A note to the reader

This document is Dr. Ghadah Angawi's annotated commentary on the **ICF Code of Ethics** (Board approved October 2024), updated October 2026: the English text of the Code with the author's footnotes and comments. Its companion summary, *"A Call for Greater Cultural Inclusivity in the ICF Code of Ethics"*, is available as a separate download.

Read the Code in both languages. The commentary is written on the English text. The official ICF Code of Ethics is published by ICF in English and Arabic:

English: coachingfederation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics
Arabic and other ICF Arabic resources: coachingfederation.org/language/arabic

An Arabic translation and review by Dr. Ghadah Angawi (October 2026) is also available: Arabic translation (PDF). We encourage Arabic-speaking coaches to read the versions side by side; the footnotes note places where ICF's Arabic translation departs from the English text.

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ملاحظة للقارئ

تتضمّن هذه الوثيقة تعليقات د. غادة عنقاوي وحواشيها على **اللائحة الأخلاقية للاتحاد الدولي للتوجيه ICF**، المعتمدة من مجلس الإدارة في أكتوبر 2024، بنسختها المحدّثة في أكتوبر 2026: النص الإنجليزي للّائحة مع حواشي المؤلفة وتعليقاتها. أمّا رسالة «**دعوة إلى شمولية ثقافية أوسع في اللائحة الأخلاقية للاتحاد الدولي للتوجيه**» فمتاحة للتحميل بشكل مستقل.

اقرأ اللائحة باللغتين. كُتبت التعليقات على النص الإنجليزي، والنسخة الرسمية من اللائحة منشورة لدى الاتحاد الدولي للتوجيه باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية عبر الرابطين أعلاه.

وتتوفّر كذلك ترجمة عربية للّائحة مع التدقيق والمراجعة بقلم د. غادة عنقاوي، بتحديث أكتوبر 2026، عبر الرابط أعلاه. ندعو الموجّهين والموجّهات الناطقين بالعربية إلى قراءة النسخ جنبًا إلى جنب، وتشير الحواشي إلى مواضع اختلفت فيها ترجمة الاتحاد العربية عن النص الإنجليزي.

حقوق اللائحة الأخلاقية محفوظة للاتحاد الدولي للتوجيه ICF، وأُعيد نشر نصّها هنا لغرض التعليق. الحواشي والتعليقات والترجمة © 2026 غادة عنقاوي، أكاديمية المواهب العالمية. تُنشر لأغراض الحوار المهني، وليست وثيقة رسمية صادرة عن الاتحاد.

ICF Code of Ethics

Original Text: icf-ethics-code-of-ethics-2025

Board approved October 2024

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) Code of Ethics is composed of five main parts and an appendix:

1. PURPOSE

2. ICF CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

3. COMMITMENTS FOR ALL WITHIN THE ICF ECOSYSTEM

4. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ICF PROFESSIONALS

5. THE PLEDGE OF ETHICS

APPENDIX

- **KEY DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE CODE**
- **GLOSSARY OF OTHER TERMS**

1. PURPOSE

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the world's leading coaching association.

The ICF is made up of six family organizations (FOs). Together, they form the ICF Ecosystem. The FOs are: ICF Professional Coaches, ICF Credentials and Standards, ICF Coaching Education, ICF Foundation, ICF Coaching in Organizations, and the ICF Thought Leadership Institute. The ICF Global Board provides strategic direction for and coordination of the complete ICF ecosystem.

Based on its mission and responsibility, ICF provides a code of ethics setting out ethical standards[1] of professional conduct required to be adhered to by all within the ICF Ecosystem, whether acting as ICF professionals (see definition) or in any other capacity. The roles and responsibilities governed by the ICF Code of Ethics include ICF professionals, ICF staff (see definition), volunteers, members of ICF boards, leaders of ICF Communities of Practice, and members of ICF global committees, task forces, and core teams (whether they are ICF professionals or not).

The ICF Code of Ethics incorporates the core values of the International Coaching Federation (ICF Core Values) as a foundation to understanding the ICF Code of Ethics, ethical principles, and ethical standards of conduct.

The ICF Code of Ethics serves to uphold the integrity of ICF and the global coaching profession by:

[1] Some standards may not align with Islamic ethics (Sharia). The footnotes that follow identify where these differences arise and what a Muslim practitioner may wish to consider.

Setting standards of conduct consistent with ICF core values and ethical[2] principles.

