



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 build 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 3.5 hours to complete all activities within this guide. If you do not have time for the full workshop, you might break the workshop into two separate sessions. During session one cover the Introduction and the following activities: Prior Knowledge, Open-ended Questions, Clarifying Questions, Probing Questions, Understanding Open-ended Questions, and Affirmation. In the second session cover the Introduction and the following activities: Prior Knowledge, Reflections and Summaries. Conclude both sessions with the Reflection and Recap activities.

Use only 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:

- Instructional Aid: *Prompts, Topics, and Examples of Open-Ended Questions*
- Printed copies of the Handout: *Inquiry Scenarios* (one per small group)
- Printed copies of the Handout: *Affirmation Scenario* (one per small group)
- Printed copies of the Handout: *Reflective Statement Starters* (one per small group)
- Printed copies of the Handout: *Summary Scenarios* (one per small group)
- Paper and writing utensils for each participant
- Flip chart paper or white board
- Laptop and projector to show videos



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 in order to engage individuals in conversations to reconcile their behaviors 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 in its entirety takes practice to perfect, components can be used when working with youth to support their self-efficacy and strengthen 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, 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 expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy. These principles help staff decide which strategy to use to support 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-ended 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:

- Learn about motivational interviewing strategies to improve staff’s ability to support youth development

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Briefly summarize the content you covered in the previous Workshop: *Understanding Change Talk*.
 - What to say: “In the previous workshops, we learned about how to evoke change talk and how that kind of talk helps to evoke internal motivation to change. 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 where participants can see. Ask the participants if they can remember the signs and indicators of each of the stages. Record their responses alongside the stages of change.
 - Instructor Note: The following chart lists the stages of change and some common indicators as discussion prompts.

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

- Next, write the four components of the spirit of motivational interviewing where participants can see. Ask the participants to help you define each component.
 - Instructor Note: The following chart lists the components of the spirit of motivational interviewing and some suggestions for definitions.

Component	Suggestions for Definition
Compassion	Demonstrating concern for and awareness of others’ distress, suffering, or misfortune



Effective Communication Workshop

Motivational Interviewing Strategies

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.
 - Instructor 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 trying to 'fix' things when you hear a problem. 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 where participants can see them.

Activities:

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Open-Ended Questions (20 minutes)*

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Open-Ended Questions* activity:
 - What to say: "One strategy used in motivational interviewing is asking open-ended questions. These kinds of questions are different from closed-ended questions in that they generally help to create awareness, thought, and reflection. Questions can help youth further explore their thoughts and feelings on a given subject. Properly framing questions will be important to help you distinguish open-ended questions from those that simply reframe or require only a brief or factual response."
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Open-Ended Questions* activity:
 - Watch the video *The Power of Effective Questioning*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dO0dO_wmE
 - Lead a brief discussion about the video.
 - Ask the group to think about the video and brainstorm the different ways questions can be used. Write these suggestions for all to see. A list of prompts from the video is provided for you in the Instructional Aid: *Prompts, Topics, and Examples of Open-Ended Questions*.
 - Discuss the difference between closed- and open-ended questions.
 - Instructor Note:
 - Closed-ended questions require only short answers, often from a limited set of options.

- Open-ended questions allow for longer responses and potentially more creativity and information.

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Clarifying Questions* (15 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Clarifying Questions* activity:
 - What to say: “Even though we have been asking questions all of our lives, how many of us really think about the power of questions or how to ask a question to get the information and reaction we would like? In this next activity, we are going to do an activity to practice asking clarifying questions. Clarifying questions are used when you don’t have all of the facts and help you gain a clearer picture of a situation so that you can ask another kind of question (probing) that we’ll learn more about in the next activity. The goal of this activity is to learn what kind of question is considered clarifying and to practice forming these kinds of questions.”
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Clarifying Questions* activity:
 - Write out two or three examples of clarifying questions for the participants to use as a guide. Examples might include the following:
 - “Did I hear you say...?”
 - “What’s another way you might say that?”
 - Or, after paraphrasing what you heard (repeating back in your own words), ask, “Am I getting that right?”
 - In a large group, ask the participants to brainstorm several other clarifying questions. Add them to the list you have already started.
 - Next, pass out several copies of the Handout: *Inquiry Scenarios*. Select one scenario and ask the participants to write down two or three clarifying questions. Have one or two individuals share what they wrote down.
 - Transition to the next activity by asking participants what they think the difference is between a clarifying question and a probing question.
 - Instructor Note:
 - Clarifying questions look for facts and details.
 - Probing questions ask the respondent to reflect and think more deeply about the topic.

