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Updated ICF Core Competency Model October 2019

Following a rigorous, 24-month coaching practice analysis, the International Coach Federation is announcing an updated ICF Coaching Core Competency Model. This competency model is based on evidence collected from more than 1,300 coaches across the world, including both ICF Members and non-members and representing a diverse range of coaching disciplines, training backgrounds, coaching styles and experience levels. This large-scale research initiative validated that much of the existing ICF Core Competency Model, developed nearly 25 years ago, remains critically important to the practice of coaching today. Some new elements and themes that emerged from the data have also been integrated into the model. These include a paramount emphasis on ethical behavior and confidentiality, the importance of a coaching mindset and ongoing reflective practice, the critical distinctions between various levels of coaching agreements, the criticality of partnership between coach and client, and the importance of cultural, systemic and contextual awareness. These foundational components, combined with emerging themes, reflect the key elements of coaching practice today and will serve as stronger, more comprehensive coaching standards for the future.

Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
A. Foundation					
1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice					
Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Homework Coaching Practicum About Coaching – discussion on what a coach is and is not to clearly communicate distinction and discuss	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum Group and Team Coaching – discuss agreements and providing the Code of Ethics for groups or teams and	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths		
1. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions					

with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders	coaching	discuss how to handle the confidentiality component of ethics	Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss agreements and providing the Code of Ethics		
2. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs	Ethics – review and discussion based on the Code of Ethics, homework includes how Code of Ethics will be used	Ethics and Agreements – List of Do's and Don'ts provided and discussed	The Coaching Relationship – discuss how the foundation supports the coaching relationship		
3. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders	Understanding Your Client and Focus and Motivation – Awareness of styles to ensure a good match and to adjust to the client	Coaching Process – discuss how the foundation supports co-creating the relationship	Client Priority Management – discuss how the foundation supports focusing on priorities		
4. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values	Communication – the techniques taught and subsequently practiced for the homework and during the practicum are all in keeping coaching ethically	People and Communication Skills – discuss how communication skills support the foundation	The Client's Future – discuss how the foundation supports focusing on planning for the future		
5. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws		Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how the foundation supports creating change	Challenges and Trends – discuss application of ethics and agreements when addressing challenges and how to stay current in these competency areas		
6. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions	Focus and Motivation – explores learning styles, language patterns, and thought patterns as tools for being sensitive to the client	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how ethics and agreements are foundational for work in sensitive areas			
7. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate	Coaching Practicum – the Introductory Session is used	Debrief – review the significance of			

	to determine if there is an effective match and all sessions are to practice staying in the role of coach	these competencies throughout the coaching engagements Practicum – Coaches email their agreement to their client, address the Code of Ethics with their client, and coach in keeping with the competencies	Final Debrief - review the significance of these competencies throughout the coaching engagements Practicum – Coaches email their agreement to their client, address the Code of Ethics with their client, and coach in keeping with these competencies		
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Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
A. Foundation					
2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset					
Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Homework Coaching Practicum About Coaching –	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum Group and Team Coaching	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum Coach Competencies and Strengths		
1. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices	discussion on what a coach is and is not to ensure a coaching approach plus	– discuss how to coach versus train plus how to manage multiple coachees with their differences	– the competencies and strengths are		
2. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach	review of the requirement for continuing education		foundational to a coaching mindset		
3. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to	Ethics – review and discussion based on the Code of Ethics,	Ethics and Agreements – discussion of what is appropriate	Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how the agreement		

