

Motivational Interviewing

Listening for **CHANGE TALK**



Community Care
of North Carolina

Community Care of Wake/Johnston Counties

CHANGE TALK



Your task is to elicit “change talk” from your patients rather than resistance.

When you hear change talk, you are doing it right. When you find yourself arguing for change and the patient defending status quo, you know you’re off course.

SO.....let’s look at it....What is “change talk”?

When you are speaking with a patient about behavior change, there are six different themes you may hear. Each type tells you something about the person’s motivation.

CHANGE TALK



Six Kinds of Change Talk

(1) Desire: Statements about preference for change.

“I *want* to....” (I want to get rid of this pain)

“I would *like* to...” (I would like to play more with my grandkids)

“I *wish*...” (I wish I could lose some weight)

(Desire statements tell you about the person’s preferences either for change or for the status quo.)

Six Kinds of Change Talk



(2) Ability: Statements about capability.

“I *could*...” (I could probably take a walk before supper)

“I *can*....” (I can imagine making this change)

“I *might be able* to....” (I might be able to cut down a bit)

(The ability-related change talk also signals motivational strength. “I definitely can” reflects much stronger confidence than “I probably could” or “I might be able to”.)

Six Kinds of Change Talk



(3) Reasons: Specific arguments for change.

“I would probably feel better if I.....” (I’m sure I’d feel better if I exercised regularly.”

“I need to have more energy to play with my kids”

“ This pain keeps me from playing the piano.”

“Quitting smoking would be good for my health.”

(Change talk can express specific reasons but reasons can occur along with desire verbs)

Six Kinds of Change Talk



(4) Need: Statements about feeling obliged to change.

“I *ought* to.....” (I ought to make better food choices)

“I *have* to.....” ((I must get some sleep)

“I *really* should....” (I really should get more exercise)

CHANGE TALK



DARN (Desire, Ability Reasons and Need)

The first four kinds of change talk can be remembered by the acronym- DARN- Desire, Ability, Reasons, and Need. These have something in common. **They are precommitment forms of change talk.** They are leading in the direction of change, but by themselves, they do not trigger behavior change.

To say “I want to” isn’t to say “I am going to.”

To say “I can” is not the same as “I will.”

To express reasons for change is not the same as agreeing to do it. To say “I need to” is still not saying “I intend to.”

CHANGE TALK



5th form of change talk

- **Commitment:** Statements about the likelihood of change. When it comes to commitment the quintessential verb is *will*, but commitment has many forms. Some statements of strong commitment are:

“I *promise*.....”, “I *will*....” “I *intend* to...” “I *am ready* to....”

But, don't miss lower levels of commitment because they are steps along the way too- People signal an opening door with such statements as

“I will *think* about it”, “I'll *consider* it”, “I *plan* to”, “I will *try* to”.

CHANGE TALK



6th form of change talk

- **Taking Steps:** Statements about an action taken.

“I *actually* went out and.....” “This week I started.....”

You may encounter this particularly when you see patients repeatedly over time. These statements indicate the person has taken, even if haltingly, some step toward change. He or she has done something that moves him or her in the direction of change.

“I quit smoking for a week, but then started up again.”

“I walked up the stairs today instead of taking the elevator.”

“I went all last week without stopping by McDonalds.”

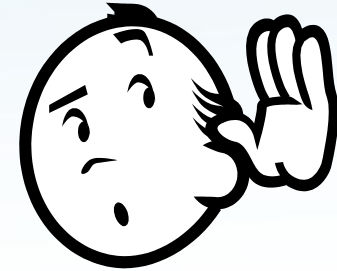
Putting it all together CHANGE TALK



How change talk fits together



The point is to attune your ears to change talk, to recognize and affirm it when you hear it.



People first talk about what they want to do (desire), why they would change (reasons), how they could do it (ability), and how important it is (need).

When you evoke a persons own desire, ability, reasons and need for change, you are fueling the human engines of change.

As DARN motivations are voiced, commitment gradually strengthens, and the person may take initial steps toward change.

Listening for Change Talk

