

# Intensive Format Best Practices

## Structuring Extended Sessions

### Overview

Multi-day intensive work requires different pacing, structure, and energy management than weekly sessions. This guide covers practical considerations for effective intensive delivery.

### Session Structure

**Day One Focus:** Assessment, history, pattern identification

**Day Two Focus:** Deep work on core issues, skill building

**Day Three Focus:** Integration, planning, relapse prevention

### Pacing Guidelines

- 90-minute blocks maximum before breaks
- 15-minute breaks between blocks
- Longer break (45-60 min) for lunch
- End each day with grounding, not crisis
- Build in processing time, not just content

### Energy Management

- Heaviest emotional work mid-morning when energy is highest
- Skill-building and practice in afternoon
- Save integration and planning for final sessions
- Monitor for flooding; take breaks when needed

### Maintaining Momentum

- Start each day with brief check-in on overnight processing
- Connect current work to previous day's breakthroughs
- Use whiteboard/visual tracking to show progress
- Celebrate wins explicitly; couples in crisis need hope

### Ending Well

- Final session should be forward-focused, not excavating new issues
- Written summary of insights and commitments
- Clear follow-up plan with specific next steps

- Resources for continued work