

Motivational Interviewing

OARS: A Quick Guide

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

How... In what ways... Describe
What... Say more about

- Avoid asking close-ended (yes/no) or single word questions
- Ask questions where the response possibilities are endless
- Avoid "Why?" as it can put people on the defensive

OPENERS:

Tell me about...	What was that experience like for you?
How does that fit with your life/work?	Tell me about how that fits into your routine...
Give me an example of a time when...	What would have to happen for you to make a change?
	How does that compare with where you're at now?

AFFIRMATIONS

- Show our appreciation for the other person's experience
- Centers around the word "you" -avoid starting with "I" (creates hierarchy)
- **Seek opportunities to notice and affirm the following:**
 - Past successes, future hopes, current efforts, struggles, desires, humanity, character, strengths, values and efforts to act on them

OPENERS:

That took a lot of... (courage/effort, strength/patience)	This shows...
You're really...	What about you would make this possible?
It must have taken a lot of work to (cut down, resist, quit)	

REFLECTIONS

You... [not "I "]

- Offers the other person's content back to them in a non-threatening way
- Invites the other person to continue or explore further
- Helps the person to organize their thoughts
- May help the person recognize his/her own change talk

In general, you will get more of whatever you reflect. If you reflect sustain talk, you are likely to hear more sustain talk. Reflect change talk and you'll get more change talk.

OPENERS:

You're wondering if ...	It seems to you that...	This has been totally ___ for you
For you, it's a matter of ...	In other words, you're saying...	You need...
You're finding...	From your point of view...	You're feeling...

 Reflections	Simple:	Repeat or rephrase of what the person said. (Useful for clarification or to reflect specific change talk).
	Paraphrase:	Restatement which brings an educated guess or inference to add meaning to what the person said.
	Amplification:	Strategic for softening sustain talk by exaggerating, overstating, or increasing its intensity; without sarcasm!
	Double-Sided:	Stating both sides of ambivalence (cons/pros) in a single reflective statement, ending with the change talk. (e.g. On one hand, you don't like the medication side effects, but on the other hand, you feel it has helped you to cut down on your smoking.)

EXAMPLES:

Reflect the client's feelings

Useful for softening sustain talk

- **Client:** If I keep vaping, I know my parents are going to ground me.
- **Clinician:** You're worried about the possible consequences if you continue to vape

Reflecting the side of no change/Siding with the Negative

Helps to diffuse discord or soften sustain talk

- **Client:** I can't give up smoking! It's how I socialize with friends.
- **Clinician:** Smoking is part of your life and has been for a long time.

SUMMARIES

- Pull together what the person has told us - shows we are listening!
- Shines a light on what's most important. Another chance to reinforce change talk.
- Wraps up task or session by pulling together what's important.
- May include change talk gathered during session. Partner with client to see if everything was included, ask for agreement and end with an open-ended question.

Guidelines:

1. **Introduce summary** (e.g. I want to be sure I have this right, Let's make sure we're on the same page)
2. **Reflect key themes, change talk, strengths, values, etc.**
3. **Ask for client input on summary** (e.g. Have I got that right? What did I miss?)
4. **End with open-ended question or call to action** (e.g. Where does this leave you? What's next? What are some things you think you can do between now and our next session?)