Evans, 2025) responded to that context with a design question: what would a coaching programme look like if it were built from Indigenous pedagogy outward — peer-led, narrative in method, and culturally governed — and built to professional coaching standards at the same time?

10.3 The design study

The research proceeded in two parts. A structured review examined coach-training programmes against stated criteria — alignment with Indigenous values, evidenced effectiveness, and adaptability to self-efficacy, narrative, and Indigenous methodologies. The review is named structured, with its criteria printed, because no reproducible search protocol is reported for it in this paper; the label *systematic* is reserved for reviews that carry one. A qualitative inquiry followed, conducted through a Talking Circle with three Indigenous student peer mentors at the sponsoring institution, analysed thematically with the participants' material organised in their own words, under Royal Roads University graduate research policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. The study is a design-based applied project. It is not an outcomes study, and this paper reports it at exactly that strength: a programme designed with rigour, informed directly by the students it was designed for, with outcomes not yet measured.

The Talking Circle's findings repay attention because they set the design's requirements from the students' side. Five themes were raised by all three participants, and unanimity in a co-design circle of three is where the finding's strength sits; mention counts are demoted to a parenthesis, descriptive of this circle's conversation only (in the order the themes are treated below, the counts run five, four, six, four, and three). Representation and cultural connection described isolation in programmes with no other Indigenous students, absence of Indigenous presence in campus spaces, and representation itself as a source of confidence. Peer support and mentorship valued colleagues who had navigated the same journey. Skill development and career preparation drew the strongest emphasis: students asked for real, transferable, employable skills and for proper, credentialled coaching training with theoretical substance. Cultural safety and understanding identified misunderstanding of First Nations family structures and Indigenous students' circumstances among non-Indigenous peers and staff as a source of disconnection, and named a culturally safe space — free of misunderstanding and judgement, with historical trauma acknowledged — as a precondition for the work. Narrative coaching and storytelling endorsed working through shared stories, in a Circle form in which everyone is heard. The themes are consistent with Pidgeon (2008) on culturally relevant supports, and with the wider literature the research reviews on peer structures and cultural safety (Gallop and Bastien, 2016), and they generated the programme's architecture directly: cohort and Circle structure from the peer and representation themes; formal, accredited training from the skills theme; cultural-safety conditions from the safety theme; narrative method from the storytelling theme.

The theoretical spine of the design joins Bandura's self-efficacy — identified by Gallop and Bastien (2016) as the most significant factor in Indigenous student success and commitment — to narrative coaching (Drake, 2018; Stelter, 2014; Stelter and Law, 2010) and to adult and experiential learning theory. Narrative coaching was argued to fit Indigenous pedagogy on three specific grounds: it does not presume that a client can quickly name a single goal inside a complex community system; it extends beyond the individual locus into the systemic forces of community history, economics, and culture; and it can hold, within one conversation, the tension between colonial and Indigenous worldviews (Evans, 2025). The designed programme architecture comprises cohorts of eight to twelve; opening and closing retreats; Circle-format group coaching; place-based learning with Elder and guest-speaker involvement; paid student-champion roles; and mentor coaching from experienced Indigenous coaches. Training is built inside ICF accreditation standards — approximately 30 hours of synchronous and 60 hours of asynchronous learning, five observed sessions, ten hours of group and five hours of individual mentor coaching, and a final evaluation against ICF ACC competencies — paired with institutional course credit. The evaluation design is specified in the research and awaits execution: pre- and post-programme General Self-Efficacy Scale measurement, reflective journaling, competency-based coaching assessments, academic records, and wellness and satisfaction surveys. Those instruments are the programme's measurement architecture. They are not results, and no result is claimed for them here.

