



IAC (International Association of Coaching) Code of Ethics

Every coach who joins the IAC must commit to upholding these Ethical Principles and Code of Ethics.

Ethical Principles

Competence: The coach will maintain a high level of competence in his or her work.

Integrity: The coach will represent himself or herself in an honest and fair manner, being fully aware of his or her particular abilities and limitations.

The coach will endeavor to be aware of his or her own belief system, values, needs and limitations, and the effect these may have on his or her work. To the extent possible, he or she will attempt to make clear to all persons involved the roles he or she plays, and to act appropriately in accordance with these roles.

Professional Responsibility: The coach will maintain a level of ethical conduct that will have a favorable impact on the coach personally and on the profession in general.

Respect for the rights and dignity of individuals: The coach will treat clients with dignity and respect, being mindful of cultural differences and the client's right to autonomy, privacy and confidentiality.

The coach will respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all persons. The coach will respect the individual's right to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy, being mindful of the existence of legal or other obligations that may lead to inconsistencies and conflicts with the exercise of these rights. The coach will be mindful of cultural, individual and role differences, including those related to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language or socioeconomic status.

The coach will attempt to eliminate the effect that biases based on these factors may have on his or her work and will not knowingly engage in or permit any discriminatory or unfair practices.

The IAC Code of Ethics consists of the following:

- Introduction General Rules
- Advertising and Public Statements

The Coaching Relationship, Privacy and Confidentiality, Coach Training, Scientific Research on Coaching and Publication of Articles.

Introduction

Coaches specialize in different fields (personal and business) in order to help their clients. Coaches receive specific training in coaching through a school or a coaching mentor, and they use and incorporate their own lived experience in the practice of their profession.

A coach may present themselves as a coach, advisor or facilitator. Although each coach measures the progress of their work in a different way, success is always measured by the progress of the coach's clients. Given the personal nature of most coaching relationships, this Code of Ethics establishes a framework and values on which professional coaches base their work.

The Code has three purposes. First, it sets out the broad principles and values that coaches adhere to, including confidentiality and the utmost concern for client well-being and success. Second, it provides rules that coaches use in many of the specific situations they may encounter. Finally, the Code serves as the basis for coaches' ethical and moral standards. Each individual coach promises to uphold the Code, and at the same time, coaches are encouraged to add to it to establish a lifelong commitment to building an ethical workplace and profession.

1. General Standards

1.1. Applicability of the Code of Ethics

(a) Any code can be regarded as a standardization of experience, expressed as a set of rules. A community adopts a code because its members agree that adherence to these rules, including the restrictions that this entails, will be beneficial to all, both within and outside the community.

(b) This Code of Ethics is addressed to all professional members of the IAC. Essentially, it comprises a series of statements that establish minimum standards for the practice of the profession, to which members are subject. Compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the code is intended.

(c) The activity of a coach who is subject to the Code of Ethics may be reviewed under these Ethical Standards only if the activity is part of the functions related to his or her coaching work.

1.2. Relationship between ethics and the laws of the country

(a) Although the law of the country in which the coach practices will take precedence over the IAC Ethical Standards, the coach will, as a minimum, endeavour to respect the IAC Code of Ethics.

(b) A coach must not engage in any illegal activity, including, but not limited to, copyright, intellectual property or patent infringements.

1.3. The professional relationship

(a) The coach will provide his or her services only to the coaches who are subject to the Code of Ethics within the context of the IAC Professional Standards.

(b) Trust and responsibility are at the core of the coaching profession. A coach is expected to act with integrity towards clients, colleagues and self at all times.

1.4. Coaching Competence

(a) A coach shall not knowingly claim to be more competent than he or she actually is and shall at all times work to the maximum of his or her stated competence.

(b) A coach shall provide services only within the limits of his or her competence, based on his or her education, training or related professional experience. A coach should accept only engagements that he or she believes he or she is capable of performing.

1.5. Maintaining a level of expertise

(a) A coach shall maintain a reasonable level of knowledge of current good business practices and information available in his or her fields of activity and shall undertake activities to maintain the level of competence of his or her professional skills.

(b) A coach shall keep informed of new technologies, practices, legal requirements and standards relevant to the coaching profession.

1.6. Communication in Coaching

(a) When providing coaching services (including any type of assessment) to an individual, group or organisation, the coach shall use language reasonably understandable to the recipient of the services.

