

STAGE 2 RESPONSE-WRITING DRILLS

PURPOSE

These drills train the trainee to convert diagnostic reasoning into language that reflects the actual formulation.

Stage 1 response writing focused on professional structure, proportionality, boundaries, and client ownership.

Stage 2 adds a more demanding requirement:

The response must fit the specific mechanism currently supported by the evidence.

A response can sound professional and still be wrong if it addresses the wrong problem.

Examples:

Reassuring a client who is avoiding does not address avoidance.

Challenging a client whose target is genuinely unrealistic does not address calibration.

Scheduling a client who has lost interest does not address goal value.

Shrinking a task does not necessarily address perfectionism.

Asking for more explanation after simple non-follow-through may be unnecessary.

Treating discouragement as loss of interest may prematurely close a valued goal.

The trainee should therefore be able to move through the sequence:

Observe Formulate Respond

without exposing unnecessary internal analysis to the client.

INSTRUCTIONS

For each scenario:

Write the exact response you would send.

Use only the information provided.

Do not explain every possibility to the client.

Do not use diagnostic labels when ordinary language would be clearer.

Ask only questions that could materially improve the next decision.

Preserve client ownership.

Keep responses realistic in length.

SECTION 1 — SIMPLE NON-FOLLOW-THROUGH

Client:

"I said I would walk three times. I walked once. There was no particular reason."

Your response:

Client:

"I missed the study session. I had time. I just did not do it."

Relevant context:

First miss after ten successful weeks.

Your response:

Client:

"I did two of four. Same four next week."

Relevant context:

This is the first partial miss.

Your response:

Client:

"I skipped the workout because I did not feel like going. I still want the same goal."

Relevant context:

No repeated pattern.

Your response:

Client:

"I missed once and now I feel like we need to change the whole plan."

Your response:

SECTION 2 — AVOIDANCE

Client:

"I had time to make the call. I kept finding other things to do."

Your response:

Client:

"The proposal is finished. I just have not sent it."

Your response:

History:

Client completes all business preparation but no outreach.

Client:

"I want to work on my website again this week."

Your response:

Client:

"I studied for the practice exam for three hours, but I still did not take it. I do not want to see a bad score."

Your response:

History:

Client has postponed one difficult conversation for four weeks.

Client:

"I think I need to find a better time."

Relevant context:

Several workable times have already been available.

Your response:

Client:

"I know the application is ready. I just keep thinking maybe there is something I missed."

Your response:

Client:

"I want to reduce five outreach contacts to zero for a month until I feel more comfortable."

Your response:

SECTION 3 — UNREALISTIC COMMITMENT

Client:

"I committed to six workouts, but looking at the week, I only had three actual windows."

Your response:

History:

Client repeatedly completes two to three sessions against a target of seven.

Client:

"I want seven again."

Your response:

Client:

"I know I only have four hours available, but I want to commit to ten because ten is what I should be doing."

Your response:

Client:

"If we lower five to three, that means I did not meet the original commitment."

Your response:

Client:

"I did all five, but only because I stayed up until 2 a.m. several nights."

Your response:

Client:

"I want to reduce five sessions all the way to one because I know I can definitely do one."

Your response:

SECTION 4 — COMPETING PRIORITIES

Client:

"I keep choosing extra work because I want the promotion more than I want to grow the side business right now."

Your response:

Client:

"I say exercise is my priority, but when work asks me to stay late, I always say yes."

Your response:

Client:

"I want to keep both goals, but they both need the same two evenings."

Your response:

Client:

"My family needs more of my time for the next three weeks. I still want the business goal active."

Your response:

Client:

"I do not want to reduce either priority."

Relevant context:

The available time cannot support both at the current level.

Your response:

Client:

“My side business is still my number-one priority.”

History:

For six weeks, the client has voluntarily accepted optional work assignments instead.

Your response:

SECTION 5 — OVERWHELM

Client:

“I have nine goals active and I do not know what to do first.”

Your response:

Client:

“I want to keep all nine goals active. I will just make every one smaller.”

Your response:

Client:

“Everything is urgent.”

Relevant context:

Only two items have actual deadlines.

Your response:

Client:

“I start one thing, remember another thing, switch, then realize something else is more important.”

Your response:

Client:

"I spent six hours working and somehow completed almost nothing."

Relevant context:

Client repeatedly moved among 15 tasks.

Your response:

History:

Active goals were reduced from seven to two.

Client:

"I am doing much better now except I still cannot make that one phone call."

