

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **A. OVERVIEW**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this code is to establish and maintain standards for coaches, who are members of the LBCAI and to inform and protect members of the public seeking and using their services.
- 1.2 All members of the LBCAI are required to abide by existing codes appropriate to them. They thereby accept a common frame of reference within which to manage their responsibilities to clients, colleagues, members of the LBCAI and the wider community. Whilst the Code cannot resolve all ethical and practice related issues, it aims to provide a framework for addressing ethical issues and to encourage optimum levels of practice.
- 1.3 This Association has a Grievance Procedure, which can lead inter alia to the withdrawal of membership for breaches of its Code of Conduct.

### **2. Caution**

All members of The Life and Business Coaching Association of Ireland (“LBCAI”) must agree to follow the Code of Conduct of the Association (“the Code”). Alleged breaches of the Code will be fully investigated by the LBCAI and, if proven may, lead to the expulsion from the membership of the LBCAI of the guilty party and the withdrawal, without compensation of all and any rights previously bestowed by virtue of that individual’s connection with the LBCAI.

### **3. Definition of Coaching**

- 3.1 The overall aim of coaching is to provide the client with opportunities to explore, discover and clarify ways of living in more satisfying and resourceful ways.

Coaching incorporates the giving of time, attention and respect in a confidential relationship. This includes work with individuals or groups of people referred to as ‘clients’.

The coach’s role is to facilitate the client’s growth in ways, which respect the person’s values, personal resources and capacity for self-determination and to achieve their stated goals.

- 3.2 Only when both parties explicitly agree to enter into a coaching relationship and a contract is agreed between the coach and client does it become coaching.
- 3.3 Regardless of the theoretical approaches preferred by individual coaches, there are ethical issues, which are common to all coaching situations.

## **B. CODE OF ETHICS**

### **B.1 General**

The basic values of coaching are integrity, impartiality and respect. Coaches should take the same degree of care to work ethically whether the coaching is paid or voluntary.

### **B.2 Client Safety**

Coaches shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the clients safety during coaching.

### **B.3 Clear Contracts**

The terms on which coaching is being offered must be made clear to clients before coaching commences. Subsequent revisions of these terms must be agreed in advance of any change.

### **B.4 Competence**

Coaches shall take all reasonable steps to monitor and develop their own competence and to work within the limits of that competence. This includes having appropriate and ongoing supervision, which may include consultative support.

### **B.5 Practitioner Conduct**

Always conduct themselves to the highest level of ethics, integrity, accountability and responsibility; maintaining the good reputation of the coaching profession in general and Life and Business Coaching Association in particular. Endeavour to enhance public understanding and acceptance of professional coaching.

### **B.6 Avoiding Conflict of Interest**

Avoid all conflicts of interests and give of notice potential conflicts to the LBCAI. Advise both LBCAI and the client on the risk of conflict if a relationship moves beyond a coach/client situation. (For example a personal or business relationship)

### **B.7 Communication Terms of Coaching Contracts**

Comply with both the spirit and the letter of the letter of any commercial agreements made with clients, professional colleagues and LBCAI; make commercial agreements with clients and potential clients that are fair and will respect all parties to such agreements. Clearly state to clients and potential clients, the terms of any commercial agreement including the expectations of both parties. Ensure that a copy of this code is freely available to clients, potential clients and the general public.

### **B.8 Transparency of Competence**

Represent true levels of status, title, competence and experience in order not to mislead, misrepresent or defraud.

### **B.9 Guarantees of Outcome.**

Make no claim or implication of outcome that is unreasonable or unrealistic.

### **B.10 Third Party Commissions/Compensation**

When appropriate, disclose to a client, all compensation to or from third parties in relation to that client.

**B.11 Commitment to Standards**

Use the tuition, definition and works provided by LBCAI as the basis for all coaching procedures, practices and objectives.

**B.12 Boundaries**

Avoid entering into business, intimate or personal relationships with clients.

When a Coach has other qualifications (for example counselling to name but one) the Coach needs to explain the difference to the Client from the outset. If the Coach or and Client finds that after a contract has been agreed and the session or sessions have commenced, that a different discipline (for example counselling) is the best way to precede, the Coach should refer the client to an appropriately qualified practitioner even when the Coach has the appropriate qualification. (This is to cover the situation when the session changes from in its essence of Coaching to a different discipline and as a result could not be seen as Coaching a client.) Contact the LBCAI immediately if you find yourself in a situation that may create conflict, litigation or bad publicity.

**B.13 Advertising Standards**

Ensure that all advertisements, and promotional materials whether verbal or written, are legal, decent, truthful, honest and in compliance with the laws covering such areas.

**B.14 Dealing with potential for conflicts of Interest**

In the event of conflict of interest arising, the issue will be resolved by reaching a mutual agreement through discussion. The interest of the client is paramount. Give LBCAI notice of the potential conflict of interest.