(b) If for legal or other reasons the coach is not permitted to provide information to an individual or group, the coach shall inform the individual or group accordingly before commencing the service.

1.7. Respect for Others

(a) Respect for the individual is a cornerstone of the coaching relationship.

(b) In his or her work-related activities, the coach shall respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes and opinions that differ from those of the coach.

1.8. Unfair Discrimination

In his or her work-related activities, the coach shall not discriminate unfairly on any grounds.

1.9. Harassment

(a) The coach shall not knowingly behave in any way that is vexatious or humiliating to the people with whom he or she interacts in his or her work. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual provocation or advances, or verbal or non-verbal behaviour of a sexual nature. The coach ensures that his or her behaviour is appropriate at all times and cannot in any way be construed as harassment or bullying of any kind.

2. Personal problems and conflicts

(a) The coach recognises that he or she may also have personal problems that may negatively impact the coach/client relationship. The coach must inform the client of any such problems so that the two can take appropriate action together.

(b) In addition, the coach has an obligation to be aware of the signs of any personal problems at an early stage and to obtain help to resolve them as soon as possible so that they do not become an impediment to the performance of coaching.

(c) If the coach is aware of any personal problems that may interfere with the proper performance of his or her coaching activities, he or she will take appropriate action, such as seeking professional advice or help, and will decide whether to limit, suspend or terminate his or her current coaching activities.

3. Progress in work

The coach will take reasonable steps to ensure the client's progress and, in cases where no progress is made, will seek to minimise harm to the client.

4. Misuse of the coach's influence

Since the coach's judgement and actions may affect the lives of others, the coach must remain alert and vigilant to any personal, economic, social, organisational or political factors that may lead the coach to exercise influence incorrectly.

5. Misuse of the coach's work

(a) The coach will not engage in activities where there is a likelihood that his or her skills or assessments will be misused by others.

(b) If the coach becomes aware of any misuse or misrepresentation of his or her work, the coach will take reasonable steps to correct or minimise the misuse or misrepresentation.

6. Conflict of interest

(a) Whenever practicable, the coach will not undertake professional obligations where there is a relationship that could give rise to a conflict of interest.

(b) If the coach becomes aware that, due to unforeseeable factors, a potential conflict of interest has arisen, he or she will attempt to resolve it taking into account the best interests of the person affected and in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

7. Barter

A coach may accept barter only if it does not imply an abusive relationship.

The coach is free to negotiate the acceptance of goods, services or other non-monetary remuneration in exchange for coaching services, within the legal and tax limitations of the country in which he or she works.

8. Abusive relationships

- (a) The coach may not accept a barter if it does not imply an abusive relationship which will not exploit persons subordinate to him in a business situation.
- (b) The coach will not engage in sexual relationships with personnel over whom he has evaluation or management authority, as such relationships could be considered exploitative.

9. Referral of Clients to Other Professionals

When indicated and professionally appropriate, the coach may collaborate with other professionals to better serve his clients.

10. Requests for Services by Third Parties

- (a) When the coach agrees to provide services to a person or entity at the request of third parties, the coach will, to the extent possible and at the outset of the service, clarify the nature of the relationship with each of the parties involved. This clarification includes the role of the coach (for example, as an organizational consultant), the likely uses of the services provided or information obtained, and the fact that there may be limits to confidentiality.
- (b) If there is a foreseeable risk that the coach may find himself in a conflict situation because of the involvement of a third party, the coach must clarify the nature and direction of his responsibilities, keep all parties informed of the progress of the work and resolve the situation in accordance with this Code of Ethics.

11. Delegation to and supervision of subordinates

- (a) The coach shall delegate to his employees and assistants only those responsibilities that these persons can competently carry out, in accordance with their education, training or experience, either independently or with an appropriate level of supervision.
- (b) The coach shall provide appropriate training and supervision to his employees and take reasonable measures to ensure that these persons perform the services in a responsible, competent and ethical manner.

12. Records and Information Management

- (a) The coach shall establish a system for creating, maintaining, disclosing, storing, retaining and disposing of documents and data relating to his or her work and other activities, in accordance with the laws of the country in which he or she practices, and in a manner that will permit compliance with the requirements of this Code of Ethics.
- (b) The coach is encouraged to document his or her work adequately to facilitate the eventual provision of services in the future by the same coach or by other professionals, to ensure accountability and to satisfy the legal requirements of his or her country.