Your response:

SECTION 6 — PERFECTIONISM

Client:

"I have revised this internal draft six times. I still do not think it is good enough."

Your response:

Client:

"I cannot send it unless I am completely sure there are no mistakes."

Your response:

History:

Client has moved a proposal deadline three times.

Client:

"It is good. I just think it could be better."

Your response:

Client:

"I am treating this first draft like I would want the final version to look."

Your response:

Client:

"I know the report meets every stated requirement. I still do not feel ready to release it."

Your response:

Client:

"I know I overcheck things, but these three figures are still unverified and they have to be correct."

Your response:

Client:

"Every time I finish, I notice another thing I could improve."

Your response:

SECTION 7 — LOSS OF INTEREST

Client:

"I would not enroll in this course today."

Your response:

Client:

"I only keep going because I already paid for it."

Your response:

Client:

"I want to speak French someday. I just do not want to study it now."

Your response:

Client:

"I do not want this credential anymore, but quitting feels weak."

Your response:

Client:

"The method is the problem. I still want the business; I just do not want to do cold outreach anymore."

Your response:

SECTION 8 — DISCOURAGEMENT VS. LOSS OF INTEREST

Client:

"I still want the race more than anything. I just feel like I ruined my chances."

Your response:

Client:

"I am tired of missing it. Maybe I should quit."

Your response:

Client:

"If I knew I could pass, I would absolutely keep the certification goal."

Your response:

Client:

"I am not sure whether I stopped caring or whether I am just discouraged."

Your response:

Client:

"I still care, but every miss makes me feel like there is no point."

Your response:

SECTION 9 — MISSING EXPERTISE OR PREREQUISITE

Client:

"I keep opening the software and I cannot figure out how to connect the systems."

Your response:

Client:

"I cannot finish the tax filing because I do not understand one section."

Your response:

Client:

"I cannot submit because the required recommendation letter has not arrived."

Your response:

Client:

"The website is ready except for a confirmed mobile bug."

Your response:

Client:

"I keep trying to do this technical setup, but the instructions are for a different version."

Your response:

SECTION 10 — SAME CLIENT LANGUAGE, DIFFERENT RESPONSE

Instructions:

Notice that the client uses the same wording. Your response should differ because the evidence differs.

53A.

Client:

"I did not have time."

Relevant context:

No realistic available periods existed.

Your response:

53B.

Client:

"I did not have time."

Relevant context:

Three available periods existed; client used them for lower-risk tasks.

Your response:

54A.

Client:

"I was overwhelmed."

Relevant context:

Twelve simultaneous priorities, constant switching.

Your response:

54B.

Client:

"I was overwhelmed."

Relevant context:

Everything was completed except one feared conversation.

Your response:

55A.

Client:

"It was not ready."

Relevant context:

Required figures remain unverified.

Your response:

55B.

Client:

"It was not ready."

Relevant context:

Low-stakes draft already meets stated requirements.

Your response:

56A.

Client:

"I do not want this anymore."

Relevant context:

Would not choose the goal today.

Your response:

56B.

Client:

"I do not want this anymore."

Relevant context:

Immediately says they still deeply want the outcome but believe they cannot succeed.

Your response:

SECTION 11 — MIXED FORMULATIONS

Client has little available time and also avoids one difficult task during the limited time that remains.

Your response:

Client has seven active goals and applies perfectionistic standards to each.

Your response:

Client sets an unrealistic writing target and then avoids beginning because the required workload feels impossible.

Your response:

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

Your response:

Client has defined "ready enough" appropriately but still refuses to submit because of fear of evaluation.

Your response:

SECTION 12 — CLIENT PROPOSES THE WRONG SOLUTION

Client:

"I keep avoiding the calls, so I need more reminders."

Your response:

Client:

"I am overwhelmed by all seven goals, so I will make all seven smaller."

Your response:

Client:

"I do not want the course anymore, but maybe mornings would help."

Your response:

Client:

"I only have three available workout windows, but I want to keep six."

Your response:

Client:

"I keep overediting, so I think I need more time."

Your response:

Client:

"I missed once. We should probably redesign the plan."

Your response:

SECTION 13 — CLIENT REJECTS YOUR FORMULATION

Accountabili-Buddy:

"I think preparation may be replacing actual outreach."

Client:

"No. I need the preparation."

Your response:

Accountabili-Buddy:

"The current target looks higher than your available capacity."

Client:

"No. Five is the number I should be doing."

