



**21ST
CENTURY**



THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF)

**YOUTH COACHING COMPETENCE
FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT**

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Moreover, huge thanks to our excellent partnership, those who embarked this project with us, to train, supervise, mentor and support 20 and professional youth coaches, that is The Globe (CZ), EduEra (SK), Strauss APS (ITA), COOBRA (AT), ResCogita (EE) and PRAXIS (HL), for the constructive collaboration, and for the 20 participants and future impactful youth coaches who joined on a 24 month journey to enhance the European pool of youth coaches, delivering a powerful and long lasting local impact in their realities.

FOREWORD

“21st CENTURY - Coaching Europe’s Navigation Towards Understanding and Reactivating Youth” is an EU project, Erasmus+ Key Action 2 project on innovative methods of Youth Work, supported and financed by the Czech National Agency DZS.

Why coaching? Youth Organisations provide excellent support measures to youth, especially in fostering ownership to a young person’s desired future, by providing experiential learning opportunities, mobilities, training, mentoring, and some organisations are even well equipped with counselling services and psychological support. We believe, that, in addition to those support figures, one is missing, a coach, that is a professional who is competent and equipped with bringing out the true potential out of a young person, expand both horizons and opportunities by tailoring empowerment and self-learning processes around the individual, or group, to uncover their goals, shedding light on their virtues and potentials, and thus, fully live their values through this wholeness foster their accomplishments.

We submitted this project to the Czech Erasmus+ National Agency DZS, declaring our intention to deliver a long term training for 20 youth workers from Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Italy and Slovakia to become coaches, coaching tools trainers and coaching supervisors, to integrate this professional practice into youth work programs services, specifically focused to address marginalisation and working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We provide youth workers and youth based civil society organisations with coaching competencies, at the highest international quality standards, enabling them to apply these skills in their inclusion work. By doing so, we seek to empower and support marginalised groups in their pathway towards inclusion and therefore, active participation in society, particularly in the areas of goal-setting and self-realisation.

CREDITS AND DISCLAIMER

This handbook is the result of the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Innovation in the field of youth work “21st Century - Coaching Europe’s Navigation Towards Understanding and Reactivating Youth”, supported by the the EU funded programme Erasmus+ Programme’s Czech National Agency, Dům zahraničních služeb and implemented by the Czech civil society organisation The Globe in partnership as lead partner, in consortium with the EduEra (SK), ResCogita (EE), Strauss APS (ITA),

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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ABOUT THE GLOBE

The Globe/Zeměkoule is a civil society organisation founded by young people for young people in 2008, focused on deepening civic awareness and active citizenship by means of non-formal education for children, teenagers and young adults, as well as fellow civil society organisations interested volunteerism, youth work, personal growth and development, as well as the opportunities offered by the Erasmus + program. One of its primary aims is to provide opportunities for youth and youth workers, educators and support staff. The mission of The Globe is to support youth autonomy, independence, responsibility and active approach to problem-solving situations with the long-term goal to engage young people in civic life as active and responsible citizens. We provide young people with opportunities to self-fulfilment, to grow and to engage in civic life, as well as identifying potential and gratifying career paths. The Globe has over 17 years of experience in the youth field. Ranging from working with talented youth from universities to young with fewer opportunities from marginalised backgrounds.

WELCOME

Welcome

Welcome to a framework that puts young people at the center of their own growth story. Whether you are a seasoned youth worker, a new social coach, or someone exploring this field, this handbook offers you a practical roadmap for supporting young people in ways that truly matter. Young people today navigate a world of unprecedented complexity. They face traditional challenges of identity formation and career decisions alongside new realities: climate anxiety, digital overwhelm, social inequality, and rapidly changing job markets. As youth workers and social coaches, we need approaches that honor both their individual journeys and their place in wider communities and ecosystems.

This competence framework isn't about checking boxes or following rigid procedures. It's about developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help you create spaces where young people can:

- Discover their authentic selves
- Build meaningful relationships
- Navigate complex systems with confidence
- Contribute to positive change in their communities
- Develop resilience for an uncertain future

This Competence model for youth coaching was developed to provide a structured, practice-oriented framework for professionals who support young people through coaching, mentoring, and non-formal education. It combines insights from psychology, youth work, coaching, education, and sustainability to describe what high-quality youth coaching looks like in practice. This handbook aims to develop a comprehensive and effective competence model for social coaching, designed to assess and support the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required of practitioners in this emerging profession. The model is grounded in the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) of partner countries, ensuring coherence with European standards while responding to the diverse realities of youth work and social coaching. The purpose of this model is to ensure that individuals working in social coaching have the necessary qualifications and competences to provide high-quality, ethical, and impactful services. It offers a structured way of identifying, articulating, and assessing the competences that social coaches need in order to empower young people, strengthen communities, and respond to today's complex social and ecological challenges.

The model serves several purposes. The competence framework strengthens the **professionalisation of social coaching** by:

- Improving the **quality of services** provided to young people and communities.
- Enhancing **recognition, credibility, and transparency** of the profession.
- Supporting **validation and mobility** of competences across Europe.
- Providing young people and practitioners with tools for **self-reflection, growth, and empowerment**.

Why we connect this framework to the European Qualification Framework (EQF)

You might wonder why a handbook about youth coaching talks about the European Qualification Framework. The connection is both practical and transformational for your career and the young people you serve.

For your professional recognition: Youth work has historically been undervalued and poorly recognized compared to other helping professions. By aligning our competence framework with EQF standards, we're establishing youth coaching and social coaching as legitimate, skilled professions that deserve recognition, proper compensation, and career development opportunities. This isn't just about credentials – it's about respect for the complex, important work you do.

For quality and consistency: When youth services vary wildly in quality from one organization to another, young people suffer. The EQF connection ensures that whether a young person works with a social coach in Slovakia, Spain, or Sweden, they can expect certain standards of competence and ethical practice. This protects young people and strengthens the profession.

For your career mobility: In our interconnected Europe, you should be able to take your skills across borders. An EQF-aligned framework means your competencies are recognized whether you want to work in another European country, participate in international exchanges, or collaborate on European-level youth projects. Your professional growth isn't limited by national boundaries.

For accessing training and funding: Many training programs, funding opportunities, and career advancement positions require recognized qualifications. By connecting your practical experience to EQF levels, you can more easily access professional development opportunities, apply for leadership positions, and secure funding for innovative projects.

In this way, the competence model not only sets a standard for professional practice but also acts as a living resource for reflection, learning, and transformation — ensuring that social coaching remains responsive, ethical, and impactful in rapidly changing social and ecological contexts.

How the model is structured

The framework is organised into six competence areas, each representing a key dimension of effective youth coaching:

1. **Foundation, ethics, and professionalism**
2. **Building safe and inclusive relationships**
3. **Communication, active listening, and inquiry**
4. **Facilitating learning, growth, and development**
5. **Systemic awareness, social Inclusion, and collaborative engagement**
6. **Applying the principles of regeneration and sustainability**

Think of this framework as six interconnected areas that work together, like instruments in an orchestra. Each area has its own voice, but the magic happens when they harmonize:

Foundation, Ethics and Professionalism - Your solid ground

Building Safe and Inclusive Relationships - Your connection skills

Communication, Active Listening and Inquiry - Your conversational toolkit

Facilitating Learning, Growth and Development - Your guidance approach

Systemic Awareness, Social Inclusion and Collaborative Engagement - Your systems thinking

Applying Principles of Regeneration and Sustainability - Your ecological perspective

Within each area, the model is broken down into:

- **Core competencies:** Broad professional abilities describing what a competent youth coach should be able to do.
- **Criteria:** Specific aspects of practice within each competence area.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSA):** The foundation of competence, describing what the coach needs to know, be able to do, and value in their professional stance.
- **Indicators:** Observable and assessable signs of competence, providing examples of how knowledge, skills, and attitudes can be demonstrated in practice.

Who This Framework Serves

- **For young people:** Use this to reflect on your own development, identify strengths, and set learning goals. This isn't about being evaluated – it's about understanding yourself better.
- **For practitioners:** Whether you are called a youth worker, social coach, mentor, counselor, or trainer, this framework helps you reflect on your practice and continue growing professionally.
- **For organizations:** Use this to design training programs, support staff development, and ensure quality in youth services.
- **For policymakers:** This framework demonstrates the complexity and importance of quality youth work, supporting recognition and funding for the profession.

Why you should read this handbook and put it into practice

- **If you are new to youth work:** This framework provides a clear roadmap for developing your skills systematically. Instead of learning haphazardly through trial and error, you can build competence strategically across all essential areas. The EQF alignment helps you understand what "professional competence" actually means in concrete terms.
- **If you are an experienced practitioner:** This framework helps you recognize and articulate the sophisticated skills you've already developed, while identifying areas for continued growth. Many experienced youth workers underestimate their expertise – seeing how your abilities map to EQF levels can be both validating and motivating for further development.

- **If you are a team leader or manager:** This framework provides common language and standards for your team. Use it for recruitment, supervision, professional development planning, and quality assurance. It helps you build organizational capacity systematically rather than hoping good practice happens by chance.
- **If you are a trainer or educator:** This framework gives you learning outcomes and assessment criteria that connect to recognized standards. Your training programs become more valuable to participants when they can see how their learning contributes to formal professional recognition.
- **If you are a policymaker or funder:** This framework demonstrates the complexity and importance of quality youth work, supporting arguments for appropriate funding and recognition of the profession.

Young people today face complex challenges, from navigating education and work transitions, to building inclusive communities, to addressing the ecological and systemic issues of our times. This competence model emphasises not only traditional coaching abilities such as listening, inquiry, and goal-setting, but also **systemic awareness, inclusion, sustainability, and regeneration**. It positions youth coaches as both **skilled practitioners and agents of positive change**, able to foster resilience, creativity, and empowerment in young people and their communities.

**COMPETENCE AREA
I: FOUNDATION,
ETHICS, AND
PROFESSIONALISM**

This is your bedrock – the non-negotiable foundation that makes everything else possible. Think of it as learning to be the kind of adult that young people can trust completely, while staying aware of your own human limitations and growth edges.

Core competencies:

- Ethical and professional practice
 - ◇ Demonstrate deep commitment to ethical guidelines and integrity in all interactions.
 - ◇ Respect confidentiality and sensitivity, particularly important when supporting diverse youth contexts.
 - ◇ Maintain an inclusive ethical stance by actively challenging bias, discrimination, and injustice.
- Coaching mindset and self-awareness
 - ◇ Cultivate an open, curious, and reflective attitude with ongoing professional development and self-reflection.
 - ◇ Recognize personal biases and limitations, and commit to continuous learning.
 - ◇ Maintain personal boundaries and practice self-care to ensure professional sustainability.

Indicators:

- Knowledge
 - ◇ The youth coach is expected to have a comprehensive understanding of ethical standards, youth development and trauma-informed practices and relevant legal and cultural norms, including role of supervision and continuous professional development.
 - ◇ They are familiar with research on youth development and social change, as well as the theoretical foundations of coaching and other support professions in diverse contexts.
 - ◇ They understand the need of Data protection and safeguarding legislation (e.g. GDPR).
- Skills:
 - ◇ The coach should be able to consistently apply ethical guidelines in real-world situations, using reflective practice to monitor their own behaviour.
 - ◇ They can effectively set up and manage confidentiality, boundaries, and risk management procedures when working with youth.
- Attitudes:
 - ◇ A genuine commitment to personal integrity and accountability is essential.