13. Fees and Payment Terms

- (a) At the appropriate time in the beginning of the professional relationship, the coach and the client, or other recipient of coaching services, shall establish an agreement specifying remuneration and billing terms.
- (b) The coach shall not charge excessive fees, nor mislead clients, or those responsible for payment, as to the amount of fees.
- (c) If any restrictions on services provided are anticipated due to financial constraints, the coach must discuss the matter with the client as soon as possible.
- (d) If the client or other recipient of services fails to pay amounts as agreed, and if the coach wishes to use collection agencies or legal action to collect his or her fees, before taking any action, the coach will inform the client of the action that will be taken and offer the client the opportunity to pay any outstanding amounts.

14. Accuracy of information provided to those responsible for payment



In documents issued to those responsible for payment of services, the coach will accurately and clearly detail the nature of the service provided, the fees, and any other costs.

15. Referral Fees to Other Professionals

When a coach pays, charges, or splits fees with another professional (in any situation other than an employer/employee relationship), the payment to each party will be based on services rendered (client referral, consulting, administration, etc.) and will be agreed to in writing prior to the start of the professional relationship.

16. Advertising and Public Statements

16.1. Definition

Advertising and public statements means any written document or oral statement regarding coaching that the coach makes available to the general public (for example, a catalogue, article, speech, or resume).

16.2. Statements by Others

The coach understands that others may make public statements on his or her behalf, either at the coach's request or without consulting the coach. The coach will make every effort to ensure that such public statements are truthful and not misleading.

16.3. Avoiding false statements

The coach will not, under any circumstances, make any false public statements. Examples of this may be references to his or her training or experience or the fees he or she charges.

17. The coaching relationship

17.1. Structuring the relationship

(a) The coach will explain to the client the structure of his or her coaching relationship fees prior to the first charged session.

(b) The coach will raise and discuss with the client all important issues at the beginning of the coaching relationship. An example of this would be confidentiality (see also Standard 4.01: "Discussing Confidentiality and Its Limitations").

(c) The coach will refer clients to other professionals when appropriate. The coach will also refer the client to a counselor, therapist, or psychiatrist as soon as possible if the coach perceives a problem that may require mental health treatment.

(d) The coach will endeavor to answer all of the client's questions and address the client's concerns about coaching at the earliest opportunity. If the coach has written material about coaching that can help clarify specific issues, the coach should provide it to the client.

17.2. Safety and Well-Being

(a) The coach must refer the client to a mental health or emergency services professional without delay if the coach becomes aware of any situation in which the client may jeopardize his or her own safety or well-being, or the safety and well-being of others. In serious situations, the coach should contact a mental health crisis or emergency service on behalf of the client.

(b) The coach should not attempt to diagnose or assess any mental health issue or specific problem if there is a risk to the client or others, but should act only on the basis of personal experience. The coach is not trained or licensed to make such a diagnosis or assessment.

(c) The coach should report to the appropriate authorities if the client discloses that he or she is causing harm or danger to another person or group. The coach should also attempt to report the person or group being harmed or endangered. It is not the coach's role to determine whether a mental health problem exists or whether the potential or actual harm is unlawful.



17.3. Providing coaching services to persons in treatment with mental health professionals

The coach must decide whether he or she wishes to enter into a coaching relationship with a client who is receiving psychotherapy or other mental health treatment. The most important factor in making this decision is the client's well-being.

17.4. Intimate Relationships with Clients

The coach will not enter into any sexual relationship with his or her current clients.

17.5. Interruption of Services

The coach will make every reasonable effort to ensure continuity of coaching should he or she be forced to discontinue his or her services. If the interruption is prolonged (more than one month), the coach is recommended to refer the client to other coaches until the service can be resumed.

17.6. Ending the Coaching Relationship

The coach will end the coaching relationship if it is clear that the client is no longer benefiting (or is being harmed) by the relationship. Upon termination of the relationship, the coach will propose alternatives or refer the client to other coaches, or to other professional services, if appropriate.

18. Privacy and Confidentiality

18.1. Discussing Confidentiality and Its Limitations

(a) The coach will respect the client's right to privacy and will not ask the client for any private information, unless it is essential for the provision of his or her services or for scientific research purposes. With respect to any private information disclosed by the client, the coach must observe confidentiality standards.

(b) Confidentiality must be discussed at the beginning of the professional relationship, unless contraindicated or impractical, and thereafter as necessary.

(c) The coach must discuss with clients and other interested persons the nature of confidentiality and its limitations. The coach must consider situations in which confidential information may be requested or disclosed.

