

Recognizing Change Talk

Letter:	Meaning:	Letter:	Meaning:
D	Desire: Client is stating their desire to change or not to change.	TS	Taking steps towards or away from behavior change.
A	Ability: Client is making a statement about their ability to change or not to change.	Sign:	Meaning:
R	Reason: Client is stating a reason to change or not change.	+	The client is making a statement supportive of change.
N	Need: Client is expressing a need regarding the target behavior or a need with regards to changing or not changing.	-	The client is making a statement supportive of no change or away from making a change
O	Other: The statement does not fit with codes D, A, R, or N.		

Reasons:

- My liver's busted, so I have no choice. **(R+)**
- I just don't drink that much. **(R-)**
- I want my kids to have a real father. **(R+)**
- It would be so good for my kids. **(R+)**
- My drinking doesn't affect my kids. **(R-)**
- My doc told me I'm going to lose my leg if I don't start checking my blood sugars. **(R+)**
- My diabetes is as good as it's gonna get. **(R-)**
- I've gotta get a grip on this. **(R+)**
- I've got a friend who got a head injury on his motorcycle and I don't want that to happen to me. **(R+)**
- Only idiots need helmets and I am not an idiot. **(R-)**
- I don't want my child to have all these expensive cavities. **(R+)**



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Reasons continued:

- My mother gave me my own bottle when I was her age and I never got cavities. **(R-)**
 - My drinking is getting worse. **(R+)**
 - My drinking is hopeless. **(R-)**
 - If I don't stop using crack, my wife will leave me. **(R+)**
 - If I have to use a condom, why even bother? **(R-)**
 - Protecting my health is the most important thing to me. **(R+)**
 - I have young children to take care of. **(R+)**
- 
- I just want to quit hearing those voices and the medicine helps with that. **(R+)**
 - I know I'd feel closer to God if I quit using drugs. They just keep me away from Him **(R+)**
 - It's the right thing to do. **(R+)**
 - I'm a mother and I ought to take better care of my kids. **(R+)**
 - It's getting out of hand. I have to have my eye-opener in the morning. **(R+)**

Recognizing Change Talk



Desire:

- I want to stop smoking. **(D+)**
- I'd like to quit, yeah. **(D+)**
- I hate a night without a buzz. **(D-)**
- I love waking up sober. **(D+)**
- I hate being an addict. **(D+)**

Need:

- I need to stop smoking. **(N+)**
- I must quit. **(N+)**
- I gotta do this. **(N+)**
- I need a cigarette. **(N+)**

Ability:

- I am able to do this. **(A+)**
- I just can't quit. **(A-)**
- I can quit. **(A+)**
- I have the ability to stop smoking. **(A+)**
- I don't think I have it in me. **(A-)**
- Once I make up my mind, I know I can do it. **(A+)**
- I don't have much willpower. **(A-)**
- It's not that hard to do. **(A+)**



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Other:

Client: I tell everyone I know, “Stay away from crack. That shit will just mess up your life.” **(O+)** “The right AA meeting is the key.”**(O+)**

Counselor: Did you come in to treatment on your own?

Client: Yes, I know exactly where I belong. **(O+)** Cocaine is just not the answer for me. **(O+)** I’m going to be thinking positively about it. **(O+)** I never have thought I was an alcoholic **(O-)**

Counselor: What will you put in place of drinking?

Client: That’s what I’m trying to find out. **(O+)** I promised myself that if I do drink, I will tell you. **(O+)** If I weren’t in AA right now, I’d be on a bender. **(O+)** If I go to the track all day I can usually win enough money to stay drunk. That’s sad. **(O+)**



Recognizing Change Talk

Commitment language:

- I swear I'm going to stop this. Nothing is going to stop me this time. I'm going to do it. **(C+)**
- I'm going to do it **(C+)** for my family. **(R+)**
- No way I'm going to stop drinking. **(C-)**
- I'm not coming to treatment **(C-)** because I don't have a drinking problem. **(R-)**
- I got rid of all the alcohol from my house this week. **(TS+)**
- I went to two AA meetings this week. **(TS+)**
- I bought a six-pack of beer this week. **(TS-)**
- I stopped going to AA this week. **(TS-)**
- I tried cooking without butter. **(TS+)** **(concrete step)**
- I'm going to try cooking without butter. **(C+)** **(intention)**
- If I tried cooking without butter, I'd reduce my fat intake. **(O+)**
- I swear I will stop this. **(C+)**
- I'm always going to eat sweets. **(C-)**
- I'll go to the gym everyday. **(C+)**
- I'm going to throw away all of my cigarettes. **(C+)**
- I threw away all of my cigarettes. **(TS+)**
- I'll buy apples for snacks instead of chocolate. **(C+)**
- I didn't drink at all last week. **(TS+)**
- I worked overtime so I wouldn't be tempted to drink. **(TS+)**



Recognizing Change Talk



Recognizing Camouflaged Change Talk:

Counselor: What are you thinking about marijuana at this point?

