

Coach Competency Assessment

Competency Model and Behavioral Indicators

An Evidence-Based Framework for Professional Coaching Excellence

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Competency Model and Behavioral Indicators

Setting a New Standard for Coach Competency Assessment

In an industry where credibility, rigor, and measurable results are essential, clearly defined competencies are the foundation of any meaningful assessment. This comprehensive list of coach competencies, complete with precise behavioral indicators, is not only the backbone of the **Coach Competency Assessment**—it is a demonstration of our commitment to professional excellence and absolute transparency.

Why clear competencies matter:

Modern assessment psychology underscores the necessity of well-defined, observable competencies. When every standard is transparent and measurable, candidates know exactly what is expected. This transparency fosters trust and fairness, ensuring that success is determined by real capability—not by guesswork, insider knowledge, or ambiguous criteria.

A unique instrument for a diverse industry:

The Coach Competency Assessment stands apart from traditional certification routes. It does **not replace coach education** or the excellent development paths offered by established coaching associations. Instead, it provides an innovative, validated alternative for highly experienced coaches who have honed their skills outside of conventional pathways—or for those who wish to demonstrate their capabilities through performance rather than coursework.

This approach is akin to the “**Challenge Exam**” model embraced by leading universities worldwide:

Coaches who believe they are ready can step forward and prove their skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes by passing a rigorous, standardized assessment. Those who succeed earn the **Certificate of Competency** from the university—a credential respected across the professional field.

Benefits and credibility at a glance

- **Transparent Standards:** Every competency and behavior indicator is published and mapped to international best practices. Candidates and stakeholders know precisely what is measured.
- **Rigorous and Defensible:** Built on the frameworks of leading coaching associations and the Accrediting Alliance for Training and Development, the assessment stands up to scrutiny from professionals and employers alike.
- **Objective and Fair:** No hidden curriculum, no guesswork—only proven skills, knowledge, and attitudes count.
- **Recognition and Verification:** Successful candidates receive a coveted Certificate of Competency and a public listing in the **Human Intelligence Network** at the Accrediting Alliance for Training and Development—making their credentials easily verifiable for clients and organizations.
- **Practical Alternative:** Ideal for working professionals, corporate coaches, and those seeking recognition without the time or expense of traditional, multi-year programs.
- **Market Differentiation:** This assessment demonstrates mastery in a transparent and credible way, helping coaches distinguish themselves in a crowded and often unregulated market.
- **Continuous Learning:** The published competency model serves as a powerful tool for self-assessment and ongoing professional development, even before the assessment is taken.

Competency Group 1: Coaching Ethics & Professionalism

1. Demonstrates Personal Integrity & Honesty

Skills: Remains honest and transparent, even in difficult situations; takes responsibility for mistakes and admits errors openly; communicates transparently regarding uncertainties or conflicts of interest.

Knowledge: Understands the ethical standards and codes of conduct of coaching associations; recognizes the importance of transparency and honesty in the coaching process; knows examples and consequences of breaches of integrity in coaching.

Attitudes: Values honesty as a core coaching principle; is willing to self-reflect and critically examine own actions; avoids deception or withholding relevant information intentionally.

2. Upholds Coaching Code of Ethics & Professional Standards

Skills: Introduces and explains the code of ethics at the start of the coaching relationship; applies ethical guidelines consistently in practice; seeks advice from supervisors or peers when faced with ethical uncertainty.

Knowledge: Knows the current codes of ethics and professional standards (ICF, EMCC, AC, AATD); is aware of practical applications for ethical standards in coaching; understands procedures for reporting or addressing ethical issues.

Attitudes: Considers ethical conduct as the foundation of professional coaching; is committed to staying up-to-date on evolving standards and practices; feels a sense of pride in consistently applying professional standards.

3. Maintains Confidentiality & Privacy

Skills: Clearly communicates confidentiality rules to clients at the outset; protects all client data from unauthorized access or disclosure;

distinguishes between coaching information and other personal data.

Knowledge: Knows legal requirements and best practices for confidentiality and data protection (e.g., GDPR); understands exceptions to confidentiality and when disclosures are required or permitted; knows secure methods for data storage and transfer.

Attitudes: Respects client privacy as inviolable; is sensitive to risks associated with data management; values and prioritizes client trust through responsible information handling.

4. Manages Conflicts of Interest

Skills: Identifies potential or actual conflicts of interest promptly; transparently discusses conflicts with clients and stakeholders; implements strategies to minimize or eliminate conflicts.

Knowledge: Understands what constitutes a conflict of interest in coaching; knows organizational and legal policies regarding conflicts; is aware of the steps to manage or disclose conflicts appropriately.

Attitudes: Prioritizes the interests of the client and ethical practice; is willing to recuse oneself if a conflict cannot be resolved; values transparency and openness in all relationships.

5. Clarifies Roles & Professional Boundaries

Skills: Clearly communicates the differences between coaching, mentoring, consulting, and therapy; sets and maintains professional boundaries with clients; addresses boundary crossings immediately and appropriately.

Knowledge: Knows the scope and limitations of the coaching role; understands ethical issues related to dual relationships; is familiar with protocols for managing boundary issues.

Attitudes: Respects the distinctiveness of the coaching relationship; values clear, mutually agreed boundaries; is vigilant about avoiding role confusion.

6. Refers Clients to Other Professionals When Appropriate

Skills: Recognizes when client needs are outside the scope of coaching; communicates referral decisions clearly and supportively; identifies and recommends appropriate resources or professionals.

Knowledge: Knows signs indicating the need for referral (e.g., mental health, legal, or medical issues); understands the process and protocol for making referrals; is aware of local and virtual resources.

Attitudes: Puts client well-being above personal interest; is open to collaboration with other professionals; accepts the limits of one's own competence.

