

Systematic literature review to explore the experience and impact group coaching has on parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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Abstract

This systematic literature review aims to critically review current research that explores the experience and impact of group coaching with parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The researchers used both search engines and hand searching to identify studies that met their inclusion criteria. Studies included in this review have used solution focused coaching approaches with parents of children with SEND in either a group or 1:1 capacity. They have also explored parents' experience of the coaching intervention or its impact on stress or goal attainment. Three key themes have emerged, within this review; the mechanics of the coaching approaches used, the positive impact of parent-directed goals and parental wellbeing and empowerment. Current research emphasises the positive impact coaching can have on parents self-efficacy, confidence and motivation to action change. Parents are empowered by the opportunity to set their own goals and make suggestions about how to move forward. This not only has a positive impact on the family but also has the potential for wider community changes.

Key words: Coaching, Parent, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Child, Wellbeing, Empowerment, Goals

Introduction

Literature Review Overview

The aim of this literature review is to critically evaluate the current research base and answer the following question:

“What is currently known about the experience and impact of group coaching with parents of children with special educational needs?”

First the researchers outline the systematic literature search. This will provide details of the search strategy, procedure and the assessment of quality. Second, three key topics will be explored, with the aim of answering the review question:

- The mechanics of the coaching approaches used
- The positive impact of parent-directed goals
- Parental wellbeing and empowerment.

These topics were selected through analysis of the studies included in this literature review. Initially, the researchers highlighted recurring themes separately and then together agreed on the 3 key topics and their sub themes to support answering the review question. Third, researchers will draw conclusions and highlight limitations and gaps within the current research. This will clearly define the extent and breadth of this research area and present rationale for future research.

The systematic search process

The initial scoping search was conducted in March 2023. The researchers gained an overview of current research into the experience and impact of group coaching with parents of children with SEND and potential gaps for future research. There were very few peer-reviewed research studies examining the impact and experience of group coaching or that specifically worked with parents. Much of the literature found on group coaching or working with families was 'grey literature' in the form of articles in journals. Furthermore, many peer reviewed journals specifically focused on exploring the impact and experiences of the working population.

In August 2023, a systematic literature review was conducted to look at the current research in detail. This provided a rigorous synthesis of research interested in exploring the impact and experience of group coaching and parents of children with SEND.

Search engines Google Scholar, BPS Explore, PsychInfo and the International Society of Coaching Psychology were used to conduct the systematic literature review. To acknowledge the growing interest in coaching in the last two decades (Passmore & Theeboom, 2016, Passmore & Evans-Krimmie, 2021) articles had to be published between 2003 and 2023 to be included. In addition, only peer-reviewed, empirical research was included. This helps to ensure the validity of the review findings and reduces the possibility of publication bias. Due to the scoping review revealing that there is very little written about coaching with SEND parents generally, the researchers decided to use the search terms "group" and "1:1 coaching". It was decided that possible conclusions could be drawn by including both. The articles were screened by title and abstract first. Shortlisted articles were then read and evaluated against the inclusion criteria (See Table 1).

The researchers also used hand searching strategies to search for suitable articles. The reference lists of the seven approved articles were checked for further suitable articles and five additional studies met the inclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria	Justification
<p>Mentions group or 1:1 coaching with parents of children with SEND or family issues.</p>	<p>Mentions of 1:1 or group coaching with the working or general population.</p>	<p>The literature review is specifically interested in exploring the experience and impact of coaching with parents of children with SEND. Therefore, including research that has explored this demographic is fundamental.</p> <p>Studies that applied group and 1:1 coaching were included due to the limited amount of research into this area.</p>
<p>Uses solution focused or cognitive behavioural coaching approach</p>	<p>Mentions use of tools that are directive or training that parents have taken part in as part of the project.</p> <p>Mentions supporting parents through emotion coaching.</p>	<p>The literature review is interested in exploring Solution Focused (SF) or Cognitive Behavioural (CB) approaches to coaching.</p> <p>We recognise that coaching involves a rich variety of approaches. However we were specifically interested in exploring the impact and experience of SF or CB coaching. Therefore, emotion coaching and parent training focused studies were excluded.</p>
<p>Explores the experience and/or impact coaching has on stress and or goal attainment with parents</p>	<p>Explores their experience of how they've specifically assessed coaching</p>	<p>The literature review is interested in exploring the impact coaching has on parental stress.</p> <p>It is also interested in exploring how coaching can help affect change for parents.</p> <p>We recognise that parents can access coaching</p>

Empirical research paper published in a peer reviewed journal	Doctoral thesis or undergraduate dissertation.	through various mediums. However, accessibility and delivery are not the focus of this literature review.
Published between 2003 - 2023	Published pre- 2003	This literature review is seeking to find empirical peer- reviewed studies on which to base the current research.
		Over the last 2 decades interest in understanding coaching, how it works and its impact has increased.

