



International Coaching Community

Standards and Ethics

ICC Standards and Ethics

This code provides the broad principles to which the ICC subscribes. Principles are a code of action that guide behavior based on values. The principles are based on Common Law, in other words they do not lay down in detail what the coach must do, but gives guiding principles within which the coach can move freely. Agreement to this code is a prerequisite to membership of the ICC. This code always acts within the context of the laws of the country where the coach works.

The ICC is not responsible for the work of the certified coaches, nor does it monitor them on an ongoing basis. Certified coaches are responsible for their own work and own results. However, The ICC will pay attention to complaints against the standards, if they are brought to our attention. If these are proved, the coach will be barred from the ICC. This is in addition to any other action that might be taken against them by the originator of the complaint.

Standards and Ethics

Because we are interdependent with others, every action has two consequences. It has a consequence for others and a consequence for yourself.

Every action changes you as well as the world.

Ethics are the principles of action that you apply to yourself. Therefore ethics cannot be imposed from the outside. The reward or sanction for ethics is in the actions themselves.

Standards cover the principles of actions that apply to others. They are the visible results of your actions as they affect others. Some ethical principles also have implications for standards, in that if you act unethically, you will also harm others or act against their interests and this will be visible.

Ethics and standards are built on the presuppositions of coaching.

Coaches act as if these are true in their coaching.

- There is no failure, only feedback.
Failure is only a judgment about short term results. A client never fails.
- If you want to understand, act.
- Action is the answer, the learning is in the doing.
- We already have all the resources we need or can create them.

- There are no unresourceful clients, only unresourceful states of mind. The client's deeper wisdom is waiting to be discovered.
- All behavior has a purpose.
- Actions are not random; clients are always trying to achieve something, although they may not be clear what that is.
- Having a choice is better than having no choice.
- If clients are given a better choice according to their values and beliefs, then they will take it.
- You are doing the best you can - and you could probably do better.
- You create your own reality.
- Clients operate as if those mental maps are reality. The mental maps they create can limit their potential more than any real constraints from the outside world.
- Coaching is an equal, synergistic partnership.
- If you think one and one only make two, it is only because you have forgotten the power of the 'and'.
- The client has the answers. The coach has the questions.

The following guidelines are about ethics and standards; they condense a set of values and their consequent behaviors into a series of principles. These values have been shown to benefit all those both inside and outside the community. The Community accepts these principles and the consequent restrictions by consensus, without such consensus they are impossible to maintain. We expect all coaches in the ICC to act ethically and to uphold the following standards in their coaching work.

Ethical Principles

1. Trust

At the heart of every coaching relationship is trust. The client must trust the coach for coaching to work at its best. Trust is built over time; the coach must show themselves to be trustworthy. To be trustworthy, the coach needs to demonstrate competence and integrity

Competence

- The coach to the best of their ability with every client.
- The client will act to the best of their ability
- The coach demonstrates the core competences
- The coach makes effort to stay updated with developments in coaching methodology.
- The coach is aware of their level of skills and always works to improve those skills.
- A coach is aware of their own personal problems and ensures that they do not adversely affect their professional coaching relationship with their clients. If necessary they will obtain professional help at an early stage, either from another coach or from an appropriate professional. If these problems are causing problems in dealing with their clients, they will consider limiting or terminating their coaching activities.

Integrity

- The coach keeps their promises, acts responsibly and helps wider social community of which they are part.
- The coach acts consistently and honors agreements
- The coach keeps the client's material confidential except where otherwise authorized by the client or required by law.

2. Respect for the client

- The coach will treat clients with dignity and respect.
- The coach never takes advantage of the client personally, sexually or financially.
- The coach will obtain permission from any client before using their names or endorsements as references.
- The coach will not seek to impose their own beliefs, values or views on the client.

3. Honesty

- The coach will be aware of their level of skills and qualifications and will

- advertise, market and present them in an honest way.
- The coach will only accept those clients when there they perceive a match between the client needs and their skills.

4. Professional respect

- The coach will not do anything that harms the general understanding or acceptance of coaching as a profession.
- The coach will not claim or imply outcomes for coaching that they cannot congruently assert.

