

Development of a Coaching Competency Framework

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Abstract

Introduction: Competency models should be kept up to date in order to ensure that they align with how the job is currently being performed.

Method: This work describes a robust job analysis process that informed an update to an existing coaching competency model. More than 1,300 coaches from across the globe provided input to the job analysis through three face-to-face workshops, one virtual workshop, and a comprehensive validation survey.

Results: This large-scale research initiative validated that much of the content in the existing competency model remains important to the practice of coaching today, although new themes and elements did emerge from the job analysis.

Discussion: The new themes include a paramount emphasis on ethical behavior and confidentiality, the importance of a coaching mindset and ongoing reflective practice, the critical distinctions between various levels and types of coaching agreements, the criticality of partnership between coach and client, and the importance of systemic, contextual, and cultural awareness.

Conclusions: These updates resulted in a simplified and streamlined model that reflects emergent themes in the coaching profession. This model will be useful for strengthening and supporting critical aspects of coaching, such as training, development, and performance assessment, in the coming years and beyond.

Keywords: coaching skills, coaching competencies, job analysis

Introduction

The definitive determination of specific dynamics, factors and interpersonal approaches that foster highly effective coaching have eluded researchers for years. At the heart of this is the fact that small actions can have profound effects. One simple question from a coach can spur a client to reflect on mental and emotional interpretations and experiences previously unexplored and ripe for reinterpretation. Significant changes can be facilitated by the coach taking the right action at the right time. This is one reason why extensive scientific research on the coaching process and competencies is needed: to fully decode and decipher the impact diverse and nuanced coaching tasks and approaches can have in varied coaching sessions. While the development of a coaching competency framework could be undertaken quickly with a select set of “thought leaders,” a truly robust and scientifically rigorous process requires the involvement and collection of data from a large sample of coaches from across the globe.

Job Analysis and Competency Models

To understand the underlying dynamics, strategies and approaches that are utilized in highly effective coaching sessions, we turn to one of the oldest tools in industrial and

organizational psychology: job analysis (Wilson, 2007).

Job analysis is a long-established process that reveals the important details of a job including required tasks and the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) needed by workers to carry out a specific job or role. Numerous excellent reviews of job analysis processes have been completed by Sackett and Laczko (2003), Brannick, et al. (2007), Wilson (2007), Schippmann (2010) and others.

At its core, a job analysis is a systematic procedure for examining and documenting work activities (tasks) and the worker attributes (KSAOs) required to perform those activities. As such, job analysis data provide a vital foundation for competency model development. Job analyses can also be used to develop a KSAO model that would be primarily focused on the capabilities of the coach rather than on coaching behavior. While competency models or KSAO models can be used successfully, competency models have become preferred tools within the coaching profession and among management and human resources professionals, due to the ease with which they are understood and readily applied.

For many years, a common understanding of what qualifies as a competency has remained elusive. Our efforts are guided by Schippmann's (2010) succinct description: "Competencies are the measurable, organizationally relevant, and behaviorally based capabilities of people" (p. 198).

In addition to analyzing the work (e.g., tasks) and/or the worker's qualities (e.g. KSAOs) it can be informative to contrast a competency model with a practice model, which is more comprehensive and overarching (as seen in Hoffart & Woods, 1996) and includes events and actions outside of coaching sessions such as marketing and client scheduling. In the present context, we're focused on defining a coaching competency model that captures key tasks, actions and approaches that are applied and demonstrated within coaching sessions.

There are many coaching competency models currently in use, including those from the Association for Coaching (2012), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC, 2015), the International Coaching Federation (ICF; n.d.), and the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (2007). All of these models share key elements that include coaching ethics, coach-client agreements, client assessment, the coach-client relationship,

communication, and facilitation of client learning and results.

Models, or frameworks, such as these can be used for training, assessment, certification, and determining the level of coaching expertise. While coaching competency models have been in use for more than 20 years (Auerbach, 2005) and continue to have strong support, their support is not necessarily universal. Bachkirova and Smith (2015) discuss the need to shift the focus from observable competencies to more internally-focused capabilities in order to provide freedom to coaches as they carry out their work with each individual client.

