

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

FAMILY LIFE COACHING STANDARD AREAS

Family Life Coaching is a combination of knowledge of Family Science and Coaching Techniques. Certified Family Life Coaches must show proficiency in both areas.

Family Science Standard Areas

Certified Family Life Coaches must be competent in the following areas.

FOUNDATIONAL

1. FAMILY THEORIES

Family Life Coaches understand various family theories that explain how family members affect and are affected by each other, larger social systems, and social policies. The following are examples of suggested theoretical content one should be familiar with: Family Systems, Life Course, Stress and Resilience, Bioecological Conflict, Feminist, Exchange, Symbolic Interactionism, and Structural Functionalism Theories.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Recognize and utilize family theories in case studies*
- *Describe the nature and components of various family theories*
- *Explain the relationship between various family theories and family life coaching application*
- *Explain how family members affect and are affected by each other, larger social systems, and social policies*
- *Identify characteristics of family systems that nurture family members and promote their resilience (strengths), as well as factors and experiences that discourage social and emotional development of family members and create stress and crisis in the family*
- *Identify the strengths and/or deficiencies of each theory's ability to explain family dynamics*

2. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Family Life Coaches understand the developmental changes (both typical and atypical) in the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains of individuals throughout the lifespan. They are familiar with physical developmental theories (prenatal through late adulthood), personality developmental theories, cognitive developmental theories, psychosocial developmental theories, moral developmental theories, and ethnic identity developmental theories).

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Demonstrate an understanding of major physical, personality, cognitive, ethnic identity, social, emotional, and moral development across the lifespan*
- *Articulate the main ideas in the major developmental theories and research in human development*
- *Acknowledge the interacting contribution of heredity and environment on human development*
- *Recognize the major similarities and differences in the developmental patterns among various cultural and ethnic group*
- *Apply the knowledge of human development to real life situations*

3. FAMILY DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE PROCESS

Family Life Coaches have an understanding of the transitions in relations throughout the family life cycle and family developmental theories. They are familiar with family developmental theories, parenting developmental theories, and family transitions.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Identify critical issues in the family life cycle; recognition that transitions alter roles, routines, and assumptions about family life*
- *Describe the definition of love, contemporary ideas about love, how we experience love, and factors important for relationships that last*
- *Explain how family members affect and are affected by each other, larger social systems, and social policies*
- *Compare and contrast the unique familial and resource needs and strengths associated with being single again, repartnering after divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies/blended families*
- *Relate family planning strategies and varying paths to parenthood*
- *Describe socio ecological factors that affect parenting*

DYNAMICS

1. INTERNAL FAMILY DYNAMICS

Family Life Coaches have an understanding of communication and relationship theories and how they influence the internal dynamics of the family. Coaches will have an understanding of how intimacy is formed in families through rituals, family time, and core and balance activities.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Identify healthy and unhealthy characteristics of family relationships and family development*
- *Analyze family functioning using various theoretical perspectives, including family systems*
- *Evaluate family dynamics in response to normative and nonnormative stressors and crisis*
- *Interpret how special needs in families impact family dynamics*
- *Differentiate strategies that help families function effectively*
- *Recognize the impact of personality and communication styles*
- *Recognize the developmental stages of relationships*
- *Explain relationship enhancement and enrichment strategies*

2. SOCIAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT ON FAMILIES (environment, race/nationality, gender, gender identity, ability, sexuality, policy)

Family Life Coaches have a theoretical understanding of how societal context and social systems influence personal development, family dynamics, and relationships in the area of family values, conflict management, problem solving, lifestyle choices, goal setting and decision-making. They consider differences in both family and societal cultures and develop an attitude of “different” rather than “good” or “bad.”