7. Ensures Full Transparency in Agreements

Skills: Drafts clear coaching agreements outlining scope, fees, confidentiality, and expectations; reviews agreements with clients and clarifies questions; updates agreements when changes occur.

Knowledge: Understands standard contract elements in coaching; knows legal and ethical requirements for agreements; is aware of organizational or association policies on contracting.

Attitudes: Values honesty and openness in all client interactions; prioritizes mutual understanding and informed consent; seeks to prevent misunderstandings through clarity.

8. Commits to Fair Treatment & Inclusivity

Skills: Demonstrates respect for client diversity in every interaction; adapts language and behavior to honor cultural differences; addresses bias or discrimination if it arises.

Knowledge: Knows principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in coaching; understands the impact of bias and stereotypes; is familiar with resources for inclusive practice.

Attitudes: Embraces inclusivity as a core value; is open-minded and nonjudgmental; actively seeks to learn from diverse perspectives.

9. Navigates Ethical Issues in Team Settings

Skills: Maintains confidentiality across multiple clients within a team or group; manages complex dynamics and potential conflicts in team coaching; establishes clear agreements regarding shared information.

Knowledge: Understands unique ethical challenges in team and group coaching; knows protocols for confidentiality and reporting in group settings; is aware of power dynamics and their influence on coaching.

Attitudes: Values fairness and respect for all team members; is vigilant about ethical risks in group contexts; seeks to build trust within the group.

10. Maintains Professional Competence

Skills: Participates regularly in professional development and training; applies new knowledge and skills to coaching practice; seeks and incorporates feedback from clients and peers.

Knowledge: Knows current trends, research, and best practices in coaching; understands the importance of supervision and ongoing learning; is aware of personal development areas.

Attitudes: Is committed to lifelong learning and growth; values humility and curiosity in practice; welcomes feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

11. Uses Accurate Representation & Marketing

Skills: Describes credentials, experience, and services honestly in all communications; avoids misleading or exaggerated claims in marketing materials; clarifies limitations of services to potential clients.

Knowledge: Knows ethical guidelines for advertising and self-promotion; understands regulations regarding professional representation; is aware of consequences of false or deceptive marketing.

Attitudes: Values integrity and authenticity in public image; prioritizes transparency over self-promotion; respects the intelligence and autonomy of prospective clients.

12. Complies with Legal & Organizational Requirements

Skills: Stays informed about relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies; ensures all coaching activities comply with these requirements; documents actions as required by law or policy.

Knowledge: Knows applicable national, regional, and local laws related to coaching; understands organizational compliance protocols; is familiar with documentation and record-keeping requirements.

Attitudes: Respects the rule of law and organizational standards; prioritizes compliance over convenience; accepts responsibility for staying current with changes.

13. Integrates Ethical Use of Technology & AI

Skills: Uses digital tools and platforms responsibly, safeguarding client data; communicates clearly about technology use in coaching sessions; stays current with technology-related ethical issues.

Knowledge: Knows privacy and security best practices for digital communication; understands ethical implications of AI and technology in coaching; is aware of legal requirements for online services.

Attitudes: Embraces technology as a tool for client benefit, not as a replacement for ethical responsibility; maintains caution and critical thinking about new tech; values client autonomy and informed consent in tech use.

14. Engages in Supervision & Peer Support

Skills: Actively participates in professional supervision or peer groups; shares and reflects on coaching challenges and ethical dilemmas; integrates learning from supervision into practice.

Knowledge: Knows supervision models and their value for professional development; understands the role of peer support in ethical decision-making; is aware of available supervision and peer networks.

Attitudes: Values openness to feedback and learning from others; recognizes supervision as essential for quality assurance; is willing to be vulnerable and transparent in peer settings.

15. Monitors & Manages Ethical Dilemmas

Skills: Identifies ethical issues and dilemmas as they arise; uses structured processes for ethical decision-making; seeks consultation when faced with complex dilemmas.

Knowledge: Knows common ethical dilemmas in coaching; understands models and frameworks for ethical decision-making; is familiar with available resources for guidance.

Attitudes: Prioritizes ethical behavior over personal or commercial interests; accepts uncertainty and complexity as part of ethical practice; is willing to take difficult but necessary actions to resolve dilemmas.

16. Protects Vulnerable Clients

Skills: Recognizes signs of vulnerability or risk in clients; takes appropriate action to ensure client safety and well-being; reports concerns when required by law or ethical guidelines.

Knowledge: Knows indicators of abuse, neglect, or crisis situations; understands mandatory reporting requirements; is aware of support services and referral pathways.

Attitudes: Places client safety above all other concerns; is sensitive to power imbalances; demonstrates empathy and vigilance for client welfare.

17. Ensures Cultural & Contextual Sensitivity

Skills: Adapts coaching approach to fit client's cultural and contextual background; seeks to understand the client's worldview and experience; avoids assumptions or generalizations based on background.

Knowledge: Knows cultural competence frameworks and their relevance to coaching; understands the impact of cultural context on behavior and communication; is aware of resources to support cross-cultural understanding.

Attitudes: Values diversity and uniqueness of each client; maintains humility and openness to learning from clients; is committed to continuous cultural self-awareness.

18. Maintains Emotional Self-Awareness & Regulation

Skills: Recognizes personal emotions and their impact on coaching sessions; manages emotional triggers and responses constructively; models emotional intelligence for clients.

Knowledge: Knows principles of emotional intelligence and self-regulation; understands techniques for self-reflection and emotional management; is aware of personal emotional patterns and triggers.

Attitudes: Prioritizes emotional self-care as part of professional responsibility; values authenticity balanced with professional composure; is willing to seek support when needed.

19. Supports Client Autonomy & Empowerment

Skills: Encourages clients to make their own decisions and set their own goals; avoids imposing personal values or solutions; uses questioning to foster independent thinking.

