Coping under Constraint - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about coping under constraint while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Devin manages an unpredictable work schedule and needs more reliable childcare.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore coping under constraint using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: Coping questions recognize survival and context without praising endurance of harm. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Name a difficult condition, what has helped you get through, and what outside change or support is still needed. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Devin manages an unpredictable work schedule and needs more reliable childcare.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What should not remain your responsibility to solve alone? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

Acknowledge distress and structural barriers before asking about change. Do not use exceptions or compliments to dismiss harm. A personal scale is a conversational aid, not a validated outcome measure, risk screen, or reason to withhold assessment.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: What is Solution-Focused Therapy?. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/approaches/resources/SFB-A09-3