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## Supporting Mental Well-Being Through Emotion-Focused Coaching Intervention

*Valeriya Kovbuz*

Student of Master of Science in Psychology, University of Derby, UK

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### Abstract

Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) is a new method focused on expanding emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, which does not involve therapeutic work. The current conceptual paper suggests a theoretical literature review to analyze the peer-reviewed sources on how EFC can promote emotional awareness, self-compassion, resilience, and better interpersonal relationships. EFC does not involve clinical intervention, unlike other traditional forms of therapeutic interventions; it offers a structured means through which the individual interacts with his thoughts and feelings. According to the literature, coaching clients tend to become more empathetic communicators and also develop greater skills in conflict resolution, both personal and professional. Possible use of EFC in the learning process, medical practice, and workplace is also explored as an early solution to emotional support. The method demands well-trained special coaches who effectively work in an emotional facilitation context and clients who are ready to practice self-reflection. All in all, EFC proves to be a revolutionary model of self-growth and a resourceful addition to the upcoming sphere of coaching and mental support.

**Keywords:** Emotion-Focused Coaching, emotional intelligence, mental well-being, psychological resilience, self-compassion, emotional literacy, personal development

## Introduction

Mental well-being has become increasingly necessary in a world that is fast-paced and emotionally demanding. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), people across the globe are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety, stress, and emotional exhaustion. While many continue to seek traditional counseling, a growing number are looking for something simple. Non-clinical alternatives to address their emotional challenges. Emotional-Focused Coaching (EFC) is one such emerging approach that aims to support personal growth by helping individual understand and engage with their emotion.

This type of coaching draws inspiration from Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) and Humanistic Psychology, both of which emphasize that emotions are central to finding meaning and understanding behavior (Greenberg, 2015). Unlike other coaching forms, EFC guides clients through their inner emotional experiences, helping them identify unmet needs and adopt healthier emotional coping strategies.

Clients who engage in EFC often benefit from an increased sense of voice and self-identity, which promotes psychological safety and facilitates personal growth and emotional healing (Brown, 2018). By validating individuals' emotions and fostering emotional intelligence, EFC contributes to greater mental resilience.

To contextualize the increasing adoption of emotion-focused coaching, this conceptual paper, based solely on a review of existing literature and not on original research or data collection, examines other popular coaching approaches. The differences between Emotion-Focused Coaching, Cognitive-Behavioral Coaching, and Solution-Focused Coaching are summarized in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1:** Comparison of Emotion-Focused Coaching with Other Coaching Approaches

Approach	Primary Focus	Techniques Used	Emotional Depth	Typical Goals
Emotion-Focused Coaching	Emotional awareness and processing	Reflective listening, emotional labeling, and empathy	High	Self-awareness, emotional resilience
Cognitive-Behavioral Coaching	Thought-emotion-behavior links	Cognitive restructuring, behavioral experiments	Moderate	Goal achievement, mindset shift
Solution-Focused Coaching	Strength-based future orientation	Scaling, miracle questions, solution talk	Low to Moderate	Quick solutions, future planning

As shown in **Table 1**, other coaching models may primarily address behaviors and cognitions. In contrast, emotion-focused coaching includes emotions as a core component of the process. For individuals struggling with

intense or unresolved emotions, burnout, low self-esteem, or persistent grief, EFC can provide meaningful improvement in their mental health (Gendlin, 1981; Neff, 2003).

In an increasingly demanding world, the need for emotionally intelligent and compassionate support has never been greater. Emotion-Focused Coaching offers accessible and timely help, empowering individuals to reclaim their emotional well-being. The following sections will explore mental well-being, the underlying framework and strategies of EFC, and practical examples of its application.

## **Literature Review**

Recent scholarly attention has focused on the role of emotions in mental health, personal growth, social development, and interpersonal relationships. Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) has emerged as a significant method that integrates psychological theories into coaching to foster emotional awareness and well-being (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008). This conceptual review draws on peer-reviewed literature to explore the foundations of EFC, its psychological basis, and its practical applications.

