



Institute for the Advancement of AD/HD Coaching

AD/HD Coaching Core Competencies

Note: Competencies written in *Italics* will not be demonstrated in every coaching session.

A. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Ethics and Conduct** – Accepts and appropriately follows all IAAC Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct: (See Documents at website)

- a. Understands and exhibits, in own behaviors, the IAAC Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct .
- b. *Understands and offers, when appropriate, information regarding the differences between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other allied professions.*
- c. *Exhibits sensitivity to special confidentiality concerns of individuals with neurobiological conditions.*

2. **Knowledge of AD/HD** – Ability to keep abreast of the complex and continually evolving field of AD/HD, including co-occurring conditions:

- a. *Understands theoretical models of AD/HD and executive functioning (e.g., Barkley, Brown, etc.).*
- b. *Reads peer-reviewed research on AD/HD.*
- c. *Stays abreast of constantly expanding body of information on professional skills and AD/HD (e.g., attends AD/HD coaching conferences, workshops and trainings, reads books and articles, etc.).*
- d. *Comprehends multi-modal treatment plans for AD/HD, and is familiar with alternative treatment protocols.*
- e. *Knows about FDA approved medications for the treatment of AD/HD. **DOES NOT OFFER MEDICAL OR PHARMACOLOGICAL ADVICE.***
- f. Understands AD/HD symptoms, including but not limited to those outlined in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.
- g. Utilizes the AD/HD coaching skill set in both a life coaching context and in the context of the AD/HD knowledge base.
- h. Demonstrates the ability to articulate and utilize a conceptual framework for AD/HD coaching that is the foundation of session-by-session coaching.
- i. *Supports clients to self-advocate or advocate for a dependent child.*

- j. *Assists clients to understand their needs and the requirements under disability law in order to get their needs met.*
 - k. *Understands the rights of individuals with AD/HD and the services (accommodations) available to them in workplace and educational settings.*
- 3. Working in a Professional Community – Ability to work as part of a multi-modal team and/or communicate effectively with other AD/HD professionals:**
- a. *Identifies and collaborates with allied professionals for client's benefit.*
 - b. *Knows where, how and when to refer clients to allied professionals (physicians, therapists, psychologists, counselors, educators, advocates, and attorneys, etc.).*

B. CREATING THE COACHING PARTNERSHIP

- 1. Establishes a Well-Defined Coaching Agreement - Demonstrates the coaching requirements for new clients and for maintaining ongoing clients:**
- a. New Clients:**
 - i. *Discusses agreements with new clients about the coaching process and relationship.*
 - ii. *Evaluates potential for collaboration and goodness-of-fit for the partnership.*
 - iii. *Defines parameters, expectations and logistics of the coaching relationship (e.g., logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate).*
 - iv. *Clarifies what is and is not being offered (e.g., not therapy, tutoring or consulting).*
 - b. Ongoing Clients:**
 - i. *Elicits, clarifies and comes to agreement about the agenda for each session.*
 - ii. *Establishes measures of success for each coaching session.*
 - iii. *Notices shifts in coaching priorities and when needed requests clarification of the session's agenda.*
- 2. Creates a Supportive Coaching Relationship – Demonstrates the ability to create a safe and respectful environment:**
- a. *Establishes trust with the client.*
 - b. *Establishes clear agreements and keeps promises.*
 - c. *Demonstrates understanding of, and respect for, client's learning style, pace, information processing needs, and life challenges.*
 - d. *Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including fear of failure and undertaking difficult challenges.*
 - e. *Asks permission to coach sensitive topics.*
 - f. *Communicates that reaching behavioral goals is a process that takes place over time (e.g. learning to follow-through).*
 - g. *Demonstrates the ability to be engaged and fully present.*
 - h. *Creates the atmosphere of a "learning laboratory" in which both success and failure are seen as learning opportunities.*
 - i. *Acknowledges client's difficulties and successes.*

- j. Is confident and flexible, takes risks, uses own intuition as a guide, and demonstrates detachment from outcomes.
- k. Uses lightness and humor, as appropriate.

C. SKILLFUL COACHING

1. **Professional Listening** – Ability to hear the full text and subtext of client communication:

- a. Attends to client's agenda (not coach's agenda) and brings client back to stated agenda as needed.
- b. Discerns and reinforces the essence of client communication in the context of client values, goals, feelings and beliefs.
- c. Hears both what is and is not said.
- d. *Helps the client focus on core issue(s) and learn to bottom line, rather than engaging in long descriptive stories. (Acknowledges that bottom-lining can be a learning process).*
- e. Clarifies understanding of client communication through summarizing and paraphrasing.
- f. *Notices client's structure of interpretation regarding how life works and what is and is not possible.*
- g. Supports client examination of both big picture and details and asks clients to move back and forth between long-term and short-range goals, plans and actions.

