



Definition of Coaching

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.

Distinctions

The ICF offers these distinctions between coaching and other support services:

Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction, and conflict within an individual or in relationship. The focus is on resolving difficulties arising from the past and improving psychological functioning in order to deal with the present in more emotionally healthy ways.	Coaching is future focused. While positive feelings/emotions may be a natural outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphases in a coaching relationship are on action, accountability, and follow through.
Consulting is sought by individuals or organizations seeking expert solutions. Consultants diagnose problems, prescribe, and sometimes implement solutions.	Coaching assumes that individuals or teams are capable of generating their own solutions, with the coach supplying supportive, discovery-based approaches and frameworks.
Mentoring is provided by an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling, and coaching.	Coaching does not include advising or counseling and focuses on individuals or groups setting and reaching their own objectives.
Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum.	Coaching is less linear without a set curriculum. Though objectives are clarified in the coaching process, they are set by the individual or team being coached.

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