Table 1 Systematic review inclusion and exclusion criteria

The literature review highlighted a limited insight into the experiences and impact of coaching with parents of children with SEND. Subsequently, the researchers chose to include papers that applied Occupational Performance Coaching (OPC). Although it is typically used by Occupational Therapists (OT) it is a solution focused approach that aims to support parents to realise their aspirations, amplifies their expertise to make and reflect on decisions on how to achieve their goals (Graham et al, 2020)

In total twelve research studies were judged to be relevant after applying the above criteria. See Table 2 for studies included in the systematic review.

Researchers	Title	WOE
Aragão et al (2022)	Group coaching intervention with parents of children with autism spectrum disorder in Brazil -pilot study	Medium
Bernie et al (2021)	Coaching While Waiting for Autism Spectrum Disorder Assessment: A Pilot Feasibility Study for a Randomised Controlled Trial on Occupational Performance Coaching and Service Navigation	Medium
Brandon et al (2015)	Turning points or turning around: Family Coach Work with "troubled families"	Medium-High
Dunn et al (2012)	Impact of a Contextual Intervention on Child Participation and Parent Competence Among	Medium High

	Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Pretest/Post-test Repeated-Measures Design	
Foster et al (2013)	Coaching Mothers of Children with Autism: A Qualitative Study for Occupational Therapy Practice	Medium-High
Graham et al (2010)	Enabling Occupational Performance of Children Through Coaching Parents: Three Case Reports	Medium-High
Graham et al (2013)	Effectiveness of Occupational Performance Coaching in Improving Children's and Mothers' Performance and Mothers' Self-Competence	Medium-High
Graham et al (2014)	Mothers' Experiences of Engaging in Occupational Performance Coaching	Medium-High
Jamali et al (2021)	Randomised controlled trial of occupation performance coaching for families of children with autism spectrum disorder by means of telerehabilitation	Medium- High
King et al (2017)	Solution-focused coaching in paediatric rehabilitation: Investigating transformative experiences and outcomes for families	Low-Medium
Kim et al (2021)	Coaching in context: parent perspectives	Medium
Little et al (2018)	Occupation-Based Coaching by Means of Telehealth for Families of Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder	High

Table 2 - Studies included in the systematic literature review and their WoE

Approach to the critical appraisal of research papers

The researchers used Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence (WoE) framework to review the selected papers. Pawson et al's (2003) TAPUPAS framework was applied to structure the WoE approach. This supported the researchers to reflect and make judgements in the areas of transparency, accuracy, purposivity, utility and propriety. The intention of applying these frameworks is to highlight the strengths and limitations and reflect on each study's merits in relation to the review questions (Pawson et al, 2003).

This process ensured that the researchers had a thorough understanding of the research. It also ensured a transparent measure of assessing the quality of those chosen for inclusion in the review and validity of the findings from the current systematic literature review.

1. The mechanics of the coaching approach with parents

As an emerging area of research it is important to understand the mechanics that are integral to coaching parents. Within the studies parents reported to have valued the solution focused approach, the time their coach took to form connections with them, having opportunities to experience new learnings and take accountability for their role in making change happen. Knowing this lays the foundation for future coaching initiatives and promotes the use of evidence based practice.

1.1 Solution focused approach

All of the studies included in this literature review apply techniques that are embedded within positive psychology and specifically adopt a solution-focused (SF) approach to coaching. The primary focus of the SF approach is for the client to describe their preferred future and create a pathway forward, in both thinking and action, that supports them to achieve this state (Cox et al, 2023). Most studies applied a form of Occupational Performance Coaching (OPC), which is formulated as 3 hierarchically arranged and interacting domains of the coaches actions: Connect, Structure and Share (Graham, 2020). Graham (2020) explains how client agency and expertise takes precedence in the selection of goals, analysis of the situation, decisions about actions and evaluation of success. Similar SF approaches were used that brought awareness and built upon parent's strengths (Brandon et al, 2016 and King et al, 2017) or increased parental self-awareness, which encouraged them to take action to address challenges that impede their current situation (Kim et al, 2021).

