ETHICAL SITUATIONS IN EXECUTIVE COACHING AS EXPERIENCED AND EVALUATED BY PSYCHOLOGY AND NON-PSYCHOLOGY-TRAINED COACHES

Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the
California School of Professional Psychology
Alliant International University
San Diego
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
by
Maggie Elizabeth Sass, M.S.
2016

Approved by:
Rodney Lowman, Ph.D., Chairperson
Nicholas P. Aramovich, Ph.D.
John Kantor, Ph.D.
DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this dissertation to my surrogate grandmother, Margaret Calhoun, who in life inspired me to play, laugh, eat, create, and read and in death, gifted me the opportunity to dedicate myself and my career to the study of psychology. Thank you for coming into our lives and sharing your wacky, wonderful world with us. I wish you could be here to share in all the new adventures but I know you are eating bon-bons somewhere marvelous.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It feels almost impossible to thank all the people who have carried, inspired, pushed, motivated, helped, encouraged, and loved me through graduate school and particularly, the dissertation process.

I’d first like to thank my parents for always supporting me in one capacity or another. You have been there through the tears and triumphs over the years and have always kept me focused on the larger picture. Thank you for all the love and support you have shown me especially in the darkest of dissertation hours. To my wonderful sister, Victoria, thank you for being exactly who you are. Thank you for all the pep talks, YouTube videos, articles, and hikes over the last several years and for all your brilliant, academic insight.

To my husband, Ryan, thank you for loving me in spite of this process. Thank you for working your life and your schedule around me and my emotions for the last 6 years and for believing in me so deeply. You forced me to celebrate wins, really live and enjoy life during this process, and helped me gain perspective when I felt like it would never end. Your support has been immeasurable and indispensable. I love you so much and can’t wait to see what post-dissertation married life holds for us.

To some of my favorite people in the world: Sarah Soriano, Arwa Ibrahim, Lauren Knuth, and Kristine Petrick – thank you for your words of encouragement, wine nights, yoga Saturdays, and Torrey Pines Lodge brunches. Thank you to Ronak Daylami, my editor extraordinaire, for helping to translate my academic-speak for real people. Thank you to Ross Blankenship for being my dissertation coach and accountability partner. A special thanks to Janet Ratnewski. The dissertation road was long and windy for the both of us but I am so happy we did it together. Thank you for loaning me your strength and perseverance these last few
months when I had lost my own. You are such an amazingly talented and gifted healer in so many ways and I delight every day that I benefit in that by being your friend. And, to Monica Perea, who will always be my graduate school advisor. Thank you for your friendship, love and strength through this process. You helped me see that I needed to grow and change as a student and as a professional by going through this, not trying to go around it.

To my original Alliant clan - Brian Beamish, Brian Tran, Janette Williams, and Bindya Bhakta – thank you for all the late night study groups, paper-writing Saturdays, life-chats and dissertation vent sessions. You are all so amazingly brilliant, talented, experienced, and unique in your own ways. Thank you for opening up your lives and for sharing in mine – graduate school was a wonderful time in my life because of each of you.

To my dissertation committee, Drs. Lowman, Aramovich, and Kantor. Thank you for pushing me to create the best piece of work I could; a study I am truly proud to call my own. I appreciate all the knowledge, insight, challenge, and guidance you three have given me over the last couple of years and know I am a better writer, learner, and practitioner because of it. Thank you also to my boss, Jennifer Habig, who allowed me the flexibility and the emotional space to take a full-time faculty position and finish my dissertation at the same time. Thank you for the direction, coaching, and confidence boosts along the way.

And finally, to all those people who had a hand in helping this research come to be. Gracious thanks to the Society of Consulting Psychology for financially supporting this research. Thank you to Tina Elliot, Brian Underhill, Joel DiGirolamo, Erin Sullivan, Rosa Belzer, Doug Riddle, Marie Legault, Declan Woods, Johan Naude, and Barbara Fly-Dierks who engaged in conversations about coaching ethics and helped to get this study in the hands of so many coaches.
from around the globe. Thank you as well to all the coaches from the International Coach Federation, the Center for Creative Leadership, and Coach Source who participated in this study.
ABSTRACT

The last 20 years has seen a proliferation in the practice of executive coaching despite the limited empirical research about its efficacy. This research focused on ethical issues arising in the practice of business and managerial coaching ("executive coaching"), which had not been extensively examined in coaching literature. The research consisted of two studies. Study 1 was an empirical study to identify actual ethical issues and dilemmas that had been experienced by both psychology and non-psychology trained executive coaches working as either internal or external coaches. A total of 68 participants, a majority of whom were U.S. based coaches, submitted 90 ethical cases experienced in their coaching practice. It was hypothesized that executive coaches with different educational backgrounds would report different types of ethical issues and dilemmas but the results did not support this claim. Analysis showed that 78% of cases were classified in the categories of confidentiality, contracting, conflicts of interest, informed consent, and multiple relationships. The remaining 22% of cases centered on ethical topics such as diversity, use of assessments, record keeping and coaching supervision. In Study 2, the evaluation of coach behavior described in ethical vignettes was examined among 144 participants who were psychology-trained, business-trained, or other-trained executive coaches. Findings suggested that, in general, differences in education did not appear to be associated with statistically significant differences in the evaluation of ethical behavior. Implications for coach practitioners and current coaching organizations are addressed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Dedication** ........................................................................................................................................ ii

**Acknowledgments** ............................................................................................................................ iii

**Abstract** ............................................................................................................................................... vi

**List of Tables** .................................................................................................................................... x

**CHAPTER I. Introduction and Literature Review** ........................................................................... 1

  Statement of the Problem ....................................................................................................................... 2

  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................................................... 5

  Review of the Literature ....................................................................................................................... 6

    Definitions of Executive Coaching ........................................................................................................ 6

    Who is Practicing Executive Coaching? ............................................................................................... 11

    Coaching Ethics .................................................................................................................................. 12

  Review of Ethical Codes from Established Coaching Organizations .............................................. 15

    Association for Coaching (AC) ........................................................................................................... 15

    Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) .............................. 16

    European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) ................................................................. 19

    International Coach Federation (ICF) ............................................................................................... 20

    International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) ................................................................. 21

    American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics ............................................................ 22

    British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct .................................................. 26

    Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) Code of Ethics ........................................................... 27

  Comparison of Various Coaching-Related Codes of Ethics ............................................................ 29

  Rationale and Objective for Current Research ..................................................................................... 66
CHAPTER II. Study 1

Method .................................................................71
Procedure ..............................................................71
Participants ............................................................72
Measures ...............................................................76
Data Analysis ..........................................................77

Results ........................................................................80
Main Hypotheses .......................................................83
Discussion ...............................................................85
Areas for Ethical Code Development or Extension ........88
Limitations ..............................................................96
Suggestions for Future Research ...............................96

CHAPTER III. Study 2 ..................................................98

Method .................................................................98
Procedure ..............................................................98

Vignette Creation and Pilot Testing ..........................99
Participants ............................................................102
Measures ...............................................................106
Data Analysis ..........................................................109

Results ....................................................................109
Main Hypotheses ....................................................111
Discussion ..............................................................122
Limitations ..............................................................126
Suggestions for Future Research .................................................................................. 129

CHAPTER IV. General Discussion ............................................................................... 131

References .................................................................................................................. 135

APPENDIX A. Study 1 Coach Survey ........................................................................ 147

APPENDIX B. Study 1 Coaching Professionals’ Survey ............................................. 150

APPENDIX C. Study 2 Survey ..................................................................................... 151
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. Comparison of Definitions of Executive Coaching ...........................................7

TABLE 2. Comparison of Ethical Codes .............................................................................31

TABLE 3. Demographics of Study 1 Participants ...............................................................74

TABLE 4. Country Demographics of Study 1 Participants ................................................76

TABLE 5. Pairwise Agreement Ratings and Fleiss’ Kappa for Interrater Reliability in the Coding of Ethical Cases .................................................................81

TABLE 6. Numbers and Percentages per Ethical Category of Submitted Cases .................82

TABLE 7. Primary Dilemmas Depicted in Pilot 2 Vignettes .............................................100

TABLE 8. Demographics of Study 2 Participants ...............................................................103

TABLE 9. Final Vignettes Used in Study 2 Vignette .........................................................106

TABLE 10. Means and Standard Deviations for Judgment, Acceptability, Violation and Sanction Items Across Study 2 Sample .........................................................110

TABLE 11. Judgment Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches .................................................................111

TABLE 12. Acceptability Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches .................................................................113

TABLE 13. Violation Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches .................................................................114

TABLE 14. Sanction Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches .................................................................115

TABLE 15. Classification Accuracy of Raters Across Vignettes .........................................117

TABLE 16. Judgment Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches .................................................................118

TABLE 17. Acceptability Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches .................................................................119

TABLE 18. Violation Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches .................................................................120
TABLE 19. Sanction Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches .................................................................121
CHAPTER I

Introduction and Literature Review

The last 20 years has seen a proliferation in the practice of executive coaching. The International Coach Federation (ICF), a leading global coaching organization and coaching certification body, expanded from just over 2,000 North American members in 1999 to over 20,000 global members in 2012 in more than 100 countries. Its members include coaches in North America as well as Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America (International Coach Federation, 2010). A 2012 ICF Global Coaching Study, which included survey results from 12,133 coaches (over a third of whom were non-ICF members) representing 31 countries, suggested that the then current annual global revenue from coaching was estimated to be almost two billion dollars. Many large consulting firms now offer executive coaching as part of custom individual and organizational leadership programs, and hundreds of organizations offer coach-training programs to meet the market demand for coaches (Sherman & Freas, 2004). The ICF Global Coaching Study suggested that there might be as many as 41,300 coaches actively practicing worldwide, almost 16,000 of whom were in the US (International Coach Federation, 2012). Although robust in sample size, the ICF’s study does not lend confidence that the numbers are comprehensive as the sample was obtained exclusively from the ICF members, contacts, and affiliates. These numbers likely underestimate the number of coaches practicing worldwide and in the United States, as the practice of coaching does not require participating in any particular training, procurement of standardized coaching certifications, or membership to any professional coaching organizations (such as the ICF).
Literature on coaching has mainly focused on its descriptions of coaching tools and techniques (e.g., Alexander, 2006; Herd & Russell, 2010; Peterson, 2011), case studies of coaching engagements (e.g., Freedman & Perry, 2010; Kilburg, 2004), and the disparity between practice and empirical research in the emerging field (e.g., Boyce & Hernez-Broome, 2011; Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Although a number of empirical articles have begun to measure executive coaching’s impact and effectiveness (e.g., Steinbrenner & Schlosser, 2011; Fisher, 2001; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008), empirical research on executive coaching is still trailing practice (e.g., Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kampa & White, 2002; Lowman, 2007; Gregory et al., 2011; Lowman, 2013). Lowman (2013) argued that without an adequate empirical basis to support and define coaching, not only do ethical concerns need to be addressed to determine “what constitutes appropriate practice and appropriate preparation for coaching practice” (p. 72), but research also needs to be done to uncover the important ethical issues for the practice of coaching.

**Statement of the Problem**

Passmore and Mortimer (2011) maintained that ethics is an essential component of any type of business or leadership coaching but report that it is seldom the focus of research in coaching and consulting journals or at professional conventions. There are a number of reasons research on coaching ethics may be lacking. Law (2010) suggested that the smaller number of attendees in ethics workshops at coaching conferences might suggest an assumption by coaches that they should know what ethical practice in coaching looks like and should have no issue making the appropriate ethical decisions. Although coaches may not assume they know everything about ethics, it could be argued that topics like “branding” and “tools and techniques in coaching” may seem more relevant to the practice and business of coaching. Petlier (2011)
argued that coaches may be less familiar with professional ethics because executive coaching “is too new” for articulated professional ethical norms (p. 353), although Wasylyshyn (2003) suggested that maintaining high ethical standards is paramount for psychologist coaches and distinguished them from coaches whose work was not informed by a professional ethical code. Lowman (2013) argued that all practicing coaches, whether professionally trained or not, need to “learn how to incorporate ethics into their coaching practices” (p. 69).

A number of coach certification organizations (e.g., International Coach Federation, Association of Coaching, Association for Professional and Executive Coaching and Supervision, European Mentoring and Coaching Council, etc.) have attempted to identify coaching ethics by providing members with a coaching-specific ethics code, though coaches are not required to be a part of these credentialing programs or to have completed any formal educational programs in order to practice coaching in most venues (Passmore & Mortimer, 2011). Peltier (2011) suggested that because there are no formal licensure processes required of executive coaching, coaches who are not members of a coaching organization are ostensibly on their own to make challenging moral judgments. Lowman (2013) suggested that psychological ethics codes, such as the American Psychological Association’s (APA) code of ethics, provide appropriate guidance for executive coaches, though not all coaches are psychologists and therefore not required to abide by the tenets of psychologists’ codes of ethics. This may be one of the field’s biggest challenges. In all professions, there are required competencies of practice and ethical standards by which to guide that practice. This is not currently the case with coaching because it has not been designated a profession. Therefore, it is possible there are people without proper training, including ethics training in coaching who are working as coaches, and ultimately, doing more harm than good.
Furthermore, there is no one universal code of ethical standards for coaching practice. Depending on the scope of the coaching work, the needs of the coaching clients, and the organizational context of the coaching, Peltier (2011) argued that the needs of coaching ethics might go beyond the codes provided in the APA Code of Ethics. Law (2010) also argued that psychologists practicing coaching are responsible for using ethical guidelines from a number of different fields including business, psychology, counseling, and psychotherapy, and then framing them in a way that is applicable to their coaching relationships. Although Law may be somewhat exaggerating this point, it is clear that not any single code of ethics, whether from psychology or business, will necessarily cover all necessary guidelines for every coach. Ethics has been argued to be one of the most important components for a responsible coaching practice (Lowman, 2013; Peltier, 2011; Law, 2010; Passmore and Mortimer, 2011) but one the biggest issues of the professionalization of coaching is the ability to aid coaches appropriately in addressing ethical issues (Gray, 2011). To date, general ethical codes and professional codes from related fields, such as psychology, have attempted to provide direction and create a system of principles to provide ethical guidance for coaches within their professional roles. However, it seems none of them have emerged from an analysis of what coaching ethics needs to provide for the field and for practitioners. As such, it is not clear if such codes are truly reflective of the totality of ethical issues encountered in the field of professional coaching. This could be problematic because is a top down approach rather than bottom up, so when coaches face an ethical issue they may not receive adequate guidance from the available ethics codes. Given the variety of educational and training backgrounds of executive coaches in the field, it is also possible there might be differences in the interpretation and/or evaluation of ethical situations due in part to educational differences. Understanding the level of agreement among coaches
about what constitutes ethical versus unethical behavior would be important in the discussion around professionalization of the coaching field. Ethical codes have standards, which have to be abided to by all who agree to be part of an organization or a profession, and this is difficult if the people from different backgrounds have different ideas about what is ethical.

**Purpose of the Research**

This research was comprised of two studies. Study 1 attempted to answer Law’s (2010) questions to coaches and coachees “What are coaching ethics? What are their implications to the coaching relationship in practice” (p. 184)? The purpose of this study was to identify ethical dilemmas and situations actually encountered in the practice of coaching through use of the critical incident technique, the same method used by the APA in creating its first code of ethics (Fisher, 2003). The critical incident technique “consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327). The primary research questions that were addressed by this study were:

- What are the ethical situations that have been encountered in the coaching field by executive coaches from a variety of professional backgrounds?
- Can a majority of the reported ethical situations be classified into current ethical categories from coaching-relevant ethics codes?; and
- Are coaches who came to coaching from different educational training (e.g., psychology-trained vs non-psychology trained) likely to report experiencing different types of ethical dilemmas?

In contrast to the available ethics codes that appear to be from a top down approach, this research approaches coaching ethics from a bottom up perspective. In starting with coaches’
experiences the researcher was able to analyze the types of ethical issues being raised to see if the codes adequately addressed the issues.

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether educational background of coaches was associated with differences in the evaluation of coach behavior in ethical situations. Law (2010) argued that depending on level and scope of education coaches may lack quality ethical training, which could lead to unforeseeable differences across coaching services, and subsequently discredit the field. Differences in the way coaches are educated about ethics – either in psychology (i.e., clinical psychology, Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology, consulting psychology, etc.), business or in freestanding coach training programs – may result in different interpretations of and responses to ethically relevant situations that arise in coaching. Berglas (2002) even argued that executive coaches who have not had psychological training, “may do more harm than good” in working with managers and executives (p. 85). The primary research question to be answered by this study was: “Are there group differences based on educational background in how executive coaches evaluate ethical situations?”

**Review of the Literature**

**Definitions of Executive Coaching**

In order to understand the ethical issues that are important to executive coaching, it is first important to understand how coaching has been defined. A literature review of executive coaching produced 1,263 peer-reviewed articles and dozens of unique definitions of executive coaching suggesting that its definition has varied quite widely. Table 1 compares various definitions of executive coaching to display the diversity of characterization and focus of coaching and followed by a brief discussion of the definitions.
Table 1
*Comparison of Definitions of Executive Coaching*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition of Coaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilburg (1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Executive coaching is a helping relationship formed between a client, who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization, and a consultant, who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to assist the client, to achieve a mutually-identified set of goals to improve the client’s professional performance and personal satisfaction and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization within a formally defined coaching agreement (p. 67).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson &amp; Hicks (1998)</td>
<td>Coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective. Executive coaching, distinguished from performance or developmental coaching, is a way to build an effective organization by ensuring executive breadth and depth for building and leading the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauffman &amp; Coutu (2009)</td>
<td>Executive coaching is a confidential, individually tailored engagement designed to meet the needs both of the executive being coached and the organization paying for the service (p. 3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, &amp; Fernandes (2008)</td>
<td>Executive coaching is a short-term interactive process between a coach and a manager to improve leadership effectiveness by enhancing self-awareness and the practice of new behaviors. The coaching process facilitates the acquisition of new skills, perspectives, tools and knowledge through support, encouragement, and feedback in the organizational context (p. 79).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankovel gia &amp; Riddle (2010)</td>
<td>A formal one-on-one relationship between a coach and a coachee, in which the two collaborate to assess and understand the coachee and his or her development needs, challenge current constraints while exploring new possibilities, and ensure accountability and support for reaching goals and sustaining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive consulting offers senior leaders a thoughtful, challenging relationship with a neutral third party to help think through difficult issues and decisions. This type of coaching uses a more Socratic (i.e., nondirective, questioning) approach emphasizing creative problem solving, decision-making, and capitalizing on strengths. It can be brief in duration or more extended, depending on the needs and interests of the executive.

| Kilburg’s (1996, 2000) definition of executive coaching provides a helpful and detailed description of the roles of both the coach and the person being coached (hereafter, “coachee”) and the expected outcome of such an engagement. However, it has been argued that such an exhaustive definition could hinder a coaching engagement by seemingly requiring the coach and |
coachee to play specific roles (Douglas & Morley, 2008). Alternatively, Kauffman and Coutu (2009) define executive coaching to be “individually – tailored” which might suggest that roles of the coach and coachee are less prescribed and could shift during the coaching process depending on the scope of the engagement.

Some definitions attempt to define the skills or development needs of the coachee as addressed in the coaching relationship. Berman and Bradt (2006) conceptualized executive coaching in a four-category model based on the goals of the coaching assignment and include facilitative, restorative, developmental, and executive coaching. For instance, “facilitative coaching” is a short-term, business-focus type of coaching used to help leaders in new roles or managers dealing with additional challenges to achieve personal and organizational goals; whereas “executive coaching” provides both challenge and support in an effort to help an executive traverse difficult organizational issues and resolutions.

Some provided definitions of what coaching entails but less about the actual process of coaching (Peterson & Hicks, 1996; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008; Frankovelgia & Riddle, 2010). Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, and Fernandes’ (2008) definition in particular may not be as relevant because it defined executive coaching as a “short-term” process which is not always typical of executive coaching engagements (Liljenstrand, 2004). Frankovelgia and Riddle’s (2010) definition did provide parameters and roles of coaching, though is it less specific about the role of the coachee and does not explicitly state anything about the organizational goals. Kauffman and Coutu’s (2009) definition of coaching identified the coaching parameters (“confidential, individually tailored”) but it does not clearly identify the roles or the process of coaching.
Kilburg’s definition identified six important components of a coaching engagement including: (1) the role of the coach (“consultant”), (2) and the role of the coachee (“client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization”), (3) the process of coaching (“variety of behavioral techniques and methods”), (4) the personal goals (“assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction”), (5) the organizational goals of the engagement (“consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization”), and (6) parameters of the engagement (“within a formally defined coaching agreement”). However, this definition also defined coaching as a “helping relationship” which may be considered too clinical a conceptualization of the coaching relationship for the purposes of this study.

The definition created as part of a study of coaching by the APA divisions 13 and 14 is similar to Kilburg’s (1996, 2000) definition in that it characterized the type of relationship, the roles, the personal and organizational goals, and the coaching process. This definition clarified the distinction between business coaching and other types of coaching by stating, “coaching refers to work with individuals within an organizational context, and is intended to encompass the concepts of "executive coaching," "coaching psychology," and "individual coaching." It does NOT include: (a) routine performance coaching between supervisors and subordinates or team leaders and members, (b) employee mentoring, or (c) psychotherapy/counseling”.

Executive coaching – as conceptualized for this study – followed the definition proposed by APA Divisions 13 & 14 Interim Definition as it was broad enough to define coaching for both psychologists and non-psychologist practitioners. The definition of executive coaching selected for this study was used to indicate to survey participants the scope and depth of coaching evaluated in this study. In an attempt to reach a broad range of coaches and to assess the ethical
issues encountered in a wide array of coaching engagements, the coaching sessions could be connected to either a larger organizational initiative with financial and administrative support from internal stakeholders, or ad hoc (Riddle & Pothier, 2011) as an individual coaching engagement coordinated by coachees themselves. In an effort to generalize to the business and managerial focus that is most common in executive coaching, only ethical dilemmas encountered during business, leadership, or managerial coaching were considered for this study.

**Who is Practicing Executive Coaching?**

Although there are almost 50,000 coaches reportedly practicing in the US and worldwide (ICF, 2012), only a small portion of the emerging coaching literature has attempted to provide an accurate description of professional coach academic and training backgrounds. Berglas (2002) asserted that some coaches come from psychological backgrounds but that “a greater share are (comprised of) former athletes, lawyers, business academics, and consultants” (p. 87).

Wasylyshyn (2003) performed a small case study when she surveyed 87 executives she had coached between 1985 and 2001. Reportedly, their top three criteria in choosing a personal executive coach were: (1) psychological training (82%), (2) business acumen (78%), and (3) coach reputation (25%), suggesting that psychologists and coaches with a business background are perceived to be educated in ways that would be useful to would-be coachees.

Grant and Zackon (2004) collected data from 2,529 ICF members who responded to an online survey to ascertain their educational training, including professional background and certification. Over three-fourths of respondents (78%) reported they held an ICF credential, either as an associate, professional or master certified coach. The study found almost all coaches had previous educational training (e.g., counselors (12.7%), psychologists (4.1%), social workers (4.1%), and teachers (15.7%)) or work experience (e.g., consultants (40.8%), executives (30.2
ETHICAL SITUATIONS IN EXECUTIVE COACHING

%, managers (30.8%), and salespeople (13.8%)) before joining the coaching field. A small portion of coaches reported training in medicine and other health professions, law, and the financial sector. In Grant and Zackon (2004) study’s sample, 57.3% of respondents held some sort of coaching credential and 90.3% had graduated from a coach-training program.

Liljenstrand and Nebeker (2008) evaluated responses from 2,231 coaches to determine the academic training of professional coaches and to explore differences between coaches with backgrounds in I-O psychology, clinical psychology, business, education and “other,” including individuals trained in life sciences, engineering, and law, among others. To attract participation from professional coaches from a variety of backgrounds and professional associations, participants were contacted through professional, business, consulting and coaching list servers including the APA, Association of Business Psychologists, Center for Creative Leadership, International Coach Federation, RHR International, the Executive Coaching Forum, and the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches. Of the 2,231 respondents, 6.9% were I-O psychologists, 9.3% were clinical psychologists, 24.7% came from business backgrounds, and 48.5% were from other academic fields. Coaches from the psychology field had worked as coaches significantly longer than coaches from other backgrounds and were significantly more educated. Only 19% of respondents had doctoral degrees, but over half of the I-O and clinical psychologists had earned a PhD. Coaches from psychology backgrounds were significantly more likely to have a master’s degree where coaches with a business background were the least educated with 49% reporting a bachelor’s degree or less.

Coaching Ethics

St. John-Brooks (2010) in a study of 123 internal coaches with at least six months coaching experience from over 30 organizations found the following to be the top 10 dilemmas
for coaches:

1. Third parties wanting information (e.g., boss asking about progress, etc.)
2. Role conflict (e.g., coaching someone they may work with in other work capacities)
3. Coachee wanting to discuss someone with whom the coach has a personal relationship
4. Hearing about inappropriate behavior in a coaching session and not being able to act on the information
5. Hearing about client’s personal issues impacting performance and not being able to share to help explain negative performance
6. Multiple relationships (e.g., coaching manager and her direct report)
7. Knowing something about coachee or coachee’s future that you can’t share
8. Unable to use information that could benefit coachee/organization
9. Coachee exploiting coaching sessions to further own agenda
10. Coachee wanting to talk about quitting

The two main issues that surfaced connected to these dilemmas were: 1) the coach feeling unsure of the appropriate ethical action to take, and 2) the coach needing to self-manage their own emotions and biases about many of the situations. The research showed that coaches were “confused about whether their coaching was subject to an ethical code” (p. 4) as 38% of coaches reported that they either did not believe they were subject to an ethical code or were not sure.

