

AD/HD Coaching for Adults

WHAT IS COACHING?

Everyone knows what it is. We see coaches on the football field, the tennis court, in every sport. There are voice coaches, dance coaches, and coaches in almost every kind of specialized endeavor. But what about coaching for the daily challenge of life itself? Personal and professional coaching is defined as an ongoing relationship which focuses on clients taking action toward the realization of their visions, goals or desires. Put simply, coaches help people to meet the challenges and opportunities life presents.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM AN AD/HD COACH?

- Helps people to plan and set goals
- Helps people to become organized, learn time management skills, learn how to prioritize
- Assists people in developing and maintaining focus and concentration
- Helps people to create and maintain their own medication titration log
- Provides structure, support and encouragement
- Maintains a safe space to work on social skills
- Facilitates the handling of AD/HD issues in the workplace.

HOW DOES COACHING HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH AD/HD?

For the person with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), a partnership with a coach can help by refocusing the client's energy, turning failure and frustration in the direction of accomplishment, fulfillment, and self-esteem. Specifically, individuals with AD/HD benefit from coaching which emphasizes four basic areas: structure, skills, support and strategies.

AD/HD coaches help individuals to set goals, accept limitations and acknowledge strengths, develop social skills, and create strategies that enable them to be more effective in managing their day-to-day lives. They do this by establishing a pattern of frequent communication with clients to make sure they are focused and working steadily toward their goals.

HOW DOES AD/HD COACHING DIFFER FROM LIFE COACHING?

The ICF defines coaching as: *“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”*

Professional coaches provide an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. A professional coach helps people improve their performance and enhance the quality of their lives. Coaches are trained to listen, to observe, and to customize their approach to each individual client's needs. They seek to elicit solutions and strategies from the client. They believe the client is naturally creative and resourceful. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has.

THE IAAC DEFINES AD/HD COACHING AS:

“A designed partnership that combines coaching skills with knowledge of Attention Deficit Disorder, a neurobiological condition. The coaching process enhances quality of life, improves performance and supports growth and change.”

“The purpose of AD/HD coaching is to provide support, structure and accountability. Coach and client collaboratively explore strengths, talents, tools and new learning to increase self-awareness and personal empowerment. Together they design strategies and actions and monitor

progress by creating accountability in line with goals and aspirations.”

AD/HD coaching embraces the ideals and core competencies of both life coaching and AD/HD coaching. This approach provides the structure and strategies needed to create success for clients with AD/HD, while honoring the clients as creative and resourceful individuals. In AD/HD coaching, we hold our clients more accountable and usually have a tighter plan with more frequent contact than in general life coaching. Meeting with AD/HD clients occurs at least once a week, which is more often than in many life coaching or executive coaching programs.

The protocol of regularly checking in with our clients provides for more structure and is designed to be more frequent. When coaching teens and college students, the check-ins may be set up as often as daily. It is the consistency of contact, making sure that we have that tighter plan to increase contact. We really pump up the accountability factor and the process that we use for holding our clients accountable. Typical means of contact include: emails, check-in calls, and some form of follow up if they don't call in at the designated time. These are topics that should be discussed in the intake and revisited throughout the coaching process.

The coach does not control the plan. The coach supports and monitors the success of the plan.

HOW CAN I FIND THE RIGHT COACH?

A well-trained coach will help the prospective client take time to consider all the aspects of coaching before making a commitment. Coaching is not a quick fix and it is not a process that changes anyone overnight. Coach training programs are offered worldwide in a variety of formats and coaching models. It is valuable for the prospective client to seek out a coach who has both life coach training (non-ADHD specific) and AD/HD coach training. Because coaching is still fairly new, there are many factors one might want to look at in addition to training when choosing a coach. Prospective clients are encouraged to articulate their needs, inquire about the experience of the coach and take time to find the best match.

Learning Disability (LD) training is not required for coaches. However, since there is a 30-50% overlap between AD/HD and LD, most AD/HD coach training programs cover LD issues in addition to other co-existing conditions. While many AD/HD coaches have an educational background and training in learning disabilities and special education, this is not a requirement for AD/HD coaches.

Before interviewing a prospective coach, clients should assess their needs:

- Do you prefer face-to-face coaching sessions? If so, look for a coach who is nearby or within driving distance who offers one- on-one sessions. Many coaches conduct the initial session in person, and follow up with weekly check-ins by phone and/or e- mail.
- Is the gender of the coach important? Would the client prefer to be coached by a man or woman?
- Will the client benefit more by working with a coach who has a background in business, academia, gender issues, or some other specialty?
- Is the client looking for someone with a specific expertise— clutter management, family issues, business or career-related challenges?
- How important is a sense of humor to the client? Or would a serious approach make a better match?

When interviewing a coach, a client should determine the professional's involvement in and commitment to the field of AD/HD coaching. Because coaching is a developing field, coaches need to continue their education in order to keep their skills sharp.

- What coach training courses have you completed, and when?
- How many clients with AD/HD, EF and/or LD have you coached?
- How long have you been providing AD/HD specific coaching

services?

- What is the age range of your clients and past clients?
- What are your professional coaching and ADHD/LD affiliations, memberships, and credentials?

A client should interview at least two prospective coaches and ask about experience, training, client references, and affiliation with AD/HD and coaching organizations. In addition, a client should ask for referrals from allied professionals—therapists, psychiatrists, and responsible organizations that regularly offer services to people with ADHD/LD.