All approaches were parent-centred and placed emphasis on them being the expert to the situation. This helped to create non-judgemental spaces for families to be their true authentic selves and the opportunity to therefore flourish.

1.2 Forming a connection

Forming a connection with the family is considered the foundation on which families felt comfortable to reflect, share knowledge and create plans for moving forward (Foster, 2013). Brandon et al (2016) found that by taking the time to sit with families, showing kindness and a genuine interest, the Family Coaches were perceived as being less judgemental than other professionals. Across other studies parents also expressed feeling like equal partners in the coaching process and appreciated feeling affirmed by their coach (Graham et al, 2010, 2013; Jamali, 2021; Kim, 2021; Little et al 2018 and).

This creates opportunity for families to feel attuned to their coach and in charge of the process (King et al, 2021; Brandon, 2016). One of the parents interviewed by King et al (2019) reported that their favourite part was *'feel[ing] like that you're in charge instead of...them coming into your house and walking all over you.'* Thoughtful and mindful listening is therefore necessary to attune the interaction to families and their life situations (King et al, 2019). Coaching promotes

adopting a bottom-up approach and acknowledges parents as experts. This in turn encourages them to share their ideas and take ownership of how they move forward.

At times roles within the coaching space were questioned. Within Graham et al's (2010) research two mothers had expected the OT to tell them what to do and had found implementing the changes at home difficult at the beginning. Brandon et al (2016) also expressed the potential for the boundary between professional and a friend to the family can become blurred. This highlights the importance of establishing the coach's role when connecting and clearly outlining what the client can expect from you.

Aragão et al (2022) was the only study that applied a group coaching approach. Families were observed to share knowledge with each other. They connected not only with the coach but with other families. This helped improve their problem-solving skills by sharing suggestions within a group coaching context. One of the mother's goals was for her son to hold a pen correctly. After suggestions were made within the group, she explored different pencil grip tools with her son and even made her own before reporting back which worked best. This supports previous research findings within 1:1 coaching, that parent led goals influences persistence and ability to apply their knowledge to find solutions that work specifically for their family. (Dunn et al, 2012 and Graham et al, 2010 and King et al, 2019).

1.3 New learning

The coaching intervention is a dedicated time for parents to talk about their family and create perspective (Dunn et al, 2012, Foster et al 2012). Within this space parents are able to reflect and be curious about how they might move forward. Dunn et al (2012) suggests that having the time to reflect, amongst the challenges of daily life as a parent to a SEND child, brought awareness to their own capacity. The parents in Graham et al's (2014) study also found sessions directed their attention to their existing knowledge about 'what worked' to support their children's performance. These reflections supported parents to experience 'aha' moments and build their own solutions from what they've learnt within their coaching sessions. Similarly, Aragão et al (2022) found that parents participating in group coaching had opportunities to comprehend their challenges in the context of others. This developed their ability to problem solve with others and use their reflections to find solutions together. This acknowledges the value of having the opportunity to reflect upon the situation, explore possible solutions and then act on their assumptions and beliefs (Foster et al, 2012).

Some studies also found that experiencing personal insight transforms parents' behaviour (Foster et al, 2012 and Graham et al 2014). Although Graham et al (2014) reports that these insights were generally positive, at times they were uncomfortable for parents who accepted their role in some of the difficulties they're experiencing. However, moving past this discomfort led parents to perceive and respond to their child in a more positive, calm and encouraging way (Graham et al, 2014).

As well as new learnings about self, parents were also acquiring new skills within the coaching process (Brandon, 2015; Graham et al, 2010; Graham et al, 2014 and Kim et al 2021). Kim et

al's (2021) thematic analysis emphasised the value of parents being able to organise their strategies, which led to new learning. Parents were supported to prioritise multiple tasks and demands by making lists, using calendars and writing tasks down. This highlights the potential of coaches working with families offering some psycho-education around tools or theories related to the parent-directed goals. In addition, there might also be the potential of offering practical support and signposting families. Brandon et al (2015) explained how some families received information around debt and housing which supported the coaching process. Whether families are reflecting on their experience, putting into practice new skills or following up on practical support they are motivated to find their own ways forward.

1.4 Accountability

Creating a sense of accountability in coaching is important to parents (Dunn et al, 2012 and Kim et al 2021) Dunn et al suggests that having a dedicated person to talk to each week encourages them to try new things. Similarly, the parents in Kim et al (2021) explained that the connection between client and coach provided a sense of accountability that supported them to achieve their goals for the following week.

