

# ICF Core Competencies 2019-2025 Comparison Chart

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rev. 09.08.25

## Updating the ICF Core Competencies

### Summary

This document is designed as a companion to the updated 2025 ICF Core Competencies. The chart shows where updates have been made to the 2019 ICF Core Competencies.

### 2025 ICF Core Competencies Update

The primary objective in undertaking the 2025 global coaching job analysis was to understand how coaching practice has evolved since the previous job analysis in 2019. The aim was to identify any new competencies that are now essential for coaches, to determine any competencies that are no longer relevant, and revise existing competencies where necessary. Updates to the ICF Core Coaching Competency model were made through rigorous, evidence-based methods to assess how the Knowledge, Abilities, and Other Characteristics (KAOs) of coaching have changed.

The 14-month job analysis used a variety of methods, including literature reviews, focus groups, analyses of tasks and knowledge, abilities, and other characteristics (KAOs), surveys, and a review of the existing competency model. These approaches were designed to (a) identify changes in the coaching profession since the last update in 2019 and (b) determine how those changes could guide updates to ICF's competency model. This competency model is based on the data collected from nearly 3,000 coaches across the world, including both ICF Members and non-members and representing a diverse range of coaching disciplines, training backgrounds, coaching styles and experience levels.

While no new main competencies are introduced, five new sub-competencies have been added, and revisions have been made to 11 existing sub-competencies. One competency definition was updated, and a glossary of terms has been added. The glossary can be found in the appendix.

## 2019 to 2025 ICF Core Competencies Comparison Chart

| Original CCs   | Updated CCs  |
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| <b>1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice</b>  | <b>1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice</b>  |
| Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching                         | Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching                         |
| 1.01. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders | 1.01. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders |
| 1.02. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs                              | 1.02. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs                              |
| 1.03. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders                      | 1.03. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders                      |
| 1.04. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values   | 1.04. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the <b>ICF</b> Core Values                                      |
| 1.05. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws              | 1.05. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws              |
| 1.06. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions         | 1.06. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions         |
| 1.07. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate  | 1.07. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate  |
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| 2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset   | 2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset   |
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| Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered | Definition: 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. |
| 2.01. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices                            | 2.01. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices  |
| 2.02. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach                                     | 2.02. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach, including remaining aware of current coaching best practices and use of technology   |
| 2.03. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching                          | 2.03. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching  |
| 2.04. Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others       | 2.04. Remains aware of and open to the influence of biases, context and culture on self and others   |
| 2.05. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients                              | 2.05. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients  |
| 2.06. Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions                              | 2.06. Develops and maintains the ability to manage one's emotions  |
| 2.07. Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions   | 2.07. Maintains emotional, physical, and mental well-being in preparation for, throughout, and following each session.   |
| 2.08. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary   | 2.08. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary   |
| N/A  | 2.09. Nurtures openness and curiosity in oneself, the client, and the coaching process.  |
| N/A  | 2.10. Remains aware of the influence of one's thoughts and behaviors on the client and others  |
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| 3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements   | 3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements   |
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| Definition: 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. | Definition: 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. |
| 3.01. Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders  | 3.01. Describes one's coaching philosophy and clearly defines what coaching is and is not for potential clients and stakeholders  |
| 3.02. Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders  | 3.02. Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders, including commitment to working toward coaching goals                 |
| 3.03. Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others   | 3.03. Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others   |
| 3.04. Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals  | 3.04. Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals  |
| 3.05. Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility  | 3.05. Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility  |
| 3.06. Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session   | 3.06. Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session   |

