

## Motivational Interviewing Skills for Enhanced Provider Communication

1. **Ask permission:** “How would you feel if we spent a few minutes talking about \_\_\_\_\_?”

2. **Ask open-ended questions:**

- *Why would you want to make a change in this part of your life?*
- *What’s at stake if you don’t change?*
- *On a scale of 0-10, how important would you say it is for you to make this change? And why are you at \_\_\_\_ and not a zero.*

0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

*Here is another opportunity to listen reflectively. When the patient answers your questions, try to reflect the person’s reason for change. This may stimulate “Change Talk” or reasons why they feel they should, want, need or are going to change.*

3. **Summarize “change talk”**

*Make a summary outlining the underlying feeling or meaning of what the patient is saying. Try to read into what they are saying by summarizing the deeper meanings around their expressed need to change. For example, if someone talks a lot about their children, your summary may include a point about how important it is to them to be a “good parent”.*

4. **Find out what they want to do next:** *What do you think is the next step regarding \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Depending on their response, you might offer some ideas at this point. If someone explicit tells you that they are not ready to make a next step, it might be useful to go back to asking some more questions rather than to move forward into advice giving. If they are ready, you can explore their change plan and/or ask permission to give some suggestions of your own. Remember, the speaker will be more receptive to your suggestions if you introduce them in a way that preserves their autonomy (i.e. I have some ideas, how would you feel if I shared them with you). In addition, It’s usually helpful to propose several options so that the patient can choose between them thus increasing their control regarding the plan.*

5. **Make an affirmation:** “It’s impressive/says a lot about you that \_\_\_\_\_.”

*When making an affirmation, we are trying to point out a behavior or achievement that we observe the patient has made. Rather than saying something general (“You are doing great!”) we trying be more specific. (“I’ve noticed that you are here on time for all your appointments, you are really make this a priority and I have a lot of respect for that kind of commitment.”)*