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# Key Principles

**“People are usually better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the minds of others.”**  
**- Blaise Pascal**



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- 1) **EXPRESS EMPATHY:** Understand where the patient is and then convey your understanding to them. Guide people to understand and listen to themselves.
- Acceptance facilitates change.
  - Skillful reflective listening is the essence of motivational interviewing (the concept and practice the clinician can return to over and over again).
  - Ambivalence is normal and a critical element for all human growth.



“Those are a lot of medications. I can see how it would be hard to keep all that straight.”

“What you are saying is really important to me, tell me more about\_\_\_\_\_.”

“Okay, I hear you...I would like to back up a bit. What do you think about talking about what concerns you the most about your condition?”

- 2) **DEVELOP DISCREPANCY:** Change is motivated by a perceived discrepancy between present behavior by a patient and their important goals and values. Developing discrepancy should be done in a non-judgmental way.

Common techniques used to create or develop discrepancies include:

- Asking the patient to look into the future and imagine a changed life under certain conditions (i.e., condition is well managed) or to look into the past and recall periods of better functioning.
- Ask the patient to consider the worst possible scenario resulting from not changing behavior or the best possible consequences resulting from trying to change. Reflect any movement toward change.
- Ask questions about behaviors that don't support goals set by the patient. Present discrepancies as legitimate conflicts or mixed experiences rather than as contradictions or judgments that prove patient has a problem.
- Use clear and articulate statements that capture the divergent elements a patient has said. Integrate the patient's specific discrepant statements using a supportive, non-judgmental tone.

“On one hand I hear you saying that you would like to walk your grandson to the bus stop in the mornings, and on the other hand you said it is hard for you to get up in the morning if you haven't been taking your medications regularly.”



“It may be that the freedom to do \_\_\_\_\_ is so important to you right now that you are willing to deal with the consequences, no matter how severe.” (Clinician's tone is validating patient's right to choose.)

“As I listen to you reflect on what challenges you will face if you make changes in \_\_\_\_\_, I am curious what strength you believe you showed the last time you faced sudden, unexpected changes.”

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3) **ROLL WITH RESISTANCE:** The resistance or disconnect a person offers can be turned or reframed slightly to create a new momentum toward change. The object that is in motion here, expressed as resistance, is not a person but a perception. So, roll, flow with it; no need to oppose.

- Avoid arguing for change (unnecessary stress for you and stress for the patient).
- It is a signal to RESPOND DIFFERENTLY, slow down...listen...breathe.
- New perspectives are offered—with patient permission—but not imposed.
- Remember and rest in the fact that the patient is the PRIMARY RESOURCE in finding answers and solutions. Validate and express empathy.



“It is hard to imagine how I could possibly understand.”

“It sounds like you have tried before and it hasn’t worked for you.”

“On the one hand, it seems you recognize there are some real problems here I’m trying to help with, and on the other hand, what I am suggesting is just not acceptable for you right now.”

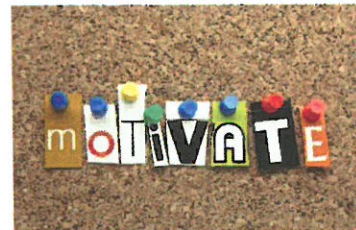
4) **SUPPORT SELF-EFFICACY:** It refers to a person’s belief in his or her ability to carry out a task and succeed. It is a key element for change and can be a good predictor of treatment outcome. It is the hope that the patient holds that there is a possibility for change.

- A person’s belief in the possibility of change or even a willingness to contemplate a different vision for themselves is a powerful motivator.
- It is the person, not the care manager, that will choose which change to make and will carry it out. Each person is an expert in his or her own life. The care manager offers a possibility which may or may not fit where the person needs or desires to be.
- The care manager’s BELIEF in the person’s ability to change, move, consider new possibilities is a powerful resource for the patient to choose to utilize and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Confidence is a predictor of change.

“What is it about you that can help move you towards taking the next step in making this change?”

“May we take things one step at a time? If so, what do you think is the first step?”

“May I share with you what others have taught me? There is a variety of possibilities that people have used successfully to deal with what you are facing. (Share the information after permission is granted). Which of these do you prefer or speaks to you? Which do you think may work best for you?”



