

CIPLA ACADEMY

Coaching Conversations with Medical Representatives

FACILITATOR GUIDE — 60 MINUTES

Audience	First-Line Managers — Pharmaceutical Sales Organization
Duration	60 Minutes
Model Used	GROW Coaching Model
Designed by	Cipla Academy L&D COE Marketing & Managerial Academy
Confidential	For Internal Facilitator Use Only

How to Use This Facilitator Guide

This guide is designed to feel like a conversation, not a lecture. Every segment includes exact trainer talking points, transition statements, and facilitation cues.

Before You Begin — Facilitator Checklist

- Print one Field Coaching Commitment Card per participant (Section 9)
- Write 'GROW' on a whiteboard/flip chart before participants enter
- Arrange seating in U-shape or clusters — NOT classroom rows
- Prepare 5 'Coaching Trap' names on a flip chart sheet for the dot-voting activity
- Have a visible timer for role-play segments

Opening Hook — The Story That Sets the Tone

Deliver this at the start of the session. Time: 3–4 minutes. Read verbatim or in your own words.

Facilitator Script — The Manoj Story

"Let me tell you about Manoj."

"Manoj was a Regional Business Manager — eight years in the field, consistently top 20% in his region. He was the kind of manager who could read a doctor's prescription pad before the MR could. On JFW days, his team loved going with him — because he always had the answer."

"And that was exactly the problem."

"Every JFW ended the same way. In the car, Manoj would do a mini post-mortem: 'You should have positioned the product earlier. You didn't ask about their cardiology patients. Next time, try this...' His MRs would nod. And then do exactly the same thing next week."

"His team had the lowest coaching scores in the BU. His RBM asked him: 'Manoj, your numbers are decent, but your MRs aren't growing. What's happening?' Manoj had no answer."

"The truth? Manoj wasn't coaching. He was reviewing. And there's a world of difference between the two."

"That's what today is about. Not a new framework to add to your already full toolkit. But one conversation — that actually changes something."

Transition → WIIFM

"Before we go further — let me tell you what's actually in this for you today. Because I know you have calls to take and territories to manage."

WIIFM + Learning Objectives

What's In It for You

After this 60-minute session you will:

- Stop leaving JFW conversations feeling like nothing changed
- Have 5 coaching questions that work in the field — not just in a classroom
- Know the real difference between reviewing performance and building capability
- Have a simple 4-step structure you can use in a 10-minute car conversation
- Feel more confident coaching MRs who are resistant, defensive, or over-confident

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Distinguish between a review conversation and a coaching conversation
2. Apply the GROW model to a real field coaching situation
3. Use at least 3 high-impact coaching questions in a simulated MR conversation
4. Identify common coaching traps and how to avoid them
5. Create a personal action commitment for their next JFW

Full Session Flow — 60-Minute Facilitation Blueprint

Colour key: Teal rows = conceptual segments. Orange rows = activity/engagement segments.

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
0–5 min	Welcome & The Manoj Story	Break the 'I already coach' assumption; establish WIIFM; create psychological safety.	Tell the Manoj story (see Section 2). Pause after '...he wasn't coaching — he was reviewing.' Hold silence 3 seconds. Ask: 'How many of us have been Manoj at some point?'	Show of hands: 'Who has left a JFW feeling like nothing will change?' Acknowledge every hand without judgment.	'Think of your last JFW. Did you coach — or did you review?'	Do NOT rush. The emotional pull of this story sets the tone for the entire session. Watch for nodding vs defensive smirking.
5–12 min	Review vs. Coach — The Line Most Managers Cross	Help managers viscerally feel — not just understand — the difference between reviewing and coaching.	Write on board: 'Reviewing says: here's what you did wrong. Coaching asks: what do YOU think happened?' A review looks backward. Coaching builds what happens next. MRs may agree with your review — but they OWN a coaching insight. Ownership changes behaviour.	Card Sort: Read 5 manager statements aloud. Participants call out R (Review) or C (Coach). Answers: (1) 'You should have led with the data' = R. (2) 'What was on your mind when he objected?' = C. (3) 'Your opening was too long' = R. (4) 'On a scale of 1-10, how ready did you feel?' = C. (5) 'That objection handling	'Which kind of manager do your MRs experience you as — most of the time?'	If a manager argues that R statements are also useful — agree, and clarify: reviews have a place; this session is about when to coach instead.

