

ICF CORE COMPETENCIES LEVELS TABLE

COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice 	Most ethical standards are not directly assessed during performance evaluation, however: Applicant will NOT receive a passing score at any level if: • The coach focuses primarily on telling the client what to do or how to do it (consulting mode). • The conversation is based primarily in the past, particularly the emotional past (therapeutic mode). • The coach is not clear on basic foundation exploration and evoking skills that underlie the ICF definition of coaching; that lack of clarity in skill use will be reflected in the skill level demonstrated in some of the other competencies listed below. For example, if a coach almost exclusively gives advice or indicates that a particular answer chosen by the coach is what the client should do, trust and intimacy, coaching presence, powerful questioning, creating awareness, and client-generated actions and accountability will not be present, and a credential at any level would be denied.		
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered. It is a process that requires ongoing learning and development, establishing a reflective practice, and preparing for sessions. These elements take place over the course of a coach's professional journey and cannot be fully captured in a single moment in time.	Certain elements of this competency may be demonstrated within a coaching conversation. These particular behaviors are articulated and assessed through the following PCC Markers: 4.1: The coach acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights, and work in the coaching process. 4.3: The coach acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, or suggestions. 4.4: The coach partners with the client by inviting the client to respond in any way to the coach's contributions and accepts the client's response. : Coach acts in response to the whole person of the client (the who). : Coach acts in response to what the client wants to accomplish throughout this session (the what). : The coach partners with the client by supporting the client in choosing what happens in this session. : Coach demonstrates curiosity to learn more about the client. : Coach allows for silence, pause, or reflection. : Coach's questions and observations are customized by using what the coach has learned about who the client is or the client's situation. 6.5: Coach inquires about or explores how the client currently perceives themselves or their world. 7.1: The coach asks questions about the client's current way of thinking, feeling, values, needs, wants, beliefs, or behavior. 7.5: The coach shares—with no attachment—observations, intuitions, comments, thoughts, or feelings and invites the client to explore them through verbal or tonal invitation. As with other competency areas, a minimum number of these markers must be demonstrated to pass the performance evaluation. All elements of this Competency will also be evaluated in the written assessment for ICF Credentials (Coach Knowledge Assessment).		
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
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.	• Coach takes what client says they want to work on at surface level. • Attends to that agenda, but little further exploration is done. The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: • The coach chooses the topic for the client. • The coach does not coach around the topic the client has chosen.	• The coach takes what the client says they want to work on. • Attends to that agenda with some exploration as to measures of success for each topic in session. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • The coach does not engage in some exploration of the measures of success for each topic with the client or defines those measures for the client. • The coach does not explore underlying issues related to achieving the outcomes or agenda or	• The coach explores fully what the client wants from the session, establishes measures of success for the client in the session, and ensures that the client and coach are both clear about the coaching purpose. • The coach returns to check regularly if the direction of coaching is continuing to serve the client's coaching purpose and makes changes in direction, if necessary, based on feedback from the client. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC)

		check with the client about whether the client is moving toward what the client wanted from the session.	• Full partnership with the client is not demonstrated. • The coach does not explore the measures of success for each topic with the client to a degree that achieves clarity about the client's intent or direction for the session. • The coach does not allow the client full input into the issues that should be discussed relative to the client's stated objectives for the session. • The coach does not check with the client to see whether the client is moving toward what the client wants from the session.
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
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.	• The coach attends to the client's agenda but is attached to their own performance, so trust and intimacy are not the strongest competencies. The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: • The coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than the client's view of the situation. • The coach does not seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation. • The coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation. • The attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic.	• The coach may have some degree of trust in the client and a connected relationship with the client. • The coach is still conscious of presenting an image of a "good coach," so they are less willing to risk or not know what stands in the way of complete trust in and intimacy with the coach self, the client, and the coaching relationship. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • The coach does not invite the client to share their thinking on an equal level with the coach.	• Coach is connected to complete trust in a new and mutual state of awareness that can only arise in the moment and out of joint conversation. • Coach is comfortable not knowing as one of the best states to expand awareness in. • The coach is willing to be vulnerable with the client and have the client be vulnerable with the coach. • The coach is confident in self, process, and the client as a full partner in the relationship. • Sense of complete ease and naturalness in conversation; coach does not have to "work" to coach. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC)
			• The coach does not treat the client as a full partner, choosing not only the agenda but also participating in the creation of the coaching process itself. • The coach exhibits interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than the client's view of the situation. • There is any indication that the coach is teaching rather than coaching.
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
5. Maintains Presence Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident.	• The coach attends to the client's agenda but is attached to their own performance, and therefore, the coach's presence is diluted by the coach's attention to self. • Coach substitutes thinking and analysis for presence and responsiveness much of the time. The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: • The coach demonstrates significant interest in the	• The coach will attend to the client's agenda but drive the coaching and choice of tools. • The coach will choose an objective or subjective perspective but rarely hold both simultaneously. • The coach will evidence the need for direction toward a solution rather than simply being in the moment with the client. • The coach will be choosing ways to move versus letting	• The coach is a completely connected observer to the client. • The connection is to the whole of the client's identity, how the client learns, and what the client has to teach the coach. • The coach is ready to be touched by the client and welcomes signals that create a resonance between them.