- ◇ The coach shows openness to ongoing feedback, learning, and self-improvement with a lifelong learning mindset, thereby ensuring that ethical practice is seen as an ingrained professional attitude rather than as a checklist.
- ◇ The coach prioritizes their own well-being and self-care as essential to sustaining ethical, effective, and empathetic practice, recognizing that caring for oneself enhances their capacity to support others responsibly.
- ◇ The coach respects diversity and cultural sensitivity.

Indicators:

Criterion: Ethical and professional practice

- Knowledge indicators:
 - ◇ Coach demonstrates clear understanding of the Code of Ethics (e.g. by articulating key principles in supervision sessions or training evaluations) and continuous professional development and supervision.
 - ◇ The coach can accurately explain legal, administrative rules, regulations, socio-cultural contexts and cultural regulations relevant to youth coaching. (*) States how bias and privilege affect coaching decisions.
- Skill indicators:
 - ◇ Documented examples or case studies where the coach manages confidentiality and ethical dilemmas appropriately, especially in challenging situations.
 - ◇ Reflective practice and peer or supervisor observations note that the coach consistently applies ethical decision-making in simulations/role-plays/training situations or real coaching sessions.
 - ◇ Navigates multi-stakeholder situations professionally. Identifies when youth need specialized support and refers accordingly, regulates emotions and remains calm in stressful coaching contexts.
 - ◇ Set and communicate clear personal/professional boundaries and engage in regular self-care practices.
- Attitude indicators:
 - ◇ Self-reflective journals or evaluation reports reveal an ongoing commitment to personal integrity and improvement.
 - ◇ Feedback from clients emphasizes the growth mindset, that the coach's behavior is respectful, transparent, and free from judgment.

Criterion: coaching mindset and self-awareness

• **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Completion of continuous professional development courses (e.g. coaching mindset workshops) and ability to share key learnings.
- ◇ References to relevant literature, background material during reflective sessions with supervisors.
- ◇ Awareness of emotional labor in youth coaching, personal energy levels, burnout signs, and resilience-building strategies.

• **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ The coach demonstrates an ability to regulate their emotions during sessions (observed through calm responses in stressful moments).
- ◇ In supervision, the coach effectively uses reflective questioning to explore how their personal biases may affect the coaching process.
- ◇ Sets and communicates clear personal and professional boundaries with clients and teams and engages in self-care.

• **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Regularly self-assessed growth and willingness to seek feedback from peers and mentors.
- ◇ Expressed openness to new perspectives and demonstrated readiness to adapt based on client feedback.
- ◇ Integrity in balancing care for others with care for self.

Summary

| Core Competence | Indicatori di conoscenza | Indicatori di abilità | Indicatori di atteggiamento |
|--|--|--|--|
| Ethical & Professional Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the Code of Ethics, safeguarding law, GDPR, and relevant cultural/legal regulations. • Able to explain ethical standards clearly during supervision. • Explains how bias, power, and privilege affect youth-adult relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies ethical decision-making consistently in sessions. • Maintains confidentiality and risk management, including safeguarding and mandatory reporting in challenging situations. • Challenges discriminatory language/behaviour respectfully. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates integrity, accountability, and transparency. • Open to feedback and continuous improvement as shown in self-reflections. • Shows equity, social justice, and cultural sensitivity in all interactions. • Engages in reflective questioning (e.g., "Whose voice is missing here?"). |
| Coaching Mindset & Self-Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes professional development on coaching mindset and reflective practice. • References youth development, coaching theory, and resilience/burnout literature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulates emotions during sessions and adjusts approach accordingly. • Uses supervision, journaling, or peer feedback to identify and address personal biases. • Sets and communicates clear professional boundaries; engages in self-care routines. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks feedback, embraces learning, and adapts based on reflection. • Maintains humility and openness to diverse perspectives. • Balances care for others with personal well-being to sustain ethical practice. |

Evaluation Standard: Success in this area is measured by the coach's ability to navigate complex ethical ambiguities, self-report and observe integrity during sessions, and incorporate cultural sensitivity into decision-making.

Practical applications

A young person shares something that worries you, but isn't clearly dangerous. You balance confidentiality with duty of care by being transparent: "I'm feeling concerned about what you've shared. Can we talk about who else might be helpful to involve?"

Scenario 2: You realize you've been giving advice instead of coaching because this young person's situation reminds you of your own past. You acknowledge this in supervision and adjust your approach.

Scenario 3: A colleague makes a comment that shows cultural bias. You address it respectfully in the moment, then follow up privately to explore it further.

Reflective questions for this area

For Self-Awareness:

- What personal experiences or triggers might affect how I work with young people?
- When do I feel most confident in my ethical decision-making? When do I feel uncertain?
- How do I currently practice self-care, and is it sufficient for sustainable practice?
- What assumptions do I make about young people from different backgrounds than mine?

For Practice Development:

- How do I explain confidentiality and its limits in ways young people understand?
- What does "cultural humility" look like in my day-to-day work?
- How do I know when I need supervision or consultation?
- What evidence do I have that young people feel safe and respected with me?

For Ethical Reflection:

- How do I balance respecting young people's autonomy with my responsibility to keep them safe?
- What would I do if I disagreed with my organization's policies on a particular issue?
- How do I address my own privilege and bias in my work?

**COMPETENCE AREA
II: BUILDING SAFE
AND INCLUSIVE
RELATIONSHIPS**

This is about becoming someone young people want to work with – not because you are cool or permissive, but because you create a space where they can be genuinely themselves without fear of judgment or harm.

Core Competencies:

- **Building Rapport and Trust**
 - ◇ Create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages young people to share freely, thereby fostering authenticity and openness.
 - ◇ Establish and maintain clear coaching agreements that define roles, expectations, boundaries, and mutual responsibilities.
- **Facilitating a Collaborative Coaching Process**
 - ◇ Work together with youth to co-create goals and action plans that reflect their developmental stage and personal aspirations.
 - ◇ Demonstrate flexibility by adapting coaching approaches and communication styles to diverse youth contexts and needs.

Criteria:

- **Knowledge:**
 - ◇ The coach understands best practices for building relationships with youth and the importance of establishing mutual trust.
 - ◇ They possess knowledge about effective frameworks to co-create goals and coaching contracts that are adaptable for diverse contexts and environments.
- **Skills:**
 - ◇ Demonstrated ability to rapidly build rapport and trust with young people, establishing a safe, supportive atmosphere, co-creating agreements and boundaries.
 - ◇ Effective facilitation of coaching agreements, clearly outlining expectations, roles, responsibilities, and boundaries in a way that resonates with youth.
- **Attitudes:**
 - ◇ The coach is empathetic and patient, valuing youth input and promoting a shared responsibility model.
 - ◇ They are committed to genuine collaboration, encouraging young clients to take ownership of their growth while remaining supportive.

Indicators:

Criterion: Building Rapport and Trust

- **Knowledge indicators:**
 - ◇ Knowledge of effective rapport-building strategies, evidenced by successful design of initial coaching agreements.
 - ◇ Familiarity with socio-cultural responsive techniques, shown in training certificates or case discussions.
 - ◇ Knows how to design coaching agreements that define expectations, roles, and boundaries.
- **Skill indicators:**
 - ◇ Observable ease in establishing trust early in sessions (as attested by client testimonials or session recordings).
 - ◇ Co-create clear, documented coaching agreements that outline mutual expectations and boundaries.
 - ◇ Use of trauma-informed and culturally safe communication strategies as observed in feedback or recording.
 - ◇ Co-creates ground-rules that acknowledge cultural power imbalances and displays deep cultural awareness and adapts coaching strategies accordingly.
- **Attitude indicators:**
 - ◇ Demonstrable empathy, curiosity and active interest in the client's background and unique needs, as reported in client evaluations.
 - ◇ Client feedback that reflects feeling safe, valued, and understood during interactions.
 - ◇ Shows commitment to equity and inclusivity in all interactions.

Criterion: Facilitating a Collaborative Coaching Process

- **Knowledge indicators:**
 - ◇ Understands models of co-creation and youth-centered goal-setting.
 - ◇ Demonstrates knowledge of research and best practices for youth participation and collaboration.
- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Co-creates coaching plans and action steps with clients (documented in coaching logs or progress notes).
- ◇ Uses participatory techniques (e.g., brainstorming, visual tools) to involve and engage youth in decision-making.
- ◇ Adapts approach and agreements flexibly as youth needs evolve.
- **Attitude indicators:**
 - ◇ Consistent demonstration of a client-centered approach and respect for youth autonomy, as reflected by positive client reflections.
 - ◇ Willingness to modify agreements based on evolving client needs.
 - ◇ Feedback and supervision notes show flexibility, openness, and responsiveness.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Facilitating a Collaborative Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands models of co-creation and youth-centered goal-setting. • Demonstrates knowledge of research and best practices for youth participation and collaboration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and documents coaching plans collaboratively. • Uses interactive techniques (e.g. brainstorming, co-design) effectively. • Adapts approach and agreements flexibly as youth needs evolve. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a client-centered, flexible approach. • Consistently values and encourages youth input and autonomy. • Feedback and supervision notes show flexibility, openness, and responsiveness. |
|---|--|--|--|

Evaluation Standard: Success is measured by high-quality relationships, clear and mutually agreed-upon contracts, and the youth's willingness to engage actively in the process.

Practical applications

Scenario 1: Meeting 16-year-old Maya, who crosses her arms and says she doesn't want to be there. Instead of pushing forward with an agenda, you acknowledge her feeling: "It sounds like being here wasn't your choice. That must be frustrating. What would make this hour feel less like a waste of your time?"

Scenario 2: Working with Jamal, who comes from a different cultural background. You ask: "I want to make sure I understand your perspective. Can you help me understand what respect looks like in your family/community?"

Scenario 3: In a group session, you notice that quieter members aren't participating. You introduce a visual brainstorming activity that allows different communication styles to contribute.

Reflective questions for this area

For Relationship Building:

- What helps me feel most connected to the young people I work with?
- How do I adapt my communication style to different personalities and backgrounds?
- What do young people tell me (directly or indirectly) about feeling safe with me?
- How quickly do I tend to move to problem-solving versus relationship-building?

For Inclusion and Collaboration:

Summary

| Core Competence | Knowledge indicators | Skill indicators | Attitude indicators |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Building Rapport & Trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows effective rapport-building and contextual responsive techniques. • Can explain coaching agreements and specifics of the coaching relationship. • Knows how to design coaching agreements that define expectations, roles, and boundaries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly establishes trust in initial sessions (as seen in recordings/testimonials). • Creates clear, written contracts outlining roles. • Co-creates ground-rules that acknowledge cultural power imbalances and displays deep cultural awareness and adapts coaching strategies accordingly. Uses trauma-informed and culturally safe communication strategies (as observed in feedback or recording). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy and genuine interest in youth clients. • Clients report feeling safe, valued, and understood. |

- How do I check whether young people feel genuinely heard and valued?
- What barriers might prevent some young people from engaging fully with me?
- How do I share power and decision-making with young people?
- What feedback do I get about my cultural sensitivity and responsiveness?

For Ongoing Practice:

- How do I repair relationships when things go wrong?
- What signs tell me that trust is building versus declining?
- How do I balance being warm and approachable with maintaining appropriate boundaries?

**COMPETENCE
AREA III:
COMMUNICATION,
ACTIVE LISTENING,
AND INQUIRY**

This is your conversational toolkit – learning to listen in ways that help young people discover things about themselves they didn't know before, and ask questions that open up possibilities rather than shutting them down.

Core Competencies:

• **Effective Communication and Active Listening**

- ◇ Employ active listening techniques that are attuned to youth language, emotional expressions, and non-verbal cues.
- ◇ Use open-ended, powerful questioning to help young people explore their thoughts and feelings, drawing on widely accepted ICF standards.

