

Developing Powerful Accountability Agreements

with Your ADHD Coaching Clients

ADHD Professional Institute, November 8, 2018

Cameron Gott, PCC

Building a Strong Partnership with Powerful Agreements

What powerful agreements do you have with your clients?

How do these agreements contribute to the coaching partnership?

The ADHD/Accountability/Coaching Connection

- ADHD directly impacts ones ability to be accountable
- Clients hire ADHD coaches to address accountability issues
- Clients often display limited or negative thinking regarding accountability
- Accountability is a part of the coaching dynamic

What limited perspectives do your clients hold with respect to accountability?

What opportunities exist regarding accountability and your coaching?

Possible Coaching Scenarios

- Brainstorm different scenarios
- Demonstration

What worked? What would you do different?

This work is based on the concepts from our ebook *Curious Accountability*. I have made chapters 1 and 4 available to provide context and background for this presentation. You will find a link at the top of the resource page. I strongly encourage participants to review these chapters and the attached hand-out appendix prior to the session.

Appendix

Why Accountability Matters

Relevance for Clients

- Helps them separate their problems and chronic conditions from their identity
- Makes it more likely for them to achieve their coaching goals
- Empowers them to take greater responsibility for their solutions
- Restores their sense of personal integrity
- Increases their resources and likelihood of maintaining/adapting their solutions

Relevance for Coaches

- An opportunity to develop a deeper connection with client and formulate new agreements
- Creates source of work: clients' self-accountability has failed
- Is present already (e.g., client no-shows, tardiness, requests, etc.)
- Sends a message to clients however it is addressed or avoided

Different Views of Accountability

Traditional Accountability

Judgment: “You earned a ‘B’ on your homework” or “You get a ‘0’ for forgetting it”

Punishment: “They must be held accountable for their crimes”

Weakness: “There’s something wrong with me since I can’t do it by myself”

Neutral Accountability

“Accountable” means “obliged to account for one’s acts; responsible”

“Account” means “give satisfactory reasons or an explanation (for)”

(Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Ed.)

Curious Accountability

Learning-focused: “I didn’t do what I committed to and here’s what I realized...”

Person-focused (more than task-focused): “What resources helped you do that?”

Supportive (not enabling): “Let’s talk about the fieldwork, though you don’t want to.”

“Curious Accountability”

Definition

“A positive evaluation process based on respect and trust that focuses solely on learning from actions (or inaction).

The learning, in turn, raises the awareness necessary for developing new skills and tools and achieving goals.

Applied consistently over time, CA increases self-knowledge and resilience and fosters effective behavior change.”
(Cameron Gott, 2013)

Concepts

What It Is

- Curious
- Humble
- Judgment reserved
- Good assumed
- Client-focused (who)
- Lovingly detached
- Light, even fun

What It Is Not

- Certain
- “The Expert”
- Judgment formed
- Bad assumed
- Task-focused (what)
- Personally invested
- Heavy, even grim

Elements

Focuses on the Learning

Whatever the fieldwork’s outcome

Focuses on “Who” More than “What”

- Who the client is being
- What the client does re: fieldwork

Is a Mindset for Coach and Client

- Perception
- Perspective

Lets Client, Not Coach, Do the Work

Coach partners with client but client is ultimately responsible for the work

Requires Specific Coaching Skills

- Active listening
- Direct communication
- Self-awareness (Meta-cognition)

Three Essential Client Accountability Conversations

1. Discuss Curious Accountability

- Set up the relationship and process (during the Assessment or even Intake)
- Clarify the bigger goal(s), resources, benefits of the project(s); this bigger picture will connect with future fieldwork

**Co-creating
Perspectives
Creating Awareness**

2. Set up the Action

- Define ABROS™ for the specific fieldwork (see next page)
- Discuss how you both will address the four fieldwork scenarios (below)

A Forgot or avoided	B Started but stopped
C Did something else instead	D Followed plan <small>(desired outcome achieved or not)</small>