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Probing Questions* (15 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Probing Questions* activity:
 - What to say: “The next activity has us practice asking probing questions. Probing questions are intended to help youth think more deeply about the issue at hand. The goal of this activity is to learn what kind of question is considered probing and to practice forming these kinds of questions.”
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Probing Questions* activity:
 - Write two or three examples of probing questions in a place where participants can see them. Examples might include the following:
 - “What do you think would happen if...?”
 - “How did you decide...?”
 - “What is the connection between A and B?”

- In a large group, ask the participants to brainstorm several other probing questions. Add them to the list you have already started.
- Next, using the Handout: *Inquiry Scenarios* you handed out earlier, select a different scenario and ask the participants to write down any clarifying questions they would want answered. As a group, agree on what the answer to those clarifying questions would be; then, ask the participants to draft two or three probing questions. Have one or two individuals share what they wrote down.

Activity: Understanding Open-Ended Questions (25 minutes)

- Describe the *Understanding Open-Ended Questions* activity:
 - What to say: “Let’s think back to the video. Do you remember how they talked about the difference between closed- and open-ended questions? Questions have the power to get information and provoke a response. In this next activity, we are going to practice asking open-ended questions, which often start with what, why, how, or like the narrator in the video suggested, ‘tell me’ or ‘describe.’”
- Lead the *Understanding Open-Ended Questions* activity:
 - Post the following reminders where participants can see them:
 - **Judgement:** Do you have the answer in mind as you ask the question? If so, remove the judgement from the question, or don’t ask it.
 - **Relevance:** Check for relevance. Is your question still relevant? Check back on what you have heard the individual say previously.
 - **Solution:** Is your question a recommendation or pushing forward your agenda versus helping the individual explore their thoughts on the subject?
 - **Choose Wisely:** Try to use “what” instead of “why.” Why tends to imply, if not carry, judgement. Using why is also more likely to lead to defensiveness. A what question allows for many different kinds of responses.
 - Break the participants into groups of three or four individuals.
 - Hand out writing utensils and paper to each group.
 - Explain the activity by telling the group that you will give them a topic and their job as a group is to write down as many open-ended questions about the topic as possible within 2 minutes. Explain that after the time is up, you will write these questions on the board as long as they are open-ended and not previously suggested.
 - Provide the topic, and start the group discussion. See the list of potential topics and questions provided in the Instructional Aid: *Prompts, Topics, and Examples of Open-Ended Questions*.
 - After 2 minutes, ask the first group for an example of one of their questions, and write it where everyone can see as long as it is open-ended. Use the reminders as guides for whether or not the question is open- or closed-ended. Ask for another volunteer, and write that group’s question in the same place as the first group’s as long as it is open-ended and not previously asked. The activity is over when the next group cannot ask a related question without repeating one that was already asked.
 - Next, tell the group that you are going to change the activity so that they work as individuals and see how many open-ended questions on a new topic they can generate.
 - Make sure all participants have a writing utensil, paper, and the topic. Then start the activity.

- After 2 minutes, ask for a volunteer to start. Write their question for all to see as long as it is open-ended. Ask for another volunteer, and write that question in the same place as before as long as it is open-ended and not previously asked. The activity is over when you run out of time or no one can ask a related question without repeating one that was already asked.

