



Standard 3.3 – Case Study

Resolving any Conflict of Interest

Background

As an ICF Professional, I resolve any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest by working through the issue with relevant parties, seeking professional assistance, or suspending or ending the professional relationship. Managing biases and conflicts of interest are important and can be hard to do in a coaching relationship. If you become aware of a conflict of interest, then it's up to the coach to bring that up and provide an opportunity for discussion.

Case Study

Becca had just moved back to her hometown where she had grown up to help take care of her elderly parents. Thankfully all her coaching business was online clients and so the move hadn't affected her business in any way.

Becca and her siblings, along with their parents, finally found a retirement community that everyone had a positive reaction to the facility and staff. Because Becca had been gone for the last several years, she found herself visiting her parents the most to make up for lost time. One day, as she was leaving the facility, she ran into the CEO of the retirement community. They were having such a nice conversation, that they decided to sit down for coffee and ended up discussing the benefits of coaching, specifically team coaching.

By the end of the conversation, the CEO was seriously considering hiring Becca to offer team coaching to the directors of the retirement community. Becca was so excited for this opportunity, and they made plans to follow up with each other in the next several days.

The next day, Becca met with her coach supervisor, Andy, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Becca told Andy about the conversation and how excited she was for this opportunity. But before she accepted it, she wanted to know what Andy thought about it. He started asking her questions around any potentials for conflict of interest.

Implications for Coaching

- Becca and Andy can look together to determine if there is any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest. They can also look at the possibility that she may have personal limitations because her parents live there and how could she keep that in check. And last of all, she will have multiple agreements with this organization so what will that look like for her. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 3.2, 3.2 and 4.2)
- Becca could adjust her coaching agreement to set expectations of how this relationship will work with her parents living there as well. It may never be an issue but having it within the

agreement can help alleviate any questions or misunderstandings. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 1.1, 3.2 and 3.3)

Possible Outcomes or Next Steps

- **What happens if she accepts.** It really depends on Becca and if she can remove the fact that her parents live at this retirement community. Would she be able to put aside any bias and how would others view this partnership are questions to consider.
- **Honest about the multiple agreements.** Perhaps Becca and the CEO can craft a letter to the staff and honestly communicate that while her parents live there, no one should receive special treatment. If Becca does accept the position, she will need to keep an ongoing handle on the potential for conflict of interest.

Discussion Points

- If you were Andy, how would you support Becca?
- What potential conflicts of interest could you see coming up?
- What would you do in this situation?

Reference

ICF Code of Ethics (2025)