### **1. Emotion-Focused Coaching – Conceptual Foundations**

EFC is grounded in Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), developed by Greenberg and colleagues. EFT posits that emotions are central to psychological health and that processing emotions supports cognitive clarity, mental stability, and personal growth (Greenberg, 2015). These therapeutic insights have been adapted into coaching practice, where emotional processing helps individuals make decisions, feel motivated, and work toward meaningful goals (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997).

The EFC framework also draws heavily from humanistic psychology, particularly the work of Carl Rogers. According to Rogers (1961), personal development requires empathy, unconditional positive regard, and authenticity. Emotion-focused coaches create a supportive environment where clients can safely express and explore emotions, facilitating deeper and lasting change (Bachkirova, 2016).

### **2. Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health**

The literature strongly associates emotional intelligence with mental health. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater resilience, reduced anxiety and depression, and improved psychosomatic health (Gross & John, 2003; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). EFC promotes emotional awareness and regulation, which are critical in avoiding emotional suppression and distress (Goleman, 1995; Neff, 2003).

Goleman emphasizes that emotional understanding is vital for decision-making, relationship-building, and overall well-being. Neff (2003) further supports this view by showing that self-compassion, a core technique in EFC, enhances emotional coping skills. These findings align with EFC's emphasis on exploring emotions to build resilience and psychological strength.

### **3. Coaching and Personal Development**

While therapy traditionally addresses mental illness, coaching serves as a versatile tool for personal and professional development (Grant, 2014). Emotionally informed coaching supports clients in setting goals while understanding their inner emotional landscape (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

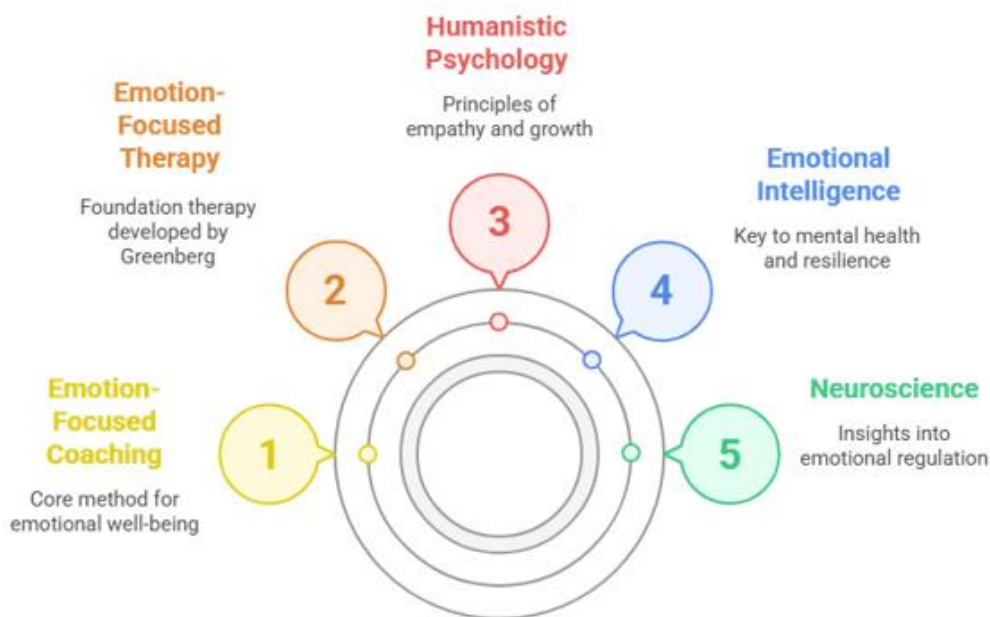
Research indicates that coaching approaches that integrate emotional work lead to positive, sustainable behavioral changes. For example, Strober and Grant found that EFC contributes to lasting improvements in behavior and emotional well-being, helping individuals connect their emotions to their goals and values.

### **4. Empirical Support for Emotion-Focused Interventions**

Much of the current evidence supporting emotion-based interventions stems from research on EFT, which has proven effective in treating depression, trauma, and anxiety disorders (Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2013). Although emotion-focused coaching research remains in its early stages, existing studies suggest that emotionally aware coaching can enhance self-awareness, emotional regulation, and stress management (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008; Passmore, 2010).