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
				needs work' = R.		
12–20 min	The GROW Model — A Structure, Not a Script	Introduce GROW as a simple, field-ready coaching structure; connect each step to real JFW car conversations.	Say: 'I'm going to give you four questions. Not twenty — just four. One per GROW step — usable in a 10-minute car ride.' Write GROW on board. G=Goal ('Before we go in, what's your one goal for this call?') R=Reality ('How did it go? What felt natural/hard?') O=Options ('What else could you have done?') W=Way Forward ('What will you do differently next call?'). Draw arrow from O to W. Say: 'Most managers jump R straight to W — skipping O entirely. That's where the MR's own thinking gets bypassed.'	Pair exercise: Each person writes their OWN GROW answers based on their last real JFW — 3 minutes silent. Then 1 person shares an insight with the group.	'Which GROW step do you most often skip in your field conversations?'	Let the GROW acronym stay on the board for the rest of the session. Every later activity can refer back to it.

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
20–30 min	Strong vs. Weak Coaching — Live Dialogue Demonstration	Show participants what a real coaching conversation looks and sounds like — and what a review dressed as coaching sounds like.	Say: 'I'm going to read two conversations. Same MR, same situation, two very different managers. I want you to FEEL the difference.' Read the Weak conversation in a flat, directive tone. Pause. Ask: 'What did you notice?' Then read the Strong conversation slowly with natural pauses. Debrief both through the GROW lens.	Group debrief after both dialogues. Collect observations on board. Highlight: question quality, silence, MR ownership, zero unsolicited advice in the strong version.	'In which conversation did the MR actually THINK? Which would actually change behaviour next week?'	See Section 5 for full dialogue text. Read the WEAK version in a fast, confident 'manager knows best' tone. Read the STRONG version slowly — pause genuinely after each question as if waiting for an answer.
30–42 min	Role Play — Your Turn in the Driver's Seat	Give participants a safe space to practise a GROW coaching conversation and receive structured peer feedback.	Form trios. One plays Manager, one plays MR using the scenario card, one Observes. Each round: 5 min coaching + 3 min feedback. Rotate so everyone coaches. Run Standard scenario first, then Difficult scenario for those ready.	Trio role-play with two scenario cards: A) Standard — MR who gives vague, non-committal answers. B) Difficult — MR who is defensive and blames market conditions (Deepak — see Section 6). Observer uses	'What was the hardest moment as the manager? What stopped you from asking the next question?'	Walk the room during role-plays. If a manager freezes, don't rescue — let silence sit 5 seconds, then whisper: 'What GROW step are you in?' Save all corrective feedback for the debrief,

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
				3 questions: What went well? Which GROW step was missed? What one question could have shifted the conversation?		never in front of peers.
42–50 min	The 5 Coaching Traps — What Gets in Our Way	Surface and normalise the most common manager coaching mistakes; build self-awareness without shame.	Say: 'Before we close — let me name a few things that trip up even great managers. I want you to be honest with yourself about which one is yours.' Walk through the 5 traps with a field example each: (1) The Expert Trap, (2) The Time Trap, (3) The Nice Manager Trap, (4) The Diagnosis Trap, (5) The Script Trap. See Section 7 for full descriptions.	Dot Voting: Write the 5 trap names on a flip chart. Each participant gets 2 coloured dot stickers — place them on their personal traps. Facilitator reads out the pattern. Normalise: 'Look — most of us share the same ones.'	'What would your MRs say if you asked them: what does coaching from me actually feel like?'	Use 'we' language throughout — never 'you'. Say: 'All of us fall into the Expert Trap — especially because most of us were great MRs before we became managers. Your expertise is an asset in reviews and a liability in coaching.'
50–57 min	My Field Coaching Commitment Card	Convert session learning into a specific, personal, time-bound	Say: 'Learning without action is just entertainment. So before we close — I'm asking you to	Individual silent writing on the Field Coaching Commitment Card (see Section 9).	'What will be different in your next JFW because of today?'	Celebrate specificity. 'I'll coach Ravi using one GROW question every call

