

OARS: A Quick Guide

Open Questions (How/What/Tell me more/Describe/ In what ways?/Say more about..)

- Don't ask for just yes, no or single word.
- Ask questions where the response possibilities are endless.
- Avoid "Why?" as it can put people on the defensive.

Openers:

Tell me about...

Tell me more about that

How does that fit with your life/work.

Give me an example of a time when

How does that compare with where you're at now?

What was that like?

Say more about _____

What was that experience like for you?

Tell about how that fits into your routine.

What would have to happen for you to make a change?

Affirmations

- Show our appreciation for the other person's experience.
- Center them around the word "you"- avoid starting with "I", creates hierarchy
- Seek opportunities to notice and affirm: Past successes, future hopes, current efforts, struggles and desires, humanity, character, strengths, values and efforts to act on them,

Openers:

That took a lot of...

You're really...

What about you would make this possible?

This shows...

It must have taken a lot of work to...

Summaries

- Pull together what the person has told us. Shows that we were listening.
- Shines a light on what's most important. Another chance to reinforce change talk.
- Collecting summaries: List off the items as they accumulate
- Linking summaries: Bring in information previously known
- Transitional summaries: Wrap up task or session by pulling together what's important
- Recapitulating summary: Includes all the change talk gathered in evoking. Partner with client to see if everything was included, ask for agreement and end with an open question.

Guidelines:

Introduce summary (i.e "I want to be sure I have this right..", "Let's make sure we're on the same page, "What you said is important and I want to make sure I got it all")

- Reflect the key themes, change talk, strengths, values...
- Have I got that right? What did I miss?
- Where does this leave you? What's next?

Reflections (You...[not “I”])

- Offer the other person’s content back to them in a non-threatening way
- Invite the other person to continue or delve deeper
- Helps the person to organize their thoughts
- Can help the person recognize his/her own change talk
- **In general, you will get more of whatever you reflect. If you reflect sustain talk you are likely to hear more sustain talk. Reflect change talk and you get more change talk.**

Openers:

You’re wondering if...	You want...	You’re feeling...
You’re hoping...	Almost as if...	You need...
You’re finding...	It seems to you that...	From your point of view
For you it’s a matter of...	You’re wondering if...	You...
This has been totally___ for you	In other words, you’re saying...	Like a ...

Simple Reflection: Repeat or Rephrase what the person said.

Useful for clarifying what was said or to reflect **Specific Change Talk Language**.

Paraphrase: Restatement which brings in an educated guess or inference to add meaning to what the person said.

Amplification: Strategic for **softening Sustain Talk** by exaggerating, overstating, or increasing its intensity; without sarcasm!

- Client: I’m not interested in quitting drinking at this time
- Staff: There’s no way it makes sense to even consider it.

Double-Sided: Both sides of ambivalence (cons/pros) are contained in a single reflection.

End with the change side.

- On one hand, you don’t like the medication side effects; and on the other hand, it has helped you achieve more stability in your life.

Feeling: Reflection of implied underlying feeling (name the feeling). Useful for **softening sustain talk**.

- Client: If I keep smoking marijuana, I know you are going to put me in jail.
- Staff: You’re *worried* about the possible consequences.

Metaphor: This is “picture language” or statements that evoke images.

- It’s like a dam finally broke this week and everything is flooding out.
- It’s like climbing a ladder: you’re reaching for the next goal.
- You hit a wall trying to figure this out.

Coming Alongside: Take up and reflect the side of no change; side the negative.

Strategic for **softening Sustain Talk or responding to Discord**.

- Client: I can’t give up drinking; it’s how I socialize. Staff: Drinking is a part of your life.
Client: This program isn’t useful. Staff: You’re having a bad experience here.

Continuing the Paragraph: Anticipate the next statement that has yet to be said.

Starts with a conjunction (and..because..) to make a guess about future change to **Cultivate Change Talk**.

- Client: I have to get my kids back. Staff: ...and you’re ready to take a step toward change.



Reflect back more than the person said, but not more than a person meant to say.