



Issues in Coaching

As in all professions, there are issues that can arise in coaching. Some are obvious and some are more discreet. It is important to keep these possible issues in mind when working with any client. When in doubt, always seek consultation or supervision.

- Dual Roles/Relationships
 - Coaching a friend or a colleague
 - Sexual relationships
 - Living in a small community
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - What if your cousin or friend asks if you would coach him or her?
 - What if you are attracted to your client or your client asks you for a date?
 - Would you attend a client's graduation or their child's birthday party?
 - Would you join a celebration of a goal your client was working on with you?
 - Would you do business with your client, e.g. take your dry cleaning to his/her store, buy Mary Kay cosmetics from her, or enter a business partnership? Or if already doing business with someone, would you accept them as a coaching client?
 - Would you buy a fundraiser item from a client?

- Counseling versus Coaching
 - This is a fine line to be drawn and needs to be held up so the boundaries are not crossed.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - Where do you draw the line between coaching and counseling?

- How do you keep from crossing that line?
 - If a coaching client tells you they are seeing a professional counselor, do you go ahead and provide coaching services?
 - Do you need to coordinate services with the counselor?
- Using non-directive techniques all the time
 - Often in counseling and coaching, the professional may struggle with advice giving, or giving directives.
 - Example questions to ask yourself
 - How do you stop a natural inclination to want to give advice or suggest things the client should do?
 - How can you make suggestions without being directive?
 - What can you tell yourself as a reminder that whatever a client decides to do is their choice?
- Guru versus Coach
 - It is important to remember that you are a coach and not a guru. You are not an expert in your client's life. There is a difference between imparting information and being an expert.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - How is this information relevant to the client's goal(s)?
 - Is this truly (factual) information or my opinion?
 - Is there a way I can get the client to this information through questions rather than just telling?
- Client's not ready to make changes
 - Some clients believe they want change, but may not want to do the work to facilitate change.
 - Some clients may be mandated to see you (via work, parents, court, etc.).
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - If this client is mandated to be here, how can I be useful to help facilitate change?
 - How do I determine whether or not the client is ready to make changes?

- How long do I continue with a client if I believe (s)he is not ready for change?
- Client not taking personal responsibility
 - Some clients continually blame others as the cause of their problems/struggles.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - How do you work with clients who are in denial of their role in their situation?
 - How can you help a client view things from a different perspective?
 - How can you shift his/her understanding to his/her role?
- Working harder than the client
 - This can become a source of frustration for a coach and can lead to quick burnout.
 - It is also not how a coach wants to run a session and the coaching relationship.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - Who is doing the work?
 - How is progress measured?
 - When is it okay for the coach to work harder than the client?
- Values conflict
 - Think of your religion, political views, parenting style, marital views, morals, etc.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - What things are you rigid on/about?
 - What do you do if you are seeing a client who thinks/believes very differently than you?
 - How do you work with someone when your values are getting in the way?
 - How do you know when your values are getting in the way?
 - Am I able to coach this client fairly and ethically?
 - If not, what do I do?

- Personality conflict
 - Not everyone is going to get along or like one another. This may happen with a client.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - Why am I struggling with this client?
 - What are our differences?
 - How can I work around this?
 - What is getting in the way of our coaching relationship?
 - Am I able to coach this client fairly and ethically?
 - If not, what should I do?

- Finding Supervision
 - Due to Certified Coaching being fairly a new mandate, one may struggle in finding proper supervision for the field.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - Do I know of any other coaches?
 - Is it acceptable to seek supervision with a counselor, social worker, or therapist?
 - How do I find proper supervision?

- Professional Organizations/Education
 - As stated above, this is a fairly new certified profession.
 - Example questions to ask yourself:
 - What organizations help the integrity of coaching?
 - Where does one get support as a coach?
 - How can I follow up on research, literature, and seminars/conferences?
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- Coaching Session Mediums: via phone, email, in-person, skype.
 - There is dispute and debate over counseling/therapy via the non-in-person mediums. How does this apply to coaching?
 - Example questions to ask yourself:

- How do these mediums help or hinder the coaching process?
- How do these mediums help or hinder the coaching profession?
- Am I able to build rapport and a working relationship with my client through this medium?
- Are these mediums ethical? Why or why not?

Assignment: Please answer the above questions to the best of your ability, including any other issues you believe you might face when coaching. Provide possible solutions to those issues. If you are struggling with your answers, create a discussion on our Facebook group page to collaborate with others.