

Workshop Description: This workshop supports youth program staff in developing and practicing effective communication skills in youth program settings. Successful implementation of this workshop will ultimately help youth program staff to reflect on how they support youth's communication skills and how they use communication to further support the positive development of youth within the program.

This workshop guide will ask participants to examine and reflect on their communication strategies to better assist youth in their development. This workshop guide and all others within the Effective Communication series are intended to lead to building skills in youth program staff that help address unhealthy or negative behaviors and better assist youth in their development.

Preparation Time: The preparation time for this workshop is approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This preparation time should include reading background information on the Effective Communication and Positive Youth Development website and in this workshop guide, collecting materials, and gathering any additional information you may need.

Instruction Time: It will take approximately 105 to 110 minutes to complete all activities within this guide. If you do not have time for the full workshop, only use the most relevant activities to make the workshop fit within your timeframe or split the workshop into multiple sessions. Be sure to keep the reflection portion of the activities and workshop as this is where staff should consider how the activities and knowledge apply to their work.

Materials:

- Copies of Handout: *Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk* (one per participant)
- Paper and writing utensils for each participant
- Flip chart paper, white board, or laptop and projector

Preparation Instructions: You should read the content related to this topic on the Effective Communication and Positive Youth Development website, specifically the content related to Effective Communication and Youth Program Staff. In addition, you should review the background information in this workshop guide, gather all necessary materials, and prepare for the activities.

In this series of workshops, youth program staff will learn skills that build on one another in a specific sequence. We recommend you complete this set of workshops the workshops in the following order:

1. *Understanding Effective Communication,*
2. *Effective Communication and Youth Development Factors,*
3. *Effective Communication Strategy: Active Listening*
4. *Effective Communication Strategy: Clear Expectations and Direction,*
5. *Understanding Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing,*
6. *Understanding Change Talk*
7. *Motivational Interviewing Strategies,*
8. *Practicing Motivational Interviewing*

Knowledge: Effective Communication and Youth Program Staff

Sometimes youth exhibit unhealthy or harmful behaviors or express a desire to adopt new healthy behaviors. One technique, called motivational interviewing, can be used to help youth adjust behaviors and at the same time drive the process of change. This technique uses both effective communication skills and our understanding of how behaviors change to engage individuals in conversations to reconcile their behavior with their goals. Motivational interviewing is a person-centered approach to behavior change that reinforces positive youth development, autonomy, agency, youth voice, and accountability. At its core, motivational interviewing is a communication strategy that combines active-listening and facilitated decision-making to promote better choices and positive change.^{109, 110}

Although motivational interviewing takes practice to perfect, it is a useful tool for youth program staff to use when working with youth as it supports self-efficacy and strengthens adult youth relationships. It can also be used to support prosocial norms, the adoption of healthy behaviors, decision making, and critical thinking. Motivational interviewing works best in an environment that practices positive youth development and fosters supportive adult/youth relationships. This technique fits well within a program that focuses on youth's strengths and goals and tries to help them feel motivated to engage in positive change.¹¹¹

As noted earlier, motivational interviewing is complex. To be truly successful a youth program staff must keep some key components in mind. The youth program staff's mindset is one component and describes what guides all of their interactions. This mindset is often called the ***Spirit*** of motivational interviewing. Youth program staff approach interactions with compassion, acceptance, evocation, and partnership and help to build rapport and an alliance with the youth on any subject (whether related to behavior change or not.) Another component is often called the ***Principles*** of motivational interviewing. These principles guide how youth program staff work with youth and guide youth's internal motivation for change. They include express empathy, develop discrepancy, roll with resistance, and support self-efficacy. These principles help staff decide which strategy to use to support the youth as they discover their internal motivation. A third component of motivational interviewing has to do with understanding ambivalence, resistance, and discord. This component requires the staff to use active-listening skills to listen for '***change talk***' or the youth's expression of desire, ability, reason, or need to change. The final component is a set of strategies represented by the acronym ***OARS*** and involves program staff using open-questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summaries to guide conversations with youth and help them to discover their internal motivation to adopt or change behaviors.

Although there have been no empirical studies of motivational interviewing use in youth programs, motivational interviewing demonstrates promise as a tool for staff who work with youth^{112, 113, 114} and who are tasked with applying communication strategies that help to manage youth's behavior and overall experience within a youth program.

Objectives:

- Understand the role that readiness, ambivalence, and resistance play in motivational interviewing
- Learn how to identify change talk and reflect on youth's readiness to change a behavior
- Practice identifying change talk

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Briefly summarize the content you covered in the previous Workshop: *Understanding Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing*.
 - What to say: "In the previous workshops we learned about the Stages of Change and explored the spirit and key aspects of motivational interviewing. Today we are going to go over each of the strategies of motivational interviewing."
- Transition into Prior Knowledge activity:
 - What to say: "To start, we are going see what you remember about the stages of change and concepts that make up the spirit of motivational interviewing."