• **Facilitation of Awareness and Reflection**

- ◇ Help youth explore and articulate insights about themselves and their experiences to promote self-awareness and responsibility.
- ◇ Offer constructive feedback in a respectful, open-minded manner to support growth participation, inclusion and learning.

Criteria:

• **Knowledge:**

- ◇ The coach understands communication models, active listening techniques, and inquiry methods that are effective and tailored for youth.
- ◇ They are familiar with youth-specific reflective strategies, non-verbal communication patterns linked to developmental stages, and how socio-cultural expressions influence meaning.
- ◇ They can identify and apply narrative or digital tools that resonate with young people.

• **Skills:**

- ◇ The coach can use open-ended, powerful questions that encourage reflection and self-discovery.
- ◇ Proficient in both verbal and non-verbal communication, ensuring clarity while also adapting messages to the youth's developmental level.
- ◇ The coach integrates narrative, metaphorical, and digital tools when needed, and shows creativity and flexibility in communication.

• **Attitudes:**

- ◇ The coach maintains an open-minded stance, showing respect and genuine curiosity

about the youth's lived experiences.

- ◇ A commitment to creating an empathetic environment that values the youth's voice and fosters transparent dialogue.
- ◇ They remain open to creative approaches (e.g., silence, metaphor, play) as legitimate tools to support insight.

Indicators:

Criterion: Effective Communication and Active Listening

• **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates knowledge of capacity-building in advanced communication skills (certificates, continuing education credits).
- ◇ Ability to articulate principles of active and reflective listening during interviews or feedback sessions.
- ◇ Identifies and applies narrative/digital tools popular with youth.

• **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Session transcripts or video recordings showcasing effective paraphrasing, summarizing, and thoughtful questioning.
- ◇ Client feedback indicates feeling truly heard and understood (e.g., satisfaction surveys).
- ◇ Uses narrative tools, visual metaphors, digital chat in order to support reflection and exploration.

• **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Consistent reports from peers and supervisors of unbiased and curious listening.
- ◇ A willingness to invite dialogue and explore unspoken issues.
- ◇ Shows curiosity for youth culture; avoids "adult-centric" jargon.

Criterion: Facilitating Awareness and Reflective Inquiry

• **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Familiarity with multiple inquiry models (Socratic questioning, metaphors, use of silence).
- ◇ References relevant research or inquiry frameworks in supervision.

• **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Coach uses open-ended questions and silence that generate client insights (demonstrated in session recordings and supervisor feedback).
- ◇ Demonstrates measurable shifts in client perspectives, captured in follow-up evaluations.
- ◇ Adapts inquiry creatively to suit youth developmental stages and needs.

• **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Reflective narratives show intrinsic commitment to fostering youth self-discovery.
- ◇ Openness to exploring ideas beyond their own, frequently expressed during peer-review sessions.
- ◇ Values silence, metaphor, and creative methods as valid supports for youth insight.

Summary

| Core Competence | Knowledge indicators | Skill indicators | Attitude indicators |
|---|---|--|--|
| Effective Communication & Active Listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed training in advanced communication skills. • Can articulate the principles of active and reflective listening. • Identifies and applies narrative/digital tools popular with youth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates paraphrasing, summarizing, and thoughtful questioning in sessions (as evidenced by transcripts or recordings). • Client feedback indicates feeling truly heard and understood. • Uses narrative tools, visual metaphors, or digital chat to support reflection/exploration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently respectful and curious about youth stories (supported by peer/client feedback). • Consistent reports of unbiased listening from peers/supervisors. • Shows curiosity for youth culture; avoids adult-centric jargon. • Willingness to invite dialogue and explore unspoken issues. |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Facilitating Awareness & Reflective Inquiry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of inquiry models (e.g. Socratic questioning, use of silence, metaphors). • References relevant research or inquiry frameworks in supervision. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses open-ended questions that lead to client insights. • Observed shifts in client perspectives through reflective questioning. • Adapts inquiry creatively to suit developmental stages and needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows an innate commitment to stimulating self-discovery. • Open to exploring ideas and challenging assumptions in supervision. • Values silence, metaphor, and creative methods as valid supports for youth insight. |
|--|---|--|---|

Evaluation Standard: Effectiveness in this domain is evident when youth express feeling heard and understood, and when changes in their self-awareness can be linked to the quality of the coach's questions and feedback.

Practical applications

Scenario 1: Sam says, "I hate school and I'm going to drop out." Instead of arguing or giving advice, you reflect and inquire: "Sounds like school feels really difficult right now. What parts of it feel most challenging? And what, if anything, do you find yourself missing when you are not there?"

Scenario 2: During a group discussion, you notice Maria hasn't spoken. You use a creative approach: "Let's try a round where everyone shares one word about what we've discussed, and we can come back to expand on any of those words that spark interest."

Scenario 3: Alex is sharing a complex family situation. You listen actively, then reflect: "I hear you describing feeling caught between wanting to help your mom and needing to focus on your own goals. That tension sounds really difficult."

Reflective questions for this area

For Listening Skills:

- What percentage of my conversations involve me talking versus listening?
- How do I know when a young person feels truly heard by me?
- What distracts me from listening fully? (personal triggers, planning my response, etc.)
- How comfortable am I with silence in conversations?

For Inquiry and Questioning:

- What types of questions help young people think more deeply?
- How do I balance curiosity with respect for privacy?
- When do I ask questions versus make statements or give advice?
- How do I use creative or visual methods to facilitate reflection?

For Communication Adaptation:

- How do I adjust my communication for different ages, cultures, and communication styles?
- What digital tools or platforms help me connect with young people?
- How do I communicate difficult or complex ideas in accessible ways?

**COMPETENCE AREA
IV: FACILITATING
LEARNING, GROWTH,
AND DEVELOPMENT**

This is about becoming a catalyst for growth – helping young people discover their own answers, set meaningful goals, and develop the confidence to pursue them, while honoring their developmental stage and individual pace.

Core Competencies:

- **Core Competencies**

- ◇ Guide youth in setting realistic, ecological, and meaningful goals that support their personal and social development, ensuring they do no harm to themselves, others, the community, or the environment.
- ◇ Support the creation of actionable plans and checkpoints for progress, integrating learning into everyday experiences.

- **Developmental and Non-Formal Learning Facilitation**

- ◇ Use coaching techniques informed by non-formal educational methods to foster youth empowerment and self-directed learning.
- ◇ Encourage a balance between self-exploration and structured support so that youth develop confidence, autonomy, and a stronger sense of identity.

Criteria:

- **Knowledge:**

- ◇ Familiarity with developmental psychology, learning theories, SMART goal frameworks, and non-formal education practices relevant to youth.
- ◇ Understanding of how personal experiences, peer interactions, and community contexts shape learning outcomes.

- **Skills:**

- ◇ Ability to design and implement tailored learning plans and action steps that are realistic, meaningful, and aligned with youth needs.
- ◇ Effective use of reflective and evaluative tools that help youth monitor progress, celebrate success, and recalibrate goals as needed.

- **Attitudes:**

- ◇ A supportive, empowering approach that values the youth's autonomy and cultivates a growth mindset, celebrates small achievements and believes in experimentation, failure, and self-direction.
- ◇ Patience and flexibility to adapt the process to each youth's pace and unique circumstances.

- ◇ Recognition and support that identity exploration and formation are legitimate developmental goals.

Indicators:

Criterion: Goal-Setting and Action Planning

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates knowledge of diverse goal-setting and action-planning frameworks (e.g., SMART, ecological goal models), evidenced in coaching plans or training materials.
- ◇ Explains developmental and learning needs of youth in supervision, workshops, or reflective essays.

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Produces documented examples of collaboratively developed SMART goals with young people.
- ◇ Evidence of regular progress reviews and adjustments in action plans, captured in coaching logs or client reports.

- **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ A proactive approach to celebrating small wins and milestones, as reflected in client feedback or self-assessments.
- ◇ Encourages youth to take ownership of their goals and growth (noted in client evaluations and supervision).
- ◇ Recognises identity exploration as a valid developmental goal in itself.

Criterion: Developmental Learning Facilitation

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates understanding of non-formal, value-based, experiential, and hands-on learning approaches, supported by youth development theories.
- ◇ Aware of typical challenges youth face in learning and self-direction, confirmed through research discussions or reflective work.

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Uses tailored learning activities, group reflections, or experiential learning strategies effectively, documented in session summaries or assignments.
- ◇ • Acknowledged shifts in client self-awareness and empowerment, as observed in

reflections, feedback, or coaching conversations.

• **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Maintains a consistently supportive and patient approach that encourages independent learning (reflected in client testimonials).
- ◇ Demonstrates belief in the youth’s capacity to discover and shape their own learning pathways, documented in reflective supervision notes or peer reviews.

Summary

| Criterion | Knowledge indicators | Skill indicators | Attitude indicators |
|---|--|---|---|
| Goal-Setting & Action Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of diverse goal-setting and action-planning frameworks (e.g., SMART, ecological goal models). • Understands developmental and learning needs of youth, shown in supervision, workshops, or reflective essays. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creates measurable and achievable goals with clients • Conducts regular progress reviews and adjusts plans, documented in logs or client reports. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively celebrates progress and encourages youth to take ownership of their growth • Recognises identity exploration as a valid developmental goal in itself. |
| Facilitazione dell'apprendimento evolutivo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands non-formal, value-based, experiential, and hands-on learning methods, supported by youth development theories. • Aware of challenges youth face in learning and self-direction, confirmed in reflective work or research discussions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses tailored learning activities, group reflections, or experiential methods effectively • Acknowledges shifts in client self-awareness and empowerment, as observed in reflections, feedback, or coaching conversations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a supportive and patient tone that encourages independent learning • Demonstrates belief in youth’s capacity to shape their own learning pathways |

Evaluation Standard: Success is measured by observable improvements in the youth’s self-confidence, ability to articulate learning goals, and active participation in their own development process.

Practical applications

Scenario 1: Jamie wants to "be successful" but can't define what that means. You use exploratory activities: visual goal-mapping, values exercises, future self visualization to help them discover their authentic aspirations.

Scenario 2: After Aisha doesn't get the job she wanted, you help her learn: "What did you discover about yourself through that interview process? What would you do differently next time? What confirmed that you are on the right track?"

Scenario 3: Marcus has big dreams but struggles with follow-through. You work together to break down goals into manageable steps and identify what support he needs for accountability.

Reflective questions for this area

For Goal-Setting and Planning:

- How do I help young people distinguish between goals imposed by others and their own authentic aspirations?
- What methods work best for making abstract goals concrete and actionable?
- How do I balance being encouraging with being realistic?
- How do I support young people in learning from both successes and setbacks?

For Development and Learning:

- How do I adapt my approach to different learning styles and developmental stages?
- What evidence tells me that a young person is growing in confidence and self-awareness?
- How do I celebrate progress while maintaining momentum toward larger goals?
- How do I help young people develop their own problem-solving abilities?

For Facilitating Growth:

- When do I step in with support versus step back to let them struggle productively?
- How do I help young people recognize and build on their existing strengths?
- What role does failure and disappointment play in my approach to youth development?

**COMPETENCE
AREA V: SYSTEMIC
AWARENESS, SOCIAL
INCLUSION, AND
COLLABORATIVE
ENGAGEMENT**

This is about seeing the bigger picture – understanding how systems (family, school, community, society) impact young people, and helping them navigate these systems while building their own networks and support systems.