Liljenstrand and Nebeker (2008) found no significant differences between clinical psychology-trained, I-O psychology-trained, and business-trained coaches in their evaluation of the importance of adherence to ethical guidelines. Although the authors found such results promising, they added that they “do not really know if the groups are referring to the same standards or guidelines to define what is ethical” (p. 65). The study did find significant
differences between the groups in terms of how often they reported having encountered ethical dilemmas. Coaches with business, educational, and other non-psychology backgrounds reported significantly fewer unethical situations than did I-O and clinical psychologists. Liljenstrand and Nebeker (2008) argued that although it was possible ethical dilemmas occurred more frequently in work with psychologists, “it is more probable that these groups hold different standards and definitions of what is unethical” (p. 65). Liljenstrand and Nebeker (2008) suggested that coaches are in agreement about the significance of ethical behavior, but it remains to be seen if the coaches are actually equal in their evaluation and practice of ethical behavior.

Two studies found that non-psychology coaches were less likely to refer a client with a clinical issue such as depression or narcissistic personality disorder, either because the coaches discounted the psychological issue or lacked experience in managing a clinical issue in coaching (Berglas, 2002; Wasylyshyn, 2001). Either way, such a situation could result in ethical dilemmas of professional competence and boundaries, integrity, and conflicts of interest.

Wasylyshyn (2003) reported that executives who had participated in a coaching engagement valued psychometric assessments such as 360-degree feedback reports. She suggested that psychologists are advantaged both by the number and variety of psychometric tools they are trained to interpret and debrief, but also the set of ethical standards they are educated in to ensure proper management and care of data. In fact, the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Code of Ethics includes an entire standard on psychological assessments (see Standard 9: when to use assessments, 9.02; to whom and when test data can be released, 9.04; interpretation of assessment results, 9.06, 9.09, 9.10; and security of test data, 9.10) (APA, 2002, p. 1071-1072).
Review of Ethical Codes from Established Professional Associations

Several sets of ethical guidelines have been issued by coaching-relevant professional organizations. These ethical guidelines and standards are intended to provide guidance to practitioners in decision-making and in some cases provide standards of conduct that are enforceable by the organization and the law (Law, 2010). The ethical codes of practice reviewed below include: the Association for Coaching (AC, 2013), the Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECs, 2007), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC, 2008), the International Coach Federation (IFC, 2008), the International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP, 2011), the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002; 20101), the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2008), and the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA, 2000). The researcher made several attempts to contact the coaching bodies listed above to determine the process by which they created the ethics codes and only the AC responded. It is presumed that most of these organizations used similar ethical category taxonomy from other coaching codes and professional codes of ethics (e.g., medicine, psychology, etc.) and customized it to their organizational needs.

The Association for Coaching. The Association for Coaching (AC) was established in 2002 by Katherine Tulpa, a business coach, and Alex Szabo, a strategic leadership consultant and coach. The organization’s mission is to be a reliable and ethical association based on high standards, integrity, responsiveness, openness, and client-focused work with educational and

---

1 The 2002 version of the APA is referenced throughout in this literature review though it is important to mention that there were amendments to this version adopted at the February 2010 APA Council of Representatives meeting. The changes involve the last two sentences of the final paragraph of the Introduction and Applicability section and Ethical Standards 1.02 and 1.03 and will be referenced when appropriate.
progressive objectives. The AC directory lists almost 1000 global coach members who range from founding members to affiliate members based on training, experience, and associated fees.

As a member of the AC, associates are required to commit and adhere to the organization’s ethical code, *Code of Ethics and Good Practice* (launched in 2003), and to take out necessary insurance to practice coaching professionally. The AC responded to correspondence about the creation of the code and indicated that a collective group of professional coaches created it based on their own experience in coaching. The AC sought feedback on the original iteration of the code from those involved in other professions such as psychology. As part of the requirements for individual coach accreditation, potential members are asked to write about a dilemma they faced and how they handled it, similar to the critical incident technique. The submitted ethics cases are periodically checked against the ethics code to ensure it is appropriately addressing current ethical issues. No information was provided about whether the ethics code is enforced in any way (Declan Woods, personal communication, September 21, 2012).

The current AC code is broken into four categories (Fitness to Practice, Maintaining Good Practice, Contracting, and Statutory and Legal Duties) and is comprised of a list of 17 individual guidelines (AC, 2013).

**The Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS).**

The Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) is a non-profit organization for executive coaches and supervisors of executive coaches and was launched in 2005 by co-founders Patti Stevens, an executive coach who holds a master’s degree in Psychological Counseling and Psychotherapy (MSc), and Liz Macann, an organizational coaching consultant. The association is a self-proclaimed accreditation organization for
executive coaches and supervisors “to safeguard and develop the standards of professional coaching and supervision” and “to provide a stimulating forum for individuals engaged in buying or delivering professional coaching” (APECS, 2011).

The ACEPS represents the most limited range of professionals and only accepts executive coaches or coaches who develop one-on-one developmental relationships with people with a “level of leadership responsibility and/or responsibility for policy formulation” in focused effort to help the client become more effective in a particular role in his or her organization. The APECS website claims its organization is the “top level professional body for the accreditation of Executive coaches and Supervisors of Executive Coaches” and offers membership at five levels: Accredited Executive Coaches (including Founder Members), Accredited Supervisors of Executive Coaches, Associate Members, Corporate Members, and Invited Members. The profiles and contact information for 110 Accredited Executive Coaches, 20 Accredited Coach Supervisors (some Supervisors are also listed as Executive Coaches) and 10 Associate Members are listed on the APECS website, though it is likely there are additional members, as their corporate and invited members are not similarly listed.

APECS members are provided a set of ethical guidelines which includes the following introduction to the ethics code:

The Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) is the top-level professional body for the provision of Executive Coaching and for the Supervision of Executive Coaches. The Ethical Guidelines contained in this document are indicators of that professionalism and the high standards seen as essential to the various relationships involved in Executive Coaching and Supervision. We want the safest and most effective conditions for clients (those
being coached), the clearest and most transparent understanding with host companies who commission Executive Coaching and/or Supervision and the highest professional standards for our coaches and supervisors (APECS, 2007, p. 1)

The remainder of the ethics document includes sections on the nature of the guidelines, communication of the code, important coaching definitions, general behavioral guidelines including six foundational principles, and six enforceable standards. The section on the nature of the guidelines explains that the ethics guidelines are considered contractual with each member of APECS and failure to abide by such standards could be reported for investigation under a “Complaints Procedure.” The section on communication of the code specifies that coaches need to formally introduce the ethics guidelines to individual clients and sponsor organizations and also provides information about how to report ethical violations through the APECS Complaints Procedure.

APECS expects coaches to demonstrate respect for individuals and organizations by establishing high quality relationships, maintaining awareness and sensitivity to different types of diversity, being concerned for fairness and justice in their work, being open to new knowledge and capability in the coaching arena, recognizing the importance of context in their work, and engaging in work that ultimately enhances autonomy in individuals and their companies. The general guidelines also hold coaches and supervisors responsible for what are described as being six “foundation principles of ethical thinking and behavior” (APECS, 2007, p. 2). APECS’s foundation principles include non-malfeasance and beneficence, fidelity, and justice, similar to the APA code, but they also include the foundation of autonomy, which APECS states is “to help individuals and companies make their own decisions and move toward increasing self-authority”
The principle of caring for self is also specified and urges coach practitioners to monitor their own mental, physical, emotional, and motivational health to ensure they are their best selves and produce the best work for their clients. The six official guidelines cover areas including: (1) qualifications, (2) ongoing professional development, (3) setting up and engaging in executive coaching and supervision relationships, (4) boundary management, (5) requirements for supervision, and (6) other requirements (APECS, 2007) and list roughly 20 unique standards.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) “exists to develop, promote and set the expectation of best practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe and beyond, for the benefit of society” (EMCC, 2008). The organization lists EMCC affiliate branches in 18 countries including Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom (UK), along with direct members around the world in countries where a local EMCC does not currently exist. EMCC reports over 5,000 worldwide members who represent a wide range of professionals and organizations including those involved in professional training and development, work counseling, personal or life coaching, and psycho-educational sectors. Clients interested in finding a coach through EMCC can search on their website by location and fields of expertise including behavioral, business, gestalt, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and spiritual coaching. The range of coaching specialties in the EMCC is broader than those represented in the AC, who are primarily professional coaches practicing executive, business, personal, or specialty and team coaching (AC, 2013). However, similar to both the AC and ACEPS, EMCC write about the importance of ethics in coaching as a way to develop standards for quality guarantee. EMCC’s key focus is to “develop European standards, ethics and a
professional code with a view to assure quality in the industry” (EMCC, 2011). In fact, one of the four special interest groups that the EMCC offers is UK Ethics and Research. The EMCC offers accreditation of coach training programs through the European Quality Award (EQA), a quality standard awarded to coaching and mentoring programs that “meet the EMCC research based competence standards” (EMCC, 2011) and to individuals through the European Individual Accreditation (EIA), given in recognition of professional and competent coaches and mentors. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council’s (EMCC, 2008) code of ethics is organized in five ethical categories: competence, context, boundary management, integrity, and professionalism, with 21 unique standards.

The International Coach Federation (ICF). The International Coach Federation (ICF) is a nonprofit founded in 1995 by Thomas Leonard, a personal and business coach, to help professional, executive, leadership, and life coaches to “advance the art, science and practice of professional coaching”. Currently the largest global coaching membership organization, the ICF aims to advance coaching research and best practices, provide coaching certification, and to provide a network of credentialed coaches to support the next generation in research and practice. Similar to the EMCC, the ICF defines coaching quite broadly to mean “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” and includes coaching specialties ranging from relationship to career coaching (ICF, 2011). ICF has a global membership of over 20,000 coaches who represent over 100 countries and supports two types of members – ICF Credentialed Members and ICF Members. ICF members are professionals who are involved with coaching, as defined by ICF, but who are not credentialed by the organization. ICF Credentialed Members are represented across three levels of expertise, Associate Certified Coach, Professional Certified Coach, and
Master Certified Coach, and are known as the Practice Coach, the Proven Coach, and the Expert Coach, respectively. The levels are distinguished by number of hours spent in a coach training program, time spent with a qualified ICF mentor coach, actual coaching experience, application fees, ICF-qualified coach references, and final exams, including written and oral components, and a recorded coaching session for the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and Master Certified Coach (MCC) levels (ICF, 2011).

The ICF boasts that it has been a leader not only in developing coach competencies and the practice of coaching, but also in “establishing a set of ethical standards” (ICF, 2011). The ICF Code of Ethics is comprised of two parts: a section of the definition of coaching and the official “ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct” (ICF, 2008). The ICF also supplies members with a frequently asked questions document in addition to the ethics code to give examples of how to understand the code, how to use it in practice, and to clarify the more subjective guidelines of the code (Townsend, 2011). The first definition section defines coaching, a professional coaching relationship, and the “client” and “sponsor,” and suggests it is necessary for the coach to clarify and distinguish between the various stakeholders within the coaching engagement (i.e. between the individual coaching client and the supporting organization). The second part of the code is comprised of 25 specific ethical standards within four categories of ethical practice: professional conduct at large, conflicts of interest, professional conduct with clients, and confidentiality/privacy (ICF, 2008).

The International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP). The International Society for Coaching Psychology (ISCP) was formed in 2006 (then, referred to as the International Forum for Coaching Psychology) by a group of 20 delegates, including Dr. Stephen Palmer and Dr. Giles Burch, at the International Coaching Psychology Conference in London, UK, to
respond to the need for an international association specifically for coaching psychologists. According to the ISCP website, “there was a need for an international association or society with a remit to promote and develop coaching psychology around the world” (ISCP, 2011). The mission of the organization – similar to other coaching associations – was to create a global community of professionals for learning, development, collaboration, networking, and to identify “cultural gaps” and “what works” in coaching research and practice. Early entry into the organization only required membership in the psychological society from a coach’s home country (e.g., APA, British Psychological Society, Australian Psychological Association, etc.), though the organization now offers a number of membership categories to professional coaches, including affiliate, corporate, or accredited members, depending on professional degree and professional and academic participation in the field of coaching. The ISCP code of ethics is presented in two parts. The first part defines the six ethical principles including: rights, respect, recognition, relationship, representation and responsibility and the second details the specific ethical standards under each principle (ISCP, 2011).

The American Psychological Association (APA) code of ethics. Lowman (2013) recognized that although there is no universal code of ethics for coaching, psychological ethical codes serve as appropriate references to educate the practice of coaching. Additionally, Whybrow & Wildflower (2011) suggested that psychological theory supports the theory and practice of coaching, so it could be argued that ethical codes from psychological associations would be well positioned to support the ethical development of the field as well.

The APA’s Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2002; 2010) as described above was created in 1953 using the critical incident technique. The APA ethics code contains an introduction and preamble which identifies the intent and scope of application of the
ethics code, suggests a set of five general principles to be used as a guide towards ethical ideals for use in practice (A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, B: Fidelity and Responsibility, C: Integrity, D: Justice, and E: Respect for People’s Rights and Dignity), and sets forth ten categories of standards (1: Resolving Ethical Issues, 2: Competence, 3: Human Relations, 4: Privacy and Confidentiality, 5: Advertising and Other Public Statements, 6: Record Keeping and Fees, 7: Education and Training, 8: Research and Publication, 9: Assessment, 10: Therapy) which encompass a list of 151 enforceable rules of conduct for all psychologists. Although the ethics code is written quite broadly to apply to the varied work and roles carried out by psychologists, the APA suggests that application of ethical standards may differ depending on the situation. Furthermore, the APA also suggests that the ethics code is not “exhaustive” and, as such, any particular unethical behavior not addressed by the code is not necessarily ethical, simply because of the absence of a specific enforceable standard (APA, 2002).

The ethics code is not only a guide for psychologists designating appropriate behavior in scientific, professional and educational roles, but it also identifies enforceable ethical standards (required, prohibited, and permitted behaviors) as a way to evaluate professional conduct by the professional community, the APA, licensing boards, and malpractice courts (APA, 2010; Fisher, 2003; Knapp & VandeCreek, 2003). According to the APA website, membership in the APA (and members of organizations otherwise covered by the code, such as SIOP) “commits” professional and student members to abide by the ethical guidelines, regardless of sub-discipline or specialty (e.g., clinical psychology, consulting psychology, forensic psychology, developmental psychology, etc.)

However, many psychologists agree that, historically, the APA ethics code was designed with the clinical practitioner in mind. Peltier (2011) suggested that clinical psychologists are
more familiar with ethical codes and standards because of their extensive graduate coursework in ethics, compulsory continuing education on ethical topics and lawful professional practice, and membership in a profession that has been providing ethical guidance and regulation since the original APA Ethics Code was published in 1953. Leatta Hough, president of the Society of Industrial-Organizational Psychology (SIOP) in 2005, argued that the 1992 APA Ethics Code was most applicable in clinical settings (Lowman, 2006).

According to Lowman (2006), revisions of the APA code in 2002 introduced a considerable number of references to psychological practice in organizational settings (see Standard 1.03, 3.11, 4.02, 4.05), and was evidence of an important development in the standards, as they were now relevant and applicable for a more broadly defined psychological community. Lowman (2006) also reported that ethical training is becoming more standard in I-O psychological programs and related psychological fields, with some graduate programs even offering a separate course in ethical and legal issues concerning I-O and applied organizational psychologists. Although the 2002 (and the most recent 2010) version of the ethics code no longer applies solely to clinical psychologists, Lefkowitz suggested that a separate Code of Ethics may be necessary for I-O Psychology (Lefkowitz, 2006). Arguably, there are a number of ethical uncertainties faced by I-O and consulting psychologists attempting to use the APA code in their varied practices.

Detwiler (2008) argued that both clinical and organizational psychologists apply ethical standards differentially depending on the situational context; psychologists found ethical violations in organizational settings less egregious than in comparable clinical settings. His study also shows that clinical psychologists, as rated by both clinical and organizational psychologists, are held to a stricter application of the ethical standards and greater sanction of
unethical behavior than organizational psychologists. Such research suggests that practitioners in distinctive sub-disciplines of psychology may apply the ethics code in dissimilar ways and not always appropriately, given the varied contexts organizational psychologists may find themselves working.

Peltier (2011) suggested that the field of psychology and ethical principles translated from psychotherapy has a lot to offer the burgeoning field of executive coaching. He suggested that clinical psychology and coaching ethics overlap in a number of ways including clear contracting agreements, whistle-blowing, and personal and professional limits. Lowman (2013) agreed that the APA ethics code is applicable to executive coaching in requiring personal and professional competence, but identified seven additional general principles that could be used to inform ethical practice in coaching: competence (particularly multicultural and international competence), avoiding harm, integrity, informed consent, managing multiple relationships, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest.

Interestingly enough, Peltier (2011) identified confidentiality and consent as areas where the APA code may not be as clear in its application of use in executive coaching. For example, he argued that confidentiality needs to be determined not only between the coach and coachee, but also between the coach and the sponsor organization. Coaches like to claim that coaching sessions are strictly confidential, but they are usually required to inform the coachee’s supervisor or human resources (HR) of his or her progress, especially when the company finances the coaching engagement. In terms of organizational confidentiality, coaches may find themselves observing meetings or participating in coaching sessions where they hear privileged information, learn about illegal activities, or hear rumors of unethical behavior, and even with standards and guidelines about confidentiality, these situations may be tricky to manage. It seems that
addressing possible issues of confidentiality from the start of an engagement would suffice in maintaining appropriate confidentiality even within the coach-coachee-organization triangle, though Peltier (2011) stated “the most difficult ethical problems are often those that cannot be fully anticipated at the onset” (p. 363).

The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct. The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct not only provides a helpful international perspective of psychological ethics to compare with the APA code (Lowman, 2013), but it also allows for a British professional code to be evaluated against a number of coaching organizations with ethics codes that function in the UK. The BPS code applies to all members regardless of area of psychological practice and is based on four ethical principles with standards and suggestions for professional behavior. Law (2010) suggests that the BPS might not provide a specific ethical code of practice because of the “diverse application of psychology” (p. 185), implying that the practices of clinical psychologists are distinct enough from coaching psychologists and psychologists focused on academic research to need different ethical guidelines. The BPS requires coach members to abide by the BPS code of ethics as well as the Standards Framework, published by the Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) under the BPS, which specifies the required standards and competencies of coaching psychologists (Townsend, 2011). The Standards Framework document refers to ethics in its “Knowledge” section, but also mentions ethical standards in other sections including: Professional Issues, Coachee and Client Work, and Personal and Professional Skills.

The BPS code of ethics and conduct begins by describing the ways psychologists should behave in a professional manner, affirming that the document applies to all psychologists regardless of the context in which they work, defining the term “client,” and providing additional
descriptions of appropriate decision making processes. Psychologists are urged to consider:

“What are the parameters of the situation? Is there research evidence that might be relevant? What legal guidance exists? What do peers advise? Is there guidance available from Health Professions Council or other relevant bodies?” (BPS, 2009, p. 7). The code itself includes approximately 90 standards in four distinct categories: respect, competence, responsibility, and integrity. A number of the standards are essential for a general code of professional ethics, such as respecting diversity, though some are quite relevant to the practice of coaching specifically (see Comparison of Various Coaching-Related Codes of Ethics, below).

Members of the BPS also have a number of additional resources available to them. They can consult the ethics column in *The Coaching Psychologist* and reflect on the various ethical scenarios frequently updated on the SGCP website, both of which help make members aware of ethical issues and also to help them think through issues they encounter in their own coaching engagements. The BPS’s *Guidelines for Professional Practice in Counseling Psychology* may also be a practical resource as it covers practitioner’s function and obligation in three domains: 1) self and clients, 2) self and colleagues, and 3) self and society (Law, 2010). In addition, the BPS has an advisory committee that is able to provide guidance and support to coaching psychologists if and when they are struggling with an ethical issue in their practice.

**The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) code of ethics.** The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) code, the most similar in structure to the APA according to Leach and Harbin’s (1997) comparison of 24 countries psychological ethics codes, contains general principles to guide psychologists towards ethical ideals and a list of enforceable standards of conduct. The code, now in its third edition, includes a preamble with descriptions of the structure of the code, appropriate uses, and responsibilities of the code to both personal
behavior and regulatory bodies. As Lowman (2013) noted, unlike the APA, the CPA code also provides unique sections in the preamble: a set of instructions of ethical behavior when standards seem to be at odds in particular situations, and an ethical-decision making checklist. The section, “When Principles Conflict” explains that all principles need to be evaluated and balanced in ethical decision-making, but when they are in conflict, the principles should be evaluated in the following order:

**Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons.** This principle, with its emphasis on moral rights, generally should be given the highest weight, except in circumstances in which there is a clear and imminent danger to the physical safety of any person.

**Principle II: Responsible Caring.** This principle generally should be given the second highest weight. Responsible caring requires competence and should be carried out only in ways that respect the dignity of persons.

**Principle III: Integrity in Relationships.** This principle generally should be given the third highest weight. Psychologists are expected to demonstrate the highest integrity in all of their relationships. However, in rare circumstances, values such as openness and straightforwardness might need to be subordinated to the values contained in the Principles of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Responsible Caring.

**Principle IV: Responsibility to Society.** This principle generally should be given the lowest weight of the four principles when it conflicts with one or more of them. Although it is necessary and important to consider responsibility to society in every ethical decision, adherence to this principle must be subject to and guided by Respect for the Dignity of Persons, Responsible Caring, and Integrity in Relationships. When a person’s welfare appears to conflict with benefits to society, it is often possible to find
ways of working for the benefit of society that do not violate respect and responsible caring for the person. However, if this is not possible, the dignity and wellbeing of a person should not be sacrificed to a vision of the greater good of society, and greater weight must be given to respect and responsible caring for the person (CPA, 2000, p. 2).

The “Ethical Decision-Making Process” section is a checklist of sorts that includes ten steps which may help practitioners think through ways to evaluate an ethical situation and to ultimately correct processes and procedures to help ensure similar issues are not problematic in the future (CPA, 2000, p. 3). The rest of the code is separated into four sections (Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons, Principle II: Responsible Caring, Principle III: Integrity in Relationships, Principle IV: Responsibility to Society) with a list of 168 enforceable standards covering topics such as informed consent, privacy, general caring, and development of society.

Comparison of Various Coaching-Related Codes of Ethics

Although, as Lowman (2013) suggested, the codes cover a number of similar categories, they are presented differently and have varying levels of clarity and additional supporting materials (Brennan & Wildflower, 2010), which could lead to differences in ethical decision-making. Gray (2007) suggested that due to distinct ethical codes from various coaching associations, it may be necessary for coaching bodies to consider the capacity of the codes to complement each other, the feasibility of conflict between the codes, and processes to resolve such issues.

The main overarching themes that surface from the ethical codes review include personal and professional competency, confidentiality, informed consent, and appropriate record keeping. Townsend (2011) suggested that these topical areas are well aligned with ethical principles and standards used in established professional fields such as medicine, psychotherapy, and
counseling. However, guidelines about conflicts of interest and boundaries of confidentiality between coach, coachee, and organizational client or sponsor are quite specific to the coaching profession and lie outside of other professional ethical codes (Townsend, 2011). Issues of organizational context raise questions such as: “Who is the client: the coachee or the organization? Whose benefit has priority? What is the responsibility of the coach to manage different value and interests between all stakeholders?” (Law, 2005). Table 2 displays a comparison of the ethical principles and guidelines of the five coaching bodies and three psychological associations followed by a review of the unique ethical categories. The process by which Table 2 was created was through analysis of the unique standards and guidelines within each code. The first two codes were compared which provided an initial set of structured categories. All additional codes and standards were then sorted within the existing categorical structure and added to as new categories emerged within the analysis. Table 2 represents the range of ethical categories across all eight codes.

**Competence.** Most professional codes address competence as an ethical standard and suggest that there is agreement among practitioners about the competencies, activities, and scope and applications of the work (Lowman, 2013). All five of the coaching ethics codes address competence, although to different degrees. The AC ethics code requires coaches to maintain both professional and personal boundaries: “with respect to maintaining their own good health and fitness to practice” and, “with respect to whether their experience is appropriate to meet the Client's requirements” (p. 1). Should coaches find themselves in a situation where they are mentally, physically, or professionally unable to meet the needs to the client, they are required to withdraw from practice or refer the coachee to another professional coach. The AC code directly addresses the issue of coaching a client who may be in need of clinical help: “Coaches are
required to be sensitive to the possibility that some clients will require more psychological support than is normally available within the coaching remit. In these cases, referral should be made to an appropriate source of care” (AC, 2013, p. 1).

Table 2

Comparison of Ethical Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Categories</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>APECS</th>
<th>EMCC</th>
<th>ICF</th>
<th>ISCP</th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>BPS</th>
<th>CPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal (fitness to practice)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (expertise)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting Diversity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationships</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding Harm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Record Keeping</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Assessments</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision and Development</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Requirements – Specific to Coaching</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Insurance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoiding Misrepresentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resolving Ethical Issues</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. AC = Association of Coaching; APECS = Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision; EMCC = European Mentoring and Coaching Council; ICF = International Coach Federation; APA = American Psychological Association; BPS = British Psychological Society’ CPA = Canadian Psychological Association.