This differentiation, if adopted for the assessment of coaches would mean that the focus would not be on the results that the coach achieves, but on his/her ability to opt of [sic] an action, choice or behaviour... This makes the assessment much more difficult. Competencies are manifested in behaviours and decisions in particular contexts and require repetitive observations of these to infer their stability. (Bachkirova & Smith., 2015, p. 130)

As pointed out above, it would be much more difficult to assess coach capabilities than competencies, and further, it is not clear that there would be a benefit to doing so. Job analysis is a time-proven schema and competency models have served the industrial and organizational psychology as well as human resource (HR) profession well over many decades. We do not currently see a compelling reason to change approaches.

Data used to inform the development of coaching competency models is frequently collected via survey (Auerbach, 2005; Bono, et al., 2009; Newsom & Dent, 2011; Vandaveer, et al, 2016), although interview data have also been brought into the mix (Vandaveer, et al., 2016). Qualitative data are useful in this exercise as they can more readily capture and detail concepts, meaning, and nuanced descriptions of the coaching experience (Lune & Berg; 2017).

The coaching process and methods by which client shifts are facilitated can vary and be challenging to specify. For example, how do you characterize exceptional coaching when a coach uses just a few competencies, yet they have a profound impact on a client? Some coaches use cognitive models with clients (Kauffman & Hodgetts, 2016), whereas others take a more Rogerian approach (Rogers, 1951) and allow a shift to emerge from the client. Further, a coach's use of specific skills frequently changes over the arc of their career

(Hullinger & DiGirolamo, 2020).

Aspects such as these greatly complicate the development of a coaching competency model. In the sections that follow, we describe a rigorous job analysis that includes the analysis of survey and interview data to support updates to the ICF coaching competency model described herein.

This Study

In this investigation, our research question was: What comprehensive set of competencies is required for effective coaching? It is important to point out that for this study, we are using the ICF definition of coaching: “Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (ICF, n.d.b). This means that we are looking at coaching from a more Rogerian viewpoint (Rogers, 1951) and staying away from prescriptive approaches such as mentoring (giving advice to others less experienced than yourself) and consulting (evaluating and recommending specific courses of action).

Method

The study used a mixed methods approach that was carried out by four ICF research staff and two consultants from an independent third-party organization (Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO)). Two of the researchers held ICF coaching credentials and another had previous coaching experience. Brannick et al. (2007) suggest several methods of job analysis data collection, including interviewing individuals, group interviews, and questionnaires.

For our study, interviews and workshops (a form of group interview) provided a rich source of data as well as ample time for interactive discussion, exploration and clarification. The validation survey data provided strong empirical evidence for the lists of tasks, knowledge domains, abilities, and other characteristics identified during earlier phases of the job analysis.

Our research involved the following phases:

- I. Semi-structured interviews with experienced coaches
- II. Critical incident workshop

- III. Task and knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics (KSAOs) workshop
- IV. Task and KSAO validation survey
- V. Task and KSAO linkage exercise
- VI. Competency model update workshop
- VII. Competency model development
- VIII. Competency model validation

Semi-structured Interviews

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of coaches from around the globe including North America, Europe and Oceania. Each had between 12 and 28 years of experience. One coach had no prior experience using ICF Core Competencies. The purpose of this exercise was to gain greater clarity of the overall coaching experience as well as to better define the levels of coaching and path a coach may take to progress from novice to expert. Example questions included: "In terms of your own coaching, please share some of the key things you do during the coaching session—the behaviors you engage in—in other words things someone could observe if they watched you coach," and "what sort of structured processes do you routinely use during your coaching (e.g., activities to evoke or set goals, or to hold the client accountable)?" The interview transcriptions were coded using MAXQDA software (Verbi GmbH, 2019) to succinctly capture themes articulated in the interviews.

Critical Incident Workshop

This workshop was designed to gather critical work behaviors in order to generate a “bottom-up” picture of coaching. Coaches who participated in the workshop were recruited from a list of ICF expert coaches and included two coaches who were more novice, but able to clearly articulate coaching dynamics and their coaching approach. Several coaches were included who did not previously have experience with the ICF Core Competencies in order to prevent groupthink (Janis, 1972) from occurring. While it was necessary to find coaches who were very experienced, it was also important to find coaches who could discern and articulate nuances and important elements that promote client change.

Coaches were prescreened to determine their suitability for the workshop. Diversity of gender and geography were important selection criteria.

Sixteen coaches located across the globe with between three and 15 years of experience were recruited. They possessed diverse academic backgrounds and included two participants with PhDs, nine with a master's degree and three with a bachelor's degree.