- Guiding ethical reflection, education, and decision-making.
- Adjudicating and preserving ICF ethical standards through the ICF Ethical Conduct Review[3] (ECR) process.
- Providing the basis for ICF ethics training[4] in ICF accredited programs.

This Code of Ethics is intended to assist those people subject to the Code by directing them to the ethical factors, values, and principles that need to be taken into consideration whenever they need to engage in ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making.

The ICF Code of Ethics applies when people represent themselves as belonging within the ICF ecosystem and/or ICF professionals in their professional interactions.

The challenge of working ethically means that those within the ICF ecosystem will inevitably encounter situations that require responses to unexpected issues, resolution of dilemmas, and solutions to problems.

People within the ICF ecosystem strive to be ethical, even when doing so involves acting courageously[5] and making difficult decisions that uphold the "DO GOOD" principle when it comes to their stakeholders.

Part 4 of the Code articulates the ethical obligations of ICF professionals who are acting in their different roles as coach, coach supervisor, mentor coach, trainer, and student coach-in-training.

The ICF Independent Review Board serves to uphold this Code of Ethics through the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process[6], which is applicable to all ICF professionals.

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[2] Ethical theory spans many philosophical traditions, some resting on assumptions that differ from Islamic ethics. The author's research on ethical leadership proposes altruism (al-ithar) and a stable moral reference as criteria for judging what is ethical across contexts. An inclusive code would recognize that what is considered ethical can vary with context, including for the estimated two billion Muslims who form part of the global coaching population.

[3] Where a review involves practitioners in Muslim-majority contexts, including reviewers who understand the local culture and Islamic ethics would support a fair and culturally informed process.

[4] Accredited ICF education providers serving Muslim communities often address, in their ethics training, where the Code and Islamic values differ.

[5] This commentary is offered in that spirit: as a considered, evidence-based contribution to the dialogue on the Code.

[6] Raising an ethical concern | رفع طلب تحقيق أخلاقي: start with the ICF Ethical Conduct Review Process: Decision Tree (updated 20 April 2026): https://coachingfederation.jotform.com/221144773038150. Its last page links to the complaint form. Anyone may file, under their own name, and no ICF membership or credential is needed; anonymous complaints are not accepted. Confirmed by ICF Ethics, October 2026. See the GTA guide "Raising an Ethical Concern | رفع طلب تحقيق أخلاقي".

ICF mandates that all credentialed ICF professionals have continuous ethical education and training. Furthermore, ICF accredited coaching education programs are required to provide ethics training as ICF considers ethics to be the foundational element of the coaching profession.

The ICF Code applies to all individuals or entities falling within the ICF ecosystem. No individual or entity falling within the ICF ecosystem may opt out of any section or part of the Code[7], nor are they permitted to delete, modify, or amend any provisions within the Code.

2. ICF CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The Code of Ethics provides guidelines for implementing the core values and ethical principles and shows how they are put into practice. All values and principles are equally important, support one another, and are aspirational. All within the ICF ecosystem are expected to honor the core values and align with the principles in all their professional interactions.

The core values and the related ethical principles are listed on the ICF website and are reiterated below. (See https://coachingfederation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICF-Core-Values.pdf

Professionalism: A commitment to a coaching mindset and professional quality that encompasses responsibility, respect[8], integrity, competence, and excellence.

I demonstrate professionalism by:

- Ensuring my professional conduct is consistently aligned with the value of humanity and the coaching mindset competency in all my professional interactions.
- Being true and accurate in my statements.
- Committing to my life-long professional learning and personal development.
- Supporting the ongoing personal and professional development of my clients, students, and ICF professionals.
- Delivering on my commitments.

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[7] The wording sets a firm obligation: no section may be opted out of, amended or modified. For practitioners whose faith governs their conduct, this raises the question of how the Code accommodates religious obligations where the two differ.

[8] In Arabic, respect (ihtiram) derives from hurma (sanctity) and is expressed through adab (conduct and manners) toward every person, grounded in the dignity God has given all human beings: وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference” (Quran 17:70, Sahih International translation). Respect in this sense describes how one treats others and does not imply endorsement of their beliefs; this reading applies to each use of “respect” in the Code. The term adab is also used in the coaching literature in this sense (Hawkins, P. (2014). Leadership team coaching: Developing collective transformational leadership (2nd ed.). Kogan Page).

