

# Professional Responsibilities

## 1. Ethics and Conduct

**Adhere to the Recovery Coaches International (RCI) Code of Conduct by:**

- Reading and becoming familiar with the RCI Code of Conduct.
- Exhibiting alignment with the RCI Code of Conduct in your professional conduct and interactions with your clients, colleagues, supervisors, and mentors.
- Understanding and offering, when appropriate, information about the differences between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy, sponsorship, and other allied professions.
- Exhibiting sensitivity to the special confidentiality concerns of individuals with substance use or addiction problems.

## 2. Knowledge of Substance Use, Addiction, and Mental Health

**Keep abreast of the complex and continually evolving substance use, addiction recovery, and mental health fields, including co-occurring conditions, by:**

- Being familiar with general substance use, addiction, and mental health symptoms of the client population and learning about specific challenges or solutions as needed.
- Being familiar with theoretical models of addiction and mental health such as disease, genetic, and biopsychosocial models.
- Being familiar with recovery models of change such as harm reduction, stages of change, abstinence, moderation management, faith-based, 12-step, and medically managed models.
- Being familiar with multi-modal treatment plans for addiction/mental health recovery and alternative treatment protocols.

## 3. Community

**Work and communicate effectively with other practitioners and as part of a multi-modal team by:**

- Identifying community resources and collaborating with allied professionals to benefit the clients.
- Understanding the limits of own education, training, expertise, and scope of practice, and knowing where, how, and when to refer clients to allied professionals such as physicians, sponsors, therapists, interventionists, psychologists, counselors, educators, advocates, and attorneys or to more experienced Recovery Coaches.



- Identifying or helping clients find and access community resources that support recovery such as affordable housing, education, employment, mental health services, and legal advocacy.

# Creating The Coaching Partnership

## 1. Establish a Well-Defined Coaching Agreement

**Make the coaching requirements for new and ongoing clients clear by:**

- Discussing agreements with new clients about the coaching process and relationship.
- Using initial meeting(s) to screen potential clients for “coachability” (the ability to benefit from coaching) and determining if clients can a) identify one or more achievable goals not directly related to emotions; b) can relate to the coach as a partner, not an expert; and c) can help co-create (design) the coaching relationship and set direction for coaching.
- Defining parameters, expectations, and logistics of the coaching relationship (for example, fees, scheduling, establishment and limits of confidentiality agreements, and inclusion of others when appropriate) with new clients.
- Clarifying what is and is not being offered (for example, not therapy, tutoring, sponsorship, or consulting, medical and legal advice).
- Eliciting, clarifying, and coming to agreement about the agenda for each session with the client.
- Establishing measures of success for each coaching session.
- Noticing shifts in coaching priorities and requesting clarification of the session's agenda when needed.
- Noticing whether the client is benefiting from coaching and referring the client to another organization or resource if coaching does not seem to be beneficial.
- Getting permission from the client to offer resources and information.
- Asking questions to clarify and understand the client's biopsychosocial history.

## 2. Create a Supportive Coaching Relationship

**Demonstrate the ability to create a safe, trusting, and respectful environment by:**

- Establishing clear agreements.
- Demonstrating understanding of, and respect for, the client's current learning capacity and learning style, and adapting to changes in capacity or style over time.
- Making efforts to understand and respect socio-cultural factors affecting their client and the coaching relationship.
- Coaching to increase motivation and confidence to embrace positive behaviors and actions.
- Being engaged, fully present, confident, flexible, and responsive.
- Acknowledging and embracing the client's successes and failures as opportunities for growth.



- Engaging in playfulness and humor when appropriate.
- Asking permission to coach topics that may be sensitive.
- Communicating that reaching recovery goals is a process that takes place over time.