The primary goal of the workshop was to gather a collection of brief scenarios or “critical incidents” (Flanagan, 1954) that describe common coaching behaviors. The panel of experienced coaches generated more than 280 critical incidents. The research team then developed an initial set of task descriptions and KSAO statements based upon the critical incidents. Four study researchers coded the critical incidents to identify common and underlying themes; two used the MAXQDA software and two used more traditional coding methods.

Task and KSAO Workshop

A second workshop was held to further refine the task and KSAO lists generated on the basis of the codes resulting from critical incident data analysis. For this phase, 13 coaches with between three and 15 years of experience were recruited from around the globe. The coaches reviewed the list of existing tasks and KSAOs and included additional tasks and characteristics they felt were missing. The final tally was 104 coaching tasks and 74 coach KSAO characteristics required to perform the practice of coaching.

Task and KSAO Validation Survey

A global online survey was administered to coaches to rate the importance of both tasks and KSAOs, as well as the frequency of task performance. Two forms of the survey were created with the order of items reversed between the forms in order to reduce order effects and minimize possible effects of survey fatigue. To ascertain task frequency, respondents were asked: “In general, in what percentage of coaching sessions do you engage in this behavior?” The response categories were: 0%, 1- 20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-99%, and 100%. To determine task and KSAO importance, respondents were asked: “How important is this behavior {ability, knowledge, characteristic} to your work as a coach?” The response categories were: Unimportant, somewhat important, important, very important, extremely important, and essential.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked a single open-ended question: “Are

there any tasks or knowledge, skills, abilities or other characteristics not included in the survey that you think should have been included?”

A link to the survey was sent to 41,749 individuals. Additionally, ICF shared a link with individuals known to the researchers with a request to share it with others who may be interested in participating. The survey and link were also promoted on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter (now X) by ICF and partners. The survey was open for approximately one month.

In total, 2,865 individuals began the survey. After data cleaning was complete, 1,262 sets of task data and 1,091 sets of KSAO data were available. Survey respondents were diverse with 43% from North America and 25% from Europe. About 74% (935) of the respondents held ICF credentials, 8% (95) held coaching credentials from other organizations; 67% (756) were female.

Survey data were analyzed to identify a smaller set of “core” tasks and KSAOs. The research team analyzed data from several different angles to determine the tasks and KSAOs that were essential enough to be designated as “core.” Mean values of importance and frequency were calculated based on these data and cluster and Rasch model analyses were performed. The task frequency and task importance mean values were highly correlated (Pearson $r = .95$, Spearman’s $\rho = .90$). No meaningful clusters appeared in the data.

Ultimately, 79 tasks and 56 KSAOs were identified as core. No significant themes were identified from a review of responses to the open-ended question. The core tasks and KSAOs are provided in Appendix 1.

Task and KSAO Linkage Exercise

In the next phase, a group of coaches from North America and Europe were recruited to participate in a virtual workshop. The coaches had varied levels of experience. The majority had between 11 and 20 years of experience. The workshop included an exercise to link the core tasks and KSAOs—that is, to indicate the KSAOs necessary to carry out each task. The coaches had three weeks to complete this task. These linkages will be used to develop coaching assessments under the new competency model. When developing assessments that are rooted in job analysis outcomes, it is very useful to know precisely which KSAOs

are required to perform specific tasks.

The findings from this linkage exercise indicate that nearly all KSAOs were linked to at least one task. The KSAOs with the greatest number of linkages to tasks included curiosity, active listening, and verbal communication.

Competency Model Update Workshop

Summaries of all workshop and survey data were provided to 10 very experienced coaches from around the world prior to a workshop in order to collect feedback and suggestions for competency model updates. Given that job analyses serve as the foundation for a variety of initiatives likely to have a significant impact on many stakeholders, such as training, professional development, and assessment efforts, it was important to gather input from experienced coaches on how practice analysis data could best inform competency model updates.

Competency Model Development

Four ICF researchers reviewed data collected from the workshops, the linkage exercise and validation survey and built a new, cohesive model using the previous model as a base.

Three principles guided this effort:

- 1) The competencies are for coaches at all levels (i.e., all credentialing levels, all stages of the coaching journey), but they may be expressed differently by coaches at different levels.
- 2) The competencies are meant to be guides for coaching and not prescriptive.
- 3) The competencies must represent “what” happens and not “how.”

An effort was made to ensure all of the core tasks and KSAOs were captured in the competencies and sub-competencies and that themes from all of the workshops were incorporated. A review and comparison of previous and new competency models showed that virtually all of the concepts from the previous model were retained.

