

Quick-Reference Tactic Map for Varying States of Mind

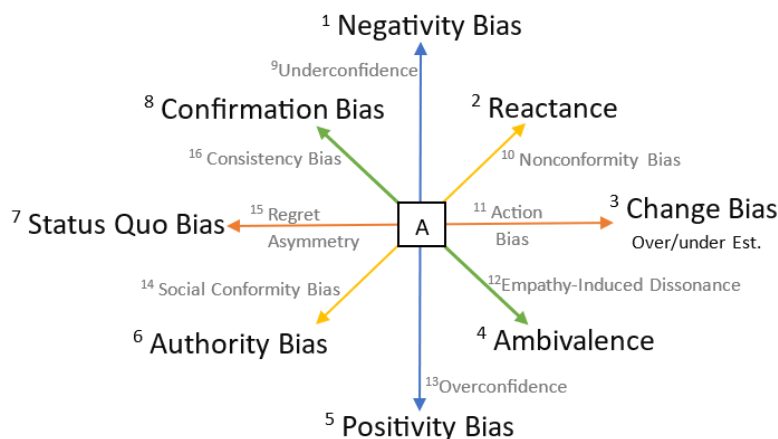
How to Use This Tactic Map

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., anchoring low, adaptive reuse, reverse positioning).
- **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—Negativity, Reactance, Ambivalence, 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.

Negativity Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels worthless, fears trying, or absolutely expects to fail	Anchoring low: Setting performance objectives below performance capabilities.	Redirects the threat of failure to the question of ambition.
Rejects compliments, fixates on difficulties, or cannot tolerate optimism	Domino effect: Circumventing negative expectations by establishing progress in another area with symbolical parallels.	Primes a feeling of efficacy through peripheral actions that symbolically generalize success.
Asserts an inability to enact a skill	Negatively calibrated prediction: Any prediction in which negative information is given more weight, creating a pessimistic forecast that leaves some margin for success.	Primes progress by framing modest progress as minor disappointment.
Feels ashamed, hopeless, or demoralized by their behavior	Adaptive reuse: Finding functional value in problematic habits, tendencies, or deep needs and redirecting them to serve a positive or constructive purpose.	Utilizes available behavior to build self-confidence, pride, and social belonging.

Positivity Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is overconfident yet under-performing	Anchoring high: Setting performance objectives slightly above performance capabilities to encourage growth.	Primes higher internal standards and focus without negating optimism.
Becomes emotionally self-absorbed, defensive, or feels victimized	Perspective taking: The act of perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from an alternative point of view, such as that of another individual.	Stimulates critical thinking by fostering empathy that transforms blame into curiosity and emotional noise into understanding.
Enthusiastic but impractical; ignores obstacles	Implementation intentions: Forming concrete plans to overcome obstacles by linking goal-directed actions to specific cues.	Commitment is used to convert optimism into structured action.
Dismissive of feedback or immune to correction	Permissive destabilization: Deliberately removing or withholding the usual resistance, constraints, or counterbalance that individuals rely on to regulate their behavior.	Redirection occurs when natural consequences prompt self-correction and responsibility.

Status Quo Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is affected by secondary-gain(s) or suppression leads to ironic-rebound	Bounded choice: Achieving partial control by altering the onset, context, frequency, duration, or intensity of unwanted behavior.	Redirects the size and scope of the distressing behavior, restoring agency, building awareness, and creating a bridge to self-regulation.
Denies any possibility for new choices	Choice justification: Helping individuals evaluate, explain, or simulate the outcomes of a difficult decision that was made in the past or that needs to be made in the future.	Focusing on beneficial outcomes activates critical thinking in the form of reevaluation and unconscious goal setting.
Signals the inevitability of status quo behavior	Yes-oriented contingency: The status quo is embraced, and an additive solution is introduced that expands or enhances the existing behavior.	Utilizes established (predictable) behavior as a cue for incremental growth
Values stability over change and has established strong routines	Default participation: Making progress contingent on existing behavioral tendencies (such as a habit, compulsion, or personality trait), so that non-participation requires actively opting out.	Utilizes behavioral momentum to sustain, rather than blocks, collaborative engagement.

