



## **Model Code of Conduct**

### **Background**

During 2007, the ICF Regulatory Committee developed the idea of creating a Model Standards of Conduct for Professional Coaches that ICF and other reputable coaching organizations could sign on to, similar to how the mediator profession developed a model set of standards that were approved by the ABA, American Arbitration Association and ACR. Having model standards for mediators has helped them to remain self-regulated. It was determined that the same approach could be useful for our ICF goal of self-regulation.

The ICF Board approved the Model Standards of Conduct for Professional Coaches in January 2009.

The below Model Standards are aligned with the ICF Code of Ethics so ICF members and credentialed coaches do not have conflicting standards to follow.

### **Model Standards of Conduct for Professional Coaches**

These Model Standards of Conduct for Professional Coaches were prepared and have been approved by the International Coach Federation and International Association of Coaches (IAC).

#### ***Preamble***

Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. A professional coaching relationship exists when coaching includes a business agreement or contract that defines the responsibilities of each party.

These Standards are designed to serve as fundamental ethical guidelines for persons coaching in all practice contexts. They serve three primary goals: to guide the conduct of coaches; to inform coaches' clients; and to promote public confidence in coaching as a process for professional and personal development.

#### **Note on Construction**

These Standards are to be read and construed in their entirety. There is no priority significance attached to the sequence in which the Standards appear.

Various aspects of coaching, including some matters covered by these Standards, may also be affected by other applicable professional rules. These sources may create conflicts with, and may take precedence over, these Standards. However, a coach should make every effort to comply with the spirit and intent of these Standards in serving their clients. This effort should include honoring all remaining Standards not in conflict with these other sources.

These Standards, unless and until adopted by a regulatory authority do not have the force of law. Nonetheless, the fact that these Standards have been adopted by the respective approving entities, should alert coaches to the fact that the Standards might be viewed as establishing a standard of care for coaches.

## **Section 1. Professional Conduct At Large**

- 1) Coaches will not knowingly make any public statement that is untrue or misleading about what they offer as coaches, or make false claims in any written documents relating to the coaching profession or the coach's credentials.
- 2) Coaches will accurately identify their coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, certifications and credentials.
- 3) Coaches will recognize and honor the efforts and contributions of others and not misrepresent them as their own. Coaches understand that violating this standard may leave them subject to legal remedy by a third party.
- 4) Coaches will at all times strive to recognize personal issues that may impair, conflict, or interfere with their coaching performance or their professional coaching relationships. Whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate, coaches will promptly seek professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate their coaching relationship(s).
- 5) Coaches will conduct themselves in accordance with these Standards of Conduct in all coach training, coach mentoring, and coach supervisory situations.
- 6) Coaches will conduct and report research with competence, honesty, and within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines. Coaches' research will be carried out with the necessary consent and approval of those involved, and with an approach that will protect participants from any potential harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complies with the laws of the country in which the research is conducted.
- 7) Coaches will accurately maintain, store, and dispose of any records created during their coaching business in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws and agreements.

## **Section 2: Conflicts of Interest**

- 8) Coaches will seek to avoid conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest and openly disclose any such conflicts. Coaches will offer to remove themselves when such a conflict arises.

9) Coaches will disclose to their clients and clients' sponsors all anticipated compensation from third parties that the coach may pay or receive for referrals of that client. The "sponsor" is the entity (including its representatives) paying for and/or arranging for coaching services to be provided.

10) Coaches will only barter for services, goods or other non-monetary remuneration when it will not impair the coaching relationship.

11) Coaches will not knowingly take any personal, professional, or monetary advantage or benefit of the coach-client relationship, except by a form of compensation as agreed in the agreement or contract.

### **Section 3. Professional Conduct with Clients**

12) Coaches will not knowingly mislead or make false claims about what their client or sponsor will receive from the coaching process or from them as the coach.

13) Coaches will not give their prospective clients or sponsors information or advice that the coach knows or believes to be misleading or false.

14) Coaches will have clear agreements or contracts with their clients or sponsors, and will honor all agreements or contracts made in the context of professional coaching relationships.

15) Coaches will carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, their coaching client and sponsors understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and any other terms of the coaching agreement or contract.

16) Coaches will be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern any physical contact that coaches may have with their clients or sponsors.

17) Coaches will not become sexually intimate with any of their current clients or sponsors.

18) Coaches will respect the client's right to terminate coaching at any point during the process, subject to the provisions of the agreement or contract, and will be alert to indications that the client is no longer benefiting from the coaching relationship.

19) Coaches will encourage their clients or sponsors to make a change if the coach believes the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource.

20) Coaches will suggest their client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate.

#### **Section 4. Confidentiality/Privacy**

21) Coaches will maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information. Coaches will have a clear agreement contract before releasing information to another person, unless required by law.

22) Coaches will have a clear agreement upon how coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client, and sponsor.

23) When acting as trainers of student coaches, coaches will clarify confidentiality policies with the students.

24) Coaches will have associated coaches and other persons whom they manage in service of their clients and their sponsors in a paid or volunteer capacity make clear agreements or contracts to adhere to these Confidentiality/Privacy standards and the entire Standards of Conduct to the extent applicable.