

Associate Certified Coach | ACC

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Familiarity with the ICF Code of Ethics and its application is required for all levels of coaching. You must demonstrate a strong understanding of ethical coaching practice to earn any level of ICF credential.

- 1.1 Demonstrate a strong understanding and alignment with the ICF Code of Ethics.
- 1.2 Consistently stay in the role of the coach, demonstrating knowledge of how to structure a coaching conversation and stay focused on future and present issues.
- 1.3 Use key coaching skills such as trust, presence, active listening, and evoking awareness to facilitate the client's own insights.

2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Embodying a coaching mindset — a mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered — is a process that requires ongoing personal and professional learning and development as a coach. These elements take place over the course of a coach's professional journey and cannot be fully captured in a single moment in time.

Your understanding of this competency is evaluated in the ICF ACC Exam.

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Definition: 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 and those for each coaching session.

- 3.1 Coach explores the client's topic with the client.
- 3.2 Coach and client reach agreement on what the client wants to accomplish as a session outcome.
- 3.3 Coach explores the significance of the coaching outcome to the client.
- 3.4 Coach attends to the agreed upon agenda throughout the session.

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.

- 4.1 Coach acknowledges the client's work in the session.
- 4.2 Coach expresses respect, support, or concern for the client.
- 4.3 Coach supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, or beliefs.

5. Maintains Presence

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

- 5.1 Coach is observant and responsive to the client.
- 5.2 Coach demonstrates curiosity about the client, or their agenda, or both.
- 5.3 Coach provides space for the client to lead during the session.
- 5.4 Coach is silent to allow time for the client to reflect.

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.

- 6.1 Coach listens by recognizing feelings, perceptions, challenges, or beliefs.
- 6.2 Coach inquires about, explores, or includes the client's use of language.
- 6.3 Coach summarizes or paraphrases what the client communicates to confirm the coach's understanding.

7. Evokes Awareness

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

- 7.1 Coach supports the client in viewing the situation from different perspectives.
- 7.2 Coach inquires about the client's feelings, perceptions, behaviors, or beliefs.
- 7.3 Coach asks clear, open-ended questions, one at a time.

8. Facilitates Client Growth

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

- 8.1 Coach asks questions about what the client has learned during the session.
- 8.2 Coach supports the client to use their learning to plan next steps.
- 8.3 Coach supports the client to close the session.

Exemplary, extremely proficient, and proficient responses clearly embody the qualities of the coaching mindset: curious, open, client-centered, and flexible in the way the coach demonstrates the BARS behavior.

Exemplary- The coach exhibits this behavior completely, effortlessly, and consistently in response to what the client presents.

Extremely proficient- The coach exhibits this behavior consistently with ease in response to what the client presents.

Proficient- The coach exhibits this behavior with ease.

Sufficient- The coach exhibits this behavior.

Not quite sufficient- The coach attempts to exhibit this behavior but does not do so competently.

Insufficient- The coach does not exhibit this behavior in response to the opportunities presented.

Not applicable- There were no opportunities for the coach to exhibit this behavior.

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