Knowledge: Knows the importance of autonomy and empowerment in coaching theory; understands how to balance support and challenge for client growth; is aware of ethical guidelines regarding influence and persuasion.

Attitudes: Respects client choices, even when different from own preferences; believes in the client's capacity for growth and decision-making; demonstrates patience and restraint in the coaching process.

20. Documents Coaching Activity Appropriately

Skills: Maintains accurate, timely, and confidential records of coaching sessions; follows best practices for documentation and data storage; shares documentation with clients as appropriate.

Knowledge: Knows legal, ethical, and organizational standards for record-keeping; understands data protection and retention policies; is aware of what information should and should not be documented.

Attitudes: Values accountability and transparency in documentation; prioritizes client privacy and data security; views documentation as a tool for quality and safety, not bureaucracy.

Competency Group 2: Building the Coaching Relationship

1. Establishes Trust and Psychological Safety

Skills: Creates a welcoming, non-judgmental environment; invites clients to express concerns or vulnerabilities; responds with empathy and reassurance.

Knowledge: Understands factors that contribute to trust and safety in coaching; knows psychological safety models and their application; recognizes behaviors that undermine trust.

Attitudes: Genuinely values client well-being and security; is approachable, open, and respectful in all interactions; maintains confidentiality as a foundation for trust.

2. Demonstrates Respect and Unconditional Positive Regard

Skills: Treats every client with dignity and respect, regardless of background or beliefs; uses inclusive, non-judgmental language; actively listens without interrupting or imposing opinions.

Knowledge: Knows the importance of unconditional positive regard in the coaching process; understands the impact of respect on client engagement and outcomes; is familiar with cultural competence frameworks.

Attitudes: Approaches each client with genuine respect and openness; holds a belief in every client's resourcefulness and potential; is committed to suspending judgment.

3. Creates and Maintains Clear Agreements

Skills: Collaboratively establishes coaching goals, expectations, and boundaries; revisits and revises agreements as needed; ensures clarity about roles and responsibilities.

Knowledge: Knows the elements of effective coaching agreements; understands the importance of co-creating agreements with clients; is

aware of potential sources of misunderstanding.

Attitudes: Values collaboration and partnership in setting agreements; prioritizes clarity and mutual understanding; is flexible and responsive to client needs.

4. Communicates Presence and Engagement

Skills: Demonstrates full focus and attentiveness in each session; uses body language and tone to convey engagement; manages distractions and interruptions.

Knowledge: Knows active listening and presence techniques; understands the impact of presence on the coaching relationship; recognizes the signs of disengagement.

Attitudes: Values being fully present for the client; prioritizes quality of attention over quantity of time; is committed to mindful, intentional coaching.

5. Develops Rapport

Skills: Finds common ground and builds a positive initial connection; uses humor, warmth, or shared interests appropriately; adjusts communication style to client preferences.

Knowledge: Knows the stages and techniques for building rapport; understands the difference between rapport and manipulation; recognizes rapport-building opportunities and challenges.

Attitudes: Enjoys connecting with others; is open and authentic in interactions; approaches new relationships with curiosity.

6. Demonstrates Empathy

Skills: Accurately perceives and reflects client feelings and experiences; validates client emotions without minimizing or over-identifying; responds supportively to client distress or struggle.

Knowledge: Knows the difference between empathy and sympathy; understands the role of empathy in coaching outcomes; is aware of barriers to expressing empathy.

Attitudes: Feels genuine concern for clients' experiences; is willing to be

vulnerable and emotionally available; values emotional connection as part of the coaching process.

7. Maintains Professional Boundaries in the Relationship

Skills: Sets clear limits regarding time, communication, and roles; addresses any attempts to cross or blur boundaries; refers clients to other resources if boundary issues arise.

Knowledge: Knows ethical guidelines for maintaining boundaries; understands risks of dual relationships and over-involvement; recognizes signs of boundary erosion.

Attitudes: Respects the need for healthy boundaries for both coach and client; is willing to have difficult conversations about limits; prioritizes the integrity of the coaching relationship.

8. Fosters Client Responsibility and Ownership

Skills: Encourages clients to take initiative and make choices; refrains from rescuing or over-directing the client; asks questions that promote self-reflection and accountability.

Knowledge: Knows the importance of client ownership in the coaching process; understands motivational interviewing and empowerment techniques; is familiar with frameworks for personal responsibility.

Attitudes: Believes in the client's capacity for self-direction; respects client autonomy and decision-making; values learning from experience and reflection.

9. Demonstrates Patience and Tolerance for Ambiguity

Skills: Waits without rushing client progress or decision-making; holds space for silence and uncertainty; refrains from filling gaps or forcing solutions.

Knowledge: Knows the value of patience in supporting client growth; understands the process nature of coaching change; recognizes cultural differences in pacing and decision-making.

Attitudes: Is comfortable with ambiguity and open-ended processes; values patience as a strength; accepts that change takes time.

10. Encourages Open and Honest Communication

Skills: Invites candid feedback from clients; models direct, respectful communication; addresses misunderstandings transparently.

Knowledge: Knows the principles of open communication in coaching; understands the risks of hidden agendas or unspoken concerns; is familiar with tools for giving and receiving feedback.

Attitudes: Values honesty as the basis of partnership; welcomes constructive criticism and dialogue; is committed to transparency.

11. Builds Partnership and Collaboration

Skills: Shares decision-making with the client; co-creates session agendas and goals; works “with” rather than “for” the client.

Knowledge: Knows collaboration frameworks and their relevance to coaching; understands the distinction between directive and collaborative approaches; is aware of potential barriers to partnership.

Attitudes: Sees the client as an equal partner; is open to sharing control and responsibility; believes in the value of co-creation.

12. Adapts to Client’s Communication Style and Preferences

Skills: Observes and adjusts to verbal and nonverbal cues; varies approach based on client feedback and needs; clarifies communication preferences early in the relationship.

