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# ICF Exam Types

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## ***Knowledge-Based(KB):***

Which of the following actions is considered a violation of the ICF Code of Ethics?

- A. Maintaining confidentiality of client information
- B. *Engaging in a romantic relationship with a client*
- C. Continuing professional development
- D. Setting clear agreements with clients

*Correct Response: B.*

**Tests for knowledge and recall**

## ***Situational Judgment(SJT):***

A client has shared a clear agenda for your session, in advance. You notice that one item in particular, has a timeline. Upon arrival, the client is excited and starts talking about a recent award that they received. The client continues to discuss this and seems to want to talk more about it. **What is the BEST action? What is the WORST action?**

- A. Ask the client if their agenda is still important.
- B. Immediately redirect the conversation to the agenda, starting with the item that has a timeline.
- C. After supporting the client to express their feelings on the award, support the client in being clear on what they want to focus on in the time that is left.
- D. Celebrate with the client and talk a lot about their success to support them in feeling good about their achievement.

*Correct Response: Best = B. Worst = C.*

**Tests for judgement and situational application**

# Situational Judgement Test (SJT)

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- Situational Judgment Tests are used by employers to investigate their applicant's competencies in areas required by the job.
- They allow the employer to assess which applicants have the best capabilities for their role.
- When taking an SJT it is always important to identify the competencies that the organization is testing for.
- A psychometric tool that assesses decision making and judgement.  
(not knowledge)



# Situational Judgement Test (SJT)

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- Situations are written to reveal how **your judgment and character is informed** by the ICF Competencies, Ethics and Coaching Definition.
- Consistency of judgment across the questions is important.
- The ICF exam tests for the Best and Worst action for a **COACH** to take.

<b>Problem solvers, teachers, advisors, consultants look at the problem the client is having and helps them get a solution to the problem.</b>	<b>Coaches focus on the individual so the individual can figure out how they can arrive at a solution for this and other situations like it.</b>
A problem solver digs into the situation, diagnoses and sets a course of action.	A coach looks for ways to grow the individual so they can be the best they can be in the situation. They factor in client comfort, beliefs, capabilities and more.
A solution is found for this situation.	A solution is found for this situation and all future situations like it.



# Video Excerpt: Demystifying the ICF Exam.

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## March Discovery Series: Demystifying the ICF Credentialing Exam

Recorded on March 15, 2023  
Associated with [ICF Coaching Education](#)

Join staff from ICF Coaching Education, ICF Credentials & Standards, and our exam development partner, HumRRRO, to learn more about the new ICF Exam.

Topics covered will include the development and implementation of the new ICF exam, preliminary exam data and statistics, exam processes with PearsonVUE, and plans for additional language aids and support.

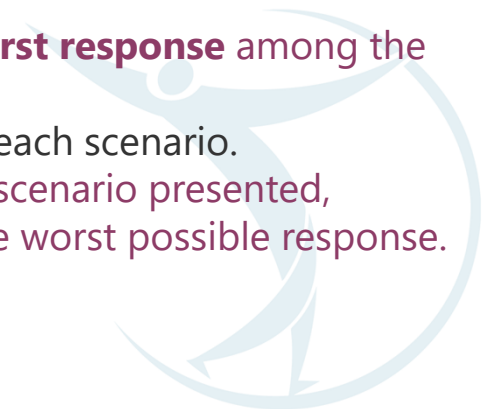
See a link to the full hour-long presentation in the fieldwork section of Porto



# ICF Credentialing Exam

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- Three-hour exam
- Delivered at a testing center or via Pearson's OnVUE remote proctored testing service.
- The total exam time is organized into the following sections:
  - I. Exam Instructions: 4 minutes
  - II. Section 1 (39 items): 83 minutes
  - III. Scheduled Break: 10 minutes
  - IV. Section 2 (39 items): 83 minutes
- Contains **78 situational judgment items**.
- Each exam item contains a realistic scenario describing a coaching situation, followed by four response options.
- For each scenario, candidates are asked to select the **best response** and the **worst response** among the options provided for that scenario.
- There is **only one correct best response and one correct worst response** for each scenario.
- Although more than one response may represent a reasonable response to the scenario presented, candidates will receive credit only for selecting the best possible response or the worst possible response.
- Pass is 460 points out of 600 (76%)



# Learning vs. Live CE Exam Questions

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For learning simplicity, our scenario descriptions are succinct and void of context.  
The real exam(s) are just the opposite.

