

Choose the route with FIT

FIT is an original practice aid: Focus, Invitation and Task. It is a selection model, not a validated assessment or a required session sequence.

F / Focus: what needs attention?

Observation: Clarify what happened when accounts are broad or several episodes are mixed together.

Meaning or prediction: Explore how the client reached a conclusion and what information would help evaluate it.

Current adversity: Consider support, protection, coping or problem-solving. An accurate concern does not need to be argued away.

I / Invitation: is exploration welcome?

Willing: Explore the relevant question; remain open to correction.

Hesitant or misunderstood: Restore choice and check the impact of your approach before continuing.

Overwhelmed: Reduce demand, pause or use an agreed stabilising response. Strong belief alone does not tell you whether someone is ready.

T / Task: what kind of learning is useful?

Missing information: Clarify or gather observations. Competing meanings: Compare explanations.

Testable prediction: Consider a proportionate experiment. Unresolvable certainty demand: Consider formulation-led work with uncertainty.

Decision rule: Select a task only when it addresses the focus and the client can participate willingly. Re-check FIT if the conversation changes.

FIT: MATCH THE FOCUS, CLIENT INVITATION AND LEARNING TASK

Clinical basis: UCL CBT competence framework; Beck Institute, "Why CBT Therapists Don't Challenge Thoughts" and "Selecting Techniques in CBT". Original educational examples; adapt within training and supervision.

Match the prompt to the gap

Use the thinking pattern as a clue to the missing perspective. Check your hypothesis with the client; several patterns can overlap.

01 / Narrow or absolute conclusions

All-or-nothing: Explore criteria and the middle ground. Prompt bank 13–16. Useful when “success” has only one acceptable form.

Overgeneralising or labelling: Examine which events support the rule and describe the episode without defining the whole person. Prompts 25–28.

Trade-off: Searching for exceptions too soon may feel dismissive. Understand the experiences behind the conclusion first.

02 / Predictions presented as facts

Catastrophising: Separate the feared outcome, estimated likelihood and available coping. Prompts 17–20.

Mind reading or prediction: Separate direct observations from inference, then agree what can actually be observed. Prompts 21–24.

Trade-off: Gathering information can become repeated checking. Ensure the task serves learning rather than requiring certainty.

03 / Uneven weighting of experience

Mental filter or discounting: Look for overlooked information and explore why it is hard to count. Prompts 29–32.

Personalisation, rigid rules or emotional reasoning: Examine controllability, expectations and what feelings establish. Prompts 33–36.

Trade-off: Positive evidence may be irrelevant to the client’s actual concern. Ask how it relates rather than assuming it disproves the belief.

PROMPT NUMBERS REFER TO ESSENTIAL QUICK REFERENCE; START WITH THE CLIENT’S MEANING

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Make a defensible choice

These fictional cases show how different FIT combinations lead to different tasks.

01 / Willing, but stuck in a global label

Case: "One awkward meeting shows I am incompetent." The client wants to examine the conclusion.

FIT: Focus = global self-label; Invitation = willing; Task = compare the episode with the broader pattern.

Choose: Explore what "incompetent" means and the range of relevant experiences. Move towards a specific description, not a flattering replacement label.

02 / A plausible real-world concern

Case: A client fears job loss after receiving a formal redundancy notice.

FIT: Focus = credible threat and practical consequences; Invitation = help wanted; Task = identify options and coping resources.

Choose: Clarify confirmed facts, remaining uncertainty and actionable support. Evaluate exaggerated secondary meanings only if this fits the client's goal.

03 / High conviction and low trust

Case: A client says questioning proves the therapist does not believe them.

FIT: Focus = feeling misunderstood; Invitation = currently absent; Task = repair understanding and restore choice.

Choose: Acknowledge the impact of the dialogue, hear the concern and agree whether to continue. If the pattern persists, review it in supervision.

WHEN FIT IS POOR, CHANGE THE TASK OR PAUSE; MORE QUESTIONS ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY BETTER

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