The APECS code addresses competence in both its general principles and its standards. Coaches are asked to recognize the importance of context in the coaching engagement, which
suggests that coaches should work within the boundaries of work-related and organizational issues. It also requires coaches to: “ensure insights into the impact of their behavior on others” (APECS, 2007, p. 2) which gets at professional competence, albeit indirectly. In the qualifications section of the standards, competence is addressed by two guidelines. The first guideline states that coaches will be properly qualified to engage in their work and coaches are directed to the APECS accreditation criteria guideline. Approval requires a minimum of five years executive coaching experience, professional training with a recognized qualification in psychology (e.g. British Psychological Society (BPS), United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), etc.), a minimum of five additional years of personal executive business experience as a line manager or consultant, a commitment to development and supervision and a contribution to the Executive Coaching profession through publishing, conference presentations, research or design and facilitation of workshops. The second guideline addresses both contracting and competence in requiring coaches to: “ensure that the requirements of the coaching/supervision contract are within their professional ability to deliver or make clear to the client and the sponsor where the shortfall may be” (APECS, 2007, p. 3). This is an interesting standard as many coaches work with leaders and managers in industries that they may not have any background or experience with, and it would be important, according to this code, to address such a gap in professional knowledge.

The EMCC code addresses competence with two guidelines, one in the competence category and the other under the boundary management category. Coaches are required to “ensure that their level of experience and knowledge is sufficient to meet the needs of the client” and to “ensure that their capability is sufficient to enable them to operate according to the Code of Ethics and any standards that may subsequently be produced” (EMCC, 2008, p. 2). The
former directly addresses professional competence, but the latter could imply both personal and professional competence in its use of the word “capability.” These two guidelines are quite vague and do not speak to any professional qualifications that would ensure experience, knowledge, or capability.

The ICF code does not directly address professional competence or qualifications but does state coaches should: “... accurately identify coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, certifications and ICF credentials” (ICF, 2008, p.1). Although this addresses the ethical issue of misrepresentation it could be argued this statement assumes ICF coaches will have the qualifications and experience necessary to engage in coaching practice. However, the code does not address a need for coaches to distinguish for themselves and their clients the limits of their expertise and experience. The ICF code does address personal competence and requires coaches to be aware of any personal impairment that could affect either the ability of the coach or the relationship between the coach and coachee. The code adds, “...whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate, I will promptly seek professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate my coaching relationships” (ICF, 2008, p. 2).

The ISCP code speaks to competence in both its core values section and in its guiding principles. The core values section addresses the six R’s (i.e., rights, respect, recognition, relationship, representation, responsibility) of ethical behavior and “recognition” assumes that coaches will recognize the standards and limits of their abilities, the necessity of optimal mental and physical functioning to preserve personal competence, and “the limits of their knowledge, skill, training, education, and experience” (ISCP, 2011, p. 2). The “relationship” category includes a guideline, similar to the APECS and EMCC codes, that also requires coaches to work
within an appropriate context. This reinforces that coaches work not only within their own boundaries, but also work within the prescribed boundaries of the coaching engagement. The standards in the guiding principles section add that coaches need to both recognize their professional limits and also practice within them. If coaches find themselves in situations outside their expertise or competency, either personal or professional, they are advised to seek assistance from colleagues, their supervisor, or the ISCP Council. The ISCP uniquely addresses peer evaluation of competence and states that coaches should “seek professional help when they become aware of their or their peer’s own personal or health-related problems that impair their coaching practice; and refrain from practice when their professional competency is seriously impaired” (ISCP, 2011, p. 3). This code also suggests that coaching professionals will appropriately collaborate with other professionals if the coachee will benefit from the referral.

In comparison of the codes from coaching bodies on the standards of competency, two things stood out. First, the APESC and the ISCP exclusively address a number of guidelines that deal with the work done in coaching that could be categorized as professional competence—though the individual standards also vary widely between the two organizations. The APESC calls for coaches to engender healthy relationships with coachees and their sponsors, ensure insights into the impact of their coachees behavior on others, and create a community of self-learning and autonomy for both the coachee and the organization. Alternatively, the ISCP suggests that coaches apply evidence-based coaching psychology techniques, provide coachees with regular feedback, offer coaching support, and “maintain a dialogue with the coachees regarding the utility of coaching that is relevant to their needs” (ISCP, 2011, p. 5). These standards in particular help to describe the behaviors of coach competency so it can be more easily monitored, evaluated, and managed by coaches. Secondly, only the ICF and the ISCP
encourage coaches to suggest a change in coach to their coachees when they believe they would be better served by an alternative.

The APA addresses boundaries of competence in Section 2.01(a) of its ethics code and requires that “psychologists provide services, teach, conduct research with populations in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study or professional experience” (APA, 2002, p. 1063). Section 2.01(b) also suggests that if psychologists find themselves outside of their professional abilities based on “factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status” that they receive the proper training, experience and supervision, or that they refer that client to someone more competent in such factors (p. 1063). In coaching, these factors are undoubtedly important, though factors such as industry (e.g., shipping or technology) or leader level (e.g., executive or director) experience might also play into competency issues. The APA also addresses personal competency in Section 2.06 and requires psychologists to avoid activities they know will prevent them from professionally engaging in work activities and that if they become aware of any personal issues interfering with their abilities to perform their work that they seek professional help to determine if it is appropriate to continue with such work.

The CPA code (2000) addresses professional competence in the “Principle II: Responsible Caring” and compels psychologists to “offer or carry out (without supervision) only those activities for which they have established their competence to carry them out to the benefit of others” (CPA, 2000, p. 16). Additional standards mandate that psychologists consult with professionals or refer a client if they find themselves outside of their professional competency and that they remain “up to date with a broad range of relevant knowledge, research methods,
and techniques, and their impact on persons and society, through the reading of relevant literature, peer consultation, and continuing education activities, in order that their service or research activities and conclusions will benefit and not harm others” (CPA, 2000, p. 16). The CPA code speaks to personal competence, again in Principle II, and requires psychologists to seek help or withdraw from professional practice and responsibilities if they have a mental or physical issue that affects their effectiveness or would cause harm to a client. Psychologists are also encouraged to “engage in self-care activities to help avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others” (CPA, 2000, p. 17).

The BPS code (2008) addresses both personal and professional competence. Standard 2.4 requires that psychologists monitor their behavior for any warning signs they are practicing outside their personal competence, seek professional help with personal issues, withdraw from professional practice when competence is compromised, and encourage the same course of action for any colleagues. Standard 2.1, similar to other codes, requires psychologists to practice within boundaries of competence, partake in professional development, stay apprised of field research connected to their work, and request consultation and/or supervision with any challenges. Interestingly enough, the BPS code also has a unique section related to competence, Standard 2.2 (Standard of Ethical Decision-Making), which requires psychologists to engage in ethical thought processes including “reflecting upon established principles, values, and standards; seeking supervision or peer review; developing alternative courses of action in the light of contextual factors; and evaluating the outcomes to inform future ethical decision making” (pp. 15-16).
**Human relations.** All of the ethics codes address issues that may arise in the category of human relations or in the relationship between the coach, coachee, and the sponsoring organization, but again, not all codes cover every category.

**Informed consent.** The AC code does not use the language “informed consent” but does ask coaches: “to be frank and willing to respond to their client’s requests for information about the methods, techniques and ways in which the coaching process will be conducted” (AC, 2010, p. 1). Although this may imply that coachees and organizations be informed of any and all coaching-related items without having to ask the coach for such details, lack of direct language about informed consent could lead to ethical issues.

The APECS requires that coaches take necessary steps to guarantee all parties involved in a coaching engagement (e.g., coachee, coachee’s organization, etc.) understand the expectations and goals of the coaching work. Moreover, it also requires that coaches clarify the appropriate uses and limitations of the coaching engagement and relationship should an inappropriate expectation arise. It is not clear whether this refers to an inappropriate expectation on part of the coachee, sponsoring organization, or both. In contrast, the EMCC definitively addresses the coach, coachee and the organization with respect to informed consent as follows: “The coach will ensure that the expectations of the client and sponsor are understood and that they themselves understand how those expectations are to be met” (APECS, 2007, p. 2).

The ICF addresses informed consent in a number of places. In guidelines 15 and 16 of section 3, professional conduct with client, coaches are urged to: “ have clear agreements or contracts with my clients and sponsors” and “carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and any other terms of the
coaching agreement or contract” (ICF, 2008, p. 3). Guideline 16 in particular makes it clear the necessary components of informed consent.

In similar fashion to the other codes, the ISCP ethics code necessitates coaches to provide clients with a contract that spells out the terms and conditions of the engagement. While the ISCP does not necessitate that the coaches ensure clients understand the professional’s ethics code, arguably, such a requirement is implied. However, the ISCP also addresses informed consent in ways not discussed by the other coaching ethics codes. For example, the ISCP requires coaches to have informed consent from coaches and/or sponsoring organizations before releasing personal information or for using their information in research or publications.

The APA code’s section on informed consent, Section 3.10(a), requires that “when psychologists conduct research or provide assessment, therapy, counseling, or consulting services in person or via electronic transmission or other forms of communications, they obtain the informed consent of the individual or individuals using language that is reasonably understandable to that person or persons” (APA, 2002, p. 1065). Although the APA addresses informed consent as it applies to therapy in Section 10.01(a), it also covers a number of topics relevant to the coaching engagement. Psychologists are required to “inform clients/patients as early as is feasible in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and anticipates course of therapy, fees, involvement of third parties, and limits of confidentiality and provide sufficient opportunities for the client to ask questions and receive answers” (APA, 2002, p. 1072).

The CPA ethics code (2000) has 11 unique standards on the topic of informed consent. The most relevant coaching-specific guidelines suggest that psychologists develop and use consent forms with clients that explain informed consent; ensure clients are provided with a full understanding of the work engagement so they are fully able to consent, including “purpose and
nature of the activity, mutual responsibilities, confidentiality protections and limitations, likely
benefits and risks, alternatives, the likely consequences of non-action, the option to refuse or
withdraw at any time without prejudice, over what period of time the consent applies, and how to
rescind consent if desired;” and obtain ongoing informed consent as any new information
presented itself during the course of the activity (CPA, 2000, p. 11).

The BPS code has five standards about informed consent. The code requires that
psychologists ensure all clients “are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose,
and anticipated consequences of any professional service” and they “keep adequate record and
when, how and from whom consent was obtained” (BPS, 2008, p. 12). The code also includes
an interesting standard on withholding of information from clients suggesting it is only done
“when necessary to preserve the efficacy of professional services” (BPS, 2008, p. 14). This
might be relevant for internal coaches who would be required to keep confidential organizational
knowledge from employees they are currently coaching who are struggling with an issue in
connection to the privileged information.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is the protection of personal information in a
professional relationship such as communication, medical records, personal identifying
information about a client, assessments, or progress notes, and is one of the most important
ethical obligations in a professional relationship. Lowman (2013) warns coaches who do not
have a professional license that are bound by laws of “privilege” (e.g., a law, medical, or
psychology license) that they need to be clear with clients about the expectations and limitations
of confidentiality because such coaches could not promise confidentiality by law.

The APESC requires its coaches to explain confidentiality, including its use and
limitations, to the client, and it is also specifies that confidentiality covers personal information,
such as names and roles of coachees and sponsors, as well as commercial property such as business plans. The ICF confidentiality guideline does not cover types of confidentiality, but uniquely requires coaches to come to a clear agreement with their coachee and sponsoring organization about how information will be exchanged. The AC does not have a specific confidentiality standard, but rather refers to it as an important piece of the coaching contract. Coaches are urged to “spell out conditions” including confidentiality and required to be “accurate and consistent” about the limits to confidentiality (AC, 2013, p.1). The EMCC code, under the category of Integrity, compels coaches to maintain an “appropriate” level of confidentiality and to “disclose information only where explicitly agreed with the client and sponsor (where one exists), unless the coach/mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the client or others if the information is withheld” (EMCC, 2008, p. 2). Even though all the coaching ethics codes include reference to confidentiality, some are more explicit and detailed in what confidentiality should cover and how it should be contracted, and others are more ambiguous about its use and limitations. For example, in the EMCC code, is it the coach, client, or organization that determines the “appropriate” level of confidentiality?

The APA code addresses confidentiality in Section 4 “Privacy and Confidentiality” with a number of relevant standards. Standard 4.01, Maintaining Confidentiality, insists “psychologists have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium, recognizing that the extent and limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law” (APA, 2002, p. 1066). Standard 4.02(a) also necessitates that “psychologists discuss with persons and organizations with whom they establish a scientific or professional relationship (1) the relevant limits of confidentiality and (2) the foreseeable uses of the information generated through their psychological activities” (APA,
This standard in particular would be quite helpful in coaching, as it would start a conversation about confidentiality early in the contracting phase to help mitigate ethical issues. This section also addresses disclosures, consultations, and use of client information for teaching purposes – giving specific instructions about ways to protect client confidentiality in each situation.

The CPA ethics code (2000) includes similar standards for confidentiality as the APA code. Standard I.41 requires psychologists to “collect, store, handle, and transfer all private information, whether written or unwritten (e.g., communication during service provision, written records, e-mail or fax communication, computer files, video-tapes), in a way that attends to the needs for privacy and security” (CPA, 2000, p. 13). Standard I.43 requires psychologists to keep all information about clients, colleagues, research participants and others confidential from all other parties, and standard I.44 requires that the expectations and limitations of confidentiality be explained to all clients.

The BPS code (2008) covers issues of confidentiality in two capacities. The code advises coaches to obtain consent for disclosure of confidential information and also highlights the limitations of confidentiality in Standard 1.2, Standard of Privacy and Confidentiality.

**Contracting.** The AC code suggests that clients need to be fully informed of the terms and conditions of the coaching engagement, both prior to its start and throughout the duration. The Code specifies that the contract should include information about confidentiality, including limits to confidentiality, coaching fees, and number of sessions. The APECS code similarly covers, confidentiality, informed consent, number of sessions, and fees but also touches on the process of coaching, the ultimate goals of the engagement, who will be involved in the process and at what stages, and any cancellation arrangements.
The ICF ethics code includes a number of guidelines regarding contracting including: “I will have clear agreements with my clients and sponsor(s). I will honor all agreements or contracts made in the context of professional coaching relationships” and “…will carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial agreements, and any other terms of the coaching contract” (ICF, 2008, p. 3). The ICF is the only code that specifically refers to the sponsor in the contracting standards, though it does not list the specifics of the contract as thoroughly as the APECS code.

The EMCC code does not refer to contracting directly, but may indirectly address the topic with the standard on informed consent in requesting that coaches: “Ensure that the expectations of the client and the sponsor are understood and that they themselves understand how those expectation are to be met” (EMCC, 2008, p. 2). The lack of information around coaching contracts and the contracting process could lead to ethical situations. The ISCP code has a single standard concerning contracting and compels coaches to provide coachees the contract with terms and conditions of the coaching, including conditions of termination (i.e., client right to terminate), and the coaching fees (ISCP, 2011, p. 4).

The APA code has a number of standards that cover the components of contracting, though not specifically related to coaching. Section 3.07, “Third-Party Requests for Services,” mandates that “when psychologists agree to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, psychologists attempt to clarify at the outset of the service the nature of the relationship with all individuals or organizations involved. This clarification includes the role of the psychologist, an identification of who is the client, the probable uses of the services provided or the information obtained, and the fact that there may be limits to confidentiality” (APA, 2002,
In a typical coaching engagement, a coach is hired by an organization to work with a particular client. This standard would be helpful in a contracting phase with the client as it would clarify the relationships between the coach, organization and client, and it would make it clear what types of information would be provided to the organization. Standard 3.11, “Psychological Services Delivered to or Through Organizations,” covers a number of additional contracting details. This standard requires that:

Psychologists delivering services to or through organizations provide information beforehand to clients and when appropriate those directly affected by the services about (1) the nature and objectives of the services, (2) the intended recipients, (3) which of the individuals are clients, (4) the relationship the psychologist will have with each person and the organization, (5) the probable uses of services provided and information obtained, (6) who will have access to the information, and (7) limits of confidentiality” (APA, 2002, p. 1066).

Issues of fees and financial arrangements are covered in Section 6.04, which requires psychologists to specify a billing arrangement early in the professional relationship. Although not all coaching engagements are organized through a sponsoring organization, arguably, it could be assumed that a coach would cover the same types of contracting information with an ad hoc coaching client.

Though the CPA code does not use the term “contracting” specifically, it addresses the necessary issues of contracting and consent in “Principle III: Integrity in Relationships” under standard III.14, stating that “all information needed to establish informed consent or any other valid written or unwritten agreement (for example: fees, including any limitations imposed by third-party payers; relevant business policies and practices; mutual concerns; mutual
responsible; ethical responsibilities of psychologists; purpose and nature of the relationship, including research participation; alternatives; likely experiences; possible conflicts; possible outcomes; and, expectations for processing, using, and sharing any information generated)’’ needs to be made clear to the client (CPA, 2000, p. 24). The code also has an interesting section of standards on risk/benefit analysis that could be helpful in a coaching engagement. Standard II.13 requires psychologists to “assess the individuals, families, groups, and communities involved in their activities adequately enough to ensure that they will be able to discern what will benefit and not harm the persons involved” (CPA, 2000, p. 17).

Again, because the BPS code is a professional code of ethics for all psychologists, not just those involved in the practice of coaching, it does not cover “coaching contracting” specifically. The code does, however, make mention to two areas that might be important in contracting for executive coaching work. Standard 4.1, Honesty and Accuracy, under section (v), requires psychologists make clients aware of their professional fees, and Standard 1.4, Standards of Determination, under section (ii), mandates that psychologists make clients aware of their right to terminate the professional services. It is worth mentioning that this code does not explicitly spell out some of the more germane parts of a general psychological contract, including a description of the service, roles, desired outcomes, timeline for the services, etc., as do the APA or CPA codes do.

**Respecting diversity.** Only three of the five codes from coaching bodies make mention of respecting diversity in coaching practice. The AC code states: “(4) Coaches must be sensitive to issues of culture, religion, gender, sexuality, disability and race and all other forms of equalities and diversity” (AC, 2013, p. 1), although it is not made clear what it means to be “sensitive.” The APECS code does not have a direct standard for respecting diversity in a
coaching engagement, however, in the general guidelines section it requires coaches to respect
the rights and dignity of individuals and organizations, have awareness and sensitivity to
diversity, including race, culture, gender, and disability, and to have concern for honesty and
integrity in their work. The ISCP mentions diversity in both its code of ethics and its guide to
coaching psychology practice (a part of the ethics document that includes behavioral standards).
Under the “Rights” section of the code, the ISCP necessitates coaches to: “respect and value
coachees’ individual and cultural differences that they may bring into the coaching arena” (ISCP,
2011, p. 2). Under that same section, the ISCP further requires that coaches “use the coaching
methods and styles that are sensitive to coachees’ individual and cultural differences such as age,
gender, disability, race, religion/belief, and sexual orientation, etc.” (ISCP, 2011, p. 4). It also
states that coaches are not to use biased or discriminatory practices.

The APA code has two standards directly relating to diversity. First, Principle E, Respect
for People’s Rights and Dignity, affirms that:

Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to
privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. Psychologists are aware that special
safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities
whose vulnerabilities impair autonomous decision-making. Psychologists are aware of
and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age,
gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual
orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status, and consider these factors
when working with members of such groups. Psychologists try to eliminate the effect on
their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or
condone activities of others based upon such prejudices (APA, 2002, p. 1063).
Second, Standard 3.01, Unfair Discrimination, requires psychologists not to discriminate in their work based on “age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status” (APA, 2002, p. 1064).

The CPA code has four applicable standards related to diversity and discrimination. Notably, psychologists are required not to talk in a demeaning way based on personal characteristics including but not limited to culture, color, sex, gender, or sexuality, and not to condone or practice discrimination in research, teaching, practice or business activities. The BPS code (2008) addresses the same personal characteristics as the CPA code but also requires that psychologists “respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of clients, relevant third parties, and members of the general public” (BPS, 2008, p. 10).

**Termination.** Four of the five codes reviewed included standards that addressed issues relevant to the termination of the coaching engagement, though, of those, only two codes address the same ethical category. Both the AC and ICF codes focus on client right to termination. The AC states that coaches respect the coachees’ right to terminate at any time in the coaching engagement. The ICF code makes the same expectation of its members, but stipulates that the right to terminate is “subject to the provisions of the agreement or contract” (ICF, 2008, p. 3). This suggests that termination, as conceptualized by the ICF, may be a topic important in the contracting phase of the engagement to ensure agreement among the coach, coachee, and organization.

The ICF code also requires that the coach “be alert to indications that the client is no longer benefitting from the coaching relationship” (ICF, 2008, p. 3). Though worded somewhat differently, the ISCP code addresses a very similar concern in its category of “rights and respect,” and requires that coaches terminate a coaching relationship where they is evidence the
coachee is not receiving any benefit from the continuation of the engagement (ISCP, 2011, p. 4). Such a standard is very important in coaching as it helps coaches to remember that the needs of their clients come before the coaches’ own business needs.

The EMCC code includes a standard under the professionalism section that addresses the professional obligations after termination. Specifically it provides:

(5c) The coach will understand that professional responsibilities continue beyond the termination of any coach/mentoring relationship. These include: maintenance of agreed confidentiality of all information relating to clients and sponsors, avoidance of any exploitation of former relationship, and provision of any follow-up which has been agreed to (EMCC, 2008, p. 3).

The APA code includes a number of standards as applied to termination issues in coaching. Standard 3.12, Interruption of Psychological Services, requires psychologists to “make reasonable efforts to plan for facilitating services in the event that psychological services are interrupted by factors such as the psychologist’s illness, death, unavailability, relocation, or retirement or by the client’s relocation or financial limitations” (APA, 2002, p. 1066). Standards 10.09, Interruption of Therapy, and 10.10, Terminating Therapy, also state that psychologists: (1) need to attempt a resolution for the client if the contractual relationships ends (e.g., a company decides to cut its coaching program in the middle of the engagement to cut costs), (2) need to terminate therapy when client is no longer benefiting or being harmed by the service, and (3) need to suggest alternative service and providers (if appropriate) before termination (APA, 2002, 1072).

The CPA code’s standard I.30 mandates psychologists to “respect the right of persons to discontinue participation or service at any time, and be responsive to non-verbal indications of a
desire to discontinue if a person has difficulty with verbally communicating such a desire (e.g., young children, verbally disabled persons) or, due to culture, is unlikely to communicate such a desire orally” (CPA, 2000, p. 12). The code also specifically addresses termination of a particular activity if it is harmful to the client or is unnecessary.

The BPS code includes two sections concerning termination. The first requires psychologists to make clients aware of their right to withdraw from professional services. The second, Standard 3.2, Standard of Termination, also requires they “terminate professional services when clients do not appear to be deriving benefit and are unlikely to do so” (BPS, 2008, p. 18). The code also requires psychologists to refer clients when appropriate (BPS, 2008, p. 18).

**Multiple relationships.** Somewhat surprisingly, only the AC and ISCP codes have guidelines that deal directly with multiple relationships. The ISCP code compels coaches to think through any unforeseen impacts that multiple relationships could have on the coachee or the intended coaching outcome, whereas the AC code requires, in the event of multiple relationship, that the coach contract an agreement between all parties before continuing with the coaching engagement. The AC guideline is more directive and would likely be more effective in preventing ethical dilemmas or situations around multiple relationships as a result.

The APA code not only addresses how a psychologist should deal with multiple relationships, but it also gives a specific definition to help practitioners understand if they are actually dealing with a such a relationship. Standard 3.05, “Multiple Relationships,” defines multiple relationships as follows:

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person, (2) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with
whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or (3) promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person. A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist’s objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists. Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical (APA, 2002, p. 1065).

In part (b) of the above standard, the APA code also adds that steps need to be taken to resolve a “harmful multiple relationship” if one arises during the course of the professional relationship (APA, 2002). Unlike psychotherapy or traditional therapy settings, coaching frequently involves types of multiple relationships between the coach, sponsoring organization, and client being coached. Standard 3.05 helps the psychologist understand not only the description of a multiple relationship, but also ways to manage necessary relationships in a way such that a multiple relationship in and of itself is not an ethical violation.

The CPA code tackles the essential issue of multiple relationships with three standards that could be read almost as a decision-tree. Standard III.26 requires the psychologist to clarify the general nature of multiple relationships and obtain consent from all parties before moving forward with any work activities; Standard III.33 requires psychologists to do their best to completely avoid dual relationships; and, finally, Standard III.34 requires the managing or multiple relationships that are unavoidable (CPA, 2000).

The BPS code addresses multiple relationships in section 4.2, Standard of Avoiding
Exploitation and Conflicts of Interest. According to the code, psychologist should remain aware of and monitor dual or multiple relationships, avoid such relationships when they could lead to harm (i.e., conflicts of interest, exploitation), and alert relevant parties to the conflicting relationships and the issues that could result (BPS, 2008).

