

3. Enhance Motivation

This is a critical step in the Brief Intervention (BI) process. During this step, the practitioner should use common tools that help the client/patient resolve ambivalence and build motivation to change. Below are some basic Motivational Interviewing strategies to help get the client/patient to move toward change.

Tools that help resolve ambivalence and build motivation to change:

- ❖ **Decisional Balance:** Ask about the pros and cons of use. This is a very effective way to get clients/patients to engage in thinking about their use.

“Tell me what you like about your use?” “Now, what’s not so good about your use?” “Are there any costs to your use? For instance, does your use have any effect on your home/family, social or work life?”

- ❖ **Readiness Ruler:** During this exercise, you should show the client/patient a scale from 1-10 and ask them to rate their readiness to change.

“We’ve been talking about the risks (pros and cons) of your substance use. On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready are you to make a change?” [1=not at all ready and 10=very ready].

After they rate their change, question it in terms of why not a lower score.

“You rated yourself at a 4. Why not a lower number, like a 2 or 1?”

Asking the client/patient, “why not a lower number” prompts them to defend their score and voice their reasons for wanting to change.

- ❖ **Personal Meaning:** During this exercise, it is important to have them write down some reasons (top 3) that they feel are important for changing and not changing their use.

“What do you think are some important reasons to change/reduce your use, either now or in the future?”

“What are some things/reasons keeping you from changing/reducing your use, either now or in the future?”

MI Techniques to use during these Exercises (OARS):

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Provide Personal Affirmation

Listen and Engage in Reflections

Provide Summaries