



ERICKSONIAN CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

Quick-Reference Tactic Map for Varying States of Mind

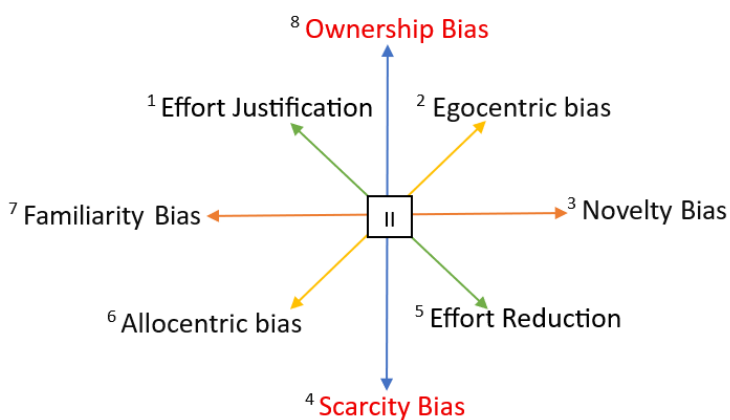
How to Use This Tactic Map

The **Quick-Reference Tactic Map** is a practical bridge between theory and contextualized care. It translates ECA's philosophical principles into specific, state-sensitive tactics that can be deployed in real time.

Each section of the map identifies:

- **The Client's Present Orientation** (e.g., biased perception, emotional tone, or motivational stance).
- **The Corresponding ECA Tactic** most suited to that state (e.g., naming, IKEA effect, echoing, information gaps).
- **The Strategic Logic** explaining *why* the tactic works (e.g., primes efficacy, redirects opposition, restores autonomy).

Practitioners use the map not as a checklist but as a *contextual compass*. Begin by identifying which bias or state of mind predominates—Ownership, Familiarity, Effort Reduction, and so forth—then scan horizontally across the map to select a tactic that transforms the existing bias into a channel for adaptive engagement.



Because contextualized care is responsive rather than procedural, the same client may move through multiple states within a single encounter. The map helps the practitioner pivot fluidly, leveraging current psychological tendencies instead of resisting them. In this way, the tactic map functions as a living instrument of *choice-centric guidance*—one that keeps interventions flexible, respectful of autonomy, and precisely attuned to the moment.

Ownership Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seeks validation, connection, or identity affirmation	Naming: Inviting people to assign a personally meaningful name to a goal, plan, role, identity, or experience, thereby increasing its salience and sense of ownership	Utilizes established meanings, attachments, and expectations to solidify new roles.
Seems to reject external solutions or feels disempowered	IKEA effect: Inviting people to construct their own solutions so they value them more	Utilizes authorship and pride through self-creation.
Struggles with follow-through	Precommitment: Securing a commitment before all the details or outcomes are fully revealed	Creates a binding early commitment that stabilizes follow-through and reduces later ambivalence.
Seems to be defined by a negative identity or lacks momentum	Temporal landmarks: Meaningful dates used as symbolic markers of a new beginning	Frames a future moment as the beginning of a new chapter or a fresh start.

Scarcity Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seems insufficiently motivated	Strategic proximity: Increasing the motivational and evaluative weight of an outcome by placing it slightly beyond immediate reach	A commitment to progress is formed through ownership and an investment of personal effort
Seems to be passively waiting for answers	Information gaps: Causing information to feel incomplete	The need to resolve uncertainty increases critical thinking
Is seeking answers or greater self-understanding	Clockwork revelation: Sequencing small clues that the client actively assembles into an unexpected realization	Insight emerges from critical thinking as the client questions assumptions, notices discrepancies, and tests interpretations.
Seeks negative attention or clings to undesirable options	Differential attention: Giving greater attention to value-aligned choices without withdrawing empathy or compassion	The intrinsic motivation for attention and connection is utilized .

Familiarity Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seems to prefer familiarity or hesitates with new options.	Mere exposure: Repeated contact is used to increase positive affect.	Mere exposure primes implicit learning.
Expresses strong identity-bound beliefs or is mistrustful of external ideas.	Verbal mirroring: Subtly matching another's words, tone, and speech patterns to increase connection.	Utilizes language that is already endowed with personal meaning.
Seeks validation, repeats narratives, responds to being understood.	Echoing: Delayed reflection of a client's prior narratives, beliefs, and logic, preserving original meaning and structure.	Echoing utilizes existing mental frameworks.
Seems highly competent in a given domain.	Contextual bridging: Applying existing skills in a new situation by showing how the two are similar.	Contextual bridging redirects established competencies to new applications.

