

Enhancing Motivational Interviewing Skills

Recognizing and Eliciting Change Talk



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Change Talk

“People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered, than by those which have come into the mind of others.”

Blaise Pascal - French mathematician and philosopher (1623 -1662)

Motivational interviewing – “a collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change” – *Miller & Rollnick, 2009*

Change talk – client speech that favors movement in the direction of change

Sustain talk – client speech that favors the status quo/not changing (not necessarily the same as resistance)

Change talk – often flows naturally by simply using the core skills of open questions, affirmations, reflective statements, and summaries (OARS) – when change talk does not occur naturally, it is possible to elicit change statements using various methods (see handout page *Eliciting Change Talk*)

Preparatory and Activating Change Statements (DARN-CT)

Preparatory change talk

DESIRE to change (want, like, wish)

ABILITY to change (can, could)

REASONS to change (if ... then)

NEED to change (need, have to, got to)

Activating change talk

COMMITMENT language (intention, decision, readiness)

TAKING steps

Examples (target behavior = drinking)

D: I'd *like* to have better control of my drinking

A: I think I *could* quit

R: *If* I want to get my kids back, *then* I have to quit drinking

N: I've *got to* do something about my drinking

C: I'm *going to* quit

T: I am calling tomorrow to make an appointment

Eliciting Change Talk

Eliciting change talk is a guiding strategy to help clients resolve ambivalence and build motivation to change. Instead of the counselor advocating for change, which often puts the client in the position of defending against it, the counselor uses the OARS micro-skills to elicit and respond to client statements that express a desire, ability, reasons, need, or commitment to change.

Methods for Eliciting Change Talk

- *Ask evocative questions*
“What worries you about your current situation?” “How does this behavior interfere with who you want to be?” “What would convince you to change?” “How would you like things to turn out for you ideally?” “How might you go about it, in order to succeed?” “Now what?”
- *Use importance/confidence scales*
“On a scale from 0 to 10, how important would you say it is/how confident are you to make this change?” “What made you give it a ___ and not (several numbers lower)?” “What would it take to move from ___ to (next highest number)?” “How can I help you with that?”

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all important/ confident									Extremely important/ confident	

- *Explore the decisional balance*
“What are the good things about (the way things are)?” “And what are the not so good things?” “If you were to change, what would be the challenges of doing so?” “What would be the benefits?”
- *Ask for elaboration*
“What else?” “Help me understand.” “Tell me more about that.” “Can you give me an example?”
- *Query the extremes*
“What concerns you absolutely most about ___?” “What are the very best results you could imagine if you made this change?”
- *Look back*
“What were things like before you ___?” “What has changed?”
- *Look forward*
“How would you like things to be different a month/a year/three years from now?”
- *Explore goals and values*
“How does this fit with your personal goals/what you value most?” “What’s most important to you?”

Adapted from Motivational Interviewing by Miller & Rollnick, 2002

A Guided MI Conversation

Your client is ambivalent about a particular behavior or concern (drinking in this example). Use open questions and a mix of simple and complex reflective statements to explore the person's ambivalence and to elicit "change talk." *AVOID* giving "helpful" information or advice.

SEEK PERMISSION

"Would it be all right if we took a closer look at your relationship with drinking?"
"Do you mind if we explore your use of alcohol further?" (*Reflect*)

EXPLORE AMBIVALENCE

"Tell me about you and drinking?" "What are the good things for you about drinking?" "What concerns do you have about your relationship with alcohol?"
(*Reflect*)

ELICIT CHANGE TALK

- *DESIRE* (want, wish, like, etc.)
"If you *were* to stop or cut back your drinking, why might you want to do so?"
(*Reflect*)
- *REASONS* (specific reasons for change)
"What would be the *best* reasons for you?"
(*Reflect*)
- *ABILITY* (can, could, able, etc.)
"How might you go about it in order to succeed?" "How confident are you that you could make this change?" (Can also use 1-10 scaling question)
(*Reflect*)
- *NEED* (have to, important, etc. without stating specific reason)
"How important is it to you to make this change?" (Can also use 1-10 scaling question)
(*Reflect*)
- *COMMITMENT* (will, plan to, intend to, going to, willing, ready, etc.)
"How ready are you to make this change?" "What do you think you will do next?"
(*Reflect*)

SUMMARIZE (summary of client's statements with particular emphasis on "change talk" that indicates the person's *desire, ability, reasons, need, or commitment* to change)
Start with "Here's what you've told me thus far..." "Finish with "What would you add?"
(*Reflect and continue conversation*)

