THE PROFESSIONAL COMPASS

ORIENTATION

A career that fits your life

Values, necessities, capacities and real-world choices belong in the same conversation.

You can love clinical work and still need a different paycheck, a quieter office, stronger professional relationships or more room for life outside therapy. This worksheet helps you explore what fits now, without declaring one practice model the winner.

VALUES

Directions for how you want to live and practice: compassion, autonomy, learning, connection, creativity.

NEEDS & CONSTRAINTS

Rent, benefits, predictable cash flow, accessibility, caregiving, health, contracts and available time.

PREFERENCES & FIT

Sensory conditions, schedule, dress, communication, leadership, clinical identity, community and client care.

POSSIBILITIES & ACTION

What you can realistically explore now, what needs support, and a small next step aligned with what matters.

Before you begin

Use the last 4-8 weeks as your reference point. Respond based on your lived experience, not an ideal career. You may compare an actual offer, a current job, or an imagined setting, but mark assumptions clearly. A low alignment mark is information, not evidence of personal failure.

What is prompting this career reflection right now?

This handout adapts the ACT values bull's-eye idea to professional life. It is not the original Bull's-Eye Values Survey, a diagnostic instrument or a validated job-fit scale.

PART 1

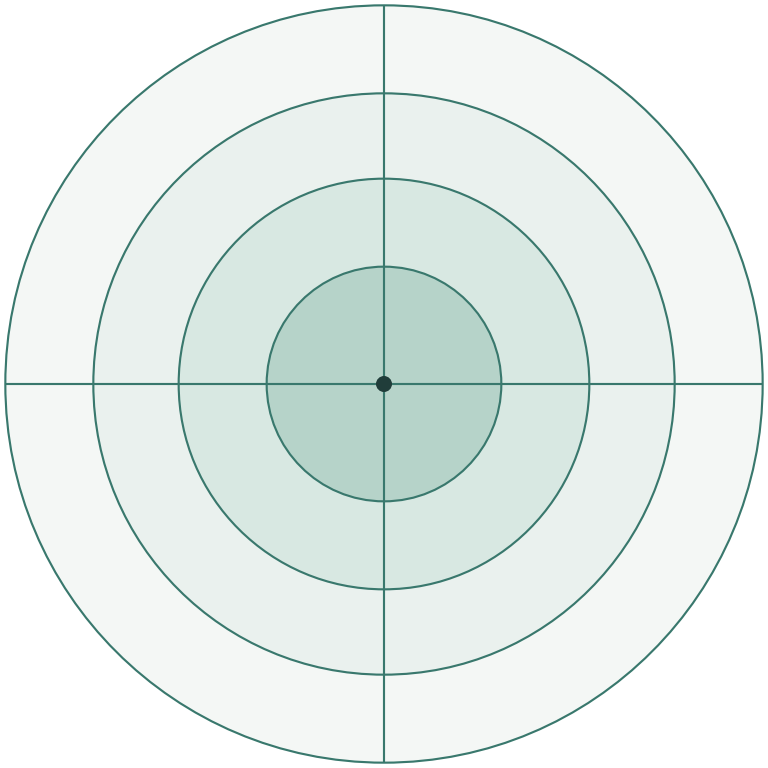
Your professional values bull's-eye

Identify what matters to you, then mark how closely your present circumstances allow you to live it.

1. In each quadrant, write 1-2 personally meaningful values or qualities. 2. Place one X for each quadrant: closer to the center means your current professional experience feels more aligned; farther out means a wider gap. 3. Write what supports or blocks alignment. This is a snapshot, not a score.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

AUTONOMY & INDIVIDUALITY



PURPOSE & GROWTH

COMMUNITY & BELONGING

center = closer alignment
outer rings = larger gap

What helps me move closer?

What makes alignment difficult?

PART 2

Your season-of-life reality check

Financial necessities are not optional values. Capacity matters as much as desire.

My minimum reliable monthly take-home need (and how I know):

Benefits or protections I need now (healthcare, leave, retirement, predictability):

My sustainable clinical workload and space for nonclinical work:

Sensory, identity, access, care, or family needs my workplace must respect:

What is desirable later but not essential right now?

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION | A financially secure position may be values-consistent because it protects people and responsibilities you care about. Likewise, creative freedom is not a substitute for adequate pay. You do not need to monetize every interest or build a second business.

PART 3

Compare actual practice settings

Research each option. Replace stereotypes with actual offers, policies, people and numbers.

Write the names of up to three options below. Include your current arrangement if useful. Use + (fits), ? (unknown), or ! (concern), plus concrete notes. Blank is better than an assumption.

Actual option / employer			
NET PAY & BENEFITS			
Predictability / cancellations			
Clinical autonomy & caseload			
Dress, identity & sensory fit			
Mentorship / belonging			
Client access & continuity			
Documentation / productivity			
Admin load / business risk			
Time for family / interests			
Growth / additional pursuits			

Check the facts: who pays for nonclinical hours, licensure/supervision, healthcare, training, marketing, leave and taxes? What happens to client relationships if scheduling, employment or insurance changes?

PART 4

Build a career portfolio, not a hustle mandate

Your practice setting can be an anchor. It does not have to be your entire professional identity.

A part-time clinical caseload may leave room for groups, teaching, writing, supervision when qualified, consultation or other work. It may also leave room for family, rest, art and experiences unrelated to earning money. The example of 15 sessions per week is illustrative, not an earnings promise.

What parts of clinical practice would I like to keep as my anchor?

What would I explore if I had time, resources and genuine interest?

Which pursuits do I want to remain non-monetized?

What support would make an idea feasible? (time, training, savings, referrals, agreements)

Reality check: gross revenue is not take-home income. Factor in unpaid development time, costs, taxes, enrollment/referrals, ethical scope, licensing requirements and contractual restrictions. A bigger portfolio is not always a better life.

PART 5

Values-guided next steps

Choose an action small enough to take, meaningful enough to matter, and realistic for your capacity.

One area I want to move toward (value, need or working condition):

A thought or feeling that may show up, and how I can make room for it:

A real-world barrier, and the support or information required:

One realistic action in the next 7-14 days (with date):

How I will know the action supported the life I want to build:

Permission to choose: Staying, leaving, negotiating, gathering information, reducing obligations, asking for accommodations or deciding not to add a side project can each be values-consistent. Revisit the bull's-eye when your season changes.

METHOD & ATTRIBUTION

Inspired by Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) values clarification and the bull's-eye approach associated with Dahl & Lundgren (2006) and Lundgren et al. (2012), The Bull's-Eye Values Survey: A Psychometric Evaluation, Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 19(4), 518-526, doi:10.1016/j.cbpra.2012.01.004. This is an original career reflection adaptation, not that survey. No career model or assessment guarantees fit, income or outcomes.