Motivational Interviewing Tips

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Motivational Interviewing facilitates behavioral change by setting a clear goal, appealing to emotion, and creating a clear plan. Most importantly, it creates a platform for the patient to consider the pros and cons of change they are considering.

What is the patient stage of change? No/ Maybe/ Yes

No (*plant a seed*):

- What are the pros and cons?
- Is this something you *might* consider?
- Follow up ("maybe you can think about it some more and we can address it again when we next meet")

Maybe (*process ambivalence*):

- What are the pros and cons of change? (tap into *feelings*- "how do you feel about your eating routine or physical activity?" (vs. asking about weight), "what is really *important* to you and how can changing the behavior help you reach that goal?" (e.g. stopping smoking or losing weight may result in better sports performance)
- On a scale of 1-10, how *important* is this to you or how *ready* are you? ("what would it take to go from a 6 to an 8?"/ "why did you give yourself a 6 and not a 3?")
- Miracle question: "If you could wave a wand and suddenly stop smoking, how would your life be different?" "What would someone observing see you doing differently?"
- How will you know when you are ready?
- What is holding you back?
- What is your time frame?
- *"Yet" vs "never"*- use change language- ("you have not been able to cut back junk food "*yet*" vs "you have *never* been able to cut back junk food")
- Follow up ("would you like to meet again to further discuss?")

Yes (create a plan):

- Keep it *simple* and aim for *incremental* change (e.g. start with exercise twice weekly instead of daily)
- What *specifically* will you be doing? ("If I were a fly on the wall, what would I see you doing differently?")

- Exceptions- (“Have you had *prior successes* in reducing marijuana use? What did you do specifically to succeed at the time?”)
- Let the patient generate ideas
- Stack the deck- create an environment that supports the goal (e.g. decrease junk foods in the pantry)
- Keep supportive family or friends in the loop
- *“When”* vs *“if”*- use change language (“when you decrease your smoking” vs “if you decrease your smoking”)
- What will you do if you *regress*?
- Follow up (“when should we meet again?”)
- Referrals needed?