	coach's view of the situation rather than exploring the client's view of the situation. • The coach does not seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation. • The coach is unresponsive to that information. • The coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation. • The coach is unresponsive to that information. • The attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic.	the client teach the coach ways to move. • The partnership is present but mixed with the coach as an expert and greater than the client. • Coach may be present to whether and how much value they are adding to client. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • The coach may seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation but is unresponsive to that information. • The coach may seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation but is unresponsive to that information. • Coach, rather than being present and responsive to the client, is overly reliant on an obvious coaching formula, a specific coaching tool, or standard coaching questions. • The coach does not allow the client to contribute to creating the method or way that the coaching session will evolve.	• The coach evidences a complete curiosity that is undiluted by a need to perform. • The coach is in a fully partnered conversation with the client. • The coach trusts that value is inherent in the process versus having any need to create value. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC) • The coach does not treat the client as a full partner, choosing not only the agenda but also participating in the creation of the coaching process itself. • The coach exhibits interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than the client's view of the situation. • The coach does not invite the client to share their thinking on an equal level with the coach and/or choose the direction and tools in the session without input from the client. • There is any indication that the coach is teaching rather than coaching.
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
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's systems and to support the client's self-expression.	• The coach hears what the client says and responds to it, but only at an obvious and surface level. • In general, the coach will demonstrate attachment to "What's the problem?" "How do I help fix it?" and "How do I add value to fixing it?" The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: • The coach does not demonstrate listening that is focused on and responding to what the client says. • The coach's response is not related to what the client is trying to achieve. • The coach appears to be listening for the place where the coach can demonstrate their knowledge about the topic or tell the client what to do about the topic.	• The coach is listening on a very conscious level. • The listening is focused on the client's agenda, and direction can change if the client changes direction. • The direction change may or may not be best for the topic at hand. • The coach is focused on what the client is saying but more from the perspective of gathering information that fits into the coach's particular tool or discovery model. • Listening tends to be more linear and concentrates on the content of words. • The coach is listening for answers, asking the next question, or looking for what to do with what they hear and will try to fit what they hear into a model they understand. • They will often respond out of that model rather than the client's model. • Listening will include some depth but often will miss key nuances that a master-level coach catches. • Listening tends to be session by session rather than	• Coach's listening is completely attuned as a learner, and listening happens at the logical, emotional, and organic levels at the same time. • The listening is both linear and non-linear, and the coach's responses evidence learning about the client at many levels. • The coach recognizes the client's ability to intuitively and energetically perceive things, which is felt when the client speaks of important things when new growth is occurring, and when the client is finding a more powerful sense of self. • The coach's listening is in the present, but also hearing the client's future development. • The coach hears the totality of the client's greatness and gifts as well as limiting beliefs and patterns. • The coach's listening is cumulative from session to session and throughout each individual session. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC) • The coach does not demonstrate listening that is

