

Code of Ethics

1. Definition of Professional Mental Health Coaching

A Professional Mental Health Coach is a trained, non-licensed support professional who helps individuals navigate challenges such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and addiction within a clearly defined, ethical scope of practice. These coaches provide biblically grounded, clinically informed support and often work in collaboration with licensed counselors. They are especially valuable during transitional phases of care, such as when individuals are stepping down from therapy, no longer meet clinical criteria for a diagnosis, or when insurance coverage limits ongoing treatment.

Professional Mental Health Coaching is a structured, client-centered process that supports individuals in achieving greater mental well-being and personal growth. It is not a substitute for therapy or clinical treatment. Instead, it complements those services by offering continuity of care and equipping clients with practical, faith-integrated tools for daily living. Professional Mental Health Coaches are fee-based providers who empower clients to build resilience, regulate emotions, and apply evidence-based coping strategies. Using a holistic approach, they address emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions to support long-term wellness.

2. Integrity in Coaching

Integrity is foundational to the professional mental health coaching relationship. Coaches must uphold the highest ethical standards, ensuring that their practice is transparent, trustworthy, and aligned with professional guidelines. Maintaining integrity means being honest about qualifications, clearly distinguishing coaching from other professional services, and prioritizing the well-being of clients. Coaches must operate within their scope of practice, refer clients to licensed mental health or medical professionals when necessary, and maintain clear financial policies. Establishing strong ethical boundaries protects both the coach and the client, fostering a safe and effective coaching relationship.

- Coaches will **accurately represent** their professional qualifications, certifications, and experience to clients, organizations, and the public.
- Coaches will clearly **differentiate** between coaching, therapy, consulting, pastoral care, and other professional support services.

- Coaches will refer clients to mental health or medical professionals when issues exceed their scope of practice, ensuring clients receive appropriate care.
- Coaches should maintain an active supervisory relationship with a licensed mental health professional in good standing to ensure accountability and alignment with best practices.
- Coaches will maintain transparency about their credentials, competencies, and the nature and limitations of the coaching relationship.
- Coaches will set fair, reasonable, and customary fees, clearly communicating financial policies, including the inability to accept insurance.
- Coaches will abide by all applicable ethical and legal guidelines regarding client welfare, confidentiality, and professional boundaries.
- Coaches will avoid conflicts of interest and maintain appropriate professional boundaries, including refraining from romantic or intimate relationships with clients during the professional coaching relationship and for a minimum of five years after it has formally ended.

3. Non-Discrimination in Coaching

Professional Mental Health Coaches shall not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. All individuals must be treated with respect and dignity, fostering an inclusive coaching environment.

4. Referrals in Coaching

- Coaches will collaborate with mental health and medical professionals and other service providers when appropriate for the client's well-being.
- Coaches will recognize when a client's needs exceed their expertise and refer them to an appropriate licensed professional.
- Coaches will build and maintain a network of trusted clinical and community resources to ensure timely and appropriate referrals.

5. Confidentiality in Coaching

- Coaches will protect the confidentiality of all client information unless required by law to disclose it.
- Coaches will only discuss confidential information in private, professional settings with individuals directly involved in the client's care.

- Coaches will obtain written consent before sharing any client information, except in situations where disclosure is legally mandated.
- Coaches will take reasonable steps to protect client confidentiality in all formats, including the use of secure technology for communication and record keeping.

6. Safety and Well-Being in Coaching

- Coaches must recognize and refer clients experiencing crises, suicidal ideation, or severe emotional distress to appropriate mental health professionals.
- Coaches are not trained to diagnose mental health conditions and must not attempt to do so. Instead, they will operate within the ethical and legal limits of their role.
- Coaches will take immediate action if a client expresses intent to harm themselves or others, including notifying emergency services or appropriate authorities when necessary.

7. Ongoing Learning as a Coach

- Coaches will commit to lifelong learning and professional development, staying informed about advancements in mental health coaching, best practices, and ethical standards.
- Coaches will seek supervision, mentorship, or peer support as needed to enhance their skills and ensure ethical practice.

The **Professional Mental Health Coaching Code of Ethics** establishes a standard of practice that prioritizes client well-being, professional integrity, and ethical responsibility. By adhering to these principles, mental health coaches can create a safe, effective, and impactful coaching environment.