

# Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

## 1. Ask Evocative Questions (Use Open-Ended Questions)

*Examples:*

- Why would you want to make this change? (Desire)
- How might you go about it, in order to succeed? (Ability)
- What are the three best reasons for you to do it? (Reasons)
- How important is it for you to make this change? (Need)
- So what do you think you'll do? (Commitment)



## 2. Ask for Elaboration

*When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more detail:*

- In what ways?
- How do you see this happening?
- What have you changed in the past that you can relate to this issue?

## 3. Ask for Examples

*When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples:*

- When was the last time that happened?
- Describe a specific example of when this happens.
- What else?

## 4. Looking Back

*Ask about a time before the current concern emerged:*

- How have things been better in the past?
- What past events can you recall when things were different?

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## 5. Looking Forward

*Ask about how the future is viewed:*

- What may happen if things continue as they are (status quo)?
- If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different?
- How would you like your life to be in the future?

## 6. Query Extremes

*Ask about the best and worst case scenarios to elicit additional information:*

- What are the worst things that might happen if you don't make this change?
- What are the best things that might happen if you do make this change?

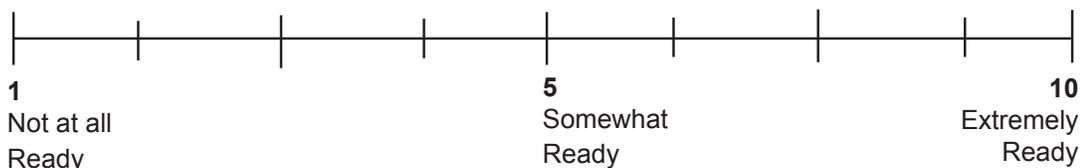


## 7. Use Change Rulers

*Ask open questions about where the client sees themselves on a scale from 1-10:*

- On a scale where one is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important (need) is it to you to change \_\_\_\_\_?
- Follow up: Explain why are you at a \_\_\_ and not (lower number)?
- What might happen that could move you from \_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_ [higher number]?
- How much do you want \_\_\_\_ (desire)?
- How confident you are that you could \_\_\_\_ (ability)?
- How committed are you to \_\_\_\_ (commitment)?

**Example Change Ruler:** On a scale of 1-10, how ready are you to make a change?



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## 8. Explore Goals and Values

*Ask what the person's guiding values are:*

- What do they want in life?
- What values are most important to you? (Using value cards can be helpful here, *please see below*).
- How does this behavior fit into your value system?
- What ways does \_\_\_\_\_ (the behavior) conflict with your value system?

## 9. Come Alongside

*Explicitly side with the negative (status quo) side of ambivalence:*

- Perhaps \_\_\_\_\_ is so important to you that you won't give it up, no matter what the cost.
- It may not be the main area that you need to focus on in our work together.

## 10. Explore Decisional Balance

*Explore Decisional Balance by asking first for the good things about changing/not changing:*

- *Perhaps \_\_\_\_\_ is so important to you that you won't give it up, no matter what the cost.*
- *It may not be the main area that you need to focus on in our work together.*

### Value Cards:

Help the client identify what values are most important to them at a given time in their lives.

Value Cards are easy to develop and can be adapted for many different clinical settings and clients.

*(Please see the reference section for an example set of Value Cards with instructions.)*

### Example:

**Purpose**

To have meaning and direction  
in my life