

Ethical Dilemma Decision Map

Navigate difficult coaching choices with a structured framework

When ethical tensions arise in Agile coaching, structured thinking prevents snap judgements. Use this decision map to work through dilemmas step by step — drawing on ICF guidance and the ethical frameworks from Chapter 9.



Common Scenarios & Ethical Guidance

ICF ETHICAL PRINCIPLE	AGILE COACHING SCENARIO	COACHING RESPONSE
Maintain Confidentiality	Sponsor asks what happened in 1:1s	Share only patterns and themes, not individual disclosures. Honour the "Las Vegas rule."
Avoid Conflicts of Interest	Coach reports to sponsor but also works closely with team	Disclose dual role in contract; renegotiate or withdraw if conflict can't be managed.
Act with Integrity & Transparency	Manager wants you to coach a team that hasn't asked for it	Ask for consent, hold a discovery session before proceeding. Don't coach under coercion.
Define Clear Agreements	Coaching goals shift mid-engagement	Re-contract with all stakeholders, reset scope and expectations openly.
Do Not Exploit Role	You're asked to give HR input affecting promotions	Decline, or share process-level reflections only — never evaluative input about individuals.
Commit to Professional Development	Facing burnout or bias but unsure how to proceed	Seek supervision, acknowledge limits, pause if needed. Burnout impairs ethical judgement.

Core Ethical Principles

Confidentiality Honour the strictest levels agreed upon. Clarify exceptions upfront.	Conflicts of Interest Disclose dual roles. Withdraw if conflict can't be managed.	Integrity Be transparent about your role, approach, and limitations.	Clear Agreements Re-contract when scope, goals, or dynamics shift.	Know Your Limits Refer out when issues exceed coaching scope.
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Ethical Check-up

- > What ethical tensions showed up this week?
- > Did I experience pressure to take sides or act outside my role?
- > What am I learning about my ethical decision making?
- > Where did I honour confidentiality, and where was it tested?
- > Did I hold space for all voices? Who went unheard?
- > What will I do differently next time?

Building Ethical Maturity

- > **Regular supervision:** Monthly sessions with an experienced coach or peer group to review cases.
- > **Reflective routines:** Keep a coaching journal; note ethical tensions after each session.
- > **Use ethical tools:** Apply ICF's Ethical Decision-Making Model or simple stakeholder charts.
- > **Continual learning:** Attend workshops on coaching ethics. Stay updated on codes.
- > **Cultivate humility:** Admitting "I'm not sure" and seeking counsel is itself an ethical stance.