

Directional OARS

****What you ask, reflect, affirm, or include in summaries matters.****

O: OPEND-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Directional Questions- Open questions the natural answer to which is change talk.

Desire: Questions usually include words such as want, wish, and like.

How would you like for things to change?

How do you want your life to be different a year from now?

What do you wish for in your relationship?

Ability: Questions usually include what a client can do, is able to do, or could do.

If you did really decide you want to lose weight, how could you do it?

What do you think you might be able to change?

Of the various options you've considered, what seems most possible?

Reasons: Questions usually ask about specific reasons why a client may consider making a change.

Why would you want to get more exercise?

What's the downside of how things are now?

What might be the good things about quitting drinking?

Need: Questions usually ask about an urgency for change to happen.

What needs to happen?

How serious or urgent does this feel to you?

What do you think has to change?

2. Exploring Extremes

What concerns you most about _____?

What do you think could be the best results if you made the change?

3. Importance Ruler

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all important' and 10 is 'the most important thing in your life right now,' how important would you say it is for you to make this change? What number would you say? Whatever the person responds with, ask "And why a [higher number] and not a [lower number]?"

"On a scale from 0 to 10, how important would you say it is for you to _____"

"Why are you at a 5 and not a 0?"

4. Looking Back, Looking Forward

"Do you remember a time when things were going well for you? What has changed?"

"If you did decide to make this change, what do you hope would be different in the future?"

Miracle question: "Imagine that a miracle occurs and when you wake up tomorrow your life is just as you would like it to be. What would be different? How would you know that the miracle has happened?"

5. Exploring Goals and Values

Tell me what you care most about in life. What matters most to you?"

How do you hope your life will be different a few years from now?

What would you say are the rules you live by? What do you try to live up to?

What are your five most important values?

If you were to write a 'mission statement' for your life, what would you write

**Note: You are not asking things like: "Why haven't you changed?" "What keeps you from doing this?" "What do you like about the way things are now?" – These responses will all likely result in more sustain talk. It is useful to explore potential barriers and obstacles when you are in the planning task, but not evoking.*

REFLECTIONS (includes Affirmations, Reflections, and Summaries)

See pg. 96-100 for various examples

From: Ch. 6 in Miller & Rollnick (2023)