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SET COACHING NORMS

CREATING CLARITY

In this session, we explore how establishing clear norms and expectations strengthens trust, professionalism, and coaching effectiveness. Students will learn how to define roles, clarify boundaries, and co-create agreements that protect both the client and the coaching relationship.

We will examine how clear expectations reduce confusion, prevent conflict, and increase accountability. Through guided practice, participants will develop confidence in initiating coaching agreements at the beginning of engagements and sessions. Clarity at the start prevents complications later.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without clear norms:

- Misunderstandings occur & boundaries blur
- Accountability weakens & trust erodes

With clear norms:

- Roles are defined & safety increases
- Focus improves & coaching becomes more effective

Clarity creates psychological safety.

THE 3 AGREEMENTS

1 | Session-Level Agreements

(Specific focus for each session)

2 | Verbal-Level Agreements

(Discuss norms/expectations with client)

3 | Written-Level Agreement

(Both parties review and sign)

WHAT TO CLARIFY

- Purpose of coaching
- Roles and responsibilities
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
- Fees and logistics
- Duration and frequency
- Communication outside sessions

Nothing should be assumed.

INITIAL QUESTIONS

- What are you hoping to gain from coaching?
- What will success look like?
- How will we measure progress?
- What expectations do you have of me?
- What expectations should I have of you?
- Agreement builds partnership.

SAMPLE NORMS

- We honor confidentiality
- We speak respectfully
- We stay client-centered
- We welcome discomfort as growth
- We commit to accountability
- Norms protect the process.

ENGAGEMENT TIPS

- Use a written coaching agreement
- Review confidentiality verbally
- Clarify scope of coaching vs therapy/consulting
- Define boundaries for communication
- Confirm cancellation and scheduling policies

SESSION TIPS

- Begin each session with a focus question
- Clarify measurable outcomes
- Confirm time boundaries
- Check for alignment before proceeding
- Adjust focus if new priorities emerge

SUSTAIN CLARITY

- Revisit goals periodically
- Confirm progress regularly
- Clarify expectations during transitions
- Invite feedback about the coaching process
- Address misalignment immediately

Clear agreements prevent resentment.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Roles - Coach, Client & Sponsor
- Safe space; confidentiality; mandatory reporting
- Session structure, pre-work & follow up
- Boundaries - communication/cancellations
- Check-ins & sharing of observations
- Length of contract; session length; frequency.
- Location, platform used, & prep work

AGREEMENT SCRIPTS

In pairs, practice clarifying:

- Purpose
- Expectations & boundaries
- Confidentiality & safe space
- Session structure

Debrief:

- Did the language feel collaborative?
- Was clarity achieved without rigidity?

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- **Did I clarify expectations clearly?**
- **Did I assume anything?**
- **Did the client understand their role?**
- **Was the session focus clearly defined?**
- **Did clarity improve the conversation?**

WRAP UP

Setting coaching norms and expectations is not administrative — it is foundational. Clear agreements create safety, professionalism, and shared responsibility. When roles, boundaries, and outcomes are defined early, coaching conversations can move deeper and faster. Misalignment often stems from unspoken assumptions.

Strong coaching begins with courageous clarity.

- “Unspoken expectations create unnecessary tension.”
- As you continue developing this competency, ask yourself:
- Have I created enough clarity for growth to flourish — or am I leaving space for confusion?