Strengthening a Person’s Own Motivation and Commitment to Change
Handouts
(Based on Miller & Rollnick, 2013)

Engaging Process

• Emphasis is to promote a working relationship
• People are making decisions about whether they like you, can trust you and whether or not they will return
• May occur in a short period of time (minutes) or take quite some time
• Engagement is a prerequisite for other processes
• What I should consider?
  ― How comfortable is this person in talking to me?
  ― How supportive and helpful am I being?
  ― Do I understand the person’s perspective and concerns?
  ― How comfortable do I feel in this conversation?
  ― Does this feel like a collaborative partnership?

Focusing Process

• Movement towards identifying the person’s agenda
• What is the concern/change they are considering or want to discuss?
• As the concern/change is identified, maintain attention on that concern/change throughout the conversation
• What I should consider?
  ― What goals for change does this person really have?
  ― Do I have different goals for change for this person?
  ― Are we working together with a common purpose?
  ― Does it feel like we are moving together, not in different directions?
  ― Do I have a clear sense of where I am going?
  ― Does this feel more like dancing or wrestling?
How to Establish a Focus

- Use Open Ended Questions and/or Reflections to Gather the person's concerns
- Prioritize what the person wants to address during the appointment
- Staff shares their concerns with permission
- Reprioritize if needed when a new concern emerges as a higher priority
- Transition to evoking process with a summary

Scenarios

1. The focus is unclear – continue to explore and engage further

2. We know where we are going - the focus is clear
   - Continue to maintain a working collaboration
   - Ensure mutual understanding of the focus
   - Assess importance, confidence, readiness and commitment
   - Move to the evoking process. If the person demonstrates readiness, move to the planning process

3. There are several options - we need to decide.

Agenda mapping

- A conversation about the focus of the work
- Like examining a map at the beginning of a journey
- Consider the way ahead and what to talk about
- Can be used to adjust direction later
- Helpful when there are a number of related concerns
- Use structuring, considering options, zooming in and visual aids
Structuring

- Makes clear what you are doing
- Involves stepping back to discuss the direction of the work
- Uses a structuring statement (e.g. “Would you mind if we discussed some of the topics we might decide to work on?”)
- Keep it hypothetical (e.g. use “might” or “could”)
- Invite the person to list additional topics or concerns
- Staff may bring up additional concerns
- May be used elsewhere in the change process (e.g. structuring time for guiding the discussion and/or agenda)

Considering Options

- Invite the person to list their concerns
- Allow the person to contemplate options
- Affirm and support the person
- Keep it hypothetical (e.g. use “might” or “could”)
- Reflective listening is very useful in this process
- Staff may share their own ideas

Zooming In

- Collaborate around a shared sense of direction
- Finding direction may include topics to explore or goals to be reached
- Refocus as needed

Use Visual Aids

- Bubble sheet, list, decision aid
- Give person autonomy over the process
- Invite person to fill in bubbles
- Allow person to add bubbles as needed
- Leave some bubbles blank on pre-populated forms
- Document on the visual aid for the person if needed
**Evoking Process**

- Elicit the person’s own motivations for change
- Learn what the person’s thoughts, feelings, and motivations are for a specific change
- Person brings their own expertise to the conversation
- What I should consider?
  - What are this person’s own reasons for change?
  - Is the reluctance more about confidence or importance of change?
  - What language in favor of change am I hearing?
  - Am I steering too far or too fast in a particular direction?
  - Do I feel the urge or am I arguing for the change?

**Identifying Sustain Talk and Change Talk**

**Sustain Talk**

- Language in favor of staying the same
- Predictive of non-change
- Normal
- **NOT** resistance
- **Examples** of Sustain Talk
  - “I really like drinking beer, it’s not like I’m a drug addict.”
  - “I don’t see how I can change my eating habits.”
  - “I have to smoke to calm my nerves.”
  - “I’m fine, I don’t need treatment.”
  - “The voices keep me company, I’m not taking medications.”
Change Talk (DARN-C)

- Language in the direction of change
- Goal is to increase self-motivation
- Listen for and encourage more change talk
- Invite the person to argue for change
- Two kinds of change talk

Preparatory Change Talk

- Desire: “want, prefer, wish”
- Ability: “able, can, could, possible”
- Reason: Why do it? What would be good?
- Need: “important, have to, need to, got to”
- Examples
  - “I really wish I could cut down.”
  - “I probably could eat less sweets.”
  - “If I don’t stop smoking, I’ll have another heart attack.”
  - “I have to get some help.”

