Editorial

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Following the Special Issue tradition of the International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring (IJEBCM), this special issue hosts research articles written by post-graduate students who recently completed their MA and Doctorate in Coaching/Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University, and, consequently, presented their research at the annual Coaching and Mentoring Research conference that was held virtually (due to the Covid-19 pandemic) on Thursday 14 January 2021. Similarly to previous special issues, this issue provides conference participants with the opportunity to share their research methodologies and findings with IJEBCM readers around the world, celebrating the burgeoning coaching and mentoring research that is taking shape and form in one of the most renowned Coaching and Mentoring research centres globally, the international Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies housed in Oxford Brookes Business School.

This special issue comprises nineteen papers. The first three papers discuss – in one way or another – coaching issues that are prevalent in organisational settings, including coaching for talent management, team coaching, and, quite pertinently, coaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following section includes three articles that specifically focus on coaching and mentoring issues within Higher Education (HE) settings, including peer assisted learning, coaching non-traditional students, and coaching for creativity purposes. The third section comprises six papers that discuss coaching for a variety of purposes, such as coaching expats, peer coaching for men diagnosed with prostate cancer, coaching childless women, coaching for burnout, coaching elite athletes in their quest for a second career, and group coaching for wellbeing. The fourth section consists of four articles discussing specific elements pertaining to the coaching relationship, including the use of digital methods in coaching, the creation and experience of thinking environments in coaching, coaching and mentoring with metaphor, as well as the essential elements of team coaching through the eyes of the coach. The firth section hosts two articles specifically on mentoring, namely, reverse mentoring in the workplace and reciprocal mentoring focusing on women's career challenges. Last but not least, the final section comprises an article that reflects on the value of a specific research methodology, namely, conceptual encounter, in exploring women's identity work in coaching for career change and transition.

Karine Mangion-Thornley's paper is the first of a series of articles on the use of coaching in organisational settings. Using a case study methodology, the paper discusses the pivotal role of coaching for talent management in a global bank, focusing on the difficulties and challenges of operationalising it. Rachael Hanley-Browne's article casts a light on the experience of team coaches in ending the coaching relationship. Specifically, she explores the skills and capabilities needed to bring the team coaching programme to a successful conclusion and reflects on how this experience influences the team coach's professional identity and future practice. Also employing an

interpretive research strategy, Judy Irving's paper explores the topical issue of coaching during the major disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, Irving's research discusses the multiple environmental pressures that affected both coaches and coachees during the initial stages of the pandemic, arguing that these pressures impacted negatively, and proposing flexibility and adaptive capacity as the ingredients to a successful practice during times of crisis.

Moving on to the second theme of this Special Issue, three papers focused on a variety of coaching and mentoring issues specifically within HE contexts. Starting with mentoring, Sarah Bailey's study, employing an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis methodology, explored how 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students made sense of their journey in becoming Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) mentors – in that HE context they are called PAL leaders – to their lower year peers. Conducting in-depth interviews with six students acting as PAL leaders and specifically inquiring into how they made meaning of their role, Bailey argues that engaging in PAL schemes can increase a sense of belonging, enhance cognitive and communication skills, promote perspective transformation through critical reflection, and stimulate personal growth. Importantly, becoming a PAL mentor can also increase a student's self-belief in successfully navigating and overcoming challenges. Also researching mentoring in a HE setting, Andrew Armour utilised a case study methodology to explore how mentoring supports developing musicians at a London-based music school. Through interviews with tutors, students, and academic administrators, he found that what he called a 'modern-maestro' mentoring relationship may help motivate students to adopt an autonomous approach to their work, which could positively impact their academic success and future professional music career. Finally, Dionne Spencer investigates the coaching experience of non-traditional (including those at a disadvantage based on geographical location, occupation, previous education and income; minority ethnic groups; mature students; first generation HE student) undergraduate (UG) students in the UK. Employing heuristic enquiry, Spencer explores the role of coaching in supporting such students during their UG study journey, arguing that coaching affords a learning space free of judgement, enables action, and improves motivation. Importantly, the article makes a case for certain conditions that are vital if coaching is to support non-traditional HE students.

