

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council Code of Ethics

1. Introduction

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) [has been established to promote best practice and ensure that the highest possible standards are maintained in the coach/mentoring relationship, whatever form that might take, so that the coach/mentoring environment provides the greatest opportunity for learning and development.

2. Purpose

This Ethical Code sets out what the clients and sponsors can expect from the coach/mentor in either a coach/mentoring, training or supervisory relationship and should form the starting point for any contract agreed. All members of the EMCC accept the principles and aims of the EMCC. We recognise that members may not always maintain these ethical principles. The EMCC has therefore agreed a process by which breaches of the Code by a member can be reported and investigated. This is referred to later in this course.

All EMCC members will make the sponsoring organisation and the individual client aware, at the contracting stage, of the existence of the Code of Ethics.

3. Terminology

The term 'coach/mentoring' is used to describe all types of coaching or mentoring that may be taking place, both in the work environment and outside. The EMCC recognises that there will be many types of coach/mentoring taking place and these will need to be defined when more detailed standards are produced. The term 'client' denotes anyone using the services of a coach/mentor. We believe the term 'client' is interchangeable with any other term that the parties to the coach/mentoring relationship might be more comfortable with, such as 'colleague', 'learner', 'partner', 'coachee' or 'mentee'.

It is recognised that there are circumstances where the coach/mentor may have two 'clients', the individual being coached and the organisation who may have commissioned the coach/mentoring. In this Code we have used the term 'sponsor' to differentiate the latter. The terms 'supervision' and 'supervisor' describe the process by which the work of the coach/mentor is overseen and advice/guidance sought. The terminology is the same, but the process may differ in significant ways from that undertaken in other professions, such as psychotherapy and counselling.

4. The Code

The coach/mentor will acknowledge the dignity of all humanity. They will conduct themselves in a way which respects diversity and promotes equal opportunities. It is the primary responsibility of the coach/mentor to provide the best possible service to the client and to act in such a way as to cause no harm to any client or sponsor. The coach/mentor is committed to functioning from a position of dignity, autonomy and personal responsibility. The EMCC Ethical Code covers the following:

- Competence
- Context
- Boundary management

- Integrity
- Professionalism

5. Competence

- 1) The coach/mentor will:
 - a) Ensure that their level of experience and knowledge is sufficient to meet the needs of the client.
 - b) Ensure that their capability is sufficient to enable them to operate according to this Code of Ethics and any standards that may subsequently be produced.
 - c) Develop and then enhance their level of competence by participating in relevant training and appropriate Continuing Professional Development activities.
 - d) Maintain a relationship with a suitably qualified supervisor, who will regularly assess their competence and support their development. The supervisor will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality referred to in this Code. What constitutes a 'suitably qualified' supervisor is defined in the EMCC's standards document.

6. Context

- 2) The coach/mentor will:
 - a) Understand and ensure that the coach/mentoring relationship reflects the context within which the coach/mentoring is taking place.
 - b) Ensure that the expectations of the client and the sponsor are understood and that they themselves understand how those expectations are to be met.
 - c) Seek to create an environment in which client, coach/mentor and sponsor are focused on and have the opportunity for learning.

7. Boundary Management

- 3) The coach/mentor will:
 - a) At all times operate within the limits of their own competence, recognise where that competence has the potential to be exceeded and where necessary refer the client either to a more experienced coach/mentor, or support the client in seeking the help of another professional, such as a counsellor, psychotherapist or business/financial advisor.
 - b) Be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest of either a commercial or emotional nature to arise through the coach/mentoring relationship and deal with them quickly and effectively to ensure there is no detriment to the client or sponsor.

8. Integrity

4) The coach/mentor will:

- a) Maintain throughout the level of confidentiality which is appropriate and is agreed at the start of the relationship.
- b) Disclose information only where explicitly agreed with the client and sponsor (where one exists), unless the coach/mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the client or others if the information is withheld.
- c) Act within applicable law and not encourage, assist or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional or discriminatory.

9. Professionalism

5) The coach/mentor will:

- a) Respond to the client's learning and development needs as defined by the agenda brought to the coach/mentoring relationship.
- b) Not exploit the client in any manner, including, but not limited to, financial, sexual or those matters within the professional relationship. The coach/mentor will ensure that the duration of the coach/mentoring contract is only as long as is necessary for the client/sponsor.
- c) Understand that professional responsibilities continue beyond the termination of any coach/mentoring relationship. These include the following:
 - Maintenance of agreed confidentiality of all information relating to clients and sponsors
 - Avoidance of any exploitation of the former relationship
 - Provision of any follow-up which has been agreed to
 - Safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data
- d) Demonstrate respect for the variety of different approaches to coaching and mentoring and other individuals in the profession.
- e) Never represent the work and views of others as their own.
- f) Ensure that any claim of professional competence, qualifications or accreditation is clearly and accurately explained to potential clients and that no false or misleading claims are made or implied in any published material.