

## STAGE 2 DIAGNOSTIC DISCRIMINATION DRILLS

### PURPOSE

These drills develop the trainee's ability to distinguish among competing explanations for non-follow-through when the observable outcome alone is insufficient.

The trainee should not ask:

"What label fits this client?"

The trainee should ask:

"What formulation is best supported by the evidence currently available, what alternatives remain plausible, and what information would materially change the judgment?"

The core formulations in this drill set are:

A. Avoidance B. Unrealistic goal or commitment C. Competing priorities D. Overwhelm E. Perfectionism F. Loss of interest G. Simple non-follow-through H. Mixed formulation I. Insufficient evidence

### INSTRUCTIONS

For each scenario:

Choose the best current formulation.

Do not infer beyond the evidence.

Use "mixed formulation" only when more than one mechanism is materially supported.

Use "insufficient evidence" when the available facts do not justify a more specific conclusion.

In later sections, identify the strongest alternative and the evidence that would distinguish between them.

### SECTION 1 — RAPID PRIMARY FORMULATION

Client planned four workouts and completed one.

No explanation is available.

**Answer:**

Client committed to six study sessions.

Calendar shows only three realistic available periods.

**Answer:**

Client completes every business task except sending sales emails.

Client reports dreading rejection.

**Answer:**

Client has 12 active goals and repeatedly switches among them without finishing.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly chooses optional work assignments because promotion is currently more important than the side business.

**Answer:**

Client has revised a first draft nine times because they do not want colleagues seeing anything imperfect.

**Answer:**

Client says:

"If I were choosing today, I would not start this certification."

**Answer:**

Client misses one routine workout after five months of consistency and reports no particular reason.

**Answer:**

Client says:

"I was overwhelmed."

No other information is available.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly plans five workouts but only has three realistic exercise windows.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly prepares for a practice exam but refuses to take it because a poor score would upset them.

**Answer:**

Client wants both a promotion and rapid business growth but repeatedly chooses promotion-related work when the two conflict.

**Answer:**

Client says they would like to speak French someday but do not want to study now.

**Answer:**

Client keeps editing a proposal that is functionally complete and says:

"It can still be better."

**Answer:**

Client does not know how to complete the required technical setup.

**Answer:**

Client misses a task once despite sufficient time, retained interest, and no identifiable barrier.

**Answer:**

Client has too many simultaneous commitments and also applies extremely high standards to each one.

**Answer:**

Client has adequate time but repeatedly postpones one difficult conversation while completing everything else.

**Answer:**

Client says the goal no longer matters and continues only because they already invested significant money.

**Answer:**

Client has a genuine family-care demand that displaces a lower-priority recreational goal for several weeks.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 2 — SAME LANGUAGE, DIFFERENT FORMULATION

Choose the best formulation in each pair.

**21A.**

**Client:**

"I didn't have time."

Client worked 70 hours and had no realistic open period.

**Answer:**

**21B.**

**Client:**

"I didn't have time."

Client had three open evenings and spent them redesigning a logo rather than making sales calls.

**Answer:**

**22A.**

**Client:**

"I was overwhelmed."

Client has 18 unsorted tasks and cannot establish sequence.

**Answer:**

**22B.**

**Client:**

"I was overwhelmed."

Client completed every task except one confrontation with a supervisor.

**Answer:**

**23A.**

**Client:**

"The goal is too much."

Client planned six workouts with only three available windows.

**Answer:**

**23B.**

**Client:**

"The goal is too much."

Client completed four workouts for eight consecutive weeks, then missed during one unusual crisis week.

**Answer:**

**24A.**

**Client:**

"I don't want this anymore."

Client says they would not choose the degree today.

**Answer:**

**24B.**

**Client:**

"I don't want this anymore."

Client then says:

"If I knew I could succeed, I would absolutely keep going."

**Answer:**

**25A.**

**Client:**

"It isn't ready."

Three required figures are genuinely unverified.

**Answer:**

**25B.**

**Client:**

"It isn't ready."

The document is a rough internal draft and has already been revised seven times.

**Answer:**

### SECTION 3 — AVOIDANCE VS. SIMPLE NON-FOLLOW-THROUGH

Choose:

A. Avoidance B. Simple non-follow-through C. Insufficient evidence

One isolated missed workout after months of consistency.

No barrier identified.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly completes every task except making one collection call.

**Answer:**

Client misses one application deadline and says:

"I just didn't do it."

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly opens a completed application, rereads it, and closes it without submitting.

**Answer:**

Client misses two sessions in one week but resumes normally the next week without intervention.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly reorganizes files, research, and notes instead of sending a finished proposal.