Neuroscience research further supports these claims. For instance, Lieberman et al. (2007) demonstrated that recognizing and naming emotions reduces activity in the brain's threat-detection system and enhances cognitive control. These findings suggest that emotionally focused coaching may contribute to improved brain functioning and emotional regulation.

## Emotion-Focused Coaching Framework



### 5. Differences Between Emotion-Focused Coaching and Other Coaching Methods

Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) differs significantly from cognitive-behavioral and solution-focused coaching in its unique emphasis on emotions as central agents of change and insight (Greenberg, 2015). Rather than encouraging clients to suppress or avoid difficult emotions, EFC guides individuals in identifying, accepting, and processing those emotions constructively. Research has shown that EFC can be particularly effective in addressing challenges such as burnout, low self-esteem, identity exploration, and unresolved grief (van Niekerk, 2017).

EFC is especially valuable in high-pressure professional domains such as healthcare, education, and social services, where practitioners often experience emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue (Smith & Moss, 2009). By equipping individuals with tools to manage emotional challenges and engage in self-reflection, EFC helps sustain professional commitment and psychological resilience in demanding environments.

Collectively, the literature highlights that Emotion-Focused Coaching enhances emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and mental well-being. Grounded in well-established theory and supported by emerging research evidence, EFC provides a structured approach to fostering personal growth and building effective emotional coping strategies within coaching sessions.

As global attention increasingly turns toward emotional literacy and psychological health, EFC offers valuable contributions to both personal development and organizational wellness. Future research should further explore measurable outcomes of this coaching approach and investigate how it can be adapted for diverse populations and contexts.

## **Methodology**

### **Conceptual Framework**

This paper explores emotional well-being and psychological resilience by synthesizing insights from existing academic literature, with a particular focus on Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC). Rather than conducting original empirical research, the study draws from peer-reviewed publications, conceptual models, and theoretical discussions. As EFC is deeply rooted in subjective, culturally shaped emotional experiences, reviewing qualitative and theoretical studies helps clarify how EFC may influence emotion regulation, emotional recognition, and personal development.

### **Theoretical Orientation**

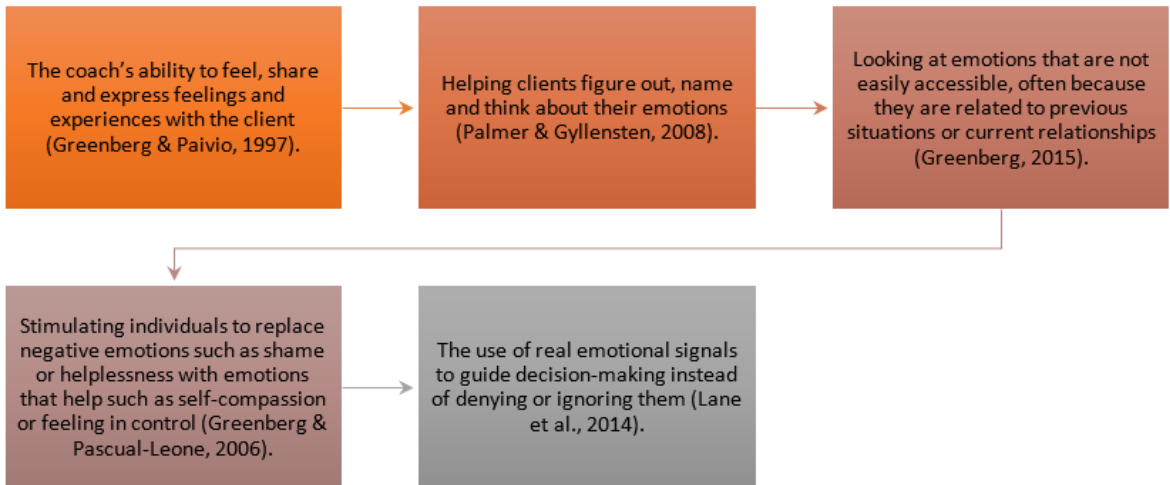
This conceptual study adopts a phenomenological lens to interpret how individuals understand their emotions through coaching. In phenomenology, personal perception and lived emotional experience are central (Moustakas, 1994). This approach aligns with the principles of EFC, which emphasize emotional insight over quantitative measurement.