**Exploitation.** The APECS, EMCC, and ICF codes all speak to client exploitation. The APECS explains that the coach will not use his or her influence or position to exploit the client and will always behave in ways that are in the coachee’s and sponsoring organization’s best interests (APECS, 2007, p. 4). The EMCC references exploitation but in the context of exploiting former coaching clients after the end of the engagement, as aforementioned (see, Termination, above) (EMCC, 2008, p. 3). The ICF addresses exploitation in terms of physical contact, requiring that coaches: “(17) will be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern any physical contact they may have with clients or sponsors” (ICF, 2008, p. 3). Standard 18 of the ICF code also states that coaches will not have sexual contact with current coachees or sponsors (ICF, 2008, p. 3).

The APA code also addresses exploitative relationships in Standard 3.08 and prohibits psychologists from exploiting people they supervise, evaluate, or have authority over which includes clients, students, supervisees, research participants, and employees. “Exploitation” is defined in other standards to include the charging of improper fees (Standard 6.04, Fees and Financial Arrangements), improper bartering (Standard 6.05, Barter with Client/Patients), and sexual exploitation (Standard 7.07, Sexual Relationships With Students and Supervisees; Standard 10.05, Sexual Intimacies With Current Therapy Clients/Patients; Standard 10.06, Sexual Intimacies With Relatives or Significant Others of Current Therapy Clients/Patients; Standard 10.07, Therapy With Former Sexual Partners; and Standard 10.08, Sexual Intimacies
With Former Therapy Clients/Patients). However, it is important to note that Standard 10.05 refers to psychotherapy patients and not coaching clients; there are no direct standards requiring termination with coaching clients. Although issues with sexual conduct could be considered more sensitive in therapy settings, it is important to consider that a coaching relationship still involves an expectation of expertise on the part of the coach suggesting that the coach holds a position of power in reference to the client.

The CPA and BPS codes are not as comprehensive as the APA code in its coverage of exploitation. In the CPA code, Standards III.27 and III.28 suggest that psychologists should be aware of the power dynamics in therapy and supervision and to not engage in sexual relationships with clients or students (CPA, 2000). The BPS code only states that psychologists are to “refrain from abusing professional relationships in order to advance their sexual, personal, financial, or other interests” (BPS, 2008, p. 22).

**Harassment.** The APA code addresses both sexual harassment and other types of harassment in Standards 3.02 and 3.03. Standard 3.02 mandates psychologists to “not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist’s activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or education environment, and the psychologist knows or is told this or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context” (APA, 2002, p. 1064). Standard 3.03 compels that psychologists not engage in behavior that is harassing based on the factors of unfair discrimination described above (see supra, Respecting diversity, p. 46) (APA, 2002, p. 1065).

The CPA code is quite brief in its coverage of harassment and charges psychologists to
“abstain from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment” (CPA, 2000, p. 9). The BPA code also necessitates that psychologists refrain from harassment and further helps to define harassment as follows:

Unwelcome verbal or physical behavior when such conduct interferes with another person’s work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; submission to this conduct is made implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of a person’s education, employment or access to resources; or submission or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for decisions affecting a person’s education or employment prospects (BPS, 2008, p. 23).

Conflicts of interest. Conflict of interest, as explained by Townsend (2011) to be a professional coach specific guideline is only referenced by the ICF, EMCC, and ISCP. The ICF actually has four separate guidelines that address conflicts of interest, three of which address anticipated monetary advantages or benefits of such conflicts, which may impair or affect the coaching relationship. Of all of the guidelines around conflict of interest, only the ICF suggests that coaches should offer to remove themselves from a coaching engagement when a conflict of interest arises (ICF, 2008, p. 2). The EMCC and the ISCP advise coaches to “be aware” of such issues and although the EMCC requires coaches to “deal with them quickly and effectively to ensure no harm to the client or sponsor” they do not specifically address how to deal with them (EMCC, 2008, p. 3; see also ISCP, 2011, p. 3).

Lowman (2013) explained that although conflicts of interest, especially in coaching, are not ethically prohibited, “they must be identified and managed” (p. 81). Coaching by nature requires the management and periodic reevaluation of personal business development and proper
and appropriate care of the coachee’s best interests so it is rather surprising that all of the coaching codes do not address it in some capacity.

The APA code addresses conflicts of interest in Section 3.06 and mandates that “psychologists refrain from taking on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial, or other interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to (1) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their functions as psychologists or (2) expose the person or organization with whom the professional relationship exists to harm or exploitation (APA, 2002, p. 1065).

The CPA code (2000) addresses conflicts of interest with five distinct standards in Principle III: Integrity and Relationships. The most relevant to coaching requires psychologists to:

Not exploit any relationship established as a psychologist to further personal, political, or business interests at the expense of the best interests of their clients, research participants, students, employers, or others. This includes, but is not limited to: soliciting clients of one’s employing agency for private practice; taking advantage of trust or dependency to encourage or engage in sexual intimacies (e.g., with clients not included in Standard III.27, with clients’ partners or relatives, with students or trainees not included in Standard III.28, or with research participants); taking advantage of trust or dependency to frighten clients into receiving services; misappropriating students’ ideas, research or work; using the resources of one’s employing institution for purposes not agreed to; giving or receiving kickbacks or bonuses for referrals; seeking or accepting loans or investments from clients; and, prejudicing others against a colleague for reasons of personal gain (CPA, 2000, p. 26).
The BPS code, much in line with the standards from the APA and CPA, compels psychologists not to abuse relationships for other interests (personally, financially, or otherwise) (BPS, 2008). Unique to this code, psychologists are held responsible for any conflicts of interest and inequity of power even after a professional relationship has ended.

**Avoiding harm.** Many professional codes, including medical, counseling, and psychology ethics codes, state that professionals must act in a way that avoids harm to the client. Interestingly, of the coaching body ethics codes, only the ISCP code addresses this standard by asking coaches to: “Ensure the health and well-being of coachees and related stakeholders. Do not cause them harm under any circumstances” (ISCP, 2011, p. 3). The ICF code compels coaches to avoid harm while conducting research but does not directly address the “do no harm” concept (Lowman, 2013).

The APA, CPA and BPS codes all expressly address harm. The APA code in Standard 3.04 requires “psychologists [to] take reasonable steps to avoid harming the clients, students, supervisees, research participants, organizational clients, and others with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable” (APA, 2002, p. 1065). The CPA code’s standard II.2 similarly mandates that psychologists should “avoid doing harm to clients, research participants, employees, supervisees, students, trainees, colleagues, and others” (CPA, 2000, p. 16). The CPA code has a particularly interesting standard as it relates to avoiding harm in asking psychologists to “evaluate how their own experiences, attitudes, culture, beliefs, values, social context, individual differences, specific training, and stresses influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all efforts to benefit and not harm others” (CPA, 2000, p. 17). The BPS code uniquely requires psychologists to “avoid harming clients, but [to] take into account the interests of different clients may conflict. The psychologist
will need to weight these interests and the potential harm” (BPS, 2008, p. 18).

**Record keeping.** All of the coaching bodies’ codes of ethics refer in some capacity to the necessity of record keeping. The AC, APECS, and ICF codes require coaches to keep accurate records and to maintain the security of the records to protect against any third-party disclosure throughout the coaching engagement. The ICF standard also states that the coach will dispose of records at the appropriate time and the AC standard draws attention to current legal requirements for data and record keeping (e.g., data protection act) (ICF, 2008, p. 2; AC, 2013, p. 2). The EMCC speaks to the safety and maintenance of records and data but in the context of professional responsibilities that extend past termination (EMCC, 2008, p. 3). The ISCP refers to records under the rights and respect section and requires that coaches: “comply with requests by coachees who are withdrawing from services that any records by which they might be personally identified be destroyed” (ISCP, 2011, p. 4).

The APA code refers to record keeping and fees in Section 6 of its 10 sections. Psychologists are required to “control, maintain, disseminate, store, retain and dispose of records and data relating to their professional and scientific work in order to (1) facilitate provision of services later by them or by other professionals, (2) allow for replication of research design and analyses, (3) meet institutional requirements, (4) ensure accuracy of billing and payments, and (5) ensure compliance with the law” (APA, 2002, p. 1067). Standard 6.02, Maintenance, Dissemination, and Disposal of Confidential Records of Professional and Scientific Work, details how to protect confidentiality by appropriate maintenance of records, especially electronic record keeping where it is required to code or use other techniques to “avoid include of personal identifiers” (APA, 2002, p. 1067).

The CPA code and BPS code go into less detail than the APA code on the topic of
records. The CPA code only states in standard I.42 that psychologists are to “take all reasonable steps to ensure that records over which they have control remain personally identifiable only as long as necessary in the interests of those to whom they refer and/or to the research project for which they were collected, or as required or justified by law” (CPA, 2000, p. 13). The BPS code requires that psychologists maintain proper records and that they store them in a confidential manner (BPS, 2008).

**Use of assessments.** Research has shown that coaches utilize personality and 360-degree feedback assessments in coaching engagements to uncover behavior tendencies, areas for development, and perceptions of client behavior as it relates to effectiveness, communication, and other competencies (Williams, 2006; Del Giudice, Yanovsky & Finn, 2014; Sperry, 2013). However, none of the coaching body codes of ethics make reference to ethical guidelines for appropriate use of assessments in coaching.

The APA Ethical Principles (2002) has an exhaustive set of guidelines for assessments including the bases for assessments (9.01), use of assessments (9.02), informed consent in assessments (9.03), release of test data (9.04), interpreting assessment results (9.06), explaining assessment results (9.10) and maintaining test security (9.11). These would apply to use of assessments by psychologists conducting coaching. The CPA only has a single standard about assessments, which mandates that psychologists appropriately debrief the results of assessments in language that is understandable by the client (CPA, 2000, p. 24). The British ethics code (2008) does not make mention of assessments or their appropriate use.

**Supervision and development.** Supervision is considered by many researchers in the coaching field (Townsend, 2011; Bachnirova et al, 2005; Gray, 2007) to be a key way to develop an understanding and awareness of ethics, learn to navigate the complexities of ethical issues,
and increase effectiveness in coaching practice through supervised and collaborative reflection. Townsend (2011) explained that while coaching codes may be widely available and coaches may be aware of the guidelines and limitations, they might not always be actively using them in their practice. Supervision, therefore, is a way to keep ethics at the forefront of any coaches’ practice.

All of the coaching bodies, except the ICF, require coaches participate in supervision and continuous professional development, though in varying capacities. The AC requires coaches to regularly consult with a supervisor, whereas the APECS goes into considerable detail about supervision, requiring coaches to create an annual development plan with a supervisor and to participate in ongoing supervision (AC, 2013, p. 2; APECS, 2007, p. 4). The ISCP only suggests that coaches seek supervision “as part of CPD” though it is not clear what is really required in terms of professional development (ISCP, 2011, p. 2). Although all of the coaching body codes, with exception of the ICF, made reference to personal and professional development, the AC was the only one to require its members to complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) annually (AC, 2013, p. 2). The ISCP code only states that, “as members of ISCP, we value CPD and maintenance of high standards of their professional work” and does make it clear that CPD is an enforceable requirement (ISCP, 2011, p. 2). However, ISCP is the only coaching body to make reference to evaluating coaching outcomes to “inform future ethical decision-making,” a guideline that suggests practitioners should always be assessing their coaching practice to better inform their decisions and to strengthen their decision-making schemas. Alternatively, the APECS compels their coaches to participate in personal development but also requires them to contract an annual development plan with their supervisor (APECS, 2007, p.4). Organizations that require a minimum number of hours of professional growth experience or that otherwise enforce a development plan may help coaches to become
more self-aware and emotionally balanced, which could in turn help those coaches to more accurately evaluate ethical dilemmas.

Some of the coaching codes specify the importance of feedback and learning for professional growth. The AC code contains a standard that directly addresses a requirement to “monitor the quality of their work and to seek feedback wherever possible from Clients and other professionals as appropriate” (AC, 2013, p. 2). The APECS’s standard on feedback and learning is part of the code’s primary section on coaching qualifications. It maintains that coaches must be committed to learning, personal growth, and growth of professional knowledge. Specifically, coaches are asked to “invest in personal development work to enhance their self-awareness and emotional balance” (APECS, 2007, p. 3). The EMCC has a number of interesting standards related to learning. In the code’s “Context” section, coaches are asked to engender an environment that supports and focuses on learning for the coach, client and sponsor (EMCC, 2008, p. 2).

The APA code only addresses supervision and development very briefly in Section 2.03 and compels “psychologists [to] undertake ongoing efforts to develop and maintain their competence” (APA, 2002, p. 1064). For example, in California, to become a psychologist one needs to obtain 3,000 hours of supervised work experience, half of which can be earned during graduate school. Additionally, all licensed psychologists must participate in continuing education. In California, psychologists need to complete 36 hours of continuing education in the form of lectures, conferences, workshops, grand rounds, and other modalities each time they renew their license (California Board of Psychology, 2016).

In contrast, the CPA code has a number of standards that address both supervision and development. Psychologists are required to (1) contribute to the psychology field through
inquiry and expression of knowledge, (2) use new research to inform their practice, (3)
participate in and contribute to continuing education, (4) supervise new psychologists so that
they understand their ethical responsibilities, and (5) “engage in regular monitoring, assessment,
and reporting of their ethical practice” (CPA, 2000, p. 29). The CPA code, unlike most other
coaching body codes, does not address supervision, arguably because supervision is a
requirement of the profession of psychology in Canada as well. For example, in British
Columbia, practitioners are required to have five years of supervised experience: one year pre-
doctoral, one year post-masters internship, and three years of additional supervised practice
(Canadian Psychological Association, 2016).

The BPS code, in standard 2.3, Recognizing Limits of Competence, states psychologists
should “(ii) engage in continued professional development” (BPS, 2008, p. 16). Additional
standards applicable to development such as review of current field research have been covered a
previous section (see Competence, above) but the code also states that psychologists should “(iv)
seek consultation and supervision when indicated, particularly as circumstances begin to
challenge their scientific or professional expertise” (BPS, 2008, p. 16).

**Legal requirements.** Standard (10) of the AC code requires coaches to keep themselves
apprised of the legal requirements that will affect their work and to abide by such requirements.
The APECS code similarly necessitates that coaches will “observe and comply with UK or EU
requirements or those governing the geographic area in which they work” (APECS, 2007, p. 5).
The EMCC code addresses legality by requiring that coaches “act within applicable law and not
courage, assist or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unlawful,
unprofessional or discriminatory” (EMCC, 2008, p.3).
The APA mentions legal issues throughout its code (2002) with respect to conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and financial arrangements. It is possible the code does not remind psychologists to abide by the legal requirements because the profession itself mandates a standard of lawful practice and the ethics code only includes issues not addressed by the law.

The CPA code mandates that psychologists “familiarize themselves with the laws and regulations of the societies in which they work, especially those that are related to their activities as psychologists, and abide by them” (CPA, 2000). If those laws or regulations seriously conflict with the ethical principles contained herein, psychologists would do whatever they could to uphold the ethical principles. If upholding the ethical principles could result in serious personal consequences (e.g., jail or physical harm), decision for final action would be considered a matter of personal conscience (CPA, 2000).

The BPS code mentions in its introduction that psychologists need to be familiar with the legal requirements and regulations relating to their specific work contexts. Such legal requirements are operationalized in standards 1.2 and 2.2 of the code, which suggest that psychologists make the legal limitations of confidentiality known to their clients and that, if the BPS code is found to be in conflict with legal obligations, the psychologists are to “analyze such contradictions with particular care, and adhere to the extent possible to these ethical principles while meeting the legal requirements of their professional roles” (BPS, 2008, p. 16).

Professional insurance. The AC, APECS and ISCP codes mandate that their coaches have up-to-date professional liability insurance that specifically covers coaching as a professional activity. The APECS specifies that the professional liability insurance needs to be of at least £1 million and, when necessary, the coach also need to have Public and Employers’ liability insurance (APECS, 2007, p. 5).
The APA and CPA codes do not directly address the need to maintain professional malpractice insurance for coaching practice. Again, it might be possible that this is not addressed in these codes because it is less of an ethical issue and more of a licensure requirement of psychological practice. However, insurance is not always required for consulting or I-O psychologists as they practice in firms or private practice where the assumption is that their work is non-mental health focused. It is possible that ethical issues in coaching around insurance could surface and the APA and CPA do not adequately address these. The BPS code does not address insurance within the code or require member psychologists to have it, however, in the conclusion section the BPS “strongly recommends that members consider taking out professional indemnity insurance” (BPS, 2008, p. 25).

**Research and publications.** For empirical research to catch up to the practice of coaching it is absolutely necessary for coaches to participate in, conduct research, and publish studies for peer review, and for the field to provide guidelines around such practices. Though not germane to the practice of coaching, research is a necessary part of developing the coaching field. It will ultimately be important to include ethical guidelines around research and publications to do so in a way that safeguards those conducting and participating in research.

**Plagiarism.** The EMCC, in the ethical section of “Professionalism” includes standard (e), which implores coaches to “never represent the work and views of others as their own” (EMCC, 2008, p. 3). The ICF mimics the sentiments of the EMCC standard but adds, “I (the coach) understand that violating this standard may leave me subject to legal remedy by a third party” (ICF, 2008, p.2). The ISCP make mention of plagiarism in the overview of the category “Representation” and requires coaches to “provide due acknowledgment to the contributions from others who collaborated on work” (ISCP, 2011, p. 3).
The APA Ethical Principles (2002) speaks to plagiarism with standard 8.11, which states “psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally” (p. 1070). The CPA standard III.7 requires psychologists to “take credit only for the work and ideas that they have actually done or generated, and give credit for work done or ideas contributed by others (including students), in proportion to their contribution” (CPA, 2000, p. 23). Similar to both the APA and CPA, the BPS mandates that psychologists “claim only appropriate ownership or credit their research, published writings, or other scientific and professional contributions, and provide due acknowledgment of the contributions of others to a collaborative work” (BPS, 2008, p. 21).

**Conducting research.** Only the ICF speaks to ethical guidelines of research in coaching. Standard (6) states, “I will conduct and report research with competency, honesty, and within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines. My research will be carried out with the necessary consent and approval of those involved, and with an approach that will protect participants from any potential harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complied with the applicable laws of the country in which the research is conducted” (p. 2). This guideline is quite descriptive and reminds coaches to abide by subject guidelines, to obtain consent from participants, to structure any study to avoid harm, and to consult with specific country laws about conducting research studies.

The APA ethics code has an entire section dedicated to research and publications. The coaching-relevant codes include informed consent to research (8.02), deception in research (8.07), debriefing (8.08), reporting research results (8.09), plagiarism (8.11, see Plagiarism above), sharing research data for verification (8.14), and reviewers (8.15).
The Canadian Code (2000) addresses research in Principle III: Integrity in Relationships with a number of helpful standards. Psychologists are charged to (1) ensure their own and other’s research results are not misrepresented, (2) acknowledge limitations in their research, (3) communicate as completely and objectively as possible in their research, (4) be open about conflicts of interest that might affect or appear to affect research, and (5) have research peer reviewed before any publication.

The British Code of Ethics and Conduct (2008) has both a standard for protection and debriefing of research participants. Requirements include taking appropriate measure to avoid harm, informing participants of right to terminate participation, informing participants of research outcomes, ensuring appropriate representation in research results, and acknowledging potential limitations.

**Avoiding misrepresentation.** As Kauffman & Coutu (2009) reported, many coaches believe the field of executive coaching has not developed more professionally because coaches are essentially able to set up shop without appropriate training and credentialing. Addressing issues of misrepresentation can be important to protect the interests of the clients but also help to develop the professional practice of coaching.

The EMCC mandates that coaches clearly and accurately describe their professional abilities to potential clients and “to make no false or misleading claims...in any published material” (p. 3). The ICF has three standards that address misrepresentation. Standards (1) and (2) are nearly identical to those from the EMCC but the ICF also requires that coaches not to give “information or advice” that they know to be misleading or false. The ICF’s standards cover not only misrepresentation of the coach to potential business clients or false advertising, but also imply the misrepresentation of ideas or strategies used in the coaching session.
themselves. The ISCP, similar to the EMCC and ICF, require that coaches appropriately advertise their services and expertise such that they are “free of ambiguity and misleading statements” (p. 5).

All of the psychological codes address misrepresentation very similarly. The APA addresses misrepresentation in section 8.12, Publication Credit, and mandates that “psychologists take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed” (Ethical Principles, APA, 2002, p. 1070). Section 5.01, Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements, also requires psychologists to not make false or deceptive statements regarding research, practice or other work activities including “(1) their training, expertise of competence, (2) their academic degrees, (3) their credentials, (4) their institutional or association affiliations, (5) their services, (6) the scientific or clinical basis for, or results or degree of success of, their services, (7) fees or (8) publications or research findings” (p. 1067). The CPA Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2000), very similarly to the APA’s standard on misrepresentation, requires in standard III.2 that psychologists “accurately represent their own and their colleagues’ credentials, qualifications, education, experience, competence, and affiliations, in all spoken, written, or printed communications, being careful not to use descriptions or information that could be misinterpreted” (p. 23). The British code mandates psychologists to be candid “in representing their professional affiliations and qualifications, including such matters as knowledge, skill, training, education, and experience” and “in advertising their professional services and products, in order to avoid encouraging unrealistic expectations or otherwise misleading the public” (BPS, 2008, p. 21).

**Resolving ethical issues.** Of the coaching body ethics codes, only the ISCP has a standard that directly addresses code compliance among professional coaches. The standard
states that coaches “ensure that other members/peers and those working under their supervision also comply with this code” (p. 6). Unfortunately, this standard does not specify how a coach would ensure behavior of peers and supervisees comply with the code but it introduces an important idea of self- and collective-policing among professionals to maintain superior ethical standards. The ISCP also addresses the idea of ethical dilemma resolution. A standard under the “Relationship” category requires that coaches “resolve complaints, grievances and disputes with good faith and goodwill through fair and reasonable communication” (p. 5). If the ethical situation cannot be resolved, coaches are directed to the ISCP Council for additional resolution support.

The APA Ethical Principles’ (2002) section 1, Resolving Ethical Issues, addresses a number of interesting coach-relevant topics. Standard 1.03 for example, addresses conflicts between ethics and organizational demands and asserts that if psychologists find themselves in an organization where there is conflict with the ethics code, they are to identify the conflict, “make known their commitment to the ethics code” and attempt resolve the issue (p. 1063). Sections 1.04, Informal Resolution of Ethical Violation and 1.05, Reporting Ethical Violations, both help psychologists in evaluating and addressing the issue, depending on the level of violation and harm it is causing or is likely to cause a client.

With respect to resolving ethical issues both the Canadian Code (2000) and British Code (2008) requires psychologists to seek advice from colleagues or ethics committees when struggling with an ethical situation, report ethical violations when informal resolution is not possible, and consult with colleagues when there is conflict with law or regulation and an ethical principle.
Rationale and Objective for Current Research

Study 1

As stated previously, primary research questions that were considered by this study were:

- what are the ethical situations that have been encountered in the coaching field by executive coaches from a variety of professional backgrounds?
- can a majority of the reported ethical situations be classified into current ethical categories from coaching-relevant ethics codes?
- are coaches with different educational training (e.g., psychology-trained vs non-psychology trained) likely to report experiencing different types of ethical dilemmas?

Though there is a paucity of literature on the process by which ethical codes from the AC, APESC, EMCC, ISCP and ICF were created, it is reasonable to assume they all used similar sources such as established coaching and coach-relevant professional codes, because they generally align around the same categorical taxonomy. Similarly, since most coaching ethics codes appear to have been derived from similar existing ethics codes, it is possible that as a whole, coaching-relevant codes of ethics will have gaps when it comes to issues experienced in the field. Therefore, the following was hypothesized in Study 1:

**Hypothesis 1a:** The majority of collected ethical issues will fall into the ethical categories identified in Table 2.

**Hypothesis 1b:** There will be ethical issues that fall outside of the ethical categories identified in Table 2 requiring the addition of at least one new category.

Although it may be true that the eight ethical codes reviewed cover similar overarching ethical issues that Lowman (2013) described can “transcend specific ethical standards” (p. 70), some codes are more comprehensive in particular areas, such as the psychological codes’
coverage of assessments, conflicts of interest, avoiding harm, resolving ethical issues, and research. However, psychological codes may not address all of the ethical issues specific to coaching such as coaching specific legal and insurance requirements. Interestingly, none of the codes speak specifically to the ethical dilemmas of an internal coach who would be employed by an organization and coaching a particular client or clients who are employed at the same organization. Issues with coaching in this particular role could include role conflict, managing multiple relationships with coaching clients, and discussing privileged information that could be harmful to the organization (St John-Brooks, 2010). Therefore, the following was hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Non-psychology-trained coaches will submit fewer cases coded in the categories of assessment, conflicts of interest, avoiding harm, resolving ethical issues and research than psychology-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 2b:** Psychology trained coaches will submit fewer cases coded in the categories of insurance and legal issues than non-psychology-trained coaches.