10.4 PathWAYS

The framework that carries the design is **PathWAYS**. Its threshold is **PATH**: the conditions a coach establishes before the framework's movements can be travelled — Protocol and Positionality, Agreement, Trust, and Humility. Each element has textual grounding in the research corpus: protocol and positionality in the study's ethics and in the author's positionality statement; agreement as aagooiidiwin — "we agree to work together," building on what already exists — a term the research takes from Borrows and McNeil's (2022) edited volume, cited at volume level, with its chapter-level provenance flagged in the Appendix; trust and cultural safety in the Circle's themes; and humility as an ongoing stance, practised continuously, following Tervalon and Murray-García's (1998) account of cultural humility. The movements themselves are **WAYS**: **Wisdom**, grounding in collective and ancestral wisdom and in one's story within shared history; **Awareness**, exploring current narratives and dominant themes through a cultural lens; **Yielding**, releasing old patterns and opening to alternative stories, in humility and resilience; and **Strengthening**, integrating re-authored narratives into daily practice, held by community ties. The framework is explicitly non-linear and cyclical: stories are revisited around, through, above, and under, across a coaching relationship's life (Evans, 2025). WAYS was built by bringing Drake (2018) and Stelter (2014) into conversation with an Indigenous worldview; it runs parallel to Drake's situate–search–shift–sustain arc and stands as its own construction.

The epistemic stance holding the whole is Two-Eyed Seeing — Etuaptmumk — the Mi'kmaw principle of learning to see with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing in one eye and the strengths of Western ways of knowing in the other, using both together, as articulated by Elders Albert and Murdina Marshall (Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall, 2012). In the design, Two-Eyed Seeing governs the join between Indigenous methodologies — storytelling as knowledge transmission (Wilson, 2008; Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009), Talking Circles as non-hierarchical, protocol-governed dialogue (Lavallée, 2009), co-creation of knowledge, and relationality as the unit of

flourishing — and Western coaching's accreditation structures and efficacy constructs. O'Toole (2015) states the contrast the design works within: Indigenous mentoring and coaching proceed from a collective orientation, with success defined through community connection, inside institutions whose default settings are individualist. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) locate the programme's system ambition: Indigenisation as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonisation, pursued at the level of the institution itself.

10.5 Resonance with the Method, and guardrails

PathWAYS is presented in this paper as the Method's worked example of a general requirement: when a client's story is held communally and historically, coaching that proceeds from individualist defaults will misread the client and may do harm. The resonance with the four movements is real, and it is stated as resonance. Wisdom does the work Clarity does — seeing one's story truly — while locating the seer inside ancestry and community. Awareness deepens Clarity into pattern-recognition across self, body, nature, and community stories. Yielding is where Courage lives: releasing a holding narrative is among the bravest acts the framework asks of anyone. Strengthening is Commitment and Character practised: a re-authored story integrated into daily life and witnessed by community. The levels analysis runs the same way. PathWAYS operates at the individual-in-community level, is delivered at the team level — the cohort and the Circle are the medium of the work — and aims at the system level, the Indigenisation of the institution. It is the paper's clearest demonstration that the three levels are nested within one another.

The guardrails are stated in the paper itself, as the research states them. First, no pan-Indigenous generalisation: the design arose with students at one British Columbia institution; First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are distinct, cultural practices differ across Indigenous groups, and Nation-specific protocol governs any real deployment. Second, ceremony is community practice led by those authorised to lead it: the research discusses ceremony as context — including the Circle's own form, which participants themselves likened to ceremonial practice — and the Method presents no ceremony as a coaching technique to be adopted, facilitated, or simulated by coaches outside that authority. Third, community authority governs knowledge: in the design, Elders and Knowledge Keepers guide, students co-designed through the Circle and explicitly authorised research use of its dialogue, and findings were shared back with participants; stories told in coaching belong to the teller and their community, and the governance language used here is stated in those terms. Fourth, no efficacy claim: the programme is designed and student-informed, and its outcomes are unmeasured. Fifth, no origination claim: Indigenous coaching predates and exists independently of this work, and the underlying knowledge systems remain their communities'. Finally, the clinical boundary holds in this context as everywhere in the Method: intergenerational trauma is named in the research as context for culturally safe practice, and coaching in the design is explicitly non-clinical.

For executive readers, the transferable element is a coaching principle, and the Indigenous practices themselves remain situated. The transfer is labelled for what it is: a **derived design principle** — the author's own coaching principle, learned from this research and carried into the Method by him. Its warrant is the research's design logic; it is not a finding of the study, and the practices it was learned from are not transferred with it. Stated, the principle is this: where a client's identity is collectively held, the competent coach works with the story's whole ecology — its

relationships, histories, and obligations — and examines which of the coach's own defaults require setting aside. That principle is practised, in different form, at every level of the Method.

