



accountabili-buddy

CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH.



REFERENCE
SHEETS

REFERENCE SHEET 9

COMMITMENT CALIBRATION

Calibration is the process of matching the commitment to:

- The client's actual capacity
- Prior performance
- Current circumstances
- The importance of the goal
- The level of challenge needed for meaningful progress

The objective is not maximum completion.

The objective is a commitment that produces useful, credible accountability.

REALISTIC DOES NOT MEAN EASY

A good commitment may be difficult.

Difficulty alone does not establish poor calibration.

Ask:

"Is this hard because the work is hard, or because the commitment does not fit the client's actual circumstances?"

USE PRIOR PERFORMANCE

Past behavior provides evidence.

Example:

A client commits to six study sessions.

Actual Performance:

Week 1: Three

Week 2: Two

Week 3: Three

Week 4: Two

The Accountability-Buddy should not treat Week 5 as if no history exists.

Useful Question:

“What makes six the right commitment given the last four weeks?”

This does not automatically mean the target should become three.

It means the history should influence the decision.

DO NOT OVERLEARN FROM ONE WEEK

The client normally completes four sessions.

One week:

One session.

Do not automatically conclude:

“Four was unrealistic.”

Ask:

“Was this an unusual week, or has your capacity changed?”

BASELINE VS. ASPIRATIONAL TARGET

Clients often set the number they ideally want rather than the number they are actually committing to.

Example:

"I would love five workouts."

Ask:

"Is five the commitment, or the ideal result?"

A useful structure may be:

Commitment: Three

Stretch Target: Five

UNDERCOMMITMENT

A commitment may be too small when:

- It is far below demonstrated capacity
- It produces little meaningful progress
- It is selected primarily because completion is guaranteed
- The client repeatedly lowers the target after every miss
- Avoiding the possibility of a miss appears to be determining the commitment more than actual capacity

Useful Question:

"Is this level strategic, or are you selecting a number you know cannot be missed?"

STRATEGIC REDUCTION

A low commitment can be appropriate when it serves a clear purpose.

Examples:

- Re-entering after a major disruption
- Interrupting an all-or-nothing restart cycle
- Testing a new structure
- Preserving continuity temporarily
- Recovering from a period of reduced capacity

Key Difference:

Strategic reduction has a reason and usually a review point.

CHRONIC OVERCOMMITMENT

Signs:

- Repeated large gap between commitment and performance
- Same high target reappears without structural change
- Commitment reflects ideal self rather than available capacity
- Client treats reduction as moral failure
- History repeatedly contradicts the target

Useful Question:

“Are we setting the commitment based on what you want to be able to do or what the evidence says you can currently support?”

REPEATED RECOMMITMENT

Persistence can be appropriate.

But after repeated identical misses, ask:

“What are we changing?”

Example:

Five sessions planned for four weeks.

Actual Performance:

2, 2, 3, 2.

Recommitting to five may still be reasonable.

Recommitting to five **without changing anything or learning anything** is weaker accountability.

CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

A previously reasonable commitment may become unrealistic.

Examples:

- New work schedule
- Family-care responsibilities
- Illness
- Travel
- Major project demands
- Loss of access to necessary resources

Do not use historical capacity to ignore current reality.

Ask:

“Has the capacity problem changed temporarily or structurally?”

TEMPORARY VS. PERMANENT RECALIBRATION

Temporary Adjustment

Useful when current circumstances are expected to change.

Example:

“One business-development block weekly for three weeks while family demands are unusually high.”

Ongoing Recalibration

Useful when evidence suggests the prior baseline no longer fits.

Example:

“Three sessions has been the sustainable level for two months and the client does not want to protect time for a fourth.”

SUCCESS DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN INCREASE

The client completes three sessions.

Do not automatically say:

“Now do four.”

Ask:

- Was three appropriately challenging?
- Is three serving the goal?
- Does the client want progression?
- Is the behavior still stabilizing?
- Would maintaining produce better long-term information?

Stability is a legitimate outcome.

FAILURE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN REDUCE

The client misses three sessions.

Do not automatically say:

“Let’s make it smaller.”

Ask:

- Was the original target genuinely unrealistic?
- Was the week unusual?
- Was avoidance present?
- Did competing priorities interfere?
- Is the method the problem rather than the quantity?

THE CALIBRATION QUESTIONS

Before setting or changing a commitment, ask:

What does prior performance tell us?

Has current capacity changed?

Is this the baseline or the aspiration?

Is the target meaningful enough to advance the goal?

Is the commitment being reduced because evidence supports reduction, or because the client missed it?

Is the commitment being maintained because evidence supports it, or because changing it feels like failure?

Does the client actually endorse the number?

THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE

Calibration is neither leniency nor toughness.

It is the disciplined use of evidence to determine what commitment is credible, meaningful, and appropriate now.