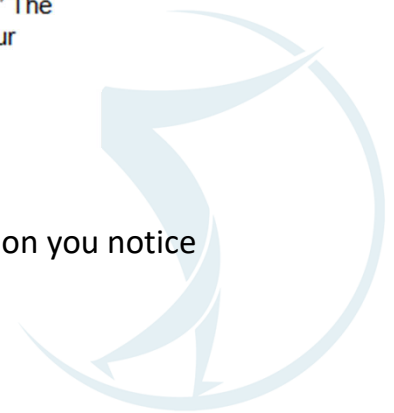
## How the ICF Credentialing EXAM looks

A coach has worked for one year with a client. The client has been identified by their supervisor as a potential leader in the organization based on their high-quality work, good relations with peers, and innovative ideas for future projects. However, the client rarely speaks up in meetings with senior leaders and when they do, they often downplay or diminish their ideas. The client's supervisor recommended coaching to improve the client's executive presence, with the ultimate goal of developing as a leader in the organization. At the start of coaching, the client was often self-critical. However, the client has made tremendous progress in recent months. During their closing session, the coach notices that the client has a confident, easy smile. When the coach shares their observation with the client, the client responds by saying, "I feel different, empowered, ready to take on new challenges." The client adds, "And I was just nominated by the CEO to be part of a leadership development program for emerging leaders in our company!"

What should the coach do?

## How we will present it in class.

In recent sessions, your client is often self-critical about their leadership presence. During the last session you notice how confident the client is now. What should you do?



# Format of an Exam Question

Tutorial - First Name Last Name

## Sample Item 1

A coach is meeting with a prospective client who is growing a new business. The coach and potential client quickly establish an easy connection. The coach is excited about the opportunity to work with the client. As the coach and client are ending their conversation, the prospective client briefly mentions the name of their new business. The coach recognizes the business, as the coach is an investor in a more established competitor business in the same community.

What should the coach do?



Drag and drop one action to the BEST box and another action to the WORST box.

A. Not say anything. Try to keep their role as an investor in a competing business separate from their role as a coach.

B. Share that the business name sounds familiar and make a mental note to determine whether it is a competitor business later that evening.

C. Share their role as investor in the competitor business only if the potential client follows up to pursue coaching with the coach.

D. Share their role as an investor in a competing business and acknowledge the possibility of a conflict of interest with the client.

BEST Action

BEST

WORST Action

WORST







# Sample Item

**A client has shared a clear agenda for your session, in advance. You notice that one item in particular, has a timeline. Upon arrival, the client is excited and starts talking about a recent award that they received. The client continues to discuss this and seems to want to talk more about it.**

**What is the BEST action? What is the WORST action?**

A. Ask the client if their agenda is still important.

B. Immediately redirect the conversation to the agenda, starting with the item that has a timeline.

C. After supporting the client to express their feelings on the award, support the client in being clear on what they want to focus on in the time that is left.

D. Celebrate with the client and talk a lot about their success to support them in feeling good about their achievement.

## 2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

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**Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered**

1. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices
2. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach
3. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching
4. Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others
5. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients
6. Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions
7. Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions
8. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary



## 2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset – Key Words

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**After a few challenging sessions, you find yourself frustrated and impatient with a client's lack of progress.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**C2**

- A. Acknowledge your frustration privately, reflect, and practice self-regulation to manage your emotions.
- B. Directly express your frustration to the client to motivate them to act faster.
- C. Take a short break during the session to regain your composure.
- D. Share with the client that you're considering changing your approach due to their lack of progress.



**Your client expresses a need to explore a topic you find personally uncomfortable or challenging.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**C2**

- A. Suggest the client might benefit from a different coach for this topic.
- B. Share that you feel uncomfortable and ask the client to choose a new topic.
- C. Set aside personal biases and create a safe space for the client to explore the topic.
- D. Gently steer the conversation away from the uncomfortable topic.



**You receive feedback that your coaching style seems directive at times.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**C2**

- A. Defend your coaching approach to your supervisor or mentor coach.
- B. Take the feedback seriously, reflect, and make adjustments to ensure a client-centered approach.
- C. Apologize to the client immediately, regardless of whether the feedback is accurate.
- D. Ignore the feedback, as you know what is best for the client.





# Sample Item

**What would you do if you found yourself with a potential or actual conflict of interest with your client or their situation?**

A. Discuss with the client to determine if there is a conflict of interest and if it is, stop the relationship or conversely refuse the conflicting offer.

B. If the client doesn't have a problem with it, go ahead with whatever it is.

C. Keep the relationship going and just observe for moments where your judgment is influenced.

D. Educate the coachee on the possible conflict and partner with them to go forward regardless of the potential ethical issue.

# Hint: WORST CASE SCENARIO KEY WORDS

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- **Words** – tell, suggest, consult, advise, cancel, praise, summarize, interrupt, disagree, unimportant, wrong, assume, remind, cancel, unavailable, declare, choose
- **People** – include a 3<sup>rd</sup> party e.g boss, manager, partner
- **Behaviours** – judgement/ bias/ assumptions/ diminishing
- **Not coaching** – advising, consulting, facilitating
- **Leading** the conversation
- **Sharing** personal experience





**During a session, your client suddenly brings up a completely new and urgent issue.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**C5**

- A. Tell the client to briefly summarize the new issue and move on.
- B. Stick to the original plan and suggest addressing the new issue in the next session.
- C. Advise the client to manage the new issue on their own outside of sessions.
- D. Stay fully engaged and explore the new issue with curiosity and openness.