2. **Direct Communication** – Speaks clearly and honestly:

- a. Uses language that is clear, unambiguous and to the point and encourages client to be clear and to the point in articulation of thoughts.
- b. *Champions courage.*
- c. Challenges client assumptions and limiting beliefs.
- d. Identifies and models the ability to initiate shifts in conversation.
- e. *Increases client awareness of transitions in conversation.*
- f. *Articulates purpose of coaching exercises, strategies, and practices.*
- g. Provides clear and supportive feedback.
- h. Reframes and offers different perspectives to increase awareness.
- i. Encourages full self-expression. (Ability to create an environment that allows the client to be completely open.)

3. **Significant Questioning** – Ability to ask powerful questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and to the client:

- a. Asks questions that reflect an understanding of the client and the particular content under consideration.
- b. Asks questions that reflect active listening and generate possibility, self-awareness, options, and learning for the client.

- c. Uses inquiry as the primary coaching methodology and refrains from telling the client what to do.
- d. Asks questions that reflect understanding of the big picture, not just the details.
- e. Asks questions that evoke client's self-understanding and knowledge of how AD/HD impacts the client.
- f. *Empowers the client to take time needed for processing questions and their answers.*
- g. *Asks questions that help client focus or refocus on the topic being discussed.*

D. FOSTERING LEARNING

1. **Clarifies Client's Understanding of AD/HD** – Ability to assess client's knowledge of AD/HD in general and how ADHD impacts the specific client:
 - a. *Explores client's factual understanding of AD/HD.*
 - b. *Explores unique impact of AD/HD on the particular client.*
 - c. *Clarifies that AD/HD is a biological issue, not a moral defect.*
 - d. *Provides resources and information as needed.*
2. **Encourages Client Self Awareness** – Explores client self-concepts (traits, strengths/challenges, styles) along with client's structure of interpretation about the way the world works and how the client functions in the world:
 - a. Explores if/how executive functioning impacts client's day- to-day performance.
 - b. *Helps the client explore the concept and practice of self-regulation.*
 - c. Assists the client in understanding their unique capacities, characteristics and styles, and how these factors relate to the demands and expectations of the environment.
 - d. Encourages the client to clarify and use strengths, talents, values, and interests rather than focusing on problems, difficulties and limitations.
 - e. Sees patterns (behavior, thinking, emotions) and makes interpretations.
 - f. *Explores client's communication patterns.*
 - g. *Explores relationship between client's self-perceptions and the way the client is perceived by others (work, friends, family, educational settings).*
 - h. *Explores client's typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself/herself and the world.*
 - i. *Explores the differences between facts and interpretation of facts, and demonstrates the ability to challenge client's assumptions and interpretation of facts.*
 - j. Explores and develops client's sense of positive self-regard.

E. FACILITATING PROGRESS AND RESULTS

1. **Planning and Goal Setting** – Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan:
 - a. Effectively prepares, organizes and reviews with client information obtained during sessions.

- b. Facilitates the client's ability to focus on the coaching plan and remains open to adjusting actions based on the coaching process.
 - c. Holds both the client's bigger vision and details and facilitates both.
 - d. Develops the client's ability to make decisions and address key concerns.
 - e. *Notices that planning may be overwhelming and encourages client to stay in the process.*
 - f. *Requests a concrete plan for execution of actions designed by client.*
- 2. Co-Creating Actions – Ability to assist client in identifying and taking actions that will effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results:**
- a. Clearly requests the client to design actions that will move them toward stated goals.
 - b. Brainstorms and explores strategies (actions) that will facilitate client goal achievement.
 - c. Acknowledges the client for what they have done, not done, learned or become aware of since the previous coaching session(s).
 - d. *Understands how perfectionist tendencies can impact a client's performance.*
 - e. Notices whether coaching plan includes a system to monitor follow-through and the tools required to establish and meet time lines.
 - f. *Works effectively with the client's experiencing difficulty getting started, maintaining motivation and/or momentum, and completing actions.*
- 3. Managing Progress through Accountability and Monitoring – Holds attention on what is important to the client and supports client to take action:**
- a. Co-creates "between-the-sessions" aspects of coaching partnership and incorporates any agreed-upon actions into coaching plan.
 - b. Supports client in developing skills needed for self-directed action.
 - c. Assists client in selecting and using self-monitoring tools.
 - d. Constructively addresses client concerns about follow-through.
 - e. Routinely revisits coaching plan and assesses progress towards goal achievement.
 - f. Fosters client's ability to follow-through and take consistent action.
 - g. *Acknowledges that greater support, additional resources and more frequent feedback may be necessary.*
 - h. Effectively organizes and manages client information and demonstrates awareness of client's status with respect to stated goals.