

Motivational Interviewing Script

Overview

Use this script to guide client-centered conversations using motivational interviewing (MI) techniques. It focuses on collaboration, evoking client motivations, and supporting autonomy.

Key elements to use in a Motivational Interviewing Script (OARS)

- Open-ended questions
 - Affirmations
 - Reflective listening
 - Summaries
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Script example

1. Opening the conversation (Build rapport and set the tone)

"Thanks for coming in today. I'd like to understand more about what matters most to you right now. Can we talk about how you're feeling about [insert issue]?"

2. Exploring ambivalence (Use open questions)

"What are some things you like about your current habits?"

"What are some things you're not so happy with?"

3. Affirming strengths and efforts

"It's great that you're even thinking about making a change. That shows real awareness."

"You've already taken some important steps."

4. Reflective listening (Mirror the client's thoughts)

"It sounds like part of you wants to keep things as they are, but another part is ready for change."

"You're feeling stuck, but you're also motivated to feel better."

5. Eliciting change talk (Support intrinsic motivation)

"What would be different in your life if you made this change?"

"What do you think it would take for you to feel ready?"

6. Summarizing and transitioning to planning

“Let me summarize what I’ve heard so far... You’re concerned about [X], you’ve noticed [Y], and you’re thinking about [Z]. Did I get that right?”

“Would it be helpful to explore some possible next steps together?”

Tips for practitioners

- Use a warm, non-judgmental tone.
 - Guide without directing.
 - Respect client autonomy at every stage.
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Additional notes