Project TEACH
Motivational Interviewing (MI) in Tobacco Cessation: An Overview—Part 8
Change Talk/Sustain Talk
Based upon the work of William Miller, Ph.D. & Stephen Rollnick, Ph.D.

Mark Evans, MSW, LCSW, CTTS
Member, Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT)
Change Talk & Sustain Talk
Change Talk and Sustain Talk

Opposite Sides of the Coin
RESISTANCE

Now known as

SUSTAIN TALK  DISCORD
Sustain Talk & Discord

- **Sustain Talk** is about the target behavior:
  - I really don’t want to quit smoking.
  - I have to have my pills to make it through the day.

- **Discord** is about your relationship:
  - You can’t make me quit.
  - You don’t understand how difficult it is for me.

- **Both** are highly responsive to counselor style. The Spirit of MI helps diffuse discord.

Sustain Talk

- The other side of ambivalence/change talk
- Speech that favors arguments against change
  - Desire for things to stay the same (status quo)
  - Ability to continue with things just as they are
  - Reasons NOT to change
- Need for things not to change
- Commitment to things just as they are

Sustain Talk

- Avoid arguing for change
- Not directly opposed
- A signal to respond differently

Snatching Change Talk from the Jaws of Ambivalence

“I really don’t want to stop smoking, but I know that I should. I’ve tried before, and it’s really difficult.”

--You really don’t want to quit.
--It’s pretty clear to you that you ought to quit.
--You don’t think you can quit.
Change Talk

- Speech that favors movement in the direction of change.…. 
  - Opposite of “Sustain Talk”
  - Specific to a particular target behavior or set of target behaviors (e.g., smoking, diet, exercise)

- What sorts of things do you say when you are considering a change? What do we watch for...?

Change Talk

DARN-CATs
Preparatory Change Talk—DARN (usually comes before Activating Change Talk)

- **DESIRE** to change (want, like, wish...)
- **ABILITY** to change (can, would...)
- **REASONS** to change (if...then)
- **NEED** to change (need, have to, must, got to...)

Example - In the Courtroom/At the Wedding

- “Do you swear to tell the whole truth...?”
  - Desire
  - Ability
  - Reason
  - Need
Activating Change Talk

- **COMMITMENT** Language (intention, decision)
- **ACTIVATION** (ready, prepared, willing)
- **TAKING** steps

You now have the **DARN-CAT**

Questions to Possibly Elicit/Evoke COMMITMENT Language

- Is that what you want to do?
- Can you do it?
- Do you have enough reasons to do this?
- How important is it to do this for you?
- Will you do it?

(YIKES—CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS—can you make them OPEN-ENDED...or turn in them into reflections?) And sometimes a closed-ended question is needed/ok. Even more so as of Oct. 2014!
Which question would you ask to elicit/evoke ACTIVATION language?

- What do you want to do?
- Do you think you can do it?
- What steps are you willing to take?
- What are the best reasons for making a change?
- How important is this change to you?
- How will you do this?
Example - In the Courtroom/At the Wedding Revisited

- “Do you swear to tell the whole truth...?”
- “Do you take this man/woman...?”
- COMMITMENT: “I DO!” “I WILL!”
Find the Activating or Commitment Language

- I’ve got to start exercising.
- I wish I could eat better.
- I’m not buying anymore junk food.
- I think I can eat better.
- I’d be a lot more healthy if I ate better.
- I know I can lose weight.
Find the Activating or Commitment Language
(continued)

- I’ve got to quit smoking.
- I wish I could quit.
- I’m not buying another pack.
- I’d be healthier if I quit.
- I think I can quit.
Find the Activating or Commitment Language (continued)

- I’ve got to start exercising.
- Dr. S. won’t do reconstructive surgery if I’m not nicotine free for two weeks beforehand.
- My kids really want me to quit smoking.
- I have to have a clean UA for my parole officer.
Handout

• Strategies for Evoking Change Talk in Motivational Interviewing
QUIZ: Recognizing Change & Sustain Talk/Responding

- I think I could quit.
- I’ve got to do something about my smoking.
- I really like fast food, and it’s so convenient.
- I’m probably gonna start exercising.
- I need to smoke pot to relax.
- I want to get my kids back, and I can’t do that unless I stop drinking.
- I’d like to have better control of my eating.
- I’m gonna keep smoking, and no one can tell me what to do.
Change or Sustain?

- Smoking is the only way I can relieve stress
- It costs too much to eat healthy
- I think I could get a good deal on a gym membership
- What would my friends think if I stopped drinking?
- My family could care less whether or not I quit smoking.
- Everyone is always telling me what to do...I don’t have to listen to them.
- I’m going to eat more fruits and vegetables.
- My heart medicine makes me feel dizzy when I first wake up.
- My sister quit smoking on chantix. It might work for me.
Change or Sustain Talk?
Reflect/respond to this statement

Aw, hell, I got nine lives. I can spare a few.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/REFERENCES

Unless otherwise noted, the materials in this presentation are from/adapted from the following publications/individuals/organizations:


The Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), and especially Patricia Figueroa, M.Ed., Lorraine Reitzel, Ph.D., Nanette Stephens, Ph.D., Theresa Moyers, Ph.D., and William Miller, Ph.D. (training, mentoring, and sharing of materials).


The Motivational Interviewing website: http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/

Special thanks to
Paul Cinciripini, Ph.D., Janice Blalock, Ph.D., Maher Karam-Hage, MD, David Wetter, Ph.D. and Diane Beneventi, Ph.D., for training opportunities, encouragement and support for training.