**B.15 Honouring Agreements**

Respect each Term of Contract made with clients and with whoever contracted for the coaching of the clients.

**B.16 Communication**

Use the Association's accreditation/certification designation letters LBCAI after the name in agreement with the rules of the Association.

**B.17 Client Benefit**

The coach recognises the needs of the client are paramount and will practice with the best interest of the client at all times.

**B.18 Inappropriate Advice/Information**

Refrain from offering professional information or advice that you know to be confidential, misleading or where the accuracy is beyond your competence to access.

**B.19 Releasing Names**

Obtain written permission from any client or potential client before releasing their names as referees.

**B.20 Use of Association Membership Lists.**

The usage of the Association Membership lists will be in accordance with the rules of the Association at all times.

**B.21 Intellectual Property Rights and Ancillary Rights**

Respect all copyright, agreements, work, intellectual property, and trademarks and comply with all laws covering such areas.

**B.22 Insurance**

Ensure that professional insurance arrangements are in accordance and up to date with the Association accreditation, certification and membership criteria.

**B.23 Minors**

Before coaching minors (persons under 18<sup>th</sup> years of age) get the express written consent of a parent, guardian as appropriate.

**B.24 Equality**

Treat all clients and potential clients with absolute dignity, confidentiality and respect as free and equal individuals.

**C. CODE OF PRACTICE**

**C.1 Issues of responsibility**

**C1.1** The coach-client relationship is the foremost ethical concern. However, this relationship does not exist in isolation. This relationship also reflects upon colleagues, other associations and members of the wider community.  
These are addressed under separate headings.

**C.1.2 To the client**

*Client Safety*

1.2.1 Coaches should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client suffers neither physical nor psychological harm during coaching.

*Client Autonomy*

1.2.2 Coaches are responsible for working in ways, which promote the client's control over his/her own life, and respect the client's ability to make decisions and change in the light of his/her own beliefs and values and goals.

1.2.3 Coaches do not normally act on behalf of their clients.

1.2.4 Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring boundaries in the coaching relationship, and making this explicit to the client.

1.2.5 Coaches must not exploit clients financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way.

1.2.6 Clients should be offered privacy for coaching sessions. The client must not be observed by anyone other than his/her coach without having given his/her informed consent. This also applies to audio/video-taping.

*Coaching information*

1.2.7 Any publicity material and all written and oral information must accurately reflect the nature of the service on offer, and the training, qualifications and relevant experience of the coach. Only LBCAI accredited coaches may claim membership status.

1.2.8 Coaches are responsible for communicating the terms on which coaching is being offered, including availability, the degree of confidentiality offered, and their expectations of clients regarding fees, cancelled appointments and any other significant matters. The communication of terms and any negotiations over these

should be agreed upon by client and coach before the client incurs financial liability. An assessment fee may be charged on initial consultation.

- 1.2.9 It is the client's choice whether or not to participate in coaching. Reasonable steps should be taken in the course of the coaching relationship to ensure that the coach and client are given an opportunity to mutually review the terms on which coaching is being offered.
- 1.2.10 Coaches should not be involved with the client in friendship, formal business relationship, sexual relationship or training relationship while the coaching is current.
- 1.2.11 Coaches should avoid unnecessary conflicts of interest and are expected to make explicit to the client any relevant conflicts of interest.
- 1.2.12 If records of coaching sessions are kept, clients should be made aware of this. At the client's request, information should be given about access to these records, their availability to other people, and the degree of security with which they are kept.
- 1.2.13 If the client is currently engaged in any other therapeutic or similar relationship, the coach must gain the clients permission before conferring with any such professional worker.
- 1.2.14 Coaches should be aware that computer-based records are subject to statutory regulations under the Data Protection Act of Ireland.

#### *Coach competence*

- 1.2.15 Coaches should monitor actively the limitations of their own competence through coaching supervision. Coaches should work within their own known limits.
- 1.2.16 Coaches should not counsel when their functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, disability, alcohol, and drugs or for any other reason.
- 1.2.17 It is an indication of the competence of coaches when they recognise their inability to coach a client(s) and make appropriate referrals.

### **C.1.3 To former clients**

- 1.3.1 Coaches remain accountable for relationships with former clients and must exercise caution over entering into friendships, formal business relationships or sexual relationships, with former clients. Any changes in relationships must be discussed at coaching supervision. The decision about any change(s) in relationship with former clients should take into account whether the issues or dynamics present during the coaching relationship have been resolved and properly ended.

### **C.1.4 To self as coach**

- 1.4.1 Coaches have a responsibility to themselves and their clients to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and ability to help clients. They are expected to monitor their own personal functioning and to seek help and/or withdraw from coaching, whether temporarily or permanently, when their resources are sufficiently depleted to require this. Further details are covered in Section B.2 (Coaching support)
- 1.4.2 Coaches should have received adequate basic training before commencing coaching and should maintain professional development.
- 1.4.3 Coaches should carry professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance.