Adjustments to the new model were all backed by data.

Competency Model Validation

Once researchers reached a consensus on the updated model, validation reviews were completed by 26 experienced coaches from around the globe including individuals not currently affiliated with ICF. Some coaches represented coach training programs and some were focused on diversity and inclusion issues. The resulting comments were considered and many small adjustments were made to the model as a result of this feedback.

Results

Overview

Several emergent themes guided the evolution and conceptualization of the new model. Data provided strong evidence that many coaches consider ethical behavior and confidentiality paramount, essentially confirming the first competency in the existing ICF coaching core competency model. Secondly, a significant amount of convergent evidence indicated three key types of coaching agreements: agreements with an organization, for each client engagement and for individual sessions. Third, overarching themes drawn from the workshop data and validated by the survey were that (a) more weight be given to the concept of a coach-client partnership, (b) the client has an equal voice in the process, and (c) both the coach and client may need to hold each other accountable. Fourth, based on the data gathered in the job analysis and a previous study on the coaching journey (Hullinger & DiGirolamo, 2020), it is evident that continuous learning and maintaining a reflective practice (i.e., reflection, awareness, self-regulation) are important development activities for coaches. Fifth, data highlighted the importance of client context and culture, including family structures, values and an overall, holistic view of the client.

Two of the competencies (i.e., Demonstrates Ethical Practice and Embodies a Coaching Mindset) are “worker” focused, whereas the remaining competencies are “work” focused. Consistent with the definition of work-focused competencies promoted by Boyatzis (1982), we aimed to identify competencies that were “effective, specific actions or behaviors.” (p. 13.)

The critical incidents developed in the first workshop demonstrated that coaches evoke awareness or insight in clients in more ways than by just asking powerful questions. An example one coach provided was the use of a snow globe as a metaphor for one's brain. Thoughts in our mind are like snow in the snow globe. They are designed to settle on their own when we don't pay attention to them and then a better thought appears.

In the final workshop, the coaches confirmed that powerful questions are one method of evoking awareness. Therefore, the existing competency of Powerful Questions was brought into an Evokes Awareness competency, expanding it to make it less prescriptive and more inclusive of ways in which an insight may be evoked and to better reflect the work that coaches currently practice.

The previous competency of Direct Communication was discussed in several workshops, however it was not highly validated by survey data. Consequently, this competency was subsumed into sub-competencies of the updated model.

Finally, data showed that coaches frequently partner with clients to develop action plans and facilitate goal-setting and accountability simultaneously, providing justification for condensing these tasks into a single competency. It was also found that coaches spend more time listening and evoking insights than working on client actions, goal-setting, and managing progress and accountability. The resulting model has eight competencies, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Updated ICF Competencies

Competency	Definition
1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice	Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching
2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset	Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered.
3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements	Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session
4. Cultivates Trust and Safety	Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

5. Maintains Presence	Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident.
6. Listens Actively	Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression.
7. Evokes Awareness	Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy.
8. Facilitates Client Growth	Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

One key comment that emerged from the competency model review was the determination that a significant amount of overlap existed among the sub-competencies. Sub-competencies were revisited and after thoughtful consideration, some of the wording was adjusted; however, it was determined that some degree of overlap was unavoidable between competencies. The full competency model with supporting sub-competencies is provided in Appendix 2. Following is a description of important aspects of each competency.

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Maintaining a strong ethical practice and client confidentiality was a theme repeated across all elements of the job analysis. These elements are considered to be foundational to the coaching relationship. This is especially important given that nearly all coaches will encounter ethical dilemmas at some point in their practice (St. John- Brooks, 2010). Two recent research studies revealed how pervasive ethical dilemmas are among contemporary coaches. Combined, these studies found that 191 coaches reported over 240 actual dilemmas (Sass, 2016; St. John-Brooks, 2010).

Maintaining sensitivity to a client's identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs was another factor that emerged in the interviews and was strongly supported by survey data and the final workshop. This was added as a sub-competency.

Survey data also showed support for a crisp delineation between coaching and other helping modalities and emphasized the importance of referring clients to other providers when appropriate. As a result, the following two sub-competencies were added: (a)

“Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions” and (b) “refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.”

2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

This was a new competency that emerged and manifested in all phases of the job analysis and was validated in previous research (Hullinger et al., 2020; DiGirolamo et al., 2016). Important elements of this competency include being willing to engage in continuous learning and development, reflective practice (Hullinger et al., 2019), self-regulation, and seeking outside help when necessary.

