

Supported Employment & Education Motivational Tools

O.A.R.S.

OARS—the skills of engagement and relationship building from motivational interviewing

Think of moving a rowboat gently through the water by using your “oars” in a planned and gentle manner

O ask open-ended questions to elicit information and story-telling from the person

A affirm and validate the person’s experiences

R respond with reflections to deepen your understanding of person’s experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings

S provide summary statements to help you and the person connect things and to check your own understanding of what the person is saying

Using these skills provides the person with the opportunity to share their story with you and to begin thinking about what they would like to change. These skills are especially helpful when working on a vocational profile and helping consumers to develop employment goals.

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions allow the person to tell their story, explain a situation, or provide other types of information from their own perspective. Some examples of open-ended questions include,

- “When you think about work, what come to mind?”
- “Tell me about some of the things that interest you regarding work?”
- “What are you thoughts about continuing your education currently?”
- “What are some things that interest you regarding school?”

Some questions may appear to be open-ended, but they are really semi-open-ended questions. They can be useful to gather specific bits of information, however they often only elicit one or two word answers. While starting a question with “why” may appear to be open ended, it may make many people feel defensive and lead to answers like “I don’t know.” Some examples of semi-open-ended questions include:

- “Why do you think you want to work now?”
- “When do you want to start school?”
- “Who will you use as a reference on your job applications?”
- “When will you get back to your education?”

Affirmations

Affirmations are statements about a person’s abilities or skills, and are used to help build motivation in two ways. When you use open-ended questions to evoke confidence in being able to change or their personal reasons to change, then the person voices their own case for increasing their confidence or motivation to change. When this occurs, offering an affirmation provides the person the chance to hear the ability or evidence for change a second time.

An example of an open-ended question combined with an affirmation includes,

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|-----------------|---|
| SEE Specialist: | “Tell me about some of the skills you used to finish high school while you were having difficulties?” |
| Client: | “I tried hard to block out the negative stuff that I thought other students were saying about me. I kept repeating to my self that they were not going to stop me from finishing school no matter what they said or did.” |
| SEE specialist: | “It seems like some people at school were making it challenging for you to complete it, but you found some ways to block out that noise and focus on what was important to you.” |

Reflections

Reflections are statements, not questions that help a person to provide more information based on statements they made or emotions you observed. Reflections serve several important purposes including helping to clarify information, letting the person know that you are actively listening to them, encouraging further sharing of information, developing ownership, highlighting discrepancies and guiding an interview.

Reflections allow SEE Specialists to further explore what they may be hearing or sensing from clients so that they have an accurate understanding of the client's own perspective. Reflections are stated as tentative hypotheses to be checked out or corrected by the client. It is sometimes helpful to start reflections with gentle phrases such as,

- “So you feel ...”
- “You are wondering if...”
- “It sounds like you...”
- “Let me see if I have this right, you...”

A reflection used in SE might look like this,

SEE Specialist: “Tell me about your previous jobs?”

Client: “I have tried so many times to get a job working at a garage and it has always turned into a disaster. I worked at three of four garages in town in the past two years. I really want to work and I have some good skills. I learned how to work on cars from my sister years ago. I know how to rotate and change tires on a car, I know how to do lube and oil changes, and I also have done some brake work. But every time I have gotten a job someone at work starts giving me a hard time and I end up losing it. Why are people always giving me a hard time?”

SEE Specialist: “Let me see if I have this right...you really want to work, in fact, employers have hired you a number of times, and you have some good skills to work at a garage.”

Summary Statements

Summary statements help clients to better organize their thinking (and perhaps our own) by providing short, clear overview statements of information that has been provided by the client. Summary statements generally serve three purposes that are sometimes connected. Summary statements help people to, hear their own information collected and presented back to them, connect different ideas, or transition to another topic in the interview. Summary statements should focus on the client and their perspective and be presented in a way that is brief and easily understood by the client. For example, a summary statement might look like this:

- “So today we have discussed your thoughts about getting a job. On one hand you feel less depressed when you are getting out of the house routinely on the other hand when you get overwhelmed with demands you can get stressed and feel anxious. You would like to find a job where there is not intense time pressure from co-workers or customers.”