- Being aware of ethical dilemmas[9] and issues and responding with adherence to the ICF Code of Ethics.
- Adding to the knowledge base and sharing expertise and skills as described in the ICF Core Competencies.
- Being resilient and confident when faced with challenges.
- Behaving with respect and transparency in all business dealings related to coaching.
- Making clear and accurate representations in all my professional interactions in relation to coaching.
- Committing to honesty, courage, consistency of action, ethical practice, and the highest standards for ICF and the coaching profession.

Collaboration: A commitment to developing social connection and community building.

I work collaboratively by:

- Making commitments and progress towards promoting professional coaching through fostering joint creativity and resourcefulness.
- Partnering with others, both within and across multiple social-identity[10] groups.
- Being mindful and intentional in my own participation while working in any collective effort.
- Cooperating with other ICF professionals working with client(s) and sponsor(s).
- Partnering and communicating with related professions, associations, and people in other coaching organizations and professions.

Humanity: A commitment to being humane, kind, compassionate, and respectful towards others.

I demonstrate humanity by:

- Accepting that, as humans, I am not meant to be perfect, and with a coaching mindset, expressing imperfections is an opportunity for me to spread a culture of openness and self-acceptance[11].
- Knowing I always have more to learn and being open to other points of view.
- Creating authentic relationships that support honesty, transparency, and clarity.

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[9] These notes aim to support awareness of the ethical dilemmas Muslim practitioners may meet when applying the Code.

[10] For Muslim practitioners, partnership across identity groups is guided by Islamic adab, which preserves each party's identity without either dominating the other.

[11] In Islamic ethics, accepting oneself is distinct from accepting a behavior. Where a behavior may harm the person, others or the community, the practitioner may name it with care and support the person to change.

- Continuously seeking and developing self-awareness.
- Being willing to acknowledge and own my mistakes.
- Accepting responsibility for my actions and learning from them.
- Being modest about my achievements.
- Avoiding any behaviors or communication that suggest superiority in any way.
- Committing to inclusivity, dignity, self-worth, and human rights[12].

Equity: A commitment to using a coaching mindset to explore and understand the needs of others so I can practice equitable processes at all times that create equality for all.

I am equitable by:

- Recognizing and respecting all identity[13] groups and their contributions.
- Treating everyone with the same dignity and sense of fairness.
- Bringing awareness to systemic patterns of conscious and unconscious biases[14] in myself and in others.
- Exploring to understand and bring awareness to social diversity[15], systemic equality, and systemic oppression[16], and how they show up in the coaching profession.
- Maintaining equality and partnership in all my coach-client, trainer-student, mentor-coach, and supervisor-coach relationships.

3. COMMITMENTS FOR ALL WITHIN THE ICF ECOSYSTEM

The values are aspirational and a robust guide for ethical reasoning and decision-making. All within the ICF ecosystem are expected to honor and uphold these values in all their professional interactions.

We:

- Mindfully perform our duties with integrity and accountability by thinking globally[17], being courageous in our thoughts, actions, and speech, being aware of our impact, and bearing the responsibility of any consequences.
- Commit to excellence through continued personal, professional, and ethical development.

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[12] For Muslim practitioners, understood within the framework of Islamic ethics.
[13] Islam encourages recognizing the contributions of all groups; this recognition does not require agreement with every group's ideology or beliefs.
[14] Islamic ethics strongly encourages awareness of conscious and unconscious bias, in the service of equality, fairness and non-discrimination in how people communicate and behave.
[15] Diversity includes religious diversity. An inclusive Code would use language that allows Muslim practitioners to keep their beliefs and culture while serving all clients.
[16] "Systemic inequalities" may be a more precise and less contested term than "systemic oppression." Wherever such inequalities occur, and whomever they affect, they are best addressed through a planned strategy agreed with system leaders and stakeholders, in the spirit of shura (consultation), rather than by a coach acting alone.
[17] "Holistically" may be a more inclusive term here, since "globally" can imply a single shared worldview.

- Remain alert to cultural filters and demonstrate respect[18] for cultures different from our own through open conversations[19] about cross-cultural and multicultural differences.
- Maintain awareness of relationships and how they are influenced by factors including biases, power dynamics, and forms of systemic oppression, and actively address these factors[20] through continuing education and open conversations.
- Cultivate our ethical growth and maturity through continuous self-reflection and increased self-awareness. If an ethical dilemma arises, we will pursue assistance where needed to resolve the matter.
- Respectfully attempt to communicate our concerns with others if we become aware of unethical conduct by them, and if necessary, seek ethical guidance for next steps.
- Communicate with those who need to be informed of the ethical responsibilities established by this Code by providing access to this Code of Ethics.
- Accept that behaving ethically means going beyond what is written in the Code of Ethics.

4. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ICF PROFESSIONALS

Meeting these ICF ethical standards of conduct is the first of the ICF core coaching competencies (ICF Core Competencies): "Demonstrates Ethical Practice: understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards."

The following ethical standards are applied to the professional activities of ICF Professionals – regardless of an existing formal coaching relationship (see definitions) or not. These ethical standards are divided into five sections:

1. Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement.
2. Confidentiality and Legal Compliance.
3. Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest.
4. Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value.
5. Professional Integrity and Accountability.

Section 1: Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement

As an ICF Professional, I:

[18] A possible rewording: "acknowledge and understand others' distinctiveness while preserving one's own identity, expressing one's beliefs and values clearly, and engaging with courtesy and adab."

[19] This commentary is offered as part of that cross-cultural conversation.

[20] Addressing systemic factors "actively" can be read as a call to activism. Most Muslim-majority countries prohibit political activism. In Islamic political ethics, a ruler who has been given allegiance (bay'ah) is obeyed in what is right, and counsel is offered through consultation (shura) and sincere advice (nasiha), preserving social cohesion. Language that implies activism could expose coaches in these countries to serious legal risk. Coaches can instead raise such factors within the coaching agreement and through the organization's own consultative channels, with a strategy agreed with its leaders (see the note on systemic inequalities above).

1.1 Communicate (before coaching begins) with coaching client(s), sponsor(s), and/or other involved parties that the coach is in a direct relationship with to explain the nature of coaching and to co-create a coaching agreement regarding roles, responsibilities, confidentiality, financial arrangements, and other aspects of the coaching engagement.

1.2 Respect all parties' right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point for any reason during the coaching engagement, subject to the provisions of the agreement.

Section 2: Confidentiality and Legal Compliance

As an ICF Professional, I:

2.1 Maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all parties involved, regardless of the role I am fulfilling.

2.2 Have a clear agreement about what information is exchanged and how it is exchanged among all parties involved during all coaching engagements.

2.3 Have a clear agreement with client(s), sponsor(s), and other involved parties about what confidential information may need to be disclosed to the appropriate authorities, e.g., illegal activity, required by law, valid court order or subpoena; or imminent/likely risk of danger to self or to others.

2.4 Maintain, store, and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications, in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with applicable laws and agreements.

2.5 Fulfill my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching client(s), sponsor(s), colleagues, and to the public at large directly and through any technology systems I may utilize (i.e. technology-assisted coaching tools, databases, platforms, software, and artificial intelligence).

2.6 Am responsible for my support personnel's adherence to the relevant standards of the Code of Ethics.

2.7 Maintain the privacy of ICF professionals and use of their contact information (email addresses, telephone numbers, and so on) only as authorized by ICF or the ICF professional.

2.8 Comply with copyright laws and recognize and honor the contributions and intellectual property of others, only claiming ownership of my own material.

Section 3: Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

As an ICF Professional, I:

3.1 Am aware of and discuss with all involved parties the implications of having multiple agreements and relationships, and the potential for conflicts of interest.

3.2 Manage conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest with coaching client(s) and sponsor(s) through self-reflection, coaching agreement(s), and ongoing dialogue. This includes addressing organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships, records, confidentiality, and other reporting requirements.

3.3 Resolve any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest by working through the issue with relevant parties, seeking professional assistance, or suspending or ending the professional relationship.

3.4 Hold responsibility for being aware of and setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern professional interactions, physical or otherwise.

3.5 Maintain fairness by being aware of my biases and addressing them so that I do not discriminate toward others based on race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation[21], socio-economic status, age[22], spiritual practice[23], ability, and other groups, classes, and categories of human differences[24].

3.6 Am mindful of the level of intimacy in the coaching relationship. I do not participate in any sexual or romantic relationship with client(s) or sponsor(s). If I detect a shift in the relationship, I take appropriate action to address the issue or cancel the coaching engagement.