11. Ethics, culture, and equity

The Method's ethics are the ICF's ethics, adopted without dilution: the Code of Ethics (2025) governs all practitioners working within the ICF ecosystem, including the five standards sections of Part 4 of the Code — Section 1: Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement; Section 2: Confidentiality and Legal Compliance; Section 3: Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest; Section 4: Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value; Section 5: Professional Integrity and Accountability (International Coaching Federation, 2025c). One standard receives emphasis because the Method's architecture depends on digital instruments. Standard 2.5, within Section 2, reads in the Code's own words: "Fulfill my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching client(s), sponsor(s), colleagues, and to the public at large directly and through any technology systems I may utilize (i.e. technology-assisted coaching tools, databases, platforms, software, and artificial intelligence)." The discipline's handbook literature carries coaching ethics as a topic in its own right beneath the Code's professional frame (Lowman, 2013). Infinitum's instruments, story modules, and records are administered under that standard, with the data boundaries of Sections 7 and 8 — client content invisible to sponsors; story content invisible to the coach — implemented in system design.

The ICF's four core values state the commitments the Method's ethics operationalise (International Coaching Federation, 2025a). **Professionalism**: "a commitment to a coaching mindset and professional quality that encompasses responsibility, respect, integrity, competence, and excellence." **Collaboration**: "a commitment to developing social connection and community building." **Humanity**: "a commitment to being humane, kind, compassionate, and respectful toward others." **Equity**: "a commitment to use a coaching mindset to explore and understand the needs of others so we can practice equitable processes at all times that create equality for all."

Culture enters the Method at three depths. At the level of technique, Rosinski (2003) establishes culture as a coaching variable to be leveraged: national, corporate, and professional differences are material to work with, and the coach's own cultural orientation is an instrument variable requiring the same calibration as any other (cross-cultural working as a recognised topic in the discipline's handbook: Abbott, Gilbert and Rosinski, 2013). At the level of theory, van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal (2016) locate coaching inside multicultural contexts as a constitutive condition; their meta-theoretical frame is what permits the Method to hold Section 10's material and Section 4's material inside one methodology with the joins argued explicitly. At the level of the room itself, the Method requires attention to power, privilege, and positionality as live features of every engagement: who may speak plainly to whom, whose feedback carries consequence, whose story the organisation rewards. The LEADS refresh carries the same requirement into capability language, naming bias and privilege inside self-awareness itself (CCHL et al., 2026). The non-clinical boundary and the duty to refer, set out in Section 3.5, close the section: ethical practice in the Method includes recognising the edge of coaching's competence and acting at that edge promptly, transparently, and in the client's interest.

12. Limitations and conclusion

12.1 Limitations of the model

Five limitations are intrinsic to the Method as presented, and the paper records them as part of the model itself. First, the integrated model is untested as a whole: its components carry varying grades of support (Section 9), its integration rests on one favourable meta-analytic pattern at corroborative strength and a design argument, and propositions P1–P9 await the research programme they were written for. Second, the evidence across movements is uneven by the paper's own account — Clarity and the System level's frameworks are the most heavily sourced; Courage and Commitment depend more heavily on synthesis across traditions, and readers should weight the movements' claims accordingly. Third, the model's demands on practitioners are high: psychodynamic literacy, somatic practice, narrative method, team-coaching competence, and systemic contracting within one practitioner is an exacting specification, and the Method's supervision and training requirements (Section 8.4) are load-bearing elements of the model. Fourth, the model's instruments are young: the LEADS-based assessment is at pilot stage, and the suite's claims are bounded accordingly (Section 7.3). Fifth, the PathWAYS material derives from one design study at one institution with three Circle participants; the paper has presented it at that strength throughout, and any wider application requires the community-governed work Section 10 describes. Sixth, the author is the Method's inventor and its vendor: the validation agenda is designed and, in its first instance, run by the practice that profits from favourable results, and the agenda's safeguards — independent evaluation as sample sizes permit, and publication of results including null results — function as mitigations of that declared interest (front matter), not as cures for it. Seventh, the synthesis is one practitioner's, from one practice, in one national and linguistic context — Canada, and English-language literatures — and the movements' sequence is itself culturally situated: Clarity, Courage, Commitment, Character encodes a developmental logic that other traditions may order otherwise, and the paper offers no evidence that the sequence travels unchanged.