enhance one's coaching	homework includes how empowering the client to choose is ethical	versus not when coaching	is part of every session and determined by the client so the coach adjusts		
4. Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others	Understanding Your Client	Coaching Process – discuss how the process is tailored to the client	The Coaching Relationship – discuss how the coach focuses on and adjusts to the client		
5. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients	provides a tool for being aware of the client and their context plus the homework includes practicing	People and Communication Skills – discuss Emotional Intelligence, Relationship Intelligence, and Social Intelligence	Client Priority Management – discuss how the coach supports the client		
6. Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions	Communication – the techniques taught and subsequently practiced for the homework and during the practicum are all in keeping with a coaching mindset	Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how confidence of the client and the coach influence creating change	The Client's Future – discuss how the coach empowers the client for their future		
7. Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions	Focus and Motivation – explores learning styles, language patterns, and thought patterns as tools	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how these sensitive topics influence decisions whether or not addressed	Challenges and Trends – discuss continuing education and staying current		
8. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary	Coaching Practicum – all sessions are to practice the coaching mindset	Debrief – review the significance of this competencies throughout the coaching engagements	Final Debrief - review the significance of these competencies throughout the coaching engagements		
		Practicum –	Practicum – Coaches		

		Coaches coach in keeping with the competencies	ensure they coach in keeping with the competencies		
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B. Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

<p>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 as well as those for each coaching session.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Homework Coaching Practicum</p> <p>About Coaching – discussion on what a coach is and is not to clearly communicate distinction and discuss the three stages of agreements</p> <p>Ethics – review and discussion based on the Code of Ethics and how it supports the agreement</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum</p> <p>Group and Team Coaching – discuss empowering the group or team to determine what they want from the session</p> <p>Ethics and Agreements – List of Do’s and Don’ts provided and discussed as well as the stages of the agreement</p> <p>Coaching Process – discuss how the agreement is co-created and supported</p> <p>People and Communication Skills –discuss how communication skills support</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coaching Practicum</p> <p>Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths</p> <p>Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss the three stages of agreements and empowering the client</p> <p>The Coaching Relationship – discuss how the agreement guides the coaching</p> <p>Client Priority Management – discuss how the agreement supports focusing on client</p>		
<p>1. Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Understanding Your Client provides a tool for being aware of the client and how to adjust to them appropriately plus the homework includes practicing</p>				
<p>2. Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities</p>	<p>Communication</p>				

of the client and relevant stakeholders	– the techniques taught and subsequently practiced for the homework and during the practicum support clarity and agreement	creating the agreement and the coaching session	priorities		
3. Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others	Focus and Motivation – the learning styles, language patterns, and thought patterns are tools for establishing the agreement	Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how confidence plays a role in the agreement and session	The Client’s Future – discuss how the agreement supports the client in their planning for the future		
4. Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals	Coaching Practicum – the practice coaching includes establishing the agreement for the session	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how to address sensitive topics and how unstated factors influence the client focus and decisions	Challenges and Trends – discuss how to stay current in the competencies		
5. Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility		Debrief – review the significance of the competencies throughout the coaching engagements	Final Debrief - review the significance of these competencies throughout the coaching engagements		
6. Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session		Practicum – Coaches email their agreement to their client, and the practice coaching includes establishing the agreement for the session	Practicum – Coaches email their agreement to their client and the practice coaching includes establishing the agreement for the session		
7. 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					

8. 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					
9. Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session					
10. Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise					
11. Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience					

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B. Co-Creating the Relationship					
4. Cultivates Trust and Safety					
<p>Definition: Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Homework, Coaching Practicum</p> <p>About Coaching and Ethics – provides a foundation for trust</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Group and Team Coaching – discuss developing rapport for trust and intimacy plus explore being present</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths</p>		

and trust.	Understanding Your Client – recognize and adjust to client personality to demonstrate respect, earn trust, and ensure the coach is present to the client	with everyone in the group or on the team Ethics and Agreements – explore how ethics and agreements are foundational to trust and presence	Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how engaging and understanding your client based on who they are builds trust		
1. Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs					
2. Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style and language and adapts one's coaching to the client	Communication – earning trust by listening, being present, clear language and respectful communication Focus and Motivation – awareness of how to work with the client based on their learning style supports trust plus expanding thinking and learning with questions based on client language and thoughts	Coaching Process – exploration of how the competencies work in the coaching process and to earn trust People and Communication Skills – discuss how people and communication skills support the trust and safety	The Coaching Relationship – discuss how to co-create the relationship and build trust Client Priority Management – discuss how trust supports a focus on client priorities		
3. Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process			The Client's Future – discuss how trust supports planning for the client's future		
4. Shows support, empathy and concern for the client		Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how trust supports change	Challenges and Trends – discuss how trust and presence apply when addressing challenges and how to stay current in these competency areas		
5. Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions	Coaching Practicum – practicing developing trust and co-creating a relationship	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how trust and presence are foundational for work in sensitive areas			
6. Demonstrates openness and transparency		Debrief –	Final Debrief		