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Identify the characteristics, diversity, and impact of local, national, and global social systems on individuals and families*
- *Identify factors (such as media, marketing, technology, economics, social movements, war, natural disasters, environment, sustainability, etc.) influencing individuals and families from both contemporary and historical perspectives.*
- *Identify factors that influence the relationship between work, personal, and family life*
- *Identify social and cultural influences and biases affecting dating, courtship, partner/marital choice and relationships, family composition and family life; including those choosing an asexual or single life*
- *Recognize the reciprocal interaction among individuals, families, and various social systems*

3. FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Family Life Coaches have an understanding of how individuals and families make decisions about collecting and managing resources. They understand how a worldview and family values impact the decision-making process.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Recognize the multiplicity of resources families need, acquire, and manage (personal, familial, professional, community and environmental)*
- *Recognize and facilitate the reciprocal relationship between individual/family/community choices and resources and evaluation of options and resources*
- *Identify effective decision-making processes (assessment of individual and family needs, identification and evaluation of options and resources, implementation of decision, evaluation of outcomes)*
- *Understand the impact of values and goals in the decision-making process*
- *Explain organizational and time management strategies*
- *Compare basic financial management tools and principles*
- *Recognize the role of time management as a resource*
- *Describe effective strategies that help families identify and manage available resources*

PROFESSIONAL (in conjunction with the FLCA Code of Ethics)

1. ETHICS IN FAMILY SCIENCE

Family Life Coaches maintain excellent ethical standards to deliver a high-quality service to clients in a safe environment. High standards are maintained in all work with clients (see Code of Ethics for more details).

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Identify areas of integrity*
- *Demonstrate competence*
- *Adhere to legal standards*
- *Provide fairness and respect to the client*

2. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

Family Life Coaches engage in their work in a professional manner. Coaches maintain professionalism by ensuring their practice is research-informed, following ethical guidelines (see Code of Ethics), collecting data for continued improvement, and continuing their education.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Interpret research in Family Science and Coaching fields*
- *Examine data for continued improvement in their work*
- *Identify continuing education through coursework, trainings, and conferences needed to maintain a high degree of competence*

Coaching Techniques Standard Areas

Certified Family Life Coaches must be competent in the following areas.

FOUNDATIONAL

1. COACHING MODELS & THEORIES

Family Life Coaches understand coaching and coaching psychology models and theories including the humanistic approach, growth oriented/strengths-based model and positive psychology. They have an understanding of behavior change theory and adult learning theory. Candidates understand and can appropriately apply the theory base of coaching with family science simultaneously in a practice context. Coaches will be particularly aware of similarities and differences between the roles of therapy and coaching.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Apply foundational theories such as humanistic approach, and Adlerian theory*
- *Utilize appreciative inquiry and positive psychology*
- *Employ a growth oriented/strengths-based approach*
- *Utilize behavior change theory and adult learning theory.*

2. COMPLY WITH COACHING ETHICS AND STANDARDS ACCORDING TO FLCA

Family Life Coaches must comply with legal standards and FLCA organizational policy requirements. They understand the difference between personal and professional values and maintain a reputable professional standard.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Uphold professional relationships with a client's family members, colleagues, and community*
- *Show respect for diversity and support healthy relationships within family units*
- *Maintain strengths-based relationships with clients*
- *Share with the client research-based information (with permission from the client) and encourage clients to make informed decisions*
- *Respect the coaching partnership built with all families*
- *Recognize families choose their own course of action*

For more details refer to the FLCA Code of Ethics.

3. TRAINING AND SKILL IN FAMILY LIFE COACHING

Family Life Coaches attain certification from an approved FLCA provider or program, or have completed a portfolio review or exam process. Candidates have completed 10 hours of mentored/supervised coaching hours in family life coaching prior to certification and additional hours of supervised coaching appropriate for higher certification levels.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Demonstrate an ability to combine foundation knowledge in the Family Sciences with coaching strategies*
- *Comply with ethical guidelines*
- *Utilize coaching theories and techniques.*

4. UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY LIFE COACHING AND OTHER FAMILY SCIENCES

Family Life Coaches understand a coach's scope of practice and the differences and similarities that exist between counseling or psychotherapy and coaching, or the differences between family life education and family life coaching. Specifically, a family life coach has the ability to apply theories and models that may lend themselves to either therapy or coaching, but does so in a coaching framework. A family life coach knows when to refer clients to the appropriate helping profession if issues presented are out of the coach's domain or ability of practice.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Understand coaching is not psychotherapy and is not meant to be a substitute*
- *Apply various research-based models and theories in a coaching framework*
- *Explain the differences between coaching and counseling or therapy to clients*
- *Refer clients to additional or alternative helping professions as needed or requested*

5. UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF COACHING AND HOW IT BENEFITS FAMILIES

Family Life Coaches empower families to develop skills and tools through powerful questioning, observation, and support that encourage forward growth and movement. Coaches serve to support the family in reaching client identified goals for improving function and family life. The process is client-centered and strengths-based. Clients choose their goals and action steps and are accountable for their own level of success. Clients are the content authorities on their own lives while coaches provide the means or process insight and support for reaching the client's identified goals.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Describe the benefits of family life coaching to individuals and families*
- *Support clients with accountability for client-determined goal setting and movement toward said goals*
- *Develop an equal partnership where the client is the content expert and the coach is the process expert*

COACHING RELATIONSHIP

1. COMMUNICATE THE PURPOSE OF FAMILY LIFE COACHING EFFECTIVELY TO CLIENT

Family Life Coaches accurately portray the unique nature of the coach-client relationship. Relationships are collaborative and client-directed. Relationships are an equal partnership rather than that of an “expert” and “client.”

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Explain how collaboration serves the needs of the clients*
- *Identify the unique roles of both the coach and the client*

2. ESTABLISH COACHING AGREEMENT

Family Life Coaches know how to effectively establish the parameters of the relationship. This process should establish roles, coaching techniques, fees, the meeting schedule, and possible inclusion of other individuals. Coaches should revisit these parameters with their clients periodically to make sure there is still a clear understanding. Parameters may be revisited to make changes as necessary.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Articulate boundaries of the coach-client relationship*
- *Clearly define and express the logistics of the interaction*
- *Recognize when parameters need to be adjusted to meet the needs of the client*

3. ARTICULATE COACH AND CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Family Life Coaches have a clear understanding of their role in the relationship. This includes using questioning, listening, and support to help empower families. They are also responsible for holding clients accountable for their choices and actions. Clients are responsible for directing the focus of the relationship, following through with decisions, and evaluating the success of actions.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Recognize their role in coaching*
- *Explain the clients' role*
- *Guide the client through the process*
- *Readjust when roles need clarification*

4. MAINTAIN A PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY SAFE COACHING ENVIRONMENT

Family Life Coaches ensure their location (physical or virtual) for their coaching sessions ensures adequate safety and confidentiality for clients. Emotionally safe environments are of equal importance. Coercion, manipulation, accusatory, or demeaning behavior have no place in the coaching environment.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Identify an appropriate setting to facilitate the coaching relationship*
- *Construct an emotionally supportive environment for coaching*
- *Maintain professional standards*

5. REFER CLIENTS TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS AS NEEDED OR REQUESTED

Family Life Coaches step out of the coaching role only with permission from the client. With this permission they can offer education or referrals to other professionals. When referrals are offered, coaches provide multiple options with no endorsement of one particular avenue. Coaches should have an understanding of services and resources offered by related fields that may assist in empowering families. This may include mental and physical health services, legal services, community services, or other similar areas. Family Life Coaches should also be aware not every client-coach relationship is a good fit, necessitating an effort to help find a different coach for the client.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Recognize when issues are beyond the coaching realm*
- *Differentiate their coaching role from other roles they may be able to take*
- *Prepare for situations when clients need services other than those they are qualified to provide*
- *Provide information for clients on other available resources*
- *Provide information for clients on other coaches available*

COACHING PROCESS (in conjunction with the FLCA Code of Ethics)**1. MAINTAIN CLIENT-DRIVEN COACHING SESSIONS**

Family Life Coaches maintain a client-driven agenda. Clients are in charge of the overall goal of their coaching process, the agenda of the daily sessions, and the final decision on goals and action plans between sessions. Coaches respect a client's decisions in this regard, continuing to offer support.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Guide clients in identifying their goals*
- *Support clients' perspectives about their lives and goals*

2. ESTABLISH TRUST AND RAPPORT

Family Life Coaches establish appropriate levels of connection and trust with clients by gathering information both before the first session (intake documents) and during the actual session (asking appropriate questions). Coaches build and maintain trust by following through on obligations, abiding by documented coaching agreements, and maintaining high ethical and professional standards

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Prepare appropriately for each meeting with a client*
- *Establish a caring relationship*
- *Maintain professional and ethical behavior*

3. DISPLAY EMPATHY, INTERACT POSITIVELY, AND WITHHOLD JUDGEMENT

Family Life Coaches employ the skills of empathic, active listening as they respectfully work with an understanding of the value-system of the client. They withhold judgement while using questions to help clients take into account information that may be crucial to the client in making decisions.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Understand and appreciate uniqueness in clients without judgement*
- *Maintain compassion and empathy in interactions with clients*
- *Recognize ways their own biases may impact the coaching relationship*