It is important to note that, although EFC shares foundational ideas with Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), it remains a distinct, non-clinical intervention. While EFT is a therapeutic model aimed at treating mental health issues (Greenberg, 2015), EFC is structured around personal growth, self-regulation, and emotional development in functional individuals. Techniques such as emotional attunement, exploring unmet emotional needs, and transforming maladaptive emotions are applied in coaching to promote high performance and well-being (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008).

### **Coaching Principles and Their Framework**

This paper discusses EFC principles based on previously published research rather than field data. The foundational belief is that emotions guide individuals toward adaptive and meaningful behaviors. According to Greenberg (2015), emotion-focused coaching enhances self-awareness, fosters emotional clarity, and supports the transformation of difficult emotions into constructive ones. Key coaching practices described in the literature include empathetic dialogue, emotional validation, and co-creating safe emotional spaces for self-reflection and growth.

Note: This is a literature-based conceptual paper. No new data were collected, and no original interviews were conducted. Illustrative findings referenced in the paper are drawn from prior published research and used to highlight theoretical insights.



Expert coaches practicing Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) draw structural inspiration from Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), adapting its principles to the non-clinical, growth-oriented coaching context. Their work is grounded in creating emotionally safe, dialogical spaces where clients can reflect, express, and evolve. Unlike directive approaches, EFC emphasizes presence, empathy, and co-exploration over instruction.

### Insights from the Literature

As this paper does not involve original empirical data, its conclusions are based entirely on prior research and theoretical models. Numerous peer-reviewed studies demonstrate that emotion-focused methods contribute significantly to personal insight and developmental progress. For instance, Palmer and Gyllensten (2008) observed that emotionally aware coaching facilitated deeper cognitive processing and more effective coping among clients. Similarly, Passmore (2010) emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in achieving sustainable coaching outcomes.

Thematic analyses across existing literature highlight that emotional awareness is a key precursor to behavior change. Coaches who support clients in recognizing and naming their emotions often promote greater self-reflection, resilience, and intentional decision-making. These findings support the notion that when guided appropriately, emotional exploration can catalyze long-term personal growth and psychological balance.



### **Ethical Considerations in Literature-Based Inquiry**

Although this study does not involve direct human participants, ethical awareness remains essential in the discussion of emotionally sensitive topics. Scholars emphasize the importance of clearly distinguishing coaching from therapy and referring clients with unresolved trauma or clinical needs to qualified mental health professionals (Spinelli, 2005; Bachkirova, 2016). Responsible coaching also involves cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, and regular supervision to navigate emotional boundaries ethically.

Moreover, the literature suggests that while EFC can support emotional development, it is not intended to diagnose or treat clinical conditions. Practices such as integrating yoga or mindfulness into emotional coaching may benefit clients, but these should only be facilitated by professionals who hold appropriate mental health qualifications (Greenberg, 2015; Palmer & Whybrow, 2014).

### **Results**

As this is a conceptual paper grounded in literature, the findings presented are drawn from existing peer-reviewed studies, qualitative syntheses, and illustrative cases. These sources consistently underscore the positive impact of emotional awareness on mental well-being. Four primary themes emerge from the literature:

- 1) improved emotional understanding,
- 2) development of self-compassion,
- 3) enhanced psychological resilience,
- 4) better interpersonal relationships.

These themes collectively support the theoretical significance of Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) as a catalyst for emotional growth.

#### **1. Improved Emotional Understanding**

The literature highlights that emotion-focused coaching enables individuals to better identify, label, and manage their emotions. This aligns with foundational principles of Emotion-Focused Therapy, which emphasize emotional awareness as essential to psychological health (Greenberg, 2015). Rather than suppress emotions, individuals are encouraged to acknowledge and explore them. A common insight across sources is that recognizing underlying emotions, such as fear or pain beneath anger helps individuals process feelings more constructively.

