



HOW COACHING DIFFERS FROM THERAPY: TAKING A DEEPER LOOK AT THE DIFFERENCE

Julie Radico, Psy.D. ABPP ACC

1

1



Julie Radico, Psy.D. ABPP ACC is the owner and chief executive officer of *Radico Psychological and Consultation Services, LLC*. Where she provides one-on-one coaching and therapy tele-services to professional women.

She is also a speaker and author. She has a collaborative YouTube channel [@undercomplicatingstuff](#) and is the coauthor of *You Will Get Through This: A Mental Health Tool Kit—help for depression, anxiety, grief, and more*, and author of *How to Understand and Deal with Anger*.

Dr. Radico has served in leadership roles for the American Psychological Association, the Pennsylvania Psychological Association, the American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology, the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, and the Society for Health Psychology.

[Drjulieradico.com](#)

2

2

DISCLOSURES/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Dr. Radico has **no** conflicts of interest to disclose.

She has coauthored *You Will Get Through This: A Mental Health Tool Kit* and has authored *How to Understand and Deal with Anger: Everything You Need to Know*, which will be published August 2026 but neither are related to this presentation.

Generative AI was **not** used for the development or content of this presentation.

3

3

OBJECTIVES

Explain several differences in treatment approach when using a coaching vs. a therapy modality to work with a client.

Compare differences in questions and goal setting when using a coaching vs. a therapy modality to work with a client.

4

4



ARE YOU ALREADY
COACHING AS PART
OF YOUR PRACTICE?

Poll

- I have a coaching credential and coach clients.
- I do not have a coaching credential and coach clients.
- I do not have a coaching credential and do not coach clients.

5

5

CASE DISCUSSION

Client reports they have been feeling increasingly stressed at work and is contemplating looking for a new job?

- How would you respond as a therapist?
- How would you respond as a coach?
- *What's the difference between the possible directions and purpose of your questions, and what's your reasoning behind those choices?*

6

6

COACHING DEFINITION

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as:

- “Partnering with clients in a *thought-provoking* and *creative process* that inspires them to *maximize* their personal and professional *potential*.”

*focuses on the future/present
*collaborative
*goal-oriented
*supportive and empowering

• Not having a universal definition of coach can create confusion.
• Clients may come to coaching when they really want consultation, mentoring, or a combination.

International Coaching Federation;
<https://coachingfederation.org/>

7

ANYONE CAN CALL THEMSELVES A COACH

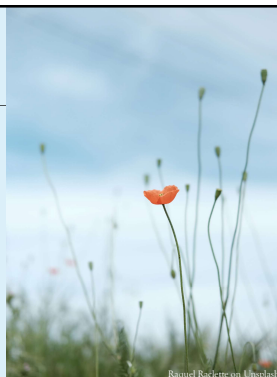
- “Coach” is **not** a legally protected title.
- No license is required to provide coaching.
- No prerequisite training is required to call yourself a coach.
- The practice is **not** regulated by state licensing boards.
 - though ICF has core competencies and a code of ethics.



8

COACHING IS NOT THERAPY

- No diagnosing.
- Outcome focused on **goal progress**, not symptom reduction.
- No long focus on the client's past.
- Minimal information sharing/directiveness.
- Of note: Many coaching approaches pull from therapy.



9

COACHING SESSION

A structured, client-led conversation designed to spark clarity, explore challenges, set goals, and inspire action.

Coaches...

- *Ask powerful questions to encourage reflection and discovery.*
- *Focus on the client's needs and goals.*
- *Set aside their own agendas to create a safe and supportive space.*
- *Guide clients in solving problems and making decisions.*
- *Hold clients accountable for their commitments.*
- *Help clients identify patterns, strengths, and areas for growth to enhance self-awareness.*

<https://coachingfederation.org/>

10

MANY SPECIALTY AREAS OF COACHING

Life Coaching
Executive Coaching
Business Coaching
Speaker Coaching
Leadership (Development) Coaching
Coaching Programs
Coaching can be 1-on-1, Groups, Teams

What's your niche?



Shutterstock

11

MANY STYLES OF COACHING

Solution-Focused
Psychodynamic
Positive-Psychology
Narrative Coaching
Existential
Etc.

Cognitive Behavioral Coaching

Effective in helping clients develop strategies to deal with stress, while also remaining focused on relevant goals.

Model Agility (leadership coaching)

Multiple toolboxes and pathways to pull from

Jordan, Pinner, and Tami-Matthews (2021), Greif et al. (2022), Whitmore (2007), Gavin & McInerney (2024), Kauffman & Holger (2016)

12

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

If you still have your license then you will likely be viewed as a “psychologist-coach.”

APA's ethics hold you to same/or a higher standard than the ICF ethics.

- Need to adhere to both if you have both credentials.
- You are still a mandated reporter.