12.2 Conclusion

The Becoming Method proposes that executive coaching be practised as one discipline with several inheritances: a professional frame from the ICF, an evidence discipline from coaching psychology, a narrative engine, a psychodynamic and somatic account of why insight alone stalls, a goal-and-habit science for sustained practice, a conditions-first account of teams, a stakeholder account of systems, and a capability language — LEADS 2026 — in which the leader's development can be read by the sector that employs them. Its four movements and three levels give coach and client a shared map of the work; its propositions give researchers a set of claims worth testing; its PathWAYS section records what the map requires when the client's story is held by a community and a history. The paper's final claim is the one its evidence supports: leaders become capable — demonstrably, observably, at increasing scope — through structured relational work on clarity, courage, commitment, and character, and a methodology that organises that work honestly is a contribution the field can use and examine.

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Appendix: Source traceability notes

This appendix records, for each load-bearing construct in the model, the primary source or sources the construct rests on and the verification status of that grounding. Version 3 incorporates the five-panel revision pass (November 2026): every panel finding was dispositioned in the revision's change log, verified items are struck through as resolved in the Verification record with their sources named. No page-level citation is made anywhere in this paper from a source whose basis grade is B or C. Status key: **P** = primary source verified in the programme's research reviews or source dossiers; **S** = secondary or programme-level grounding, cited with that label; **D** = bibliographic detail to be completed through the verification programme.

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
Four movements as an architecture	Infinitum synthesis; meta-theoretical warrant: van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal (2016)	P for the warrant. The architecture itself is the author's design claim and is labelled as such in Sections 1 and 9. Chapter-level claims on the van Zyl volume are confined to its published contents (coaching-psychology cluster apparatus check); the volume's contested "cultural neutrality" suggestion is not relied on (Section 3.2).
Narrative spine — the chain and the phases	Drake (2018)	P at work level (narrative cluster, basis B). The chain Experience → Story → Identity → Behaviour → Outcome and the Situate–Search–Shift–Sustain phases organise Section 4; the definition is cited to the 2018 second edition throughout. No page-level citation is made for any narrative-cluster source; the basis grades for that cluster run B–C.
Clarity — reflective inquiry	Reynolds (2020)	P as practitioner method (narrative cluster, basis C: publisher apparatus and secondary accounts). Cited to the 2020 first edition only; second-edition terminology is not imported. Reynolds' neuroscience rationale is treated as secondary framing; the paper's neuroscience claims rest on Arnsten (2009), Graybiel (2008), and Eisenberger et al. (2003) directly.
Clarity — Clean Language	Dunbar (2017)	P as technique source (narrative cluster, basis B). "Metaphor landscape" is the Clean community's term (Lawley and Tompkins' Symbolic Modelling tradition) and is attributed to that tradition, with Dunbar as its coaching expositor. Clean practice is presented as a discipline of reduced and declared influence; coach influence overall is governed by the rule in Section 8.1 (contracted, owned, and corrigible).
Relational container — designed alliance; whole person, real field	Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl and Whitworth (2018)	P as stance and alliance design (narrative cluster, basis B). Cited for stance and alliance design only; the model's atheoretical characterisation in the secondary literature is accepted in Section 4.4, and the wholeness premise is printed in the repaired form stated there.