Once the coaching intervention ended parents learnt to be accountable to themselves and understand how to apply the skills that they have learnt to achieve future goals (Kim et al, 2021). Jamaili et al (2016) found that parents maintained their improved performance and satisfaction following the end of the coaching intervention in spite of their quality of life decreasing. This suggests that parents have been successful in continuing to hold themselves accountable to achieving their preferred futures once the coaching comes to an end.

2. Identifying the positive impact of goal setting as part of the coaching intervention to improve performance of parent and/or child.

While goal setting is a mechanic of coaching, due to the importance placed across all studies the researchers have chosen to focus on this as an independent topic whilst also exploring the positive impact it can have as reported by the existing literature.

The positive impact of goal setting has been measured through quantitative and qualitative data. This includes, but is not exclusive to; thematic analysis of semi structured interviews, the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COMP), Goal Attainment Scale (GAS), Parenting Stress Scale Index (short form) (PSI-SF) and descriptive statistics. From these, specific areas of change have been identified as well as satisfaction expressed from reaching goals which have improved parent and/or child outcomes.

2.1 Goal setting and the impact of coaching on parents and/or children and wellbeing/satisfaction

Most study participants identified as having children with SEND, typically ASD, whether that was diagnosed or while waiting for a diagnostic assessment. Parents engaged in a range of coaching opportunities across studies where goal setting was seen as a tool which could 'improve performance within specific areas they [the parents] would like to change' (Aragão et al, 2022).

Common goals for parents were around their children and homelife, particularly being calm when supporting their child's development, developing independence, social interactions, self-regulation and transitions (Aragão et al, 2022, Graham et al, 2010, Graham et al, 2013, Jamali et al,2021, and Little et al,2018). What was important about the goals were that they allowed parents to find solutions themselves within specific areas, some of which were perhaps too overwhelming to find before the intervention (Aragão et al, 2022, Dunn et al,2012 and King et al,2019).

Parents also found that they were more likely to pursue the goals because they were self-directed and treated as equal partners with the coach (Jamali et al 2021). The collaborative goal orientation with the coach was also identified as a factor which supported parents to achieve these goals (King et al,2019). Kim et al (2021) found that coaching supported parents to break down their goals into small steps with timelines making them manageable and less overwhelming. This is a key factor found in other research which highlights potential benefits of parents' access to coaching intervention (Aragão et al, 2022, Dunn et al 2012 and King et al,2019).

The impact of parent directed goals is reflected in COPM and GAS scores across studies (Aragão et al, 2022, Dunn et al 2012, Graham et al, 2010, Jamali et al, 2021 and Little et al 2018). According to the COPM user manual an increase of +2 indicates a significant change. Aragón et al's (2022) COPM post intervention score was +2.6. This supports previous research by Dunn et al (2012) which showed an increase from 3.6 to 7 in the COPM score and an average increase of 2 points on the GAS scores.

From this evidence, it can be inferred that the impact of goal setting within coaching appears to have a positive effect. Parent satisfaction was reported across studies and specifically with families of SEND who are awaiting diagnostic assessment (Bernie et al, 2021). Parents displayed a positive perception of their child's engagement (Dunn et al, 2012, Graham et al,2013, Graham et al 2010 and Little et al,2018) and reported an improvement in practicalities and home-based goals (Little et al,2018) such as improved parenting skills, improved high school attendance and an improved housing situation (Brandon et al,201)).

Interestingly, despite goals being related to both themselves as parents and their children, the Graham et al study (2010) found that performance relating to their goals relating to their child were consistently higher than those relating to themselves. Participants in Aragón et al (2022) study also chose goals relating to themselves and children but in the COPM analysis, the most prominent goals were relating to family routine and child's skills. Jamali et al (2021) found that there were significant differences between pre and post coaching intervention for families which could potentially demonstrate the extent to which coaching is an effective tool for attainment in parents.

2.2 Experience of goal setting and coaching

Following the coaching sessions and in light of the positive impact they had, studies found that the experience of coaching and being goal oriented exceeded or reached expectations for both parents and child (Graham et al,2010). Furthermore, for the Graham et al (2014) study, all participants would recommend the intervention to other parents. The Graham et al (2013) study suggests that this is as a direct result of setting goals and subsequent realisation of staying calm which allowed for parents and children to work together more optimistically and collaboratively.

3. Coaching that empowers and improves parental wellbeing

The existing literature suggests that parents valued the collaborative approach of coaching that stretches beyond the initial goal setting. Throughout the process parents are empowered to see themselves as experts and integral to the process of change. This appears to promote greater self-efficacy, confidence and wellbeing in parents who report reduced stress levels and a sense of hope for a brighter future.