as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client		review the significance of this competency throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – practice developing trust	- review the significance of this competency throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – practice developing trust		
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Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
B. Co-Creating the Relationship					
5. Maintains Presence					
Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Homework, Coaching Practicum	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework		
1. Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client	About Coaching – review of what coaching is which includes being present for the client	Group and Team Coaching – discuss developing rapport for trust and intimacy plus explore being present with everyone in the group or on the team	Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths		
2. Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process	Ethics – discussion includes the expectations of coaches being self-aware and serving the client	Ethics and Agreements – explore how ethics and agreements are foundational to trust and presence	Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how the start of the relationship is the foundation and coaching is tailored to the client which requires presence		
3. Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client	Understanding Your Client – the tool to recognize and adjust to the client requires the coach to be present to the client	Coaching Process – List of Do's and Don'ts provided and discussed	The Coaching Relationship – discuss how to focus on the		
4. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the					

coaching process			client and remain present		
5. Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing	Communication – listening, clear language, and powerful questions are all tailored to the client	People and Communication Skills – discuss how communication skills support the competencies of co-creating the relationship	Client Priority Management – discuss how to be present to the client and their priorities		
6. Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection	Focus and Motivation – recognizing and working with learning style, language patterns, and thought patterns require being present Coaching Practicum – practicing coaching includes practicing presence	Creating Change with Confidence – discuss incorporating trust and presence to support change Time and Money Coaching – discuss how trust and presence are foundational for work in sensitive areas Debrief – review the significance of these competencies throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – practice coaching with presence	The Client’s Future – discuss how to be present to the client and their future Challenges and Trends – discuss how trust and presence apply when addressing challenges and how to stay current in these competency areas Final Debrief - review the significance of these competencies throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – practice coaching with presence		

Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
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C. Communicating Effectively

6. Listens Actively

<p>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</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Homework, Coaching Practicum</p> <p>About Coaching – review of what coaching is includes listening for what the client wants</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Group and Team Coaching – discuss managing communication including listening with a group or team</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths</p>		
<p>1. Considers the client’s context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating</p>	<p>Ethics – discussion includes the expectations of coaches hearing and serving the client</p> <p>Understanding Your Client – awareness of the client’s personal style informs listening and holding silence</p>	<p>Ethics and Agreements – explore how listening is foundational for ethics and agreements</p> <p>Coaching Process – discuss listening in the coaching process</p>	<p>Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how listening is foundational when engaging a client and for understanding clients</p> <p>The Coaching Relationship – discuss how listening supports the coaching relationship</p>		
<p>2. Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding</p>	<p>Communication – discuss specific listening techniques and how it fits in the flow of a coaching conversation</p>	<p>People and Communication Skills – exploration of these skills including listening</p>	<p>Client Priority Management – discuss how listening supports a focus on client priorities</p>		
<p>3. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating</p>	<p>Focus and Motivation – enhances listening and promotes questioning with awareness</p>	<p>Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how listening skills support change</p>	<p>The Client’s Future – discuss how listening supports planning for the client’s</p>		
<p>4. Notices, acknowledges and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors</p>		<p>Time and Money Coaching – discuss how listening is</p>			

5. Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what is being communicated	of language and thought patterns Homework – practice listening skills and write about the impact	foundational to work in sensitive areas Debrief – review the significance of communication competencies throughout the coaching engagements	future Challenges and Trends – discuss how listening skills apply when addressing challenges and how to stay current in this competency area		
6. Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns	Coaching Practicum – practice listening skills	Coaching Practicum – practice listening as a coach plus observe listening in others coaching	Final Debrief - review the significance of listening throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – practice listening as a coach plus observe listening in others coaching		

Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
C. Communicating Effectively					
7. Evokes Awareness					
Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Homework, Coaching Practicum About Coaching – review of what coaching is includes evoking awareness for the client	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Group and Team Coaching – discuss how to evoke awareness with a group or team Ethics and Agreements –	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths		

1. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful	Ethics – discussion includes the expectations of coaches	explore how ethics and agreements guide coaches in evoking awareness	Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how awareness is foundational when engaging a client and for understanding clients		
2. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight	including evoking awareness	Coaching Process – discuss evoking awareness in the coaching process			
3. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs	Understanding Your Client – the tool for recognizing personal style includes how to adjust to the client which supports effectively evoking awareness	People and Communication Skills – explore flexing to the client in support of evoking awareness	The Coaching Relationship – discuss how communication supports the coaching relationship		
4. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking	Communication – listening, questioning, and direct communication evoke awareness	Creating Change with Confidence – discuss how awareness supports change	Client Priority Management – discuss how to evoke awareness of client priorities		
5. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment	Focus and Motivation – awareness of language and thought patterns informs questions to evoke awareness	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how awareness is foundational to work in sensitive areas and awareness of influencing factors impacts thoughts and decisions	The Client’s Future – discuss how awareness supports planning for the client’s future		
6. Notices what is working to enhance client progress			Challenges and Trends – discuss how to evoke awareness for addressing challenges and how to stay current in the competencies		
7. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs	Homework – practice these skills and write about the impact				
8. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior,	Coaching Practicum –	Debrief – review the significance of communication competencies	Final Debrief - review the significance of the		

thinking or emotion	practice these competencies as a coach plus observe them in others	throughout the coaching engagements	competencies throughout the coaching engagements		
9. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do		Coaching Practicum – practice these competencies as a coach plus observe them in others	Coaching Practicum – practice these competencies as a coach plus observe them in others		
10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives					
11. Shares observations, insights and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client					

Competency	CPC	CMC	CCS	CE	Mentor
D. Cultivating Learning and Growth					
8. Facilitates Client Growth					
<p>Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.</p> <p>1. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Homework, Coaching Practicum</p> <p>About Coaching – review of how coaching empowers client choice</p> <p>Ethics – discussion includes the expectations of coaches including empowering</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Group and Team Coaching – discuss group or team planning and goals</p> <p>Ethics and Agreements – explore how ethics and agreements support empowering the client to</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Homework</p> <p>Coach Competencies and Strengths – review the competencies and expand on them with strengths</p> <p>Engaging and Understanding Your Client – discuss how facilitating learning and</p>		

2. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning	the client Understanding Your Client – understand client personal style to understand how to support their planning	plan Coaching Process – discuss how client learning and results occur throughout the coaching process	results apply when engaging a client and for understanding clients The Coaching Relationship – discuss how facilitating learning and results supports the success of the coaching relationship		
3. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability	Communication – listening enhances client openness and questions support client planning	People and Communication Skills – discuss how listening and questions empower client choice and planning			
4. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps	Focus and Motivation – working with learning styles, language patterns, and thought patterns supports effective client planning	Creating Change with Confidence – explore confidence as a tool for client planning and outcomes	Client Priority Management – discuss how facilitating learning and results applies for a focus on client priorities		
5. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers	Coaching Practicum – hands-on practice with facilitating growth and observing it in others coaching	Time and Money Coaching – discuss how these influencing factors impact choices and plans	The Client’s Future – discuss how facilitating learning and results applies in planning for the client’s future		
6. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions		Debrief – review client growth throughout the coaching engagements	Challenges and Trends – discuss how empowering the client supports them with challenges and in turn is applicable for the coach plus how to stay		
7. Celebrates the client's progress and successes					
8. Partners with the client to close the session		Coaching Practicum – hands-on			

		practice with facilitating growth and observing it in others coaching	current in this competency area Final Debrief - review the significance facilitating client growth throughout the coaching engagements Coaching Practicum – hands-on practice with facilitating growth and observing it in others coaching		
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