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Near the end of a lengthy coaching career, Lee (with Frisch, 2015) stressed the importance of coaching agreements (contracts). All elements of the job analysis supported the continued use of agreements. The current competency on agreements (i.e., Establishing the Coaching Agreement) has been expanded to incorporate overarching agreements with organizations, coaching engagement agreements with individual clients and client agreements within sessions. Data gathered during the job analysis indicated a significant evolution had taken place in the types of agreements and contracts coaches use.

At the outset, coaches often interact with potential clients to make a mutual decision about whether coaching is an appropriate activity to achieve the desired client goals. In cases of coaching for organizations, when the decision is reached to move forward with coaching, an agreement may be made between the coach and organization for one or more engagements with specific or potential clients. In these cases, the agreement between the coach and the organization often includes elements of logistics, fees and confidentiality.

In cases where a coach engages with clients directly, factors detailed in the agreement will be agreed upon between the coach and client. Coaches often use engagement agreements with clients whether or not an organization is involved. These agreements center on client goals and often include other elements such as confidentiality, detailed logistics and commitment to the coaching engagement.

Lastly, many coaches frequently begin a session with an informal, verbal agreement regarding what should be covered in the session. These points were summarized well by the coaches in the final workshop and are reflected in the updated competency model.

4. Cultivates Trust and Safety

The development of a safe and trusting relationship with the client appeared in five of the core tasks from the validation survey and frequently in interviews and survey comments. The coaching and therapy research continually shows strong correlations between relationship and positive outcomes (e.g., de Haan et al., 2016; Wampold, 2015).

Important elements within this competency include an understanding of the client's context (such as work or family environment), identity, perceptions, talents, and insights. Additionally, the coach must show support, empathy, openness, and transparency.

5. Maintains Presence

This competency remained largely unchanged from the previous model and its importance was validated in all phases of the job analysis. Interestingly, recent coaching journey research highlighted a trend toward more presence-based practices as coaches became more experienced (Hullinger & DiGirolamo, 2020). Survey data analyzed for this study corroborates these findings. Important elements in maintaining presence continue to be: (a) A focus on the client, (b) openness, (c) curiosity, (d) self-regulation, (e) confidence in working with strong emotions, (f) comfort in working in a space of not knowing, and (g) allowing space for silence, pause, or reflection.

6. Listens Actively

The critical incident data revealed that listening remains central to effective coaching and is one of the three essential elements of coaching (DiGirolamo & Guastello, 2019). Further, a multitude of core tasks and KSAOs included elements of active listening.

7. Evokes Awareness

The critical incident workshop data illustrated how often coaches use a variety of techniques to evoke awareness in a client. While powerful questions are very useful, they

are not the sole method used. For example, one critical incident illustrated how an experiential, space-relational technique helped a client gather new insight into how to look at a specific situation. Conceptually similar, Reams and Reams (2015) discuss how “...these coaching journeys would use awareness raising processes in an attempt to facilitate movement...” The Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) processes, as well as the work of Martin, et al. (2015) describe very specific protocols coaches can follow to raise awareness through “personality change coaching.”

Additional elements under this competency include noticing what is working for the client, adjusting the approach when necessary, and helping the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking, or emotion.

A controversial aspect of coaching is that of giving advice. While many coach training programs actively discourage this, in our analysis coaches revealed it can be helpful to share observations, feelings, or experiences at times to help the client move forward. Because of this tension in the field, we were very interested in exploring this element, observing what the data would show, and resolving this dilemma in an updated coaching competency model.

Data showed evidence of sharing at all stages of the job analysis. We discussed this issue with coaches in the final workshop and arrived at two conclusions. First, it is acceptable to share observations, insights or feelings with clients after getting permission to do so as long as coaches have no attachment to it. Second, the sharing must broaden (rather than narrow) the range of options or view for the client.

8. Facilitates Client Growth

This competency combines three previous competencies (i.e., Designing Actions, Planning & Goal Setting, and Managing Progress & Accountability) to more accurately reflect how coaches typically work with clients. This provides for a focus on the client as being ultimately responsible for the initial change as well as the sustained change, which was emphasized in the final workshop. Koroleva (2016) describes the elements required to promote sustainable change, and these were reflected in the job analysis data.