4. ASK POWERFUL QUESTIONS TO CREATE AWARENESS FOR CLIENTS

Family Life Coaches ask questions not only to understand the world of the client, but to help the client discover for themselves the answers to their questions. Powerful questions help a client walk through the processes of goal-setting, action-planning, execution of plans, follow-up, and accountability.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Recognize patterns and issues*
- *Create interactions that help clients discover their own truths*
- *Guide clients through creating their own plan of action*
- *Examine outcomes with clients to maintain clients' accountability*

5. ENGAGE CLIENT IN SETTING GOALS AND CREATING PLANS TO MOVE THE CLIENT FORWARD

Family Life Coaches empower, motivate, and work with clients to help them progress toward client-identified goals by clarifying and specifying goals and identifying potential problems.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Assist clients in defining goals that are meaningful to them*
- *Support the examination of clients' goals to help them clarify their ideas*
- *Recognize possible obstacles and help clients prepare for them*

6. HELP CLIENT IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE OBSTACLES

Family Life Coaches lead clients into self-discovery of circumstances that are stalling their self-identified goals. They then help clients think through possible actions that will solve identified issues.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Discuss recurring obstacles with clients, focusing on strengths, in a way that leads to self discovery*
- *Facilitate possible plans of correction*
- *Support the examination of client outcomes celebrating any successes*

7. AID CLIENT IN MOVING FORWARD

Family Life Coaches assist clients in understanding how the goals they set build upon each other to help reach short term goals as well as long term goals.

Family Life Coaches should be able to:

- *Differentiate between long and short term goals that clients set*
- *Discuss with clients how their goals fit within a bigger picture of life satisfaction*
- *Prepare clients for a continual process of planning and action, focusing on their strengths and abilities to be successful*

FAMILY LIFE COACHING CODE OF ETHICS

Family Life Coaching is a process where a client and a trained coach work together to achieve client-identified family goals. The process is collaborative and client-directed, working from a strengths-based perspective.

Family Life Coaches utilize research-based coaching strategies and techniques to encourage and support the competence and achievement of client-identified goals. They build respectful, trusting relationships with parents, children, caregivers, and/or families in order to facilitate positive growth in family life, enabling families to maximize their strengths and potential.

Family Life Coaching Association Core values

- Respect
- Professionalism
- Support
- Diversity
- Universal Access
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Evolving Practices

Key Principles

- Do no harm to the client
- Respect and right to privacy
- Report abuse/neglect
- Report actual or potential harm to client or others
- Maintain rapport and trust
- Facilitate resolution
- Refer clients who cannot be worked with in an ethically and unbiased manner
- Provide research based best practices

A. Family Life Coaches are committed to:

A.1 Maintaining Confidentiality

Coaches protect knowledge of the experiences and identities of their clients, except in situations where the client has harmed or is at risk for harming themselves or others. Coaches treat the knowledge they have of the client respectfully. Aside from suspected abuse, mandated reporting or legally required circumstances, coaches only share information with the permission of the client. Clients should be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality at the beginning of the relationship.

A.2 Reporting any harmful or potentially harmful behavior

Coaches are mandated reporters. They must report, or ensure the client self-reports, any behavior or potential behavior that poses a risk to themselves or another. Coaches need to inform clients of this responsibility at the beginning of the relationship.

A.3 Creating clear agreements with clients that define all relationship and service parameters

Coaches are transparent with clients about the scope of the coaching relationship. Coaches and clients create a clear understanding about the logistics, financial arrangements, and locations of services. Coaching agreements may only be entered into with individuals that are of legal age and have the ability to enter into agreements for services. Agreements with minors or adults with special needs should have the knowledge of a responsible caregiver and cooperation of the client.

A. 4 Providing client-oriented services

Coaches focus on the client's goals and interests. Coaches facilitate, not direct, change.

A. 5 Offering unbiased work

Coaches check their biases and work to treat all their clients without preconceived notions of characteristics, behavior, or abilities

A.6 Empowering clients

Coaches support clients in making their own changes on issues they prioritize and do so using strengths-based coaching approaches.

A. 7 Following the client's lead

Coaching is client directed, focused on client goals. A coach's role is to help a client explore, not to offer direction or solution, unless additional information is requested by the client.