Knowledge: Knows common communication styles and differences; understands the impact of style mismatches on rapport; is familiar with assessment tools for communication preferences.

Attitudes: Is flexible and adaptable in interactions; values diversity in communication styles; seeks to understand before being understood.

13. Demonstrates Consistency and Reliability

Skills: Honors commitments and is punctual; maintains consistent behavior across sessions; follows through on agreed actions.

Knowledge: Knows the importance of reliability for building trust; understands factors that can impact coach consistency; recognizes the

impact of broken commitments.

Attitudes: Takes pride in dependability; values consistency as a core relational value; is mindful of the effect of one's actions on the client.

14. Responds Appropriately to Client Emotions

Skills: Recognizes and acknowledges emotional shifts in the client; responds with sensitivity and appropriateness; supports emotional expression without overstepping boundaries.

Knowledge: Knows emotional intelligence principles relevant to coaching; understands typical client emotional responses in coaching; is aware of strategies for emotional regulation.

Attitudes: Values emotional awareness as a coaching asset; respects the client's emotional process; maintains composure and empathy.

15. Maintains a Non-Judgmental Attitude

Skills: Avoids criticism, evaluation, or unsolicited advice; listens openly to all perspectives and experiences; responds neutrally to value-laden statements.

Knowledge: Knows the difference between evaluation and inquiry; understands how judgment can hinder coaching progress; is familiar with techniques to reduce bias.

Attitudes: Genuinely values openness and curiosity; is self-aware of personal biases; strives to suspend judgment throughout the process.

16. Encourages Client Reflection and Self-Discovery

Skills: Uses questions and feedback to prompt reflection; supports clients in exploring values, beliefs, and assumptions; facilitates self-discovery without leading.

Knowledge: Knows models of reflection and adult learning; understands the importance of discovery in transformative coaching; is aware of common barriers to reflection.

Attitudes: Is curious about each client's inner world; values reflection as a key to growth; believes in the client's ability to generate insight.

17. Recognizes and Supports Client Strengths

Skills: Identifies and affirms client talents and resources; encourages clients to leverage strengths in pursuing goals; offers feedback that highlights positive attributes.

Knowledge: Knows positive psychology concepts relevant to coaching; understands the role of strengths in achieving change; is familiar with strengths-based assessment tools.

Attitudes: Focuses on what is working and what is possible; values client uniqueness and potential; maintains an optimistic outlook.

18. Maintains Appropriate Emotional Distance

Skills: Balances empathy with objectivity; avoids over-involvement in client issues; maintains professional perspective in emotionally charged situations.

Knowledge: Knows the signs of enmeshment or over-identification; understands risks of blurred boundaries in emotional involvement; is familiar with self-care practices for emotional resilience.

Attitudes: Values objectivity and professional detachment; is aware of the importance of self-care; believes in supporting the client without becoming personally affected.

19. Uses Humor and Warmth Appropriately

Skills: Integrates humor and warmth to build connection, when suitable; reads client cues about appropriateness; uses humor to defuse tension, not to distract or avoid issues.

Knowledge: Knows cultural and personal differences in humor; understands risks of inappropriate humor or misinterpretation; is aware of humor as a rapport-building tool.

Attitudes: Is open to bringing lightness into sessions when appropriate; values warmth as a foundation for connection; is sensitive to the client's comfort and boundaries.

20. Adjusts Relationship Approach Based on Feedback

Skills: Solicits and responds to feedback about the relationship; makes changes to approach as needed; reviews and re-contracts the relationship periodically.

Knowledge: Knows the importance of feedback loops in coaching; understands models for relationship review and re-contracting; is aware of techniques for responding to critical feedback.

Attitudes: Welcomes feedback as a tool for improvement; is humble and flexible in adapting to client needs; values ongoing co-creation and responsiveness.

Competency Group 3: Communication & Active Listening

1. Practices Active Listening

Skills: Focuses fully on the client's words, tone, and body language; reflects back understanding through paraphrasing and summarizing; avoids interrupting or jumping to conclusions.

Knowledge: Knows models and techniques of active listening; understands the impact of listening on rapport and insight; is aware of barriers to effective listening (e.g., bias, distractions).

Attitudes: Values the client's perspective and experience; is genuinely curious and open; maintains patience and presence throughout the conversation.

2. Asks Powerful and Relevant Questions

Skills: Formulates open, thought-provoking questions; adapts questioning style to client's needs and stage; avoids leading, judgmental, or closed questions.

Knowledge: Knows various questioning frameworks (e.g., GROW, Solution-Focused); understands the purpose of different types of

questions; is aware of the effect of questions on client reflection.

Attitudes: Believes in the power of inquiry; is non-directive and client-centered; demonstrates humility and curiosity.

3. Uses Clear and Concise Language

Skills: Communicates ideas simply and without jargon; checks for client understanding; adjusts complexity of language to suit the client.

Knowledge: Knows principles of effective communication; understands potential for miscommunication; is aware of language barriers and cultural differences.

Attitudes: Values clarity and simplicity; is respectful of the client's level of knowledge; prioritizes shared understanding.

4. Demonstrates Presence and Focus

Skills: Maintains eye contact (where culturally appropriate); minimizes distractions during sessions; tunes into both verbal and nonverbal signals.

Knowledge: Knows the elements of being present in conversation; understands the connection between presence and client trust; is familiar with mindfulness techniques.

Attitudes: Sees presence as essential to quality coaching; is committed to attentive engagement; shows respect by giving undivided attention.

5. Offers Constructive and Supportive Feedback

Skills: Provides feedback in a way that is respectful and actionable; focuses on behaviors and outcomes, not personal attributes; balances positive reinforcement with areas for growth.

Knowledge: Knows models for effective feedback (e.g., SBI, Pendleton); understands the impact of feedback on motivation and learning; is aware of timing and delivery strategies.