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
Session architecture	Starr (2022)	P as practice architecture (narrative cluster, basis B). The Coaching Path governs sessions; Drake's phases govern the work (Section 4). Fifth-edition wording of the Seven Beliefs remains a verification item (see Verification record).
Process grammar — GROW, bounded use	Whitmore (2017); Gallwey lineage	P as lineage and bounded tool. Design rule stated in Section 4.3: GROW operates only inside Commitment, for bounded execution. GROW is cited nowhere as the Method's process model or as evidence.
Clarity — Johari mechanism	Luft and Ingham (1955); Luft (1969); Bergquist (2023)	P (systemic cluster, basis A: Bergquist full text in hand). The window is cited as a heuristic model throughout. Section 7.1 uses Bergquist's three revisions: the double-paned window, the "opaque" pane, and the three meanings of trust (competence, intentions, perspectives) as the governor on disclosure and feedback; the unknown pane is treated as a resource.
Internal/external self-awareness	Eurich (2018)	S — practitioner research programme; cited with that label; no prevalence figures imported. Primary-study verification optional, low priority.
Courage — psychodynamic mechanism	Sandler (2011); Bluckert (2006)	P (coaching-psychology cluster, basis B for both). Framed in Sections 3.5 and 4.2 as listening literacy. Sandler's Emotional Profiles Triangle (Sandler, 2011, 2012) is labelled in Section 4.2 as a practice-derived heuristic and carries no psychometric claim; EPT page anchors in secondary training materials were not relied on. Bluckert's Cycle of Experience / interruptions to contact are used as process grammar.
Courage — competing commitments	Kegan and Lahey (2009)	P as method; the protocol's absence of controlled outcome evaluation is stated in Section 4.2.
Courage/ Character — developmental frame	Kegan (1982, 1994); McCauley et al. (2006)	P. McCauley pagination from the journal record; S for any stage-specific claim beyond the "mixed support" verdict — none is made.
Courage/ Commitment — somatic practice	Strozzi-Heckler (2014)	P as practice tradition; no physiological validation claimed.
Commitment — goals, motivation, efficacy, habit	Locke and Latham (2002); Ryan and Deci (2017); Bandura (1977); Stajkovic and Luthans (1998); Graybiel (2008); Wood and Rünger (2016)	P

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
Character — strengths mechanism	MacKie (2016); MacKie (2014)	P. The underlying controlled study is now cited directly (MacKie, 2014: manualised six-session protocol, n = 37, waitlist comparison, MLQ 360 ratings; gains perceived at all rater levels except by coachees themselves). Article title verified against the journal record — *strength-based*, singular (*Consulting Psychology Journal*, 66(2), pp. 118–137; verification programme, November 2026) — and the study is described in the paper as a controlled study (nonequivalent control group, n = 37).
Character — cultural frame	Rosinski (2003)	P
Team level — conditions and timing	Hackman (2002); Wageman et al. (2008); Hackman and Wageman (2005); Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005)	P. The "more than half of the variation" figure is attributed to the Wageman programme wherever used.
Team level — safety, trust, reflexivity	Edmondson (1999); Frazier et al. (2017); Newman, Donohue and Eva (2017); de Jong, Dirks and Gillespie (2016); Leblanc, Harvey and Rousseau (2024)	P
Team level — team coaching efficacy	Passmore, Tee and Gold (2025)	P — entry completed from the publisher's proof and peer-reviewed citing literature (verification programme, November 2026): randomised controlled trial, team coaching against team facilitation, LEGO® Serious Play® in both arms, gains measured as individual perceptions of psychological safety and cohesion.
Team level — definition and practice	Clutterbuck et al. (2019); Zink (2023); Whittington (2020)	P. Zink is a single case and is cited as one.
Team level — diagnosis and process	Clutterbuck et al. (2019) — PERILL; Hawkins and Turner (2020) — Five Disciplines	P at model level (systemic cluster, basis B). Division of labour stated in Section 5.3: PERILL for diagnosis, the Five Disciplines for process. PERILL is presented as a practice-derived diagnostic model; chapter pagination (pp. 150–160) verified through a scholarly citing source (verification programme); a direct publisher table-of-contents read remains the final-grade confirmation.
Team level — containment	Wrogemann (2016), in van Zyl, Stander and Odendaal (2016)	P from the volume's published contents (coaching-psychology cluster). Full chapter entry completed through the verification programme (Wrogemann, G., pp. 233–255, doi: 10.1007/978–3–319–31012–1_11) and cited directly from Version 3.