Your response:

Accountabili-Buddy:

"The quality standard may be delaying completion."

Client:

"I just care about doing good work."

Your response:

Accountabili-Buddy:

"I think the goal itself may no longer be active for you."

Client:

"I am not a quitter."

Your response:

SECTION 14 — CLIENT REJECTS THE INTERVENTION

Evidence supports reducing five sessions to three.

Client:

"I still want five."

Your response:

Evidence supports direct outreach rather than more preparation.

Client:

"I am still choosing another week of preparation."

Your response:

Client no longer values the goal.

Client:

"I still want it on my list."

Your response:

Client is overwhelmed by eight goals.

Client:

"I still want all eight active."

Your response:

SECTION 15 — PROPORTIONALITY

One simple miss after months of consistency.

Write the response in no more than one sentence.

Six-week selective avoidance pattern.

Write the response in no more than three sentences.

Clear temporary disruption.

Write the response in no more than two sentences.

Goal no longer valued.

Write the response in no more than two sentences.

Commitment objectively exceeds available capacity.

Write the response in no more than two sentences.

SECTION 16 — FORMULATION REVISION IN THE RESPONSE

Earlier formulation:

Poor planning.

New evidence:

Client had scheduled time and still avoided the action.

Write a response that updates the formulation without pretending the earlier reasoning was foolish.

Earlier formulation:

Avoidance.

New evidence:

Required external document is confirmed unavailable.

Your response:

Earlier formulation:

Loss of interest.

New evidence:

Client still strongly wants the outcome but has lost confidence.

Your response:

Earlier formulation:

Overwhelm.

New evidence:

Reducing active tasks solved everything except one feared submission.

Your response:

Earlier formulation:

Perfectionism.

New evidence:

Required technical verification is genuinely incomplete.

Your response:

SECTION 17 — SUCCESS AS FORMULATION EVIDENCE

Client:

"All three morning sessions happened after the evening sessions repeatedly did not happen."

Your response:

Client:

"Reducing the active goals from eight to two made the whole week manageable."

Your response:

Client:

"I submitted once we agreed on what 'ready enough' meant."

Your response:

Client:

"I still did not make the call even after we scheduled it."

Your response:

Client:

"I still did one of three after we reduced the target from five."

Your response:

SECTION 18 — RESPONSE WITHOUT LABELS

Instructions:

Write the response without using the words avoidance, overwhelm, perfectionism, unrealistic, loss of interest, or competing priorities.

Client repeatedly performs preparation instead of outreach.

Your response:

Client has too many simultaneous active goals.

Your response:

Client repeatedly overcredits completed work.

Your response:

Client no longer wants the active goal.

Your response:

Client has insufficient capacity for the target.

Your response:

Why can ordinary language sometimes be preferable to diagnostic terminology?

SECTION 19 — ADVANCED AMBIGUITY

History:

Client repeatedly misses evening study sessions.

Client:

"I am exhausted after work, but I also hate this section of the course."

Your response:

History:

Client repeatedly chooses optional work assignments over exercise.

Client:

"I genuinely do not know whether work is more important or whether exercise is just easier to sacrifice."

Your response:

History:

Client revises proposals heavily and fears rejection.

Client:

"I do not know whether I am trying to improve them or trying not to send them."

Your response:

History:

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

Client:

"I think both things are true. I have too much going on, and I also keep avoiding this one."

Your response:

History:

Client says the goal no longer matters but has just experienced a major setback.

Client:

"I honestly cannot tell whether I stopped caring or whether I am just discouraged."

Your response:

SECTION 20 — CASE PRACTICE: AVOIDANCE VS. CAPACITY

Client Goal:

Build a consulting practice.

Commitment:

Contact three prospects weekly.

History:

Weeks 1–4:

0, 1, 0, 0.

Client says:

"I do not have enough time."

Known:

Client has two open evenings each week.

During those evenings, client repeatedly works on website design and business organization.

Write the response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

"I guess I do have time. I just prefer working on things where nobody is judging me."

Write the next response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

"I want to reduce outreach to one because one feels safer."

Write the response:

SECTION 21 — CASE PRACTICE: UNREALISTIC TARGET

Client Goal:

Exercise regularly.

Commitment:

Six workouts weekly.

History:

Eight weeks:

3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2.

Client has three stable workout windows.

Write the response:

Client:

"I do not want to lower six because three feels mediocre."

Write the response:

Client:

"Three is actually what fits. I just wish I were someone who could do six."