3.7 Understand that ICF professionals often serve in multiple professional roles based on prior training and/or experience (i.e. mentor, therapist, HR specialist, assessor), and it is my responsibility to disclose to the client when I am acting in a capacity other than the role of an ICF professional.

3.8 Disclose to Client(s) the information of compensation and benefits that have been paid/received or will be paid/received for referrals.

Section 4: Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value

As an ICF Professional, I:

4.1 Am aware of and, in partnership with my client, actively manage any power or status differential between us that may be caused by cultural, relational, psychological, or contextual issues.

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[21] Islamic teaching addresses gender and sexuality explicitly, and Muslim practitioners are guided by their faith in these matters while preserving the dignity of every person. The Code does not currently indicate how such faith-based positions are accommodated.

[22] Islamic adab asks for particular regard for elders and compassion toward the young, whatever their status or education.

[23] The official Arabic translation renders “spiritual practice” as “spiritual beliefs” and adds “religious affiliations”, which do not appear in the English text. A review of the translation by Arabic language specialists is recommended.

[24] Muslim practitioners can coach clients from any background or religion, provided there is no conflict of interest. ICF coaching centres on the client finding their own direction, not on the coach's worldview. Where a coach finds that a conflict of values affects the work, the coach should raise it with the client and, if needed, end the engagement with integrity and adab (see 4.3).

4.2 Recognize my personal limitations or circumstances that may impair my coaching performance or professional commitments. I will seek support if necessary, including relevant professional guidance. This may require suspending or terminating my coaching relationship(s).

4.3 Remain alert to indications that there might be a shift in the value received from the coaching relationship and discuss this with the client. If appropriate, explore changes in the coaching relationship and/or the potential for a different coach, professional, or resource.

Section 5: Professional Integrity and Accountability

As an ICF Professional, I:

5.1 Accurately identify my coaching qualifications and work within the boundaries of my level of coaching competency, expertise, experience, training, certifications, and my ICF credential.

5.2 Make verbal and written statements that are true and accurate about what I offer as an ICF professional, what is offered by ICF, the coaching profession, and the potential value of coaching.

5.3 Adhere to the philosophy of "doing good" versus "avoiding bad," recognizing the impact of my professional conduct on my clients, stakeholders, the coaching profession, and society.

I understand that ICF may, at its discretion and according to the ECR process, hold me accountable for violations of the ICF Code of Ethics. I further agree that my accountability to ICF may include sanctions for any violation[25], such as mandatory additional coach education, mentoring, supervision, or loss of my ICF membership and/ or ICF credentials.

5. THE PLEDGE OF ETHICS:

While fulfilling any role within the ICF ecosystem, I promise to uphold my ethical obligations by adhering to the ICF Code of Ethics in all my professional interactions. I commit to doing my best to represent the integrity and professional reputation of coaching and the ICF.

[25] The Code does not define "violation". Clarification is needed on whether acting on one's religious obligations could be treated as a violation.

Comments on the APPENDIX[26]:

In our comments we will only bring the issues we feel are in conflict of the global community agreement of in conflict of Islamic culture.

KEY DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE CODE

"Coach Supervisor" [27]– an experienced coach who engages in reflective dialogue and a collaborative process with a coach (or group of coaches) for personal, professional, and ethical development and learning. (See Parts 1 & 2).

Comment: I disagree with the ICF in defining the supervisor as an expert coach, as supervision is not limited to being a coach only. A supervisor can be a clinical supervisor in the field of therapy and psychiatry with knowledge in coaching – clinical supervision is the primary origin of coaching supervision – or a non-coach supervisor but trained in coaching supervision. The limitation on who qualifies for guidance supervision among those in human-supporting professions fundamentally contradicts the definitions and breadth of guidance supervision found in academic books and references (Placeholder1).

"Equality" [28]– a situation in which all people experience inclusion and access to resources and opportunity, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, immigration status, mental or physical disability, and other areas of human difference.[29] (See Part 2 and Standard 3.5)

Comment: listing all groups and types is not inclusive rather exclusive and raises questions on the coach who exists in Muslim countries with the identified gender

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[26] Coaching supervision draws on a wider base than coaching alone; its roots lie in clinical supervision in the helping professions (Hawkins, P., & Shohet, R. (2012). Supervision in the helping professions (4th ed.). Open University Press). Practitioners trained in coaching supervision, including clinical supervisors with coaching knowledge, may also be qualified to supervise coaches.

