

# Core Competencies of Business Coaches

## 1. Establishing Trust and Intimacy

### Behavior Indicators

- **Active Listening:** The coach listens attentively to the client, reflects back what is heard, and confirms understanding.
- **Confidentiality Assurance:** The coach explicitly communicates and upholds confidentiality agreements, reinforcing a safe space for open dialogue.
- **Empathy Demonstration:** The coach consistently shows understanding and empathy towards the client's experiences and emotions.

## 2. Co-Creating the Relationship

### Behavior Indicators

- **Agreement on Roles:** The coach and client clearly define and agree on their respective roles and responsibilities within the coaching relationship.
- **Mutual Respect:** The coach consistently demonstrates respect for the client's viewpoints and decisions, encouraging mutual trust.
- **Adaptability:** The coach adjusts their coaching style and approach based on the client's needs and preferences.

### 3. Communicating Effectively

#### Behavior Indicators

- **Clarity in Questions:** The coach asks clear, concise, and powerful questions that provoke thought and insight.
- **Feedback Precision:** The coach provides specific, constructive, and actionable feedback based on the client's expressed goals and progress.
- **Non-Verbal Cues:** The coach effectively uses and interprets non-verbal communication, such as body language and tone, to enhance understanding.

### 4. Facilitating Learning and Results

#### Behavior Indicators

- **Goal Setting:** The coach collaborates with the client to set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and reviews progress regularly.
- **Challenging Assumptions:** The coach encourages the client to identify and challenge their limiting beliefs or assumptions.
- **Resource Identification:** The coach assists the client in identifying and utilizing resources (internal and external) that will help achieve their goals.

## 5. Ethical Practice

### Behavior Indicators

- **Adherence to Ethics:** The coach follows established ethical guidelines and clearly communicates the ethical framework to the client.
- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** The coach proactively discloses any potential conflicts of interest and takes appropriate steps to manage or avoid them.
- **Boundary Maintenance:** The coach maintains professional boundaries, avoiding dual relationships that could impair objectivity.

## 6. Cultural and Emotional Intelligence

### Behavior Indicators

- **Cultural Awareness:** The coach demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to the client's cultural background and integrates this understanding into coaching sessions.
- **Emotion Management:** The coach recognizes and manages their own emotions during coaching, ensuring they do not interfere with the coaching process.
- **Client's Emotional State:** The coach is adept at recognizing the client's emotional states and responds appropriately to support the client's progress.

## 7. Establishing Clear Agreements

### Behavior Indicators

- **Initial Contracting:** The coach and client establish a clear, written agreement outlining the goals, duration, and logistics of the coaching relationship.
- **Session Objectives:** The coach and client set specific objectives for each session, ensuring alignment with the overall coaching goals.
- **Regular Reviews:** The coach reviews and updates the coaching agreement with the client as needed, reflecting any changes in goals or circumstances.

## 8. Active Listening

### Behavior Indicators

- **Client Focus:** The coach consistently focuses on the client's words, tone, and body language without interrupting.
- **Clarification Requests:** The coach regularly asks for clarification to ensure full understanding before responding or providing feedback.
- **Reflective Listening:** The coach accurately reflects the client's thoughts and feelings back to them, helping to deepen the client's self-awareness.

## 9. Promoting Accountability

### Behavior Indicators

- **Action Plan Development:** The coach collaborates with the client to create a clear action plan with specific, time-bound tasks.
- **Progress Check-Ins:** The coach regularly checks in on the client's progress towards their goals, discussing successes and challenges.
- **Follow-Up:** The coach follows up on agreed-upon actions from previous sessions to hold the client accountable.

## 10. Continuous Professional Development

### Behavior Indicators

- **Ongoing Education:** The coach regularly participates in training, workshops, or courses to stay current with coaching practices and methodologies.
- **Supervision and Feedback:** The coach seeks supervision or feedback from peers and mentors to reflect on and improve their practice.
- **Self-Reflection:** The coach engages in regular self-reflection to assess their coaching effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.