Designing Actions

3. Follow up on the Action

- Focus on the learning
- Create new awareness

**Coaching Presence
Powerful Questions
Creating Awareness
Holding the Client's
Big Agenda**

Accountability Conversation #2: ABROS™ Method

	Example: “Tom”	
<p>Actions Committed</p> <p>Clear, specific and measurable action(s) the client commits to take by a certain deadline; includes sharing the experience with the coach</p>	<p>Committed to exercise program: going to the gym four mornings a week</p>	
<p>Benefits of Outcome</p> <p>The positive outcome the client will receive after completing the action(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease stress, which is an obstacle to him • Set a good tone for the day • Increase energy 	
<p>Resources to Tap</p> <p>The client’s resources, e.g., strengths, skills, talents, past experiences and successes, supportive people and tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There’s a gym on-site at his company • Has coworkers who work out in the morning • Is former athlete; knows value of exercise 	
<p>Obstacles to Overcome</p> <p>The potential challenges that may get in the way of completing the actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not enough time” • Logistics difficult due children school drop-off • Absence of urgency 	
<p>Support Engaged Now</p> <p>The coach’s accountability support: “What support do you have or want here?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife will take kids to school one day/week • Will make plans to meet a specific coworker at gym • Willing to talk with coach about how it went 	



Obstacles & Solutions to Providing Accountability

1. Obstacle: “Client can’t do fieldwork”

- **Issue(s):** Client has a brain-based condition, is unwilling to change, doesn’t value or understand the service, or you (the coach) has limiting beliefs about the client
- **Solution:** See client as “Naturally creative, resourceful and whole” (NCRW)

2. Obstacle: “Client won’t do fieldwork”

- **Issue:** Seems like client’s problem but you (the coach) set the rules
- **Solution:** Assert yourself, explain, persuade, expect client to participate, even if in tiny ways

3. Obstacle: “Client pays me to do it right”

- **Issue:** This definition of “right” creates dependency and reinforces client’s negative beliefs
- **Solution:** Set aside how it “should” be and help client create what could be

4. Obstacle: “It’s frustrating when the work is not done”

- **Issue:** Taking responsibility for coaching’s outcome instead of supporting client in being responsible; acting like client’s parents, teachers, significant others, etc.
- **Solution:** See client as NCRW and affirm and support him or her

5. Obstacle: “I don’t want to hurt client’s feelings”

- **Issue:** Client may beat up self already. Coach may be codependent, overly responsible
- **Solution:** Give client the respect to address it; learn to lovingly detach

6. Obstacle: “Talking about what the client didn’t do is negative and may lead to conflict”

- **Issue:** Conflict and negativity often stem from avoidance; not clear, direct communication
- **Solution:** Approach client in manner that is curious, respectful and light

7. Obstacle: “Talking about what client didn’t do may lead client to give up (hurting the client and my business)”

- **Issue:** It depends on how accountability is handled; usually clarity leads to connection, release from shame and greater success
- **Solution:** Focus on who the client is being (e.g., willing, courageous, honest), not the what (task)

8. Obstacle: “Looking in the ‘rear-view mirror’ with client doesn’t excite me as a coach”

- **Issue:** The energy is in the opportunity before the client and the coach—what is possible
- **Solution:** Evaluate the client experience briefly and with focus: what has happened informs what is possible; find the energy inherent in completion

Resources

Curious Accountability: Three Coaching Conversations for Better Client Results

[Chapter 1: Introduction](#)

[Chapter 4: Conversation I \(The Agreements\)](#)

Accountability, ADHD, Action Learning and Related Neuroscience

Beard, C., & Wilson J. P. (2006). *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers* (2nd ed.). London: Kogan Page.

Brown, D. (2009). *Recognizing and Respecting the Line: Distinguishing Coaching, Organizing and Psychotherapy* [PDF document]. Retrieved from http://www.organizercoach.com/publications_products.html

Brown, T. (2005). *Attention Deficit Disorder*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Connors, R., & Smith, T. (2011). *How Did That Happen?: Holding People Accountable for Results the Positive, Principled Way*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

Glaser, J. & Glaser, R. (2014) "[The Neurochemistry of Positive Conversations](#)" in *Harvard Business Review* online

Gott, C., & Moore, C. (2017) [Curious Accountability: Three Coaching Conversations for Better Client Results](#). ebook.

Kimsey-House, H., House, K., & Sandahl, P. (2011). *Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives* (3rd ed.). Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Medina, J. (ongoing). *Brain Rules with John Medina* [Web Blog]. Retrieved from <http://brainrules.blogspot.com>

Orem, S., & Binkert, J. (2007). *Appreciative Coaching: A Positive Approach for Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rock, D. (2009). *Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long*. New York: HarperCollins.

Rossmann, M.L. (2010). *The Worry Solution: Using Breakthrough Brain Science to Turn Stress and Anxiety into Confidence and Happiness*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Two Perspectives on Accountability

Barkley, R., "ADHD: More Accountability, Not Less". [Video](#)

Copper, J., (2015). "ADHD: Accountability vs. Responsibility". [Attention Talk Video](#)