



Minimum

Skills Required
for an
Associate Certified Coach, ACC

International ADHD Coach Training Center

CORE #4 Resource

This resource will help you answer the following questions:

- *What does it mean to be an ACC coach?*
- *What do ICF assessors listen for when evaluating a coach's readiness to be an ACC coach?*
- *What skill set areas do I need to grow to pass the ACC performance evaluation?*



Disqualifying Markers

➤ 1. Ethical Standards

Does the coach breach any ethics?

In the two upcoming classes, we will focus on ethical standards. During those classes, notice the information about confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interest. These are important and designed to protect you as a professional and your client's right to privacy.

This one should be easy for you to avoid in a coaching session. However, if you let it slip that you are secretly recording this session and making a copy of the transcript public, you might not pass.

➤ 2. Coaching vs. Therapy

Does the coach stay in the role of a coach rather than a consultant or therapist?

The ICF is big on coaches being empty vessels, merely exploring the client's world and provoking insights through curiosity, not advice-giving. Instead, a coach should act as an explorer of the client's perspective. Therefore, keep the amount of teaching or advice given extremely minimal, if at all.

Core Competency #1: Demonstrates Ethical Practice

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

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



A coach must remain consistently in the role of a coach during coaching. This includes demonstrating a knowledge of the coaching conversation, which is focused on inquiry and exploration based on present and future issues. For example, a coach cannot focus on telling the client what to do or giving advice or how to do it (consulting mode) or if the conversation is based primarily on the past, particularly on feelings that could be closer to therapy.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- Being very familiar with the ICF Code of Ethics.
- Confidentiality.
- What coaching is and isn't.
- We honor this throughout our coaching and start with "What do you want to be coached on?" Whenever you ask this question, you are meeting this marker! It acknowledges that we know we can not coach someone without their permission.
- We must stay within the coaching role/ model. We do not give advice. We are not trying to solve the client's problem; we are not focusing exclusively on the client's past but on their present and future.

Core Competency #2: Embodies a Coaching Mindset

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

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



Embodying a Coaching Mindset is foundational for coaches. When you embody a coaching mindset, your focus is on the “who” or “being” of the client. This competency is difficult to demonstrate during a coaching session but instead reveals itself through how the coach embraces their role as a coach.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- Setting up a routine that works for you before the coaching session. This means taking the time to organize yourself and prepare for the session. You might not see this in the session, but it might appear unprofessional or unorganized if not done.
- Take time after the session to reflect on what showed up for you as the coach during the session, developing a self-reflective practice.
- Seeking help from outside sources, having a coach or mentor, maintaining relationships with other coaches, reading books, and seeking resources for personal growth. It could also be directing the client to a doctor or another coach with specialties.

Core Competency #3: Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Definition: The coach partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans, and goals. These agreements include those for the overall coaching engagement and each coaching session.

- Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders.
- 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.
- Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship, such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, and termination.
- Confidentiality and inclusion of others
- Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals.
- Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility.
- Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session.
- 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.
- 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.
- Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session.
- Continues coaching toward the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise.
- Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience.

The Coach does NOT want to:

 Choose the topic.  Direct the client toward a particular topic.  Veer away from the topic the client has chosen.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- Some agreements will be evident at different parts of the coaching. In a one-off session, we may not hear "what coaching is and isn't."
- The Strategy and Planning Session is a great place to explain many agreement markers, how and when we will meet, and how and when you pay. It is also a great place to determine client-coach compatibility.
- Using T.O.M.S.S will help you meet these markers because we partner with the client to identify the session goal, what they want to accomplish, and how they will know they've reached it (measurement).
- A coach can manage the time by saying, "Given we have 20 minutes together today, what do you want to be different by the end of our session?" or "I'm noticing we have 10 minutes left. What are you taking away today?"

At an ACC level, the minimum skill demonstrated is that the coach invites the client to identify the topic and what the client wants to accomplish in the session.

Core Competency #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.

- Seeks to understand the client within their context, including their identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style, and language and adapts one's coaching to the client.
- Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights, and work in the coaching process.
- Shows support, empathy, and concern for the client.
- Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, and suggestions.
- Demonstrates openness and transparency to display vulnerability and build trust with the client.

A coach's success in demonstrating this competency is in the depth of a connection and support of the client's beliefs, perceptions, learning style, and personal being, not just the client's problem. This is demonstrated when the coach genuinely respects the client, acknowledges the client's insights and learning, and explores the client's expression of emotions, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, or suggestions.

The Coach does NOT want to:

- Demonstrate significant interest in their own view of the situation rather than the clients.
- Miss asking about the client's thinking around the situation.
- Be unsupportive or disrespectful to the client.
- Focus on their own performance.
- Talk about what they know.



