

APPENDIX C | SCRIPTS AND LANGUAGE BANKS

C.33 Push-Through Language

Supplemental resource from Beyond Wellness: The Adaptive Capacity Coaching Framework for Chronic Illness

Certain phrases, though well-intentioned, replicate the dismissal and pressure chronically ill clients have experienced elsewhere. These phrases locate the problem in the client's attitude, effort, or willpower rather than in physiological constraints.

The underlying principle: Avoid language that implies the client's limits are a matter of willpower, mindset, or effort. Respect the reality of physiological constraints while supporting agency within them.

These phrases assume the client's barrier is psychological when it may be physiological. In conditions involving Post-Exertional Malaise, pushing through causes measurable harm.

Avoid	Why It Harms	Instead
<i>"Push through the discomfort, your body will adapt."</i>	<i>In PEM conditions, pushing through doesn't adapt. It produces a crash.</i>	<i>"Let's find the level of activity your body can sustain without a cost the next day."</i>
<i>"You just need to build up your stamina."</i>	<i>Assumes a healthy physiology where effort accumulates into fitness. In ME/CFS and Long COVID, effort accumulates into deficit.</i>	<i>"Let's look at what your body can consistently manage right now."</i>
<i>"The hardest part is just getting started."</i>	<i>Implies the barrier is motivational. For this population it is often physiological.</i>	<i>"What does your body need before we talk about next steps?"</i>
<i>"Once you get moving you'll feel better."</i>	<i>Accurate for most clients, dangerous for clients with Post-Exertional Malaise.</i>	<i>"What has movement felt like for you? What does your body tell you afterward?"</i>
<i>"You have to fight for your health."</i>	<i>Frames the body as adversary and effort as the solution. Both assumptions harm this population.</i>	<i>"Let's work with what your body is telling us today."</i>