**Study 2**

Study 2 attempted to address the question, “Are there group differences based on educational background in how executive coaches evaluate ethical situations?” Literature reviewed previously suggested ethics codes promulgated by professional coaching organizations do not cover as many areas of ethical conduct as psychological ethics codes. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that as a group, psychology-trained coaches, with required ethical training as part of the professional degree will be more aware of ethical situations in general. It is also possible that non-psychologists, some with less professional ethical training, may not recognize ethical dilemmas as often as psychologists because of less exposure to ethical case studies and decision-making strategies (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008). In addition, the enforcement of
psychological ethics codes, whether by promulgating association or by law, might lead the group to evaluate such situations more harshly than non-psychologist coaches. Psychological ethics codes in comparison to the coaching-specific coaches are much more robust and cover more ethical categories, suggesting that psychology-trained coaches may be trained to have stricter ethical boundaries in general. Based on the reviewed literature of current coaches and the applicability of their backgrounds to executive coaching, the following hypotheses were identified:

**Hypothesis 3a:** Psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach judgment as poorer than business-trained coaches who will evaluate coach judgment as poorer than other-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach behavior as less acceptable than business-trained coaches who will evaluate coach behavior as less acceptable than other-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 3c:** Psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach behavior as greater violations of professional behavior than business-trained coaches who will evaluate coach behavior as greater violations of professional behavior than other-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 3d:** Psychology-trained coaches will evaluate ethical behavior as needing a higher degree of sanction than business-trained coaches who will evaluate ethical behavior as needing a higher degree of sanction than other-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 3e:** Psychology-trained coaches will more accurately categorize ethical situations into the categories they represent than business-trained coaches who will more accurately categorize ethical situations into the categories they represent than other-trained coaches.
Detwiler argued (2008) that the “emergent” nature of ethics in organizational psychology had provided less time for ethical situations to occur, and that there may be less ethical training about how to handle such organizational situations, as distinct from clinical situations (p. 33). Research has also shown that in vignette testing of ethical situations clinical psychologists were more strict in their application of the APA ethics code and harsher in the assignment of sanction than I-O psychologists (Detwiler, 2008). Such research suggests that practitioners from different sub-disciplines of psychology may apply the ethics code in dissimilar ways to similar situations. It might also be reasonable to expect clinical psychologists practicing coaching to more harshly evaluate ethical issues in the coaching field because of their clinical theoretical orientations.

Lazurus & Zur (2002), reminded readers that clinical practitioners with different theoretical orientations may define acts considered harmful, and subsequently unethical, differently. Those from a psychodynamic perspective, for instance, may evaluate having dinner or playing tennis with a client harmful and a clear boundary violation, though a consulting psychologist may find those activities useful if not a commonplace component in their work. Therefore, the following hypotheses were identified:

**Hypothesis 4a:** Clinical psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach judgment as poorer than I-O psychology-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 4b:** Clinical psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach behavior as less acceptable than I-O psychology-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 4c:** Clinical psychology-trained coaches will evaluate coach behavior as greater violations of professional behavior than I-O psychology-trained coaches.

**Hypothesis 4d:** Clinical psychology-trained coaches will evaluate ethical behavior as deserving a higher degree of sanction than I-O psychology-trained coaches.
CHAPTER II
Study One

Method

Procedure

Participants who worked as internal or external coaches or professionals working in the coaching field as either coaching talent managers or coaching project managers were contacted and recruited for this study through social networking websites, e-mail distribution lists, newsletters, through personal e-mails, and face-to-face communication at coaching and consulting conferences between November 2014 and February 2015. Requests to participate in the study were sent in electronic messages over LinkedIn.com and Facebook.com, through e-mails to personal coach contacts, coaches within learning and development departments in organizations and coach affiliate associations including, but not limited to: The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), Coach Source, the Association of Coaching (AC), and The International Coach Federation (ICF). Participants at a Society for Consulting Psychology conference were also asked to participate in the study through use of a paper version of the study. A total of two surveys were collected in this manner and the researcher then manually entered the collected responses into the online survey platform. Snowball sampling through word of mouth was used to recruit additional participants consistent with Underhill’s (2011) observation that coaches often times find themselves in the same network and “know each other well” (p. 34). This strategy allowed for the collection of a broad range of cases from coaches from different educational programs, industries, professions, professional groups, and countries. Although it was not possible to estimate the overall total number of coaches recruited for this study, a total of 462 coaches were contacted for participation from CCL, 367 coaches were
contacted for participation from ICF, and 1,000 Coach Source coaches received request to participate through company newsletters. The research aimed to collect at least 100 vignettes of ethical situations or until only redundant cases were being submitted.

Except for those approached in person, participants received an invitation to the survey through Qualtrics, a password protected online research host, which included a brief description of the study, the qualifications for participation, and access to the survey link. The first pages of the survey included the participants’ bill of rights, an informed consent form, and an assurance of confidentiality. Participants were then asked to describe an ethically challenging or troubling incident they had encountered during a coaching engagement, followed by a short set of demographic questions, including educational background, coach training experience, years coaching, coaching certifications, age, country of residence, gender, and ethnicity. The final screen of the survey provided a brief thank you note from the researcher.

Participants

Participants for Study 1 included coaches who identified themselves as internal or external executive/corporate, managerial or business coaches (rather than life or personal coaches) and professionals working in the coaching field, as coaching talent or project managers. The coaches were required to have either an advanced degree (e.g., master’s or doctorate in business, psychology, sociology, JD, etc.) or a certificate from a coach-training program. All participants were over the age of 18 and able to consent to participation independently. Additionally, participants were free to end their participation at any time during the survey process, have their questionnaire removed from data analysis upon request and/or contact the researcher to report any complaints or concerns. Because of a low barrier to entry into professional coaching, coach qualifications vary widely. As such, it was difficult to identify the
size of the population of practicing executive coaches; this study thus can only be generalized to the segment of the population whose qualifications match those of the gathered sample.

A total of 68 survey responses were collected for Study 1. The sample consisted of four respondents who reported no ethical situation or left the ethical response question blank (5.8%) and 90 ethical cases from the remaining 64 participants. Of the 64 participants who responded with an ethical situation, six were professionals working in the coaching field and 58 were executive coaches. Demographics for the overall sample and the three groups are displayed in Table 3.

The six respondents who indicated they were professionals in the coaching field (i.e., working as coaching talent or project managers, rather than as executive coaches) included \( n = 4 \) females and \( n = 2 \) males, all of whom were located in the United States. Age of participants (\( n = 6 \)) ranged from 59 to 70 (\( M = 64.67, SD = 4.20 \)). The average number of years respondents (\( n = 6 \)) reported working in the coaching field ranged from 16 to 31 (\( M = 24.5, SD = 5.8 \)). In terms of highest educational background, 16.7% of participants stated they held an undergraduate degree (\( n = 1 \)) (e.g., BA/BS), 16.67% with a master’s degree (e.g., MA/MS/MBA) (\( n = 1 \)), 16.67% with a professional degree (e.g., MD/JD/DDS) (\( n = 1 \)), and 50% stated they had a doctoral degree (e.g., PhD/EdD). In terms of ethnicity, participants identified 33.33% Hispanic or Latino (\( n = 2 \)), 50% White, not Hispanic or Latino (\( n = 3 \)), and 16.67% Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino (\( n = 1 \)).

The sample size (\( n = 58 \)) of executive coaches consisted of \( n = 35 \) females and \( n = 23 \) males. A majority of the sample, 82.76% (\( n = 48 \)), indicated the United States to be the country of primary residence. Age of participants ranged from 30 - 77 (\( M = 54.47, SD = 12.59 \)). In terms of ethnicity, participants identified 91.40% White, not Hispanic or Latino (\( n = 53 \)), 1.72%
Table 3

Demographics of Study 1 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Psychology-trained</th>
<th>Non-psychology-trained</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Overall Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>$M = 51.63$</td>
<td>$M = 57.5$</td>
<td>$M = 64.67$</td>
<td>$M = 54.47$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Practice</td>
<td>$SD = 13.77$</td>
<td>$SD = 10.6$</td>
<td>$SD = 4.20$</td>
<td>$SD = 9.52$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>$M = 12.58$</td>
<td>$M = 12.82$</td>
<td>$M = 24.5$</td>
<td>$M = 13.81$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 7.52$</td>
<td>$SD = 6.61$</td>
<td>$SD = 5.8$</td>
<td>$SD = 7.71$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.67%</td>
<td>64.29%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>60.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.33%</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>39.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity of respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>89.29%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American/Black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.33%</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>67.86%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Professionals = professionals working in the coaching field (e.g., coaching talent or project managers)
Black, not Hispanic or Latino \((n = 1)\), and 6.90\% Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino \((n = 4)\).

In terms of educational background, 51.72\% \((n = 30)\) of the executive coaches had an advanced degree in psychology. Of those 30 coaches, 70\% \((n = 21)\) had obtained a psychology degree only, 23.33\% \((n = 7)\) coaches had both a psychology degree and a business degree and 6.67\% \((n = 2)\) had a degree in psychology, a business degree and an additional advanced degree in another field, such as a law degree. Of those 30 coaches with an advanced degree in psychology, 60\% \((n = 18)\) had a PhD, PsyD or another doctoral level degree in psychology and 40\% \((n = 12)\) had a master’s degree. Psychology trained coaches had degrees in the following areas of psychology: Clinical \((n = 6, 20\%)\), Counseling \((n = 3, 10\%)\), Consulting \((n = 5, 16.67\%)\), Industrial-Organizational \((n = 6, 20\%)\), Organizational \((n = 4, 13.33\%)\), Dual Clinical/I-O \((n = 2, 6.67\%)\), Social \((n = 1, 3.33\%)\), and 4.67\% reported other \((n = 3)\).

A total of 48.28\% \((n = 28)\) of executive coaches were non-psychology trained. Of those 28 coaches, 7.14\% \((n = 2)\) had a PhD or another doctoral level degree, 3.57\% \((n = 1)\) had a professional degree, 67.86\% \((n =19)\) had a master’s degree, 17.86\% \((n = 5)\) had a bachelor’s degree, and 3.57\% did not specify degree level \((n = 1)\). The non-psychology trained group had quite a variety of educational foci including business administration, leadership, management, social work, organizational development, law and education; 39.29\% \((n = 11)\) had business degrees, 42.86\% \((n = 12)\) with non-psychology non-business advanced degrees (e.g., JD, Master’s in theology, Master’s in organizational development, etc.) and 17.86\% \((n = 5)\) with no advanced educational degree (e.g., BS in Biology, BA in Fine Arts, etc.).

Of the 58 executive coaches, 82.76\% \((n = 48)\) indicated having attended at least one coach-training program. The coaches reported percentage of total work/practice engaged in
coaching or coaching-related activity as such: 5.17% reported 10% or less of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 3), 18.97% reported 11-25% of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 11), 18.97% reported 26-50% of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 11), 18.97% reported 51-75% of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 11), 18.97% reported 76-90% of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 11), and 18.97% reported 26-50% of their work is engaged in coaching (n = 11). Thirty-nine coaches (67.24%) indicated having at least one coaching certification (i.e., ICF, BCC, etc.). Country demographics of each group and for the entire sample are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology-trained Coaches (n = 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Professionals = professionals working in the coaching field (e.g., coaching talent or project managers)*

**Measures**

**Ethical Situation Survey.** In efforts to collect ethical situations that had happened in the field, survey participants were presented with the following prompt:
Please describe any incident(s) you found ethically challenging or troubling that you experienced or witnessed in your coaching practice. Please label multiple ethical issues by numbering each unique situation. Incidents may be connected to individual, team or group coaching, or be part of internal or external coaching engagements. Please include as much background information as possible on the situation to help the researcher understand the ethical situation(s) involved in each case.

**However, please do not include the names of any persons involved or any organizational identifiers for purposes of confidentiality.**

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to respond to demographic questions including age, gender, country of residence, ethnicity, educational background, years employed as a coach, coaching certifications and/or coach training, and average time spent coaching the prior year. Coach participants were also asked about coaching specific information including years in the coaching field, percent of time spent coaching in the previous year, and membership status in coaching associations. The full set of questions asked of professionals working in the coaching field can be found in Appendix A. The full set of questions asked of executive coaches can be found in Appendix B.

**Data Analysis**

The submitted cases were evaluated through content analysis, a qualitative research and analysis method. Hsieh & Shannon (2012) identified three distinct methods of content analysis including conventional, directed, or summative. Conventional content analysis, which involves creating categories from the data, is most commonly used when existing theory or literature is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2012). Directed content analysis, in contrast, is an approach used most often when a topic is supported by theory and existing research. This method, in contrast
with conventional content analysis, uses fixed and structured categories to sort data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2012). Summative content analysis involves categorizing and measuring word counts to explore language use followed by an interpretative analysis of the words to unpack underlying meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2012). This study employed the use of directed content analysis using the existing ethical taxonomy (see Table 2), as informed by the current coaching-relevant ethics codes, by which to sort the ethical vignettes. The cases collected were then analyzed using summative content analysis to gain greater understanding of the ethical situations.

The researcher was responsible for an initial editing of the ethical vignettes to assure consistency of grammar and language, length, and to remove confidential information not relevant to the case. The purpose of this review and revision was to keep the length of the cases comparable, and to remove cases from analysis that might be overly revealing (to protect confidentiality) or not applicable to this study. Four external classifiers who were naïve to this study and hypotheses read all vignettes collected and classified them into the ethical categories from Table 2. A fifth classifier was also asked to participate as the tie-breaker. The evaluations were intended to provide interrater reliability and consistency. All classifiers were recruited by the primary researcher and asked to participate in the current study. The classifiers had been in the coaching field for at least 5 years, had taken courses or seminars on ethics, and were actively employed members of coaching organizations (e.g., CCL, etc.) or worked in their own coaching firms.

The process for classifying the vignettes was as follows: Each classifier reviewed all vignettes. As each vignette was reviewed, each classifier determined whether the content of the vignette was representative of an existing category in Table 2 and then classified as such, or, if not, suggested a new classification category to appropriately represent the new ethical situation.
Rather than simply sorting each case into a primary category of which it was representative and losing complexity of the situations, it was determined that when a vignette involved multiple ethical categories it was to be coded for all relevant categories, following De Haan, Bertie, Day & Sills (2010). For each case, vignettes that were classified in the same category by at least three of the four classifiers (75%) were retained in that category. When only two classifiers coded a case in a category (i.e., 50% of the classifiers), then the fifth classifier was asked independently to code the case to determine its final classifications. For each case, the creation of new ethical categories followed these rules. Each classifier, in his/her independent review of the set of cases, was allowed to suggest a supplemental or alternative category for any case for which none of the existing categories were felt to fit. After the individual coding phase the original four classifiers were e-mailed a list of the four proposed new categories, asked to re-read the 13 cases thought to represent one or more new categories, and determine if they would have assigned those categories had they originally been available. For instance, instructions for one case read “Reread Case 33. Would you have listed category 22 if it had been available?” For each case, if at least three classifiers (75%) assigned the new category, it was retained. If only two (50%) assigned the new category for a specific case, the fifth classifier was asked to code the case to determine the final taxonomy.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b were evaluated using the results of the content analysis review by the classifiers and the final ethical category taxonomy. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were evaluated using a chi-squared and Fisher’s exact tests to evaluate the measure of association between the ethical categories and educational background of the coach. These tests were used to determine whether specific categories of ethical dilemmas were reported in greater frequency by a particular group of coaches (e.g., psychology trained, non-psychology trained, etc.).
Results

The case data collected in Study 1 included 90 ethical cases and helped to answer the research question of what types of ethical situations coaches were encountering in the field. Categories 17 (professional insurance), 18 (plagiarism), and 19 (conducting research) were not used to classify any of the submitted ethical cases. The most frequently used classifications on the basis of content were: confidentiality (18.8%), contracting (15.9%), multiple relationships (12.9%), conflicts of interest (12%), avoiding harm (7.3%), and informed consent (4.7%). Table 6 displays the final ethical category classifications and percentage per category. The external reviewers used 25 categories (21 categories from Table 2 plus four new categories) a total of 233 times to code the 90 cases ($M = 2.6, SD = 1.4$). For example, Case 1 was categorized in four categories: category 4 (confidentiality), category 5 (contracting), category 11 (conflicts of interest), and category 14 (use of assessments). Case 51 was the only case not ultimately categorized because none of the ethical category assignments from individual reviewers had agreement of 60% or more. A total of four categories were added by the external reviewers: 1) category 22 (observing unethical behavior; unethical/unprofessional business practices observed by coach); 2) category 23 (coaching for performance problems; misuse of coaching to address poor performance); 3) category 24 (coaching versus therapy; blurring the lines between coaching and therapy); 4) and category 25 (psychological issues; coachee’s personal psychological issues best handed by psychological professionals).

To determine interrater reliability, analyses were computed for each of the 90 cases to calculate agreement between each pair of classifiers. Fleiss’ Kappa (Fleiss, 1977), a statistical measure used to assess the reliability of agreement with a fixed number of raters was also calculated for the entire sample of 90 cases. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.
Table 5
Pairwise Agreement Ratings and Fleiss' Kappa for Interrater Reliability in the Coding of the Ethical Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier 5</th>
<th>Classifier 1</th>
<th>Classifier 2</th>
<th>Classifier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classifier 1</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifier 2</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifier 3</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifier 4</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multirater agreement (Fleiss' Kappa): 0.29

Pairwise agreement scores between classifiers for individual cases ranged from 0.52 – 1 with an average per pair across all 90 cases of 0.85. Fleiss’ Kappa values ranged from -.06 (poor agreement) to 0.74 (substantial agreement) with an average value of 0.29, described by Landis and Koch (1977) as fair agreement across all 90 collected cases. Fleiss’ Kappa is known to be sensitive to the number of categories and is not expected to be large when using a large number of categories (Dollard & Auld, 1959) so an overall agreement of 0.29 suggests a reliable agreement of codes for the ethical cases across the five classifiers.

Of the 90 cases collected, 13.33% were from professionals (n = 12), 43.33% were from psychology-trained coaches (n = 39), and 43.33% were from non-psychology-trained coaches (n = 39). The number of cases submitted per participant ranged from one to six (M = 1.44, SD = 0.92). Twelve ethical cases were collected from the six participants who identified as professionals working in the coaching field with the number of cases per participant ranging from one to six (M = 2, SD = 2). Seventy-eight ethical cases were collected from the 58 participants who identified as executive coaches with the number of cases per participant ranging from one to four (M = 1.38, SD = 0.75). The 25 ethical categories and numbers and percentages of cases submitted per group are displayed in Table 6.
### Table 6
*Numbers and Percentages per Ethical Category of Submitted Cases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Categories</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Psychology-Trained Coaches</th>
<th>Non-psychology trained coaches</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal (fitness to practice)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (expertise)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting Diversity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationships</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of Interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding Harm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record Keeping</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Assessments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision and Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Requirements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Insurance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding Misrepresentation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Ethical Issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing Unethical Behavior</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching for Performance Issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching versus Therapy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main Hypotheses

Testing of Hypothesis 1a. It was expected that most of the ethical situations submitted would be able to be classified using the categories found in Table 2. Overall, 219 of the 233 (94%) classifications used to code the collected ethical situations encountered by coaches and coaching professionals in the field were of existing ethical categories taken from psychological and coaching-specific ethical codes. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported.

Testing of Hypothesis 1b. Though most cases were expected to fall into pre-determined ethical categories, it was hypothesized that there would be issues requiring the addition of at least one new category. A total of four categories were added by the classifiers – Category 22 (observing unethical behavior; unethical/unprofessional business practices observed by coach), Category 23 (coaching for performance problems; misuse of coaching to address poor performance), Category 24 (coaching versus therapy; blurring the lines between coaching and therapy), and Category 25 (psychological issues; coachee’s personal psychological issues best handed by psychological professionals). These findings seem to support the idea that categories may be missing from current psychological and coach-specific ethics codes, thus Hypothesis 1b was supported.

Testing of Hypothesis 2a and 2b. It was predicted there would be differences in the number of cases submitted in specific ethical categories (i.e., use of assessments, conflicts of interest, avoiding harm, resolving ethical issues, insurance and legal requirements) by psychology-trained and non-psychology trained coaches. In general, results showed that psychology-trained coaches did submit more cases than non-psychology-trained coaches in all expected categories. For example, psychology-trained coaches submitted 19 cases in conflicts of interest versus eight submitted by non-psychology-trained coaches. Non-psychology trained
coaches submitted more cases in one of the two categories hypothesized – four cases by non-psychology-trained coaches were submitted versus only two cases by psychology-trained coaches. None of the cases submitted were coded for legal issues.

To test this hypothesis statistically, a 2 (psychology versus non-psychology-trained coaches) × 25 (number of total ethical categories from Study 1 analysis) chi-square was used to analyze whether there was a difference in the number of cases submitted by the 58 executive coaches in any particular categories. The chi-square, $\chi^2(1) = 23.01, p = .34$, indicated no significant difference between the two groups in number of coded cases submitted per ethical category. However, there was significant cell depletion in the chi-square analysis, meaning that many ethical categories had fewer than five total cases submitted by either psychology or non-psychology trained coaches. For instance, in the category of professional competence, only three cases from psychology-trained coaches and two cases from non-psychology trained coaches were submitted, both less than the required five cases per cell. An assumption of the chi-square test is that there will be less than 20% cell depletion total (i.e., at least 80% of cells will have at least 5 cases) and in this case there was over 70% cell depletion. Fisher’s exact test, which is more robust in cases of cell depletion, was also run. These results indicated no significant difference in the number of cases submitted per ethical category, $p = .33$. The sample was also evaluated such that all categories with less than five cases were collapsed into a single category to investigate if that might be affecting results in the chi-squared analysis. Again, the chi-square, $\chi^2(1) = 4.87, p = .68$, indicated no significant difference between the two groups in number of cases per ethical category. Thus, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported.

---

2 Professionals working in the coaching field were only asked for their highest level of education not area of study so the analyses of hypotheses 1a and 1b were done only using the 58 executive coaches.
Discussion

As coaching continues to develop and grow it seems important to understand the ethical considerations important for professional practice. The gathering of ethical situations in Study 1 was a step towards understanding some of the ethical issues and concerns that coaches have actually encountered in their practice. The collection of such data in a systematic way is important because it helps coaches and coach organizations understand typical situations they might consider before engaging in a coaching engagement. It is also particularly useful to get a sense if ethical codes are actually relevant and useful in navigating ethical situations currently happening in the field and identifying areas were the codes might be lacking to highlight areas for development or improvement.

The majority (78%) of ethical cases collected in Study 1 concerned specifics of the coaching relationships; in particular, categories of confidentiality, contracting, multiple relationships, conflicts of interest, informed consent, termination, and avoiding harm. These ethical topics are the focus in related areas of study such as psychology, training and development, and management more so than other categories and thus there might be heightened awareness of such situations in practice (Newman, Robinson-Kurpius Fuqua, 2002; Anderson, Williams and Kramer, 2012). It is also likely that confidentiality, multiple relationships and conflicts of interest are considered part of contracting so coaches have more direct interaction with these categories than other ethical considerations. For example, a coach might include in the process of contracting agreements about how different types of information will be documented or shared. The contract might specify the components of confidentiality, including limitations, and be clear that a coachee’s manager would only be told about high-level themes of the engagement but not specifics of any session. This type of contract specificity would help to
manage both confidentiality and multiple relationships. We might also expect an interest with practical dimensions of the coaching relationship because these are more likely to be presented in the day-to-day dilemmas of coaching work.

It is, in some ways, encouraging that a majority of ethical cases fell within categories covered by current coaching and coach-relevant ethics codes. This may suggest that a number of ethical issues and concerns may be mitigated by consulting codes prior to drafting coaching contracts and may also stand to support a coach who is asked violate an ethical guideline. For example, an ICF-trained coach asked for specific session details by a boss about a coachee may first remind the coach about the contract details about confidentiality. If the coach gets additional pushback, she might also remind the boss that she abides by the ICF ethics code which requires coaches to come to a clear agreement with their coachee and the organization about the way information will be exchanged.

It might also be useful to review some of the specific codes and guidelines per ethical category in their usefulness in solving ethical dilemmas. Confidentiality, as an example, was addressed by all eight codes, though there were varying levels of specificity across them. Forty-four cases collected in this study were found to be representative of confidentiality challenges or dilemmas within a coaching context. The majority of the cases seemed to be addressed by the codes as they touched on limits of confidentiality and requests for information outside the scope of the contract. However, a number of cases were about the emotional requirements asked of a coach when the coach learned information that would either help or hinder the coachee or organization during a confidential meeting or through correspondence that was intended to remain confidential. Take for example an HR coach who learns a coachee, who is currently in escrow on a new home and having a new baby in several months, is to be terminated at the end
of the month due to organizational restructuring and a subsequent reduction-in-force. The coach might feel conflicted; his loyalty to the organization and to the employee. According to the EMCC code, the coach is to maintain an “appropriate” level of confidentiality. It is possible one coach might describe that as divulging to the individual that he should reconsider buying a new house at this stage in his career. Another might feel that “appropriate” confidentiality dictates saying nothing about the organizational decision. Though it is not plausible to create a code to cover all situations, it might be useful for coaching codes to be more specific about how to talk about confidentiality, how to manage issues that are likely to arise between employees and employers, and to spell out in more practical and concrete detail currently vague guidelines.

One theme that emerged in the confidentiality cases not addressed by the codes was the ability to be effective as a coach when coaching multiple people in an organization who had either reporting or competitive relationships. Some of the relevant guidelines can be found in the Multiple Relationship category, but these confidentiality cases spoke to the boundary issues of confidentiality and potential lack of safety from the coachee’s perspective in sharing information with the coach. Codes might consider a greater level of specificity in this area and require coaches to have upfront contracting conversations about a coachee’s concerns. It might be prudent to always consider the dynamics of having a single coach work with peers or a boss and his or her direct report and organizations should allow a coachee to request a different coach if he or she is uncomfortable sharing information.