		cumulative. The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • Their hearing is limited to listening for problems or weaknesses. • The coach demonstrates that they can only hear through their own perceptions and models of thinking, learning, and creating rather than being able to hear some of the client's models and methods of thinking, learning, and creating.	based on the whole client and an ability to hear the client's thinking, learning, and feeling at multiple levels. • The listening is filtered only through the coach's methods of thinking, learning, and creating. • The coach does not actively hear (and use as a significant coaching tool) the client's methods of thinking, learning, and creating. • Nuances of the client's language are not reflected in the coach's responses. • The listening is not focused on and responding to what the client says or the coach's response is not related to what the client is trying to achieve.
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC
7. Evokes Awareness Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor, or analogy	• Questions attend to the client's agenda but are generally seeking information, are formulaic, and sometimes lead or have a "correct answer" anticipated by the coach. • Generally, questions are very geared to solving issues set by clients as quickly as possible. • The coach is sometimes fairly direct but usually uses too many words or feels a need to "dress up" a question or observation. • Questions and observations generally contain vocabulary from the coach's training. • Most communication occurs on a very safe level for the coach. • Awareness is generated at the level of what will solve a problem or achieve the goal. • Limited generally to awareness of new techniques versus new learning about self. The applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: • The coach does not focus on an inquiring versus telling methodology. • The majority of questions contain already pre-determined answers by the coach. • The questions attend to an agenda or issues not set by the client but by the coach. • The coach does not attend to the client's agenda, changes the agenda without input from the client, or appears attached to a particular outcome or	• Questions attend to the client's agenda and generally are a mix of informational and powerful questions. • Even powerful questions tend to focus on solving the issue presented by the client and may be more responsive to the agenda than to the client. • Questions tend to use coaching terminology or language that is easy for the coach rather than using and exploring the client's language. • Occasional leading questions will appear as well. • The coach will tend to ask comfortable rather than uncomfortable questions. • The coach is usually direct but at times feels a need to "dress up" a question or observation. • The coach occasionally treats their intuitions as the truth. • The coach also occasionally does not say what is occurring for the coach for fear that the client is not ready to hear it. • The coach may also evidence a need to soften communication for fear of being wrong. • The coach helps the client to create new awareness by engaging in problem-solving. • The majority of awareness is geared toward new techniques; new awareness about the client is more limited. • The coach will generally help the client integrate	• The coach mostly asks, if not always, direct, evocative questions that are fully responsive to the client at the moment require significant thought by the client, or take the client to a new place of thinking. • The coach uses the client's language and learning style to craft questions. • The coach is fully based in curiosity and the coach does not ask questions to which the coach knows the answer. • The questions often require the client to make deeper contact with their shadow and light sides and discover hidden power within themselves. • The coach asks questions that help the client create the future rather than focus on past or even present dilemmas. • The coach is not afraid of questions that will make either the coach or the client or both uncomfortable. • The coach easily and freely shares what is so for the coach without attachment. • The coach shares directly and simply and often incorporates the client's language. • The coach fully trusts the client to choose the responses to the coach's communication that is best for the client. • The coach invites, respects, and celebrates direct communications back from the client.

	solution. • The communication frequently occurs in a convoluted, meandering, or circuitous manner. • The coach narrows the exploration of awareness significantly to a single issue without discussing that decision with the client and without the client's consent. • The coach seems to substitute assessments or standard coaching exercises for powerful questioning or inquiry.	new awareness as it pertains to a particular situation versus using learning to more fully broaden the scope of new awareness. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • The coach asks questions that reflect the coach's view of the situation or a preconceived answer decided on by the coach. • The questions lead the client in a direction chosen by the coach without discussion with and consent from the client. • The coach is unable to move beyond standardized coaching questions or the coach's models of thinking and learning to the exclusion of the client's models of thinking and learning. • The coach significantly or dominantly relies on their own language, thinking models, and learning models without using the client's skill set in these areas. • The coach does not invite the client to share these areas as well as the client's intuition with the coach. • The coach is attached to a particular direction or outcome in the coaching. • The coach does not attend to the client's agenda and changes the agenda without input from the client. • The coach does not use the client's thinking and learning as tools within the coaching or the client's language as a coaching tool. • The coach seems to substitute assessments or standard coaching exercises to the exclusion of using the tools already existing within the client to create awareness. • The coach states what awareness is (without exploring the client's awareness or seeking the client's input on whether the coach's observations are correct).	• The coach creates sufficient space for the client to have equal or more communication time than the coach. • The coach's invitation to exploration precedes and is significantly greater than the invitation to the solution. • The coach appears as much an explorer as well as the client. • The coach has not concluded what awareness should be (the coach is willing not to know). • There is no evidence of "fixing" a problem or the client. • There is a lovely sense of connected observation of the totality of the client's who and what they want, sharing that with them and creating space for them to share back. • The coach does not force awareness. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC) • The coach does not demonstrate questions that are evocative and ask the client to think in a larger space or an experimental space related to the client's agenda and stated objectives. • The coach frequently asks informational questions or questions that keep the client focused on the past or present details of a situation rather than on forward thinking. • The questions do not frequently use the client's language, thinking, and creating style, nor do they use what the coach has learned about the client. • The questions reflect the coach's view of the situation, the coach's learning and processing style, or a preconceived answer by the coach. • The coach drives the client toward a solution without fully exploring issues that may be important to gaining a complete solution or accomplishment for the client. • The coach's communication reflects an agenda or directing of any kind by the coach. • Coach does not often create an easy place for the client to engage in deeper thinking, learning and discovery.
COMPETENCY	ACC	PCC	MCC