**C7**

**A client keeps mentioning past failures and expresses fear of making the same mistakes.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

- A. Suggest that the client find a new job immediately to solve the problem.
- B. Encourage the client to list the pros and cons of their current career.
- C. Provide examples of common reasons why people feel stuck in their careers.
- D. Ask open-ended questions to help the client explore their feelings and thoughts more deeply.



**Your client has developed a strategy for achieving their goal, but they are unsure of the first step to take.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**C8**

- A. Encourage the client to identify a small, actionable step they feel comfortable taking first.
- B. Suggest the client focus on the most challenging step to build confidence.
- C. Create a step-by-step action plan for the client based on their strategy.
- D. Offer to research and provide the best first step for them.



**Your client emails you indicating that she feels like she is drowning and about to have a nervous breakdown because of her family life. She realizes that coaching is not therapy but pleads with you to have a conversation with her.**

**What is your BEST response? What is your WORST response?**

- A. Agree to have the conversation if the client will agree to contact her therapist for support.
- B. Remind her gently of the boundaries of coaching and ask that she call her therapist (that you have previously discussed) to support her now.
- C. Have the conversation with her and determine what kind of support will be best for her under the circumstances.
- D. Let her know you are not available, as the support she needs is not in the realm of coaching.

**C5**

**Maintains  
Presence**



**You have been hired by Mary to support her in finishing up Law School. She has consistently indicated her interest in finishing up, yet you notice that she has low energy and enthusiasm while talking about it. In all your recent sessions, she keeps wanting to talk about an interior design project that she is doing for a friend's home makeover. She clearly seems passionate about it.**

**What is your BEST response? What is your WORST response?**

**C6**  
Listens  
Actively

- A. Tell her that you think she has the wrong goal and should go into design.
- B. Notice her passionate energy around the design work and the opposite energy about law school. Ask what this might be about.
- C. Remind her of her goal and tell her that the sessions must get back on track.
- D. Set a goal for her to talk about this after finishing her schooling.



**A client desires to work with you on three different things in your session. When asked for which one is the most important, the client responds saying, “I should talk about getting my husband to clear his clutter in the garage as I am constantly irritated by it. We can talk about the other, more selfish things at another time.”**

**What is your BEST response? What is your WORST response?**

**C7**

**Evokes  
Awareness**

- A. Let the client know that changing her husband’s behavior is not appropriate for their coaching session and that you can only coach her on things she can change with and about herself.
- B. Share your perspective that selfish can sometimes be a good thing and that perhaps focusing on her self-care may be more valuable than she thinks.
- C. Ask her to say more about the situation with her husband and what she would specifically like to accomplish in the coaching related to that.
- D. Coach her on how she can approach her husband and the discussion for success.



## ICF SAMPLE QUESTION:



A coach recently began working with a client to help them plan for retirement. The client is a well-respected teacher who has taught for 30 years at a local elementary school. The client consistently arrives highly prepared and organized for coaching sessions, routinely reporting progress between sessions and identifying specific topics to focus on during coaching conversations. The client shares they are looking forward to retirement, but they discuss their retirement plans in a very matter-of-fact way. During the current session, the client shares that they have two weeks left before their retirement begins. They would like to focus on a few remaining plans they need to make. Suddenly, the client begins to cry and says, “I’ve spent half my life at this school! I adore my students and my colleagues are my best friends. I can’t imagine what my life is going to be like when I no longer walk through the front doors of the school each morning!”

**What is the BEST action? What is the WORST action?**

- A. Pause for a moment, then ask the client to identify the remaining plans they would like to focus on today.
- B. Ask the client if they are sure they want to retire.
- C. Acknowledge that retirement is a significant life transition and that emotional responses are normal.
- D. Pause, then acknowledge the emotional impacts the transition seems to be having on the client, and ask if they would like to spend some time with those feelings.

# Ready To Try It on Your Own?

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We have created a practice Credentialling Exam you can test your **knowledge**.

- 36 multiple choice questions.
- Each question advises if you selected the correct answer.
- Final score (but not the answers) sent to your email.
- **Time to complete is 1.5 hours.**
- Take it anytime and as many times as you wish.
- The link will be in the homework area in My Courses.





**Your client becomes defensive during a session and starts to challenge your questions.**

**What is the BEST action?  
What is the WORST action?**

**Warm  
up**

- A. Stay calm, listen actively, and explore what triggered the defensiveness.
- B. Defend your questions to assert your authority.
- C. Apologize to the client and change the direction of the session.
- D. Let the client know that defensiveness may hinder their progress.



# YOUR WORK BEFORE NEXT WEEK



## 1. **Read through the entire handout:**

- File: CAP Handout Ethics and Competencies 2022\_V0.1.pdf
  - ICF Coaching Definition
  - ICF Code Of Ethics
  - ICF Core Competencies

## 2. Highlight items you would like more clarity on.

## 3. **Complete exercises in the CE Learning Pack 1**

1. Watch Demystifying the ICF Credentialing Exam
2. Take the quiz #2