One finding from Study 1 was that there was no statistically significant difference in the numbers of cases submitted per ethical category from psychology and non-psychology trained coaches, suggesting that there are no differences in the types of situations experienced based on educational background. For example, it was hypothesized that there might be potential
differences in the category of “assessments” because that category is only found in psychology ethics codes. However, both the Center for Creative Leadership and Coach Source, two organizations through which the sample was collected, are known for using assessments and measurement in their coaching work. Even if non-psychology coaches were unaware of the ethical pitfalls of using assessments from their academic background, it is likely they would be oriented to appropriate uses, limitations, and potential issues of use once connected with the organization.

Another reason may be the cases coaches chose to submit. The survey prompt asked for any and all ethical issues encountered with the intention of collecting a robust representation of the types of situations experienced, but it is possible coaches from both groups were selective with what they shared and only reported more typical or common situations (i.e., competence, confidentiality, informed consent, etc.). Alternatively, coaches may have reported those cases they felt most troubled by or hardest for them to know how to respond to. Either way, coaches appeared to recognize and experience similar situations, based on those that were reported.

Less than five cases submitted were related to ethical issues of internal coaches and this is likely more related to the current sample than a lack of ethical issues experienced by internal coaches. Both CCL and Coach Source are vendors of external coaching services so very few, if any, of those coaches are currently, or have ever worked as internal coaches.

Areas for Ethical Code Development or Extension

In the analysis of the collected cases, several findings emerged. Two areas of content in cases submitted were not captured by any of the categories or guidelines found in currently coaching-relevant codes and seem important areas for code development were: 1) management of the overlap between coaching and mental health services, such as therapy, and 2) observing
unethical behavior in coachees or other organizational partners. Two additional issues that surfaced in content analysis across multiple cases and categories were, 3) determination of the coaching client and, 4) managing ethical situations with competing ethical concerns.

The first area not captured by current codes is the specific responsibility for coaches to address mental health issues in a coaching environment. Bono, Purvanova, Towler, and Peterson (2009) suggested that there are actually no “clear lines to separate coaching from therapy” (p. 264). Grant (2001) proposed that coaching and psychotherapy reside on a continuum and many have suggested that differences in actual practice do actually shape a distinction. These would include types of client issues addressed, ways coaches and clients see each other, and type and frequency of interaction (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 2000; Levinson, 1996).

The issue, then, of addressing clinical issues in coaching is related to the educational background of the coach in question. For a non-psychology trained coach it could be argued that dealing with any clinical issues would fall outside the boundaries of professional competence. However, the question arises of how a business-trained coach would recognize clinical concerns or signs in the absence of any training to do so. This is the argument of studies reviewed earlier suggesting that business trained coaches were less likely to refer coachees; presumed to be due to a lack of recognition of clinical issues (Berglas, 2002; Wasylyshyn, 2001). The question then is, what is the general responsibility as a coach to know when to refer a client for mental health or alternative care? Should coaching practice be standardized to the extent that all coaches could appropriately handle such situations? A non-clinically psychology trained coach could be argued to know more than non-psychology trained coaches, but what would they need to do to practice competently? For a clinical psychology-trained coach, the issue is in understanding when the requirements of that of a psychologist supersede that of the coaching role. Anderson, Williams,
and Kramer (2012) argued that confidentiality, similar to that of mental health professions, is also the “cornerstone” of the coaching relationship (p. 177) but that:

should a coaching client indicate harm to self or others, or plan to commit some type of act against the sponsor (the third party paying for the coaching services), the coach would have grounds to breach confidentiality, or at the least, to seek consultation about whether to maintain or break confidentiality (p. 178-179).

In psychotherapy relationships, psychologists can disclose information without client consent to protect the patient, in the case of suspected domestic violence or if the client talks about harming themselves. They can also disclose information to protect the public from harm, especially in the case of child abuse or harm to the elderly or people with disabilities (APA.org). Is a psychotherapist required to do the same in coaching contexts? Should they be prefacing their coaching work with these unique limitations to confidentiality due to their professional backgrounds?

It is worth mentioning that only 4.3% of cases were captured by this content area missing from current codes. However, if the trend of clinically-trained psychologists transitioning to more organizationally focused practice continues, it will be important to think about the necessary distinctions between educational training within coach cohorts and the areas of guidance necessary for uniquely trained coaches including psychologists, lawyers, physicians and other licensed professionals. One clear message from the cases submitted is that it is not entirely clear how clinical psychology-trained coaches are to delineate between their clinical work and their coaching work. The APA and other psychology associations might argue that when psychologists are doing coaching work they still operate as psychologists and need to follow the appropriate ethical codes, but to what extent is this work different and how should
those differences be addressed when the code is supposed to apply to all psychologists working across disciplines? If psychology wants a role in the coaching field, it needs to determine if people are actually practicing psychology when they are coaching and how it aligns with or diverges from the current code. Specific guidance from the APA about how executive coaching and therapy are similar and/or different, for example, might be useful in this area. They might also be well positioned to aid non-mental health psychology-trained and non-psychology-trained coaches in understanding how to recognize and address such issues that balance ethical concerns of both competence (APA Ethics Code Standard 2.01a, 2002, p. 1063) and avoiding harm (APA Ethics code Standard 3.04, APA, 2002, p. 1065).

The other ethical concern not captured by current codes concerns what happens when a coach observes unethical behavior of a coachee or client during a coaching engagement. One question surfaced by the cases is, what responsibility does a coach have to address unethical behavior directly with the person or group behaving badly? There are practical questions here, certainly, but it might be argued that coaches have an ethical obligation to raise ethical questions with clients concerning their own behavior. Again, it is relevant that only 1 of 90 cases or 0.4% of the total cases were reflected in this content area. Although the sample is quite small, it seems worthy of reflection because this issue isn’t covered in a single code of ethics and it seems likely that coaches in trusted advisor roles within organizations would be privy to information about or exposure to ethical misconduct.

The ethical responsibility might extend even further if a coach confronts a coachee and no action is taken to correct the unethical behavior. In that case, what responsibility, if any, do coaches have to report unethical behavior they witness? In terms of reporting obligations, certain codes such as the APA and ICF have clear guidelines around what to do when a
colleague misbehaves, but not what to do when a client does. Is that in fact the responsibility of the codes to address this issue? These questions may only help to surface other equally important ethical questions such as, who is the client?, a question deemed foundational to ethical practice in organizational situations (Fuqua, Newman, Simpson, & Choi, 2012). A coach who views the organization as the client may potentially show loyalty to the organization by not disclosing unethical behavior externally and rather seek resolution of the ethical issues first internally with key contacts or stakeholders. Alternatively, coaches who view their coachees as being their client and who witness the negative impact of unethical organizational behavior may feel compelled to report such behavior to agencies outside the organization. This might be an important area for specific organizational ethics codes to address, to help distinguish the legal and ethical issues for coaches who contract with the organization.

In addition to the ethical area addressed above, a number of cases saw the articulation of the question, who is the client? In many cases, the coach specified he or she had been hired directly by an organization or was hired by a coaching firm to work with a coachee inside an organization. Either way, the coach was managing relationships with his or her direct client (coachee) and the payer (organization) or the client (coachee), client organization and the payer (coaching firm). Thus, with the prevalence of coaching within organizations the interpretation of the “who is the client?” question by coaches could be argued to have quite an impact on ethical behavior. In at least 10 of the confidentiality cases coaches were asked by a coachee’s boss or by the HR business partner (HRBP) for updates, data (assessment or otherwise) or information about the coaching engagement, which was in direct violation of the confidentiality agreement. In most cases, coaches would remind the boss or HRBP about what they contracted around coachee confidentiality, only divulging information if the coachee consented to it, and the issue
would end there. Though the organizational sponsor might argue to be the client (as a representative of the organization) because he or she is paying the bills, rather than the coachee, specific confidentiality contracting done upfront could help support the appropriate ethical response. However, not all situations are as simple or straightforward as that approach would suggest. For example, one case collected in Study 1 described a coach hired by an organizational development firm to work with a coachee going through an individual leadership development program. In the course of the coaching engagement, the coachee shared that she was unhappy at the company and was feeling mistreated. The coach reported feeling torn between the loyalties to the organization and to the coachee he or she was supporting. Some coaches, viewing the organization as the client, might refocus the coaching conversation towards things he or she is passionate about and work to help the coachee feel more committed, to his or her work, but also, ultimately, to the organization. Other coaches, who view the coachee as the client, might advise the coachee to leave the organization or at least entertain other options, in efforts to protect the wellbeing of the coachee and to avoid additional harm. In this case the question of who is the client? becomes an important consideration in ethical decision-making and would likely be differentially impactful, both on the coachee and the organization. Most of the codes reviewed above suggest that coaches “take reasonable steps” to avoid ethical issues or to resolve them, but what does that look like in this case? Two coaches may fundamentally see this ethical situation differently, depending on how they see both the organization and the coachee, and they might each take what they believe to be reasonable steps to act in the best interest of the “client” with varying results. Codes might better serve coaches by providing a list of questions or discussion points to guide conversations about this topic with clients – to help provide more role clarity for all involved in coaching engagements.
Finally, the issue of how to deal with situations with competing ethical considerations is missing from all of the reviewed codes except the CPA code. Consider two of the submitted cases – Confidentiality Vignette 2 and Avoiding Harm Vignette 2. In Confidentiality Vignette 2, a coach reports to HR when she discovers evidence of sexual harassment by her coachee; in Avoiding Harm Vignette 2, a coach reports to HR a coachee who is potentially suicidal. In each of these cases, the coach must weigh the ethical concerns of confidentiality and avoiding harm. In the confidentiality case, the harm the coach is avoiding is of a direct report of the coachee so that adds a level of complexity and might also concern ethical considerations of managing relationships. Depending on the experience and personal ethics, coaches might evaluate these situations differently and that could lead to differences in addressing ethical situations – differences that might ultimately do harm to the coachee. Coaching ethics codes need to do more to guide professionals in either how to rank the importance of competing ethical issues.

One of the added categories by external classifiers was misusing coaching for performance issues, used to code three of the 90 cases, two from psychology-trained coaches and one from a non-psychology trained coach. It has been documented that coaching is used for both remedial (derailing managers) and developmental (high potential employees) purposes (Kiel et al, as cited in Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Hall et al., 1999) so, according to some of the definitions reviewed above, coaching a manager for performance issues falls within standard and traditional uses of coaching. However, it is possible the coaches who submitted these cases thought there were ethical concerns raised by the use of a coach to address substandard or unacceptable performance by an employee when not first addressed by the coachees’ managers. An internal coach, for example, who is sent several coachees from the same manager, all of who report the manager not appropriately training, developing, or actually managing them, may feel
that coaching is inappropriate and possibly unethical as a substitute for proper management practices. It is possible in this case that the coach sees the manager as unloading his or her responsibility as a manager onto a coach. It is also possible for a coach to see this as an ethical concern if coaching is being used to pretend the performance issue is being addressed when a decision has already been to terminate the employee. In either case, this issue might not be as widely agreed upon within the coaching community to be an ethical issue, but curious it was considered as such by a number of different coaches. Detwiler (2008) suggested that ethical determinations of right and wrong “are more tied to a theoretical basis of prediction of harm rather than empirical evidence that negative impact has occurred or might occur” (p. 82).

Doichon and Nizet (2015) also argued that personal ethics are not considered in current coaching codes and suggested “that a code fits neither all coaches nor all situations” (p. 297). It is likely that some would argue this to be an ethical concern and some coaches would find it a typical and suitable part of the work.

Ultimately, it might be important for coaches who feel strongly about this issue to be clear with the organizations with which they work and for that they feel coaching is not a substitute for management, but rather a supplement to performance and development conversations that should be taking place between an employee and his manager. Philosophical alignment around ethical concerns between a coach and the organizations he or she works for would also go a long way in aiding the management of multiple relationships.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the approach taken to recruit participants. Though the researcher recruited through a number of known coaching organizations (see above for the numbers of participants recruited for participation from known sources), the response rate could
not be calculated due to the unknown number of potential participants due to using the snowball method data collection.

A second limitation was the way in which new ethical categories were identified. Each classifier was able to suggest new categories for any particular case. Four new categories were proposed for 13 cases. Classifiers were contacted through email and presented with the four new categories up for review and specifically asked per case, if they would have assigned the proposed category, had it originally been available. It is possible this method was more leading and potentially biased classifiers to agree to the classification of the proposed categories for those specific cases. To correct for this in future studies, researchers might provide classifiers with the cases and a full list of the categories without drawing attention to the new categories. Future studies might also consider having the external reviewers discuss the new categories as a group and come to a consensus about new categories used to represent cases.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

More work needs to be done to understand the specific types of ethical challenges facing coaches working in the field. This research, along with St John-Brook’s (2010) work on ethical issues of internal coaches and Doichon and Nizet’s (2015) article on ethical situations and coaching codes, are the only studies identified that attempted to empirically capture and classify ethical situations currently happening in the field. This type of research helps to increase awareness of potential ethical pitfalls for coaches, but it also helps the coaching organizations and other coach-relevant organizations, like psychological associations, understand how the codes need to develop to keep pace with the situations being experienced by practitioners. Future research may look to use interviews in contrast to surveys to collect ethical dilemmas to allow for a richer, more nuanced understanding of such situations.
It might also be interesting to collect ethical dilemmas from both coachee’s and organizations’ perspectives to see how they align with those of coaches and how they are being addressed by current coaching ethics codes. This type of research might also help to uncover the true negative impact of coach behavior as distinct from the theoretical expectation of harm, as described by Detwiler (2008). As discussed above in the case of misuse of coaching, different coaches may have different perspectives about what is unethical and potentially harmful, though it might be useful to understand the impact of such perspectives and subsequent behavior, if any, from a client perspective.
CHAPTER III

Study 2

Method

Procedure

Professional coaches were solicited in a number of ways to participate in Study 2. Participants who worked as internal or external professional coaches were contacted and recruited for this study, as in Study 1, through mass email lists and membership directories of the previously reviewed coaching organizations, social networking websites such as Facebook.com and Linkedin.com, newsletters, through personal e-mails, face-to-face communication at coaching and consulting conferences, and through coach affiliate associations including, but not limited to: The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), Coach Source, and The International Coach Federation (ICF). Again, snowball sampling through word of mouth was used to recruit additional qualified participants. Although it was not possible to estimate the overall total number of coaches recruited for the study, a total of 443 coaches were emailed requests for participation for Study 2 from CCL, 860 coaches received e-mail requests for participation from ICF, and 1,099 Coach Source coaches received request to participate through company newsletters.

Each e-mail inviting participation in the study instructed recipients only to participate in the study if they had not participated in Study 1 and had either an advanced degree or a coach-training certification. All participants were provided a link to the survey, which directed them to an online research platform and included a brief description of the study, and qualifications for participation. The survey indicated that participants who identified as psychologists also needed to coach as part of their practice to participate in the survey. The first pages of the survey
included the participant’s bill of rights, an informed consent form, and an assurance of confidentiality. The participants were then asked to read vignettes created as a result of Study 1 and to evaluate the acceptability and judgment of the coach, evaluate the potential professional violation of the behavior and assign appropriate sanction of a number of ethical vignettes. The vignette survey was followed by a short set of demographic questions.

Data were collected using a self-report method as is frequently used in research on ethics and ethical decision-making (O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). Concerns about the inability of self-report method to account for social desirability response (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011) will be discussed.

**Vignette creation and pilot testing.** To investigate if executive coaches from different educational backgrounds evaluated ethical situations differently, modified stimulus material was used from the submitted cases in Study 1 for vignette testing in Study 2. The vignettes ultimately used for the final vignette survey were developed using an iterative process. Initially, 12 cases, four from three of the most frequently coded categories (confidentiality, multiple relationships, and contracting) were chosen. A pilot study was conducted to test if the set of chosen vignettes were representative of the categories they intended to represent. Results of the first pilot were inconclusive and were not ultimately used to inform the final vignette study, but indicated that vignettes may have been conceptualized or interpreted by pilot group participants to represent multiple ethical dimensions. A new set of vignettes from collected case material was chosen by the researcher in attempts to choose vignettes that were more clearly

---

3 An initial pilot study (n = 12) was conducted with graduate students from Alliant International University who had taken courses in both coaching and ethics. Participants were asked to identify the primary issue represented in the vignette, and those with high enough agreement with the intended category were to be made available in the final survey. Unexpectedly, agreement results ranged from 8.3% to 83.3%, although only 2 of 12 vignettes reached the required threshold to be considered in the final survey.
representative of only a single ethical category. In a second pilot, four cases that had been coded from each of three categories – confidentiality, conflicts of interest, and multiple relationships – and five cases from the category, avoiding harm, for a total of 17 cases were administered to the original five external coach classifiers ($n = 5$). The classifiers were asked to read each vignette and answer the following question:

1. The primary ethical dilemma depicted in this vignette is: (choose one)

A drop down menu of ethical categories from Table 2 were provided, including the intended categories of confidentiality, conflicts of interest, multiple relationships, and avoiding harm. Results are outlined in Table 7. The bolded percentages indicate where pilot participants rated a vignette as primarily representative of the category to which it was assigned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Primary Dilemmas Depicted in Pilot 2 Vignettes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 5</td>
<td>N = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>Avoiding Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 3</td>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 5</td>
<td>N = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>Avoiding Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>Harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>Conflicts of Interest Vignette 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 5</td>
<td>N = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Rel.</td>
<td>Conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding Harm</td>
<td>Resolving issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of Interest Vignette 3</td>
<td>Conflicts of Interest Vignette 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Dilemma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 5</td>
<td>N = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>Conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrepresentation</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of six of the eight vignettes used in the final study were categorized by at least 60% \((n = 3)\) of pilot study participants with the category the vignettes were intended to represent. The two vignettes from the avoiding harm category included in the final survey were categorized by less than 60% \((n = 3)\) of the pilot study participants with the intended category, suggesting that the vignettes were representative of multiple ethical areas. Implications will be discussed.
Participants

Participants for this study were professional executive, managerial, or business coaches. Criterion for inclusion was coaches who had been coaching professionally for at least one year, had coached a minimum of five clients and had not participated in Study 1 of the research. As in the first study, all participants were required to be over the age of 18 and able to consent to participation independently. Participants were also able to terminate participation at any time during the survey process, remove their questionnaire from data analysis and/or report any complaints or concerns to the primary researcher.

Coach participants were recruited who had three unique educational backgrounds: 1) coaches with advanced degrees in psychology including organizational psychology (i.e., consulting psychology, I-O psychology, etc.) and clinical psychology (i.e. PhD or PsyD in clinical psychology), 2) coaches with advanced business-related degrees, and 3) coaches with no advanced degree in psychology or business but with at least a certificate from a coach-training program, referred to as other-trained coaches for abbreviation purposes.

A total of 144 survey responses were collected for Study 2. Demographics for the overall sample and the three groups are displayed in Table 8. Participants were classified into the three categories of coaching and professional education. Seventy-seven coaches were in the psychology-trained coach group, 31 of whom reported obtaining a degree in clinical or counseling psychology, 22 with a degree in I-O, organizational or consulting psychology, and 24 in other psychology subfields including dual clinical/I-O, educational, and social psychology. Thirty-three coaches were in the business-trained coach group, the majority of whom reported obtaining a master’s degree (78.8%) with foci including business administration, marketing.
Table 8

Demographics of Study 2 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Psychology-trained</th>
<th>Business-trained</th>
<th>Other-trained</th>
<th>Overall Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>$M = 59.79$</td>
<td>$M = 56.36$</td>
<td>$M = 57.11$</td>
<td>$M = 58.37$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Practice</td>
<td>$SD = 9.49$</td>
<td>$SD = 8.04$</td>
<td>$SD = 9.42$</td>
<td>$SD = 9.23$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity of respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American/Black</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
finance and strategy, and human resources. Thirty-four coaches were in the other-trained coach group and included coaches from a variety of educational backgrounds and levels of education, reflective of the multidisciplinary practice of coaching. A large percentage in the other-trained coach group reported obtaining master’s degrees (41.2%) in fields including rehabilitation counseling, philosophy, computer science, engineering and social sciences, though several (11.8%) reported holding doctorate or professional degrees in fields including law, chemistry, and education. Six coaches (17.7%) reported their highest level of education being an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree in fields such as pharmacy, political science, and communication and one coach (2.94%) reported obtaining only a high school diploma and a coach training certification.

A total of 104 participants reported earning a single degree in one of the three categories (46 in psychology, 24 in business, and 34 in other) but the remaining 40 participants reported earning two or more degrees, which placed them in multiple educational categories (i.e., PhD in clinical psychology and Master’s in business, etc.). For the current study, participants who indicated earning an advanced degree in psychology were categorized in the psychology category, participants who indicated an advanced degree in business but not psychology were placed in the business category and the rest of the sample was placed in the other-trained group.

In the psychology-trained group there was overlap such that 16 respondents had an advanced degree in both psychology and business, 11 had an advanced degree in both psychology and another field (e.g., anthropology, law, etc.), and four participants reported earning three advanced degrees, one in psychology, one in business and one in another field. Analysis of these psychology subgroups was run against those with only a psychology degree (n = 46) but there were no statistically significant differences between the groups in the evaluation
of coach behavior, therefore the larger psychology group was kept together for analysis. In the business-trained group, 24 participants reported earning a business degree only whereas nine participants reported earning a business degree and an advanced degree in another field. Again, analysis was run of the subgroup \((n = 9)\) against the business-trained only group \((n = 24)\) and there were no statistically significant differences in the evaluation of coach behavior with the exception of one item. The business subgroup was kept together with the business-trained only participants because variation affected only a single item and to ensure a large enough sample size in the business-trained group for adequate power.

In the psychology group, 36.4% of the participants were male, 59.74% were female, and 3.86% did not specify; in the business group, 36.4% of the participant were male and 63.6% were female; and in the other group 23.5% of the participant were male, 70.59% were female, and 5.91% did not specify. Results from a Chi-Square, \(\chi^2(2) = 1.69, p = .43\), indicated no significant differences between the three groups in terms of gender. Across the full sample \((n = 144)\), 63.19% of coaches report being female, consistent with other studies (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008; ICF, 2012) that also found female majority in their coaching studies. There were no significant differences between the groups on age, \(F(2, 138) = 2.03; p = 0.136\). A one-way ANOVA indicated that there were statistically significant differences in years of practice, \(F(2, 139) = 11.2; p < 0.01\) such that coaches trained in psychology \((M = 16.47, SD = 8.24)\) reported being in practice longer than both business trained coaches \((M = 10.30, SD = 7.07)\), with a mean difference of 6.24, 95% CI [2.3, 10.2] and other trained coaches \((M = 10.27, SD = 7.67)\), with a mean difference of 6.48, 95% CI [2.5, 10.46].
Measures

**Vignette Survey.** The final vignette survey, displayed in Table 9, was comprised of eight vignettes, 2 each from the 4 intended categories: confidentiality, conflicts of interest, multiple relationships, and avoiding harm.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Vignettes used in Study 2 Vignette Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Ethical Dilemmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. An executive coach, Bob, contracts with a law firm to coach Mark, a third year associate, for a year. Shortly after beginning the work with Mark, Bob receives a call from Mark’s HR manager telling him it is rumored Mark is having an extramarital relationship with another colleague in the firm. The HR manager asks Bob to report back anything he hears related to the rumors. Prior to receiving the call from the HR manager, Bob and Mark had talked at length about the rumors and challenges related to the relationship in question. Bob, concerned about Mark’s well-being and his position in the firm, reports back to the HR manager about what he and Mark talked about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Annie was coaching Mac, the CFO of a retail company. To get some additional feedback about the perception of Mac and his impact on people in the company, he suggests that Annie interview one of his female direct reports. He said she was not only a friend but that she would give honest and useful feedback. Annie tells the direct report that their interview is confidential and will be used only to further Mac’s leadership skills. However, during the interview, the direct report tells Annie that Mac had on numerous occasions come onto her and tried to engage in a sexual relationship. She also reports that he had done this to a number of other female direct reports. Annie immediately reports what she learned to the company’s director of HR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Ethical Dilemmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tarek, an executive coach, is approached by a VP of a biotech firm about working together in an executive coaching engagement. Tarek works with the VP and the company’s HR department to iron out the contract and the company agrees to pay for the coaching services. In the first coaching session the VP tells Tarek that he intends to leave the company within a year but wanted the company to pay for coaching before doing so. Tarek says nothing to the company about the VP’s intentions or hidden agenda around the coaching engagement and finishes out the contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tom was coaching a manager in a high potential program when he became aware of improper, though not illegal, behavior, by the manager. When Tom brought the situation to the coachee’s attention he seemed terribly embarrassed and swore he would stop the behavior immediately. The coachee also suggested to Tom that he could recommend Tom’s coaching to a number of his colleagues if he would just keep the incident confidential. Tom agreed to keep the situation private as long as he saw the behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
change and told his coachee he would be grateful if he would pass his contact along to other interested colleagues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Relationships Ethical Dilemmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sherry, an executive coach, is also a licensed clinical therapist. Over the course of a 6-month coaching contract with Veronica, a newer manager, it comes to light that Veronica is struggling with psychological issues including social anxiety and depression. At the end of the coaching engagement, Veronica asks for a 6-month extension but the company denies the request. Veronica then asks Sherry if she will take her on as a therapy patient so they can continue their work. Sherry agrees and takes her on as a clinical patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John had been coaching the CEO of a large organization for some time when the CEO requested that John also coach 3 of his direct reports. Some of the challenges identified through the coaching process with the CEO had directly involved these individuals and John had observed dynamics in the team he felt were quite toxic to the team's effectiveness. John agreed to contract with all three direct reports and continued to coach the CEO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoiding Harm Ethical Dilemmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sally, an internal coach, was contracted to start a formal coaching engagement with Tim. Several sessions into the engagement Sally recognized that she didn’t like Tim – she was annoyed by the way he talked, put off by his political and religious beliefs, and in disagreement about a number of things he had shared. Sally knew that her feelings for Tim were negatively affecting the quality of work but she continued to coach him through the end of the contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard, an executive coach, is also a licensed psychotherapist. Richard has been working with Bill, the CEO of a small textile company for several months, in a coaching engagement. During a session, Bill tells Richard that he has thought seriously about suicide in the last couple of months due to several bad quarters for the company. Richard believes that the mental health issues displayed in the coaching environment are serious enough to require immediate lifesaving actions. Richard contacts Richard’s HR department to report the situation and get him help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After reading each vignette, participants were asked to respond to the following questions adapted from Detwiler’s (2008) study:

1. How would you rate the coach’s judgment in the vignette? (1 = Very Poor Judgment; 7 = Very Good Judgment)
2. How would you rate the acceptability of the coach’s behavior? (1 = Very Unacceptable; 7 = Very Acceptable)

3. I believe that the coach’s behavior violates a standard of professional behavior for a coach. (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)

4. What should be done, if there was a violation? (measured on a forced-choice)
   a) No sanction – there was no violation of professional behavior.
   b) No sanction – there was a violation of professional behavior but it doesn’t deserve any sanction.
   c) Warning letter.
   d) Requirement of continuing education in ethics.
   e) Continuing education and coach supervision for 6 months.
   f) Continuing education and coach supervision for 12 months.
   g) Suspension of license for 1 year.
   h) Removal of license.