**Answer:**

Client misses once because they watched television instead.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly replaces one feared action with productive low-risk tasks.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 4 — UNREALISTIC COMMITMENT VS. COMPETING PRIORITIES

Choose:

A. Unrealistic commitment B. Competing priorities C. Mixed formulation D. Insufficient evidence

Client commits to ten hours of study with only five hours available.

**Answer:**

Client has enough time overall but repeatedly chooses promotion-related work instead of side-business activity.

**Answer:**

Client wants five workouts but realistically has three available windows and often gives one of those windows to family obligations.

**Answer:**

Client has four available evenings but deliberately gives all four to a second goal considered more important.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly plans eight tasks in a week where only four can reasonably fit.

**Answer:**

Client could fit the commitment but chooses another legitimate priority each time.

**Answer:**

Client has insufficient total time because two major priorities are simultaneously active.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 5 — OVERWHELM VS. AVOIDANCE

Choose:

A. Overwhelm B. Avoidance C. Mixed formulation D. Insufficient evidence

Client has 16 tasks, no priority order, and switches constantly.

**Answer:**

Client completes 15 tasks and repeatedly leaves one difficult phone call untouched.

**Answer:**

Client has seven active goals and also avoids one specific submission task.

**Answer:**

Client says everything feels urgent and cannot identify what should come first.

**Answer:**

Client reports overwhelm but consistently functions well until reaching the point of external evaluation.

**Answer:**

Client starts every available task and completes none.

**Answer:**

Client reduces active goals from seven to two, but the same one task still remains untouched.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 6 — PERFECTIONISM VS. LEGITIMATE QUALITY CONTROL

Choose:

A. Perfectionism B. Legitimate quality requirement C. Mixed / uncertain D. Insufficient evidence

Client keeps checking medication dosage information before publication.

**Answer:**

Client rewrites a rough internal memo eight times because it “doesn’t sound polished enough.”

**Answer:**

Client delays a regulatory filing because three legally required figures are not verified.

**Answer:**

Client delays sending a routine email because they cannot tolerate the possibility of awkward wording.

**Answer:**

Client revises a client proposal after discovering an incorrect price.

**Answer:**

Client says:

"I know it meets the requirements, but I still don't feel comfortable sending it."

**Answer:**

Client has a history of perfectionism and is currently checking a genuinely high-risk factual claim.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly moves the definition of "finished" after each version meets the previous standard.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 7 — LOSS OF INTEREST VS. DISCOURAGEMENT

Choose:

A. Loss of interest B. Discouragement C. Insufficient evidence

**Client:**

"I would not choose this goal today."

**Answer:**

**Client:**

"I still want it badly. I just don't think I can do it."

**Answer:**

**Client:**

"I'm tired of failing. Maybe I should quit."

**Answer:**

**Client:**

"I genuinely do not care whether I finish."

**Answer:**

Client continues because they already invested two years but says the outcome no longer matters.

**Answer:**

Client says:

"I still want it, but I feel like I ruined my chances."

**Answer:**

Client says:

"I'm not sure I want it anymore."

No other information.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 8 — GLOBAL VS. SELECTIVE PATTERN

Choose:

A. Global difficulty B. Selective difficulty C. Insufficient evidence

Client misses work, exercise, household, and study commitments across the same period.

**Answer:**

Client completes everything except sales outreach.

**Answer:**

Client finishes drafting but repeatedly fails at submission.

**Answer:**

Client begins many unrelated tasks and finishes almost none.

**Answer:**

Client handles routine conversations but repeatedly avoids conflict conversations.

**Answer:**

Client misses one task in one week.

Answer:

## SECTION 9 — TEMPORARY VS. STRUCTURAL

Choose:

A. Temporary disruption more likely B. Structural pattern increasingly likely C. Insufficient evidence

Eight successful weeks, then one poor week during travel.

Answer:

Six consecutive weeks of 2 of 5.

Answer:

First missed deadline.

No explanation yet.

Answer:

Five deadline movements at the same completion stage.

Answer:

One low-productivity week during illness.

Answer:

Two months of “busy weeks” with the same specific task remaining incomplete.

Answer:

Three poor weeks following a major permanent schedule change.

Answer:

## SECTION 10 — PRIMARY + ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION

For each scenario, identify:

Primary formulation Strongest alternative What would distinguish them

Client completes administrative business work but not prospecting.

Primary:

**Alternative:**

**Distinguishing evidence:**

Client repeatedly misses five workouts.

Calendar shows four available periods.

**Primary:**

**Alternative:**

**Distinguishing evidence:**

Client repeatedly revises a proposal before sending.

