

Coaching for the Recovered Life

Resource #2: Consultant, Counselor, Coach: What's the Difference?

	Consultant	Counselor	Coach
Primary Purpose of Role	Transfer of expertise on a specific subject from consultant to client, as per the mandate established by the client.	Enhancement of mental health and well-being through the resolution of individual and/or interpersonal conflict stemming from emotional, cognitive, and/or behavioral challenges.	Support of client in their commitment to resolve present-day challenges through collaboration. Client establishes goals and coach facilitates change process.
Nature of Role	The consultant is the subject-matter expert, hired by the client to bring critical information to bear on a problem or planned initiative.	Clinical (medical, social, and behavioral models) are used to diagnose and treat issues that limit the client's ability to function effectively within a framework of mental health.	Non-clinical/non-diagnostic, supporting multiple strategies to a positive outcome, rooted in strengths and wellness, action-oriented and forward-moving.
Relational Model	The consultant is the subject-matter expert hired by the client. Client sets mandate, consultant fulfills mandate, client decides whether to implement consultant's recommendations for action.	Professional/hierarchical (expert model), services correspond to diagnostic criteria. Multiple models of practice, some of which emphasize a client-centered/solution-focused modality.	Partnership of equals co-created in service of the client: client is the expert on themselves and retains personal agency throughout. Coach brings expertise in skills specific to coaching

Coaching for the Recovered Life

			(e.g. reflecting, reframing) and as a change agent.
View of “Problem”	The client lacks the necessary information to move forward with a successful plan. The consultant provides this information and bases recommendations on the client’s mandate.	Varies depending on the counseling modality. For example, some modalities focus on the role of the cognitive process in relation to problematic behavior, others focus on unblocking deeply withheld experiences and emotions.	Focus on facilitating enhanced self-awareness and an authentic view of current reality, leading to strategic actions and change.
Words used to describe the activities	Advise, inform, educate, investigate, summarize, recommend	Diagnose, treat, assess, screen, refer, document, counsel, pathology	Coach, facilitate, co-create, partner, challenge, brainstorm, clarify
Credentials	Formal education in subject of expertise and/or extensive experience. May be member of professional organization (e.g. Society of Professional Consultants). https://www.spconsultants.org/	Post-graduate education in social work, counseling, counseling psychology. Mandatory licensure through jurisdictional regulatory body.	Non coach-specific education and employment experience varies, completion of accredited coach training program recommended. Credentialing available at various levels through professional coaching organizations (e.g. International Coach Federation). https://coachfederation.org/

Coaching for the Recovered Life

Core Competence	Expertise in specific subject reflected in ability to consolidate and convey pertinent information and recommendations for action in accordance with the client's mandate.	Includes ability to perform clinically oriented functions, knowledge of various pathologies as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), theories of counseling, counseling techniques, screening and assessment skills, treatment planning, ethical decision-making, documentation protocol, etc.	Includes ability to screen clients for ability to benefit from coaching, knowledge [and effective use] of coaching skills, increase client's motivation and confidence, facilitate awareness of and movement toward new possibilities, support client in establishing clear goals and specific actions, corroborate and challenge.
------------------------	--	--	--

Created with input from Role Clarity Matrix (Crossroads Recovery Coaching), Core Competencies (International Coach Federation), Qualities and Actions of Effective Therapists (American Psychological Association), Core Competencies (Society of Professional Consultants), The Difference between Counseling and Coaching (Elizabeth Franzoso, MA)

Resource #2: Consultant, Counselor, Coach: What's the Difference?

©Lianne MacGregor 2019