Attitudes: Genuinely wants to support client development; is sensitive to client readiness and receptiveness; avoids criticism or judgment.

6. Recognizes and Names Key Issues

Skills: Identifies underlying patterns, beliefs, or challenges; shares observations with the client for validation; distills complex information into core themes.

Knowledge: Knows frameworks for issue identification (e.g., systemic coaching); understands the value of insight in facilitating change; is familiar with techniques for pattern recognition.

Attitudes: Is observant and perceptive; respects the client's readiness to explore key issues; is willing to challenge constructively.

7. Uses Silence and Pauses Effectively

Skills: Allows silence for reflection and processing; waits for the client to speak without rushing; uses pauses to emphasize key points.

Knowledge: Knows the psychological effects of silence; understands cultural variations in comfort with silence; is aware of moments where silence can be most powerful.

Attitudes: Values silence as a tool for depth; is comfortable with pauses and space; is patient and non-anxious.

8. Clarifies and Summarizes Client Statements

Skills: Restates key points to ensure understanding; asks clarifying questions to resolve ambiguity; summarizes progress and next steps at session end.

Knowledge: Knows summarizing and clarifying techniques; understands the importance of checking assumptions; is familiar with tools for tracking client statements.

Attitudes: Strives for mutual understanding; is attentive to client meaning, not just words; values clarity and alignment.

9. Adapts Communication to Client Needs

Skills: Adjusts pace, tone, and vocabulary; responds flexibly to client emotional state; uses analogies, stories, or metaphors when helpful.

Knowledge: Knows principles of adaptive communication; understands

the impact of communication mismatches; is aware of diverse learning and communication styles.

Attitudes: Is flexible and responsive; respects client individuality; values accessibility and inclusion.

10. Demonstrates Emotional Intelligence in Communication

Skills: Senses and responds to emotional cues in conversation; expresses own emotions appropriately and professionally; helps clients articulate and explore their feelings.

Knowledge: Knows emotional intelligence models and their application; understands the interplay of emotion and communication; is familiar with emotional vocabulary and expression.

Attitudes: Values emotional honesty; is sensitive to emotional undercurrents; maintains professionalism with empathy.

11. Listens for Values, Strengths, and Aspirations

Skills: Identifies underlying client values and motivators; points out strengths and aspirations as they emerge; brings focus to positive drivers.

Knowledge: Knows methods for uncovering values and strengths; understands the role of aspirations in coaching; is familiar with positive psychology approaches.

Attitudes: Believes in the client's potential; is supportive and affirming; is attentive to what energizes the client.

12. Checks Understanding and Seeks Confirmation

Skills: Regularly checks that both parties understand each other; invites the client to correct or expand on statements; paraphrases to confirm shared meaning.

Knowledge: Knows the risks of assumptions in communication; understands confirmation and clarification techniques; is aware of signals of misunderstanding.

Attitudes: Values accuracy and shared meaning; is open to correction and learning; is committed to mutual understanding.

13. Avoids Assumptions and Biases

Skills: Asks clarifying questions rather than making assumptions; recognizes and manages own biases in conversations; encourages clients to challenge their own assumptions.

Knowledge: Knows about cognitive biases and their effects; understands how assumptions can distort communication; is familiar with tools for bias reduction.

Attitudes: Is humble and self-aware; values objectivity and fairness; is willing to challenge own thinking.

14. Encourages Client Expression and Storytelling

Skills: Invites clients to share their stories in their own words; listens attentively to narratives and metaphors; encourages self-expression without judgment.

Knowledge: Knows narrative coaching and story-based approaches; understands the power of storytelling in meaning-making; is aware of cultural differences in self-expression.

Attitudes: Values authentic client voice; is open to diverse modes of expression; enjoys hearing and exploring client stories.

15. Handles Challenging or Sensitive Topics with Care

Skills: Introduces difficult topics thoughtfully and gently; maintains composure and empathy in sensitive discussions; ensures client feels safe and respected.

Knowledge: Knows protocols for discussing sensitive issues; understands psychological safety and trauma-informed approaches; is aware of escalation or referral processes if needed.

Attitudes: Respects the client's vulnerability; is courageous yet compassionate; is non-judgmental and discreet.

16. Communicates Nonverbally with Awareness

Skills: Uses facial expression, posture, and gesture to support communication; reads and interprets client nonverbal cues accurately;

adjusts own nonverbal signals to promote openness.

Knowledge: Knows basics of body language and nonverbal communication; understands cultural nuances in nonverbal cues; is familiar with congruence between verbal and nonverbal signals.

Attitudes: Is attentive to the “whole person” in communication; values congruence and authenticity; is observant and mindful.

17. Encourages Two-Way Communication

Skills: Fosters dialogue rather than monologue; invites questions, input, and reactions from the client; balances speaking and listening.

Knowledge: Knows techniques to encourage participation; understands the benefits of dialogue over didactic interaction; is familiar with barriers to open communication.

Attitudes: Believes in shared exploration; is collaborative and facilitative; values co-created meaning.

18. Manages Disagreement and Constructive Conflict

Skills: Navigates disagreement without escalating tension; encourages respectful expression of differing views; finds common ground or understanding.

Knowledge: Knows conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques; understands the growth potential in constructive conflict; is aware of triggers and dynamics in disagreement.

Attitudes: Is calm and steady under pressure; values diverse perspectives; sees conflict as a learning opportunity.

19. Uses Communication to Motivate and Inspire

Skills: Shares affirmations and motivational language; celebrates successes and progress; frames challenges as opportunities.

Knowledge: Knows motivational communication strategies; understands the psychology of encouragement; is aware of limits of external motivation.

Attitudes: Is optimistic and encouraging; believes in the client’s ability to grow; is supportive and positive.