Need to consider types of coaching (evidence-based practices) and ways to measure effectiveness.

Check with your legal and malpractice advisors.

13

INFORMED CONSENT: NEED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COACHING AND THERAPY

Website

- Marketing materials

Documents

- Consent forms
- All form of contracts

Ongoing informed consent with your client

- With potential clients
- Already established clients
- Clients can see you for either therapy or coaching (not both with one client)

Check with your legal and malpractice advisors.

14

INFORMED CONSENT: NEED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COACHING AND THERAPY, CONSISTENTLY AND ONGOING

What type of “coaching” are they getting?

- Consulting?
- ICF Coaching?
- A mix?
- A mix of what styles?

15

ICF CORE COMPETENCIES

A. FOUNDATION

1. **Demonstrates Ethical Practice:** Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching
2. **Embodies a Coaching Mindset:** Engages in ongoing personal and professional learning and development as a coach. Works with coaching supervisors or mentor coaches as needed. Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered.

B. CO-CREATING THE RELATIONSHIP

3. **Establishes and Maintains Agreements:** Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.
4. **Cultivates Trust and Safety:** Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.
5. **Maintains Presence:** Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident

16

ICF CORE COMPETENCIES

C. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

6. **Listens Actively:** Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression
7. **Evokes Awareness:** Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy

D. CULTIVATING LEARNING AND GROWTH

8. **Facilitates Client Growth:** Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

icf-core-competencies-2025.pdf

17

17

CASE DISCUSSION

Client reports they have been feeling increasingly stressed at work and is contemplating looking for a new job?

- How would you respond as a therapist?
- How would you respond as a coach?
- *What's the difference between the possible directions and purpose of your questions, and what's your reasoning behind those choices?*

18

Establishes and Maintains Agreements: Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.

What question would you like to explore today?

Regarding this topic what would you like to achieve?

What makes that important at this time?

What could we explore in our 50 minutes today to move you toward that goal?

What's the outcome from this conversation that will let us know we've moved this forward enough for you to ____?

19

19

Cultivates Trust and Safety: Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.
Maintains Presence: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident

Good Nonverbals

Kind

Head nodding

Supportive

Eye contact

Professional

Holding space

Follows client's focus

Reflective statements

Consistent

Empathy

Asks permission to "switch hats"

Summarizing

20

20

Listens Actively: Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression
Evokes Awareness: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy

"It's sounds like..." / "It's as if..." / Intentional Silence

What insights are you having?

What do you believe is the root cause of the challenge you're facing?

What assumptions are you making about this situation?

What are you learning about yourself from this?

21

21

Facilitates Client Growth: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

Now that you know where you are going, what could that look like?

What do you need to accomplish this?

What do you already have that you can leverage to move forward?

What will you be moving forward with after today?

What support do you need to take the next step?

In what ways will you hold yourself accountable?

22

22

Closing the Session

We are about to end, is there something you would like to say to close the session?

What are your overall thoughts about the work you've done today?

How do you see yourself or the situation now?

23

23



QUESTIONS?

24

24

REFERENCES

Borer, G., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2014). Executive coaching: Guidelines that work. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 28(4), 9-14.

Calais, L. F., Kitzuli, H., & Burscher, M. J. (2024). What are executive coaches actually doing and when are they doing it? A systematic review of coaching behavior. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 76(3), 238-258. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000267>

de Haan, E., Grant, A. M., Burger, Y., & Eriksson, P. O. (2016). A large-scale study of executive and workplace coaching: The relative contributions of relationship, personality match, and self-efficacy. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(3), 189-207.

de Haan, E. (2016) What Works in Coaching. *The Training Journal*. <http://www.erikdehaan.com/whatworks-in-coaching/>

Gavin, J. & McCreary, M. (2024). The 6 Whats Coaching Model: A Practical Guide to Structuring Professional Coaching Conversations. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 19(3), 124

Greif, S., Müller, H., Schull, W., Pommer, J., Müller, F. (2022). Coaching Definitions and Concepts. In: Greif, S., Müller, H., Schull, W., Pommer, J., Müller, F. (eds) *International Handbook of Evidence-Based Coaching*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81938-5_1

International Coaching Federation (ICF). ICF Core Competencies. 2025. Retrieved from <https://coachingfederation.org/resource/icf-core-competencies/>.

Junker, S., Pommer, M., & Traut-Mattusch, E. (2021). The impact of cognitive-behavioural stress management coaching on changes in cognitive appraisal and the stress response: a field experiment. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 16(2), 184-201.

Kauffman, C., & Hodgins, W. H. (2016). Model Agility: Coaching Effectiveness and four perspectives on a case study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol.68, No.2, 157-176

Whitmore, J. (2017). *Coaching for performance: The principles and practice of coaching and leadership* (5th ed.). Quercus.

25