After participants read all eight vignettes and responded to the four questions per scenario, the vignettes were then shown a second time (one at a time) and participants were asked to respond to the following question:

1. What is the primary ethical issue involved in this case?

A drop down menu of ethical categories from Table 2 were provided, including the intended categories of confidentiality, conflicts of interest, multiple relationships, and avoiding harm. Both times participants were presented with the vignettes they were in randomized order to address the problem of order effects, where participants’ answers to earlier questions can affect response to subsequent questions. Each of the vignettes was also similar in length to
standardize the level of detail and description of each case and to offset any possible effect of length on response.

**Demographics.** The participants were also asked to respond to demographic questions including age, gender, nationality, educational training, years employed as a coach, and average percent of time spent coaching. The set of demographic questions can be found in the full Study 2 survey in Appendix C.

**Data Analysis**

Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d were analyzed using one-way ANOVA to examine differences across groups. Hypothesis 3e was tested using a chi-squared test. Post hoc tests (Tukey and Games-Howell) determined which particular groups, displayed differences. Hypothesis 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d were tested using independent t-tests to determine if there were significant differences in the evaluation of ethical dilemmas between clinical and non-clinical psychology-trained coaches.

**Results**

As displayed in Table 10, across all eight vignettes, mean scores ($N = 144$) indicated that the behavior thought to be least acceptable, the greatest violation of professional behavior and deserving of the harshest sanction was Confidentiality Vignette 1 – disclosure by the coach of confidential information about the coachee to the HR manager.

Mean scores indicated that the behaviors thought to be most acceptable, deserving of the most lenient sanction, and the least in violation of professional behavior were Conflict of Interest Vignette 1 – in which a coach learns the coachee intends to leave company after receiving coaching but didn’t report it and Avoiding Harm Vignette 2 – in which a licensed psychotherapy
Table 10
Means and Standard Deviations for Judgment, Acceptability, Violation and Sanction Items Across Three Rater Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Judgment</th>
<th>Acceptability</th>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>Sanction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>M 1.41</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>M 3.26</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>M 4.26</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>M 3.06</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>M 3.51</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>M 3.4</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>M 2.04</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>M 4.54</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lower scores on judgment indicate rater evaluation of poorer coach judgment; lower score on acceptability indicate rater evaluation of more unacceptable coach behavior; higher scores on violation indicate rater evaluation of greater professional violation; higher scores on sanction indicate rater evaluation of harsher punishment for behavior.

trained coach is told by a coachee that he has suicidal thoughts and the coach reports the situation to the HR department.

**Main Hypotheses**

Tests of Hypothesis 3a. It was hypothesized that psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach judgment as poorer than business-trained coaches and other-trained coaches and

---

4 Rater groups include psychology-trained, business-trained and other-trained
also that business-trained coaches would evaluate coach judgment as poorer than other-trained coaches. In order to investigate the hypotheses associated with Hypothesis 3a, a one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the judgment ratings are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11
Judgment Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette Description</th>
<th>Psychology-Trained (n = 77)</th>
<th>Business-Trained (n = 33)</th>
<th>Other-Trained (n = 34)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>1.42 0.73</td>
<td>1.27 0.57</td>
<td>1.53 0.90</td>
<td>1.006</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.05 2.11</td>
<td>3.76 1.94</td>
<td>3.26 2.12</td>
<td>1.337</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.36 1.76</td>
<td>4.09 1.59</td>
<td>4.18 1.70</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>2.83 1.46</td>
<td>3.36 1.88</td>
<td>3.29 1.57</td>
<td>1.762</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.19 1.79</td>
<td>3.64 1.88</td>
<td>4.09 1.66</td>
<td>3.072</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.48 1.74</td>
<td>3.52 1.72</td>
<td>3.12 1.70</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>2.03 0.89</td>
<td>2.18 1.07</td>
<td>1.94 1.07</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.18 2.27</td>
<td>4.94 1.97</td>
<td>4.97 1.96</td>
<td>2.354</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lower scores on judgment indicate rater evaluation of poorer coach judgment.

Among the eight different vignettes, only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, \( F(2, 141) = 3.072; p = 0.049 \), with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .04). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was not significant, \( F(2, 141) = 1.574; p = 0.177 \), so Tukey’s HSD was used as the appropriate post-hoc procedure to determine areas of significant difference. Results of the Tukey’s HSD test revealed psychology-trained coaches (\( M = 3.19, SD = 1.79 \)) rated judgment lower than other-trained coaches (\( M = 4.09, SD = 1.66 \)), a mean difference of .89, 95% CI [.02, 1.76], which was statistically significant (\( p < 0.05 \)).
This means that psychology trained coaches found the coach in the vignette to have used poorer judgment in responding to the ethical situation than the other-trained coaches. Thus, Hypothesis 3A was not supported with exception of Multiple Relationship Vignette 1.

Although the hypotheses were set up to be planned contrasts (i.e., psychology versus business, business versus other), post hoc tests were used as a more conservative alternative to cut down on family-wise error. This was repeated for Hypotheses 3B through 3D. This hypothesis and those that follow were based on the assumption that degree type would lead to differences in the evaluation of coach behavior. However, due to this particular sample, it was possible that degree-area (e.g. psychology vs. business) was cofounded with degree-type (e.g. MA vs. doctorate). To evaluate this, an analysis of education level within each group was run and no differences were found, suggesting that more education was not necessarily associated with a stricter evaluation of ethical behavior.

**Tests of Hypothesis 3b.** It was hypothesized that psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as being less acceptable than both business-trained and other-trained coaches and that business-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as less acceptable than other-trained coaches. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the acceptability ratings are displayed in Table 12.

Among the eight different vignettes, only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 141) = 4.636; p = 0.011$, with a medium effect size (partial eta squared = .06). The Levene test for homogeneity of variance was not significant, $F(2, 141) = 0.072; p = 0.932$. Results of the Tukey’s HSD test revealed psychology coaches ($M = 3.42, SD = 1.80$) rated acceptability of coach behavior lower than other-trained coaches ($M = 4.53, SD = 1.76$), a mean difference of 1.1, 95% CI [.24, 1.99], which was statistically significant.
(p < 0.05). This means that psychology-trained coaches thought the coach in the vignette to have behaved less acceptably than other-trained coaches. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported with exception of Multiple Relationship Vignette 1.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psychology-Trained (n = 77)</th>
<th>Business-Trained (n = 33)</th>
<th>Other-Trained (n = 34)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>1.48 0.74</td>
<td>1.27 0.52</td>
<td>1.62 1.05</td>
<td>1.669</td>
<td>0.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.19 2.09</td>
<td>3.64 1.92</td>
<td>3.29 2.11</td>
<td>0.535</td>
<td>0.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.64 1.73</td>
<td>4.67 1.69</td>
<td>4.56 1.62</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>2.99 1.51</td>
<td>3.45 1.97</td>
<td>3.47 1.58</td>
<td>1.506</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.42 1.80</td>
<td>3.91 1.81</td>
<td>4.53 1.76</td>
<td>4.636</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.75 1.73</td>
<td>4.03 1.59</td>
<td>3.62 1.81</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td>0.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>2.19 0.93</td>
<td>2.52 1.33</td>
<td>2.24 0.96</td>
<td>1.133</td>
<td>0.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.34 2.23</td>
<td>5.09 1.93</td>
<td>4.88 2.01</td>
<td>1.758</td>
<td>0.176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lowe scores on acceptability indicate rater evaluation of more unacceptable coach behavior.

Test of Hypothesis 3c. It was hypothesized that psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as greater violations of professional behavior than both business-trained and other-trained coaches and also that business-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as greater violations of professional behavior than other-trained coaches. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the violation ratings are displayed in Table 13.

Among the eight different vignettes, only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference $F(2, 141) = 3.454; p = 0.034$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .05). The Levene test for homogeneity of variance shows that the data are
homoscedastic and thus non-significant, $F(2, 141) = 0.124; p = 0.883$, so Tukey’s HSD was the appropriate post-hoc procedure. Results of the Tukey’s HSD test revealed other-trained coaches ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.86$) rated the violation lower than psychology-trained coaches ($M = 4.32, SD = 1.87$), mean difference .97, 95% CI [.07, 1.87], which was statistically significant ($p = .031$). This means that psychology-trained coaches saw the coach’s behavior as a greater violation of professional standards than the other-trained coaches. Thus, Hypothesis 3c was not supported with exception of Multiple Relationship Vignette 1.

Table 13
*Violation Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Psychology-Trained (n = 77)</th>
<th>Business-Trained (n = 33)</th>
<th>Other-Trained (n = 34)</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>0.381</td>
<td>0.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>2.071</td>
<td>0.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.454</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>0.380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td>0.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Higher scores on violation indicate rater evaluation of greater professional violation.

**Tests of Hypothesis 3d.** It was hypothesized that psychology-trained coaches would assign a harsher sanction than both business-trained and other-trained coaches and that business-trained coaches would assign harsher sanction than other-trained coaches. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the sanction ratings are displayed in Table 14.
Table 14

Sanction Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Psychology, Business, and Other-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Psychology-Trained (n = 77)</th>
<th>Business-Trained (n = 33)</th>
<th>Other-Trained (n = 34)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>5.09 (1.57)</td>
<td>4.94 (1.52)</td>
<td>4.59 (1.76)</td>
<td>1.153</td>
<td>0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.74 (1.87)</td>
<td>3.00 (2.08)</td>
<td>3.29 (1.62)</td>
<td>2.009</td>
<td>0.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>1.94 (1.54)</td>
<td>2.18 (1.83)</td>
<td>1.44 (0.82)</td>
<td>2.225</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.18 (1.78)</td>
<td>2.58 (1.66)</td>
<td>2.68 (1.61)</td>
<td>1.903</td>
<td>0.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.09 (1.76)</td>
<td>2.42 (1.56)</td>
<td>1.88 (1.34)</td>
<td>6.916</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>2.56 (1.75)</td>
<td>1.97 (1.43)</td>
<td>2.50 (1.67)</td>
<td>1.511</td>
<td>0.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.36 (1.59)</td>
<td>3.18 (1.86)</td>
<td>3.29 (1.51)</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>2.68 (1.95)</td>
<td>2.21 (1.71)</td>
<td>2.18 (1.62)</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>0.290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Higher scores on sanction indicate rater evaluation of harsher punishment for behavior.

For Hypothesis 3d, a one-way ANOVA showed that among the eight vignettes, only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, \( F(2, 141) = 6.916; p = 0.001 \), with a medium effect size (partial eta squared = .09). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was significant, \( F(2, 141) = 6.013; p = 0.003 \), so Welch’s test was run as it is a more robust test of the equality of means. Results confirmed statistically significant differences between groups, \( F(1, 141.749) = 12.21; p = .001 \). The Games-Howell statistic was used as it is an appropriate post-hoc procedure for heteroscedasticity and found other-trained coaches (\( M = 1.88, SD = 1.34 \)) rated sanction lower than psychology-trained coaches (\( M = 3.09, SD = 1.76 \)), a mean difference of 1.21, 95% CI [.48, 1.94], which was statistically significant (\( p < .05 \)). This means that psychology-trained coaches assigned a harsher sanction to the coach than others-trained coaches, as predicted. Thus, Hypothesis 3d was not supported with exception of Multiple
Relationship Vignette 1.

ANOVA is used with continuous variables and the sanction variable was continuous but ordinal in nature, rather than interval. Therefore, the order between the sanction items was meaningful but the difference between each value wasn’t necessarily the same across items. Hypotheses 3d could have been evaluated using a chi-square test to see if different numbers of coaches were selecting certain sanctions more than other types of coaches. However, chi-square analysis of this hypothesis revealed violations of the minimum expected cell frequency assumption. Again, the assumption is that values in cells should be 5 or greater in 80% of cells with only 20% cell depletion. For each vignette an 8 (number of sanctions) × 3 (psychology, business, other-trained) chi-squared was run and cell depletion ranged from 42.9% - 79.2%, clearly violating the assumption. Therefore, the ANOVA analysis was a more appropriate method of analysis.

Tests of Hypothesis 3e. It was hypothesized that psychology-trained coaches more than business-trained coaches and other-trained coaches would correctly assign ethical situations to the ethical categories as determined by experts. To test the hypotheses associated with Hypothesis 3e, a chi-square test was used. Results across all 8 vignettes can be found in Table 15.

Among the eight different vignettes, only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(2) = 6.757; p = 0.034$. Results showed that more psychology-trained coaches (39.0%) identified the ethical issue represented in the case relative to business-trained coaches (27.3%) and other-trained coaches (14.7%). Therefore, Hypothesis 3e was not supported with the exception of Multiple Relationship Vignette 1.
Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psychology-Trained (N = 77)</th>
<th>Business-Trained (N = 33)</th>
<th>Other-Trained (N = 34)</th>
<th>Model Chi-Square</th>
<th>Model p</th>
<th>Model df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>66 85.7%</td>
<td>4.26 78.8%</td>
<td>32 94.1%</td>
<td>3.312</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>46 59.7%</td>
<td>16 48.5%</td>
<td>15 44.1%</td>
<td>2.742</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>17 22.1%</td>
<td>10 30.3%</td>
<td>9 26.5%</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>46 59.7%</td>
<td>19 57.6%</td>
<td>19 55.9%</td>
<td>0.155</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>30 39%</td>
<td>9 27.3%</td>
<td>5 14.7%</td>
<td>6.757</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>45 58.4%</td>
<td>19 57.6%</td>
<td>22 64.7%</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>20 26%</td>
<td>6 18.2%</td>
<td>5 14.7%</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>38 49.4%</td>
<td>22 66.7%</td>
<td>24 70.6%</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n and % represent number of participants in each group to correctly classify vignette

Tests of Hypothesis 4a. It was hypothesized that clinical psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach judgment as having been poorer than I-O psychology-trained coaches. In order to investigate the hypotheses associated with Hypothesis 4a, an independent samples t-test was used with the 23 coaches trained only in clinical or counseling psychology and 19 coaches trained only in consulting, I-O, or organizational psychology. From here forward, each group is referred to as clinical psychology-trained or I-O psychology-trained for purposes of abbreviation. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Table 16 displays findings of the judgment ratings.
Table 16  
Judgment Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Clinical Psychology-Trained (n = 23)</th>
<th>I-O Psychology-Trained (n = 19)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>1.61, 1.08</td>
<td>1.32, 0.48</td>
<td>1.099</td>
<td>0.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>2.91, 2.11</td>
<td>3.32, 2.29</td>
<td>-0.593</td>
<td>0.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.57, 1.56</td>
<td>4.63, 1.64</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
<td>0.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.26, 1.45</td>
<td>2.68, 1.49</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>0.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.04, 1.75</td>
<td>3.68, 2.21</td>
<td>-1.050</td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.22, 1.62</td>
<td>4.47, 1.95</td>
<td>-2.277</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>2.22, 0.95</td>
<td>2.11, 0.74</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.43, 2.17</td>
<td>4.42, 2.36</td>
<td>-1.408</td>
<td>0.167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Lower scores on judgment indicate rater evaluation of poorer coach judgment.*

Among the eight different vignettes, only multiple relationship vignette 2 had a statistically significant difference as a function of the type of psychology training, t(42) = -2.28; p = 0.03. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance shows that the data are homoscedastic (F = 2.691; p = 0.109). In this case, clinical psychology-trained coaches (M = 3.22, SD = 1.62) evaluated the coach to have poorer judgment relative to I-O psychology-trained coaches (M = 4.47, SD = 1.95), as predicted. Thus, Hypothesis 4a was not supported with exception of multiple relationship vignette 2.

**Tests of Hypothesis 4b.** It was hypothesized that clinical psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as less acceptable than I-O psychology-trained coaches. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the acceptability ratings are displayed in Table 17.
Table 17

Acceptability Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Clinical Psychology-Trained (n = 23)</th>
<th>I-O Psychology-Trained (n = 19)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>1.65 (SD = 1.07)</td>
<td>1.37 (SD = 0.50)</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.00 (SD = 2.00)</td>
<td>3.32 (SD = 2.29)</td>
<td>-0.477</td>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.91 (SD = 1.54)</td>
<td>5.00 (SD = 1.60)</td>
<td>-0.179</td>
<td>0.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.39 (SD = 1.59)</td>
<td>2.84 (SD = 1.61)</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td>0.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>3.17 (SD = 1.67)</td>
<td>3.84 (SD = 2.06)</td>
<td>-1.161</td>
<td>0.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.61 (SD = 1.59)</td>
<td>4.58 (SD = 1.95)</td>
<td>-1.777</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>2.39 (SD = 1.08)</td>
<td>2.21 (SD = 0.79)</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.61 (SD = 2.29)</td>
<td>4.58 (SD = 2.22)</td>
<td>-1.385</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lowe scores on acceptability indicate rater evaluation of more unacceptable coach behavior.

No statistically significant results were found associated with the acceptability of coach behavior. Thus, Hypothesis 4B was not supported. It was expected that clinical psychology-trained coaches would find the coach behavior less acceptable as compared to I-O psychology-trained coaches.

Tests of Hypothesis 4c. It was hypothesized that clinical psychology-trained coaches would evaluate coach behavior as violations of professional behavior more than I-O psychology-trained psychologists. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of the violation ratings are displayed in Table 18.

Among the eight different vignettes, only confidentiality vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(32.67) = -2.11; p = 0.04$. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance
showed that the data were heteroscedastic ($F = 8.410; \ p = 0.01$) so significance value used assuming unequal variances.

Table 18

Violation Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Clinical Psychology-Trained ($n = 23$)</th>
<th>I-O Psychology-Trained ($n = 19$)</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>5.87 1.52</td>
<td>6.58 0.51</td>
<td>-2.105</td>
<td>0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.74 1.94</td>
<td>4.26 2.28</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>2.96 1.61</td>
<td>2.47 1.54</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.3 1.52</td>
<td>4.89 1.70</td>
<td>-1.189</td>
<td>0.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>4.7 1.69</td>
<td>4.00 2.06</td>
<td>1.204</td>
<td>0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>3.91 1.73</td>
<td>3.00 1.83</td>
<td>1.661</td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>5.52 0.99</td>
<td>5.26 1.15</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td>0.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>4.52 2.11</td>
<td>3.42 2.27</td>
<td>1.627</td>
<td>0.111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Higher scores on violation indicate rater evaluation of greater professional violation.

In this case, clinical psychology-trained coaches ($M = 5.87, SD = 1.52$) had lower ratings of violation relative to I-O psychology-trained coaches ($M = 6.58, SD = 0.51$), which was in the opposite direction than hypothesized. Thus, Hypothesis 4c not supported with the exception of confidentiality vignette 1.

**Tests of Hypothesis 4d.** It was hypothesized that clinical psychology-trained coaches would evaluate ethical situations as more deserving of sanction than I-O psychology-trained coaches. A one-way ANOVA was run for each of the eight vignettes. Results of sanction ratings are displayed in Table 19. No statistically significant results were found related to sanction, thus,
the hypothesis was not supported. Again, an alternative analysis for this hypothesis could be a chi-square test. Similarly to Hypothesis 3d, cell depletion ranged from 71.4%-100%, violating the assumption of minimum expected cell frequency so use of ANOVA was the appropriate statistical method for analysis.

Table 19
Sanction Ratings of Ethical Vignettes by Clinical and I-O Psychology-Trained Coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Clinical Psychology-Trained (n = 23)</th>
<th>I-O Psychology-Trained (n = 19)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 1</td>
<td>M = 4.91, SD = 1.41</td>
<td>M = 5.58, SD = 1.90</td>
<td>-1.304</td>
<td>0.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality Vignette 2</td>
<td>M = 3.96, SD = 1.40</td>
<td>M = 3.74, SD = 2.08</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 1</td>
<td>M = 1.74, SD = 1.18</td>
<td>M = 1.47, SD = 1.22</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Vignette 2</td>
<td>M = 2.87, SD = 1.69</td>
<td>M = 3.21, SD = 1.78</td>
<td>-0.636</td>
<td>0.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 1</td>
<td>M = 3.26, SD = 1.71</td>
<td>M = 2.63, SD = 1.86</td>
<td>1.140</td>
<td>0.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Relationship Vignette 2</td>
<td>M = 2.61, SD = 1.67</td>
<td>M = 2.11, SD = 1.56</td>
<td>1.001</td>
<td>0.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 1</td>
<td>M = 3.57, SD = 1.53</td>
<td>M = 3.16, SD = 1.54</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td>0.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid Harm Vignette 2</td>
<td>M = 3.30, SD = 1.87</td>
<td>M = 2.37, SD = 1.98</td>
<td>1.573</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Higher scores on sanction indicate rater evaluation of harsher punishment for behavior.

**Discussion**

The main conclusion revealed by results of Study 2 is that for the most part, differences in educational training were not associated with statistically significant differences in the evaluation of ethical behavior. It is possible that professionals who decide to coach as part of their practice are more similar to one another than those educated in their fields and working in more traditional paths associated with such academic backgrounds (e.g., clinical psychologists
working in therapy, coaches with JD’s working in the law field, etc.). It is also possible that expected differences were not confirmed due to the composition of the samples used in this research. Over 75% of the total sample reported holding an advanced degree (e.g., master’s, doctorate, professional) and of those, over 95% had also attended a coach-training program. On average, this group is arguably more educated than that of the coaching population as a whole, which might suggest that more of these coaches have studied ethics in graduate work and been exposed to the discussion of coaching ethics in coach-training programs. There might also be something more ethically minded about those who chose to participate in such a study on ethics, suggesting these coaches are more similar to each other than to other coaches also working in the coaching field.

The results might also be more connected to the content of the vignettes than to educational background of the coaches. The eight vignettes used were specific issues, as conceived by certain coaches, to be ethical dilemmas. However, it is possible that across the groups, there was disagreement about the extent to which certain vignettes represented ethical issues. For example, multiple relationship vignette 2 described a coach who decided to coach both a CEO and his three direct reports. Some coaches might conceive the inherent multiple relationships in such a situation to be too much for any coach to manage and might argue that it would be generally unethical to agree to coach all four employees. However, other coaches might feel this to be a typical situation, and one that deserves only more concrete contracting around confidentiality and multiple relationships. According to the APA ethics code, as long as the multiple relationships in question would not be expected to cause impairment of the coaching psychologist or risk exploitation or harm to the client, it is not inherently unethical (APA Ethics Code Standard 3.05a, APA, 2002, p. 1065). Therefore, evaluation of a coach agreeing to take on
the CEO and three direct reports might be more connected to a coach’s personal view of the situation, rather than interpretation of any particular code of ethics.

The one statistically significant vignette for hypotheses 3 was Multiple Relationship Vignette 1. In this vignette, a licensed clinical therapist allowed a coaching client to become a therapy patient when the coachee’s company denied a request for additional coaching. As hypothesized, the results showed that psychology-trained coaches found the coach behavior to be less acceptable, a more serious ethical violation, and requiring harsher sanction than the non-psychology non-business trained coaches found the situation. Specifically, the psychology-trained coaches, on average, rated coach judgment to be somewhat poor, coach behavior to be somewhat unacceptable, rated it a violation of professional behavior, and required a warning letter. Other-trained coaches, on average, rated coach judgment to be neither good nor bad (neutral), rated coach behavior to be somewhat acceptable, disagreed somewhat that the behavior was a violation of professional behavior, and required no sanction.