3.1 Self efficacy

Having the opportunity to create their own goals, offer suggestions and generate their own interventions also helped parents improve their self-efficacy (Dunn et al; 2012 and Foster et al, 2013). Using the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC) Dunn et al (2012) found parental competency to increase from the initial meeting, prior to the coaching starting, to 4 weeks after the intervention finished. Parents were sharing ideas, creating plans with their coach and then adjusting them outside of the session, without the coaches support. They suggest that the result was only significant at the end due to the time it could take for parents to process their child's progress, their own reactions and to implement plans. This reflects similar findings of Graham et al (2013) who also used the PSOC, but found that improved self-efficacy was not maintained post intervention.

3.2 Confidence

Parents explained how their experience of coaching had also improved their confidence meaning they had a greater capacity to manage day to day life (Kim et al, 2021) Within Brandon et al's (2016) study parents explained that their coach helped them acknowledge that knowing they were doing okay with their parenting made a big difference. Feeling more confident in their parenting abilities led to a reduction in the parents calling the police if their child was having an emotional outburst and feeling more confident when speaking with professionals (Brandon et al, 2016).

Similarly, one parent suggests that the purpose of coaching is to empower parents, "*give them confidence so that they don't feel helpless and hopeless and throw their hands up*". (Foster et al, 2013) Coaching can provide parents the opportunity to approach problems proactively rather than out of desperation (Foster et al, 2013), which subsequently increases confidence in their own ability to parent (Brandon, et al 2016; Foster et al, 2013 and King et al 2017). Through coaching parents developed confidence in their ability to make choices and felt empowered not having someone telling them what to do (Brandon et al, 2016 and Foster et al, 2013). They were

able to find solutions ‘more tailored to the child. . . [and] came up with the ideas [and] understood the basis of those ideas’ (Foster et al, 2013).

In addition, a parent in Kim et al (2021) found the coaching process supported them to identify having a lack of confidence as a barrier before coaching. Having the opportunity to deconstruct and deal with the core issue has supported them to achieve their goals and their confidence flourish.

3.3 Wellbeing and Stress

There is emerging research that suggests that coaching interventions can help decrease parental stress (Bernie et al, 2021; Dunn et al, 2012 and Graham et al, 2014). Parents from Dunn et al’s (2021) in person OPC study completed the Parental Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-S) on 4 separate occasions. On average parental stress was measured in the 85th percentile during the initial visit, 4 weeks prior to starting the intervention. There was a significant decrease to the 50th percentile when parental stress was measured 4 weeks after coaching had come to an end. This suggests an overall positive change in parental stress.

Interestingly Bernie et al (2021) found similar results when coaching families using OPC online. They also used the PSI-SF as a pre and post intervention measure and saw parental stress shift from the 54th percentile to the 36th percentile. It is however unclear why families who met with practitioners saw an increase in parental stress from 61st percentile to the 66th percentile. This highlights the potential for parental stress to be further explored, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, to truly understand its impact.

Graham et al (2014) thematic analysis found that both parents and child felt calmer and happier as a result of engaging with the coaching intervention. One parent explained that *‘when I’m calm the family’s calm’*. This shift in emotional tone subsequently had a positive effect on their confidence and capacity to manage challenging situations (Graham et al, 2014). In addition, although the parents in Aragão et al (2022) study’s goals were specifically related to their child, parents were found to also prioritise time for themselves. They had begun going to the gym, meeting friends and finding respite for their children. Although there was no standardised evaluation of this variable, there is a possible ripple effect of coaching with families that’s worth further exploration.

3.4 Brighter futures

Once coaching came to an end parents felt hopeful for the future (Brandon et al, 2016 and King et al 2019). King et al (2019) found that parents reflected a sense of generalised empowerment that transcended a specific situation but altered their perspective. One parent reported feeling *‘able to see more of what’s out there and what I can do to help myself . . . and what’s out there to help me.’* Many of the families that participated in Brandon et al’s (2016) study also described new positive feelings about themselves and their brighter futures. This highlights the possibility for transformational experiences within coaching with families and the continued impact of the intervention.

Limitations

Limitations to the studies included, but not limited to; retention of participants (Bernie et al, 2021), small sample sizes, absence of control group, varying levels of training for those delivering the intervention, and the lack of diversity in participants. Whilst it was often mothers who participated in the research, some studies report that the high levels of education in some mothers might impact the results (Graham et al 2013, Jamali et al 2021, Graham et al 2014).