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Affirmations* (30 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Affirmations* activity:
 - What to say: “In this activity, you’ll learn about affirmations and practice saying affirmations to yourself and others. Affirmations are statements of appreciation, an acknowledgement of a person’s strengths, talents, and skills. Affirmations can encourage the development of self-efficacy within the youth, and they are another way to let youth know you hear and appreciate their efforts toward change.”
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Affirmations* activity:
 - Draw three columns where participants can see, and label them Strengths, Talents, and Skills.
 - As a large group, brainstorm some words that correspond to each of these categories. Then come up with affirmations that either incorporate a word from one of the categories or an appreciative statement. If the group is stuck, use the following examples:
 - Strengths: resilience, compassion, patience, hardworking, generosity, etc.
 - Talents: good at singing, dancing, writing, songwriting, baking, etc.
 - Skills: listening, teaching, problem-solving, etc.
 - Affirmation: I appreciate how hard it gets to have the patience to listen to complaints about your behavior from your parents; thanks for opening up to me.
 - Provide participants with a piece of paper and writing utensils. Ask them to think of a friend, relative, or youth that they know well. Write down the various strengths, virtues, and positive qualities they see in this person. Come up with several affirmations that they might offer to this person in relation to the strengths or qualities that they’ve identified. If necessary, give the following examples as a guide:
 - That took a lot of courage to...
 - You showed a lot of patience when...
 - You put in many hours of hard work to achieve...
 - You showed resilience when...
 - Encourage the participants to repeat this exercise for at least three people:
 - Self
 - One person you care for (could be more than one)
 - One person you find challenging to be around (preferably a youth)
 - Encourage the participants to share their affirmations with a partner to receive feedback on how positive it sounds and whether or not it’s genuine.
 - Divide the participants into groups of three or four, and provide each group a copy of the Handout: *Affirmation Scenario*. Instruct the participants to discuss the strengths they see in Sammy and come up with some affirmations.

- Instructor Note: If the participants are stuck, suggest the following:
 - Strengths: Independent—doesn't let others unduly influence her; aware of changes in her behavior and is bothered by it; wants to break out of the addiction and make real connections.
 - Affirmation: You are someone who makes up your own mind. You're aware of the negative effects of social media, and when you're ready to make a change you'll do what's needed to be successful.
- Come back to the larger group and ask for volunteers to share their affirmations.

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* (60 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* activity:
 - What to say: “Reflective listening, to put it simply, is a way of asking, ‘Is this what you mean?’ to determine whether the listener understands what the speaker means. There are two types of reflections. The first one is simple reflection, which refers to the extent to which staff repeated (using exact words) or rephrased (slight rewording) what the youth was saying. The second is complex reflection, which refers to the extent to which staff paraphrased (inferred meaning, reflected feelings, used analogies and metaphors, offered empathy) what the youth was saying. The goal of this activity is to learn what reflections are and to practice using them.”
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* activity Part 1:
 - What to say: “We are going to start by watching a video that demonstrates reflective listening skills.
 - Watch the *Reflective Listening* video: <https://youtu.be/95lANI1oeBk>
 - Lead a brief discussion about the video, asking the group to answer the following questions:
 - What was Phil trying to do for his wife before he got advice from the spa ladies? (Answer: trying to help, trying to solve her problem)
 - What do the spa ladies say Phil's wife wants other than solutions? (Answer: sometimes just wants a sympathetic ear, support to solve her problems herself)
 - In the video, Phil reflects several of his wife's statements. Which of these is a good example of reflective listening?
 - A) **Wife:** Alex ripped Haley's sweater, and now I'm driving all over trying to find an exact replacement.
Phil: Don't do that—just explain what happened.
 - B) **Wife:** They are fighting about that sweater, and I did everything I could to stop them from fighting.
Phil: I don't understand how they can't see how much you love them. (correct)
 - C) **Wife:** I hate getting stuck in traffic.
Phil: Maybe you should leave earlier.
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* activity Part 2:
 - What to say: “This video was a fun way to show you reflective listening in action. Reflective listening has two main outcomes. First it helps you, as the listener,

understand what the person is saying. When you reflect back to the speaker you are ‘checking in’ to see if your understanding is correct. The speaker can then clarify and redirect you if your understanding is not accurate. The second outcome is that it gives the speaker the sense that they are being heard, allows them to clarify their thoughts on the matter, make decisions, and explore their emotions.”