Prior Knowledge (10 minutes):

- Write the five stages of change on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ask the participants if they can remember the signs/indicators of each of the stages. Record their responses on the paper/board so participants can see.
 - Instructors Note: The following chart lists the stages of change and some common indicators as discussion prompts.

Stage	Signs/Indicators
Precontemplation	Not aware, not recognized
Contemplation	Aware, but ambivalent
Preparation	Intent on taking action
Action	Actively modifying behavior
Maintenance	Sustaining new behavior new behavior

- Next, write the four components of the spirit of motivational interviewing on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ask the participants to help you define each component.
 - Instructors Note: The following chart lists the components of the spirit of motivational interviewing and some suggestions for definitions.

Component	Suggestions for Definition
Compassion	Demonstrate concern and awareness of other's distress, suffering, or misfortune
Acceptance	The act of agreement or believing in an idea, opinion, or explanation
Evocation	The action of bringing forth a feeling, memory, image, or thought to the conscious mind
Partnership	The association of two or more people who work together in the same activity for a common end

- Next, write the four motivational interviewing strategies on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ask the participants to help you define each strategy.
 - Instructors Note: The following chart lists the motivational interviewing strategies and some suggestions for definitions.

Strategy	Suggestions for Definition
Open-ended questions	questions that are not easily answered with a yes/no/or other one word response (i.e., OK)

Affirmations	statements that highlight a person's resources
Reflective listening	active listening, not righting reflex. Hear the content and add the emotion
Summarizing	reviewing what people say

- Finally, ask the participants if there is anything they are unsure of in regards to any of the stages, components, or strategies or if there is anything they want to learn through this workshop. Again, record responses on a flip chart or whiteboard.

Activities:
Activity: Motivation Blocked (10 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivation Blocked* activity
 - What to say: "Helping youth discover their own motivation to adopt a new behavior takes some skill and practice. Remember you are only supporting the youth in developing their own, internal motivation to make a change. Your job will be to learn to recognize ambivalence, resistance, and discord and help the youth to find their own motivation to make a change. In this activity we will come to an agreement on the definition of ambivalence, resistance, and discord."
- Lead the *Motivation Blocked* activity:
 - Write the words Ambivalence, Resistance, and Discord on a flipchart or white board.
 - Ask the group to help you define each word. Document the definitions next to each word.

Instructor Note: Possible definitions to help you facilitate the discussion are below.

- Ambivalence:** the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.
- Resistance:** the refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.
- Discord:** lack of agreement or harmony between things.
- Next, say: "You may run into anyone or more of these responses when discussing change with a youth. In the next activity we will learn about how people, including youth, talk about change."

Activity: Youth Behaviors (15 minutes)

- Describe the *Youth Behaviors* activity:
 - What to say: "Before we start learning about how youth talk about behaviors and change it would be helpful to have some common behaviors. This activity should help us identify some common behaviors and how youth in our program talk about them."
- Lead the *Youth Behaviors* activity:
 - As a large group, ask the participants to identify some behaviors youth may want to change or new behaviors they may want to adopt. Write these on a flipchart or whiteboard.

Instructors Note: One way to facilitate this is to explore common domains in any individual's life. Ask the group for examples of healthy behaviors youth may want to adopt or unhealthy behaviors they may want to change, relate to:

- **Physical** (health, physical fitness, nutrition) e.g., starting a sport, new eating habits, etc.
 - **Social/Emotional** (interactions in relationships with peers, teachers, other adults) e.g., interruptions, fighting, developing friends, engaging in activities, bad language, etc.
 - **Cognitive** (academics) e.g., grades, studying, etc.
- Next, ask participants to provide you with some common statements youth might say about these behaviors. Write these statements on a flipchart or whiteboard.
- Instructor Note: Save this list. If written on a whiteboard or you can't save it, take a photo. You will use it again in the *Spotting Change Talk* and *Promoting Change Talk* activities.

Activity: *Recognizing Change Talk* (20 minutes)

- Describe the *Recognizing Change Talk* activity:
 - What to say: "As you work with youth you may sometimes hear them say something that indicates they want to or need to change a behavior. This kind of language is called change talk. Change talk is simply a verbal indicator that a person is ready to make a move and change a behavior. Motivational interviewing uses a set of strategies to help individuals to reflect on their motivation to change. This activity will help you begin to identify the patterns in what they say and how they act."
- Lead the *Recognizing Change Talk* activity:
 - Write the acronym DARN on a flip chart or white board. Next to each letter add the word that the letter represents.
 - D – Desire
 - A – Ability
 - R – Reason
 - N – Need
 - Next, ask the participants to brainstorm a definition for each of these words.
 - Write the definitions next to each word.

Instructor Note: a definition is provided below to help facilitate this brainstorming.

- **Desire:** a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen.
 - **Ability:** the power or skill to do something.
 - **Reason:** good or obvious cause to do something.
 - **Need:** a thing that is wanted or required.
- Next, ask the participants to brainstorm with you ways we express each of these words.
- Write the examples next to each word.

Instructor Note: some ideas are provided below to help facilitate this brainstorming.