Novelty Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is prone to delay or impulsive switching despite readiness	Crossing a virtual boundary: A small, self-initiated action that marks entry into a new phase of engagement and shifts cognition from deliberation to implementation.	Initiates an implemental mindset, narrowing attention and organizing behavior toward continuation; converts novelty <i>into</i> commitment-driven momentum while preserving authorship.
Is seeking answers or greater understanding and is open to exploratory engagement	Exploratory learning: Structuring self-directed engagement with novel environments that generate feedback, variability, and information gaps.	Channels novelty into experience-based learning cycles, converting curiosity into critical thinking , integration, and adaptive revision, rather than fragmented exploration.
Is caught in repetitive cognitive loops or environmentally cued patterns	Doorway effect: Introducing a physical or symbolic boundary that segments experience and disrupts prior context.	Produces event segmentation, weakening access to prior cognitive content and enabling redirection toward new behavioral sequences.
Seems to have identity concerns and is seeking status-driven upgrading (i.e., "a better life")	Fresh start: Introducing a meaningful situational or role transition that separates past patterns from current participation.	Creates psychological distance from prior constraints and utilizes the person's drive for identity coherence.

Egocentric Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is seeking recognition, pride, or affirmation of competence	Ego Appeal: Framing a choice as evidence of a valued or aspirational identity.	Framing a choice as evidence of a valued identity causes adaptation to feel like self-confirmation rather than compliance.
Treats their own perspective as the obvious or complete account, or assumes that others should share it	Belief Congruence: Aligning language and options with the individual's existing belief system.	Utilizes the person's belief structure, allowing new options to be experienced as self-generated and coherent with existing views, reducing discomfort and increasing uptake.
Is defensive, insecure, or anchored in group identity	Shared Identity: Making a relevant ingroup connection salient.	Primes "people like us" norms, increasing trust, openness, and coordination by expanding the self-boundary to include others.
Seems socially anxious, often overestimating how much others notice or evaluate them	Trending Norms: Highlighting emerging patterns of behavior among select groups.	Framing a behavior as part of an emerging pattern circumvents conformity pressure while still offering the benefits of group identification.

Allocentric Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seems to need purpose and social connection	Acts of Kindness: Creating opportunities for voluntary actions that benefit others and make their impact visible and meaningful.	Utilizes existing relational motives that are reorganized into sustainable, self-directed contribution rather than diffuse self-sacrifice.
Defers to higher-status people or seldom initiates within a hierarchy	Status Leveling: Temporarily shifting decision-making authority so lower-status individuals can initiate, decide, and coordinate within a defined task.	Redirects influence so deferential individuals initiate, decide, and coordinate.
Is seeking clear signals of goodwill or safety	Interactional Reciprocity: Organizing interaction into alternating sequences in which each response guides the next.	Redirects expression into structured, sequential participation.
Seems to ruminate on past wrongs or is self-punishing	Moral Cleansing: Channeling guilt into specific, proportionate acts of repair that restore a sense of moral integrity.	Utilizes guilt or shame to motivate constructive repair and bring punishment to a close.

Effort Reduction Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seems to enjoy an undesirable habit	Deterrence bundling: Linking a tedious behavioral task to another behavior that needs to be eliminated.	Utilizes personal aversions to generate new intrinsic motivation.
Seems averse to effortful cognition	Choice set expansion: Linking a tedious decision-making process to a behavior that needs to be eliminated.	Strengthens commitment to values through strategic effort.
Seems powerless over urges or compulsions	Cognitive reinvestment: The use of conscious implementation to disrupt an automatic response.	Redirects automatic behavior by interrupting fluency and opens space for re-training.
Seems intrinsically motivated by an undesirable habit	Overjustification: Adding external rewards to an already ongoing behavior.	Redirects intrinsic motivation to a more productive path

Effort Justification Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Seems closed-off to outside influence	Join-Up: Tracking and pacing the client's behavior	Primes progress by aligning outside influence with intrinsic motivators, which increases trust and openness to guidance.
Seems to lack persistence or is losing motivation	Escalation of Commitment: Linking earlier investments to continued engagement	Incremental increase in investment strengthens the client's commitment to the chosen direction.
Seems overwhelmed or unable to begin	Successive Approximation: Breaking a larger objective into small steps of increasing difficulty	The experience of being near completion and having a series of wins strengthens the client's commitment to the chosen direction.
Seems to believe improvement is impossible without major breakthroughs	Small windfalls: Modest, unexpected positive outcomes that arise within ongoing effort	Redirects expectations of failure by introducing small, unexpected wins, without creating performance pressure.