

SAMPLE MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING SESSION SCRIPT HANDOUT

Ensure that the Readiness Ruler is administered just before the session, ideally by someone other than you.

Opening Statement

- I'm not here to preach to you or tell you what you "should" do; how would I know, it's your life and not mine! I believe people know what's best for them.
- I don't have an agenda, just a goal: to see if there is anything about the way you take care of your health that you would like to change, and if so, to see if I can help you get there.
- How does that sound to you?

The Session

Begin with a general question regarding their health and health-related behavior. For example, **"I'm curious—how happy are you with how well you take care of your health?"**

- Follow up by using all your best MI skills: reflections, open-ended questions, affirmations, and eliciting change talk (e.g., "You said you feel you could be doing better. In what way?"). The overall goal here is to communicate a genuine desire to understand, not a desire to push them into anything.
- Try to stay focused on health-related behavior. This part should take 5–10 minutes, but could be more or less depending on the client.

Next, mention that you have some information to share, if it's OK with them. **"I've got some information here that's related to you and your health. Is it OK with you if we go over this a minute?"**

- Remember the keys to good feedback: Be completely objective (you are providing them with information that they can take or leave, you are NOT evaluating them). Never argue, and ask a simple question: **"What do you make of all this?"**
- Follow up with reflections, etc. Be sure to use the Pros and Cons exercise and at least one other strategy to elicit change talk, usually the Readiness Ruler ("On a 0–10 scale, if 0 is not in the least bit ready to see the doctor at least once every 3 months and 10 is as fired up as you can be, where are you?) Remember with the Readiness Ruler to ask, "Why a 3 and not a 0?" if they give you a low number, and "Why such a high number?" if they give a high number (7 or higher).
- Remember, never argue, never push, just be curious and accepting. There's no hurry. Remember also, the goal here is to maximize change talk by using questions that elicit change talk, by asking for explanation (if they give a little, ask for more details), and by using exercises like Pros and Cons or the Readiness Ruler.

When there are 5–10 minutes left in your session (or when you feel like you're not going to get any further with Phase I), move into Phase II.

- Do a good summary of everything that's been said so far. **"Let me see if I understand where you're at with your health right now. . . ."** Summarize the things they feel good about and the positive health behaviors you have noticed, starting with general health stuff and ending with specific stuff about their attending doctor's appointments. Next, move into the things that concern them in general, and things that concern them about appointments in particular. Note, if there is one, the disparity between recommended number of appointments and the number they kept last year. Ask if your summary is about right. If not, correct it.

Ensure that the Readiness Ruler is administered after the session, ideally by someone other than you.

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