

When to Refer for Intensive

Referral Criteria Guide

Overview

Weekly sessions aren't always the most effective format. This guide helps identify when clients might benefit from intensive work instead of or in addition to ongoing weekly sessions.

Strong Indicators for Intensive

- Crisis level: Separation/divorce is imminent without intervention
- Weekly sessions aren't creating traction after 3-6 months
- Couple needs concentrated time to break entrenched patterns
- Logistics prevent regular weekly attendance
- Recent discovery of affair or major betrayal
- One or both partners have limited time (deployment, travel job)

Contraindications

- Active untreated addiction
- Ongoing domestic violence (victim safety risk)
- Acute mental health crisis requiring stabilization first
- One partner clearly not committed to relationship
- Active affair that hasn't ended

Questions to Assess Fit

- "How urgent does change feel right now?"
- "Are you both willing to dedicate 2-3 full days to this work?"
- "What's happened with previous attempts at counseling or coaching?"
- "Is there anything that would make intensive work unsafe for either of you?"

Making the Referral

- Frame as escalation of care, not abandonment
- Explain what intensive format offers that weekly doesn't
- Offer to coordinate with intensive provider if appropriate
- Discuss role of ongoing work post-intensive

