

O.A.R.S.: 4 Strategies of motivational interviewing in the early stages of treatment

Open-Ended Questions

- Open questions gather broad descriptive information
- Facilitate dialogue
- Require more of a response than a simple yes or no
- Often start with words like “how” or “what” or “tell me about” or “describe”
- Usually go from general to specific
- Convey that our agenda is about the consumer

Affirm

- Must be done sincerely
- Supports and promotes self-efficacy
- Acknowledges the difficulties the client has experienced
- Validates the client’s experience and feelings
- Emphasizes past experiences that demonstrate strength and success to prevent discouragement

Reflective Listening

- Reflective listening begins with a way of thinking
- It includes an interest in what the person has to say and a desire to truly understand how the person sees things
- It is essentially hypothesis testing
- What do you think a person means may not be what they mean
- Repeating – simplest
- Rephrasing – substitutes synonyms
- Paraphrasing – major restatement
- Reflection of feeling – deepest

Summarize

- Summaries reinforce what has been said, show that you have been listening carefully, and prepare the client to move on
- Summaries can link together client’s feelings of ambivalence and promote perception of discrepancy

Motivational Interviewing 4 Principles

Express Empathy

- Acceptance facilitates change
- Skillful reflective listening is fundamental to expressing empathy
- Ambivalence is normal

Develop Discrepancy: This is accomplished by thorough goal and value exploration

- Help the client identify own goals/values
- Identify small steps toward goals
- Focus on those that are feasible and healthy
- When substance use comes up explore impact of substance use on reaching goals/consistency with values
- List pros and cons of using/quitting (decisional balance/payoff matrix)
- Allow client to make own argument for change

Roll with Resistance

- Avoid argumentation
 - Human beings have a built in desire to set things right (righting reflex)
 - When the righting reflex collides with ambivalence, the client begins defending the status quo
 - If a person argues on behalf of one position, he/she becomes more committed to it
- Resistance is a signal to change strategies
- See handout

Support Self-Efficacy

- Express optimism that change is possible
- Review examples of past successes to stop using
- Use reflective listening, summaries, affirmations
- Validate frustrations while remaining optimistic about the prospect of change