Results also found psychology-trained coaches, in contrast to, other-trained coaches accurately identified Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 with the intended category of multiple relationship. The category of multiple relationships was primarily found in psychology ethics codes as distinct from coaching-specific codes, which may explain the reason psychology-trained coaches were more likely to identify the vignette as representative of an issue of multiple relationships in contrast with coaches with other educational backgrounds. Coaches from disciplines outside of psychology may not recognize issues of multiple relationships because they are not discussed in many of the coaching-specific codes. Non-psychology trained coaches are also not trained as clinicians so they may not recognize the importance of managing the separation of therapeutic and non-therapeutic roles in the coaching context.
It is curious that the only vignette that showed a statistically significance difference was one in which the protagonist coach was specifically described as being a licensed clinical therapist who also worked as a coach. One explanation for the finding might be that the two groups were conceptualizing the vignette differently by filling in “grey” areas with respondent-specific information missing from the vignettes. For example, perhaps the psychology-trained coaches thought the coach behavior to be worse because they expected the coach to do both coaching and therapy simultaneously whereas the non-psychology coaches expected there to be a clear contract end and a new contract negotiated around the therapy relationship.

It is also possible that both psychology-trained coaches and others may hold psychology-trained coaches to a different set of ethical standards. Pomerantz and Pettibone (2005) suggested that evaluation of ethical behavior is related not only to the behavior but also to the person displaying the behaviors as well as the person evaluating the behaviors. Consequently, there are practical questions raised by this possibility. For instance, if there were ever a universal standardized process for reviewing ethical complaints and potential violations by coaches, (such as represented by the APA for US-based psychologists) how would those charged with addressing such complaints be chosen? How could the process ensure that all coaches would be held to similar standards, regardless of the educational background of either the coach in question or the assessor?

It may be the more important question is: should psychology-trained coaches be held to different standards? The APA and other psychological associations might be best positioned to think specifically about the challenges faced by psychology-trained coaches. The ICF and other coach-training organizations might then be equally positioned to collaborate to create a standardized code general enough to include all coaches without having to specifically address
psychology-centric issues (i.e., overlap of therapy and coaching, etc.). However, if psychology as a discipline wants to keep a stake in the coaching field and dictate ways that coaching by psychologists is to be practiced, it needs to define how psychology ethics apply to the work in more concrete ways.

With the exception of two findings, Study 2 found no statistically significant differences in the evaluation of ethical behavior between clinical psychology-trained and I-O psychology-trained coaches. The first significant finding was of the judgment dimension in multiple relationship vignette 2 such that clinical psychology coaches, on average, found the judgment to be somewhat poor in comparison to I-O psychology trained coaches who found the judgment to be neither good or bad (neutral). The second significant finding was of the violation dimension in confidentiality vignette 1 such that clinical psychology coaches, on average, agreed the behavior was a violation of professional standards in comparison to I-O psychology trained coaches who indicated that they strongly agreed the behavior to be a violation. Detwiler (2008) found that, in general, clinical psychologists were more critical of psychologist behaviors than were I-O psychologists. It is possible the clinical psychology-trained coaches in the sample were more similar to the organizational psychology-trained coaches than to other clinical psychologists working in traditional clinical settings such as hospitals or private clinics. In this sample, clinical psychology-trained coaches ($M = 18.63, SD = 8.13$) compared to the I-O psychology-trained coaches ($M = 13.44, SD = 8.47$) had been working in the coaching field for longer and were therefore likely aware of the nuances of organizational practice. This might result in more flexibility in their evaluations of ethical behavior, potentially even more leniency, to other coaches than they would to clinical psychologists working in clinical settings.
Limitations

One limitation of Study 2 was that the data were collected exclusively through self-report measures as social desirability has been found to affect participant responses in past ethics research (Dalton and Ortegren, 2011). One issue with vignette-based research is that it does not necessarily translate to understanding how a person might actually act, given the same context. A person may harshly evaluate others’ behavior but then make concessions or justifications for their own similar behavior. This limitation might be overcome in future research by having participants evaluate vignette material coupled with 360-degree feedback assessments. For example, future studies might look at the relationship between coach rating of vignettes and 360 feedback of the coach by people who know them well (e.g., close work relationships, family members) about how ethically the coach behaves in his or her own life. Evaluation of such a relationship might help researchers understand how likely coaches are able to “practice what they preach” or hold themselves to the same standards they may hold coaches described in vignette material. It might also help to control for social desirability bias.

Another limitation was the way Study 2 participants were categorized into educational backgrounds. To further test whether statistically significant differences were being lost to the specific categorization, participants were categorized by their highest level of education, the educational categorization method used by Liljenstrand (2004). In doing this with the current study’s dataset, data from 13 participants were removed from analyses as they reported earning two degrees of equal level in different fields (e.g., PhD in psychology and DBA specializing in finance and marketing). Results of these analyses were similar to this study’s findings and also suggested there were no group differences in the evaluation of coaching ethics based on education.
As results from the pilot studies suggested, the question of the primary issue in the vignettes might have not beeninterpreted in a standard way across participants and represents another limitation. Thus, caution should be applied when making meaning from the statistically significant finding in Hypothesis 3e. Across the eight different vignettes, the chi-square test showed only Multiple Relationship Vignette 1 yielded a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(2)= 6.757; p = 0.034$. This showed that psychology-trained coaches were most likely (39.0%) to correctly identify the ethical issue represented in the case relative to business-trained coaches (27.3%) and other-trained coaches (14.7%). However, a 3 (psychology, business and other-trained coaches) $\times$ 10 (ethical category choices presented to participants) chi-square test was run to see if there was a difference between the three groups across all 10 ethical category options. The chi-square analysis, $\chi^2(16)= 20.86; p = 0.184$, showed no significant differences between the groups, lending support that there was variation in the interpretation of the primary issue across the three groups.

An example may be helpful in conceptualizing this issue. Multiple relationship vignette 1 was intended to represent the issue of multiple relationships since it depicted a coach who allowed a client to be both a coaching client and then also a therapy client. According to the APA Standard 3.05, “Multiple Relationships,” this is an example of the definition of multiple relationships, *viz. ,*

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person (APA, 2002, p. 1065).

The results of this study (Table 15) showed that psychology coaches were the most likely (39.0%) to identify the ethical issue as one of multiple relationships relative to business coaches
(27.3%) and other coaches (14.7%). However, across the three groups, both conflict of interest and contracting were selected by coaches as the primary issue such that 19.5% of psychology-trained, 12.1% of business-trained and 29.4% of other-trained participants respectively identified conflicts of interest as the primary issue. An additional 16.9% of psychology-trained, 27.3% of business-trained and 35.3% of other-trained identified contracting as the primary issue. Although the case described an ethical situation with a component related to multiple relationships, it is also likely, considering how a person conceptualized the vignette, that contracting and conflicts of interest would be major dimensions of ethical concern as well, and might be considered to be more “primary.” Survey participants may have also read vignettes and mentally created additional detail that were not part of the vignettes. In the case of Multiple Relationship Vignette 1, a survey participant may have read the vignette and assumed that the coach allowed the client to transfer from a coaching client to a therapy client because the coach could not financially afford to lose the contract. In that case, conflict of interest could be argued to be the primary issue. It is possible that this question is measuring cognitive schemas around primary issue of concern more than a coach’s ability to correctly identify examples of the categories themselves (Langer, 1992).

One thing the researcher could have done to mitigate this issue and also still test coaches’ ability to identify ethical categories would have been to ask coaches for all ethical situations presented in each case, as opposed to trying to identify only a primary issue. In this way, complex vignettes could have been used and participants could have been asked to identify all dilemmas to see if there were differences between groups of coaches in ability to recognize categories.
Suggestions for Future Research

This research did not support the idea that differences in educational backgrounds lead to differences in the evaluation of coach behavior, but there was variation in the evaluation of the vignettes. In fact, across the majority of vignettes there was a range in the evaluation of judgment, behavior, violation and sanction suggesting that there are in fact differences in the evaluation of coach behavior – they are just not attributable to education. Future research might look at other individual characteristics (i.e., personality, values, religiosity, propensity toward harsh/lenient ratings, etc.) that may play a role in differences in the evaluation of coach behavior. There are also cultural, regional, conservatism differences, and other bases that have shown to be significant in moral formation.

Future research might consider whether coaches evaluate psychology-trained and non-psychology trained coaches differently, in similar coaching situations. For example, might two coaches be evaluated differently for dealing with a coachee who threatens suicide by breaking confidentiality and informing the HR department if one is a clinically-trained psychologist and the other has a background in English Literature? This might help to provide a better understanding of whether coaches hold subsets of coaches based on educational background to a higher ethical standard. Also, what are coachee’s expectations of coaches? To what degree do clients hold psychology-trained and non-psychology-trained coaches to similar standards? It might also be useful to survey coachee’s or HR professionals responsible for the hiring and managing of coaching cadres to see if they also evaluate coach behavior differently based on the education of the coach in question.

Future research could also further examine the unique situational factors at play in coaching work by adding to the categories of the ethical content in vignette testing. This study
looked at eight vignettes that were chosen from categories with the greatest number of coded cases. It is possible using vignettes from less typical categories might have shown a higher level of disagreement between coaches from different educational backgrounds. Using vignette content as variables might help better understand ethical dilemmas that are seen in standard ways and those that display a greater level of disparity.

Finally, future studies might investigate the decision-making processes coaches use to conceptualize and resolve ethical issues. Participants could be presented with vignette material and either rank order a list of provided steps they might follow or respond qualitatively with a plausible solution for addressing the issues. This type of research would aid in understanding similarities and differences in the decision-making connected to ethical situations. If coaches are asked which code of ethics they follow (e.g., APA, ICF), this type of research might also help to understand how well coaches are using specific codes and might illuminate ways the codes either get in the way or lack support, as suggested by Doichon and Nizet’s (2015).
Chapter IV
General Discussion

This research was conducted to gain an understanding of the current state of ethical situations in executive coaching and to determine if differences in academic background led to distinct perspectives of ethical dilemmas and subsequently, differences in the evaluation of ethical situations. Ultimately, there were not many statistically significant findings; however, there are a number of practical applications that can be gleaned from the research.

As evidenced by results in Study 2, there were almost no statistically significant differences between differently trained coaches in terms of how they evaluate ethics vignettes. This may actually bode well for the coaching community as it suggests that there is more consensus than disagreement across differently educated coach groups around these vignettes. This suggests that there may be a common core of ethical issues that most people doing coaching would agree upon. Accordingly, there may be a mutual foundation on which the coaching profession can begin to treat ethics as an emerging area of practice and help define those ethical gray areas that none of the current ethics codes deal adequately. Such as: who is ultimately the client? and how are boundaries of competence around more clinical issues managed? Because coaching organizations like the ICF, EMCC and AC have not fully addressed issues of how and in what ways to traverse challenging ethical scenarios, the guidance appears to be coming from personal views and experiences of those coaches practicing in the field. To the extent that freestanding coaching organizations want the right to claim and define coaching, they should also aim define the ethics attached to such work to ensure that coaches are doing good rather than harm.

Accordingly, coach training organizations may want to consider requiring continued education groups that routinely meet to discuss issues they are experiencing and to provide
newer coaches access to more seasoned coaches for supervisory counsel and thought-partnering about dilemmas they may be facing. Over time, such groups would have collections of case examples – of the situations and of ways coaches successfully (and potentially, unsuccessfully) navigated the situations to provide to coaches for enhanced learning. Coaches, both those new to the field and those who have been practicing for decades, have a responsibility to contribute their experiences to the field to advance the practice of coaching. As Lowman (2016) stated, “more knowledge generates more guidelines and standards” (p. 133) and such advancement ultimately helps to serve and guide coaches in their practice. Such groups may help to normalize the topic of ethics more and inspire engagement from those who might otherwise shy away from the topic. In content analysis of the comments of Study 2 it was clear that coaches – psychology-trained and non-psychologist trained alike – were interested in having more practice scenarios to read and discuss with other professionals, as one way of continuously keeping an ethical lens on their coaching practice.

Another practical application of this research may be for those creating codes of ethics themselves. An awareness of ethical categories provided by both psychology and coaching-specific ethics codes may be useful but may not be enough to actually aid in acting more ethically. Craft (2013) in a literature review of ethical decision-making literature from 2004-2011 found mixed results for the impact of ethical codes on ethical-decision making. Several studies found ethical codes helpful in judgment and decision-making in ethical situations (Pfugrath et al, 2007; Deshpande, 2009; McKinney et al, 2010 as cited by Craft, 2013) though two studies suggested a strong ethical code was helpful but not sufficient in affecting ethical awareness or behavior (O’Leary and Stewart, 2007; Rottig et al, 2011 as cited by Craft, 2013). The literature seems to suggest that a strong ethical code is a necessary foundation for ethical
awareness but that additional guidance may be necessary to translate awareness into appropriate decision-making and behavior. In a study of 27 coaches using coaching ethics codes (either the ICF or SCF code) as the guide by which to navigate dilemmas they were faced with, the code itself was found to be irrelevant, containing shortcomings, or getting in the way of personal ethics (Doichon & Nitzet, 2015). This along with Study 1 findings suggest that codes may need to be supplemented by casebooks and other literature to provide more guidance to practitioners. Doichon and Nitzet (2015) suggested that the codes could include a set of reflection questions or vignette examples related to each section to help guide coaches in thinking through specific challenges, though it might be more useful to have these separate from the codes, as supplemental material.

The literature review portion of this research provided an extensive comparison of the existing coaching and coach-relevant codes and it showed a lack of standardization across codes but moreover, an opportunity for coaching organizations to think more practically about the necessary standards and guidelines for actual coaching work. The hope is that this research demonstrated a greater need for guidance for more pragmatic decision-making in ethical situations in coaching. Organizations like the APA and ICF have an opportunity potentially to work together to modify and add to their current codes, or to transcend their own organizations and create a new code specifically designed to support the business and managerial coaches who are at work in organizations around the world.

Based on the findings in the present studies, more needs to be done to understand the diversity of issues facing coaches, both internal and external, and the appropriate ways they should respond to ethical challenges in their work. Regardless of whether coaching becomes a regulated profession or remains a practice of multidisciplinary practitioners, ethics must become
a lens through which coaching is practiced and evaluated in order to support and protect coaches, clients, and the organizations they serve.
References


doi:10.1037/12170-018


doi:10.1002/9781118255995.ch4


ETHICAL SITUATIONS IN EXECUTIVE COACHING


doi:10.1037/a0035453


Appendix A: Study 1 Coach Survey

1. Please describe any incident(s) you found ethically challenging or troubling that you experienced or witnessed in your coaching practice. Please label multiple ethical issues by numbering each unique situation. Incidents may be connected to individual, team or group coaching, or be part of internal or external coaching engagements. Please include as much background information as possible on the situation to help the researcher understand the ethical situation(s) involved in each case. Please do not include the names of any persons involved or any organizational identifiers for purposes of confidentiality.

(\text{text box for written response})

2. Do you have an advanced degree in psychology?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. (\textit{If answer was “yes” to Question 2}) Which best represents the degree type of your highest education level in psychology?
   a. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   b. Doctor of Psychology (PsyD)
   c. Marriage & Family Therapy (MFT)
   d. Master of Art (MA)
   e. Master of Science (MS)
   f. Other (please specify)

4. (\textit{If answer was “yes” to Question 2}) What area of psychology is your highest educational degree?
   a. Clinical Psychology
   b. Clinical/Industrial-Organizational Psychology (dual degree)
   c. Cognitive Psychology
   d. Consulting Psychology
   e. Counseling Psychology
   f. Developmental Psychology
   g. Educational Psychology
   h. Experimental Psychology
   i. Industrial-Organizational Psychology (or Industrial Psychology)
   j. Organizational Psychology
   k. Social Psychology
   l. Other (please specify)

5. (\textit{If answer was “yes” to Question 2}) Which of the following APA Divisions do you belong to? (Select all that apply)
   a. 12 (Clinical Psychology)
   b. 13 (Society of Consulting Psychology)
   c. 14 (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology)
   d. Other: (please specify by number)
   e. Other: (please specify by number)
   f. Other: (please specify by number)

6. (\textit{If answer was “yes” to Question 2}) Which of the following APA Divisions do you belong to? (Select all that apply)
7. *(If answer was “yes” to Question 2)* What is your current licensure status? (Select one)
   a. Not licensed
   b. Licensed psychologist in home state
   c. Licensed psychologist in more than one state (please specify how many)

8. Do you have an advanced degree in business?
   a. Yes
   b. No

9. *(If answer was “yes” to Question 8)* Which best represents the degree type of your highest education level in psychology?
   a. Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
   b. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   c. Master of Art (MA)
   d. Master of Science (MS)
   e. Other (please specify)

10. *(If answer was “yes” to Question 8)* What area of business is your highest educational degree?
    a. Business
    b. Management
    c. Human Resources
    d. Leadership
    e. Other (please specify)

11. Do you have an advanced degree in a field other than psychology or business?
    a. Yes
    b. No

12. *(If answer was “yes” to Question 11)* Please indicate the degree level and area of specialty of any other advanced degrees (e.g., PhD in anthropology, M.D. specializing in OB/GYN, MA in history)
    
    *(Text box for written response)*

13. *(If answer was “no” to Questions 2, 8 and 11).* Which best represents the degree type of your highest education level?
    a. Bachelor of Science (BS)
    b. Bachelor of Art (BA)
    c. Associate Degree (AA)
    d. High School Diploma
    e. Other (please specify)

14. *(If answer was “no” to questions 2, 8 and 11).* In what area is your highest educational degree?
    
    *(Text box for written response)*

15. Have you been through a coach-training program?
    a. Yes (please specify)
    b. No
16. How many years has coaching been a part of your professional work or practice? (drop down menu)

17. How much of your time in the last year was spent coaching?
   a. 10% or less
   b. 11-25%
   c. 26-50%
   d. 51-75%
   e. 76-90%
   f. More than 90%

18. Which, if any, coaching certifications do you have (select all that apply)
   a. Associate Certified Coach (ACC) – International Coach Federation
   b. Professional Certified Coach (PCC) - International Coach Federation
   c. Master Certified Coach (MCC) - International Coach Federation
   d. Board Certified Coach (BCC) – Center for Credentialing & Education
   e. ATD (formerly, ASTD) Coaching Certificate
   f. Other: Specify
   g. Other: Specify
   h. Other: Specify
   i. Other: Specify

19. In what year were you born? (Drop down menu 1940-1999)

20. Please indicate your country of primary residence.
   a. United States
   b. Other (please specify)

21. Please indicate your gender.
   a. Female
   b. Male

22. Please indicate your ethnicity.
   a. Hispanic or Latino
   b. White, not Hispanic or Latino
   c. Black, not Hispanic or Latino
   d. Asian, not Hispanic or Latino
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific-Islander, not Hispanic or Latino
   f. American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic or Latino
   g. Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino
Appendix B: Study 1 Coaching Professionals’ Survey

1. Please describe any incident(s) you found ethically challenging or troubling that you experienced or witnessed in your coaching practice. Please label multiple ethical issues by numbering each unique situation. Incidents may be connected to individual, team or group coaching, or be part of internal or external coaching engagements. Please include as much background information as possible on the situation to help the researcher understand the ethical situation(s) involved in each case. Please do not include the names of any persons involved or any organizational identifiers for purposes of confidentiality.

(Text box for written response)

2. Please indicate your country of primary residence.
   a. United States
   b. Other (please specify)

3. Please indicate your gender.
   c. Female
   d. Male

4. In what year were you born? (Drop down menu)

5. Please indicate your ethnicity.
   e. Hispanic or Latino
   f. White, not Hispanic or Latino
   g. Black, not Hispanic or Latino
   h. Asian, not Hispanic or Latino
   i. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific-Islander, not Hispanic or Latino
   j. American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic or Latino
   k. Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino

6. Which best represents your highest level of education?
   a. High School/Secondary School
   b. Associate’s Degree/Trade School
   c. Undergraduate Degree/University (e.g., BA/BS)
   d. Master’s Degree/Certification (e.g., MA/MS/MBA)
   e. Professional (e.g., MD/JD/DDS)
   f. Doctoral (e.g., PhD/EdD)

7. How many years has coaching been a part of your professional work or practice? (Drop Down Menu)
Appendix C: Study 2 Survey

Each of the 8 vignettes were shown one at a time and participants were asked to respond to the following questions after each vignette:

1. How would you rate the coach’s judgment in the vignette?
   a. Very poor judgment
   b. Poor judgment
   c. Somewhat poor judgment
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat good judgment
   f. Good judgment
   g. Very good judgment

2. How would you rate the acceptability of the coach’s behavior?
   a. Very unacceptable
   b. Unacceptable
   c. Somewhat unacceptable
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat acceptable
   f. Acceptable
   g. Very Acceptable

3. I believe that the coach’s behavior violates a standard of professional behavior for a coach.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat disagree
   d. Neither agree nor disagree
   e. Somewhat agree
   f. Agree
   g. Strongly agree

4. What should be done, if there was a violation? (Measured on a forced-choice)
   a. No sanction – there was no violation of professional behavior.
   b. No sanction – there was a violation of professional behavior but it doesn’t deserve any sanction.
   c. Warning letter.
   d. Requirement of continuing education in ethics.
   e. Continuing education and coach supervision for 6 months.
   f. Continuing education and coach supervision for 12 months.
   g. Suspension from practice for 1 year.
   h. Permanent suspension from the coaching field.

Each of the 8 vignettes were again shown one at a time and participants were asked to respond to the following question after each vignette:

5. The primary ethical issue depicted in this vignette is:
a. Personal competence (expertise)
b. Informed consent
c. Confidentiality
d. Contracting
e. Termination
f. Multiple Relationships
g. Conflicts of interest
h. Avoiding harm
i. Legal requirements
j. Resolving ethical issues

6. Do you have an advanced degree in psychology?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. (If answer was “yes” to Question 6) Which best represents the degree type of your highest education level in psychology?
   a. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   b. Doctor of Psychology (PsyD)
   c. Marriage & Family Therapy (MFT)
   d. Master of Art (MA)
   e. Master of Science (MS)
   f. Other (please specify)

8. (If answer was “yes” to Question 6) What area of psychology is your highest educational degree?
   a. Clinical Psychology
   b. Clinical/Industrial-Organizational Psychology (dual degree)
   c. Cognitive Psychology
   d. Consulting Psychology
   e. Counseling Psychology
   f. Developmental Psychology
   g. Educational Psychology
   h. Experimental Psychology
   i. Industrial-Organizational Psychology (or Industrial Psychology)
   j. Organizational Psychology
   k. Social Psychology
   l. Other (please specify)

9. (If answer was “yes” to Question 6) Which of the following APA Divisions do you belong to? (Select all that apply)
   a. 12 (Clinical Psychology)
   b. 13 (Society of Consulting Psychology)
   c. 14 (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology)
   d. Other: (please specify by number)
   e. Other: (please specify by number)
   f. Other: (please specify by number)

10. (If answer was “yes” to Question 6) What is your current licensure status? (Select one)
    a. Not licensed
b. Licensed psychologist in home state

c. Licensed psychologist in more than one state (please specify how many)

11. Do you have an advanced degree in business?

   a. Yes
   b. No

12. (If answer was “yes” to Question 12) Which best represents the degree type of your highest education level in psychology?

   a. Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
   b. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   c. Master of Art (MA)
   d. Master of Science (MS)
   e. Master’s in Business Administration (MBA)
   f. Other (please specify)

13. (If answer was “yes” to Question 12) What area of business is your highest educational degree? (Text box provided for written response)

14. Do you have an advanced degree in a field other than psychology or business?

   a. Yes
   b. No

15. (If answer was “yes” to Question 15) Please indicate the degree level and area of specialty of any other advanced degrees (e.g., PhD in anthropology, M.D. specializing in OB/GYN, MA in history) (Text box provided for written response)

16. (If answer was “no” to questions 2, 8 and 11). In what area is your highest educational degree? (Text box provided for written response)

17. Have you been through a coach-training program?

   a. Yes (please specify what program(s) you attended)
   b. No

18. How many years has coaching been a part of your professional work or practice? (Drop down menu)

19. How much of your time in the last year was spent coaching?

   a. 10% or less
   b. 11-25%
   c. 26-50%
   d. 51-75%
   e. 76-90%
   f. More than 90%

20. Which, if any, coaching certifications do you have (select all that apply)

   a. Associate Certified Coach (ACC) – International Coach Federation
   b. Professional Certified Coach (PCC) - International Coach Federation
   c. Master Certified Coach (MCC) - International Coach Federation
   d. Board Certified Coach (BCC) – Center for Credentialing & Education
   e. ATD (formerly, ASTD) Coaching Certificate
   f. Other: Specify
   g. Other: Specify
   h. Other: Specify
   i. Other: Specify

22. Please indicate your country of primary residence.
   a. United States
   b. Other (please specify)
23. Please indicate your gender.
   a. Female
   b. Male
24. Please indicate your ethnicity.
   a. Hispanic or Latino
   b. White, not Hispanic or Latino
   c. Black, not Hispanic or Latino
   d. Asian, not Hispanic or Latino
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific-Islander, not Hispanic or Latino
   f. American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic or Latino
   g. Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino