

## Motivational Interviewing Strategies and Techniques: Rationales and Examples

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ASKING PERMISSION</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Communicates respect for clients. Clients are more likely to discuss changing when asked, than when being lectured or told to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you mind if we talk about ...?</i></li> <li>• <i>Can we talk a bit about your ...?</i></li> <li>• <i>Would you feel comfortable talking about...?</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Allows for a richer, deeper conversation that flows and builds empathy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tell me what you like about your ...</i></li> <li>• <i>What makes you think it might be time for a change?</i></li> <li>• <i>What happens when you behave that way?</i></li> <li>• <i>Tell me more about when this first began....</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ELICITING/EVOKING "CHANGE TALK"</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> "Change talk" tends to be associated with successful outcomes. This strategy elicits reasons for changing from clients by having them give voice to the need or reasons for changing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What makes you think you need to change?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would you like to see different about your current situation?</i></li> <li>• <i>What will happen if you don't change?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would be the good things about changing your ...?</i></li> </ul> <p>Change talk for clients having difficulty changing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can I help you get past some of the difficulties you are experiencing?</i></li> <li>• <i>If you were to decide to change, what would you have to do to make this happen?</i></li> </ul> <p>Change talk by looking forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If you make changes, how would your life be different from what it is today?</i></li> <li>• <i>How would you like things to turn out for you in 6 months?</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REFLECTIVE LISTENING</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Way of responding to clients that involves listening carefully and making a reasonable guess about what they are saying. This gets clients to state the arguments for change rather than trying to persuade them that they need to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It sounds like...</i></li> <li>• <i>What I hear you saying ...</i></li> <li>• <i>It seems as if...</i></li> <li>• <i>I get the sense that...</i></li> </ul> <p>Reflective listening (specific)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It sounds like you recently became concerned about your ...</i></li> <li>• <i>I get a sense that you are wanting to change, and you have concerns about ...</i></li> <li>• <i>What I hear you saying is that your ... is not really much of a problem right now. What do you think it might take for you to change in the future?</i></li> <li>• <i>I get the feeling there is a lot of pressure on you to change, and you are not sure you can do it because of difficulties you had when you tried in the past.</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AFFIRMATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Recognizes clients' strengths and efforts to change to increase clients' confidence in their ability to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Your commitment really shows by ...</i></li> <li>• <i>By the way you handled that situation, you showed a lot of ...</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DECISIONAL BALANCING</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> For clients to realize that they get some benefits from their risky/problem behaviors, and there will be some costs if they decide to change their behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are some of the good things about...? Okay, on the flipside, what are some of the less good things about ...?</i></li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NORMALIZING</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Communicate to clients that they are not alone in their experience or in their ambivalence about changing so they understand that many people experience difficulty changing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A lot of people are concerned about changing their ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Many people report feeling like you do. They want to change their ..., but find it difficult.</i></li> <li>• <i>Most people report both good and less good things about their ...</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADVICE/FEEDBACK</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Providing new, relevant information should be presented in a neutral, nonjudgmental, and sensitive manner that empowers clients to make more informed decisions about quitting or changing a risky/problem behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you mind if we spend a few minutes talking about ...?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are you interested in learning more about ...?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you know about how your drinking affects your ...?</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READINESS TO CHANGE RULER</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Assessing readiness to change is a critical aspect of MI. Ask clients to give voice to how ready they are to change using a 10-point scale ruler where 1 = definitely not ready to change and 10 = definitely ready to change. Knowing a client's level of motivation for change can guide the direction of the conversation. The Readiness to Change Ruler can also be used to have clients give voice to how they changed, what they need to change further, and how they feel about changing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the following scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is definitely not ready to change and 10 is definitely ready to change, what number best reflects how ready you are at the present time to change ...?</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXPLORING IMPORTANCE AND CONFIDENCE</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Clients view the importance of changing and the extent to which they feel change is possible (e.g., Readiness to Change Ruler) so they give voice to what they would need to do to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do you think you might do to increase the importance/confidence about changing your ...?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would need to happen for your importance/confidence score to move from a (insert #) to a (insert higher #)?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would it take to move from a (insert #) to a (insert higher #)?</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUMMARIES</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Used judiciously to relate or link what clients have already expressed, especially in terms of reflecting ambivalence, and to move them on to another topic or have them expand the current discussion further.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Over the past three months you have been talking about stopping ..., and it seems that just recently you have started to recognize that less good things are outweighing the good things. That, coupled with... (e.g. relationship breakup due to substance use) .... makes it easy to understand why you are now committed to not using....anymore.</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STATEMENTS SUPPORTING SELF-EFFICACY</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Objective is to increase clients' self-confidence that they can change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It seems you've been working hard to quit .... That is different than before. How have you been able to do that?</i></li> <li>• <i>So even though you have not been (substance- free) every day this past week, you have managed to cut your use down significantly. How were you able to do that?</i></li> </ul> <p>After asking about changes clients have made, it is important to follow-up with a question about how clients feel about the changes they made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How do you feel about the changes you made?</i></li> </ul>