

“They say you can lead a horse to water but that you can’t make it drink. But I say, you can salt the oats.” *Madeline Cheek Hunter, Educator*

Quick Desk-Top Reference Supplement for Standard Ongoing Contacts

This reference provides additional guidelines and tips to assist officers in conducting and documenting standard ongoing contacts with probationers. It is designed to supplement the *Quick Desk-Top Reference for Supervision Planning and Case Management* as well as the AOIC *Effective Casework* training manuals 1-3.

Change Talk

Statements that indicate a person may be considering the possibility of change can be referred to as *change talk*. Being able to elicit, recognize, and affirm change talk is critical to motivational interviewing. Change talk may be grouped into four general categories shown below. In practice, you may find that statements often fall into more than one category.

Category	Example:
▪ Problem Recognition	“I think I might be drinking too much.”
▪ Concern	“It’s affecting my job and ruining my family life.”
▪ Belief in ability to change	“With some help, I think I can stop. I have before.”
▪ Intent/Commitment	“I’m going to get into treatment and stop drinking.”









Ways to Elicit Change Talk

- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to explore the probationers perceptions, concerns, and plans regarding change.
- ✓ Use scaling questions (e.g., “On a scale of 1-10...”) to determine how important change is to the probationer.
- ✓ Use a decisional balance to discuss the pros and cons of change.
- ✓ Ask the probationer to look to a time when the problem did not exist to see what was different.
- ✓ Ask the probationer to envision two different futures: one in which change has occurred and one in which it has not.
- ✓ Have the probationer consider the best and worst possible outcomes of change.
- ✓ Explore the probationer’s goals and values and their relation to behavior.

Traps to Avoid!

- Playing the expert
- Arguing or being confrontational
- Giving advice without being asked or without first asking
- Being overly sympathetic
- Blaming or labeling
- Focusing prematurely on change
- Doing most of the talking

Checklist of Basics

- ☑ Review the supervision plan with the probationer
 - ☑ Assess and document the following:
 - Progress on action steps 
 - Changes in criminogenic needs and stages of change 
 - Compliance with conditions 
 - ☑ Note necessary verification efforts 
 - ☑ Use the basic principles and tools of motivational interviewing to keep the interaction directed and focused (see inside)
 - ☑ Elicit, recognize, and affirm “change talk” (see back cover)
 - ☑ Adjust the interventions/strategies as needed 
 - ☑ Document any other information pertinent to the supervision of the case 
 - ☑ Update the action steps 
 - ☑ Summarize important points of the interview and reinforce the probationer’s progress and commitment
-  = Items that should be documented on the case record

“In probation settings, the development of positive relationships between probationers and staff dramatically increase the likelihood that new and pro-social behavior ... will stick.”

Effective Casework III: Social Learning Theory and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions, A Three-Part Series for Probation Officers in Illinois.

Motivational Interviewing: A directive, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence (i.e., mixed feelings about particular behavior). *Stephen Rollnick and William R. Miller, Psychologists and co-founders of Motivational*

Basic Principles of Motivational Interviewing (DEARS)

Develop discrepancy

Change is motivated when someone realizes that one's behavior is inconsistent with one's goals and/or values. By having probationers talk about goals and their relationship to certain behavior, an officer can help probationers see for themselves how their actions are keeping them from achieving what they want in life.

Express empathy

Create an atmosphere in which the probationer can safely express views and explore difficult conflicts. Seek to understand the probationer's perspective without judging, criticizing, or blaming. This does not mean you have to agree with, approve of, or sympathize with the person. Simply acknowledge the person's viewpoint, feelings, and motives in a non-judgmental manner.

Amplify ambivalence

Ambivalence (i.e., having both positive and negative feelings about something) is a natural part of change. Arguing one side or telling someone what to do will most often cause the person to argue the opposite side. By having the probationer explore both the pros and cons of behavior related to criminality, the officer can help the person resolve ambivalence and move toward change. Asking about hypothetical change (e.g., "What would happen if you did change...?") can also be helpful in resolving ambivalence.

Roll with resistance

Resistant behavior should not be directly opposed. Avoid arguing for change as this usually just increases resistance. The officer can invite the probationer to consider new perspectives but should not impose them. Resistant behavior is often a sign for the officer to try a different approach.

Support self-efficacy/build confidence

Belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator and is critical for moving ahead. It should be made clear that it is the probationer who is responsible for carrying out personal change and for choosing the ways to do so. By highlighting strengths or bringing out examples where the probationer (or someone else in a similar situation) has made positive changes (even small or temporary ones), the officer can help build the probationer's self-confidence. Additionally, the officer's belief in the probationer's ability to change can improve chances for success.

Basic Tools of Motivational Interviewing

Keep the interaction moving in the right direction with OARS

Open-ended questions, unlike close-ended questions, cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" or other brief statements such as "twice per week." Open-ended questions encourage discussion and get people to talk about what is important to them. They are useful for increasing understanding, gathering information, building rapport, and getting people to think about change.

Affirmations are statements and gestures that acknowledge the probationer's strengths or recognize behaviors (both big and small) that indicate the probationer's move toward positive change. Affirmations help build self-confidence in one's ability to change. To be effective, affirmations must be sincere and consistent with the strength/behavior being affirmed.

Reflections are basically a rephrasing or paraphrasing of what the probationer has said. Using reflections demonstrates that one is listening, improves rapport, builds trust, and enables the officer to reinforce important points and keep the interview focused in the right direction. Reflections decrease chances for miscommunication by making sure that what was said was heard and interpreted correctly. In addition to simple reflections, overstated, understated, and double-sided reflections can be useful. For example, an overstated, or "amplified," reflection (i.e., slightly exaggerating what the person has said or meant) may cause a person to back away from a statement, while an understated reflection may cause a person to take a stronger stance or deepen his or her feeling about something. A double-sided reflection captures both sides of ambivalence and can help the probationer recognize his or her own mixed feelings about an issue.

Summaries are similar to reflections but cover more information and tie together multiple ideas or issues. They are useful at transitional times during an interview (e.g., at the end of a topic or end of the interview). Like reflections, they improve the accuracy of communication and provide the officer a means for focusing on important points and steering the probationer toward change. Summaries should be concise while including the following:

- 1) A brief statement indicating the intent to summarize, such as, "This is how I understand what you've said so far, let me know if I'm right"
- 2) Recognition of any "change talk" (see back cover)
- 3) A summary of both sides of any ambivalence expressed
- 4) Information from your own knowledge or other collateral sources such as families, the courts, or research
- 5) An invitation to the probationer to add or correct anything
- 6) If appropriate, a discussion of what the next steps should be