**Primary:**

**Alternative:**

**Distinguishing evidence:**

Client says the certification no longer matters after three bad weeks.

**Primary:**

**Alternative:**

**Distinguishing evidence:**

Client says they are overwhelmed and has six simultaneous goals.

**Primary:**

Alternative:

Distinguishing evidence:

SECTION 11 — MIXED FORMULATIONS

Identify all materially supported factors, then choose the primary formulation.

Client has only limited time and uses much of the remaining time avoiding a difficult sales call.

Supported factors:

Primary:

Client has too many active goals and applies excessive standards to every task.

Supported factors:

Primary:

Client no longer values the certification but continues because stopping would mean abandoning a substantial prior investment.

Supported factors:

Primary:

Client sets an excessively large writing target and then avoids beginning because the workload feels unmanageable.

Supported factors:

Primary:

Client has a temporary caregiving priority and is also becoming less interested in the displaced goal.

**Supported factors:**

**Primary:**

**What remains uncertain?**

**SECTION 12 — EVIDENCE WEIGHTING**

For each scenario, identify the evidence that should receive greatest weight.

Client says:

“Four workouts is impossible.”

**History:**

Four completed successfully in 10 of the previous 12 weeks.

**Most important evidence:**

**Why:**

Client says:

“I still want the course.”

Client also says:

“I would never enroll if I were deciding today.”

**Most important evidence:**

**Why:**

Client says:

“I am avoiding the report.”

A required third-party dataset has not arrived.

**Most important evidence:**

**Why:**

Client has a history of overchecking.

Current task is a legal filing with one unverified figure.

**Most important evidence:**

**Why:**

Client historically avoids launches.

Current website has a confirmed navigation defect.

**Most important evidence:**

**Why:**

## SECTION 13 — FORMULATION CONFIDENCE

Choose:

A. Low B. Moderate C. High

One missed commitment, no explanation.

**Answer:**

Six repeated selective misses with consistent successful completion of comparable tasks.

**Answer:**

Client says "I'm overwhelmed," no behavioral data.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly revises functionally complete low-risk drafts and explicitly reports inability to tolerate imperfection.

**Answer:**

Client says they lost interest during one bad week.

**Answer:**

Client repeatedly says the goal no longer matters, would not choose it today, and continues only because of sunk cost.

**Answer:**

## SECTION 14 — WHAT EVIDENCE WOULD CHANGE YOUR MIND?

**Current formulation:**

Avoidance.

**What evidence would materially weaken it?**

**Current formulation:**

Unrealistic commitment.

**What evidence would materially weaken it?**

**Current formulation:**

Overwhelm.

**What evidence would materially weaken it?**

**Current formulation:**

Perfectionism.

**What evidence would materially weaken it?**

**Current formulation:**

Loss of interest.

**What evidence would materially weaken it?**

**Current formulation:**

Simple non-follow-through.

**What evidence would require a more specific formulation?**

**SECTION 15 — DIAGNOSTIC TRAPS**

For each statement, identify the reasoning error.

“They had time, so it must be avoidance.”

**Error:**

“They missed six times, so the goal must be unrealistic.”

**Error:**

“They said overwhelmed, so overwhelm is the formulation.”

**Error:**

“They keep revising, so they are a perfectionist.”

**Error:**

“They said they don’t care, so close the goal.”

**Error:**

“They chose work, so work is definitely their real priority.”

**Error:**

"They missed once for no reason, so there must be a deeper barrier."

**Error:**

"They have avoided before, so this delay is avoidance too."

**Error:**

## SECTION 16 — SHORT CASES

**Client Goal:**

Complete a book proposal.

**History:**

Proposal functionally complete for three weeks.

Client continues editing phrasing, format, and examples.

Client says:

"I just want to give it the best chance."

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best discriminating question:**

**Client Goal:**

Exercise five times weekly.

**History:**

Actual completion over eight weeks:

2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2

Three reliable exercise windows exist.

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best discriminating question:**

**Client Goal:**

Build a consulting practice.

**History:**

Operational work consistently completed.

Prospecting results:

0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0.

Client says:

"I am still getting ready."

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best discriminating question:**

**Client Goal:**

Complete professional course.

Strong progress for four months.

Recent promotion makes credential less useful.

Client says:

"I'm not sure I care about finishing anymore."

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best discriminating question:**

**Client Goal:**

Complete home renovation plan.  
Client spends hours every weekend jumping among 20+ unresolved decisions and completes almost none.

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best discriminating question:**

**Client Goal:**

Run three times weekly.  
14 of previous 16 weeks completed fully.

**This week:**

1 of 3.