# Code of Ethics for Business Coaches

## Core Ethical Principles

The AATD Code of Ethics sets forth the ethical standards and guidelines that all certified business coaches are expected to adhere to. This Code is designed to ensure the highest levels of professionalism, integrity, and excellence in coaching practices. It is built on core principles that promote client well-being, responsible use of technology, and continuous personal and professional development. The Code of Ethics is dynamic, reflecting emerging trends, technologies, and societal shifts, ensuring that our coaches remain at the forefront of ethical practice.

### 1. Integrity and Professionalism

**Definition:** Business coaches must demonstrate honesty, transparency, and professionalism in all their interactions, maintaining the highest ethical standards.

#### Behavior Indicators

- **Disclosure of Conflicts:** Coaches proactively disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the client and take appropriate steps to manage them effectively.
- **Commitment to Accuracy:** Coaches ensure that all information shared with clients, including qualifications, experience, and success rates, is accurate and verifiable.
- **Adherence to Ethical Codes:** Coaches consistently adhere to the ethical guidelines established by AATD and other relevant coaching bodies.

## 2. Client Well-Being and Empowerment

**Definition:** Coaches must prioritize the well-being of their clients, supporting them in achieving their goals in a safe, respectful, and empowering environment.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Informed Decision-Making:** Coaches provide clients with the necessary information to make informed decisions about their coaching journey.
- **Empathy and Support:** Coaches demonstrate empathy, understanding, and genuine support for their clients' challenges and aspirations.
- **Safe Environment:** Coaches create and maintain a safe and supportive environment, where clients feel comfortable exploring their goals and challenges.

## 3. Confidentiality and Privacy

**Definition:** Coaches must protect the confidentiality and privacy of all client information, ensuring that it is only used for the purposes agreed upon by the client.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Data Protection:** Coaches use secure methods to store and transmit client information, adhering to relevant data protection regulations.
- **Confidentiality Assurance:** Coaches clearly communicate confidentiality policies to clients and obtain consent before sharing any information.

- **Discretion:** Coaches exercise discretion in all discussions, avoiding the disclosure of identifiable client information in public or professional settings.

#### 4. Transparency and Honesty

**Definition:** Coaches must be transparent and honest in all communications, ensuring that clients are fully informed and aware of the coaching process, fees, and potential outcomes.

##### Behavior Indicators

- **Clear Contracting:** Coaches ensure that all agreements, including fees, session structure, and confidentiality, are clearly outlined and agreed upon with the client.
- **Realistic Expectations:** Coaches set and manage realistic expectations regarding the outcomes of coaching, avoiding any guarantees of specific results.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Coaches maintain open lines of communication with clients, updating them on any changes to the coaching process or agreements.

#### 5. Cultural Competence and Inclusivity

**Definition:** Coaches must respect and embrace diversity, demonstrating cultural competence and inclusivity in their practice.

##### Behavior Indicators

- **Cultural Awareness:** Coaches actively seek to understand and respect the cultural backgrounds and perspectives of their clients.



- **Non-Discrimination:** Coaches avoid discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Coaches adapt their coaching approaches to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of clients.

## 6. Responsible Use of Technology (including AI)

**Definition:** Coaches must use technology, including AI tools, responsibly, ensuring that these tools enhance the coaching experience without compromising ethics or client autonomy.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Informed Consent for AI:** Coaches obtain informed consent from clients before using AI tools, explaining how these tools will be used and their potential impact on the coaching process.
- **Transparency of AI Tools:** Coaches clearly communicate the capabilities and limitations of AI tools, ensuring that clients do not over-rely on them.
- **Bias Mitigation:** Coaches regularly audit AI tools to identify and mitigate any biases, ensuring that the tools support fair and equitable outcomes for all clients.

## 7. Continuous Improvement and Professional Development

**Definition:** Coaches must commit to ongoing learning and development, continuously improving their skills, knowledge, and ethical practices.

## Behavior Indicators

- **Ongoing Education:** Coaches participate in regular training and professional development activities to stay current with coaching methodologies and industry standards.
- **Supervision and Feedback:** Coaches seek supervision or feedback from peers and mentors to reflect on and improve their practice.
- **Ethical Reflection:** Coaches engage in regular self-reflection and ethical reflection sessions to assess and enhance their adherence to ethical standards.