- **Desire** - I want; I'd like to; I wish
- **Ability** - I think I can; I might; I've tried ____ before, I could
- **Reason** - It would be better if...; I have no reason to ...; I need to do ____ so I can do ____
- **Need** - I have to ...; I ought to...; My parents would be so mad;

Effective Communication Workshop

Understanding Change Talk

- Summarize the activity by saying: "These four words represent ways youth may feel motivated to make a behavior change. When staff can recognize this language they can use motivational interviewing strategies to help youth to be successful in making changes to their behavior."

Activity: Spotting Change Talk (15-20 minutes)

- Describe the *Spotting Change Talk* activity:
 - What to say: "Let's see how good we are at spotting change talk. In the earlier activity, we identified some common youth behaviors and made a list of ways we have heard youth talk about these behaviors and changes."
- Lead the *Spotting Change Talk* activity:
 - Display the list of common statements youth may say about behaviors they want to change from the *Youth Behaviors* activity.
 - As a large group, identify which of the types of change language are represented in each statement and mark them with the corresponding letter (i.e., D for Desire, A for Ability, R for Reason, and N for Need).

Instructor Note: It is OK for statements to have more than one kind of change talk noted.

Activity: Promoting Change Talk (25 minutes)

- Describe the *Promoting Change Talk* activity:
 - What to say: "If you remember the stages of change we talked about at the beginning of this workshop, you may remember that individuals can approach change at different stages and sometimes people think the stages of change is a continuum, but actually people can jump around as they struggle to change a behavior. Being able to evoke change talk is one way youth program staff can help youth to understand and then leverage their motivation to help them move from early stages like precontemplation and contemplation to later stages like preparation, action, and maintenance. In this next activity we are going to use ten strategies for evoking change talk to start learning how to help draw out youth's motivation to change a behavior."
- Lead the *Promoting Change Talk* activity:
 - Display the list of common statements youth may say about behaviors they want to change from the *Youth Behaviors* activity.
 - What to say: "The research around behavior change indicates that change is more likely to be meaningful and lasting when the motivation for that change comes from within the individual making the change. Change talk and motivational interviewing strategies are one way youth program staff can support youth in making changes to their behavior. There are some common ways to draw change talk out of youth."
 - Provide each group a copy of the Handout: *Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk*
 - Ask one participant to read the first definition.
 - Ask the larger group for volunteers to develop a statement related to one of the behaviors from the *Youth Behaviors* activity using the first strategy on the handout.

Instructor Note: If participants struggle with developing a statement using the strategy, allow other participants to help and facilitate a discussion about what they think the definition means.

- Continue to the second strategy and repeat the process. Make sure all of the participants have an opportunity to create statements using the strategies.
- Once you have worked through all or most of the youth behavior statements, process the activity as a large group. Ask:
 - How could you use this in the youth program?
 - Which of these strategies can you see using in the program?
 - When might change talk be a sign you need to get the youth help from a medical or mental health professional?

Reflection and Recap (5 minutes):

- Return to the participants' responses gathered at the start of the workshop (see Prior Knowledge activity). Ask the participants what they learned during the course of the workshop and record the information on the same paper or a new blank page if there is no room. Draw attention to topics that were on the list generated earlier, new topics, and questions that were answered.
- Ask follow-up questions, such as "What part of the activity made you realize that?" and "How could you use these strategies with youth?"

Resources:

- Handout: *Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk*

Sources:

[Practice Transformation]. *Chasing Change Talk* [Video]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/158973974>

Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. *Ten strategies for evoking change talk* [PDF file].

Retrieved from:

<http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/sites/default/files/Ten%20Strategies%20for%20Evoking%20Change%20Talk%20Sue%20EckMaahs.pdf>

1. Ask Evocative Questions: Ask open question, the answer to which is change talk.
2. Explore Decisional Balance: Ask first for the good things about status quo, then ask for the not-so-good things.
3. Ask for Elaboration: When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more details. In what ways? Tell me more...? What does that look like?
4. Ask for Examples: When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples. When was the last time that happened? Give me an example. What else?
5. Look Back: Ask about a time before the current concern emerged. How were things better, different?
6. Look Forward: Ask what may happen if things continue as they are (status quo). Try the miracle question: If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different? How would you like your life to be five years from now?
7. Query Extremes: 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?
8. Use Change Rulers: Ask, "On a scale from zero to ten, how important is it to you to [target change] - where zero is not at all important, and ten is extremely important? Follow up: And why are you at _____ and not _____ [lower number than they stated]? What might happen that could move you from _____ to [higher number]? Instead of "how important" (need), you could also ask how much you want (desire), or how confident you are that you could (ability), or how committed are you to (commitment). Asking "how ready are you?" tends to be confusing because it combines competing components of desire, ability, reasons and need.
9. Explore Goals and Values: Ask what the person's guiding values are. What do they want in life? Using a values card sort can be helpful here. If there is a "problem" behavior, ask how that behavior fits in with the person's goals or values. Does it help realize a goal or value, interfere with it, or is it irrelevant?
10. 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.

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