Core Competencies:

- **Cultural and Contextual Competence, Systems Navigation**
 - ◇ Understand and navigate the broader social, cultural, and systemic contexts that influence young people's lives.
 - ◇ Help young people “read” and navigate education, employment, and support systems, including identifying barriers and opportunities.
 - ◇ Adapt coaching practices to be socio-culturally responsive and relevant to youths’ lived experiences.
- **Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Engagement, Social Capital Building**
 - ◇ Engage with clients’ ecosystems (families, schools, community organizations, peers) to build networks of support.
 - ◇ Foster inclusion by promoting diversity and addressing barriers.
 - ◇ Support youth in building, expanding, and ethically leveraging their social capital.
- **Team and Group Coaching Dynamics (if applicable)**
 - ◇ Apply group coaching techniques that foster collective learning, manage dynamics, and strengthen peer support.
 - ◇ Promote inclusion and shared responsibility in group settings while maintaining safe boundaries.

Criteria:

- **Knowledge:**
 - ◇ A solid grasp of the PESTEL factors impacting youth, including awareness of systemic barriers, diversity, and community resources.
 - ◇ Familiarity with inclusion, equity, safeguarding, and collaborative coaching policies and best practices.
 - ◇ Systems Landscape Literacy: Ability to explain how youth-relevant systems (education, employment, social/health services) are structured, financed, and accessed, including “hidden rules” and eligibility filters that often block marginalised youth.
 - ◇ Network & Capital Awareness: Defines bonding, bridging, and linking social capital; maps

local opportunity-holders; understands ethical considerations when sharing contacts.

- ◇ Knowledge of group/team coaching models, group development stages, and ethical considerations in collective settings.

- **Skills:**

- ◇ Engages effectively with multiple stakeholders, bridging youth and systems (families, schools, organizations).
- ◇ Facilitates group discussions and team coaching sessions to help youth situate themselves in broader systems.
- ◇ Pathway Mapping & Self-Advocacy: Co-creates visual pathway maps, rehearses real-life interactions (emails, calls), supports youth in achieving concrete system milestones.
- ◇ Strategic Connection-Making: Introduces youth to new contacts, facilitates networking-skill practice, supports relationship mapping, and tracks network growth.
- ◇ Facilitates inclusive group processes: co-creates agreements, manages dynamics, employs creative multi-modal tools, and resolves conflict constructively.

- **Attitudes:**

- ◇ Strong commitment to social justice, equity, and respectful collaboration.
- ◇ Empathy, cultural humility, and openness to diverse perspectives.
- ◇ Proactive, equity-first advocacy: monitors policy changes, challenges bias, and advocates when systemic barriers exceed youth power.
- ◇ Inclusive community-building: models ethical networking, shares contacts transparently, celebrates contributions, and avoids creating dependency.
- ◇ Group orientation: champions collective wisdom, credits peer contributions, and ensures all voices are heard.

Indicators:

Criterion: Cultural and Contextual Competence

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates understanding of PESTEL factors through training or professional discussions.
- ◇ Explains structures, funding, and access points of education, labour, and social-service systems.

- ◇ Identifies hidden rules and eligibility filters (e.g., apprenticeships, bridging courses).
- ◇ Describes safeguarding obligations and referral protocols.
- ◇ Maintains an updated resource directory (contacts, deadlines).

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Adapts coaching practices to different socio-cultural contexts, documented in case studies or role-plays.
- ◇ Utilisation of culturally and contextually sensitive language and tools, with observable positive feedback from youth clients from diverse backgrounds.
- ◇ Co-creates pathway maps with youth, outlining next steps.
- ◇ Support self-advocacy through rehearsed and completed system interactions.
- ◇ Facilitates safe code-switching practice between home and institutional cultures.

- **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Exhibits genuine respect and curiosity about different cultural backgrounds.
- ◇ Commitment to fairness and inclusiveness, demonstrated by consistent integration of diverse perspectives in coaching strategies.
- ◇ Proactively scans for policy or procedural changes that might affect clients.
- ◇ Exhibits cultural humility; checks understanding rather than assuming.
- ◇ Acts as an advocate when institutional barriers exceed the young person's current power.
- ◇ Reflects on personal privilege and bias in supervision sessions.

Criterion: Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Engagement

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates knowledge of community resources, stakeholder networks, and social capital concepts (bonding, bridging, linking).
- ◇ Familiarity with best practices for group and team coaching from both the youth and stakeholder's environments.
- ◇ Maps local networks and "opportunity holders" (mentors, employers, clubs, online communities) with a focus on marginalised youth and relevant to client goals.
- ◇ Understands ethical considerations when sharing contacts (consent, safeguarding).

- ◇ Recognises how structural bias limits network access for some individuals or groups.

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Establish partnerships with relevant community organizations or schools, with evidence such as partnership agreements or collaborative project reports also for Identifying systemic barriers and works within them.
- ◇ Facilitation of group coaching sessions where youth work together effectively.
- ◇ Facilitates a networking-skills micro-workshop (elevator pitch, LinkedIn message, peer-to-peer support circle).
- ◇ Creates safe practice spaces (e.g. group role-play, community asset walk) for social interaction confidence.

- **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ A proactive and supportive attitude toward integrating multiple viewpoints and encouraging collective problem solving, as highlighted in peer reviews.
- ◇ An earnest commitment to building long-term, reciprocal relationships with both clients and community stakeholders.
- ◇ Models inclusive networking (introduces others, credits contributions).
- ◇ Celebrates community contribution as success, not just individual gain.
- ◇ Prioritises empowerment: teaches autonomy, avoiding dependency.
- ◇ Maintains confidentiality.

Criterion: Team and Group Coaching Dynamics

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Explains the difference between group and team coaching.
- ◇ Describes the stages of group development (e.g., forming-storming-norming-performing) and related interventions for each phase.
- ◇ Lists multiple group coaching tools (e.g., Action Learning sets, fishbowl reflection) and their applications.
- ◇ Identifies ethical and safeguarding considerations unique to group settings, including confidentiality boundaries and power-imbalance cues.

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Co-creates group agreements on confidentiality, turn-taking, and feedback.
 - ◇ Ensures balanced participation (no single voice dominates).
 - ◇ Uses at least one creative, multi-modal method (visual, embodied, digital) to stimulate collective insight and peer support.
 - ◇ Manages conflict constructively: intervenes unproductive tension and guides the group to agree on a resolution path.
 - ◇ Tracks progress: gathers group feedback and adjusts process.
- **Attitude indicators:**
 - ◇ Champions collective wisdom, credits peer contributions, and frames success as collective learning.
 - ◇ Models equitable inclusion, inviting quieter voices and checking “whose voice is missing”.
 - ◇ Maintains facilitator neutrality: stays curious, withholds judgement, and uses reflective questions instead of solutions.
 - ◇ Welcomes continuous feedback and documents adjustments based on group input.

Summary

| Core Competence | Knowledge indicators | Skill indicators | Attitude indicators |
|---|--|---|---|
| Cultural & Contextual Competence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates awareness of PESTEL factors affecting youth. • Explains structures, funding, and access points of education, labour, and social-service systems. • Identifies hidden rules and eligibility filters in pathways (e.g., apprenticeships, bridging courses). • Describes safeguarding obligations and referral protocols. • Maintains an updated resource directory. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapts coaching practices to different socio-cultural contexts (case studies, role-plays). • Uses culturally responsive language and tools with positive youth feedback. • Co-creates pathway maps with youth, outlining next steps. • Coaches self-advocacy through rehearsed/real interactions (calls, emails). • Facilitates safe code-switching practice between home and institutional cultures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuinely respectful and curious about diverse backgrounds. • Commits to fairness and inclusivity in all coaching interactions. • Proactively scans for policy/procedural changes affecting clients. • Exhibits cultural humility; checks understanding rather than assuming. • Advocates when systemic barriers exceed youth power. • Reflects on privilege and bias in supervision |
| Collaborazione e impegno interdisciplinare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of community resources, stakeholder networks, and social capital concepts (bonding, bridging, linking). • Familiar with inclusion, equity, and collaborative coaching best practices. • Maps local networks and “opportunity holders” relevant to youth. • Understands ethical considerations when sharing contacts (consent, safeguarding). • Recognises structural bias limiting network access. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes partnerships with schools/organizations (evidence in agreements/projects). • Facilitates group coaching sessions where youth collaborate effectively. • Facilitates networking-skills workshops (elevator pitch, LinkedIn, peer-support). • Creates safe practice spaces (role-play, asset walks). • Guides youth in maintaining personal “relationship maps.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes inclusion and collective problem solving (peer reviews). • Builds long-term, reciprocal relationships (confirmed in feedback). • Models inclusive networking, introduces others, credits contributions. • Celebrates community contribution as success, not only individual gain. • Prioritises empowerment, avoids dependency. • Maintains confidentiality and obtains consent before connecting people. |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Dinamiche di coaching di team e gruppi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains differences between group and team coaching; names recognised models. • Describes stages of group development (forming-storming-norming-performing). • Lists multiple group-coaching tools (e.g., Action Learning, fishbowl reflection). • Identifies ethical and safeguarding considerations in group settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creates group agreements on confidentiality, turn-taking, and peer feedback. • Ensures balanced participation (no single voice dominates). • Uses at least one creative multi-modal method (visual, embodied, digital). • Manages conflict constructively and guides resolution. • Tracks group progress with feedback or reflection notes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champions collective wisdom; credits peer contributions. • Models equitable inclusion; invites quieter voices and checks "whose voice is missing." • Maintains facilitator neutrality and curiosity. • Welcomes continuous feedback; documents adjustments based on group input. |
|---|---|--|---|

Evaluation Standard: Effectiveness is assessed through the coach's ability to integrate broader social contexts into individual coaching sessions, foster inclusive environments, and facilitate youth involvement in community-oriented projects.

Practical applications

Scenario 1: Fatima, a recent immigrant, wants to go to university but doesn't understand the application system. You help her map the pathway, identify key contacts, practice interactions, and connect with others who've navigated similar processes.

Scenario 2: A group of young people are frustrated about the lack of youth services in their neighborhood. You facilitate them organizing a community meeting and help them develop advocacy skills.

Scenario 3: Devon faces multiple barriers (learning differences, family poverty, racial bias) in accessing opportunities. You help him understand these as systemic issues, not personal failures, while building strategies to navigate them.

Reflective questions for this area

For Systems Understanding:

- How well do I understand the systems (education, employment, healthcare, etc.) that affect the young people I work with?
- What systemic barriers do young people in my community face most commonly?
- How do I help young people distinguish between personal challenges and systemic barriers?

- What allies and resources exist within various systems that can support young people?

For Cultural Competence:

- How do I continue learning about cultures and communities different from my own?
- What assumptions do I make about what's "normal" or "appropriate"?
- How do I balance cultural sensitivity with challenging harmful practices?
- How do young people from different backgrounds experience me and my services?

For Collaboration and Advocacy:

- When do I advocate directly for a young person versus support them in self-advocacy?
- How do I build relationships with other professionals and community members?
- What networks and partnerships serve the young people I work with?
- How do I address systemic issues while maintaining focus on individual growth?

**COMPETENCE AREA
VI: APPLY THE
PRINCIPLES OF
REGENERATION AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

This is about helping young people see themselves as part of something larger – their communities, their ecosystems, their planet – and supporting them in making choices that regenerate rather than deplete themselves and their world.

Core Competencies:

- **To promote community engagement and participation in action planning.**
 - ◇ Foster community engagement and participation with beneficiaries when designing actions.
 - ◇ Explore and understand the surrounding environment of beneficiaries, recognising its influence on their current situations and goals.
 - ◇ Support identification of resources and support within the community and surroundings to strengthen social capital and motivation.
- **Encourage regeneration and sustainability attitudes through engagement with the natural world and its ecosystems.**
 - ◇ Apply coaching tools and approaches grounded in ecopsychology and biosemiotics.
 - ◇ Use outdoor and natural environments as spaces for reflection, self-awareness, and re-affiliation with oneself, one's community, and the natural world.
 - ◇ Promote sustainability and regeneration as starting from individual attitudes and extending to collective and environmental well-being.