Limitations

While a range of professional coaches were included in the process, the majority who participated were associated with ICF and that may have influenced the associated outcomes of this effort. Secondly, we were not able to differentiate the tasks and KSAOs demonstrated in low efficacy and high efficacy coaching. Finally, the study was conducted using an evolution of an existing coaching competency model, which may have impacted and inhibited respondents from proposing more radical shifts to the updated model.

Future Research

This well-validated model provides an excellent foundation for continued coaching competency and measurement work. By measuring outcomes and correlating competencies with sub-competencies, a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of coaching dynamics and the coaching experience has been defined. While good outcome measures were not available at the time of the study, recent research has revealed a significant set of validated measures that may prove helpful to future efforts (DiGirolamo, Barney, & Tkach, 2019). This foundation can also be used to develop and validate coaching skills for managers and leaders, teams, and more. At the outset, we stated that the competency framework is meant for all levels of coaching. However, this framework could be used to assess and determine coaching levels in concert with behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS; Schwab et al., 1975) or another nuanced rating system. These are just a few examples of the potential research and practical applications that are now possible using this validated model.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the updated coaching competency model is simplified and more streamlined than the previous model, while reflecting the emergent themes prevalent in the coaching profession. Moreover, the updated model uses task-based language to define each competency and sub-competency to ensure the model is clear and easy to understand. While more research is required to delineate all aspects and dynamics that underscore coaching sessions, this model sheds important light on core competencies, knowledge and practices of effective coaches. As such, it is a powerful tool and reference for strengthening and supporting critical aspects of coaching—professional development,

training and education, and research—in the coming years and beyond.

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Appendix 1: Core Tasks and KSAOs

Tasks

- 1) Work with potential clients and other stakeholders to make a professional decision that ensures coaching is an appropriate intervention.
- 2) Explain what coaching is and is not to potential clients and other stakeholders and describe the process to them.
- 3) Determine how well suited you and a potential client are for each other.
- 4) Establish administrative guidelines for coaching agreements with clients and other stakeholders; including logistics, use of technology and associated contingencies, fees, timing, environment, and methods.
- 5) Establish professional guidelines for coaching agreements with clients and other stakeholders; including the roles and responsibilities of the coach, client, and stakeholders as well as what remains confidential to whom.
- 6) Co-create the interpersonal guidelines, including the boundaries and behavioral expectations of the coaching relationship with the client and other stakeholders.
- 7) Identify and agree on the initial objectives for coaching engagements.
- 8) Maintain confidentiality as outlined in the agreement.
- 9) Revisit and revise coaching agreements, if needed.
- 10) End coaching contracts and agreements as circumstances dictate.
- 11) Revisit and revise the coaching and session objectives to ensure continued relevance.
- 12) Identify and discuss any issues and challenges that clients are experiencing that may be helped by or require a different intervention (e.g., counseling, therapy, consultation).
- 13) Monitor the time in coaching sessions and adjust the pacing as needed to ensure objectives for each session are addressed within the allotted time.
- 14) End the coaching relationship in a way that honors and celebrates the experience.
- 15) Close coaching sessions by summarizing what was covered and discussing next steps.
- 16) Use questions or observations to bring clients back to the coaching agenda.
- 17) Notice one's own thought processes.
- 18) Notice one's own physical and emotional reactions to things clients say or do.
- 19) Reflect on one's coaching practice to identify areas for future improvement.
- 20) Consider the ideas and thoughts that come to one's mind before acting upon

- them.
- 21) Use awareness of one's intuition and self to benefit clients.
 - 22) Adapt one's coaching approach when the current course of action is not working.
 - 23) Recognize situations when it would be helpful to seek guidance from other sources, such as one's mentors or supervisors.
 - 24) Keep personal and cultural biases from interfering with coaching.
 - 25) Manage one's emotions to best serve clients.
 - 26) Prepare for coaching sessions by engaging in activities to focus and center oneself.
 - 27) Consider clients' personalities and what you know about the clients when deciding what actions to take.
 - 28) Consider what strategies or techniques work and do not work with a particular client when deciding what actions to take.
 - 29) Consider clients' developmental readiness when deciding what actions to take.
 - 30) Determine the correct moment to challenge clients or to use techniques to provoke awareness or insight.
 - 31) Notice clients' energy levels and engagement during coaching sessions.
 - 32) Notice clients' verbal and non-verbal cues during coaching sessions.
 - 33) Notice trends in clients' behaviors and emotions across sessions (i.e., "connect the dots") to identify themes and patterns.
 - 34) Notice changes or discrepancies in clients' stated coaching goals.
 - 35) Recognize when there is "more to the story" than what clients have shared or broader issues that would benefit from being explored.
 - 36) Listen to clients to determine the full meaning behind what they are saying.
 - 37) Pay attention to what is working to move clients forward.
 - 38) Remain present with clients.
 - 39) Reflect or summarize to clients what you heard them say.
 - 40) Share observations about changes or patterns in clients' behaviors, body language, or emotions.
 - 41) Acknowledge that clients are individuals with unique talents and insights.
 - 42) Acknowledge changes in clients' emotional, attentional, or physical states.
 - 43) Acknowledge client successes, growth, development, or progress toward goals.
 - 44) Acknowledge that something is challenging for clients.
 - 45) Acknowledge that clients are the ones responsible for their own choices.
 - 46) Ask clients what goals they want to accomplish.
 - 47) Ask clients about emotions they may be experiencing (i.e., what is causing it, what lessons are there) or how they feel about something.

