



Standard 2.1 – Case Study

Maintain the strictest level of confidentiality

Background

As an ICF Professional, I maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all parties involved, regardless of the role I am fulfilling. Confidentiality is very important in a coaching relationship. Having a clear agreement outlining what will remain confidential and what could be shared is an important piece in building a safe and healthy relationship with your client(s). And ICF defines confidentiality as the protection of any information obtained in or around the coaching relationship unless there is a legal reason or requirement, a threat of harm, or written consent to release is given by the client.

Case Study

Ivan had been coaching several individuals within an organization for the past year. The organization knew that Ivan had been planning to retire at the end of the year and they had asked him if he had any recommendations on who could continue coaching because it had been beneficial for these several individuals.

Ivan recommended Katya to the organization. They were a similar personality type to Ivan, and he felt that they could take over his role. Katya asked Ivan to meet to discuss the individuals that they would now be coaching. When Ivan agreed to meet Katya, he began to think about what information he could or could not share with Katya. Ivan had no doubt they were going to be a good coach, but surely the rules of confidentiality would still apply.

Implications for Coaching

- Confidentiality should be a top priority. When there is a shift in coaches, the client(s) should be involved in determining what information is and is not allowed to be shared. There should already be a determination within the agreement of what can and cannot be shared between the coach and the organization. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)
- Each individual client should be introduced to Katya separately. They have the right to determine if they want to continue to be coached if someone new is taking over the coaching agreement. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2)

Possible Outcomes or Next Steps

- **Revisit your coaching agreement.** This is a great time to take a look at what the coaching agreement says around confidentiality. Including Katya in the discussion would be very beneficial in case they have questions or want to make any changes. Then include the representative from the organization to ensure that they can agree with any changes.

- **Meet with each individual.** This is a great time for Ivan to introduce Katya to each individual within the organization who is being coached. If it is not clear what can be shared with Katya, that should be determined ahead of time with the individuals.

Discussion Points

- How should Ivan decide what can or cannot be shared with Katya, if anything?
- If you were Ivan's coach supervisor, how would you support him?

Reference

ICF Code of Ethics (2025)