- Write the words Hearing, Responding, and Being in a place where everyone can see. Ask the group to help you brainstorm how these skills are used by a listener practicing reflective listening.
 - Facilitation Questions:
 - Hearing
 - “How do you think we use Hearing when we practice reflective listening?”
 - “What else could we be listening to, other than words, when we are hearing a person?” or “How do we use our eyes to listen to another person?”
 - “How do we hear emotions?”
 - Responding
 - “What would a person practicing reflective listening be responding to?”
 - “What, other than words, would we be responding to?”
 - “How can we respond or reflect someone’s emotions?”
 - Being
 - “What does it mean to ‘be’ with someone?”
 - “What are some things to avoid when ‘being’ with someone?”
 - Instructor Note: General definitions of each skill are below for facilitation purposes.
 - Hearing means seeing, listening to, and understanding the words, meanings, and emotions the other person is communicating through their words and nonverbal cues
 - Responding means reflecting the thoughts and emotions you heard back to the other person
 - Being means giving the other person all of your attention as they work through their thoughts and feelings
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* activity Part 3:
 - What to say: “Our next activity will help us see how powerful reflective listening is.”
 - Divide the participants into groups of three or four and instruct the groups to select one Speaker. The other participants in the group will be Listeners.
 - Give the groups the following instructions. Speakers will be given a topic to speak on for 2 minutes. The Listeners can only ask follow-up questions that are closed-ended (i.e., elicit single-word answers). Speakers can only respond to questions with simple answers, no elaboration.
 - Topics for the Speaker:
 - “Describe what your parents would say if they were bragging about you.”

- “Describe a time when you felt challenged.”
 - “Describe how you typically spend your weekend.”
 - Switch roles, and repeat this exercise for another 2 minutes. Repeat until each member of the group has been the Speaker.
 - Provide each group with a copy of the Handout: *Reflective Statement Starters*. In the same groups, ask the Speakers to respond to the same question as before.
 - Now, instruct the Listeners to take turns responding to the Speaker by forming reflective statements such as “It sounds like you...”, “You’re feeling...”, or “It seems to you..., so you....” The Speaker can respond with more than yes or no.
 - Instructor Note: Remind the Listeners to offer only reflections of what they are hearing and to avoid asking questions as they reflect.
 - Switch roles and repeat this exercise until each participant has had an opportunity to be the Speaker (approximately 10 minutes).
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Reflections* activity Part 4:
 - What to say: “In the next exercise we are going to continue to practice making reflective statements. I am going to write a statement on the board, and I’d like you each to write down at least three different reflective responses to the statement. Each of your responses should emphasize a different aspect of the statement. Before we start, we’ll try one together.”
 - Write out the following: “It’s been fun, but something’s got to give. I just can’t go on like this anymore.”
 - Ask volunteers to suggest reflective responses.
 - Instructor Note: Here are some possible responses:
 - You’ve enjoyed yourself.
 - You’re worried about what might happen.
 - It’s time for a change.
 - Write down more sentence stems for participants to use as a guide:
 - I know I could do some things differently, but if she would just back off, then the situation would be a whole lot less tense—then these things wouldn’t happen.
 - I’ve been depressed lately. I keep trying different ways to help myself feel better, but nothing seems to work.
 - I know I’m not perfect, but why do they always have to tell me what to do. I’m not 3 years old!
 - Provide participants with paper and writing utensils. Instruct the participants to pair up and develop three reflective responses that emphasize a different aspect of the statements.
 - As a large group, review a few sample responses from each pairing.