The third and largest section of this special issue consists of six papers that discuss coaching for a plethora of specific purposes. In the first article of this section, Priscilla F. de Araujo explores how cross-cultural coaching supports expatriates in their expatriation journey. Employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, de Araujo provides in-depth accounts of the research participants' expatriation experiences, arguing that cross-cultural coaching supports their journey, recommending this intervention as a formal tool for organisations. Moving on to a completely different setting, Aidan Adkins investigates the instrumentality of peer coaching in the treatment decision making process of men diagnosed with prostate cancer. Also employing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach, Adkins explores the lived experience of individuals who have been supported through peer coaching in making treatment decisions, proposing the development of accessible peer coaching schemes across the UK. The following paper in this section, written by Sophia Andeh, discusses the value of coaching in supporting women deal with the issue of childlessness. Through a heuristic inquiry approach, Andeh found that coaching offered several benefits to women coming to terms with childlessness, including coping with negative self– and societal– narratives; accepting and changing their perspective on a life without children; picturing alternative futures; building confidence; achieving goals and rediscovering themselves. The fourth article in this section is about burnout. Through a constructivist grounded theory approach, Anthony Garaghty explores how coaches work with 'burnout' clients, proposing that coaching can complement counselling and/or psychotherapy in supporting individuals suffering with burnout. The penultimate paper, written by Anna Edwards, focuses on coaching for the career progression of elite athletes. More specifically, also employing a constructivist grounded theory approach, Anna Edwards built an evidence-based coaching model that supports an elite athlete's transition to a second career, arguing that coaching, delivered in a variety of ways along the way, can support elite athletes through their career transition learning. Last but not least for this section, Ana Nacif proposes an evidence based group coaching model for wellbeing. Contributing to the

scant literature on coaching for wellbeing, Nacif highlights the crucial role the group can play as a catalyst for change, whilst enabling coachees to experience conditions that contribute to their wellbeing. Group coaching, she argues, renders the process of coaching for wellbeing more inclusive, accessible and impactful.

The fourth section of this special issue is dedicated to specific elements pertaining to the coaching relationship. The first paper in this section deals with the topical issue of digital coaching. Through a mixed methods approach, Kevin Ellis-Brush seeks to explore the relationship between a coachee and an artificial coach via a chatbot app. Analysing the contributions of 48 volunteers, he found that, while a working alliance with the artificial coach did not develop successfully, the majority of the participants saw their self-reliance improving in a non-judgemental, safe space that was created via the chatbot app. The theme of critical thinking environment is the focal point of the second paper in this section. More specifically, employing a contrsuctivist grounded theory methodology, Donna Johnston explores how coaching enables the development of critical thinking skills, arguing that three elements create a critical thinking environment for coaching: contracting, thinking space, and the physical environment. The following is a conceptual study on the effective use of metaphor in coaching and mentoring. Employing a process of critical realist analysis, Russ Thompson ventured the development of a coaching model for metaphor use, placing emphasis on a figurative safe space where the metaphorical helping process can happen. Finally, in the fourth paper of this section, Gill Graves conducted a heuristic inquiry to shed light on the experience of team coaching on the part of a coach. Through a creative synthesis of her findings, Graves proposes a team coaching model which reflects the complexity of team coaching interventions, recognising the universal elements of team coaching, as well as the numerous divergences in team coaching practices.

Moving on to the fifth section in this special issue, it is made up of two articles specifically on mentoring. The first one, written by Ian Browne, sheds light on reverse mentoring relationships in multi-generational workplaces. Through a qualitative exploratory study of ten mentors and mentees, Browne shows how reverse mentoring proves to be extremely advantageous for both mentors and mentees, as well as organisations, offering benefits that far exceed the mere exchange of knowledge. Investigating the benefits of reciprocal mentoring, Sue Round's study focuses particularly on the shared understanding of women's career equality challenges by means of mixed gender reciprocal mentoring pairs. Through a case study methodology, Round found that reciprocal mentoring helps bring down barriers of 'difference' in the workplace, enabling a wider understanding of key issues, such as women's career progression.

Finally, this special issue concludes with a thought provoking article on the use of conceptual encounter methodology in coaching research. More specifically, Sarah Snape discusses how she used conceptual encounter methodology to 'co-create', with her research partners, a coaching model in order to explore and support women's identity work in career choices and transitions.
Enjoy this special issue! I sincerely hope that you benefit from the insightful research studies presented in this special issue as much as I did.