Importance and Confidence Rulers

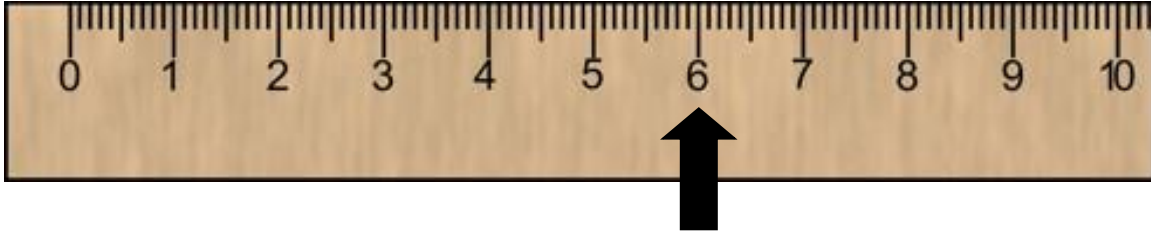
These tools are very useful in helping consumers to state their reasons for wanting to change and what they think will be important in helping them to achieve the change.

The most important part of using these tools is remaining in a person centered mode of interviewing and helping the person to explain to you (and ultimately to themselves) their reasons for change and what will help when you ask them questions about where they place themselves on each of these “rulers.”

These rulers are not intended to produce answers or assessments about who is or who is not motivated to work but instead to help unfold the person’s narrative about why work is important to them, what would make work more important to them, how confident they are in finding work and how you can help them be more confident.

Importance Ruler

“On a scale of 1 – 10 with one being not at all important and 10 being most important, how important is it for you to get a job that you like?”

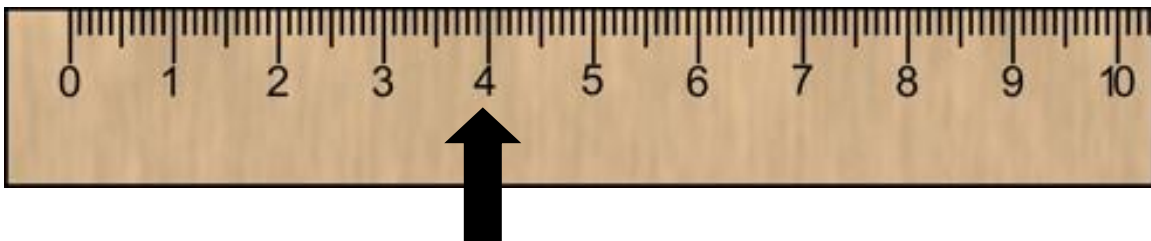


“What are the reasons that you answered a 6 instead of a lower number?”

“What would it take to move your answer up to a 7?”

Confidence Ruler

“On a scale of 1 – 10 with one being not at all confident and ten being most confident, how confident are you that you will be able to get a job with my assistance?”



“What are the reasons that you answered a four instead of a lower number?”

“What would it take to move your answer up to a 5?”

Decisional Balance Matrix

This tool is used to help the person to identify the sources of confusion and / or ambivalence when struggling to make a complex decision. It is important to work on this tool in a way that the person can see what is written down in each quadrant.

It is also important to let the person put their answers where they want them. People may also put the same answer in more than one of the quadrants.

You may work on this matrix over a couple meetings and may offer the person to have a meeting with family members and/or other NAVIGATE team members.

Remember you can go back and revisit things listed on this matrix at later points. You might offer the client the chance to further explore things that come up on this matrix both with you and other team members.

This tool is also helpful when people are sorting through the pros and cons of other complex decisions such as: if the person is struggling with a decision to pursue further education, or if the person wants to provide disclosure permission for the job search, or if the person is struggling with applying for or appealing a disability benefit.

Being Unemployed

Being Employed

Pros

Cons