(d) All information obtained in the course of professional service will be confidential unless there is a compelling professional reason to disclose it. The coach will disclose confidential information without the client's prior permission if necessary to prevent imminent and foreseeable harm to the client or another person. In all circumstances, the coach must exercise good judgment as to the amount of information disclosed.

18.2. Maintaining Confidentiality

(a) The coach must be extremely prudent with respect to protecting the right to confidentiality of those with whom he or she works or consults. The coach recognizes that professional relationships, institutional regulations and/or the law may establish confidentiality.

(b) The coach must not disclose any confidential information in a situation where secrecy cannot be guaranteed. The coach will disclose confidential data only for appropriate professional, advisory or scientific purposes, and only to persons clearly related to these matters.

(c) In dealing with the public and in any consultative capacity, a coach must not disclose confidential information that could lead to the identification of a client with whom he or she has a confidential relationship. A coach may disclose such information only if he or she has obtained the client's prior consent or if disclosure cannot be avoided. In addition, a coach must share only the information necessary to achieve the purpose of the consultation.

(e) A coach must take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the coach's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(f) A coach must protect the confidentiality of deceased clients in accordance with this Code of Ethics.

18.3. Management of documents and information

(a) The coach shall maintain confidentiality when creating, storing, accessing, transferring or deleting documents in his or her custody, in accordance with this Code of Ethics and the laws of his or her country.

(b) The coach shall take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information communicated by telephone, voicemail, computer, email, short messages, fax machines or any other computerised means.

(c) The coach shall take practical and lawful measures to ensure that documents remain available, to best serve the interests of his or her clients.

18.4. Disclosure of information

(a) Unless prohibited by law, the coach shall disclose confidential data only if the client, or any person legally authorised to act on the client's behalf, has given his or her express written consent.

(b) The coach may disclose confidential information without the client's consent only in circumstances required or permitted by law.

(c) Where possible, a coach will inform clients about the disclosure of confidential information and the possible consequences thereof before disclosing the data. (d) A coach will only disclose confidential data to third parties responsible for payment with appropriate written consent.

(e) A coach must disclose certain confidential data as required by law or if the confidential information poses a risk of harm to the client or others or compromises their well-being.

19. Coach training

19.1. Design of training programs

Coaches who train other coaches will make every effort to ensure that their training programs are well designed and will provide learners with the material they seek.

19.2. Training program descriptions

Coaches who train other coaches will not mislead others about the training they offer.

19.3. Ethics in training

Coaches who train other coaches shall ensure that their students are aware of this Code of Ethics, where appropriate, and shall comply with it during the training process.

19.4. Limitations to training

Coaches shall be aware of their own limitations when training other coaches, and if they do not believe they have adequate experience to train another coach in a particular area or technique, they shall refer the student to another coach or training programme.

20. Scientific research on coaching and publication of articles

20.1. Planning of research

(a) Coaches who lead research projects should design and carry out the studies in accordance with recognised scientific standards.

(b) Research on coaching should be planned to minimise the possibility of obtaining misleading results from the data collected.

(c) Coaches who conduct research should be qualified to do so, or have the research conducted by other qualified scientific professionals.

(d) Research must be conducted in compliance with all laws of the country in which it is conducted.

20.2. Conduct of research projects

(a) Approval or consent must be obtained from research participants or sponsoring organizations unless the conditions set out in the section below apply.

(b) Approval or consent from research participants or sponsoring organizations is not required except in special cases, such as studies based on anonymous questionnaires or naturalistic observations.

(c) Participants must be informed of the research and its intended uses, all of which is expressed and in a language understandable to the general public.

(d) If necessary, research participants will be adequately protected against any adverse consequences related to the research, including (but not limited to) the potential consequences of withdrawing from the study.

(e) If incentives are offered to research participants, these incentives must not be excessive or improper.

20.3. Communication of research results

When making research results public, coaches will not falsify them or present fake results. In addition, if significant errors in the research are found in the future, an attempt will be made to correct previous results in a timely manner.

The following points apply to all published work by coaches.

20.4. Plagiarism

Coaches will not copy the research or data of others without the written permission of the author of the research or data.

20.5. Publication Credits

Coaches shall take responsibility and credit only for their own work.

20.6. Professional Reviewers

Coaches who serve as professional reviewers of material for publication shall respect the confidentiality of the work and attribute credit to the author(s) who submitted it.