



NDSW for Professional Coaches

Clean Language Cheat Sheet (Based on the work of David Groves)

These “Clean Language” questions can be powerful tools in coaching, especially with neurodivergent clients. They help maintain the client's focus, facilitate deep exploration without judgment or interpretation, and support a nuanced understanding of the client's own perspective and experience.

These questions are designed to help coaches facilitate discussions with neurodivergent clients, focusing purely on the clients' own words and experiences. This approach minimises interpretation and helps clients explore their thoughts and feelings deeply.

Basic Questions

"What would you like to have happen?" Opens the conversation by focusing on the client's desired outcome.

"And is there anything else about [client's word]?" - Explores additional details or aspects about a specific topic or term the client mentioned.

"And what kind of [client's word] is that [client's word]?" - Encourages description of qualities or characteristics, using the client's own descriptors.

"And where is [client's word]?" or "And whereabouts is [client's word]?" - Helps localise a feeling or concept in space, which can be particularly grounding.

"And that's [client's word] like what?" - Asks the client to find a metaphor or simile, deepening understanding through comparison.

Developing and Exploring

"And then what happens?" - Moves the narrative or explanation forward in time.

"And what happens just before [client's word]?" - Investigates what precedes an event or feeling, identifying triggers or causes.

"And when [client's word], what happens to [client's word]?" - Looks at the relationship or interaction between two elements identified by the client.

"And how does [client's word] know to do [client's word]?" - Explores the mechanism or rationale behind an action or response.

"And can [client's word] happen?" - Questions the possibility or capability, encouraging exploration of potential or limitations.

Supporting Change

"And what would [client's word] like to have happen?" - Directs attention to what a particular part or aspect of the client's experience wants or needs.

"And what needs to happen for [client's word]?" - Identifies prerequisites or conditions necessary for a desired change.

"And can [client's word] be [client's word]?" - Explores the feasibility of a change or a new state being achieved.

"And when [client's word], what needs to happen for [client's word]?" - Connects an existing condition with a necessary action or change for a desired outcome.

"And what would [client's word] like to do next?" - Encourages forward thinking and planning next steps or actions.

Recommended Reading

Wilson, C. (2017). *The work and life of David Grove: Clean Language and Emergent Knowledge*. Troubador Publishing.