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
		action for the next JFW.	write three things on your commitment card: (1) Which MR will you coach this week? (2) Which GROW question will you ask first? (3) What coaching trap will you consciously avoid?' Give 4 minutes of quiet writing time. Then pair-share — each person reads their commitment aloud to a partner.	Optional pair-share to create accountability. Facilitate 2–3 people sharing with the full group if time permits.		this week' is far better than 'I'll coach more.' Name the specific ones when you hear them.
57–60 min	Close — The Conversation That Changes Everything	Leave participants with an emotional anchor and a single memorable takeaway.	Return to Manoj. 'Three months later, Manoj tried something different. He asked one question. Just one. And he waited. His MR talked for 4 minutes. Manoj added nothing. That MR had their best month ever.' Close: 'The best coaching conversations are mostly	Optional round-robin (if time): each person shares one word describing how they feel about coaching after today. No repeats.	'If you could give Manoj one piece of advice based on today — what would it be?'	Put your notes down for the last 3 minutes. Make eye contact. Mean it. The close should feel like a conversation between two people who trust each other — not a training session ending.

Time	Slide / Section Title	Objective	Trainer Talking Points	Activity	Learner Reflection	Facilitation Notes
			silence. The manager's job is to ask the question that helps the MR hear themselves think.' Thank the group warmly and personally.			

Section 5 — Sample Coaching Dialogues

Use during the demonstration segment (Minutes 20–30). Read aloud or distribute as handouts.

Weak Coaching Conversation — The Review Trap

Context:
 Post-call debrief. MR Priya just finished a call with Dr. Sharma, a high-potential cardiologist. The doctor asked about efficacy data but seemed unconvinced. Manager Vikram is now in the car with Priya.

Speaker	Dialogue
VIKRAM (Manager)	Priya, that call didn't go well. You spent too much time on the brand story and never got to the clinical data. Dr. Sharma is a data-driven doctor — you should know that by now.
PRIYA (MR)	I did present the data, sir. He just wasn't giving me time—
VIKRAM (Manager)	No, you got off track. I saw it. Next time, lead with the IMPROVE trial data within the first two minutes. That's what works with him. Also, your closing was weak — you should have asked for a prescription commitment.
PRIYA (MR)	Okay sir, I'll try.
VIKRAM (Manager)	And the sample drop — too many samples, too early. Hold them till you've got the commitment. Remember this for Dr. Mehta's call tomorrow too.
PRIYA (MR)	Yes sir.

What went wrong here?

- Vikram spoke 80% of the time — Priya barely processed any of it
- Every statement was a diagnosis, not a question — zero GROW steps used
- Priya ended with 'yes sir' — the classic signal that nothing will change
- Priya's interruption was cut off — her own insight was lost
- No acknowledgement of what Priya did well — motivation damage with no capability gain

Strong Coaching Conversation — GROW in Action

Context:
 Same situation. Same MR Priya. Same Dr. Sharma call. Manager Rahul (different manager) is now in the car. GROW steps are noted in brackets for the facilitator's reference — they are invisible in the actual conversation.