### 3. Establish the Foundation of the Coaching Partnership

**Develop and maintain ongoing awareness of the client's deepest human needs, desires, strengths, and potential by:**

- Gaining knowledge of the client's stated life purpose and fulfillment and holding this at the center of the coaching relationship.
- Encouraging the client's compassion and acceptance of self and others.
- Coaching to develop the client's courage, strengths, resilience, and autonomy.
- Coaching clients to develop social assets such as helpful people and supportive friends, family, and community.
- Encouraging the client's expansion of interests and activities that support the client's life in recovery.
- Supporting the client's ongoing development of a dynamic, satisfying, sustainable life in recovery.

## Skillful Coaching

### 1. Active Listening

**Hear the full text and subtext of the client's communication, listening to both what is and what is not said, by:**

- Attending to the client's agenda (not the coach's agenda) and bringing the client back to the stated agenda as needed.
- Reflecting the essence of what the client has communicated in terms of the client's values, goals, feelings, and beliefs.
- Supporting the client's examination of both the big picture and the details and inviting the client to move between long-term and short-range goals, plans, and actions as appropriate.
- Recognizing the client's stage of change and coaching accordingly.
- Noticing the client's interpretations of how life works and what is and is not possible.



### 2. Direct Communication

**Speak clearly and honestly by:**

- Using language that is clear, unambiguous, and to the point.
- With permission from the client, challenging the client's assumptions and limiting beliefs.
- Providing clear, honest, and compassionate feedback as needed.
- Reframing and offering new or different perspectives to increase awareness.
- Speaking directly to self-care issues.
- Articulating the purpose of coaching exercises, strategies, and practices.
- Redirecting the client to focus on the goal or to return to a topic under discussion as needed.

### 3. Effective Questioning

**Ask powerful questions and allow time and space for the client to process and respond to them by:**

- Asking questions that uncover the client's needs, values, desires, and hopes.
- Asking questions that generate possibility, self-awareness, options, and learning for the client.
- Asking questions that reflect an understanding of the client's big picture, not just the details.
- Asking questions that evoke the client's self-understanding and knowledge of how substance use and/or addictive behaviors impact themselves and others.
- Emphasizing questions that elicit positive change talk and avoiding questions that encourage negative change talk.

### 4. Effective Reflecting

**Clarify communication through paraphrasing and summarizing by:**

- Reflecting the essence of the client's communication in terms of the client's values, goals, feelings, and beliefs.
- Selectively reflecting to emphasize positive change talk and minimize negative change talk.
- Appropriately reflecting content and meaning.
- Using reflections to explore story and meaning.

### 5. Effective Use of Intuition

**Notice, describe, and use nonlinear information that becomes available by:**

- Noticing intuitive thoughts, feelings, images, and metaphors.



- Assessing the potential usefulness of the nonlinear information.
- Deciding whether it is appropriate or useful to share these insights with the client.
- Asking permission to share, if appropriate.
- Sharing intuition with the client without attachment to how the intuition received.

### 6. Self-management

**Maintain awareness of your own processes, prejudices, reactions, and fears while remaining balanced, detached, and compassionate by:**

- Staying aware of your own reactivity to the client's behaviors.
- Managing your own vulnerability and reactions.
- Avoiding over-involvement in the life and feelings of the client.
- Developing awareness of personal and cultural beliefs and biases.
- Managing beliefs and biases to avoid conscious or unconscious harm to clients.

## Learning & Awareness

### 1. Encourage the Client's Understanding of Recovery

**Explore the client's understanding of recovery and help the client develop their chosen recovery path by:**

- Encouraging the client's exploration and understanding of substance use or compulsive behavior, addiction, and recovery.
- Exploring the unique impact of substance use and/or compulsive behaviors on the client and the client's level of functioning.
- Clarifying that the client's misuse may be a maladaptive form of self-care or self-management.
- Providing resources and information as appropriate.

### 2. Support Self-Awareness

**Explore the client's concept of self and its effect on self-care, motivation, confidence, and choice of behaviors by:**

- Using tools such as reflection, feedback, acknowledgment, and celebration to acknowledge and develop positive characteristics and learning styles.
- Encouraging clients to clarify and use their strengths, talents, values, and interests to manage limitations and resolve problems or difficulties.