Write the response:

SECTION 22 — CASE PRACTICE: OVERWHELM

Client Goal:

Make progress on home renovation.

Active tasks:

24 unresolved decisions.

Client:

"I spend all weekend working on this and finish almost nothing."

Write the response:**Client:**

"I keep bouncing between flooring, lighting, furniture, contractors, paint, and budget."

Write the response:**Client:**

"I think I need to choose one category and finish it before touching another."

Write the response:

SECTION 23 — CASE PRACTICE: PERFECTIONISM

Client Goal:

Submit book proposal.

History:

Proposal complete.

Deadline moved twice.

Client:

"It is ready technically. I just keep finding wording I could improve."

Write the response:**Client:**

"I know another week probably would not make me feel finished either."

Write the response:

Client:

"I think I am waiting to feel certain that nobody will criticize it."

Write the response:

SECTION 24 — CASE PRACTICE: LOSS OF INTEREST VS. DISCOURAGEMENT

Client Goal:

Complete certification.

Client:

"I am thinking about quitting."

History:

Client cared strongly about certification until several recent unsuccessful exam attempts.

Write the response:

Client:

"If I knew I could pass, I would absolutely continue."

Write the response:

SECTION 25 — CASE PRACTICE: GOAL VALUE ACTUALLY CHANGED

Client Goal:

Complete advanced degree.

Client:

"I have been thinking about this for months. I would not start this degree today. The career I wanted it for does not interest me anymore."

Write the response:

Client:

"I only keep thinking I should finish because I have already done two years."

Write the response:

SECTION 26 — CASE PRACTICE: LEGITIMATE QUALITY REQUIREMENT

Client:

"I cannot submit the report yet."

History:

Client has previously had perfectionism problems.

Write the initial response:

Client:

"Three required figures have not been independently verified."

Write the next response:

Client:

"Once those are verified, everything else meets the filing requirements."

Write the response:

SECTION 27 — CASE PRACTICE: SIMPLE MISS

Client Goal:

Walk three times weekly.

History:

12 successful weeks.

Current week:

1 of 3.

Client:

"I had time. Nothing happened. I just did not go."

Write the response:

Client:

"Same three next week."

Write the response:

Next week:

3 of 3.

Write the response:

What should the Accountabili-Buddy resist doing across this case?

SECTION 28 — FINAL RESPONSE-WRITING CHALLENGE

Client Goal:

Launch an online course.

Original Scope:

Four modules.

Current Status:

All four modules are complete.

Over six weeks the client adds:

bonus lessons;

worksheets;

resource library;

private community;

new introductory videos;

second pricing tier.

Launch date moves twice.

Client:

“I am overwhelmed. There is still so much left, and I do not want to release something unfinished.”

Write the response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

“The original four modules meet everything I originally said the course needed.”

Write the next response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

"I just do not feel comfortable launching without the extras."

Write the response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

"I still want to finish all the extras first, even if it takes another month."

Write the response:

NEW INFORMATION

Client:

"I understand. I am choosing another month knowingly, not because the original course is incomplete."

Write the final response:

What changed between the first and final response?

RESPONSE-WRITING SELF-REVIEW

Review at least 20 responses and ask:

Did the language reflect the formulation?

Did I expose more diagnostic reasoning than the client needed?

Did I use labels instead of describing behavior?

Did I ask questions when the evidence was already sufficient?

Did I miss a discriminating question when one was necessary?

Did I automatically reduce difficult commitments?

Did I automatically preserve ineffective commitments?

Did I confuse discouragement with loss of interest?

Did I distinguish genuine quality requirements from excessive standards?

Did I preserve client authority when the client rejected my recommendation?

Did I write responses that could actually be sent?

STAGE 2 RESPONSE-WRITING STANDARD

A competent Stage 2 response should demonstrate that the trainee has already done the diagnostic reasoning internally.

The client should not receive an essay containing every hypothesis considered.

The response should make visible only what is useful for the accountability conversation.

A strong response typically does one or more of the following:

states the relevant discrepancy;

distinguishes the important competing explanations;

asks one discriminating question;

identifies the pattern supported by the evidence;

recommends a matched change;

challenges a mismatched proposed solution;

maintains an appropriate commitment;

recalibrates where evidence supports it;

preserves the client's decision ownership.

The governing standard is:

The reasoning may be complex. The response should be as simple as the situation allows.

END OF STAGE 2 RESPONSE-WRITING DRILLS