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
System level — positional heuristics	Whittington (2020)	P as heuristics only (systemic cluster, basis B). Section 5.3 re-grades the principles from laws to heuristics and prints the evidence position: constellation outcome evidence derives from family settings (Hunger et al., 2014; Konkolÿ Thege et al., 2021), organisational use is inconclusive (Scholtens et al., 2021), and no controlled studies exist in coaching. Full entries for all three studies were completed through the verification programme and are carried in the reference list.
System level — frame and culture	Hawkins and Turner (2020); Hawkins (2012); Schein (2017); Senge (1990)	P. Senge is cited as lineage only, per Section 5.4. Distinct jobs assigned to the two Hawkins sources in Section 5.4 (2012: culture institutionalisation; 2020: contracting, ethics, evaluation).
Relational primacy — common factors	de Haan (2008); de Haan, Bertie, Day and Sills (2010); de Haan and Nieß (2015); de Haan, Grant, Burger and Eriksson (2016); de Haan and Nilsson (2023)	P at programme level (coaching-psychology cluster, basis B+; abstracts in hand). Named studies are now cited directly in Sections 8.1, 8.4, and 9. The settlement is stated in Section 8.4: movements = the client's developmental curriculum and the engagement's contracting architecture; the alliance is the medium. No alliance effect size is printed anywhere in the paper, per the evidence review's verification rule.
Somatic adoption boundary	Strozzi-Heckler (2014)	P as practice tradition (systemic cluster, basis B). Section 4.2 states the boundary: awareness and practice adopted; bodywork techniques excluded. Page references in secondary summaries of the book were not relied on.
Outcome effects (Section 9.1)	Theeboom et al. (2014); Jones, Woods and Guillaume (2016); de Haan and Nilsson (2023); Wang et al. (2022); Cannon-Bowers et al. (2023); Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018); Grover and Furnham (2016)	P. All figures taken from the evidence review's verified set; no ⚠-flagged figure appears in the paper.
Feedback effects and cautions	Smither, London and Reilly (2005); Kluger and DeNisi (1996); Fleenor et al. (2010)	P. Fleenor agreement magnitudes are stated qualitatively, per the evidence review.
Debrief effects (Snapshot warrant)	Tannenbaum and Cerasoli (2013); Keiser and Arthur (2021)	P — journal details confirmed against publisher records during drafting.
Birkman psychometrics	Vendor technical documentation, as restated by Maxwell et al. (2016)	P — the Maxwell et al. (2016) entry was completed from the journal record (verification programme). Section 7.3 keeps the two records distinct: vendor-documented averages (test–retest .85, alpha .80) and Maxwell et al.'s restated ranges (test–retest 0.57–0.91, mean 0.79; alpha 0.54–0.88), with low-end scales read as conversation openers. Claims bounded to developmental use, per the programme's Birkman white paper (v2).

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
LEADS 2026 structure and refresh method	CCHL, LEADS Global, CHLNet and Royal Roads University (2026); Dickson and Tholl (2020); Cass, Funnell and Pilon (2026)	P. The Method's mapping (Table 2) is Infinitum's synthesis and is labelled as such.
ICF frame	International Coaching Federation (2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2021)	P — the Code's five Part 4 section names and the text of Standard 2.5 were verified word-for-word from ICF's official rationale document (verification programme) and are printed in Sections 3.1 and 11; the Code is cited as ICF (2025), and the copy ICF now serves carries a May 2026 revision line (Board approved October 2024). The Team Coaching Competencies entry is annotated (document v13.11, ©2020; released and adopted 2021); the document's own imprint page remains unread directly (see Verification record). Starr (2022) is likewise carried there.
PathWAYS and the design study	Evans (2025); Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall (2012)	P for content, per the Indigenous research review's source locations; the thesis entry was completed with its formal title during the Version 3 verification programme. PATH expansion is sourced from the author's published practice framing and grounded in the thesis corpus, per the Indigenous research review (§2.1 of that review).
Foundations — humanistic and depth inheritances	Rogers (1951, 1957, 1961); Jung (1928/1966); Gregory and Levy (2013)	P as lineage (supplementary cluster, basis A for the handbook contents). Presented in Section 3.3 as foundations and stance, corroborated at alliance level only; the collective unconscious and archetypes are excluded. Entry forms for Rogers (1957) and Jung's Collected Works Vol. 7 follow the supplementary cluster's standard citations.
Coach-side Courage; contracting lineage; value testimony	O'Neill (2007)	P as practice authority (supplementary cluster, basis A: full text). Backbone (Sections 4.2, 8.1), the triangled coach (Section 8.1), live-action coaching (Section 8.2), return on investment as testimony (Section 8.3). Never cited as outcome evidence.
Handbook chapters	Passmore, Peterson and Freire (eds) (2013), chapters as cited	P at contents level (supplementary cluster, basis A). Chapters are cited for their schools' positions. Not admitted, per the supplementary review: the neuroscience chapter (Ch. 6), the mentoring chapters (Chs. 11–14), and Grant's (2013) efficacy figures.
System level — leader–culture congruence	Nyukorong (2016)	S — heuristic only. FLOCC is an untested framework whose author concedes it awaits verification; used in Sections 5.4 and 8.1 with its status stated and the effectiveness-over-fit clause carried in substance.
Coach development — maturities	Drake (2024)	S — grey literature (Moment Institute report, June 2024), flagged in Section 8.4 with the inventor-interest caution. The Five Maturities are reported; the report's further vocabularies are not imported; spiritual maturity is reported and not adopted as a Method requirement.