Client: Actually I wasn't thinking about it at all. I was thinking about my girlfriend...but yeah, I guess I'm smoking too much for my own good. At least she says so and she wants me to quit. I don't want to break up with her **(R+)**. I think it's messing me up at school, too. **(R+)**

Counselor: Has your husband been supportive of you in the past?

Client: Uh huh.

Counselor: If you could push a button that would make you stop drinking, would you do it?

Client: Uh huh **(O+, hypothetical change)**



Recognizing Change Talk

The Temperature of Change Talk



Reason: High

- I definitely can't afford to get another DWI. **(R+)**
- I'll go back to jail if I have another positive urine. **(R+)**
- If I lose one more paycheck at the track, my husband will divorce me. **(R+)**
- I hate the way my clothes smell. **(R+)**
- There's no way I'd check my blood sugar three times a day because I'd be a human pincushion. **(R-)**
- It's the only way I can deal with the stress of my job. **(R-)**
- Sobriety just sucks most of the time. **(R-)**



Reason: Medium

- It's embarrassing to remember what I did that night. **(R+)**
- The reasons are starting to pile up. **(R+)**
- If I go to the casino again, my husband would probably leave me. **(R+)**
- It's the right thing to do. **(R+)**
- I can never find that machine when I have the time to test my blood sugar. **(R-)**
- My cigarettes are like a good friend. **(R-)**

Reason: Low

- I guess I'd be healthier if I exercised. **(R+)**
- It seems like the right thing to do. **(R+)**
- It's cramping my style. **(R+)**
- Well, it helps me to relax a little. **(R-)**
- I'd kind of miss my friends at the casino. **(R-)**
- It's sort of nice to just eat whatever I want. **(R-)**

Recognizing Change Talk

The Temperature of Change Talk



Desire: High

- I want to get off drugs for good. **(D+)**
- I'd love to be able to control my diabetes. **(D+)**
- I really wish I could just cut down. **(D+)**
- I don't want to quit. **(D-)**
- I like my life the way it is. **(D-)**



Desire: Medium

- I wish I could just snap my fingers and lose 10 pounds. **(D-)**
- I just want to wake up sober in the morning. **(D-)**
- I like smoking. **(D-)**
- What's wrong with a little nightcap every now and then? **(D-)**



Desire: Low

- I guess I'd like to smoke less. **(D+)**
- I sort of wish I hadn't started using coke. **(D+)**
- It would be kind of nice to have the extra money. **(D+)**
- There's a few good things about it. **(D-)**
- I'm pretty much enjoying things the way they are. **(D-)**
- I guess I'm not very motivated to exercise. **(D-)**



Recognizing Change Talk

The Temperature of Change Talk



Need: High

- I definitely have to get off the street and this is the way to do it. **(N+)**
- I absolutely have to lose weight. **(N+)**
- I've got to use a condom every single time I have sex, no question about it. **(N+)**
- I need my pain pills and that's all there is to it. **(N-)**
- Cigarettes are the only thing keeping me going. **(N-)**



Need: Medium

- Probably I need to do something about my drinking. **(N+)**
- A change would be a good idea. **(N+)**
- Mostly, I have to drink. **(N-)**
- I guess I need some excitement in my life. **(N-)**

Need: Low

- I sort of have to drink right now. **(N-)**
- I guess I don't think I need to quit. **(N-)**



Recognizing Change Talk

The Temperature of Change Talk



Other: High



- I've had it with this way of living. **(O+)**
- I imagine my liver must be saying, Thank God! **(O+)**
- I'm no teetotaler! **(O-)**
- I'm one of the hopeless ones they talk about in the Big Book. **(O-)**

Other: Medium



- I feel good about what I've accomplished. **(O+)**
- I realize now that all that drinking was wrong. **(O+)**
- AA gives me a lot of hope. **(O+)**
- If not now, when? **(O+)**
- I keep asking myself: when are the benefits gonna show up? **(O-)**

Other: Low

- I think that will motivate me to quit. **(O+)**
- If I could just be on a desert island for a month, I could quit. **(O+)**
- The court asked me to come to treatment, but that's probably not such a bad idea. **(O+)**
- I'm kind of questioning my behavior. **(O+)**