Standards of the ICC

These guidelines are for all professional members of the ICC. They prescribe minimum standards of practice to be followed by members, and coaches can provide their services only within the context of ICC standards.

1. Competence

- Coaches will give their best skills to each of their clients, and demonstrate the core competences in their coaching.
- They will strive to be aware of current best business practices, new technologies, legal requirements and standards as related to the coaching profession.
- They will seek to improve and expand their skills through reading, peer contact and training.
- Coaches will always be aware of their skills, their strengths and their limitations. They will only accept work that they believe themselves competent to perform.
- They will not make claims that they cannot congruently assert. Nor will they claim any skills, credentials or qualifications that they do not hold, nor knowingly allow others to claim them on their behalf, either in written documents or verbal statements.

2. Respect for clients

- Coaches will respect the rights of others to hold differing opinions and beliefs from their own. They will not attempt to argue their own beliefs, values or opinions as correct.
- At the beginning of the relationship, the coach will ensure as far as possible that the client understands the coaching agreement between them.
- Coaches will not unfairly discriminate against clients on any basis.
- Coaches will not take advantage of the client personally, sexually or financially.
- The coach will obtain permission from any client before using their

- names or endorsements as references.
- The coach honors all agreements and keeps their promises to clients.

3. The profession of coaching

- Coaches will respect the rights of others in copyrights, intellectual property, trademarks and patents. They will acknowledge the contributions of others where appropriate.
- Coaches will not willingly engage in any activity that could bring the profession of coaching into disrepute. If they learn of misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they will take reasonable steps to correct that.

4. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

- The coach keeps the client's material confidential except where otherwise authorized by the client, required by law, or another compelling reason such as imminent harm to others. This material may be verbal in face-to-face session, or by technology such as telephone, computers, or voice mail.
- Wherever possible a coach will not take on professional obligations where pre-existing relationships could create a conflict of interest. If such a conflict arises, the coach will do their best to resolve it within the framework of the Ethical guidelines and Standards.
- Coaches may use client material, in training and written material, provided the client is in no way identifiable.
- Coaches will disclose to a client all fees that they receive from third parties as a result of referrals or advice they give concerning that client.
- Where professionally appropriate, coaches may cooperate with other professionals to help their client better, always with the client's permission.
- When the coach is asked to provide services to a person or organization at the request of a third party, they will carefully evaluate the relationship between the two and determine that there is no conflict of interest with regard to the coach's differing roles or issues of confidentiality.
- A coach's employer may not be the same as their client (For example when a business engages and pays the coach to coach one or more people in the business). In these cases a coach will clarify in advance with both client and employer the feedback they will give to the employer, the form it will take and the results that the employer wants. They will ensure that these are agreed in advance by coach, client and employer and do not breach the confidentiality or trust of the client. If not agreement can be reached; the coach will decline the work.

5. Feedback and progress

- Coaches will take reasonable steps to measure their clients' progress. If

the client is not progressing, they will discuss this openly with the client as part of the coaching relationship.

- Coaches will create and keep adequate record of their work with clients to meet professional and legal requirements.
- Coaches will refer clients to other professionals when relevant, such as a counselor, therapist or doctor when they know of a problem that needs such treatment.
- Coaches always seek to avoid harm or danger to themselves, clients or others in their work.
- When there is an interruption to the coaching, the coach will make reasonable efforts to make other arrangements for the client. If the interruption is a long one, this may involve finding the client an interim coach from within the ICC.
- The coaching relationship is terminated by agreement between coach and client, usually at the end of a prepaid contract. If the coaching is terminated by the coach before the end of such a contract, they will repay any fees paid in advance for which they will not be supplying coaching services. If the coaching is terminated by the client before the end of such a contract, the client will pay fees in lieu of notice if previously agreed.

6. Fees

- The coach will clearly inform the client about the logistics, fees and scheduling of the coaching relationship.
- A coach is free to charge whatever fee they want. They disclose these fees as early as possible in the coaching relationship.
- If there is a problem with the payment of the fees, the coach takes reasonable steps to discuss this problem in advance and decide with the client what to do. If the client does not pay the agreed fees, the coach can take appropriate legal measures to collect them.