Accountability without Defensiveness - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about accountability without defensiveness while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Quinn wants to acknowledge a broken agreement without explaining it away.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore accountability without defensiveness 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: Accountability can name choices and impact without demanding immediate trust. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Draft a statement that owns a known action, acknowledges impact, and offers a concrete next step without blaming the hurt partner. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Quinn wants to acknowledge a broken agreement without explaining it away.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What can be owned plainly? 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

Joint work requires private assessment of coercion, violence, fear, and retaliation. Do not require graphic disclosure, passwords, surveillance, reconciliation, forgiveness, or sexual contact. Accountability for deception is not assigned to the hurt partner. Support individual agency and appropriate medical, legal, or safety consultation without using this worksheet as professional advice.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Integrative Model of Affair Recovery. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/recovery/resources/INF-A06-3