Speaker	Dialogue
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RAHUL (Manager)	[GOAL] 'Priya, before we start — what was the one thing you most wanted to achieve in that call with Dr. Sharma today?'
PRIYA (MR)	I wanted to get him interested in the efficacy data — especially the IMPROVE trial. He's a cardiologist who responds to numbers.
RAHUL (Manager)	[REALITY] 'And how do you feel it went? Did you get there?'
PRIYA (MR)	Honestly, not fully. I got caught up in the brand story and by the time I reached the data, his attention had shifted. I felt it slipping.
RAHUL (Manager)	'That's a real observation, Priya. When did you first sense his attention shifting?'
PRIYA (MR)	About two minutes in. He started looking at his prescription pad. I should have pivoted then.
RAHUL (Manager)	[OPTIONS] 'You said you should have pivoted — what could that have looked like?'
PRIYA (MR)	I could have asked him directly: 'Dr. Sharma, what data matters most to you when choosing an add-on therapy?' That would have pulled him back in.
RAHUL (Manager)	'I really like that. What else could you have done?'
PRIYA (MR)	I could have led with a patient story first — someone like his typical patient profile — and then backed it with the IMPROVE data. More emotional first, then clinical.
RAHUL (Manager)	[WAY FORWARD] 'You've come up with two strong options. Given Dr. Mehta has a similar profile tomorrow — which will you try first?'
PRIYA (MR)	I'll lead with a patient story. Then bring in the data once I have his engagement. And if I sense him drifting, I'll ask the direct question about what data he prioritises.
RAHUL (Manager)	'That's a clear plan. Write it down before the call tomorrow. I'll be curious to hear how it goes.'

What made this conversation powerful?

- Priya spoke 70% of the time — and arrived at her own solution
- Rahul asked 6 questions. Zero pieces of advice. Zero diagnoses.
- The GROW structure was completely invisible — it felt like a natural conversation
- Priya's commitment at the end was specific, owned, and immediately actionable
- Rahul's closing line created accountability without pressure or judgment

Section 6 — The Difficult Coaching Scenario

Scenario: Deepak — The Defensive MR

For use in the difficult role-play round (30–42 min).

Background for the person playing the MR:

You are Deepak, an MR with 4 years of experience. Your numbers have been flat for two quarters. You believe this is because your territory has three new private clinics that your competitor already has access to, and because your company's pricing is uncompetitive. You are not open to feedback about your field craft — you've heard it before and nothing has changed. You tend to redirect every coaching question toward market conditions. You will only open up if the manager genuinely listens without jumping to solutions or defending the company.

Common Manager Mistakes in This Scenario:

- Arguing with the market excuse instead of acknowledging it first
- Moving to Way Forward before Deepak feels genuinely heard
- Asking leading questions that are advice in disguise: 'Don't you think if you focused more on Tier-1 doctors...'
- Abandoning the GROW structure the moment Deepak deflects
- Becoming defensive about the company or the product

Coaching Questions That Work in This Scenario:

- 'It sounds like the market is making things really tough for you right now. Tell me more about that.' — Acknowledge first, always.
- 'In the calls where you've had a good outcome recently — what was different?'
- 'What's the one thing, within your control, that you could change this week?'
- 'If a brand-new MR took over your territory with fresh eyes — what would they try first?'
- 'I hear you on the market conditions. Setting those aside for a moment — what would you do differently in tomorrow's call?'

Debrief Questions After the Difficult Scenario:

- 'When Deepak deflected to the market — what did you feel like doing?'
- 'What would have happened if you had argued with his market excuse?'
- 'At what moment did you feel the conversation begin to shift?'
- 'What question cracked it open — or what question do you wish you had asked?'

Section 7 — The 5 Common Coaching Traps

Use during Minutes 42–50. Read each trap aloud, give the field example, pause for self-reflection.

