

# CONTRACTING

**This is a pack of contracting handouts that I have written, adapting both original source material and my own experience. Contracting is a key skill, that is important when working with clients, coaching people, or when taking on new tasks, roles, or responsibilities.**

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## AGREEING GUIDELINES

### 1. BACKGROUND

Contracting is one of the basic principles of Transactional Analysis and reflects the philosophy that people are OK and, with the right information, can solve their own problems. Clear contracts are needed in order for people to operate effectively within groups and organisations. To be effective, the contracting process needs to be transparent and the people involved need to have the power to make their own choices. Contracting involves mutual and self respect and enables all the information to be placed 'on the table' for all to see. Contracts also need to be effectively communicated to all parties.

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### 3. CONSTRUCTIN

Healthy contracts reflect the philosophy that people are OK and can solve their own problems with the right information. To be effective they need to involve four key requirements (defined by Claude Steiner). **1) Mutual consent** – both parties must agree to the contract. **2) Consideration** – some form of recompense is given in return for someone's time or work. **3) Competency** – the practitioner must have the skills to perform the contract and the client must be able to understand the contract and have the resources to complete it. **4) Lawful object** – it must be within the law and conforming to ethical principles laid down by professional bodies.

When looking at each axis of the three cornered contract we need to consider **three levels:** administrative, professional and psychological. The psychological level is often overlooked. This can result in 'volcanic explosions' later on if people are unable to contain their rising emotions.



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Alternatively people in organisations may withdraw from the process (often without telling you) because they have unresolved issues clouding their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Therefore a robust and effective contract will clearly address all three elements:

<b>FIRST LEVEL – ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	
<p>This is sometimes known as the Procedural or Social level. It includes all practical arrangements, such as dates, times, locations, telephone numbers, email addresses, and other considerations. Getting the administrative details sorted out is essential. Write it down, for example on a flipchart.</p>	<p>Get the contract written down, for example on a flipchart. This is a sample only. Please purchase this product to see the rest of the detail. Thank you.</p>
<p>This provides a framework for the process. For example, for a learning, performance or coaching contract, you might want to include a commitment to the process. For a coaching contract, you might want to include a commitment to confidentiality.</p>	<p>Get the contract written down, for example on a flipchart. This is a sample only. Please purchase this product to see the rest of the detail. Thank you.</p>
<p>This is a dynamic process. The contract evolves as the process evolves. There are always changes. There are always changes. There are always changes. There are always changes. There are always changes.</p>	<p>Get the contract written down, for example on a flipchart. This is a sample only. Please purchase this product to see the rest of the detail. Thank you.</p>

**4. PUTTING IT TOGETHER**

The contract is for you

- What are the goals?
- How will we measure success?
- What are the roles and responsibilities?
- So what are the next steps?

Using 'we' instead of 'you' helps to encourage participation and helps to prevent people from feeling that they have 'been done to'. Spend time on the **psychological level** so that people know what's happening and feel safe. Consider elements such as fears, worries, confidentiality, commitment, permissions, expectations and hidden agendas. If people feel exposed or unsafe they may not honour the contract. Encourage people to voice their feelings and if there are unhelpful processes going on then ask people to 'name them'. Two 'sabotage questions' can be used to help facilitate the process:

- **What could I do to make it not work? / How might we go wrong?**

Look out for 'rumble smiles' which will help you to identify when you have hit the mark. Also remember to consider the 'local culture' as this will influence people's perception of "what's ok around here".

**Take away message: Meaningful contracts require careful construction.**

# CONTRACTS

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## ELEMENTS OF A TRAINING CONTRACT

At the start of a training workshop use a flipchart to establish and agree a contract between yourself (as the trainer) and the delegates. Use the following as a guideline to cover the key areas:

### Workshop Title

Length of time for the workshop

~~Include break times~~



This is a sample only.

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to see the rest of the detail.

Thank you.

It's Ok to share

It's Ok to question

It's Ok to make your own choices and take away what you need to

# CONTRACTS

## ELEMENTS OF A COACHING CONTRACT

At the start of a coaching session (or at the start of a series of sessions) it is important for the Coach and the Coachee to agree a coaching contract. The following is a guide to the key points:

### SECTION (A) Administration

1. Frequency:
2. Location:
3. Session Duration:
4. Note Taking:
5. Contract:
6. Cost:
7. Confidentiality:
8. Client's Role:

### SECTION (B) Coaching Process

1. The Coaching Process:
2. The Coaching Relationship:
3. The Coaching Structure:
4. The Coaching Process:
5. The Coaching Process:
6. Assumptions:

### SECTION (C) Coaching Outcomes

1. Defining the Coaching Relationship:
2. Giving the Coachee a Choice:
3. Making the Coaching Relationship Work:
4. Discussing the Coaching Relationship:
5. Reviewing the Coaching Relationship:
6. Coaching the Coachee:
7. Coachee's Role:



**NOTE:** At the start of each subsequent coaching session it is worth reminding the Coachee of the limits to confidentiality and their freedom to choose their own path.