Activity: *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Summaries* (20 minutes)

- Describe the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Summaries* activity:
 - What to say: “In this activity, you’ll learn the components of a summary. The goal of this activity is to know what a summary is and practice forming summaries.”
- Lead the *Motivational Interviewing Strategies – Summaries* activity:

- Explain to the participants the components of summaries:
 - What to say: “A summary is a statement that pulls together what you’ve heard youth say. They show that you have been listening and allow youth to clarify their thoughts. More importantly, summaries are a way to promote shared decisions being made during the discussion. There are a couple of things you should include in your summaries.”
 - Write the acronym ICAN for participants to see. ICAN stands for Indicate, Change, Ambivalence, and Next Steps.
 - Describe each letter as you write the letter and corresponding word.
 - **Indicate** is a summary. Staff might say, “Let me see if I have this right...” or “We need to move to the next activity; here is what I heard...”
 - Key point: Indicate that you are pulling together what youth have said.
 - **Change** is about reflecting back any indications youth have made about wanting to change. When you start, focus on the verb they use (i.e., I’m worried, I want, I need to stop, etc.).
 - Key point: Think about the content and the emotion. Miller and Rollnick (2002) focused on four types of change statements: Desire, Ability, Reason, and Need. These statements give you an indication of what is motivating the youth.
 - **Ambivalence** is a state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about a topic.
 - Key point: Youth may not be ambivalent, but if they are, make sure you include their mixed feelings or contradictory ideas.
 - **Next Steps** are your chance to end with an invitation. Say “What do you think are the next steps?” or “What are you thinking you will do?” or “What would it take to...?”
 - Key point: This is their behavior, and they are learning not only what they want and how to make a decision, but they are also learning self-efficacy in addressing a goal.
- Next, divide the participants into groups of three or four, and provide each group with a copy of the Handout: *Summary Scenarios*. Ask groups to choose one of the scenarios and write a possible summary statement using the ICAN structure you just explained.
 - Instructor Note: To help facilitate this activity, possible summary statements are provided below:
 - Possible response to Scenario 1: Let me see if I understand all of this. You’ve filled your dad in on the situation, but you’re not so sure you want to bring your mom into the discussion. You want to graduate and are worried about getting everything done. You know things need to change. What do you think you’ll do?
 - Possible response to Scenario 2: I think I understood you, but let me check. You’re feeling conflicted because you can’t put your anger down. From your vantage point, it feels like his unwillingness to admit his part makes it hard for you to let go, though you recognize that it’s taking a



toll on your mental health and driving a wedge between you and your friends. Where do you think you want to go from here while waiting for his apology?

- Bring the small groups back to process as a large group and ask for volunteers from each group to share their summaries, then discuss how each summary uses the ICAN structure and how each summary could be strengthened.

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. 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:

Instructional Aid: *Prompts, Topics, and Examples of Open-Ended Questions*

Handout: *Inquiry Scenarios*

Handout: *Affirmation Scenario*

Handout: *Reflective Statement Starters*

Handout: *Summary Scenarios*

Sources:

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Effective Communication Instructional Aid

Prompts, Topics, and Examples of Open-Ended Questions

Prompts From Video:

- Obtain Information to Make Better Decisions
- Control Conversations
- Show Interest
- Build Relationships
- Explore Personalities
- Provoke Further Thought
- Emphasize a Point
- Encourage Conversation

Potential Topics:

Pick your own topics or choose from this list:

- Community
- Graduation
- Type of Music or Sport
- Fast Food
- Technology
- Bullying

Possible Open-Ended Question Prompts:

- What were your thoughts as you ...?
- How were you feeling when...?
- What do you think would happen if you ...?
- Why do you think this is the case?
- What would have to change in order for...?
- What's another way you might...?
- How is...different from...?
- When have you experienced something like this before?
- What does this remind you of?
- How did you decide...?
- What is your hunch about...?
- What was your goal when...?

Source: *Handout: Clarifying and probing questions*. (2013). Indiana University Bloomington. Retrieved from <https://global.indiana.edu/documents/global-perspectives/clarifying-and-probing-questions-handout-step-2-define.pdf>

Litmos Heroes. (2014, December 22). *The power of effective questioning* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dO0dO_wmE



Directions: Use these scenarios to practice asking open-ended questions.

1. A youth in your program has recently been informed by their parents that they are getting a divorce. Since then, the youth has had trouble performing well in school and has withdrawn somewhat from friendships with other youth in the program.
2. A youth in your program has begun to react very strongly to negative feedback, especially wrong answers on tests and lower grades in school. You are not aware of any changes at home. The youth talks frequently about how “stupid” and “worthless” they are. When you tell them things will improve if they work and study hard, they say things like “What’s the point?” They seem very anxious in the days preceding tests or project due dates at school.
3. Youth in the program have brought to your attention that one of their peers has been pushing them around and calling them names. The aggressive youth has not acted in this manner before, but you know that there was a recent death in their family. Furthermore, they have withdrawn from activities they used to enjoy.