# OARS

	<p><b>Open-ended questions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evocative and inviting</li> <li>• Can't be answered with "yes" or "no"</li> <li>• Probing (rely on your curiosity)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Explain"</li> <li>○ "Tell me about"</li> <li>○ "Say more about"</li> <li>○ "Clarify"</li> <li>○ "How," "what" vs. "are," "do," "did" and "could"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Affirmations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes and reinforces success             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key: needs to be expressed with genuineness</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Offers perspective in face of difficulties</li> <li>• Expresses optimism</li> <li>• Sees any progress as progress</li> <li>• "It takes a lot of strength to go through all you have been through."</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Reflective Listening</b> (see example reflection stems on next page)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mirrors what patient is saying</li> <li>• States what the patient is meaning</li> <li>• Shows collaboration and equity</li> <li>• Should be done frequently – try to offer two reflections for every question you ask</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Summaries</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lets patient know you're listening and understanding</li> <li>• Pulls together and links relevant information</li> <li>• Allows patients to hear their own motivations and ambivalence</li> <li>• Helps to clarify any disordered thinking or communication</li> <li>• Helps to bridge and transition between topics</li> <li>• Focuses on priority content and feelings</li> </ul>

## MI Reflection Stems

- Sounds like...
- You're saying that...
- You're feeling like...
- This has been totally \_\_\_\_\_ for you.
- Almost as if...
- Like a...
- For you, it's a matter of...
- From your point of view...
- You...
- You are...
- Must be...
- You really ...
- Through your eyes...
- You believe...
- Your concern is that...
- Your fear is that...
- It seems that...
- You're not terribly excited about...
- You're not much concerned about...
- This really...
- It is so...
- You feel so...
- It's really important to you that...
- You're not really...
- You feel as though...
- What I heard you say was...
- Empathy is saying more than the client said but not more than the client meant.

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# Conversation Flow and Sample Questions



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# Sample MI Questions and Statements

## Statements for Reflective Listening (Express Empathy)

- “You’re feeling uncomfortable with your \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “You are angry with/about \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “You’ve tried to do \_\_\_\_\_ before, and it has not worked for you.”
- “You are frustrated with trying to \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “So, if I understand you so far, you \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “I can see how you might feel \_\_\_\_\_ at this point.”
- “\_\_\_\_\_”

## Statements and Questions to Develop Discrepancy

- “You have said that you know \_\_\_\_\_ is the best choice but that it won’t fit your lifestyle. What are some of your concerns about fitting \_\_\_\_\_ into your current lifestyle?”
- “What is it about your \_\_\_\_\_ that others may see as reasons for concern?”
- “What would be the good things about your child/baby/you being/having \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “How has \_\_\_\_\_ stopped you from doing what you want to do?”
- “How do you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “The fact that you are sharing with me indicates that you are interested in learning about \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you want to learn about \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “What makes you think that you need to make a change?”
- “If things worked out exactly as you like, what would be different?”
- “If you decided to change, what do you think would work for you?”
- “What concerns do you have about making changes?”
- “What things make you think that this is a problem?”





- “What difficulties have you encountered trying to change your \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

## Statements and Questions to Roll with Resistance

- “It’s ok if you don’t think any of these ideas will work for you, perhaps you’ve been thinking about something that might work instead.”
- “Ultimately, it is your decision. So, what would you like to try?”
- “You are right. I am concerned about your \_\_\_\_\_, but you are the one in control.”
- “You’re feeling uncomfortable with your \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “I don’t understand everything you are going through, but if you want to share what you’ve tried, maybe together we can find something that could work for you.”
- “Would you like to talk about some ideas that have worked for others and use what works for you?”
- “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”



## Questions to Support Self-efficacy

- “How important is this to you?”
- “How much do you want to \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “How confident are you that you can make this change?”
- “What encourages you that you can \_\_\_\_\_, if you want to?”
- “I know that it seems like such an uphill battle to \_\_\_\_\_, but now that we’ve discussed some options that have worked for other participants, which ones sound like the best fit for you?”

- “It sounds like you want to continue to \_\_\_\_\_. What personal strengths do you have that will help you succeed? Who could offer helpful support so you can continue to \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “\_\_\_\_\_”

### **Statements and Questions for Reinforcing Positive Change-talk and New Behaviors**

- “That sounds like a good idea.”
- “That’s a very good point.”
- “You are very considerate of how your decisions affect other people.”
- “I can see that it’s important to you to be a good parent.”
- “You’ve really changed the way you \_\_\_\_\_. How do you feel about that?”
- “\_\_\_\_\_”