A.8 Expressing openness and honesty about the service and limits of the service

Coaches accurately explain the scope of coaching services to clients at the beginning of the relationship and additionally as needed to allow clients to choose the most appropriate helping services.

A.9 Using research-based knowledge and practices

Coaches utilize current knowledge of theories, proven findings, and techniques.

A.10 Building skills

Coaches use a client's strengths to improve their relationships, hone abilities, and address their goals.

A.11 Maintaining safe boundaries

Coaches balance authentic, warm relationships with maintaining professional distance from ownership of client's experiences.

A.12 Setting aside personal beliefs

Coaches separate their personal experiences and preferences to demonstrate respect for their client's right to choose their own actions and beliefs.

A.13 Asking permission if stepping out of coach role

Coaches with credentials in other helping fields may come out of their coaching role with clients to provide education or intervention only with the expressed permission of the client. This maintains a client-controlled relationship and keeps the parameters of coaching clear.

A.14 Using unconditional positive regard

Coaches operate from the perspective that clients are doing the best they feel they can do in their present situation. Coaches validate the client's worth and work from a strengths-based perspective to empower clients to make self-identified changes.

A.15 Utilizing appropriate assessment and data collection to ensure effective strategies

Coaches monitor the progress of clients to ensure techniques are appropriate and the coaching relationship is helpful and meaningful to the client. Progress may be monitored using session notes, exercises or instruments appropriate to the client.

A.16 Respecting the client, even in third-party payer situations

Coaches recognize their client is the person who they are in a relationship with, regardless of who is paying for the fees. Coaches are clear with both the client and the payer about the boundaries of the arrangement. There are clear understandings with all parties about responsibilities of each, the nature and conditions about sharable information, and the nature of the coaching relationship. This applies whether the payer is a parent, an employer, or another party.

A.17 Referring as needed

Coaches recognize the limits of their work with clients. When clients exhibit or express needs beyond the scope of coaching, coaches are familiar with appropriate options of other professionals and are able to offer referral suggestions to clients.

A.18 Honoring a client's right to terminate relationship

Coaches maintain an open and voluntary relationship with the client. Coaches recognize the client's benefit is primary, and honor a request to end the relationship, not taking it personally.

A.19 Respecting their own right, as a coach, to terminate relationship

Through the open and voluntary relationship, a coach recognizes when the coach-client relationship has reached an end or if it may not be a good fit. Before terminating the coach-client relationship, the coach will discuss the situation with the client and help to find a suitable replacement coach when appropriate.

B. As a professional, Family Life Coaches are committed to:

B.1 Sustaining strong foundational knowledge in Family Science and Coaching Methodology.
Coaches have formal training both in Family Science and in Coaching Methodology.

B.2 Continuing familiarity and compliance with laws and regulations that guide work with individuals and families.
Coaches are current in knowledge of the laws that govern the locations where they practice. They comply with all legal aspects of interactions with clients.

B.3 Maintaining professional and confidential storage of records related to clients.
Coaches collect only necessary, required personal information from the client and maintain organized records of their work in a protected, confidential area.

B.4 Avoiding any disruptive or harmful situations that may lead to misinterpretation caused by multiple roles/relationships with clients.
Coaches are clear in the parameters of their role with clients. Coaches avoid serving too many roles with clients, such as coaching their child's teacher, that may not serve the client's best interest. Where possible, the coach should avoid additional roles with the client outside of the coaching relationship.

B.5 Maintaining confidentiality within the client's community.
Coaches protect not only the client's personal information but also the existence of the coaching relationship unless they have the client's expressed consent. For example, the coach will not divulge the coach-client relationship to a client's friend or neighbor unless the coach has permission.

B.6 Avoiding any sexual or romantic relationships with clients or former clients.
Coaches refrain from a sexual or romantic relationship with any client who is in a formal coaching relationship or has been in the past two years. Coaches also refrain from any sexual or romantic relationship with anyone closely connected with the client for the same period of time.

B.7 Avoiding any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in work with clients or organizations.
Coaches prioritize client interests above their own within the coach-client relationship. Coaches recuse themselves from relationships where their actions may appear to benefit themselves at the cost of the client.

B.8 Ensuring honesty in marketing.
Coaches represent their background and services accurately in all communications and materials designed to recruit clients.