- 48) Ask clients how an observation you made resonated with them or impacted them.
- 49) Ask clients to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do.
- 50) Ask clients if there is more that they would like to share about a specific topic or issue to generate clarity.
- 51) Ask clients what they notice about themselves or others.
- 52) Ask clients about their perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, including how these domains impact each other.
- 53) Ask clients about their interpretations of an event or what story they are telling themselves about it.
- 54) Ask clients what is or could be different in terms of energy, focus, or some type of change.
- 55) Ask clients what is holding them back from doing something.
- 56) Ask clients what they would like to get out of the session.
- 57) Ask clients to imagine how something might unfold, to imagine a future state, or envision how something "could be."
- 58) Ask clients what actions they are planning to take and what they hope will happen as a result.
- 59) Ask clients who or what resources might be able to help them reach their goals or support them in taking certain actions.
- 60) Ask clients what they learned after something happened or after they took certain actions.
- 61) Ask clients to share feedback about the coaching process, including what has been useful to them or what is not working.
- 62) Invite clients to share more about a thought or a feeling they have expressed.
- 63) Create or allow space for silence, pauses, and reflection.
- 64) Use coach- or client-generated metaphors (physical or imagined) to increase client insight and awareness.
- 65) Refocus clients' perspectives when they get stuck.
- 66) Help clients identify the factors that lead to specific patterns of behavior, thinking, or emotion.
- 67) Support clients by helping them reframe negatives into positives.
- 68) Invite clients to share what has happened since the last session.
- 69) Use techniques with clients to generate awareness or new insights.
- 70) Work with clients to integrate new awareness or insight into their worldview and interactions with others.

- 71) Challenge clients in order to provoke awareness or insight.
- 72) Work with clients to identify action steps to implement between sessions.
- 73) Work with clients to establish how they will hold themselves accountable.
- 74) Facilitate clients' goal setting.
- 75) Demonstrate openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with clients.
- 76) Talk with clients to get to know their interests and backgrounds to identify thoughtful coaching approaches.
- 77) Provide clients with encouragement that they can meet a goal or challenge, or overcome doubt or anxiety to take an action.
- 78) Build safe, trusting relationships with clients.
- 79) Adapt one's coaching to each client's style and language.

KSAOs

- 1) Ability to be open to change and compromise (Adaptability/Flexibility)
- 2) Ability to anticipate the likely impact of actions or decisions
- 3) Ability to generalize trends, patterns, and outcomes to new situations
- 4) Ability to consider the system in which a situation is occurring; awareness that a person is part of a system (Systemic Mindset)
- 5) Ability to express ideas verbally in a clear and succinct manner
- 6) Ability to be open and transparent
- 7) Ability to understand why others react as they do (Social Awareness)
- 8) Ability to gather information through observation and reflection
- 9) Ability to manage one's own time and the time of others (Time Management)
- 10) Ability to concentrate on something over a period of time without being distracted (Selective Attention)
- 11) Ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems (Critical Thinking)
- 12) Ability to discern general rules to specific problems and produce answers that make sense (Deductive Reasoning)
- 13) Ability to combine pieces of information to discern general rules or conclusions (Inductive Reasoning)
- 14) Ability to shift back and forth between two or more sources of information
- 15) Ability to generate unique ideas about a given topic or situation (Creative Thinking or Originality)