Criteria:

- **Knowledge:**
 - ◇ Knowledge of local realities and contexts faced by beneficiaries.
 - ◇ Solid understanding of ecopsychology, biosemiotics/ecosemiotics, and related sustainability frameworks (e.g., ecological panarchy, cultural definitions of nature).
 - ◇ Awareness of how engagement with the natural world positively impacts mental health and well-being.
 - ◇ Familiarity with community and social dynamics that shape participation and support.
- **Skills:**
 - ◇ Ability to co-create action plans with beneficiaries that respect ecological principles (benefit or do no harm to self, others, community, environment).
 - ◇ Competence in guiding multi-sensory, reflective activities in wild or semi-wild outdoor spaces.

- ◇ Effective use of reflective/evaluative tools to monitor progress, celebrate successes, and recalibrate goals.
- ◇ Capacity to guide beneficiaries in rehearsing participation and engagement strategies that foster agency and belonging.

- **Attitudes:**

- ◇ The ability to support the identification of solutions, resources and support in the clients' surroundings as grounds to foster their motivation to invest in their own social capital development.
- ◇ Demonstrates tangible commitment to fostering belonging and interconnectedness between community and personal well-being.
- ◇ Holds a belief that regeneration and sustainability begin with individual attitudes and extend into collective practice.
- ◇ Models respect for privacy, safety, and ownership of outcomes in nature-based and community-focused sessions.

Indicators:

Criterion: Community engagement and Action Planning

- **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Knowledge of models and frameworks for process- and goal-setting, demonstrated in supervision and coaching agreements.
- ◇ Understanding of community and social dynamics in relation to the beneficiary's background and environment.

- **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Produces follow-up action plans collaboratively that positively impact both client and community, with no harm to surroundings.
- ◇ Evidence of progress reviews and adjustment in action plans, and visible improvements in the beneficiaries' goal accomplishment.
- ◇ Observable increase in youth's sense of agency and wellbeing after nature-based sessions.

- **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Takes a positive approach to support identifying the benefits of participation and engagement in a complex environment that includes addressing existing barriers.

- ◇ Tangible commitment to fostering belonging of beneficiaries to their communities, surroundings and societies, understanding the interconnectedness between community and personal wellbeing.

Criterion: Sustainability and Regeneration

• **Knowledge indicators:**

- ◇ Knowledge of diverse models and frameworks such as the ecological panarchy, ecosemiotics/biosemiotics, founding principles of ecopsychology for support professions and the biological and cultural definitions of types of nature.
- ◇ Awareness of the positive effects of engagement with the natural world on the mind and mental wellbeing.

• **Skill indicators:**

- ◇ Effective adoption of outdoors spaces in natural wild or semi-wild spaces to guide the beneficiary in reflective and contemplative activities that inspire active imagination, positive experiences and safety.
- ◇ Facilitates nature-based interventions that lead to increased self-awareness, empowerment, well-being, and balanced mood.

• **Attitude indicators:**

- ◇ Demonstrates a supportive, guiding posture while respecting beneficiaries' privacy, safety, and ownership of outcomes.
- ◇ A tangible belief that sustainability and regeneration processes start as individual attitudes to be later reflected in the beneficiaries' behaviour and potential to positively impact the surrounding world.

Summary

| Criterion | Knowledge indicators | Skill indicators | Attitude indicators |
|--|--|---|--|
| Community Engagement in Action Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of models and frameworks for process- and goal-setting, demonstrated in supervision and coaching agreements. • Understanding of community and social dynamics in relation to the beneficiary's background and environment. • Familiarity with local realities and contexts faced by beneficiaries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creates follow-up action plans with beneficiaries that positively impact both client and community, with no harm to surroundings. • Conducts progress reviews and adapts plans.. • Guides beneficiaries in rehearsing participation and engagement strategies that foster agency and belonging. • Observable increase in youth's sense of agency and well-being after nature-based sessions (feedback/reflections). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a positive approach to supporting participation, addressing barriers in complex environments. • Tangible commitment to fostering belonging and interconnectedness between community and personal well-being. • Supports clients in identifying resources and solutions in their surroundings to build motivation and social capital. |
| Sustainability and Regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of ecological and sustainability frameworks (e.g., ecological panarchy, ecopsychology, biosemiotics, cultural definitions of nature). • Awareness of the positive effects of engagement with the natural world on mental health and well-being. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively adopts outdoor (wild/semi-wild) spaces to guide reflective and contemplative activities that foster imagination, positive experiences, and safety. • Facilitates nature-based interventions that enhance self-awareness, empowerment, well-being, and balanced mood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a supportive, guiding posture while respecting beneficiaries' privacy, safety, and ownership of outcomes. • Holds a tangible belief that regeneration and sustainability start with individual attitudes and extend into collective and environmental practice. • Models alignment of personal behaviour with ecological and regenerative principles. |

Evaluation Standard: Success is measured by observable improvements in the beneficiaries' well-being, clarity, as well as self-awareness, accompanied by a stronger sense of belonging to the surrounding human and more-than-human world.

Practical applications

Scenario 1: Instead of meeting in an office, you take a walking conversation through a local park, using the natural environment to stimulate reflection and reduce anxiety.

Scenario 2: Kai wants to start a business. You explore: "How could this business contribute positively to your community? What would it look like if it regenerated rather than just extracted?"

Scenario 3: A group of young people are worried about climate change. You facilitate a project where they research local environmental issues and develop community action plans, transforming anxiety into agency.

Reflective questions for this area

For Regenerative Thinking:

- How do I help young people see connections between personal wellbeing and community/environmental health?
- What opportunities exist for young people to contribute meaningfully to their communities?
- How do I address climate anxiety and eco-grief while building hope and agency?
- What would it look like to center sustainability in my practice and organization?

For Community Connection:

- How do I help young people identify and build their social capital?
- What community assets and resources can support young people's goals?
- How do I facilitate intergenerational connections and learning?
- What role does service or contribution play in youth development?

For Nature-Based Practice:

- How comfortable am I using outdoor or natural spaces in my work?
- What nature-based activities could support reflection and growth?
- How does connection to nature affect the young people I work with?
- What barriers prevent young people from accessing natural environments, and how can these be addressed?

**EMBEDDING
PROCESS:
EVALUATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION
AND ONGOING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

- Regularly assess and update coaching practices based on feedback from youth, peer review, and ongoing training, development and empowerment.
- Integrate available tools—such as handbooks, digital resources, and peer networks—to continuously enhance coaching competence and quality of support.

Overall Measurement of Effectiveness

To evaluate the success of this competence framework, consider the following principles:

- **Outcomes-Oriented Feedback:** Regular assessments (through self-reflections, peer reviews, and client feedback) to ensure that the coach’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes are translating into positive youth outcomes.
- **Reflective Practice:** Use of tools like coaching journals, supervision sessions, and performance reviews that monitor the ethical alignment, relational depth, and developmental progress of coaching sessions.
- **Adaptability and Continuous Improvement:** Establish a system for ongoing professional development where coaches update their knowledge and skills based on emerging research and social changes affecting youth.

By grounding the evaluation of youth coaching competencies in this tripartite framework—knowledge, skills, and attitudes—you create measurable, developmentally sensitive standards that reflect both the personal and social dimensions essential to empowering youth and generating meaningful change.

Overall Evaluation of Effectiveness

For the entire framework, the following cross-cutting indicators should also be used:

- **Outcome-Focused indicators:**
 - ◇ Regular feedback from youth clients (via surveys or interviews) showing improvement in self-confidence, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the coaching partnership.
 - ◇ Quantitative measures such as achievement of set goals, retention rates, or changes in behaviour and performance collected over regular intervals.
- **Reflective Practice indicators:**
 - ◇ Documented coaching logs, self-assessment journals, and supervisor review reports that chronicle the coach’s reflective process and adjustments in practice.
 - ◇ Peer evaluations or client testimonials that highlight strengths in specific competencies (e.g., active listening, conflict resolution).
- **Continuous Improvement:**

- ◇ Evidence of ongoing professional development—such as certificates from training programs, participation in peer networks, self-directed learning or attendance in workshops—and subsequent application of new learning in coaching practice.

Cross-Cutting indicators for Overall Effectiveness

| Aspect | Indicators |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Outcome-Focused indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular client surveys/interviews showing improvements in confidence, learning outcomes, and satisfaction. • Quantifiable achievement of set goals and observable behavioural changes. |
| Reflective Practice indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented coaching logs, reflective journals, and supervisor evaluation reports highlighting adjustments in approach and ongoing personal development. |
| Continuous Improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of ongoing professional development (e.g., certificates, workshop attendance) with subsequent application in coaching practice. • Peer evaluation feedback and client testimonials that confirm development over time. |

Using this framework for continuous growth: A practical guide

Remember that competence is not a destination but a journey. Professional growth in youth work happens through continuous reflection, learning, and adaptation. This framework aligns with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs), creating a structured pathway for professional development that is recognized across Europe while remaining flexible enough to adapt to local contexts and individual learning styles.

Think of this framework as your professional compass – it helps you navigate your development journey while connecting your growth to broader European standards and career opportunities.

Self-assessment: Mapping your professional journey

Honest self-reflection forms the foundation of professional growth. Rather than seeing self-assessment as a judgment of your current abilities, approach it as an opportunity to understand your strengths and identify areas for development. Creating a regular self-assessment routine using the competence areas helps you track your growth over time and make informed decisions about your professional development.

Consider establishing a rhythm that works for your schedule and learning style. A monthly quick check might involve spending fifteen minutes rating yourself on each of the six competence areas using a simple 1-5 scale, noting which indicators feel strongest and which need attention. This brief reflection helps you stay aware of your development without becoming overwhelming.

Quarterly deep dives offer opportunities for more thorough reflection. Choose one competence area to focus on during each quarter, using the specific knowledge, skill, and attitude indicators to assess your current level honestly. You might ask yourself questions like: "What evidence do I have of growth in this area? What challenges am I still facing? How has my understanding evolved?" This deeper reflection helps you understand not just where you are, but how you've grown and what you want to work on next.

Your annual professional review becomes a comprehensive look across all areas, comparing your ratings from previous assessments to track growth over time. This broader view helps you see patterns in your development and plan strategically for the year ahead.

When documenting your self-assessments, consider using learning outcome language that aligns with formal qualification descriptors. This approach bridges the gap between your practical experience and formal recognition systems. For example, you might write "I can consistently apply ethical decision-making frameworks in complex youth work situations" (corresponding to EQF Level 6) or "I demonstrate advanced communication skills adapted to diverse youth populations" (EQF Level 7). This language not only helps you articulate your competencies clearly but also prepares you for formal qualification processes.

Several practical tools can support your self-assessment process. Maintaining a competence portfolio allows you to collect evidence of your developing competencies through case studies, reflective journals, and client feedback. This portfolio becomes both a learning tool and potential evidence for formal qualifications. With appropriate permissions, recording practice sessions can provide valuable insights into your communication patterns and relationship-building skills – often we don't realize our habits until we see them from the outside. After challenging situations, conducting a critical incident analysis using the framework's ethical and professional indicators helps you learn from difficult experiences and strengthen your future practice.

Planning professional development: Strategic growth

Once you understand your current competence levels, thoughtful planning helps you grow strategically rather than randomly. Professional development becomes most effective when it's intentional and connected to your specific learning needs and career goals.