8. Facilitates Client Growth Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.	• The coach tends to suggest homework and actions that they think would best handle the problem or achieve the goal. • Actions tend to be one-dimensional in nature. • Taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results. • The coach tends to adopt goals suggested by the client at their most obvious level. • Planning and goal setting tend to be one-dimensional in nature, with the coach sometimes substituting their expertise for the clients'. • The coach tends to suggest forms of accountability that may feel a bit parental in nature. • Accountability tends to be one-dimensional. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if • The coach insists the client do what the coach has prescribed as homework. • The suggested homework does not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda. • The homework does not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward. • Suggested tools and structures clearly do not relate to the needs of the particular client or their agenda. • The coach insists that the client follow a prescribed plan that is familiar to the coach. • The coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective coaching plan. • The plan or goals do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcome. • The methods of accountability do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcomes. • The methods of accountability do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward.	• The coach engages in some, but not a complete, partnership with the client to develop actions. • The actions are attuned to solving the situational issue the client has presented rather than looking beyond the situation to other, broader learning that might be inherent in the situation. • The coach tends to define forward motion only in terms of physical action. • The coach engages in some, but not a complete, partnership with the client to develop goals and plans. • The coach tends to edit plans presented by the client. • The coach, in some partnership with the client, develops methods of accountability. • These methods are often reflective of or use coach training tools. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See ACC) • There is little or no co-creation in the process of designing actions, plans and goals, measures of success, or accountability structures • The actions do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and the client's style of learning and creating. • The actions, plan, or goals do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward. • The coach is the most significant voice in suggesting plans, setting goals, and building accountability structures. • The coach suggests standard coaching tools or exercises without discussing with the client the extent to which they might be of value to the client. • The coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective accountability structure.	• The coach works in complete partnership with the client to design actions, goals, and plans or, alternatively, lets the client lead in designing them. • The coach and client design actions, goals, and plans that fit the client's learning style and pace of desired or necessary movement. • The coach allows action and plans to include thinking, creating, and doing. • The coach engages the client in relating designed actions, goals, and plans to other aspects of what the client wants, thereby broadening the scope of learning and growth. • The coach encourages informed experimentation to help clients develop more powerful, leveraged actions. • The coach works with the client to clarify and develop goals that achieve more than just the presenting concerns of the client. • The coach has the client determine their own methods of accountability and offers support to those methods. • The client determines totally who should be on their accountability team and how to use each person, including the coach. • The coach trusts the client to be accountable to themselves and lovingly calls the client to account or discussion if agreed upon forward movement does not occur. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if: (See PCC) • The coach does not invite full client participation in the design of activities or dominate in any way the design of activities. • The designed activities do not reflect a clear potential for forward learning or movement by the client related to the client's agenda, desired outcomes, or to • some other learning that the client has defined as necessary for their growth. • Designed actions and/or discussions of designed actions involve only physical activity, with no attention to the client's thinking, learning, being,
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			and creativity structures. • The coach does not invite full client participation in planning strategies, designing goals and accountability methods, or influencing the creation of the above. • The coach is the most significant voice in setting accountability structures. • The measures and structures do not have a clear relationship to the client's • stated agenda and desired outcome or the client's learning and creating processes. • The measures and structures do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward. • Suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or their agenda or deeper learning designated by the client. • The coach does not encourage the invention of structures by the client based on the client's thinking, learning, being, and creating style.
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This document was created using content put forth by the ICF regarding the expectations for the now-outdated 11 Core Competencies. Powerhouse Coaching has reorganized and formatted ICF's proprietary content to fit the new model.