Change Talk Quiz

Modified from Moyers & Martin, 2005

Instructions: For each of the client statements below, underline any part of the statement that is change talk.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Interviewer: Tell me about your drinking. |
| 2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client: Well, I just love the way it makes me feel. It makes me feel great. I can't really imagine a day without that feeling. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: A day without alcohol would be difficult. |
| 4 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Yeah, I don't think I could cope. I mean, I get really stressed by my work, and I need a few drinks to calm down. |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: So you use alcohol to deal with stress. |
| 6 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Yeah, I don't think I'll ever quit drinking. I really don't want to quit and I mean, what would be the point? |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: You don't see any reason to quit. |
| 8 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Yeah, I tell you, just this week I brought a pack of beers from around the world, and I started drinking a different one each day, to start the evening out each night. |
| 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: Well, why don't you tell me what you don't like about alcohol? |
| 10 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Well certainly, it costs a lot of money. I mean, I'm sure I could spend the money in better ways. |
| 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: The money is an issue for you. Is there anything else you don't like about it? |
| 12 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Yeah, the way I feel when I wake up. I still fell pretty groggy all day at work. I would like to feel a little more clear-headed. |
| 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: The grogginess affects your work. |
| 14 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Well, certainly I'm a little more short-tempered than I might be. I really gotta get a handle on that. I mean, I'm a sales person, so if I'm not patient with the idiots who call up wanting something, then I lose the sale. |
| 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: So, alcohol has affected your ability to do your job. |
| 16 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Yeah, I guess so. |
| 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: So, on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being not at all motivated, and 10 being extremely motivated, how motivated would you say you are to quit drinking. |
| 18 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: I'd say a 2. |
| 19 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: So, why not a 1? Why not the lowest possible motivation? |
| 20 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C: Well, I really want to feel better at work. And, I need to make more sales, which means I need to drink less. And things would certainly be better financially if I wasn't spending so much money on alcohol. In fact, I'd say I'm more around a 3 than a 2. I just don't think I can do it, you know. I don't think I can cut down. |
| 21 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I: So, I'm really hearing two things. You want to cut down, you need to cut down and you have reasons to cut down, but you're not sure that you will be able to cut down? |

22	C: Yeah, I'm afraid it might be too hard.
23	I: It sounds like drinking has been part of your life for a long time?
24	C: Since I was fourteen. My friends and I used to shoplift it from the Quickie Mart down the street. We got caught a few times, but we just kept doing it. Then after high school, I had a friend at work that would buy it for me, but only if I paid and he got half of the booze. That was hard because I was spending almost all my paycheck just to get half the booze.
25	I: So, it cost quite a bit back then. How about now? You mentioned the money before.
26	C: I'd say I spend way too much on it these days. But, I gotta have that buzz after work, like I said.
27	I: Without it you'd be too wound up to function.
28	C: Well, I don't know about function. I'd function OK, I guess, I just wouldn't be as happy.
29	I: What other things do you like to do?
30	C: I like to watch TV, hang out with my friends, but they all drink too. And I like to go see movies.
31	I: And you're not drinking when you see movies.
32	C: No, a movie is usually distracting enough that I can go without until I get home. I suppose I could go see a movie every night! I think I'll try that. Two hours without drinking is like 4 less beers a night.
33	I: And cheaper than 4 beers, I would imagine.
34	C: Not when you drink like I do. I get the cheapest beer possible, because I drink so much of it. A movie costs \$10 these days, but 4 beers only costs me like 2 bucks.
35	I: So, seeing a movie wouldn't really help financially, but you would probably feel better the next day.
36	C: Yeah, and I would probably be more patient on the phone with customers, which might mean more sales. That would help financially. I get paid on commission.
37	I: There are probably periods in your life where you didn't drink.
38	C: Yes, once I quit for a couple of weeks?
39	I: It wasn't something you wanted to keep doing.
40	C: Well, I was more productive, but the stress was terrible. I started to exercise, and that helped.
41	I: So, you were able to quit for two weeks, and exercise helped reduce the stress that you felt from work.
42	C: Yep. You know, I bet I could do that again. I could exercise.
43	I: So, it sounds like you have two plans in mind, to go to a movie each night and to exercise to relieve stress. Do you think you could do both?
44	C: I don't see why not. It might even help me to eventually quit.

Instructions: After underlining all of the change talk, note which of the O-A-R-S the interviewer uses to respond to each occurrence of change statements in column 2.

Change Talk Activity: Observer Sheet

Break into groups of three. Identify who will be the **counselor**, **client**, and **observer**.

The **counselor** attempts to elicit from the **client** at least one example of each of the following types of change talk. The **observer** listens carefully to each client statement to determine if it fits into one of the five categories. When you hear an example that does fit, write the statement down in that box.

DESIRE: Want, wish, like, etc.

ABILITY: Can, could, able, etc.

REASONS: Specific reason(s) for change

NEED: Need, have to, important, etc. (without stating specific reason)

COMMITMENT: Will, plan to, intend to, going to, willing, ready, etc.

MI Self Check

My clients would say that I...

- Believe that *they* know what's best for themselves
- Help them to recognize their own strengths
- Am interested in helping them solve their problems in their own way
- Am curious about their thoughts and feelings
- Help guide them to make good decisions for themselves
- Help them look at both sides of a problem
- Help them feel empowered by my interactions with them

Adapted from Hohman. & Matulich. Motivational Interviewing Measure of Staff Interaction, 2008

Selected Resources

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Website: www.motivationalinterviewing.org