- Noticing patterns of thinking, emotions, defenses, or behaviors and exploring how they impact the client's choices, decisions, and actions.
- Encouraging and developing clients' belief in their own capabilities.
- Encouraging clients to be aware of their responses and reactions to changing environments and to create a protective environment for themselves that includes individuals and communities supportive of their ongoing recovery.
- Assisting clients to explore concepts and practices of compassionate self-awareness, self-care, and responsibility.
- Exploring clients' typical ways of perceiving themselves and the world and encouraging new and more useful perspectives.

## Facilitating Goal Setting & Planning

### 1. Goal Setting

**Help clients develop effective recovery and/or general life goals by:**

- Helping clients identify key concerns.
- Encouraging the exploration of a variety of options and helping clients identify preferred outcomes.
- Assisting clients to clearly define and specify chosen goal(s).
- Supporting clients in developing specific, measurable, attainable, rewarding, and time-bound (SMART) goals.

### 2. Planning

**Help clients organize and create plans effectively by:**

- Assisting clients to identify actions that will lead to accomplishing agreed-upon goals, including the creation of a change plan and the steps required to implement said plan.
- Assisting the client in creating an effective change plan by reviewing and organizing information about the client's history, learning style, and motivation.
- Brainstorming and exploring with the client strategies, such as ways to manage barriers and leverage strengths, that will facilitate the achievement of these goals.
- Developing a coaching strategy or plan that is realistic, relevant, and aligned to support the client's stated goal(s) effectively.
- Helping clients identify potential barriers and find ways to either overcome them or cope with them.
- Establishing multiple measures for recognizing progress and accountability.



# Supporting Actions, Accountability And Process

## 1. Support Actions

**Help clients develop structures and methods for taking effective action and maintaining momentum by:**

- Assisting clients in choosing, designing, and committing to actions to be taken between sessions.
- Making clear and specific requests for actions that may move clients toward their goals.
- Reminding clients that they are free to decline, accept, or renegotiate any actions requested by the coach.
- Supporting clients in taking specific agreed-upon actions and creating appropriate accountability.
- Supporting clients in taking actions that support their self-esteem.

## 2. Support Accountability

**Provide boundaries and expectations for keeping agreements and meeting goals by:**

- Creating structures with the clients for holding clients accountable for agreed-upon actions.
- Continuing to encourage motivation and commitment by consistently asking clients to report their progress with the agreed-upon actions.
- Acknowledging and celebrating with the client for actions taken and exploring the client's learning and insights.
- Challenging clients, neutrally articulating their behavior, when they do not take agreed-upon actions.

## 3. Support Progress

**Help clients make progress towards reaching their goals by:**

- Witnessing and maintaining curiosity about clients' change process and development.
- Supporting clients in identifying and consistently leveraging their expanding resources, skills, strengths, and self-care.
- Integrating learning by exploring new information and/or changes.



## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES – 8/8

---

- Routinely revisiting the coaching plan, assessing progress towards the achievement of goals, and incorporating any agreed-upon changes into the coaching plan.
- Supporting clients to identify feelings and associated needs and to obtain appropriate resources to meet them.
- Coaching clients to identify where, how, and why they got stuck and to take self-directed action to find practical solutions.
- Assisting clients in exploring and identifying patterns that limit their ability to change, and in finding internal and/or external resources that support their ongoing development.
- Referring clients to the appropriate resources (for example, therapist or medical doctor) if they are unable to benefit from coaching.



**Michael Walsh**  
Addiction Recovery Solutions

@ [Coach@MichaelWalsh.com](mailto:Coach@MichaelWalsh.com)  
🌐 [www.MichaelWalsh.com](http://www.MichaelWalsh.com)  
📞 250 896 8494