## 8. Accountability and Responsibility

**Definition:** Coaches must be accountable for their actions and decisions, taking full responsibility for maintaining the highest ethical standards.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Self-Assessment:** Coaches regularly assess their performance against the ethical standards and take corrective action when necessary.
- **Client Feedback:** Coaches actively seek feedback from clients and use it to improve their coaching practice.
- **Reporting Violations:** Coaches report any ethical violations they witness, whether by themselves or others, to the appropriate authorities within AATD.

## 9. Sustainability and Social Responsibility

**Definition:** Coaches must consider the broader impact of their work on society and the environment, promoting sustainability and social responsibility in their practice.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Sustainable Practices:** Coaches integrate sustainability principles into their business practices, reducing their environmental impact where possible.
- **Community Engagement:** Coaches actively contribute to the well-being of their communities, using their skills to support social and environmental causes.
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Coaches consider the broader social and environmental implications of their coaching decisions and actions.

## 10. Ethical Innovation

**Definition:** Coaches must stay at the forefront of ethical practice, embracing innovation while ensuring it aligns with the highest ethical standards.

### Behavior Indicators

- **Continuous Ethics Review:** Coaches participate in ongoing reviews of ethical standards, ensuring that their practices reflect the latest ethical guidelines and societal changes.
- **Ethical Reflection Sessions:** Coaches engage in regular discussions with peers about challenging ethical dilemmas, sharing best practices and learning from each other.

- **Client-Centric Adaptations:** Coaches tailor ethical practices to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each client, within the bounds of ethical guidelines.

## Responsible Use of AI and Technology

### 1. AI Literacy and Education

**Definition:** Coaches must be well-informed about the ethical use of AI and technology in their practice, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge to use these tools responsibly.

#### Behavior Indicators

- **AI Training:** Coaches undergo regular training on AI tools and their ethical implications, staying updated on the latest developments.
- **Technology Competence:** Coaches demonstrate competence in using AI tools, ensuring they are integrated effectively and ethically into the coaching process.

### 2. Informed Consent and Transparency

**Definition:** Coaches must obtain informed consent from clients regarding the use of AI and technology, ensuring full transparency in how these tools are applied.

#### Behavior Indicators

- **Clear Communication:** Coaches provide clients with detailed information on how AI tools will be used and the potential benefits and limitations.

- **Ongoing Consent:** Coaches regularly check in with clients to confirm their continued consent for the use of AI tools, making adjustments as needed.

### 3. Bias Mitigation and Fairness

**Definition:** Coaches must actively work to identify and mitigate any biases in AI tools, ensuring that these tools support fair and equitable outcomes for all clients.

#### Behavior Indicators

- **Regular Audits:** Coaches conduct regular audits of AI tools to identify and address any potential biases.
- **Diverse Data Sources:** Coaches use diverse data sources in AI tools to reduce the risk of bias and ensure that all clients are treated fairly.

### Certification and Compliance

#### 1. Certification Process

Coaches must complete a certification process that includes training on the Code of Ethics, AI literacy, and ethical innovation. Certification is reviewed and renewed periodically.

#### 2. Ongoing Audits and Peer Reviews

Coaches undergo regular audits and peer reviews to ensure compliance with the Code of Ethics. Feedback from these reviews is used to improve practices and maintain high ethical standards.



### **3. Ethical Ombudsman**

AATD will establish an Ethical Ombudsman role to address any ethical concerns or violations. The Ombudsman will provide guidance and support to coaches facing ethical dilemmas.

#### **Review and Updates**

##### **Continuous Ethics Review Process**

The Code of Ethics is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changes in societal norms, technological advancements, and industry best practices. Coaches are encouraged to participate in this process, contributing their insights and experiences.

##### **Final Thoughts**

The AATD Code of Ethics is more than a set of rules; it is a commitment to excellence, integrity, and responsible coaching. By adhering to these standards, our coaches not only ensure their success but also contribute to the growth and well-being of their clients and society at large.