Start by comparing your self-assessment results with the competence indicators to identify specific learning needs. This gap analysis helps you focus your limited time and resources on areas that will make the biggest difference in your practice. Rather than trying to improve everything at once, prioritize areas that most directly impact your ability to serve young people effectively.

Setting development goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) creates accountability and direction. Link these objectives directly to framework indicators so you can track progress clearly. For example, instead of "improve communication skills," you might set a goal like "by December, demonstrate effective use of three different inquiry techniques with diverse youth populations, as evidenced by client feedback and supervisor observation."

Professional growth happens through multiple channels. Combining formal education, experiential learning, and peer learning addresses different types of competence development. Formal education might include workshops, courses, or degree programs that deepen your theoretical knowledge. Experiential learning happens through trying new approaches in your practice, taking on challenging cases, or working with different populations. Peer learning occurs through conversations with colleagues, observation of others' practice, and collaborative problem-solving.

The European context adds another layer to your development planning. Mapping your current competence level to EQF descriptors (typically Level 4-7 for youth work professionals) helps you understand how your skills translate across borders. This mapping process also helps you identify formal qualifications that would validate your competencies and plan pathways for advancement within your national qualification system. Consider how your competencies might transfer across European contexts if you are interested in international opportunities or want to contribute to European youth work networks.

A simple planning template can help organize your thinking:

Competence Area: [Choose one area to focus on]

Current Level: [Based on your self-assessment and EQF alignment]

Target Level: [Where you want to be in 6-12 months]

Evidence Gaps: [What specific evidence do you need to demonstrate growth?]

Learning Activities: [Mix of formal courses, informal experiences, and non-formal peer learning]

Timeline: [Realistic deadlines for different milestones]

Assessment Method: [How will you know you've achieved your goal?]

This template helps you think systematically about your development while keeping the process manageable and focused.

Seeking supervision and support: Building your learning community

Structured supervision using the framework:

1. **Competence-Focused Supervision:** Use each supervision session to explore one competence area in depth, bringing specific examples and questions.

2. **Case Consultation:** Present challenging cases through the lens of multiple competence areas to develop integrated thinking.
3. **Ethical Consultation:** Use Area I (Foundation, Ethics & Professionalism) as a regular supervision focus, especially when facing ethical dilemmas.

Finding the Right Support:

- **Internal Supervision:** Regular sessions with experienced colleagues or supervisors within your organization.
- **External Supervision:** Professional supervision from qualified practitioners outside your immediate work context.
- **Peer Supervision Groups:** Collaborative learning with colleagues at similar experience levels.
- **Mentorship:** One-on-one guidance from experienced practitioners who can model advanced competencies.

Preparing for Effective Supervision:

- Bring specific examples linked to competence indicators.
- Prepare reflective questions about your practice.
- Share your self-assessment results and development goals.
- Request feedback on areas where you feel less confident.

Collaborating with Colleagues: Shared Learning and Resource Building

Creating Communities of Practice:

1. **Competence Study Groups:** Regular meetings focused on exploring specific competence areas together.
2. **Case Study Circles:** Collaborative analysis of practice situations using the framework.
3. **Resource Sharing Networks:** Pooling tools, techniques, and materials related to each competence area.

Collaborative Activities:

- **Co-facilitation:** Work together on group sessions to observe and learn from each other's approaches.
- **Shadowing:** Observe colleagues' practice with permission, focusing on specific competence areas.

- **Peer Feedback:** Exchange observations about each other's strengths and growth areas.
- **Joint Training:** Attend professional development activities together and discuss applications.

Building Organizational Capacity:

- Advocate for framework adoption across your team or organization.
- Develop internal training programs based on the competence areas.
- Create peer mentoring systems using the framework structure.
- Share successful practices and innovations with colleagues.

Evaluating Impact: Measuring What Matters

Multiple Evaluation Approaches:

1. **Outcome-Focused indicators:** Track concrete improvements in young people's lives.
 - ◇ Goal achievement rates
 - ◇ Retention and engagement levels
 - ◇ Feedback on relationship quality
 - ◇ Self-reported confidence and skill development
2. **Process indicators:** Monitor the quality of your practice.
 - ◇ Consistency in applying ethical principles
 - ◇ Effectiveness of communication strategies
 - ◇ Success in building inclusive environments
 - ◇ Integration of systemic and ecological perspectives
3. **Reflective Practice indicators:** Document your professional growth.
 - ◇ Quality and depth of self-reflection
 - ◇ Integration of learning from supervision
 - ◇ Adaptation of practice based on feedback
 - ◇ Contribution to professional community

Data Collection Methods:

- **Youth Feedback:** Regular, anonymous surveys about their experience of safety, inclusion, and growth.
- **Peer Observation:** Structured feedback from colleagues using competence indicators.
- **Supervisor Assessment:** Formal evaluation of competence development over time.
- **Portfolio Evidence:** Documentation of learning, growth, and impact across all competence areas.

EQF/NQF Recognition: Maintain evidence in formats that support formal recognition:

- Learning portfolios with competence-based evidence.
- Professional references linking to specific framework indicators.
- Certification of participation in relevant training programs.
- Documentation of supervision and mentoring relationships.

Adapting Practice: Responsive and Innovative Youth Work

Continuous Improvement Cycle:

1. **Regular Practice Review:** Monthly analysis of what's working and what needs adjustment.
2. **Innovation Integration:** Incorporating new research, methods, and tools into your practice.
3. **Contextual Adaptation:** Modifying approaches based on changing youth needs and social conditions.
4. **Cultural Responsiveness:** Continuously learning about and adapting to the communities you serve.

Staying Current:

- Subscribe to youth development research publications
- Participate in professional conferences and workshops
- Engage with young people as co-researchers and practice developers
- Follow policy developments affecting youth services
- Connect with international practitioners to learn diverse approaches

Framework Evolution: This competence framework is designed to evolve. As our understanding of youth development, social justice, and environmental sustainability deepens, the framework should adapt. You play a role in this evolution by:

- Providing feedback on framework applications
- Sharing innovations and adaptations
- Contributing to research and evaluation efforts
- Participating in framework review and update processes

Practical Implementation Timeline

First 3 Months:

- Complete comprehensive self-assessment
- Establish regular supervision arrangements
- Begin competence portfolio development
- Join or create peer learning group

Months 4-12:

- Implement planned professional development activities
- Conduct mid-year practice review
- Seek formal or informal feedback on competence development
- Begin documenting evidence for potential qualification recognition

Year 2 and Beyond:

- Consider formal qualification pathways
- Take on mentoring or supervision roles with newer practitioners
- Contribute to framework development and organizational capacity building
- Engage in research or evaluation projects related to youth coaching effectiveness

Alignment with European Standards

This framework's compatibility with EQF/NQF systems means your competence development can:

- **Transfer across borders:** Your documented competencies are recognized in different European countries
- **Support career mobility:** Move between organizations and sectors while maintaining

professional recognition

- **Enable qualification pathways:** Build toward formal qualifications that validate your expertise
- **Facilitate continuous learning:** Access training and development opportunities across Europe

The framework serves as both a practical tool for improving your work with young people and a professional credential that supports your career development within the broader European context of youth work and social coaching.

Remember: This framework guides your development, but the most important measure of success remains whether young people leave their interactions with you feeling more confident, connected, and capable of creating positive change in their own lives and communities. Let the framework support this fundamental goal, adapting it as needed to serve the unique young people and contexts you encounter.

**SPECIFICITIES OF
YOUTH COACHING,
AS OPPOSED TO
COACHING IN
GENERAL**

Youth coaching has several distinct specificities compared to coaching with adult professionals or in other fields. These unique aspects reflect the developmental stage, social context, and educational needs of young people. Here are some key elements that set youth coaching apart:

1. Developmental Orientation

- ◇ Youth coaching must account for the cognitive, emotional, and social development stages of young people. Unlike adults who may be more stabilized in their identity and life direction, youth are in formative phases where identity exploration, self-awareness, and building resilience are central. Youth coaches need to tailor their approaches to foster growth in areas such as decision-making, self-esteem, and the development of life skills.
- ◇ This developmental emphasis may include incorporating non-formal and experiential learning techniques to help young people gain insight into their own capabilities and future potentials—elements emphasized in the ETS competence model for youth workers.

2. Contextual and Cultural Sensitivity

- ◇ Young people come from diverse backgrounds and are often navigating rapid changes in their social and cultural environments. Youth coaches need to be especially skilled at understanding these contexts and adapting their coaching methods accordingly.
- ◇ In addition to the standard ethical and cultural considerations found in general coaching, youth coaching often requires a stronger focus on issues like inclusion, diversity, and community integration. This sensitivity not only supports the individual but helps build a supportive environment around them.

3. Focus on Empowerment and Educational Support

- ◇ Youth coaching frequently integrates aspects of mentoring, by identifying risks and refers to support services when needed

4. and coaching, emphasizing education and personal development. Coaches in this field work to empower young clients to set realistic goals, learn from their experiences, and actively participate in decision-making processes.

- ◇ Unlike more results-driven approaches in the corporate world, youth coaching balances goal achievement with fostering the learning process itself. It's about nurturing long-term personal growth rather than merely enhancing immediate performance.

5. Relationship Building and Trust Development

- ◇ Establishing rapport with young clients often requires different communication strategies. Youth coaching is built on trust and supportive relationships where openness is encouraged.
- ◇ Active listening, empathy, and the ability to establish clear, flexible boundaries are

essential—competencies highlighted in both the ICF core competencies and the ETS model—since young people may be more vulnerable and in need of a safe space where they feel understood and respected.

6. Integration of Social and Community Aspects

- ◇ Youth coaching often extends beyond individual sessions to include elements of group coaching, peer support, and community engagement. Coaches help young people understand their role within a community, encouraging solidarity and collaborative growth.
- ◇ This broader focus reflects a holistic approach where the coach not only deals with personal issues but also aids in developing the skills necessary for active citizenship and social participation—an area particularly highlighted by youth work models.

While all coaching disciplines emphasize ethical behavior, active listening, and goal setting, youth coaching is uniquely characterized by a strong developmental focus, an emphasis on educational and learning processes, heightened sensitivity to cultural and social contexts, and the need to build nurturing, trust-based relationships that empower young people not only as individuals but also as members of a community.

**HOW EQF
PROFICIENCY LEVELS
APPLY**

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) is like a common language that helps people understand professional qualifications across different European countries. Think of it as a ladder with eight rungs, where each level describes what someone knows, what they can do, and how independently they can work.

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) describes eight levels of learning outcomes across three domains:

- **Knowledge** (theoretical and factual)
- **Skills** (cognitive and practical)
- **Responsibility and autonomy** (attitudes and the ability to apply knowledge and skills independently).

For youth workers and social coaches, you don't need to worry about all eight levels. Most professionals in our field work between Level 4 and Level 7. Understanding these levels helps you:

- **Recognize your current professional standing** and plan your career development
- **Apply for jobs or training programs** with clarity about your qualifications
- **Work across European borders** with credentials that are understood everywhere
- **Set realistic goals** for your professional growth

For social coaching, we don't need all eight levels — usually, **EQF Level 5-7** are the most relevant for youth workers, coaches, and practitioners. We've identified two main proficiency levels that capture the reality of youth work careers:

Level 1 – Practitioner / Emerging Social Coach (EQF Level 5-6)

This is you if you are building confidence in youth work, learning to work more independently, but still benefit from regular guidance and structured support.

- **Knowledge:**
 - ◇ Has comprehensive knowledge of ethical guidelines, youth development, and relevant policies (e.g., safeguarding, GDPR).
 - ◇ Familiar with communication models, coaching frameworks, and non-formal education methods.
 - ◇ Understands the role of community resources and basic systemic barriers affecting youth.
- **Skills:**

- ◇ Can apply coaching techniques in structured settings, co-create goals, and manage confidentiality and boundaries.
- ◇ Uses supervision and reflective practice to improve decisions.
- ◇ Engages youth with participatory techniques and adapts coaching style to different developmental stages.