#### **2. Development of Self-Compassion**

A key outcome identified in the literature is increased self-compassion. EFC creates a supportive environment in which individuals can



reduce self-criticism and adopt a more compassionate internal dialogue. This is consistent with Neff's (2003) findings, which link self-compassion to lower levels of anxiety, shame, and burnout. Emotionally open coaching spaces appear to facilitate greater tolerance of personal imperfections and encourage self-care.

### 3. Enhanced Psychological Resilience

Emotion-focused coaching is also associated with strengthened emotional resilience. Individuals referenced in the reviewed studies reported a greater capacity to manage stress and bounce back from adversity. Research by Palmer and Gyllensten (2008) and Davidson and Begley (2012) indicates that EFC fosters emotional regulation and flexibility, contributing to improved psychological endurance in the face of personal and professional challenges.

### 4. Relational Improvements

The literature also suggests that EFC enhances interpersonal relationships. Increased emotional literacy is linked with stronger communication, more effective conflict resolution, and heightened empathy. These outcomes support Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's (2004) framework, which emphasizes that emotional intelligence improves both intrapersonal insight and social connection.

**Table 2:** Key Emotional Themes in Emotion-Focused Coaching

Theme	Description
Emotional Understanding	Increased ability to identify and reflect on feelings
Self-Compassion	Reduction of self-judgment; development of a kind internal dialogue
Psychological Resilience	Enhanced stress coping, emotional flexibility, and recovery after adversity
Relational Improvements	Greater empathy, better communication, and improved conflict resolution

Note. Synthesized from existing empirical and conceptual literature.  
No original data were collected.

### Summary of Findings

Overall, the literature indicates that Emotion-Focused Coaching contributes meaningfully to mental and emotional well-being. These positive outcomes occur not through clinical diagnoses or therapy, but through the relational safety and emotional support offered in coaching environments. Greenberg (2015) notes that emotional connection and empathy are central to transformative change, an idea echoed throughout the conceptual models reviewed.

Although some studies suggest that developing emotional competencies through EFC may require time and commitment, the overall evidence supports EFC as an effective approach to enhancing self-awareness,

fostering emotional strength, and improving relational dynamics across both personal and organizational settings.

## **Discussion**

This conceptual paper synthesizes theoretical perspectives and research evidence to explore how Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) promotes emotional awareness, self-compassion, psychological resilience, and enhanced interpersonal relationships. The findings presented are drawn from patterns consistently reported in peer-reviewed literature, not from original empirical investigation. This section analyzes those synthesized findings within established psychological frameworks, highlights applied implications, and proposes directions for future research.

### **Building Mental Health Through Emotional Awareness**

Greenberg (2015) emphasized the central role of emotional awareness in fostering psychological well-being. Supporting this, multiple studies suggest that individuals who engage in emotional reflection and expression demonstrate greater adaptability and emotional control. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) argue that emotional clarity enhances self-regulation, a critical element of emotional intelligence.

These insights align with Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson (2011), who found that non-judgmental attention to inner experiences increases psychological flexibility and reduces stress. Similarly, Barrett (2017) observed that identifying emotional origins improves emotional response patterns and may alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression.

### **The Role of Self-Compassion in Emotional Healing**

Self-compassion consistently emerges as a protective factor in emotional health. Literature shows that coaching environments emphasizing emotional safety and non-judgmental acceptance encourage positive self-regard and reduce self-criticism. This finding aligns with Neff's (2003) model, which identifies self-compassion as a buffer against emotional dysregulation, and Gilbert's (2009) research, which links self-kindness to emotional resilience and adaptability.

Through emotionally responsive coaching relationships, individuals may internalize compassionate perspectives, leading to healthier self-concepts and more effective coping strategies.

### **Psychological Resilience Through Coaching**

Emotion-focused coaching also appears to strengthen psychological resilience. Literature suggests that coaching approaches rooted in emotional processing can enhance clients' ability to recover from adversity and regulate

stress (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008). Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) propose that cultivating positive emotions builds internal resources, increasing adaptability in challenging situations. Trust-based coaching relationships may be central to fostering such resilience.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Relational Benefits**

Though often underexplored in coaching literature, relational improvements are a recurring outcome in emotion-focused approaches. Individuals who enhance their emotional literacy often demonstrate improved communication, greater empathy, and stronger interpersonal functioning. Mayer et al. (2004) note that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to both personal and professional relationship satisfaction. The literature suggests that EFC facilitates emotional growth internally while supporting social connection externally.