- 16) Ability to see the broader view of a situation and apply it to future scenarios (Strategic Thinking)
- 17) Ability to perceive one's own emotions (Emotion Perception - Internal)
- 18) Ability to perceive emotions in others as well as in objects, art, stories, music, and other stimuli (Emotion Perception - External)
- 19) Ability to interpret what emotions someone may be experiencing through their choice of words, vocal tone, and body language
- 20) Ability to understand and integrate emotional information
- 21) Ability to access intuition
- 22) Ability to give one's full attention to what others are saying and not saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times (Active Listening)
- 23) Ability to be open to one's own feelings and to modulate them in service of others (Managing Emotions)
- 24) Ability to set aside one's judgments
- 25) Ability to monitor and control one's own behavior, emotions, and thoughts, and alter them in accordance with situational demands (Self-Regulation)
- 26) Ability to deal effectively and calmly with high stress situations (Stress Tolerance)
- 27) Ability to monitor and assess one's own performance to make improvements or take corrective action
- 28) Ability to withhold sharing a potential solution with the client
- 29) Ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings or employ them in other cognitive processes (Facilitating Thought)
- 30) Ability to be open to others' feelings and modulate them so as to promote understanding and growth (Managing Emotions)
- 31) Ability to adjust actions in relation to others' actions
- 32) Knowledge of relevant professional ethics codes (e.g., ICF Code of Ethics, ethical codes from relevant professional associations)
- 33) Knowledge of how to contract with clients (e.g., key elements of a coaching agreement)
- 34) Knowledge of what constitutes a conflict of interest
- 35) Knowledge of coaching competencies
- 36) Knowledge of the definition of coaching
- 37) Knowledge of the coaching process and how it differs from other related professions (therapy, counseling, mentoring, consulting)
- 38) Knowledge of when and how to make appropriate referrals to mental health

- professionals
- 39) Knowledge of goal-setting and motivation
 - 40) Knowledge of how the body handles tension and stress
 - 41) Knowledge of organizational contexts and systems (i.e., how contextual characteristics can impact the coaching process)
 - 42) Knowledge of the signs of mental health conditions that may block progress in coaching
 - 43) Knowledge of the relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies and procedures around confidentiality (e.g., what factors would necessitate breaking confidentiality)
 - 44) Knowledge of a variety of coaching tools and resources
 - 45) Self-care: deliberate care for one's mental, emotional, and physical health
 - 46) Self-efficacy: belief that you can be an effective coach
 - 47) Curiosity
 - 48) Empathy: concern for others
 - 49) Ethical: acting with integrity and honesty
 - 50) Growth Mindset: value self-development and a learning goal orientation
 - 51) Inclusive Mindset: noticing and honoring differences
 - 52) Comfortable working in a space of not knowing
 - 53) Self-awareness: conscious understanding and accurate appraisal of one's own internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions
 - 54) Appreciation for complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty
 - 55) Appreciation for multiple perspectives
 - 56) Being comfortable with discomfort

Appendix 2: ICF Core Competencies and Sub-competencies

A. Foundation

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching

1. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
2. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
3. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
4. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values
5. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws
6. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions
7. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate

2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered

1. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices
2. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach
3. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching
4. Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others
5. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients
6. Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions
7. Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions
8. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary

B. Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Definition: Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals.

Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.

1. Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders
2. Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders
3. Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others
4. Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals
5. Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility
6. Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session
7. Partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address or resolve to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session
8. Partners with the client to define or reconfirm measures of success for what the client wants to accomplish in the coaching engagement or individual session
9. Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session
10. Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise
11. Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience

4. Cultivates Trust and Safety

Definition: Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

1. Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
2. Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style and language and adapts one's coaching to the client
3. Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process
4. Shows support, empathy and concern for the client
5. Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions
6. Demonstrates openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client

5. Maintains Presence

Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident

1. Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client
2. Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process
3. Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client
4. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process
5. Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing
6. Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection

C. Communicating Effectively

6. Listens Actively

Definition: Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression

1. Considers the client's context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating
2. Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding
3. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating
4. Notices, acknowledges and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors
5. Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what is being communicated
6. Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns

7. Evokes Awareness

Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy

1. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful
2. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight
3. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs
4. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking
5. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment
6. Notices what is working to enhance client progress
7. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs
8. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion
9. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do
10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives
11. Shares observations, insights and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client

D. Cultivating Learning and Growth

8. Facilitates Client Growth

Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

1. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors
2. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning
3. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability
4. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps
5. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers
6. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions
7. Celebrates the client's progress and successes
8. Partners with the client to close the session



EMPOWERING THE WORLD THROUGH
COACHING.