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| 3.07. Partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address or resolve to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session                    | 3.07. Partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address or resolve to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session                    |
| 3.08. Partners with the client to define or reconfirm measures of success for what the client wants to accomplish in the coaching engagement or individual session          | 3.08. Partners with the client to define or reconfirm measures of success for what the client wants to accomplish in the coaching engagement or individual session          |
| 3.09. Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session  | 3.09. Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session  |
| 3.10. Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise   | 3.10. Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise   |
| 3.11. Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience   | 3.11. Partners with the client to <b>close</b> the coaching relationship in a way <b>that respects the client and the coaching experience</b>                               |
| N/A   | <b>3.12. Revisits the coaching agreement when necessary to ensure the coaching approach is meeting the client's needs</b>   |
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| <b>4. Cultivates Trust and Safety</b>   | <b>4. Cultivates Trust and Safety</b>   |
| Definition: 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. | Definition: 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. |
| 4.01. Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs                                    | 4.01. Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs                                    |
| 4.02. Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style and language and adapts one's coaching to the client   | 4.02. Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style and language and adapts one's coaching to the client   |

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| 4.03. Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process                       | 4.03. Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process                       |
| 4.04. Shows support, empathy and concern for the client  | 4.04. Shows support, empathy and concern for the client  |
| 4.05. Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions          | 4.05. Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions          |
| 4.06. Demonstrates openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client               | 4.06. Demonstrates openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client               |
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| <b>5. Maintains Presence</b>   | <b>5. Maintains Presence</b>   |
| Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident | Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident |
| 5.01. Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client  | 5.01. Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client  |
| 5.02. Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process   | 5.02. Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process   |
| N/A  | 5.03. Remains aware of what is emerging for self and client in the present moment  |
| 5.03. Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client   | 5.04. Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client   |
| 5.04. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process                             | 5.05. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process                             |
| 5.05. Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing   | 5.06. Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing   |
| 5.06. Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection   | 5.07. Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection   |
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| 6. Listens Actively   | 6. Listens Actively   |
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| Definition: 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 | Definition: 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 |
| 6.01. Considers the client's context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating                             | 6.01. Considers the client's context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating                             |
| 6.02. Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding   | 6.02. Reflects or summarizes what the client <b>is communicating</b> to ensure clarity and understanding  |
| 6.03. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating  | 6.03. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating  |
| 6.04. Notices, acknowledges and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors   | 6.04. Notices, acknowledges and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors   |
| 6.05. Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what is being communicated  | 6.05. Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what <b>the client is communicating</b>   |
| 6.06. Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns  | 6.06. Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns  |
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| 7. Evokes Awareness   | 7. Evokes Awareness   |
| Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy  | Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy  |
| 7.01. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful   | 7.01. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful   |



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| 7.02. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight  | 7.02. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight   |
| 7.03. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs                                | 7.03. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs   |
| 7.04. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking   | 7.04. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking  |
| 7.05. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment   | 7.05. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment  |
| 7.06. Notices what is working to enhance client progress  | 7.06. Notices what is working to enhance client progress   |
| 7.07. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs   | 7.07. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs  |
| 7.08. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion                   | 7.08. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion                                  |
| 7.09. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do                    | 7.09. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do                                   |
| 7.10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives   | 7.10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives  |
| 7.11. Shares observations, insights and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client   | 7.11. Shares observations, <b>knowledge</b> , and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new <b>insights</b> for the client |
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| <b>8. Facilitates Client Growth</b>   | <b>8. Facilitates Client Growth</b>  |
| Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process. | Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.                |
| 8.01. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors                        | 8.01. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors                                       |

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| 8.02. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning | 8.02. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning |
| 8.03. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability              | 8.03. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability              |
| 8.04. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps                        | 8.04. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps                        |
| 8.05. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers              | 8.05. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers              |
| 8.06. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions                                | 8.06. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions                                |
| N/A  | 8.07. Partners with the client to integrate learning and sustain progress throughout the coaching engagement               |
| 8.07. Celebrates the client's progress and successes   | 8.08. Acknowledges the client's progress and successes   |
| 8.08. Partners with the client to close the session  | 8.09. Partners with the client to close the session  |

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# COACHING.