**Table 3:** Theoretical Implications of Emotion-Focused Coaching on Psychological Outcomes

Domain	Theoretical Contribution	Supporting Authors
Emotional Awareness	Enhances regulation, expression, and clarity of feelings	Greenberg (2015); Barrett (2017)
Self-Compassion	Reduces shame and self-criticism; increases emotional acceptance	Neff (2003); Gilbert (2009)
Psychological Resilience	Strengthens adaptability and recovery through positive emotion scaffolding	Tugade & Fredrickson (2004); Palmer & Gyllensten (2008)
Relationship Quality	Promotes empathy, conflict resolution, and social connectedness	Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2004)

Note. Based on a synthesis of peer-reviewed conceptual and empirical literature.

### **Practical Applications**

Emotion-focused coaching has practical relevance beyond therapeutic contexts. As a non-clinical intervention, it offers accessible emotional support for individuals who may not pursue traditional psychotherapy. Literature suggests that trained coaches using EFC can enhance clients' emotional resilience, reduce emotional fatigue, and promote overall well-being.

EFC also has significant organizational applications. Emotionally intelligent leadership and communication training can reduce conflict, enhance workplace cohesion, and support employee wellness initiatives (Palmer & Gyllensten, 2008). Additionally, EFC's emphasis on self-reflection and emotional validation may benefit individuals seeking personal development in non-clinical environments.

### **Future Research Directions**

While conceptual literature provides strong theoretical support for EFC, further empirical validation is needed. Mixed-methods research

involving larger, randomized samples could help substantiate and expand these findings. Comparative studies may also clarify how EFC differs in effectiveness from other coaching models, particularly in fostering emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, cross-cultural research is essential to explore the applicability of Emotion-Focused Coaching across diverse populations and cultural settings. These future directions would enhance understanding of EFC's global relevance and support its integration into evidence-based coaching practices.

## **Conclusion**

This conceptual study synthesized existing literature to support the value of Emotion-Focused Coaching (EFC) as a promising framework for enhancing mental and emotional well-being. The reviewed evidence suggests that EFC promotes emotional awareness, cultivates self-compassion, enhances psychological resilience, and fosters stronger interpersonal relationships. Together, these outcomes contribute to more adaptive emotional functioning and improved psychological health. Unlike traditional outcome-focused coaching strategies, EFC facilitates internal transformation by helping individuals recognize, accept, and regulate their emotions. Through empathetic and supportive coaching relationships, clients are encouraged to explore emotions non-judgmentally, promoting sustainable personal growth and emotional clarity. Self-compassion emerged as a central theme in the literature, with multiple sources emphasizing that individuals who practice kindness toward themselves are better equipped to manage stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue. This internal self-acceptance not only builds resilience but also positively influences how individuals relate to others. Furthermore, the benefits of Emotion-Focused Coaching extend beyond the immediate coaching relationship. EFC supports the development of emotional literacy, which enables individuals to become more empathetic, better communicators, and more effective at resolving interpersonal conflict skills that are critical both personally and professionally. These gains contribute to healthier workplaces and more emotionally intelligent communities. As global awareness of mental health increases, Emotion-Focused Coaching offers a non-clinical, accessible avenue for addressing emotional difficulties. Its integration into educational settings, healthcare environments, and organizational contexts may provide individuals with practical tools for emotional regulation and stress management, potentially preventing more serious psychological concerns. For EFC to be effective, it requires clients who are open, reflective, and willing to engage in emotionally vulnerable work. Coaches must also be highly skilled in emotional facilitation and capable of creating psychologically safe

environments. Under these conditions, EFC holds the potential to support deep self-understanding, emotional maturity, and improved relationship quality.

In conclusion, the theoretical synthesis presented in this paper underscores the value of Emotion-Focused Coaching as a transformative model for personal development. As interest in emotional intelligence and mental well-being continues to grow, EFC may serve as a meaningful and impactful contribution to the evolving fields of coaching and emotional health care.

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**Data Availability:** All data are included in the content of the paper.

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