Trap	What It Sounds Like	Why Managers Fall Into It	The Fix
The Expert Trap	<i>"What you should have said is..." / "The right approach here is..."</i>	Most managers were high-performing MRs. Their experience is real — their instinct is to share it immediately.	Ask: 'What do YOU think would have worked better?' before offering anything.
The Time Trap	<i>"We only have 5 minutes, let me just quickly tell you what to do next time."</i>	Coaching feels like a delayed return. Reviews feel efficient in the moment.	One GROW question takes 90 seconds. You don't need an hour — you need intent.
The Nice Manager Trap	<i>"You did really well overall — just a few small things, nothing major." (When the call was actually poor.)</i>	Fear of demotivating the MR. Conflict avoidance. Wanting to be liked.	Kind is not vague. Ask: 'What did YOU feel could have been stronger?' The MR usually knows.
The Diagnosis Trap	<i>"The problem is your call structure." / "The issue is your relationship with this doctor."</i>	Managers pattern-match fast. They see the problem in 30 seconds and think diagnosing = helping.	Stay in the Reality step longer. Ask three questions before you name what you see.
The Script Trap	<i>"Okay, Goal — done. Reality — done. Options? Okay. Way Forward?"</i>	When new to a model, the model becomes the point — not the MR.	GROW is a compass, not a train track. Follow the MR's energy, not the checklist.

Section 8 — Transition Statements (Word-for-Word)

Use these to move between segments so the session feels like one continuous conversation, not a sequence of topics.

After Opening Hook → WIIFM

"Manoj's story isn't unique. Before we go further, let me tell you what you'll actually get from the next 60 minutes — because your time matters, and I want to earn it."

After Review vs. Coach Activity → GROW Introduction

"So if reviewing isn't coaching — what does coaching actually look like in the field? Let me give you a structure. Four steps. One per coaching conversation. Simple enough to use in a car ride, powerful enough to change a career."

After GROW Introduction → Dialogue Demonstration

"I could keep explaining GROW — but you'll understand it better by seeing it. I'm going to read you two versions of the same conversation. Same MR. Same doctor. Two very different managers. Listen carefully — and ask yourself which conversation you've been having."

After Dialogue Debrief → Role Play

"You've seen it. You've analysed it. Now comes the part that will actually stick — you do it. And I promise you, it will feel uncomfortable at first. That discomfort is not a sign something is wrong. That's the feeling of learning."

After Role Play → Coaching Traps

"Before we move to your commitments — let me name a few things I noticed in those role-plays. I saw some patterns. I want to talk about them honestly — because these patterns happen to all of us. Including me."

After Coaching Traps → Commitment Card

"Awareness without action is just guilt. So let's close today by turning everything into something specific you will actually do. Not next quarter. Next week."

Section 9 — Field Coaching Commitment Card

Print one per participant. Can also be shared as a WhatsApp message template post-session for follow-up.

MY FIELD COACHING COMMITMENT CARD

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. The MR I will coach this week:

2. The GROW question I will ask first:

3. The coaching trap I will consciously avoid:

4. How I'll know it was coaching and not a review:

Accountability partner: _____ *Signed:* _____

Section 10 — Closing Script

Deliver verbatim or in your own words. Put your notes down. Make eye contact.

"Let me close the way I started — with Manoj."

"Three months after his RBM's conversation, Manoj tried something different on a JFW with his MR Arvind. After a tough call with a KOL who had completely switched to a competitor, Manoj didn't say a word in the car. He waited."

"Then he asked: 'Arvind, what do you think happened in there?'"

"Arvind talked for four minutes. About the doctor's history with the brand. About an MSL visit that had gone wrong. About his own discomfort since the product switch."

"Manoj said nothing except: 'That's a lot to carry. What do you think you'll do differently with him next time?'"

"Arvind had his best month that quarter."

"Manoj didn't teach him anything that afternoon. He just created the space for Arvind to teach himself."

"That is what a coaching conversation is. Not a performance review with better vocabulary. A conversation that helps another human being hear themselves think."

"You all have the capacity to do this. You just needed a reminder of what it looks and sounds like. Go have that conversation. I look forward to hearing how it goes."

— END OF FACILITATOR GUIDE —

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