Adapted from Source: *11 signs your child may need to see a therapist*. (2017, December 14). Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials. Retrieved from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/11-signs-your-child-may-need-a-therapist/>



Directions: Use this scenario to practice using affirming statements.

Scenario:

You observe Sammy, a female youth who is 14 years old. She is constantly on her phone, checking various social media platforms. She's distracted by the phone during activities and isolated from the rest of the youth. You've talked to her about her interests, and she has commented that she knows that comparing herself to others might be harmful to her self-esteem. She has also said that she's fed up with people reminding her to put away her phone. When you ask her to join activities she says sure but then doesn't engage with the other youth and turns back to her phone. She tells you that she is worried that she is missing out on activities in the youth center and school and doesn't know how to connect with her peers. You've asked her if she thinks she wants to participate and she's indicated that she just can't seem to stop checking her feeds and that the phone gives her an escape from interacting with the other youth, who just aren't like her. She doesn't appear to have any friends in the youth center, but you know she has many followers on her various social media profiles. Again, you try to engage her, but she says she'll start working on friends once she feels more confident about herself and that she'll get involved when she is ready but just not yet. You know she is afraid that when she tries to make friends at the youth program no one will accept her.

Adapted from: Rosengren, D. B. (2009). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook*. New York: Guilford Press.



Reflective listening brings together three skills: Hearing, Responding, and Being. To practice reflective listening, youth program staff must use all three skills during interactions with youth.

Pay attention to

- **Hearing** means seeing, listening to, and understanding what words, meanings, and emotions the other person is communicating through their words and nonverbal cues. *Tips: Listen and hear the words, watch for nonverbal cues, listen and hear the feelings, thoughts, and opinions that may not be stated.*
- **Responding** means reflecting the thoughts and emotions you heard back to the other person. *Tips: Give nonverbal and verbal cues that you are listening: eye contact, head nods, acknowledgement statements (oh, go on, yes, etc.).*
- **Being** means giving the other person all of your attention as they work through their thoughts and feelings. *Tips: Concentrate, minimize distractions, focus on words, emotions, and nonverbal cues; empathize and try to view the situation from the speaker's point of view.*

After reflective listening, the next step is to make reflective statements. These statements are restatements of the content youth expressed as well as a summary of the emotions and meanings staff observed.

Reflective statements might start with one of the following:

- What I think I hear you saying is...
- Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't you saying...
- Let me review what I've heard you say. Please correct me if I leave anything out.
- I hear you saying.... Is that right?
- You're feeling...
- It seems to you...
- So, you...
- It seems that...
- So, you are saying...
- It looks as though...
- It sounds like...
- What I'm hearing is...
- In other words...
- I get the impression that...
- You mean...
- You feel that...
- I'm sensing...

Source: Developed by the University of Minnesota REACH Lab



Directions: Select one of the following scenarios and develop a possible summary statement.

Scenario 1 (studying for school): “I don’t want my mother brought into this. I don’t see why she would need to be. I know some things need to change, and I have been talking about this with my dad. I live with him, and he pays the bills, so I think it makes sense to talk with him. I know I need to get some things going if I’m going to graduate. I’ve been talking with my teachers—more or less—and I think I know what I need to do. I’m a little worried about all the things that I have to do between now and the end of the year.”

Scenario 2 (improving relationship): “I’m willing to apologize, but he has to admit that he wronged me as well. I admit that what I did was wrong. I shouldn’t have said it. But he also said some things that were pretty mean and won’t acknowledge it. There was a context, and now all of our friends have turned against me. Still, I know it’s not doing me any good staying angry. I just feel worse and more depressed. So, I know that I should let go, but it’s hard.”

Source: Rosengren, D. B. (2009). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook*. New York: Guilford Press.