Mobilizing Change Talk (Commitment)

- Intention, Decision
- Ready, Prepared, Willing
- Taking Steps
- Actually predicts change
- Examples
  - “I’m never going back to that hospital, I’m taking my meds.”
  - “If I don’t make a decision now, I never will.”
  - “I’m willing to take a walk every day.”
  - “I’ll probably look for a place to live this weekend.”
  - “I quit the crack, and now I’m only drinking once in a while.”
Strategies to Elicit Change Talk

a. Ask Evocative Questions
   - “Why would you want to make this change?” (Desire)
   - “How might you go about it, in order to succeed?” (Ability)
   - “What are the best reasons for you to do it?” (Reasons)
   - “How important is it for you to make this change?” (Need)
   - “What do you think you’ll do?” (Commitment)

b. Use Change Rulers
   **Importance Ruler**
   - “On a scale of 0 – 10, where zero is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important is it to you to change _______?”
   - “Why you are at a ___ and not a [lower number]?”
   - “What might happen that could move you from a ____ to a _____ [one number higher]?”
   **Confidence Ruler**
   - “On a scale of 0 - 10, how confident are you that you can _______?”
   - “Why you are at a ___ and not a [lower number]?”
   - “What would it take for you to be at a _______ [one number higher]?”

c. Explore the Decisional Balance (Pros and Cons)
   - “What would be the benefits of making this change?”
   - “What are the not so good things about making this change?”

d. Ask for Elaboration (when change language emerges, ask for more detail)
   - “In what ways?”
   - “How do you see this happening?”
   - “Tell me about your past experiences with _____?”
   - “What else?”
   - “Tell me about the last time ______?”
   - “Describe a specific example of when this happens.”
   - “What are some examples of problems you’ve had with _____?”

e. Looking Back (ask about a time before the current concern emerged):
   - “Tell me about a time when things were going well?”
   - “What are the differences between now and before this was a concern?”
   - “What were things like before _____?”
   - “How has this concern interfered with your life?”

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f. **Look Forward** (ask about how the future is viewed)
   - “What may happen if things continue as they are (status quo)?”
   - “If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different?”
   - “How would you like things to be next year?”

g. **Query Extremes** (ask about the best and worst case scenarios of changing or not changing)
   - “What are the best things that might happen if you do make this change?”
   - “What are the worst things that might happen if you don’t make this change?”

h. **Explore Goals and Values** (ask what the person’s guiding values are)
   - “What is most important to you?”
   - “How does this behavior fit with who you are?”
   - “In what ways does this situation conflict with where you see yourself?”
   - “What are the three most important things to you?”

i. **Hypothetical Questions** (when importance and confidence are low)
   - “What might you say to a friend or family member who was in this situation?”
   - “What might happen that would let you know it was time for a change?”
   - “If you were to make this change, how might you go about it?”
   - “Not now, but when the time is right for you, what might your next step be?”

**Responding to Change Talk:** When you hear change talk respond to it

- Elaborate: Ask for examples
  - “When was the last time...?”
  - “In what ways...?”
  - “What else?”
  - “What other reasons?”
- Affirm: Acknowledge change talk without arguing for change
- Reflect:
  - Continue the paragraph
  - Make connections between value or meaning and the person’s statement(s)
  - Pluck change talk from the jaws of ambivalence: When change talk is mixed with sustain talk, identify the change talk and reflect it
- Summarize: “Collecting flowers of change talk into a bouquet”
**Evoking and Strengthening Confidence Language**
- Evocative questions
- Confidence ruler
- Reviewing past successes
- Personal strengths and supports
- Brainstorming
- Giving information and advice (with permission)
- Reframing
- Hypothetical change

**Responding to Confidence Language**
- Elaborate
- Affirm
- Reflect
- Raise possible problems and challenges
- Summarize

**Signs of Readiness for Change**
- Diminished sustain talk and attention to the problem
- Increased frequency and intensity of change talk
- Talk about “when” and “how” of the change
- Questions about change
- Envisioning
- Taking small steps

**Summarize**
- Person’s perception of the problem
- Any remaining ambivalence
- Evidence related to importance of change
- Person’s own motivation for change
- Person’s effort to this point

**Ask Key Question**
- “What now?”
- Where do we go from here?”
- “What could you do at this point to make this change happen?”
- “What are some ways you would like to move forward from here?”
Planning Process

• Transition when the person reaches a threshold of readiness
• Shift focus from “whether to change” toward “when” and “how” to change
• Focus on developing commitment to change
• Develop a specific plan based on person’s own ideas and solutions
• Explore challenges and obstacles to change
• Continually monitor plan for needed changes
• Is an ongoing process
• What I should consider?
  — Am I remembering to evoke the person’s ideas rather than prescribe a plan?
  — What would be a reasonable next step toward change?
  — What would help this person to move forward?
  — Am I paying attention to any lingering ambivalence?
  — Am I offering needed information or advice with permission?
  — Am I remaining curious about what will work best for this person?

Negotiating a Change Plan - collaborate with the person to:

• Set specific goals
• Consider a range of change options
• Decide on the first steps
• Write a plan
• Involve significant others when possible
• Monitor and refine the plan over time
• Provide positive feedback for even the smallest successes
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Notes