20. Protects Confidentiality in All Communications

Skills: Avoids discussing client details outside of agreed boundaries; uses secure communication methods; clarifies confidentiality in electronic and written communication.

Knowledge: Knows confidentiality protocols for various media; understands legal and ethical standards for information sharing; is familiar with best practices for secure communication.

Attitudes: Values and prioritizes client trust; is vigilant about privacy; is respectful and discrete in all communications.

Competency Group 4: Facilitating Learning & Results

1. Supports Clients in Setting Clear and Meaningful Goals

Skills: Guides clients to articulate specific, relevant, and achievable goals; uses goal-setting frameworks (e.g., SMART); helps prioritize goals based on client values and needs.

Knowledge: Knows principles and models of effective goal-setting; understands the link between goals, motivation, and progress; is familiar with common obstacles to goal clarity.

Attitudes: Values clarity and purpose in client work; believes in the power of intentional direction; encourages client ownership of goals.

2. Facilitates Action Planning

Skills: Helps clients break down goals into actionable steps; co-creates detailed action plans with timelines; encourages the identification of resources and supports.

Knowledge: Knows action planning strategies and tools; understands how to structure plans for sustainability; is aware of factors that affect follow-through.

Attitudes: Is solution-focused and practical; values client autonomy in choosing actions; is optimistic about incremental progress.

3. Encourages Accountability

Skills: Establishes clear accountability measures with clients; checks in on progress consistently; provides reminders and support as needed.

Knowledge: Knows different approaches to fostering accountability; understands the role of accountability in behavior change; is familiar with common challenges to maintaining accountability.

Attitudes: Sees accountability as empowering, not punitive; believes in respectful follow-up; values honesty about progress and setbacks.

4. Celebrates Progress and Achievements

Skills: Recognizes and acknowledges client successes; encourages reflection on achievements, big and small; reinforces positive behaviors and milestones.

Knowledge: Knows motivational and positive reinforcement techniques; understands the psychology of celebration and reward; is aware of the impact of acknowledgment on self-efficacy.

Attitudes: Values celebration as part of growth; is genuinely pleased with client progress; maintains enthusiasm and encouragement.

5. Helps Clients Identify and Overcome Obstacles

Skills: Guides clients to explore barriers and challenges; uses problem-solving frameworks to address obstacles; supports brainstorming and testing of solutions.

Knowledge: Knows common obstacles in personal and professional growth; understands root cause analysis and reframing techniques; is familiar with resilience and coping strategies.

Attitudes: Views obstacles as learning opportunities; is nonjudgmental and supportive; encourages persistence and creative thinking.

6. Promotes Reflective Learning

Skills: Facilitates reflective questioning and dialogue; encourages clients to extract lessons from experiences; supports journaling or other reflection tools.

Knowledge: Knows models of reflection (e.g., Gibbs, Kolb); understands the benefits of reflection for growth; is aware of methods to prompt deeper thinking.

Attitudes: Values reflection as a key driver of insight; is patient with the reflective process; encourages openness and self-discovery.

7. Supports Sustainable Change

Skills: Guides clients in identifying changes that can be maintained over time; helps anticipate and plan for setbacks; encourages habits and routines that support goals.

Knowledge: Knows principles of habit formation and change management; understands relapse prevention and sustainability; is familiar with research on long-term change.

Attitudes: Believes in gradual, lasting improvement; is realistic and honest about setbacks; values perseverance and adaptability.

8. Encourages Experimentation and Learning from Failure

Skills: Invites clients to try new approaches and stretch beyond comfort zones; helps clients reframe failures as valuable feedback; facilitates review of “what worked” and “what didn’t.”

Knowledge: Knows the value of a growth mindset and experimentation; understands learning cycles and iterative approaches; is aware of psychological safety in risk-taking.

Attitudes: Embraces mistakes as opportunities for learning; is supportive and non-blaming; values curiosity and courage.

9. Facilitates Creative Problem-Solving

Skills: Uses brainstorming and divergent thinking techniques; encourages lateral thinking and exploring multiple options; helps synthesize solutions collaboratively.

Knowledge: Knows creative problem-solving models; understands the importance of cognitive flexibility; is familiar with barriers to creativity.

Attitudes: Enjoys creative thinking and innovation; is open to unconventional ideas; encourages playfulness and experimentation.

10. Monitors and Evaluates Progress

Skills: Sets up systems for tracking and measuring progress; uses check-ins and feedback loops; adjusts plans based on evaluation findings.

Knowledge: Knows evaluation methods (qualitative and quantitative); understands the importance of monitoring in coaching; is aware of the limits and benefits of measurement.

Attitudes: Values accountability and evidence-based practice; is open to course correction; encourages honest self-assessment.

11. Encourages Client Resourcefulness

Skills: Helps clients identify and access their own strengths and resources; supports self-directed learning and exploration; encourages independence and resilience.

Knowledge: Knows resource-mapping and strengths-based coaching methods; understands empowerment principles; is familiar with barriers to resourcefulness.

Attitudes: Believes in the client's capacity for problem-solving; respects client choices; is supportive but avoids fostering dependence.

12. Maintains Focus on Client-Defined Outcomes

Skills: Regularly checks alignment with client's original goals; re-contracts or re-focuses as needed; avoids imposing coach-driven agendas.

Knowledge: Knows outcome-focused coaching models; understands the distinction between process and outcome goals; is aware of the

importance of alignment and re-contracting.

Attitudes: Respects client priorities and choices; values co-created direction; is mindful of scope and boundaries.

13. Uses Evidence-Based Tools and Approaches

Skills: Applies validated frameworks and tools appropriately; tailors interventions to client context; evaluates the effectiveness of methods used.

Knowledge: Knows current research and best practices in coaching; understands strengths and limitations of various tools; is familiar with sources of evidence and ongoing developments.

Attitudes: Values scientific rigor and credibility; is open to innovation while remaining critical; maintains professional responsibility for tool selection.

