



Statement of Standards and Ethics

Ethical Foundation

Coaching, in its many forms, is primarily about improving the life and performance of the client. Through a one to one relationship the coach is given access to the client's hopes and fears. As rapport is built and trust develops the coach also shares the client's aspirations and future goals. The very nature of the coaching relationship puts the coach in a privileged position, a position from which to enrich the life of the client, but also a position which, unless care is exercised, can cause harm.

Coaching, no less than any other profession, requires clear behavioural guidelines in order to safeguard clients and coaches. These guidelines are encapsulated in our Professional Standards and give clear indications of what is, and what is not, acceptable professional behaviour within the coaching community in general, and The ECI in particular.

Professional Standards do not stand on their own. They are the product of an ethical foundation, which presumes that coaches will conduct their lives and practices to the highest standards. The ECI endorses the following Core Values, as the basis for Professional Standards:

1. Integrity
2. Honesty
3. Transparency
4. Excellence
5. Care
6. Professionalism
7. Accountability

Our Professional Standards are the result of applying these Core Values to the areas of life and work in which we have particular responsibility. As coaches, we exercise a responsibility towards our clients, ourselves and the coaching community therefore The ECI Core values cover the following areas of responsibility:

- A. Client Care
- B. Personal Professional Conduct
- C. Professional Relationships

When things go wrong in a coaching relationship or within a coaching business, it will undoubtedly be the result of the lack of a rigorous application of the core values to the areas of responsibility. The ECI, recognising the requirement to ensure the highest standards of professional and personal behaviour, requires all those coming under its banner to conduct their coaching work in such a way as to maintain and maximise the impact of the Core Values upon each area of professional responsibility.

Our Professional Standards represents a summary of what are, and what are not, acceptable standards for professional coaches. Advice on the practical outworking of these bullet points can be obtained through The ECI Standards and Ethics.

Where things go wrong, and the reality is that they will from time to time, **The ECI Complaints Procedure** is available to ensure that both coach and client are cared for and helped towards effective and supportive resolutions.



Professional Standards

A. Client Care

Coaches have a duty of care towards their clients and should ensure that in all dealings with their clients they display the highest standards of professional conduct.

- i. Coaches will ensure that clients fully understand the coaching agreement, terms and conditions: the costs, the process, the location and the frequency of sessions.
- ii. Coaches will not give clients misleading information or advice or make false claims about the results of, or what client will receive from, the coaching process.
- iii. Coaches will treat all clients with honour, dignity, and integrity, fully respecting the client's values, beliefs and goals (which may differ from their own), being aware of cultural, regional and linguistic differences.
- iv. Coaches will not abuse their client's trust in order to gain sexual, emotional, financial or any kind of professional advantage.
- v. Coaches will not prolong a coaching relationship beyond its useful conclusion, but will encourage a client to make a change to, or to terminate the agreement, when aware that the client is no longer benefiting from the coaching relationship.
- vi. Coaches will respect the client's right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point during the coaching process.
- vii. When working within organisations, coaches will obtain the express consent of the client before releasing information such as progress reports and other particulars to the person who may be employing them.
- viii. Coaches will inform clients of any personal situations or relationships which may have an adverse effect upon the coach/client relationship, and together agree what appropriate action should be taken.
- ix. Coaches will not diagnose or assess any health issue (mental or physical) but will suggest that the client consults with a relevant practitioner.
- x. Coaches will ensure that clients are aware of The ECI Statement of Standards and Ethics, and of how to access The ECI Complaints Procedure.

B. Personal Professional Conduct

Coaches have a duty to ensure that their professional standing and conduct are of the highest level.

- i. Coaches have a responsibility to monitor and maintain their fitness to practice at a level that enables them to provide an effective service. If their effectiveness becomes impaired for any reason, including health or personal circumstances, they should stop working and seek advice and support.
- ii. Coaches will clearly understand their own levels of coaching competence, experience, qualifications and accreditation and will not exaggerate, embellish, misrepresent or defraud these in any way.
- iii. Coaches will ensure that all promotional materials and advertisements, including verbal and written, are truthful, honest, legal, decent and compliant with current legislation.
- iv. Coaches will work within the limitations of their own competence and will distinguish situations where it may be necessary to refer a client either to a more experienced coach or to seek the help of a qualified professional or practitioner.



- v. Coaches will operate within applicable laws, rules and regulations and will not, assist, persuade or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unprofessional, unlawful or discriminatory in any way.
- vi. Coaches will treat all information from a client with absolute confidentiality. Coaches will only disclose information where explicitly agreed with the client, or where the coach believes there is compelling evidence of serious danger to the client or others if the information is withheld.
- vii. Coaches will be aware of the impact of their own belief and values systems and the effect of these may have on their coaching.
- viii. Coaches will ensure their behaviour can in no way be described as sexual harassment, physical advances, sexual solicitation, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature.
- ix. Coaches will maintain appropriate records of their work with clients, ensuring that any such records are accurate and that reasonable precautions are taken to protect against third party disclosure. Attention should be given to the client's rights under current legislation.
- x. Coaches will be diligent in understanding and implementing their clients' and their own legal and other obligations with regards to race, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, disability, and socioeconomic status, ensuring they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.
- xi. Coaches will ensure they participate in relevant training and appropriate Continuing Professional Development to augment and increase their level of coaching competence. Coaches will ensure they are aware of new technologies, legal requirements, practices and standards as are relevant to the coaching profession by participating in appropriate and relevant instruction. Coaches will maintain a record of all such training undertaken.
- xii. Coaches will monitor the quality of their work and seek feedback from clients and other professionals.
- xiii. Coaches will not enter into a coaching arrangement where it could create a risk of conflict of interest.
- xiv. Coaches will ensure that they have current professional indemnity insurance to cover the provision of their coaching services.

C. Professional Relationships

Coaches have a duty to ensure that in their dealings with colleagues and the public they maintain the good standing of the coaching profession and do not bring the profession, professional bodies or individual coaches into disrepute.

- i. Coaches will work supportively with colleagues to raise the profile and standards of coaching by conducting their business in keeping with European Coaching Institute Professional Standards.
- ii. Coaches will ensure that any public statements produced by themselves or their agents (verbally or in writing) are true and reflect well on the coaching community.
- iii. Coaches will take care to ensure that they do not use their relationship with European Coaching Institute, or other professional bodies, in a way that is detrimental to such a body or that brings that body into disrepute.
- iv. Coaches will not claim to represent European Coaching Institute, or other professional bodies, unless explicit permission for such has been granted.
- v. Coaches will take care to use logos only as allowed by their status within each organisation.



- vi. Coaches will immediately notify The ECI, or other professional bodies to which they belong, if a situation arises which creates conflict, litigation or bad publicity.
- vii. Where a Coach has reason to be concerned about the behaviour or practice of another member of the coaching community, that matter will be raised firstly with the person concerned. Thereafter the matter should be referred to The ECI Complaints Procedure. Such concerns should be treated with the appropriate degree of confidentiality and sensitivity.

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