Coaching Competency Examples:

- When a client shares a powerful feeling, belief, story, etc., notice it. The client demonstrates trust by sharing. You demonstrate trust by acknowledging what the client has just shared.
- The coach asks about what is important, what has been learned from the coaching, and what still needs to be acknowledged or explored.
- Ask questions like "Would you be willing to share more about how this is impacting you?" or "Can you share more about what this experience is like for you?"
- The coach is genuinely curious about the client vs. telling them about themselves.
- Staying open and not assuming how clients feel or what they are experiencing as they share. "It sounds like that is overwhelming, or "you must be excited." A coach asks these questions instead of telling a client what they feel or experience. Ask "What is that experience like for you?"
- A coach adapts and to the client and uses the client's language.
- Coaches acknowledge and respect client's unique talents, insights or awareness, we stop and acknowledge that. "What did you just hear yourself say there? That sounded important as I heard you say that. What is that for you? What does that tell you about yourself?"

Core Competency #5: Maintains Presence

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

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

For an ACC, the minimum skill that must be demonstrated is that the coach demonstrates curiosity about the client and the client's agenda and is responsive to the information the client offers throughout the session.

The Coach does NOT want to:

- ↪ Demonstrate significant interest in their own view of the situation rather than exploring the clients.
- ↪ Speak more frequently than the client.
- ↪ Be primarily interested or direct the conversation to the coach's performance.
- ↪ Share their expertise or knowledge about the topic.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- These competencies show up in many ways and areas in the coaching conversation.
- A coach allows for silence in the coaching, even if it feels uncomfortable in the moment, because we know that this is when our clients are processing a new way of thinking or thinking over an idea.
- Coaches confidently ask a question without over-explaining or using too many words. We trust that the client will do and go where they need to with the question we asked.
- Coaches are fully engaged and listening deeply to what the client is saying and listening for those powerful emotional words and doorways into what might be the deeper issues or barriers. Our questions will naturally flow out of that if we are fully engaged.



Core Competency #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.

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

The Coach does NOT want to:

- Focus on or respond to what the client communicates if they are unrelated to what the client is trying to achieve.
- Appear to be listening for where the coach can demonstrate their knowledge about the topic.
- Tell the client what to do.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- These competencies show up in many ways and areas in the coaching conversation.
- Coach keeps their own bias and assumptions out of the coaching conversation.
- Coach stays out of performance mode and is listening at a very deep level.
- Coach uses the client's language.
- Coach asks for clarity on powerful language and beliefs. (The should's, can't, safety, inner critic) "I am hearing something like you should be doing something different. I'm curious what you're hearing as you hear me reflect this back to you?"
- Staying very curious about the client and focused on what they are saying or not saying.
- Coach asks, "What just happened there? What did those tears tell you about what's important for us to be looking at?"

The minimum needed to demonstrate this skill of listening actively is that the coach pays attention to what the client shares on multiple levels, including the client's language, tone of voice, energy or emotional shifts, body language, underlying beliefs, thinking, creating, and learning that is occurring for the client. A coach must listen to and be able to respond, summarize, or paraphrase what the client shares to ensure they understand and integrate what the client has communicated and support the client in achieving their agenda.



Core Competency #7: Evokes Awareness

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

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

To demonstrate Evokes Awareness, the coach wants to ask questions and use inquiry, exploration, silence, and other techniques to support the client in achieving new or deeper learning and awareness. Specifically, the coach inquires about or explores the client's language, ideas, perspectives, beliefs, thinking, intuition, emotions, and behaviors. In addition, a coach wants to acknowledge the client's new awareness, learning, and movement toward the desired outcome.

The Coach Does NOT Want to:

- ↪ Focus consistently on instructing the client or sharing the coach's own knowledge, ideas, or beliefs.
- ↪ Have the majority of the coach's questions leading or contain pre-determined answers by the coach.
- ↪ Ask questions and explorations that attend to an agenda or issues not set by the client, but set by the coach.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- Coach asks, "Tell me what the experience is like for you?"
- "How would you want this to be different?"
- "How are you showing up in this situation?"
- "What's important to you about this situation?"
- Asks questions that allow the client to share their thoughts and feelings or their values around a situation.
- Evoking awareness takes place in the bulk of the coaching conversation.
- Coach asks for clarity when a client uses a metaphor and uses metaphors as a way to bring clarity to the coaching conversation.
- "What's showing up for you right now?"



Core Competency #8: Facilitates Client Growth

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

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



The Coach does NOT want to:

- ↪ Insist the client carries out specific actions designed by the coach.
- ↪ Suggest actions or steps to the client that do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda.
- ↪ End the session without supporting the client in moving forward in their learning.

Coaching Competency Examples:

- This is really about how the coach partners with the client to transform the learning and new awareness from the coaching conversation to support the client in designing a plan and steps to move them into action.
- Promotes the client's autonomy and agency in taking action for themselves.
- This marker is the bookend to Establishes and Maintains Agreements, which is the beginning of the coaching conversation, getting the agreement/topic, the measurement, and what's important to them
- As a coach, we pause and check in with the client throughout the session, "How are we doing with getting to what you said you wanted to take away? Is there anything else coming up that would be important to explore?"

ACC minimum standard of skill that must be demonstrated to receive a passing score is that the coach supports the client in exploring how to apply the client's learning and awareness to post-session actions that are related to the client's stated agenda and have the potential to move the client forward in their thinking, learning, or growth.