

The Worksheets

THERAPY WITH A COACHING EDGE:

Partnership, Action and Possibility in Every Session

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Guidepost for Client Suitability

From Chapter 3: Who's Coachable in Therapy

In Chapter 3, you learned how to determine suitability for this model, using a series of client questions and then reviewing the responses with a checklist. Suitability is based on three factors:

- Client Preference (what your client wants out of therapy)
- Client Challenges (presenting issues, short history of mental health problems, diagnosis)
- Client Capacity (overall functionality, ability to work with a proactive, collaborative therapist)

Questions for Clients

Here are questions to use in session with individual adult or mature adolescent clients to determine suitability, along with any other assessments you currently use. Use some or all in each category, in conversation or written form, to help you and your clients decide if *Therapy with a Coaching Edge* is a good approach for them, given each category:

Client Preference:

- *Are you seeking short-term or long-term therapy?*
- *For example, would you prefer a slower-paced, longer-term method that would allow you to spend more time talking and processing memories and developing insight? Or would you prefer a faster-paced therapy which results in taking action and making decisions?*
- *Do you have trouble expressing thoughts and feelings and would you like therapy to help with this?*
- *Do you want therapy sessions that focus on the present and future, or more on the past?*
- *Do you want therapy that results in behavioral change?*
- *Are you interested in using therapy to set and achieve goals in order to make concrete change in your life?*
- *Do you want a therapist who primarily listens and lets you talk, or one who voices thoughts and opinions?*
- *Do you like to have homework, reading or action steps to take between sessions?*

Client Challenges:

- *Why did you decide to come to therapy now?*
- *Are you in danger or in a crisis that needs immediate attention?*
- *Are you able to make good decisions for yourself and those dependent upon you?*

- *Do you think your issue can be resolved by focusing on your own feelings, behavior, or thinking?*
- *Are you interested in changing yourself and your situation?*
- *Do you need something or someone outside of you to change first, before you can address your own problems?*
- *Can you think of a possible first step that would begin to resolve one of your problems?*
- *What would a successful outcome in our work together be?*

Client Capacity:

- *What gives you energy and what drains you?*
- *What is a typical day like?*
- *What is going well?*
- *What is not?*
- *Are you worried about physical or personal safety or immediate survival?*
- *Of all the problems you face, which need attention immediately?*
- *Which are low priority that can be corrected over time?*
- *What are you proudest about in regards to your life/ and or work?*
- *Where would you like to see yourself (in life, relationships, work, career) by the end of therapy?*
- *What would you want from me, as your therapist, to help you reach your goals?*

For Therapist Review:

After conferring with your client on the above, review the answers along with any other assessments you may have used. The following checklist is to help you confirm suitability. Unchecked items need to be evaluated on the basis of anticipated progress from early stages of treatment that might resolve the issue quickly.

The client who is right for this approach prefers:

- therapy or counseling that is short-term.
- between-session homework, reading, and/or moving forward to complete action steps.
- a therapist who is collaborative, interactive, and verbal during a session.
- session conversation that is pragmatic and optimistic.
- to focus more on present-day issues than on the past.
- therapy that involves planning for the future with goals and action steps.
- fits the presenting criteria above and suffers from mild to moderate symptoms.
- is not in physical danger or mental/emotional crisis, including active addiction or relapse.
- is dealing with issues that can be resolved with a collaborative discussion, goal setting, and an action plan.

- likes problem solving as a way to resolve challenges.
- has access to internal and external resources to make any problematic situations (debt, living conditions, career) quickly resolvable.
- can tolerate and participate in conversations with a therapist who is proactive and cooperative.
- is struggling with only moderate or mild symptoms of depression, anxiety, loss, stress-related, relationship, parenting, or workplace issues.
- has a lifeline or some type of support system in place.
- has sufficient energy or vigor to stay with an approach of therapy that is faster-paced than traditional talk therapy.
- is employed or employable and/or functions in a safe way in the world.
- can (with help) identify, set, and begin to follow through on goals.
- can relate to the therapist without undue projection or transference.
- can allow and utilize the therapist's support to stay on track with treatment.

Does the client you are assessing meet the above suitability?

For more support, case examples and complete information, read or re-read chapter 3 of *Therapy with a Coaching Edge*.