

Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

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

Examples:

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



2. Ask for Elaboration

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

- In what ways?
- How do you see this happening?
- 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:

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

4. Looking Back

Ask about a time before the current concern emerged:

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

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5. Looking 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 your life to be in the future?

6. Query Extremes

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

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

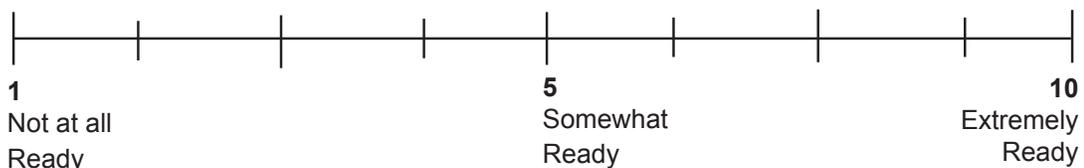


7. Use Change Rulers

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

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

Example Change Ruler: On a scale of 1-10, how ready are you to make a change?



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8. Explore Goals and Values

Ask what the person's guiding values are:

- What do they want in life?
- What values are most important to you? (Using value cards can be helpful here, *please see below*).
- How does this behavior fit into your value system?
- What ways does _____ (the behavior) conflict with your value system?

9. Come Alongside

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

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

10. Explore Decisional Balance

Explore Decisional Balance by asking first for the good things about changing/not changing:

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

Value Cards:

Help the client identify what values are most important to them at a given time in their lives.

Value Cards are easy to develop and can be adapted for many different clinical settings and clients.

(Please see the reference section for an example set of Value Cards with instructions.)

Example:

Purpose

To have meaning and direction
in my life