Construct	Primary source(s)	Status and note
Well-being theory resonance	Besika (2023)	S — recorded in Section 9.1 as resonance only; untested; no claim rests on it.
Two-Eyed Seeing	Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall (2012)	P — primary source, added at the direction of the Indigenous research review; the paper does not rely on the secondary citation chain used in the author's earlier texts.

Verification record (consolidated)

The Version 2 list is reproduced with each cleared item struck through and its clearing source named, per the programme's verification record (8 November 2026).

1. ~~**ICF Code of Ethics (2025):** the exact wording of the Code's five standards-area headings.~~ **Resolved** — verified word-for-word from ICF's official Code of Ethics rationale document; the five Part 4 section names and Standard 2.5 are printed in Sections 3.1 and 11.
2. ~~**ICF Team Coaching Competencies:** the document year of the competency model cited as International Coaching Federation (2021).~~ **Resolved as annotated** — the entry now records document version 13.11, ©2020, released and adopted 2021.
3. ~~**Drake (2018):** publisher form to be confirmed from the copyright page.~~ **Resolved** — CNC Press, Petaluma, CA (copyright page of the 2nd edition; ISBN 978-0-9963563-1-2).
4. **Starr (5th ed.):** the Seven Beliefs' fifth-edition wording, and the citation year (2022, per the canon review), to be confirmed against the library copy's copyright page before any verbatim use.
5. ~~**Zink (2024):** the journal title of the article "Which hats should a team coach wear?"~~ **Resolved** — *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching*, 14(1) (2024), verified from the journal issue. The article remains uncited in the paper.
6. ~~**Hunger et al. (2014):** the journal of record, and full entries for Konkolÿ Thege et al. (2021) and Scholtens et al. (2021).~~ **Resolved** — all three entries completed from journal records and DOI registrations and carried in the reference list.
7. ~~**PERILL:** chapter pagination in Clutterbuck et al. (2019).~~ **Resolved** — pp. 150–160, verified through a scholarly citing source; a direct publisher table-of-contents read remains the final-grade confirmation.
8. ~~**Wrogemann (2016):** chapter author initial and full pagination.~~ **Resolved** — Wrogemann, G., pp. 233–255, with chapter DOI (APA PsycNet chapter record).
9. ~~**MacKie (2014):** article title to be confirmed against the journal record.~~ **Resolved** — "strength-based" (singular), *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 66(2), pp. 118–137, doi:10.1037/cpb0000005 (APA PsycNet).
10. ~~**Maxwell et al. (2016):** full bibliographic entry.~~ **Resolved** — completed from the journal record (PMC5221831): *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 80(9), article 148, doi: 10.5688/ajpe809148, all ten authors listed.
11. ~~**Passmore, Tee and Gold (2025):** full bibliographic entry.~~ **Resolved** — completed from the publisher's proof: *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 17(1), pp. 119–132, doi:10.1108/JWAM-12-2023-0137. The title's word order rests on peer-reviewed citing literature.

12. **~~Evans (2025):~~** ~~the thesis entry's formal title.~~ **Resolved** — *Designing a Peer-Led Narrative Coaching Program to Enhance the Academic Performance, Well-Being, and Satisfaction of Indigenous Students*, MA thesis, Royal Roads University.

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