14. Adjusts Strategies in Response to Feedback and Results

Skills: Solicits and integrates feedback from clients; modifies coaching approach as needed; responds flexibly to unexpected outcomes.

Knowledge: Knows principles of adaptive coaching and iterative change; understands the value of feedback loops; is familiar with techniques for course correction.

Attitudes: Is flexible and responsive; values learning from results; is humble about the limits of any one approach.

15. Encourages Long-Term Vision and Planning

Skills: Guides clients to consider long-term implications and goals; supports the creation of vision statements or future plans; connects immediate actions to larger aspirations.

Knowledge: Knows strategic planning frameworks; understands the benefits of long-term orientation; is aware of motivational techniques for sustaining vision.

Attitudes: Values future orientation as a source of inspiration; encourages “big picture” thinking; believes in clients’ potential to create lasting change.

16. Builds Client Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Skills: Provides encouragement and reinforces strengths; uses affirming language to support belief in ability; helps clients track and celebrate skill development.

Knowledge: Knows theories of self-efficacy and confidence-building; understands the relationship between self-belief and action; is familiar with barriers to confidence.

Attitudes: Genuinely believes in client capability; is encouraging and supportive; values small wins and progress.

17. Fosters Action Between Sessions

Skills: Assigns or co-creates “homework” or action steps for clients; checks on inter-session activities and learning; helps maintain momentum between meetings.

Knowledge: Knows the value of action outside the coaching session; understands motivational strategies for self-directed follow-up; is aware of pitfalls in sustaining engagement.

Attitudes: Values ongoing client activity and learning; is supportive but not overbearing; encourages self-motivation and initiative.

18. Identifies and Leverages Learning Opportunities

Skills: Spots and explores “teachable moments”; integrates learning from client experiences into the process; encourages transfer of learning to other contexts.

Knowledge: Knows experiential learning principles; understands generalization and application strategies; is familiar with adult learning theory.

Attitudes: Is attentive to potential for learning in every situation; encourages curiosity and openness; believes in continuous growth.

19. Helps Clients Develop New Perspectives

Skills: Uses reframing and perspective-shifting techniques; encourages clients to challenge assumptions and consider alternatives; supports exploration of multiple viewpoints.

Knowledge: Knows cognitive and narrative reframing models; understands the benefits of flexible thinking; is aware of the role of mindset in change.

Attitudes: Is open-minded and non-dogmatic; enjoys discovery and exploration; believes in client capacity to shift perspective.

20. Concludes Coaching Engagements with Purpose

Skills: Reviews achievements and learnings at the close of coaching; facilitates planning for ongoing development post-coaching; ensures closure and celebrates the coaching journey.

Knowledge: Knows best practices for ending professional relationships; understands the psychological process of transition; is familiar with follow-up and referral options.

Attitudes: Values intentional closure and reflection; celebrates client growth and independence; supports client success beyond the coaching relationship.

Competency Group 5: Self-Management & Continuous Improvement

1. Practices Ongoing Self-Reflection

Skills: Regularly reviews own coaching sessions for strengths and improvement areas; uses reflective journals, supervision, or peer feedback; adjusts behavior based on self-insight.

Knowledge: Knows models of reflective practice (e.g., Gibbs, Schön); understands the value of self-reflection for professional growth; is familiar with tools and prompts for structured reflection.

Attitudes: Values lifelong learning and self-discovery; is humble and open to seeing own blind spots; embraces self-reflection as an ethical responsibility.

2. Engages in Professional Development

Skills: Pursues ongoing training, certifications, and learning opportunities; actively seeks out new research and best practices; integrates new knowledge into coaching work.

Knowledge: Knows current trends, research, and innovations in coaching; understands the requirements of professional associations for development; is familiar with sources for continuing education.

Attitudes: Is committed to staying current and relevant; values curiosity and intellectual growth; believes professional development never ends.

3. Seeks and Incorporates Feedback

Skills: Invites feedback from clients, peers, and supervisors; listens actively and non-defensively to critique; adjusts coaching practice based on feedback.

Knowledge: Knows effective feedback mechanisms and tools; understands the psychology of feedback and change; is aware of personal patterns in receiving feedback.

Attitudes: Welcomes feedback as a tool for excellence; is grateful for honest perspectives; sees feedback as a gift, not a threat.

4. Maintains Personal Well-Being

Skills: Recognizes signs of stress, burnout, or emotional fatigue; implements regular self-care routines; seeks help when personal well-being is compromised.

Knowledge: Knows self-care and stress management strategies; understands the link between personal well-being and coaching effectiveness; is familiar with resources for professional and personal support.

Attitudes: Values well-being as foundational for effective coaching; is proactive, not reactive, about self-care; believes in setting boundaries to protect personal health.

5. Demonstrates Emotional Self-Regulation

Skills: Identifies personal emotional triggers and responses; uses strategies to manage emotions during and between sessions; maintains composure in challenging situations.

Knowledge: Knows emotional intelligence frameworks and tools; understands how emotions can influence decision-making; is aware of the impact of coach emotions on the coaching process.

Attitudes: Values emotional stability and resilience; is honest about emotional challenges; sees self-regulation as a marker of professionalism.

6. Balances Professional and Personal Boundaries

Skills: Clearly distinguishes between work and personal time; sets limits on availability and engagement outside sessions; protects client confidentiality in all personal and professional settings.

Knowledge: Knows ethical and practical guidelines for boundaries; understands risks of boundary blurring and dual relationships; is aware of strategies to reinforce healthy boundaries.

Attitudes: Respects own time and needs; is assertive about setting boundaries; views boundary management as essential for sustainability.

7. Demonstrates Adaptability and Flexibility

Skills: Adjusts coaching style and approach in response to client or context; navigates changes or disruptions with resourcefulness; learns from unexpected situations.

