

The Core Skills of Motivational Interviewing

O

Open Questions



Open questions engage the other person by providing an opportunity for them to reflect, elaborate and answer questions more honestly. The opposite are closed questions, which only elicit "yes/no", one word, and simple responses. When talking about change, it's important to gain rich information around the change goal. Skillfully asking questions that are open, which open the door for the other person to give thoughtful consideration of what is on their mind, helps to do this.

A

Affirming



Rooted in the belief that people are inherently worthy and are equipped with wisdom, strengths and resources - affirmations are a way to recognize the other person's worth, intentions, behaviors and potential, by searching for these positives and commenting on them. When affirmations are accurate and expressed in a genuine way, they support self-efficacy and enhance rapport.

R

Reflecting



Reflecting begins with deeply listening to the other person. It involves making meaning out of what the other person is saying and not saying and communicating back what you heard. Reflective statements are often a guess at your understanding of what you heard and takes courage to communicate. Even when your guess is wrong, a good reflective statement encourages deep exploration. The aim is to have twice as many reflections than questions.

S

Summarizing



Summaries are a series of reflections used at different points of the conversation. They highlight the main points of what the other person expressed including highlights of the productive elements of the conversation, such as the person's intentions and efforts. Summaries are used when transitioning the conversation and can also be used when you feel stuck in the conversation.