**Client:**

"I had time. I just didn't feel like it."

**Primary formulation:**

**Alternative:**

**Confidence:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Best next discriminating move:**

## SECTION 17 — PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

**Initial information:**

Client misses three sales calls.

Client says:

"I was too busy."

**Current formulation:**

**Confidence:**

**New information:**

Client had three free evenings.

**Update:**

**New information:**

Client used those evenings to rewrite the website.

**Update:**

**New information:**

Client says:

"Website work feels safer because nobody can reject me."

**Final formulation:**

**Confidence:**

**Initial information:**

Client repeatedly delays a report.

**Current formulation:**

**New information:**

Client says:

"I keep checking the figures."

**Update:**

**New information:**

Three figures are legally required to be verified and remain unconfirmed.

**Final formulation:**

**What earlier formulation should be weakened or abandoned?**

**Initial information:**

Client says:

"I don't want the marathon anymore."

**Current formulation:**

**New information:**

Client says:

"I would still do anything to finish it. I just think I ruined my chances."

**Final formulation:**

**Initial information:**

Client misses five-session target repeatedly.

**Current formulation:**

**New information:**

Client has only three realistic windows.

**Final formulation:**

**New information:**

Client sometimes skips one of those three because of dread.

**Final formulation:**

## SECTION 18 — ADVANCED AMBIGUITY

Client has sufficient time for the task but reports severe fatigue during the available period.

**Possible formulations include:**

capacity limitation;

avoidance;

simple non-follow-through.

**What information matters most?**

Client repeatedly prioritizes work over exercise but says exercise is their “number one priority.”

**What is established?**

**What is not yet established?**

Client repeatedly edits a proposal and fears rejection.

**Could both perfectionism and avoidance be operating?**

**Explain:**

Client has 10 active goals and repeatedly leaves one emotionally difficult goal untouched.

**Could both overwhelm and avoidance be operating?**

**Explain:**

Client says a goal no longer matters but also appears discouraged after a major setback.

**What is the key discriminating question?**

## SECTION 19 — DIAGNOSTIC DISCIPLINE

Complete each statement.

**A client explanation is:**

**but not automatically:**

**A repeated pattern increases:**

**but does not automatically establish:**

**Selective non-follow-through is useful because:**

**A working formulation should change when:**

**When evidence remains ambiguous, the appropriate professional stance is:**

## SECTION 20 — FINAL DIAGNOSTIC CHALLENGE

**Client Goal:**

Launch an online course.

**Original Scope:**

Four instructional modules.

**Current Status:**

All four original modules are complete.

Over the next six weeks, the client adds:

two bonus modules;

worksheets;

a resource library;

new video introductions;

a private community;

a second pricing tier.

The launch date moves twice.

Client says:

"I'm overwhelmed. There is still so much left to do, and I do not want to launch something half-done."

**Observed facts:**

**Client formulation:**

**Primary formulation:**

**Strongest alternative:**

**Mixed formulation possible?**

**Explain:**

**Evidence supporting overwhelm:**

**Evidence supporting perfectionism or scope expansion:**

**What information would distinguish necessary product development from expanding completion standards?**

**Best discriminating question:**

**Confidence level:**

Low / Moderate / High

**Why?**

**What should the trainee NOT conclude yet?**

**What future evidence would materially strengthen the primary formulation?**

## DIAGNOSTIC SELF-REVIEW

Which formulation do you select too quickly?

**Avoidance:**

**Unrealistic commitment:**

**Competing priorities:**

**Overwhelm:**

**Perfectionism:**

**Loss of interest:**

**Simple non-follow-through:**

Which pair is hardest for you to distinguish?

Do you tend to overvalue client labels?

Do you tend to underweight client self-report?

Do you use successful behavior as comparative evidence?

Do you distinguish one-off events from repeated patterns?

Do you recognize when multiple mechanisms coexist?

Do you assign confidence levels appropriately?

Do you know what evidence would make you change your mind?

## **STAGE 2 DIAGNOSTIC DISCRIMINATION STANDARD**

A trainee is ready to move forward when they can reliably:

identify the best-supported formulation without overclaiming certainty;

generate plausible alternatives;

distinguish similar formulations using behavioral evidence;

recognize insufficient evidence;

distinguish global from selective patterns;

use longitudinal history appropriately;

recognize mixed formulations;

weigh contradictory evidence;

identify what information would materially change the judgment;

revise a formulation when new evidence requires it;

avoid allowing familiar labels to replace analysis.

The core professional question is:

“What explanation best accounts for the behavior we actually have evidence for?”

END OF STAGE 2 DIAGNOSTIC DISCRIMINATION DRILLS