### **C.1.5 To other coaches**

- 1.5.1 Coaches should not conduct themselves in their coaching-related activities in ways, which undermine public confidence in either, their role as a coach or in the work of other coaches.

- 1.5.2 If a coach suspects misconduct by another coach which cannot be resolved or remedied after discussion with the coach concerned, that person should implement the Complaints Procedure, doing so without breaches of confidentiality other than those necessary for investigation of the complaint.

### **C.1.6 To colleagues and members of the caring professions**

- 1.6.1 Coaches should be accountable for their services and dealings with colleagues, employers and funding bodies as appropriate. The means of achieving this should be consistent with respecting the needs and rights of the clients related to matters of privacy, conflict of interest and confidentiality which are covered in other sections of this code.
- 1.6.2 Coaches should accept their part in exploring and resolving specific conflicts of interest between themselves and their agencies, especially where this has implications for the client.

### **C.1.7 To the wider community**

#### *Law*

- 1.7.1 Coaches must work within the law.
- 1.7.2 Coaches should take all reasonable steps to be aware of current law affecting the work of the coach. A coach's ignorance of the law is no defence against legal liability or penalty, including inciting or encouraging the commission of offences by clients.

## **C.2 Coaching support**

- C.2.1. It is a breach of LBCAI ethical requirements for coaches to practice without regular coaching supervision as well as consultative support whenever necessary.
- C.2.2 Coaching refers to a formal arrangement, which enables coaches to discuss their coaching regularly with one or more people who have an understanding of coaching and coaching supervision. Its purpose is to ensure the efficacy of the coach-client relationship. This is a confidential relationship.
- C.2.3 Coaches who have line managers owe them appropriate managerial accountability for their work. The coach supervisor role should be independent of the line manager role. However, where the coaching supervisor is also the line manager, the coach should also have access to independent consultative support.
- C.2.4 The volume of supervision should be in accordance with current LBCAI criteria.
- C.2.5 The discussion of cases within supervision/consultative support should take place without revealing the personal identity of the client.

## **C.3 Confidentiality: clients, colleagues and others**

- C.3.1 Confidentiality is a means of providing the client with safety and privacy.
- C.3.2 Coaches should take all reasonable steps to communicate clearly the extent of the confidentiality they are offering to clients. It should be made clear to the client that the coach is supervised. This information should be conveyed in the pre-coaching information or initial contracting.
- C.3.3 Coaches must treat in confidence personal information about clients, whether obtained directly or indirectly or by inference. Such information includes names, addresses, biographical details, and other descriptions of the client's life and circumstances, which might result in identification of the client.
- C.3.4 Exceptional circumstances may arise which give the coach good grounds for believing that the client will cause serious physical harm to others or themselves, or have harm caused to

him or her. In such circumstances, the client's consent to a change in the agreement about confidentiality agreed between a coach and client should be made only after consultation with a coaching supervisor or an experienced coach.

- C.3.5 Any breach of confidentiality should be minimized both by restricting the information conveyed to that, which is pertinent to the immediate situation, and to those persons who can provide the help required by the client. The coach should seek a balance between (i) acting in the best interest of the client in ways which enable the client to resume taking responsibility for his/her actions, and (ii) the coach's responsibilities to the wider community.
- C.3.6 Care must be taken to ensure that personally identifiable information is not transmitted through overlapping networks of confidential relationships.
- C.3.7 Any agreement between the coach and client about confidentiality may be reviewed and changed by joint negotiations.
- C.3.8 Agreements between the coach and client about confidentiality continue after the client's death unless there are overriding legal or ethical considerations.
- C.3.9 Special care is required when writing about specific coaching situations for case studies, reports or publication. It is important that the author effectively disguises the client's identity and, unless impossible, has the client(s) informed consent.

#### **C.4 Confidentiality in the legal process**

- C.4.1 In a situation where a coach is in any doubt about his/her legal rights and obligations, or where a current crime is being disclosed, the coach should seek legal advice and/or contact their supervisor and the Association.

#### **C.5 Advertising/public statements**

- C.5.1 When announcing coaching services, coaches should limit the information to name, relevant qualifications, address, telephone number, hours available, and a brief listing of the services offered and theoretical orientation. All such information should be accurate in every particular.
- C.5.2 Only LBCAI accredited coaches may claim membership status as a qualification of accreditation and may use MLBCAI after their name.
- C.5.3 Coaches should not display an affiliation with this Association in a manner, which falsely implied the endorsement or verification of this Association.

#### **C.6 Research**

- C.6.1 The LBCAI code of confidentiality applies for research purposes.
- C.6.2 Coaches conducting research should use their data accurately and restrict their conclusions to that compatible with their methodology.