



accountabili-buddy

CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH.



REFERENCE
SHEETS

REFERENCE SHEET 11

PATTERN LANGUAGE

Accountability improves when individual outcomes are interpreted in relation to prior behavior.

A pattern is not:

- One miss
- One difficult week
- One unusual event
- One statement the client made
- An impression the Accountabili-Buddy has developed

A pattern is a **meaningful recurrence across observations**.

The purpose of identifying patterns is to improve formulation and decision-making, not to construct a case against the client.

DESCRIBE THE PATTERN BEFORE INTERPRETING IT

Start with what has actually repeated.

Observation

"For the last four weeks, you committed to four sessions and completed one or two."

Interpretation

"The commitment may be consistently higher than your current capacity."

The first statement is established by the record.

The second is a formulation that still requires judgment.

USE SPECIFIC BEHAVIORAL LANGUAGE

Weak:

"You always procrastinate."

Better:

"The last three applications were completed but remained unsubmitted for several days after they were ready."

Weak:

"You never prioritize yourself."

Better:

"For the last five weeks, your personal goal has been the first commitment removed when work demands increased."

Weak:

"You keep sabotaging your progress."

Better:

"After each successful week, the next commitment has increased substantially and then gone incomplete."

Behavioral description creates something that can be examined.

Character language usually does not.

PATTERN DOES NOT MEAN CAUSE

Suppose the record shows:

Week 1: Planned four workouts, completed two

Week 2: Planned four, completed two

Week 3: Planned four, completed one

Week 4: Planned four, completed two

Established Pattern:

Actual performance has remained consistently below the commitment.

Not Yet Established:

Why.

Possible explanations include:

- Unrealistic calibration
- Competing priorities
- Avoidance
- Inadequate planning
- Reduced capacity
- Low current priority

Pattern recognition should initiate better reasoning, not terminate it.

USE FREQUENCY, NOT ABSOLUTES

Avoid:

"You always..."

"You never..."

unless the record genuinely supports the absolute statement and the distinction matters.

Prefer:

"This has happened four weeks in a row."

"Three of the last four times..."

"Each time the deadline has approached..."

"So far, the same result has occurred under both schedules."

Specific frequency is more accurate and usually more persuasive.

IDENTIFY WHAT IS STABLE

Sometimes the explanation changes while the outcome remains stable.

Example:

Week 1:

"I forgot."

Week 2:

"I was tired."

Week 3:

"Work was busy."

Week 4:

"I planned to do it later."

Do not necessarily conclude:

"Those are all excuses."

Instead observe:

"The immediate reason has changed each week, but the commitment has gone incomplete every week."

Then investigate whether a stable factor may be contributing to the repeated outcome.

IDENTIFY SELECTIVE PATTERNS

Selective behavior can be particularly informative.

Example:

A client reports:

"I am too overwhelmed to work on the business."

But during the same period they consistently complete:

- Administrative work
- Research
- Website changes
- Planning
- Email organization

The repeatedly omitted behavior is prospect outreach.

The useful pattern is not:

Client does nothing when overwhelmed.

It is:

Client continues working but repeatedly omits external prospect contact.

That distinction changes the formulation.

IDENTIFY CONTEXTUAL PATTERNS

Patterns may depend on circumstances.

Examples:

"Evening study sessions repeatedly fail; morning sessions usually occur."

"Exercise remains consistent until business travel begins."

“Writing occurs reliably when the commitment is time-based but deteriorates when it is word-count based.”

“Follow-through declines when more than three goals are simultaneously active.”

These patterns can identify useful interventions without requiring psychological interpretation.

IDENTIFY RESPONSE PATTERNS

The relevant recurrence may happen **after** the miss.

Examples:

- Client disappears after unsuccessful weeks
- Client immediately reduces the next commitment
- Client makes the next commitment larger
- Client changes goals after early difficulty
- Client produces increasingly elaborate explanations
- Client recommits without changing anything
- Client asks the Accountabili-Buddy to choose the next target

The response to non-follow-through may become as important as the original miss.

IDENTIFY SUCCESS PATTERNS

Pattern recognition is not only for problems.

Examples:

“All four successful weeks used morning sessions.”

“Follow-through improved when only two goals were active.”

“Submission improved after the client defined a minimum acceptable quality standard.”

“Client consistently succeeds when the first session occurs early in the week.”

Successful patterns should inform future accountability.

DO NOT FORCE A PATTERN TOO EARLY

One event:

"I missed because I was exhausted."

Possible Interpretation:

Unusual fatigue.

Do not immediately record:

Client struggles with fatigue-related avoidance.

Wait for evidence.

Useful Language:

"Let's see whether this was an isolated week or something we need to account for going forward."

KNOW WHEN REPETITION CHANGES THE CONVERSATION

Week 1:

"What happened?"

Week 2:

"Same issue?"

Week 5:

"We have now had the same outcome five times. I do not think we should treat this as another isolated miss."

Repeated evidence should increase the depth of review.

Otherwise accountability becomes repetitive reporting rather than cumulative analysis.

PATTERNS CAN INVALIDATE OLD FORMULATIONS

Suppose the initial formulation is:

Poor scheduling.

The client then:

- Schedules the task precisely
- Protects the time
- Receives reminders
- Appears at the scheduled time
- Still does not begin

The new pattern weakens the scheduling formulation.

Do not keep applying scheduling interventions simply because scheduling was the first identified problem.

PATTERNS CAN CHANGE

A client may historically struggle with one issue and later encounter another.

Example:

For months, the client avoided submitting work.

Later, a submission is delayed because the required document is genuinely unavailable.

History justifies scrutiny.

It does not make every future delay avoidance.

USE PATTERN LANGUAGE TO OPEN INQUIRY

Useful:

"This is the fourth time the task has been ready but not submitted. I think the submission point itself deserves attention."

Useful:

"Your completion rate has stayed almost identical despite changing the schedule twice. That makes me question whether scheduling is the main problem."

Useful:

"Whenever work becomes busy, this is the first goal that disappears. Is that an unavoidable capacity issue, or does it tell us something about its current priority?"

Pattern language should make the evidence visible.

It should not predetermine the answer.

THE PATTERN TEST

Before naming a pattern, ask:

What exactly has repeated?

How many observations support it?

Under what circumstances does it occur?

Are there meaningful exceptions?

Am I describing behavior or assigning a trait?

Does the pattern support a cause, or merely tell me what needs investigation?

Has newer evidence changed the pattern?

THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE

Use history as evidence, not accusation.

A pattern should make the next accountability decision more accurate, not make the client feel permanently defined by previous behavior.