

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaching is distinct from psychotherapy and other behavioral health interventions. As such, it requires highly specific education. ICF coaches complete at least 60 hours of education, but many have exceeded 200 hours of coach-specific education. I, personally, have nearly 1000 hours of coaching experience, and nearly the same with coach learning.

ICF has defined curriculum standards to ensure consistency in coach training. The curricula of coach-specific training programs accredited by ICF are required to define the differences between coaching and behavioral health modalities and to address steps for referring clients to behavioral health care practitioners when appropriate.

ICF, which gathers 35,000 highly trained members and 25,000-plus Credential-holders, has taken measures to ensure that the public can rely on coaches to practice professional standards. All ICF coaches pledge to uphold a rigorous Code of Ethics that includes, among other provisions, a requirement for coaches to, "Encourage the client or sponsor [of the coaching engagement] to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource and suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate."

The ICF Code of Ethics and Core Competencies for coaches also emphasize the necessity of establishing a coaching agreement with clients that highlights the expectations and the limitations of the coaching relationship. Our Ethical Conduct Review Process and Independent Review Board (IRB) protect consumers, ensure adherence to our code of ethics, and provide a venue for individuals to report practitioners' breaches of the code.

Our ICF Credentialing system also includes a three-year renewal requirement to ensure Credential-holders' pursuit of continuous education and ongoing familiarity with ethical guidelines governing the profession.

While coaching is a relatively new field, it is now nationally recognized and taught separately from psychology in universities across the country, including the University of Wisconsin, the University of Miami, Georgetown University, Columbia University and New York University, among others.

Several leading organizations in the public and private sectors are using coaching with great results, including Nike, Oracle, Cisco, Adidas, Intel, and HP.

Not only would the failure to exempt professional coaches from these proposed amendments be detrimental to practicing coaches, it would also be an economic loss for your state. Coaching is a \$2.8 billion (USD) industry annually, according to the *2020 ICF Global Coaching Study*. Coaches are entrepreneurs and pay the costs of owning a business, hefty fees for continued education, and membership credentialing fees to the ICF. Regulating them would certainly be a financial loss for their businesses and for the state.

As a side note, "Life Coaching" encompasses many variations of coaching including career, executive, leadership, and teams. My specialty is leadership and teams, a much-needed resources to help leaders create better workplaces.

Thank you,

Cindy Hooker