

ICF CORE COMPETENCIES RATING LEVELS –

Adapted from the Minimum Skills Requirements documents for each credential level

(Includes will-not-receive-passing-score criteria- gray background)

COMPETENCY	ACC LEVEL	PCC LEVEL	MCC LEVEL
1. Ethics and Standards <i>Applicant will not pass this competency if applicant</i> <i>focuses primarily on telling the client what to do or how to do it (consulting mode)</i> <i>the conversation is based primarily in the past, particularly the emotional past (therapeutic mode).</i> <i>is not clear on basic foundation exploration and evoking skills that underlie the ICF definition of coaching; that lack of clarity in skill use will be reflected in skill level demonstrated in some of the other competencies listed below.</i> <i>For example, if a coach almost exclusively gives advice or indicates that a particular answer chosen by the coach is what the client should do, trust and intimacy, coaching presence, powerful questioning, creating awareness, and client generated actions and accountability will not be present and a credential at any level would be denied.</i>	Not directly assessed during oral exam– see first column	Not directly assessed during oral exam – see first column	Not directly assessed during oral exam – see first column
2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement - Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship. - Initially establishing the “rules of engagement” - Establishing the agreement for the current session. What is it the client wants to work on today? What will make the next	- Coach takes what client says they want to work on at surface level. - Attends to that agenda, but little further exploration is done.	- Coach takes what client says they want to work on. - Attends to that agenda with some exploration as to measures of success for each topic in session	- Coach explores fully what client wants from session, establishes measures of success for client in session, and ensures that client and coach are both clear about coaching purpose. - Coach returns to check regularly of whether direction of coaching is continuing to serve client’s coaching purpose and makes changes in direction if necessary based on feedback from client.

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30 minutes most worthwhile? Establishing a focus. <i>Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:</i>	<i>coach chooses the topic for the client</i> <i>coach does not coach around the topic the client has chosen</i>	<i>coach chooses the topic(s) for the client</i> <i>coach does not coach around the topic(s) the client has chosen</i> <i>the coach does not engage in some exploration of the measures of success for each topic with the client or defines those measures for the client</i> <i>coach does not engage in some exploration of underlying issues related to achievement of the outcomes or agenda or does not check with client about whether the client is moving toward what the client wanted from the session.</i>	<i>if full partnership with the client is not demonstrated</i> <i>coach chooses the topic(s) for the client</i> <i>coach does not coach around the topic(s) the client has chosen</i> <i>coach does not explore the measures of success for each topic with the client to a degree that achieves clarity about the client's intent or direction for the session</i> <i>coach does not allow the client full input into the issues that should be discussed relative to the client's stated objectives for the session</i> <i>coach does not check with the client about whether the client is moving toward what the client wanted from the session.</i>
3. Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client - Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust. Setting a strong foundation up front for partnership with the client. Establishing expectations for an open and honest relationship. Demonstrating integrity, confidentiality, respect and support. Holding the client in "unconditional positive regard."	Coach attends to client's agenda, but is attached to his/her own performance and therefore trust and intimacy is not the strongest competency.	- Coach may have some degree of trust in client and connected relationship to client. - Coach still conscious of presenting image of "good coach", so less willing to risk or not know which stands in way of complete trust in and intimacy with coach's self, the client, and the coaching relationship	- Coach is connected to complete trust in new and mutual state of awareness that can only arise in the moment and out of joint conversation, - coach is comfortable not knowing as one of the best states to expand awareness in, - coach is willing to vulnerable with client and have client be vulnerable with coach, - coach confident in self, process, and the client as a full partner in the relationship. - Sense of complete ease and naturalness in conversation; coach does not have to "work" to coach
<i>Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:</i>	<i>coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation than the client's view of the situation</i> <i>coach does not seek information from the client</i>	<i>coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than the client's view of the situation</i> <i>coach does not seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation</i>	<i>coach does not treat the client as a full partner choosing not only the agenda, but also participating in the creation of the coaching process itself</i> <i>coach exhibits an interest in the coach's view of the situation</i>