- **Responsibility & Autonomy (Attitudes):**

- ◇ Works under supervision or within defined procedures but shows autonomy in applying coaching principles.
- ◇ Demonstrates integrity, empathy, and openness to feedback.
- ◇ Prioritises personal self-care and respects diversity.

This level matches practitioners who are **new to the profession**, recently trained, or developing independence.

You might be new to youth work, recently completed training, or have some experience but are still developing your confidence in complex situations. You work effectively with guidance and are building toward greater independence.

Real-world examples of Level 1 practitioners:

- Maria has just finished her youth work diploma and is in her first year at an NGO
- Ahmed has been volunteering with young people for two years and recently started paid work
- Sarah worked in education and is transitioning into social coaching
- David has natural skills with young people but is formalizing his approach through training

What You Know (Knowledge indicators)

At this level, you have solid foundational knowledge that you can explain and apply in straightforward situations.

Competence Area I - Foundation & Ethics: You understand the key ethical guidelines for youth work, know about confidentiality rules like GDPR, and can explain why safeguarding matters. You are familiar with trauma-informed approaches and know when you need to seek supervision.

Example: When 16-year-old Alex shares something concerning, you know to check whether it meets the threshold for safeguarding referral, and you understand exactly who to consult if you are unsure.

Competence Area II - Relationships: You know various strategies for building rapport with young people from different backgrounds. You can design coaching agreements that are clear

and age-appropriate.

Example: You've learned several ice-breaker techniques and know how to adapt your communication style when working with quieter versus more outgoing young people.

Competence Area III - Communication: You are familiar with active listening techniques and can use open-ended questions effectively. You know some creative methods like visual tools or simple digital approaches that appeal to young people.

Example: When Jasmine says "school is pointless," you know to reflect back what you heard and ask questions like "What makes it feel pointless?" rather than immediately trying to convince her otherwise.

What You Can Do (Skill indicators)

You can apply your knowledge consistently in typical situations, though you might need support for particularly complex cases.

Working with Individual Young People:

- Co-create realistic goals with young people using frameworks like SMART goals
- Maintain appropriate boundaries while building trust
- Use reflective listening and ask questions that help young people think deeper
- Adapt your communication style to different ages and backgrounds
- Recognize when someone needs specialized support and make appropriate referrals

Working in Group Settings:

- Facilitate basic group discussions where everyone feels included
- Establish group agreements about respect and confidentiality
- Notice when power dynamics are affecting participation
- Use creative activities to engage different learning styles

Professional Practice:

- Document your work appropriately while maintaining confidentiality
- Use supervision effectively to reflect on challenging cases
- Manage your own emotional responses during difficult conversations
- Apply ethical guidelines consistently in everyday situations

Example: During a group session, you notice that Maya always stays quiet when the louder members are talking. You introduce a "talking stick" activity where only the person holding the stick can speak, ensuring Maya gets heard.

How you approach your work (Attitude indicators)

Professional Stance: You demonstrate integrity and are open to feedback. You actively seek learning opportunities and acknowledge when you don't know something. You practice cultural humility, recognizing that young people from different backgrounds may have perspectives you need to learn about.

Self-Care and boundaries: You are developing healthy self-care practices and learning to recognize your own limits. You might sometimes struggle with work-life balance but are aware this is important for sustainable practice.

Growth mindset: You believe young people can change and grow, and you apply this same growth mindset to your own professional development. You see challenges as learning opportunities.

Example: After a difficult session where you felt out of your depth, you bring specific questions to supervision: "I wasn't sure how to respond when Jake started crying. Looking back, I think I rushed to comfort him instead of just being present. What would you have done?"

**LEVEL 2 – ADVANCED
PRACTITIONER /
PROFESSIONAL
SOCIAL COACH (EQF
LEVEL 7)**

This is you if you are working with full autonomy, handling complex situations confidently, and often guiding or mentoring others in the field.

- **Knowledge:**

- ◇ Has highly specialised knowledge of coaching, youth development theories, systemic and ecological frameworks (ecopsychology, social capital, inclusion policies).
- ◇ Integrates research and theoretical frameworks into practice.
- ◇ Demonstrates systemic literacy: can explain how education, labour, and social systems are structured and accessed.

- **Skills:**

- ◇ Consistently applies ethical decision-making in complex and ambiguous situations.
- ◇ Designs and evaluates long-term developmental and ecological action plans.
- ◇ Facilitates group coaching, manages conflict, and creates systemic pathways and networks for youth.
- ◇ Innovates coaching practice through supervision, mentoring, and advanced reflection.

- **Responsibility & Autonomy (Attitudes):**

- ◇ Operates with full autonomy and takes responsibility for ethical and sustainable coaching practice.
- ◇ Acts as an advocate and community-builder, addressing systemic barriers and promoting inclusion.
- ◇ Models ecological and regenerative principles in professional and personal practice.
- ◇ Mentors peers and contributes to the professionalisation of the field.

This level represents **experienced social coaches** who not only practice but also influence systems, policies, and communities.

You work with full autonomy and confidence, handling complex ethical and practical situations independently. You often mentor newer practitioners and contribute to the development of youth services in your community.

Real-world examples of Level 2 practitioners:

- Lisa has 8 years of youth work experience and supervises a team of newer workers
- Carlos leads training programs for other youth workers across his region

- Fatima works with the most challenging cases and is consulted by colleagues for advice
- Roberto develops partnerships between his NGO and local schools, employers, and health services

What You Know (Knowledge indicators)

Deep systemic understanding: You understand how different systems (education, employment, health, justice) interconnect and affect young people differently based on their backgrounds. You know the "hidden rules" of these systems and can help young people navigate them strategically.

Example: When working with Amir, a refugee who wants to study engineering, you understand not just the formal university requirements, but also the informal networks, financial aid options, mentorship programs, and potential discrimination barriers he might face.

Theoretical integration: You can draw on multiple coaching models, psychological theories, and youth development frameworks, adapting them fluidly to different situations. You understand research in your field and can critically evaluate new approaches.

Example: Working with a group of young people concerned about climate change, you integrate ecopsychology principles, group coaching techniques, and community organizing methods to help them process their anxiety while building agency.

What you can do (Skill indicators)

Your skills are highly developed and you can handle complex, ambiguous situations with confidence.

Complex Case Management:

- Work effectively with young people facing multiple, intersecting challenges
- Navigate ethical dilemmas that don't have clear-cut answers
- Coordinate support across multiple agencies and professionals
- Design long-term developmental interventions that address root causes, not just symptoms

Advanced Facilitation:

- Manage conflict in group settings constructively
- Facilitate difficult conversations about sensitive topics (racism, trauma, family conflict)
- Adapt your approach fluidly based on group dynamics and emerging needs
- Use creative, multi-modal techniques to engage different learning styles and cultural backgrounds

Systems Navigation and Advocacy:

- Coach young people in self-advocacy skills for complex institutional settings
- Build strategic partnerships with schools, employers, health services, and other organizations
- Challenge discriminatory practices when you encounter them
- Design pathways and opportunities that didn't exist before

Professional Leadership:

- Mentor and supervise developing practitioners
- Design and deliver training for other professionals
- Contribute to policy discussions and service development
- Conduct reflective practice that contributes to the broader field

Example: When your organization faces budget cuts, you facilitate a strategic planning process with young people, staff, and board members that results in a more sustainable service model while maintaining quality.

How You Approach Your Work (Attitude indicators)

Systems Thinking: You see individual young people's challenges within broader social, economic, and political contexts. You work for change at multiple levels simultaneously - individual, community, and systemic.

Cultural Leadership: You actively promote equity and inclusion, not just in your direct practice but in the organizations and communities where you work. You model cultural humility while taking action against discrimination.

Professional Responsibility: You see yourself as responsible for the development of the field, not just your own practice. You contribute to research, training, policy development, or other activities that strengthen youth work as a profession.

Sustainable Practice: You've developed sophisticated approaches to self-care and boundary management that allow you to work sustainably with challenging cases over the long term. You model healthy professional practice for others.

Example: Recognizing that many young people in your area face similar barriers accessing mental health support, you initiate a community partnership between your NGO, local health services, and schools to create more accessible support pathways. You secure funding, train staff, and evaluate the impact.

Practical self-assessment: Where are you now?

Use these reflective questions to honestly assess your current level:

Knowledge questions:

- Can you explain youth development theory and apply it to different situations?
- Do you understand the legal and ethical frameworks that guide your practice?
- Can you analyze how systemic factors (poverty, discrimination, policy changes) affect the young people you work with?
- Do you know when and how to make referrals to specialized services?

Assess your current level in *Knowledge area*:

Youth development and theory

- **Level 1:** I know the basics of youth development theory and can apply them in straightforward cases.
- **Level 2:** I integrate multiple theories and can adapt them flexibly in complex, ambiguous, or cross-cultural situations.

Ethical and legal frameworks

- **Level 1:** I know the main codes of ethics and safeguarding rules, and I follow them in my daily work.
- **Level 2:** I can interpret and apply ethical frameworks in difficult dilemmas, explain them to others, and mentor colleagues in ethical decision-making.

Systemic awareness

- **Level 1:** I am aware that systemic issues (poverty, discrimination, policy changes) affect young people, and I discuss them when they arise.
- **Level 2:** I analyse systemic factors proactively, use them to shape my coaching strategies, and advocate for young people in institutional settings.

Referral pathways

- **Level 1:** I know when to refer young people to specialised services, and I follow referral procedures with support.
- **Level 2:** I confidently identify when specialised support is needed, build referral networks, and guide others in using them.

Skills Questions:

- Can you build rapport quickly with young people from backgrounds very different from your own?
- Do you handle conflict and strong emotions effectively during sessions?
- Can you facilitate group discussions where everyone participates meaningfully?

- Do you adapt your approach based on individual needs and circumstances?
- Can you work effectively with other professionals (teachers, social workers, health professionals)?

Assess your current level in *Skills area*:

Rapport-building

- **Level 1:** I can build trust and rapport with young people, especially in familiar contexts or with youth similar to me.
- **Level 2:** I can quickly build rapport even with young people from very different or challenging backgrounds.

Conflict and emotions

- **Level 1:** I manage conflict or strong emotions with some support or guidance.
- **Level 2:** I confidently de-escalate conflict, regulate my own emotions, and support others to do the same.

Group facilitation

- **Level 1:** I can facilitate group discussions if the group is cooperative and the task is clear.
- **Level 2:** I manage group dynamics in diverse or challenging settings, ensuring all voices are included.

Adaptability

- **Level 1:** I can adjust my approach when I notice something isn't working, with supervision or advice.
- **Level 2:** I adapt flexibly in real time, using creative methods, and can justify my choices to others.

Working with professionals

- **Level 1:** I participate in meetings with teachers, social workers, or other professionals, mainly as a contributor.
- **Level 2:** I coordinate with multiple professionals, initiate collaboration, and sometimes lead multi-stakeholder processes.

Independence and Responsibility Questions:

- Do you seek guidance on most challenging situations (Level 1) or handle most situations independently (Level 2)?
- Are you primarily learning from others (Level 1) or also teaching/mentoring others (Level 2)?
- Do you work within established programs (Level 1) or design and develop new approaches (Level 2)?
- Are you focused mainly on direct service (Level 1) or also involved in organizational and systems change (Level 2)?

