

Nine Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

1. Ask Evocative Questions - Use Open-Ended Questions.

Examples:

- a. Why would you want to make this change? (Desire)
- b. How might you go about it, in order to succeed? (Ability)
- c. What are the three best reasons for you to do it? (Reasons)
- d. How important is it for you to make this change? (Need)
- e. So what do you think you'll do? (Commitment)

2. Ask for Elaboration

When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more detail:

- a. In what ways?
- b. How do you see this happening?
- c. What have you changed in the past that you can relate to this issue?

3. Ask for Examples

When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples.

- a. When was the last time that happened?
- b. Describe a specific example of when this happens.
- c. What else?

4. Looking Back

Ask about a time before the current concern emerged:

- a. How have things been better in the past?
- b. What past events can you recall when things were different?

5. Look Forward

Ask about how the future is viewed:

- a. What may happen if things continue as they are (status quo)?
- b. If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different?
- c. How would you like your life to be in the future?

6. Query Extremes

Ask about the best and worst case scenarios to elicit additional information:

- a. What are the worst things that might happen if you don't make this change?
- b. What are the best things that might happen if you do make this change?

7. Use Change Rulers

Ask open questions about where the client sees themselves on a scale from 1 -10.

- a. On a scale where one is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important (need) is it to you to change?
 - i. Follow up: Explain why are you at a ___ and not ___ (lower number)?
 - ii. What might happen that could move you from ___ to ___ (higher number)?
- b. How much you want ___ (desire)
- c. How confident you are that you could ___ (ability),
- d. How committed are you to ___ (commitment).

8. Explore Goals and Values

Ask what the person's guiding values are.

- a. What do they want in life?
- b. What values are most important to you? (Using a values card sort can be helpful here).
- c. How does this behavior fit into your value system?
- d. What ways does (the behavior) conflict with your value system

9. Come Alongside

Explicitly side with the negative (status quo) side of ambivalence.

- a. Perhaps ___ is so important to you that you won't give it up, no matter what the cost.
- b. It may not be the main area that you need to focus on in our work together.