

Ethical Guidelines of the Association for Professional Executive Coaching & Supervision TM

Introduction

The Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) is the top level professional body for the provision of Executive Coaching and for the Supervision of Executive Coaches. The Ethical Guidelines contained in this document are indicators of that professionalism and the high standards seen as essential to the various relationships involved in Executive Coaching and Supervision. We want the safest and most effective conditions for clients (those being coached), the clearest and most transparent understanding with host companies who commission Executive Coaching and/or Supervision and the highest professional standards for our coaches and supervisors.

Nature of the Guidelines

These Guidelines set out the principles, standards and sometimes procedures that guide our work. Members of APECS accept these as part of their contract with APECS and would be expected to tell APECS if there was any part or parts of the Guidelines with which they could not agree and which they could not practice.

Failure to abide by these standards by any member of APECS may be reported to APECS for investigation under its Complaints Procedure. These procedures will be set out in a further document entitled “APECS Complaints Procedure”.

Communication of this Code of Ethics and Conduct

Whatever the contracting arrangements are with a coaching client (individual) or his/her sponsoring organisation, it must be brought formally to the attention of the individual client and the sponsoring organisation that these Ethical Guidelines and the APECS Complaints Procedure exist and where to obtain copies if required.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code:

“Coach” refers to the person who carries out Professional Executive Coaching of the “Client”, the individual receiving coaching. “Sponsoring Organisation” or “Sponsor” refers to the company, institution or body which is funding the coaching.

Professional Executive Coaching or “coaching” refers to a one-to-one developmental relationship with clearly focused aims related to the clients’ effectiveness in a particular role in the sponsoring organisation.

“Supervision” or “Supervisor” refers to the relationship between the coach and a qualified person who is not in any managerial relationship with the coach wherein the coaching work

with particular clients may be discussed in strict confidence with the purpose of enhancing the quality of the coaching work and of ensuring client safety.

Guidelines

In general, Executive Coaches and Supervisors of Executive Coaches will behave in ways which demonstrate:

- Respect for individuals and organisations (rights and dignity)
- Awareness and sensitivity to difference (race, culture, gender, disability etc)
- Their concern for fairness and justice at all levels of their work
- Openness to new knowledge, competencies and attitudes that further the quality of their work
- The importance of context in their work
- Commitment to establishing high quality and high level healthy relationships with individuals and organisations
- Ensuring insights into the impact of their behaviour on others
- They engage with provisions that develop and enhance autonomy in individuals and organisations.

APECS Executive Coaches and Supervisors will hold firmly to the foundation principles underpinning ethical thinking and behaviour:

- Autonomy – to help individuals and companies make their own decisions and move towards increasing self-authority
- Fidelity – to be faithful to contracts, relationships and promises made
- Beneficence – to do what benefits the well being of all
- Non-Maleficence – to avoid whatever might harm others
- Justice – to maintain fairness
- Caring for self – to look after oneself physically, emotionally, mentally and motivationally so that clients and organisations receive the best service possible.

These guidelines (values) will influence decisions made by Executive Coaches and Supervisors in areas such as:

1. Qualifications
2. Ongoing professional development
3. Setting up and engaging in Executive Coaching relationships
4. Boundary management
5. Requirements for supervision
6. Other requirements

1. Qualifications

The coach will:

- Be properly qualified to carry out the work (see APECS Accreditation Criteria Guidelines)
- Ensure that the requirements of the coaching contract are within their professional ability to deliver or make clear to the client and the sponsor where the shortfall may be.

- Continue to learn and grow in their professional knowledge and expertise
- Invest in personal development work to enhance their self-awareness and emotional balance.
- Work with an approved supervisor (see APECS Accreditation Criteria Guidelines) to ensure client safety, review their client case work and monitor their own well-being and effectiveness.

2. Ongoing professional development

Executive Coaches and Supervisors with APECS will be committed to their own learning and development and take steps to ensure that they are up to date with current thinking and knowledge. They will review the steps they take to ensure this in professional supervision and they and their supervisor will agree an annual development plan that will be part of their supervisor report.

3. Setting up and Engaging in Executive Coaching or Supervision Relationships

The coach or supervisor will:

- Take proper steps to ensure a sound understanding of the nature of the sponsor's and clients expectations of coaching.
- Where there appear to be inappropriate expectations of understandings of the nature of coaching, to explain its limitations and uses appropriately and simply.
- Explain this Code of Ethics and Conduct to the Sponsor and the Client including the confidentiality requirements and the rare exceptions to it.
- Establish a clear contract with the Sponsor and the Client which covers:
 - The process of coaching /supervision
 - The aims of the specific coaching engagement /under supervision
 - The duration, hours provision and periodicity of the engagement
 - Specifically who will be involved in the process and at which stages
 - The matters of confidentiality and boundary management (see below)
 - Fee and cancellation arrangements
- The Coach / Supervisor will not in any way use his/her position of influence to take advantage of the Client and will always act in the Client's and Sponsor's best interests.

4. Boundary Management

The coach and supervisor will:

- Maintain proper confidentiality of personal information gained within the coaching/supervision context.
- Maintain confidentiality of the names and roles of those who are or have been coached/ supervised.
- Maintain commercial confidentiality regarding any aspects of the Sponsoring Organisations business and plans.
- Only disclose information from the coaching/supervision context to the Sponsor with the specific permission of the Client and then only if there are special reasons why this is in the best interests of the Client.

- Be prepared to disclose to the Sponsor or the competent authorities any matter which indicates an illegal or illicit action by the Client or where there is a significant risk to another person or body should this not be disclosed. In such rarer circumstances the Client should be given the first opportunity to disclose unless the timing indicates that urgent action is needed by the Coach/Supervisor.

5. Requirements for supervision

Each Executive Coach will choose a form of supervision and a supervisor that best fits their learning needs. In ongoing and regular supervision they will discuss confidentially their thoughts, feeling and reactions to their work at all levels: clients, relationships, interventions, contracts, impasses, joys, upsets etc. Supervision will be a forum for reflection on coaching work where supervisees will take responsibility for their own learning.

Supervisors will provide APECS with a short annual report on supervisees assuring APECS

that they are working ethically and to an acceptable standard.

6. Other requirements

- The Coach and Supervisor will ensure the safekeeping of all related records and data connected with the coaching contract and its delivery.
- The Coach and Supervisor will have professional liability insurance of at least £1 million.
- Where necessary the Coach and Supervisor will have proper Public Liability and Employers' Liability Insurance cover.
- The Coach and Supervisor will always observe and comply with any U.K. or E.U. requirements or those governing the geographic area in which they work.

Breaches of the Code

APECS Coaching and Supervisory members will endeavour to behave in a way which models exemplary professionalism and which will reflect well on the Coaching profession.

Should a situation arise where it appears that a Coach or a Supervisor has behaved in a way which is in breach of these Ethical Guidelines and if the matter can not be resolved by them or is of high importance then APECS can be approached to invoke its Complaints Procedures by contacting the association: info@apecs.org