Assess your current level in Independence and *Responsibility area*:

Decision-making

- **Level 1:** I seek guidance for most difficult situations.
- **Level 2:** I handle most situations independently and support others in decision-making.

Learning and mentoring

- **Level 1:** I mostly learn from others (trainers, supervisors).
- **Level 2:** I also teach, mentor, or supervise peers.

Program involvement

- **Level 1:** I work within established programs and use given methods.
- **Level 2:** I design new programs, approaches, or resources.

Scope of impact

- **Level 1:** I focus mainly on direct service with young people.
- **Level 2:** I am also engaged in organisational or systemic change.

Professional Development Questions:

- Are you building foundational competencies (Level 1) or specializing and innovating (Level 2)?
- Do you participate in training primarily as a learner (Level 1) or also as a facilitator/trainer (Level 2)?
- Are you developing your own practice (Level 1) or contributing to the development of the field (Level 2)?

Assess your current level in Independence and *Professional Development area*:

Competence building

- **Level 1:** I am developing foundational competences and consolidating my practice.
- **Level 2:** I specialise, innovate, and create new approaches.

Role in training

- **Level 1:** I mainly attend training as a participant.
- **Level 2:** I also act as a trainer, facilitator, or speaker.

Contribution to the field

- **Level 1:** I focus on improving my own practice.
- **Level 2:** I contribute to the development of the wider field (e.g., publishing, leading initiatives, influencing policy).

Using These Levels for Career Development

If You are Currently at Level 1:

Focus your professional development on:

- Deepening your foundational knowledge through formal training

- Seeking diverse practice opportunities to build confidence
- Finding strong supervision and mentorship
- Building a portfolio of evidence showing your developing competencies
- Connecting with professional networks and communities of practice

Typical next steps might include:

- Pursuing advanced certificates or diplomas in youth work or social coaching
- Taking on more complex cases with appropriate support
- Beginning to mentor volunteers or newer practitioners
- Specializing in particular approaches (trauma-informed care, group work, specific populations)

If You are Currently at Level 2:

Focus your professional development on:

- Staying current with research and innovations in the field
- Taking on leadership responsibilities within your organization or community
- Contributing to the development of other practitioners
- Engaging with policy and systems change work
- Pursuing advanced qualifications that recognize your expertise

Typical next steps might include:

- Master's level study in relevant fields
- Training and supervision certifications
- Leadership roles in professional organizations
- Research or evaluation projects
- Policy advisory or consultation work

Recognition and Career Pathways

Formal Qualifications

Understanding your EQF level helps you identify appropriate formal qualifications:

Level 1 practitioners might pursue:

- National diplomas in youth work or social care (typically EQF 5-6)
- Professional certificates in coaching or counseling
- Specialized training in areas like trauma-informed practice or group facilitation

Level 2 practitioners might pursue:

- Bachelor's or Master's degrees in youth work, social work, psychology, or education (EQF 6-7)
- Advanced professional certifications (coaching credentials, supervision qualifications)
- Leadership and management qualifications

Career Progression

This framework supports clear career pathways:

- **Direct practice roles** at both levels (youth worker, social coach, mentor)
- **Coordination and management roles** typically requiring Level 2 competencies
- **Training and supervision roles** definitely requiring Level 2 competencies
- **Policy and development roles** requiring Level 2 competencies plus additional specialized knowledge

Cross-Border Recognition

Because this framework aligns with EQF standards, your competencies are more easily recognized when:

- Applying for jobs in different European countries
- Participating in international training or exchange programs
- Pursuing qualifications offered by institutions in other countries
- Contributing to European-level youth work networks and initiatives

Remember: These levels aren't about being "better" or "worse" - they're about being at different stages of professional development. Level 1 practitioners are essential for quality youth services, and everyone starts somewhere. The framework simply helps you understand where you are now and plan where you want to go next.

EQF VS COMPETENCE MODEL

Competence Area I: Foundation, Ethics, and Professionalism

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Understands codes of ethics (ICF, youth work, safeguarding), GDPR, and trauma-informed practice.
- **Skills:** Applies ethical decision-making with supervision; manages confidentiality and boundaries; uses safeguarding checklists.
- **Attitudes:** Demonstrates integrity, openness to feedback, and respects diversity. Practices self-care under guidance.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Integrates multiple ethical frameworks and can critically reflect on their application in complex youth contexts.
- **Skills:** Consistently applies ethical principles in ambiguous, high-stakes situations; mentors others on ethics; addresses systemic discrimination.
- **Attitudes:** Models integrity and cultural humility; balances self-care with leadership responsibilities; advocates for equity and justice in institutions.

Competence Area II: Building Safe and Inclusive Relationships

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Knows rapport-building strategies, coaching agreements, and socio-cultural communication basics.
- **Skills:** Builds trust; co-creates clear coaching agreements; adapts communication to youth contexts.
- **Attitudes:** Empathetic, patient, values youth input, and respects autonomy.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Integrates research on inclusion, collaboration, and cultural power dynamics; can analyse barriers to participation.
- **Skills:** Facilitates complex collaborations; designs inclusive processes across diverse groups; adapts flexibly to evolving needs.
- **Attitudes:** Champions equity; models long-term collaborative practice; fosters collective responsibility.

Competence Area III: Communication, Active Listening, and Inquiry

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Familiar with active listening techniques, communication models, and youth-tailored inquiry methods.
- **Skills:** Uses open-ended questions, paraphrasing, and reflective listening; integrates simple narrative or digital tools.
- **Attitudes:** Respectful, curious, avoids bias, and maintains openness.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Has specialised knowledge of multiple inquiry models (Socratic, metaphors, silence); references research in supervision.
- **Skills:** Adapts questioning techniques creatively; facilitates perspective shifts; uses multi-modal reflective tools.
- **Attitudes:** Models deep curiosity and cultural sensitivity; fosters reflective communities of practice.

Competence Area IV: Facilitating Learning, Growth, and Development

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Understands learning theories, youth development basics, and SMART goal frameworks.
- **Skills:** Co-creates achievable goals; uses reflective tools to monitor progress; celebrates small achievements.
- **Attitudes:** Encourages growth mindset; patient, flexible; supports identity exploration.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Masters developmental psychology and non-formal education; integrates ecological goal frameworks.
- **Skills:** Designs and evaluates tailored developmental plans; facilitates long-term growth strategies; links personal goals with community/ecological outcomes.
- **Attitudes:** Models empowerment, resilience, and sustainable growth; mentors others in developmental facilitation.

Area di competenza V: Consapevolezza sistemica, inclusione sociale e impegno collaborativo

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Understands basics of PESTEL factors, systemic barriers, and community resources.
- **Skills:** Co-creates pathway maps; introduces youth to support services; facilitates basic group agreements.
- **Attitudes:** Respectful and inclusive; advocates for fairness when barriers are visible; practices cultural humility.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Expert in systems literacy, policies, inclusion frameworks, and social capital theory; maps complex networks.
- **Skills:** Coaches youth through systemic navigation; facilitates advanced networking workshops; manages complex group dynamics.
- **Attitudes:** Acts as equity-first advocate; builds inclusive communities; champions collective wisdom in group coaching.

Competence Area VI: Applying the Principles of Regeneration and Sustainability

Level 1 (EQF 5-6)

- **Knowledge:** Understands local contexts, basic ecopsychology principles, and benefits of nature on well-being.
- **Skills:** Co-creates ecological action plans; guides reflective activities outdoors; uses feedback to adapt.
- **Attitudes:** Supports youth in identifying community resources; believes in individual responsibility for sustainability.

Level 2 (EQF 7)

- **Knowledge:** Specialised knowledge of ecopsychology, biosemiotics, and sustainability frameworks (e.g., panarchy).
- **Skills:** Designs and facilitates complex nature-based interventions; links ecological practice to systemic change.

- **Attitudes:** Models regenerative principles; integrates sustainability into coaching identity; mentors others in eco-coaching.

Summary

- **Level 1 (EQF 5-6):** Practitioner / Emerging Social Coach > applies established methods, builds trust, manages ethics, and supports youth with guidance and supervision.
- **Level 2 (EQF 7):** Advanced / Professional Social Coach > integrates specialised knowledge, handles complex systems, innovates practice, and mentors others while advocating at systemic levels.

CONCLUSION:

This handbook has presented a **comprehensive competence framework for social coaching**, designed to clarify, strengthen, and professionalise the role of coaches and youth workers who accompany young people on their developmental journeys. By outlining six **competence areas**, each broken down into **knowledge, skills, attitudes, and indicators**, the model offers a clear picture of what high-quality practice looks like in real contexts.

Key contributions of the framework

1. **Practical Clarity:** It translates broad professional expectations into concrete, observable indicators that practitioners can use in self-reflection, supervision, training, and peer learning.
2. **Professionalisation:** By aligning with the **European Qualification Framework (EQF)** and **National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs)**, the framework elevates social coaching into a recognised, comparable profession across Europe.
3. **Relevance to Youth Realities:** It integrates traditional coaching competences with newer priorities such as systemic awareness, inclusion, sustainability, and regeneration — reflecting the complexity of the challenges today's young people face.
4. **Flexibility and Growth:** It offers **two EQF proficiency levels** (Practitioner at EQF 5-6, Advanced Professional at EQF 7), giving coaches a clear developmental pathway without reducing practice to a rigid checklist.

Why EQF Alignment Matters

The inclusion of EQF levels is not a formality — it is a **bridge between practice and recognition**. EQF alignment makes it possible to:

- Compare competences across different national contexts.
- Support the mobility of youth workers and social coaches across Europe.
- Provide practitioners with language and evidence that can be recognised by educational institutions, employers, and policymakers.
- Connect informal and non-formal learning with formal qualification systems, strengthening professional identity and credibility.

Practical Implications for Readers

For **practitioners**, this framework is a tool for self-assessment, reflection, and growth. It encourages you to ask: *Where am I now? What do I need to develop further? How do my competences translate into better outcomes for young people?*

For **trainers and educators**, it provides a structured basis for curriculum design, training modules, and assessment tools. It allows learning outcomes to be clearly defined and mapped to EQF levels.

For **organisations and policymakers**, it offers a quality standard for designing programs,

supporting recognition of competences, and strengthening the professionalisation of youth work and social coaching as a field.

For **young people**, the ultimate beneficiaries, this framework helps ensure that those who support them are ethical, skilled, inclusive, and forward-looking — able to provide guidance that is both personally meaningful and socially relevant.

Looking Ahead

Competence is not static — it evolves with context, research, and practice. This framework is therefore intended as a living resource that should be revisited, updated, and enriched over time. As social realities shift — from digitalisation to climate change, from new forms of inequality to new opportunities for civic participation — so too must the competences of those who coach and support young people.

The next steps involve **implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement**:

- **Implementation**: using the framework in training, curricula, supervision, and everyday practice.
- **Evaluation**: testing the indicators in real contexts, collecting feedback from practitioners and young people, and refining them accordingly.
- **Improvement**: integrating emerging insights from psychology, education, coaching, and sustainability into the next iterations of the model.

Final Reflection

At its heart, this framework is about ensuring that **young people leave their interactions with a social coach feeling more confident, connected, and capable of shaping their own lives and communities**.

If it succeeds in guiding practitioners toward that outcome — while also building a recognised, mobile, and professionalised field of social coaching across Europe — then it will have achieved its purpose.

The invitation to all readers — whether you are a youth worker, coach, trainer, policymaker, or young person — is to use this framework as a **compass and a bridge**:

- A **compass** to guide your professional growth and practice.
- A **bridge** connecting your work to European standards, recognition systems, and communities of practice.

By doing so, we ensure that social coaching remains not only a meaningful practice for individuals, but also a **powerful force for inclusion, resilience, and regeneration** in our societies.