Whilst the OPC and SF approach appears to draw positive outcomes for participants, some papers indicate that the level of training that those delivering the intervention was not sufficient to determine the full impact of the intervention. For example, Aragão et al (2022) worked off the principles of OPC as a Brazilian cross-culturally adapted publication of the OPC manual had not been developed at the time of the research taking place. This is similar to the Jamali et al (2021) study where the therapist administering the intervention was knowledgeable about OPC, but not formally trained.

Despite the evidence presented demonstrating the positive impact of goal setting as part of a coaching intervention, the range of caregivers is not seen as significant to be able to report similar findings across a more diverse population (Graham et al 2013, 2014, Foster et al 2013, Little et al 2018). Where the level of education in mothers is a concern, a call for those from low income and educational backgrounds is suggested by Graham et al (2014).

Conclusion

We are at the beginning of understanding the experience and impact of group coaching with parents of children with SEND. As only one study was found to include a SF group coaching approach our conclusion includes insight from studies that adopted a 1:1 SF coaching approach to work with parents. The studies show that by creating spaces that empower families to be themselves, find their own goals and own solutions, meaningful change is possible (Brandon et al, 2015, Kim et al 2021).

Engaging in coaching sessions where parents can plan with the coach, create their own suggestions for adjustments and celebrate goal achievement can increase self-efficacy in parents (Dunn et al 2012). Mothers have reported the experience of coaching as very positive (Graham et al 2014) and in part this has to do with the new learning and reflective space that coaching offers (Dunn et al, 2012, Foster et al 2012, Kim et al 2021). Kim et al (2021) also stress the importance of creating a non-judgmental space where the parent can receive unbiased reassurance whilst also perceiving feelings of accountability towards the coach as they discuss strategies implemented related to the client identified goals. Although most of the current research focuses on 1:1 coaching, the researchers conclude that the same principles would be fundamental in supporting parents in a group coaching environment. However, it remains important to distinguish additional knowledge and skills that are required for group coaching. This includes developing the group, promoting positive socio-emotional behaviour (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977), encouraging cohesion and group performance (Podsakoff et al, 1997) to ensure positive group dynamics that enhance an individual's experience and outcomes.

At its foundation SF aims to empower clients to consider their preferred future and motivate them to take action. King et al (2017) suggests this approach motivated parents to engage. Parents are considered experts using this approach and are encouraged to explore how they might approach day to day challenges related to their child (Foster et al, 2013; Kim et al, 2021). This can lead to increased self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to approach problems proactively using their strengths and expertise (Foster et al, 2013).

In addition to this, there are some suggestions that a coaching intervention can be cost effective for a local authority (Brandon et al,2015) and may improve family outcomes when used whilst families wait for a diagnosis (Bernie et al, 2021). This implies that group coaching could be a useful early intervention tool for families who have children with SEND. With an increased demand on SEND services in England (Department for Education; 2023), this could be a critical step in ensuring improved family outcomes. Considering group coaching can reach more families we hypothesise that there is the possibility of change moving beyond the individual and their microsystems to the communities and exosystems that parents belong to.

Future research

Given the limitations to the studies and the gap in literature on the impact and experiences of group coaching on parents of children with SEND, the authors of this literature review hope to pursue research in this field and further explore the impact of coaching on parents when they are within a community of other parents with similar needs and challenges. This is in line with the research by Aragão et al (2022) which touched upon the importance of parents being able to understand their own challenges in the context of others through the group.

We believe that being part of a group that shares similar experiences, may help them to not feel so alone and create support systems where they have support outside of the coach/coachee relationship. This may further empower them and assist them to reach goals outside of the sessions. The support of trained coaches sharing principles of coaching across communities could lead to transformative conversations that lead to greater parental empowerment, greater family wellbeing and tools to create the future they hope for. Using SF coaching will help parents to stay highly engaged and working in a collaborative manner (King et al 2017).

Based on the current research it is apparent that for this to work, the coaches must: connect and establish a working relationship with the families, allow for parents to identify their own goals, offer opportunities for reflection, allow families to share how they wish to move forward, allow for accountability and be able to introduce coaching techniques whilst offering psychoeducation around the parents' needs. While the coach will lead and shape the group, it is important to acknowledge that the families will be expected to share and apply their expertise in order to collaborate with the coaches. The researchers believe that this process will aid parents to achieve their individual goals.

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