Knowledge: Knows principles of adaptive leadership and coaching; understands the benefits of flexibility in professional practice; is familiar with change management strategies.

Attitudes: Embraces change as a growth opportunity; is open-minded and innovative; is comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.

8. Maintains Integrity Under Pressure

Skills: Adheres to ethical standards even in challenging circumstances; handles conflicts of interest transparently; makes principled decisions in the face of adversity.

Knowledge: Knows ethical codes and standards for coaches; understands common dilemmas and pressure points; is aware of resources for ethical consultation.

Attitudes: Values integrity above convenience or gain; is courageous and steadfast in ethical matters; prioritizes long-term trust over short-term benefit.

9. Manages Time and Commitments Effectively

Skills: Schedules sessions and commitments reliably; prioritizes tasks and meets deadlines; uses tools and systems to organize work.

Knowledge: Knows time management methods and tools; understands the impact of reliability on professionalism; is familiar with strategies to prevent overload.

Attitudes: Respects the time of clients and colleagues; takes pride in punctuality and reliability; values efficiency and order.

10. Demonstrates Cultural and Contextual Awareness in Own Practice

Skills: Reflects on own cultural lens and biases; seeks to understand and adapt to diverse client backgrounds; pursues cultural competence training.

Knowledge: Knows cultural humility and awareness frameworks; understands the impact of culture on coaching dynamics; is aware of resources for diversity and inclusion.

Attitudes: Is humble about limitations in cultural understanding; values diversity and inclusivity; seeks ongoing growth in cultural awareness.

11. Evaluates and Updates Own Coaching Practice

Skills: Reviews and updates methods and approaches based on results; uses data and outcomes to inform improvements; seeks evidence for effectiveness of new techniques.

Knowledge: Knows evaluation and continuous improvement models; understands the need for ongoing practice development; is familiar with current best practices and innovations.

Attitudes: Is self-critical in a constructive way; believes in always striving for better results; values evidence-based practice.

12. Maintains Professional Relationships and Networks

Skills: Engages with peers and professional communities; participates in supervision, peer groups, or professional associations; collaborates and shares knowledge with others.

Knowledge: Knows the value of networking for learning and support; understands roles of professional associations and groups; is aware of opportunities for community involvement.

Attitudes: Values collegiality and mutual support; is generous in sharing expertise; believes in learning from and with others.

13. Seeks Supervision and Mentoring

Skills: Identifies and engages with qualified supervisors or mentors; brings real coaching challenges to supervision; implements suggestions and learning from supervision.

Knowledge: Knows supervision and mentoring models and their value; understands the distinctions between supervision, mentoring, and peer support; is familiar with how to select a supervisor or mentor.

Attitudes: Is humble and open to guidance; values mentorship as a resource for growth; is proactive in seeking developmental relationships.

14. Upholds Commitment to Ethical Practice

Skills: Reviews and applies ethical standards in all situations; seeks clarification or advice when faced with uncertainty; communicates ethical boundaries to clients.

Knowledge: Knows ethical guidelines of relevant coaching associations; understands the role of ethics in protecting clients and the profession; is aware of trends and updates in ethical standards.

Attitudes: Holds ethical practice as a top priority; is transparent and honest in all dealings; respects the dignity and autonomy of every client.

15. Learns from Mistakes and Failures

Skills: Analyzes setbacks or errors objectively; implements changes to prevent recurrence; shares learning openly with peers or supervisors.

Knowledge: Knows learning models related to mistakes and failure (e.g., growth mindset); understands the difference between blame and responsibility; is familiar with case studies and examples in the profession.

Attitudes: Views mistakes as opportunities for learning; is honest and accountable about errors; is resilient in the face of setbacks.

16. Regularly Reviews Client Feedback

Skills: Collects and analyzes formal and informal client feedback; identifies themes and patterns for self-improvement; adjusts approach based on client responses.

Knowledge: Knows feedback collection methods and timing; understands how to interpret feedback constructively; is aware of the limits and strengths of feedback.

Attitudes: Is grateful for all client input; values openness to criticism; is always looking for ways to improve the client experience.

17. Maintains Confidentiality in Self-Development Activities

Skills: Anonymizes client information when discussing cases in supervision or training; protects client identity and data at all times; seeks consent when sharing any client-related information.

Knowledge: Knows confidentiality guidelines in professional development; understands privacy and data protection laws; is familiar with best practices in case discussion.

Attitudes: Values client trust as sacrosanct; is cautious and responsible in all sharing; holds respect for privacy as non-negotiable.

18. Embraces Innovation and Technology for Growth

Skills: Experiments with new digital tools and resources; stays informed about technological advances in coaching; integrates technology ethically and effectively.

Knowledge: Knows current and emerging technologies in the field; understands best practices for digital adoption; is aware of ethical considerations with technology use.

Attitudes: Is open-minded about new possibilities; balances enthusiasm with critical thinking; values technology as a means to enhance (not replace) coaching.

19. Manages Emotional Impact of Client Work

Skills: Practices emotional debriefing and self-care after challenging sessions; recognizes emotional transference and countertransference; seeks support when emotionally affected by client issues.

Knowledge: Knows psychological principles of emotional impact; understands emotional boundaries and self-protection; is familiar with resources for emotional support.

Attitudes: Values emotional resilience; is honest about limits; believes in responsible care for self as well as clients.

20. Maintains Commitment to Professional Identity and Purpose

Skills: Regularly revisits and reflects on personal mission, values, and motivations as a coach; aligns professional activities with a sense of purpose; upholds the reputation and dignity of the profession in all interactions.

Knowledge: Knows the foundations of professional identity formation; understands the broader impact of coaching on individuals and society; is familiar with ongoing debates and developments in the profession.

Attitudes: Feels pride and responsibility as a member of the profession; is motivated by purpose as well as results; strives to serve as a positive role model for others.

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