Change Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Blind to progress or believes change is nonexistent	Temporal self-comparison: A process of comparison that goes on only within a single individual (versus social comparison).	Redirects attention to gradual growth and restores confidence in capacity to evolve.
Difficulties are private, variable, or internally experienced	Self-monitoring: Any means of displaying or measuring behavior to make it subject to concrete observation.	Builds awareness, responsibility, and commitment .
Behavior is involuntary or if attempts at direct regulation fail	Injunctive contingency: Framing the regulation of non-volitional behavior as a byproduct of a volitional action (When X is a problem, do Y to achieve Z).	Volitional behavior is transformed into a commitment to make progress with non-volitional action.
Dreams big without anchoring in realistic steps	Mental contrasting: Juxtaposing positive fantasies about a desired future with the present reality's obstacles that may impede achieving that future.	Establishes a commitment to sustainable action through concrete planning and realistic goal-setting.

Reactance

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels threatened by authority or is prone to reactance	Preemptive devaluation: Deliberately revealing a personal flaw, limitation, or self-deprecating remark early in an interaction to leverage a predisposition towards disagreement.	<i>Primes</i> unsolicited validation since people instinctively counter negative self-assessments.
Escalates control battles or withdraws entirely	Strategic surrender: Feigning surrender in a power struggle to lower the opponent's guard, creating an opportunity for a surprise counteraction.	<i>Priming</i> Brings opposition to a natural conclusion.
Rejects proposals without consideration	No-oriented proposition: Providing multiple options to reject a request, while strategically placing high-value options later in the sequence.	<i>Primes</i> feelings of control, making later cooperation feel self-initiated.
Turns defiance into identity or a point of pride	Injunctive reversal: Converting cooperation into an act of defiance by explicitly prohibiting the behavior.	<i>Redirects</i> defiance aligning it with adaptive action.

Authority Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Needs accountability or moral consistency	Watching eyes: Creating the feeling of having one's choices subject to observation by using visual cues or an expectation that one could be watched.	<i>Primes</i> pro-social values through observation or symbolic oversight.
Self-inhibition or hesitation stand in the way of progress	Permission: Sanctioning a new choice as an authority figure.	<i>Utilizes</i> the need for external validation by legitimizing self-efficacy and autonomy.
Lacks confidence or motivation to persist	Positively calibrated prediction: Providing an optimistic yet realistic forecast about an outcome, behavior, or future event.	Stimulates critical thinking and planning needed for goal attainment.
Feels uncertain, powerless, or unqualified to act independently	Agentic framing: Leading an individual act as an agent of a respected authority figure, out of duty, obligation, or loyalty.	Framing the action as fulfilling a duty activates prosocial and compliance circuits, transforming passive obedience into active responsibility, and transferring moral clarity and confidence from an established leader.

Ambivalence

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is stuck between all-or-nothing choices or competing values	Tandem anchoring: The use of continuum-based logic to locate a compromise between polar options.	Cognitive Reframing: By plotting both anchors (A and B), new midpoint options emerge between them.
Is torn between two futures or unable to decide	Future contrasting: Mentally picturing both a choice that goes against one's values and an alternative that aligns with them, while imagining the long-term consequences of each path in vivid detail to highlight the contrast between them.	Primes that choice which is most closely aligned with future aspirations (makes long-term consequences salient).
Is tempted by self-defeating impulses or compulsion	Momentary allurements: The activation of high-priority goals using low-priority temptations as a prime.	The redirection of temptation into a cue for goal activation and playful mastery.
Defends unhelpful behavior with strong emotion or debate	Reverse positioning: Deliberately applying persuasive pressure on one side of an argument to increase emotional investment in the opposing position.	Primes internal re-alignment through the need to win (arguments).

Confirmation Bias

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels invalidated or fears judgment	Selective validation: Selectively acknowledging useful aspects of a person's experience versus challenging problematic aspects.	The utilization of part of a person's thought process is enough to meet the need for feeling respected and understood.
Is emotionally attached to a given belief	Steelman argument: Presenting the strongest version of another person's argument to engage with it.	Priming the experience of having an ally lowers defensiveness and increases openness to influence (cognitive flexibility).
Clings to ideological certainty or habitual self-justification	Counter-attitudinal advocacy: Encouraging individuals to argue in favor of a position they initially disagree with.	Framing an opposing position as one's own creates dissonance through voluntary reversal, encouraging re-alignment with the stated evidence and values.
Has expectations, fears, or assumptions that diverge from observable reality	Reality testing: Actively comparing one's expectations or interpretations with actual outcomes through personal experience.	Discrepancies between expectation and result foster reevaluation and learning (critical thinking) as the client replaces speculation with evidence.