[27] Under Islamic law (Sharia), gender is understood as male or female, and the laws of several Muslim-majority countries reflect this. Listing sexual orientation and gender identity as categories of equality may place Muslim practitioners in those countries in conflict with their faith and with local law. A more inclusive definition could commit to fair access and non-discrimination for every person without enumerating these categories (see the note on Standard 3.5).

[28] This definition places inequality in the "laws … nations, and society" themselves and divides people into "marginalized" and "privileged" identities. Read together with the commitment to "actively address" such factors (see note 20), it can be taken as a mandate for political action against a state's laws and institutions. Most Muslim-majority countries prohibit political activism, and Islamic political ethics directs reform through allegiance (bay'ah) to legitimate authority, consultation (shura), and sincere advice (nasiha), so that social cohesion is preserved. A coach seen to act on this definition could face serious legal consequences. A definition of systemic inequalities that names no group, paired with improvement through strategies agreed with system leaders and stakeholders, would serve the same aim without this risk (see note 16).

[29] DEIB carries a policy and advocacy meaning in the US context. In countries with different systems of governance, practitioners may need neutral wording when presenting the Code to client organizations, so that its use remains within local law and regulation.

is male or female and no other identification is acknowledge based on the Sharea law. Therefore, putting Muslim caches in conflict with their conscious and law.

"Systemic Oppression"[30] – Systemic racism, colorism, sexism, and other forms of systemic inequality that are embedded in the norms, beliefs, language, images, ethics, core values, policies, structures, laws, practices, and cultures of communities, organizations, professional associations, nations, and society and that perpetuate widespread prejudicial and harmful treatment of people with marginalized identities and reward and benefit people with privileged identities. (See Parts 2 & 3)

GLOSSARY OF OTHER TERMS

"DEIB" [31]

"Diversity"[32] – race, color, caste, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, rank, socio-economic status, age, spiritual practice, national origin, ability, and other groups, classes, and categories of human differences, such as personality characteristics, appearance, communication styles, and leadership styles.

Comment: while the above definition of diversity is valid in the United States and western cultures, it is not adopted in the Muslim countries and by Sharea law with its current reference to Sexual orientation. Something again that will present a conflict of interest to the Muslim coach. The other terms and definitions should be stripped of the implication of activism and encouragement for participation in decision-making as it invites direct violation to the governance system in most Muslim countries. It is important to understand that these terms are practiced in countries with democratic systems and that the words have to be moderated for a coach to use and present the code of ethics to their beneficent organization.

"Equity"[33] – actions that provide access to resources and opportunities and establish norms, actions, policies, infrastructure, and culture so that everyone can realize their full potential.

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[30] Two points arise for Muslim practitioners. First, "spiritual practice" presents religion as a practice only, whereas Islam is a system of belief that shapes values and conduct (see the note on Standard 3.5). Second, sexual orientation and gender identity, as listed here, are not recognized under Sharia or in the law of most Muslim-majority countries, which may place Muslim practitioners in conflict between the Code and their faith.

[31] Defining inclusion as participation "in decision-making about what the organization's work is" assumes a particular model of organizational democracy. In many Muslim-majority societies, decisions in organizations and in the state follow consultation (shura) with those in authority, who then decide. Coaches can support wider consultation within an organization's agreed governance, but presenting the Code as requiring a change to how decisions are made could place them at odds with local law and custom (see notes 16 and 20).

[32] The Appendix explains the terms used in the Code; it does not form part of the text of the pledge that members sign.

[33] Islam established principles of equality and fairness, among them the sayings "Women are the twin halves of men" and "No Arab has superiority over a non-Arab except by piety." Muslim practitioners can keep a clear religious identity while treating everyone with adab.

“Inclusion”[34] – action that includes and fully supports people from marginalized as well as privileged groups; by creating and maintaining processes, infrastructure, and culture; so their inclusion goes beyond assimilation and differentiation to integrating them in the life and work of the organization in a way that they participate in decision-making about what the organization’s work is, and how the work gets done.

[34] “Actions” in this definition refers to organized efforts to change the position of marginalized groups, which in some societies take the form of lobbying campaigns or protests. Equity is a core principle in Islam, but in Muslim societies it is pursued through established institutional channels and consultation (shura) with those in authority and leadership, not through external pressure, so that division is avoided and social cohesion preserved. Coaches can therefore support equity within an organization’s agreed governance (see notes 16 and 20).