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4. Coaching Presence - Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident. • Being fully present and flexible with the client, "dancing in the moment" • Being curious, trusting your gut, experimenting, using humor.	<i>about the client's thinking around the situation</i> • coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation • the attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic.	• coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation • the attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic • coach does not invite the client to share his/her thinking on an equal level with coach.	<i>rather than the client's view of the situation</i> • coach does not seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation • coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation, or any attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic. In addition • coach does not invite the client to share his/her thinking on an equal level with the coach and/or chooses the direction and tools in the session without significant input from the client • any indication that the coach is teaching rather than coaching will also create a score below the MCC level.
Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	• Coach attends to client's agenda, but is attached to his/her own performance and therefore presence is diluted by coach's own attention to self. • Coach substitutes thinking and analysis for presence and responsiveness much of the time.	• Coach will attend to client's agenda, but drives the coaching and choice of tools. • Coach will choose objective or subjective perspective, but rarely hold both simultaneously. • Coach will evidence need to have direction toward solution versus simply being in the moment with the client. • Coach will be choosing ways to move versus letting client teach coach ways to move. • Partnership is present, but mixed with coach as expert and greater than client. • Coach may be present to whether and how much value they are adding to client	• Coach is a completely connected observer to client. • The connection is to whole of who client is, how the client learns, what the client has to teach the coach. • The coach is ready to be touched by the client and welcomes signals that create resonance for both the coach and client. • The coach evidences a complete curiosity that is undiluted by a need to perform. • The coach is in fully partnered conversation with client. • The coach trusts that value is inherent in the process versus having any need to create value.
	• coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than exploring the client's view of the situation • coach does not seek	• coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than the client's view of the situation • coach does not seek information from the client about the client's	• coach does not treat the client as a full partner choosing not only the agenda, but also participating in the creation of the coaching process itself • coach exhibits interest in the

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5. Active Listening - Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression. - Listening without an agenda, distinguish between the words, tone of voice and body language. Level 2 and Level 3 Listening. - Understands the essence of the client's communication. Helps the client gain clarity and perspective rather than engaged in the story.	<i>information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation</i> <i>coach is unresponsive to that information</i> <i>coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation</i> <i>is unresponsive to that information</i> <i>the attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic</i> - Coach hears what client says and responds to it, but only at obvious and surface level. - In general, coach will evidence attachment to "what's the problem", "how do I help fix it", and "how do I give value in fixing it".	<i>thinking around the situation or is unresponsive to that information</i> <i>coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation or is unresponsive to that information</i> <i>the attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic</i> <i>coach, rather than being present and responsive to the client, is overly reliant on an obvious coaching formula, a specific coaching tool, or standard coaching questions</i> <i>coach does not allow the client to contribute to creating the method or way that the coaching session will evolve.</i> - Coach is doing listening on a very conscious level. - The listening is focused on the client's agenda and can change direction if the client changes direction. - The direction change may or may not be best for the topic at hand. - The coach is focused on what client is saying, but more from the perspective of gathering information that fits into coach's particular tool or discovery model. - Listening tends to be more linear and concentrates on content of words. - Coach is listening for answers, next question to ask, or looking for what to do with what they hear and will try to fit what they hear into a model they understand. - They will often respond out of that model rather than client's model.	<i>coach's view of the situation than the client's view of the situation</i> <i>the coach does not seek information from the client about the client's thinking around the situation</i> <i>coach does not seek information about the client's goals regarding the situation, or any attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic</i> <i>coach does not invite the client to share his/her thinking on an equal level with the coach and/or chooses the direction and tools in the session without input from the client.</i> <i>Any indication that the coach is teaching rather than coaching will also create a score below the MCC level</i> <i>coach does not allow the client to help develop coaching tools for themselves and instead relies on standard coaching formulas, tools, or questions.</i> - The coach's listening is completely attuned as a learner and listening happens at the logical, emotional, and organic level at one time. - The listening is both linear and non-linear and responses from the coach evidence learning about the client at many levels. - The coach recognizes both hers and the client's ability of intuitive and energetic perception that is felt when the client speaks of important things, when new growth is occurring for the client, and when the client is finding a more powerful sense of self. - The coach's listening is in the present, but hearing also the client's future develop. - The coach hears the totality of the client's greatness and gifts as well as limiting beliefs and patterns.

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Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach does not demonstrate listening that is focused on and responding to what the client says - coach's response is not related to what the client is trying to achieve - coach appears to be listening for the place where the coach can demonstrate their knowledge about the topic or tell the client what to do about the topic.	- Listening will include some depth, but often will miss key nuances that a master level coach catches. - Listening tends to be session by session versus cumulative.	The coach's listening is cumulative from session to session and throughout each individual session
6. Powerful Questioning - Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client. Clear direct questions that lead to new insight and move the client forward. Open ended questions using What and How that are clear, direct and succinct.	- Questions attend to client's agenda, but are generally seek information, are formulaic, and sometimes leading or have a "correct answer" anticipated by the coach. - Generally, questions are very geared to solving issue set by client as quickly as possible.	- Questions attend to client's agenda and generally are a mix of informational and powerful questions. - Even powerful questions tend to focus toward solution of issue presented by client and may be more responsive to the agenda than to the client. - Questions will tend to use coaching terminology or language easy for the coach versus using and exploring the client's language. - Occasional leading questions will appear as well. - The coach will tend to ask comfortable rather than uncomfortable questions.	- coach does not demonstrate listening that is based on the whole client and an ability to hear the client's thinking, learning, and feeling at multiple levels - the listening is filtered only through the coach's methods of thinking, learning, and creating - coach does not actively hear and use as a significant coaching tool, the client's methods of thinking, learning, and creating - nuances of the client's language are not reflected in the coach's responses - the listening is not focused on and responding to what the client says or the coach's response is not related to what the client is trying to achieve or their hearing is limited to listening for problems or weaknesses - coach appears to be listening for the place where the coach can demonstrate their knowledge about the topic or tell the client what to do about the topic. - The coach asks mostly, if not always, direct, evocative questions that are fully responsive to the client in the moment and that require significant thought by client or take client to a new place of thinking. - The coach uses the client's language and learning style to craft questions. - The coach are fully based in curiosity and the coach does not ask questions to which the coach knows the answer. - The questions often require the client to find deeper contact with the client's shadow and light sides

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Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach does not focus on an inquiring versus telling methodology - the majority of questions contain already pre-determined answers by the coach - the questions attend to an agenda or issues not set by the client, but set by the coach.	- coach asks questions that reflect the coach's view of the situation or a preconceived answer decided on by the coach - the questions are leading the client in a direction chosen by the coach without discussion with and assent to the direction by the client. - coach is unable to move beyond standardized coaching questions or the coach's models of thinking and learning to the exclusion of the client's models of thinking and learning	and find hidden power in himself/herself. - The coach asks questions that help the client create the future rather than focus on past or even present dilemmas. - The coach is not afraid of questions that will make either the coach or the client or both uncomfortable - coach does not demonstrate questions that are evocative and ask the client to think in a larger space or an experimental space related to the client's agenda and stated objectives - coach frequently asks informational questions or questions that keep the client in the past or in present detail of a situation rather than in forward thinking - the questions do not make frequent use of the client's language, thinking, and creating style or do not make use of what the coach has learned about the client - the questions reflect the coach's view of the situation, the coach's learning and processing style, or a preconceived answer by the coach - coach is unable to move beyond standardized coaching questions or a standardized model
7. Direct Communication - Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client. - Being clear, articulate and direct in questions, observations and feedback. - Noticing language and the impact on the client. Using language that supports and	- The coach sometimes is fairly direct, but usually uses too many words or feels a need to "dress up" a question or observation. - Questions and observations generally contain vocabulary from the coach's training. - Most communication occurs on a very safe level for the coach.	- The coach is usually direct, but at times feels a need to "dress up" a question or observation. - The coach occasionally treats their intuitions as the truth. - The coach also occasionally does not say what is occurring for the coach for fear that the client is not ready to hear it. - The coach may also evidence a need to soften communication for fear of being wrong.	- The coach easily and freely shares what is so for the coach without attachment. - The coach shares directly and simply and often incorporates the client's language. - The coach fully trusts the client to choose the responses to the coach's communication that is best for the client. - The coach invites, respects, and celebrates direct communication

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respects the client. Draw on their language/interests for metaphor and analogy for learning. <i>Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:</i>	<i>coach does not attend to the client's agenda, changes the agenda without input from the client, or appears attached to a particular outcome or solution</i> <i>the communication frequently occurs in a convoluted, meandering, or circuitous manner.</i>	- The coach tends to use some coaching language versus the language of the client. - The coach has a sufficient, but not broad base of language tools to use with the client.	back from the client. - The coach creates sufficient space for the client to have equal or more communication time than the coach. - The coach has a broad language base to use and play with and uses the client's language to broaden that base.
8. Creating Awareness - Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information, and to make interpretations that help the client to gain awareness and thereby achieve agreed-upon results. - Going beyond the immediate goal. Engaging in exploration for discovery, perspective, learning and growth with the client. - Identifying and acknowledging strengths. Noticing connections or threads between what is said and what is done.	- Awareness generated at level of what will solve problem or achieve goal. - Limited generally to awareness of new techniques versus new learning about self.	- The coach helps the client to create new awareness by engaging in problem solving. - The majority of awareness geared to new technique; new awareness about who the client is more limited. - In addition, awareness tends, as a result to be more defined in scope. - The coach will generally help the client integrate new awareness as it pertains to a particular situation versus using learning to more fully broaden the scope of new awareness.	<i>coach does not fully invite the client's participation in the coaching dialogue on an equal level</i> <i>coach's communication reflects an agenda or directing of any kind by the coach</i> <i>the communication does not evidence frequent use of the client's language, learning, thinking, and creating styles</i> <i>the communication does not often create a place for the client to engage in deeper thinking, learning, and discovery</i> <i>coach's communication limits the thinking and learning direction for the client without specific interaction with, discussion of, and assent by the client to the limitation.</i> - The coach's invitation to exploration precedes and is significantly greater than invitation to solution. - The coach appears as much an explorer as well as client. - The coach has not concluded what awareness should be (coach is willing not to know). - The use of the client's greatness invited and welcomed. There is no evidence of "fixing" a problem or the client. - The coach allows client to make coach aware and the client's voice more prevalent than coach's. - There is a lovely sense of connected observation of totality of who client is and what client

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Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach does not attend to the client's agenda, changes the agenda without input from the client, or appears attached to a particular outcome or solution - coach narrows the exploration of awareness significantly to a single issue without discussing that decision with the client and without the client's consent - coach seems to substitute assessments or standard coaching exercises for powerful questioning or inquiry	- coach does not attend to the client's agenda, changes the agenda without input from the client, or appears attached to a particular outcome or solution - coach does not use the client's thinking and learning tools as tools within the coaching or does not use the client's language as a coaching tool - coach seems to substitute assessments or standard coaching exercises to the exclusion of using the tools already existing within the client to create awareness - coach states what awareness is without exploring with the client what the client's awareness is or seeking the client's input on whether the coach's observations are correct and giving the client a chance to add their own observations	wants, sharing that with client, and creating space for client to share back. - The coach does not force awareness. - coach drives the client toward solution without fully exploring issues that may be important to gaining complete solution or accomplishment for the client - coach does not fully invite and allow the client to use as coaching tools, the client's intuition, thinking, and learning - the dialogue of awareness does not provide sufficient space for the client's full participation in creating awareness - coach's communication reflects an agenda or directing of any kind by the coach - coach's voicing of awareness does not evidence frequent use of the client's language, learning, thinking, and creating styles - coach does not often create an easy place for the client to engage in deeper thinking, learning, and discovery - coach's communication limits the thinking and learning direction for the client without specific interaction with, discussion of, and assent by the client to the limitation.
9. Designing Actions - Ability to create with the client opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching and in work/life situations, - Working with the client to design actions or activities ("fieldwork") outside of the coaching session to continue exploration, increase awareness and learning and move toward the desired goal. - Coach may initially assign field-work with increasing shift to	- The coach tends to suggest homework and actions that they think would best handle the problem or achieve the goal. - Actions tend to be one dimensional in nature - and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results.	- The coach engages in some, but not a complete partnership with the client to develop actions. - Again, the actions are attuned to solving the situational issue the client has presented rather than looking beyond the situation to other, broader learning that might be inherent in the situation. - Finally, the PCC level coach is tends to define forward motion only in terms of physical action.	- The coach works in complete partnership with the client to design actions or, in the alternative, lets the client lead in designing actions. - The coach and client design actions that fit the client's goals, learning style, and pace of wanted or necessary movement. - The coach allows actions to include thinking, creating, and doing. - The coach engages the client in relating designed actions to other

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coach/client designing actions to support the client's goals, learning style and desired pace. Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach insists the client do what the coach has prescribed as homework - the suggested homework does not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda - the homework does not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward - suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda.	- there is little or no co-creation in the process of designing actions - the actions do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and the client's style of learning and creating - the actions do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward - suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda, or are imposed on the client without discussion.	aspects of what the client wants, thereby broadening the scope of learning and growth. The coach encourages informed experimentation to help clients develop more powerful, leveraged actions.
10. Planning and Goal Setting - Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client. Partnering with the client to develop goals that are (SMART) specific, measurable, attractive, realistic and have target dates. Staying aware of client's plan, learning style, pace and commitment to the goal. Identifying successes that are important to the client.	- The coach tends to adopt goals suggested by the client at their most obvious level. - Planning and goal setting tend to be one dimensional in nature with the coach sometimes substituting his/her expertise for the clients.	- The coach engages in some, but not a complete partnership with the client to develop goals and plans. - Again, the actions are attuned to solving the situational issue the client has presented rather than looking beyond the situation to other, broader learning that might be inherent in the situation. - Finally, the PCC level coach is tends to edit plans presented by the client.	aspects of what the client wants, thereby broadening the scope of learning and growth. The coach encourages informed experimentation to help clients develop more powerful, leveraged actions.

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Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach insists that the client follow a prescribed plan familiar to the coach - coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective coaching plan - the plan or goals do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcome - the plan or goals do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward - suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda.	- there is little or no partnership or co-creation of the plans and goals - coach is the most significant voice in suggesting plans and goals - coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective coaching plan - the plan or goals do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcomes or the client's learning and creating processes - the plan or goals do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward - suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda - coach suggests standard coaching tools or exercises without discussing with the client the extent to which they might be of value to the client.	- coach does not invite full client participation in planning strategies or designing goals or dominates in any way the creation of plans and goals - plans and goals do not reflect a clear potential for forward learning or movement by the client related to the client's agenda, desired outcomes, or to some other learning that the client has defined for as necessary for their growth - designed plans and goals and/or discussion designed actions involves only physical activity with no attention to the thinking, learning, being, and creativity structures of the client.
11. Managing Progress and Accountability - Ability to hold attention on what is important for the client, and to leave responsibility with the client to take action. Staying focused on what is important for the client and holding them accountable.	The coach tends to suggest forms of accountability that may feel a bit parental in nature. Accountability tends to be one dimensional.	The coach in some partnership with the client develops methods of accountability. Those methods are often reflective of or use coach training tools.	- The coach has the client determine their own methods of accountability and offers support to those methods. - The client helps determine or determines totally who should be on their accountability team and how to use each person, including the coach. - The coach trusts the client to be accountable to themselves and lovingly calls the client to account or discussion if agreed upon forward movement does not occur.
Applicant will NOT receive a passing score if:	- coach insists that the client follow prescribed measures and structures familiar to the coach - coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective method of managing and measuring	- there is little or no partnership of co-creation of the measures of success and accountability structures - coach is the most significant voice in setting accountability structures - coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective measures and accountability structure - the measures and structures do not	- coach does not invite full client participation or does not encourage client leadership in planning strategies and methods of accountability or dominates in any way the accountability mechanisms that are created - coach is the most significant voice in setting accountability structures

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	<i>progress</i> <i>the measures and methods of accountability do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcomes</i> <i>the measures and methods of accountability do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward</i> <i>suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda.</i>	<i>have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcome or the client's learning and creating processes</i> <i>the plan or goals do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward</i> <i>suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda</i> <i>coach suggests standard coaching tools or exercises without discussing with the client the extent to which they might be of value to the client.</i>	<i>coach is unable to support the client in developing an effective measures and accountability structure</i> <i>the measures and structures do not have a clear relationship to the client's stated agenda and desired outcome or the client's learning and creating processes</i> <i>the methods and structures do not have a clear purpose and potential to move the client forward</i> <i>suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda or deeper learning designated by the client</i> <i>coach suggests standard coaching tools or exercises without discussing with the client the extent to which they might be of value to the client or does not encourage invention of structures by the client based on the clients thinking, learning, being, and creating style</i>