

10 Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

Importance Ruler: ““On a scale from zero to ten, how important is it to you to [target change] - where zero is not at all important, and ten is extremely important? Follow up: And why are you at ___ and not zero? What might happen that could move you from ___ to a higher score?”

Confidence Ruler: “On a scale of 0-10, how confident are you that you could make this change? Why a ___ and not a zero? What might move to a higher score?”

Query Extremes: 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?

Looking Back: Ask about a time before the current concern emerged. How were things better, different?

Looking Forward: Ask what may happen if things continue as they are (status quo). Try the miracle question: If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different? How would you like your life to be five years from now?

Evocative Questions: (Desire) “Tell me about your desire to change this behavior.”
(Ability) “How confident are you that you can make this change.”
(Reason) “Why do you want to make this change?”
(Need) “How important is it to you to change this behavior?”

Decisional Balance (Pros & Cons): What are some of the good things about your [current behavior]?” “What are some of the not-so-good-things about your behavior? What else? What else?”

Goals & Values Exploration: “You mentioned how important [e.g., being a good father] is to you and it's bothering you that [e.g., your drinking] is interfering with that.”

Elaboration Questions/Reflections: “Tell me more about your [Desire; Reason; Need] to change this behavior.” “What would be some examples of that?” [Ability] “You're probably thinking of how that might occur?” “You're probably thinking of ways to make that happen.” “What else?”

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Coming Alongside: “You can't even imagine what it would be like not to hang out with your gang.”