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# Coercive Control Domestic Abuse: Advocacy Interviewing

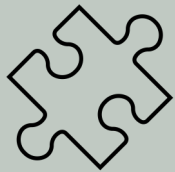


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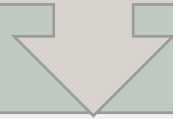
# Advocacy Interviewing: Course Description



Teaches principles of effective interviewing in advocacy and what to avoid



Addresses the skills and procedures needed to develop an appropriate advocacy plan for survivors



Places special emphasis on survivors determining best options for their marriages/relationships and children

# Goals of Interviewing



Establish  
Rapport



Gather  
Information  
Efficiently



Formulate  
Advocacy  
Needs



Assess for  
Safety



# Relationship Building

- Building trust and rapport can take time, especially with abuse history
- We want to communicate to survivors up front:
  - Our role as advocate
    - Here as a support (not just “critical” needs)
    - What we can offer
    - The 3 Es
  - Consistency/contact is important
    - We let survivors lead/initiate contact
    - Protocol if we haven’t heard from a survivor in a few months





# Listening



Listen 90%

Provide input 10%

- First contact—allow 90 minutes for survivor to tell her story

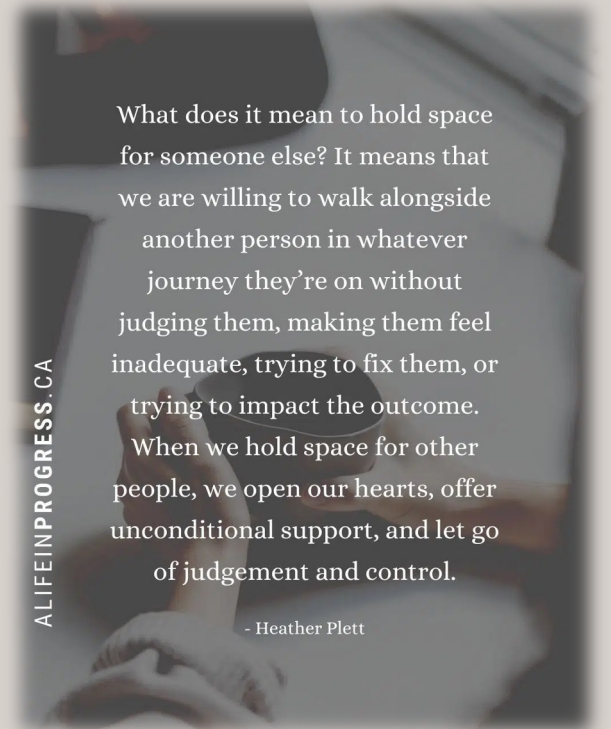
# Listening 90%

**W** *HY*  
**A** *M*  
**I**  
**T** *ALKING*

**W** *HY*  
**A** *M*  
**I**  
**S** *TILL*  
**T** *ALKING*

# Advocate's Posture

- ❖ Hold sacred space
- ❖ Be non-judgmental
- ❖ Validate survivor's experience
- ❖ Equip/empower to help her
- ❖ Support survivor's decision making
- ❖ Support survivor's conscious choices
- ❖ Support survivor as she takes back her life/identity
- ❖ Be comfortable with ambivalence



# Advocate's Mentality

## Attitude toward the survivor:

- An advocate must respect, value, and accept the survivor as a human being and where she is at.

## "Working hypothesis":

- The survivor has the capacity to deal constructively with their problems.

## Guiding principle of advocacy:

- Assume the internal frame of reference of the survivor.







## **“The 3 E’s”: 3 Tenets of Advocacy**

- Education
- Empowerment/equipping
- Emotional support/encouragement

# 3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

## › Educate

- listen and help survivors create a chronological picture they can present to court or mental health professionals (**timeline**)
- educate about and validate coercive control (with and without physical violence) and label dynamics/tactics she expresses (**wheels**)
- educate about entrapment process (**web of entrapment diagram**); how CC was used to take survivor hostage through use of **the 4 C's**)
- pointing out abuser's responsibility for their **choice** to abuse and identify ways they may be held accountable through court system
- family court system process/procedures, ways to strategically manage their case, and present in court

# 3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

## › Educate (continued)

- communications (yellow rock, BIFF)
- domestic relations and parenting time statutes options
- development of parenting time plan proposals
- safety recommendations based on assessments
- pros and cons related to relocation and filing for protection orders as part of domestic relations case
- emotional dysregulation- physical/emotional safety and resilience skills for survivors to pass on to their children, information about utility of counseling/therapy
- grounding techniques, self care, etc.



## 3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

- › **Empower/Equip-** to regain their agency and autonomy
  - through meeting with advocate and/or support group to gain knowledge of coercive control, abuser tactics, and healing processes for themselves and their children
  - hold sacred space for survivors while they struggle through the multiple challenges of healing
  - use interviewing skills learned in this course to validate survivors' experiences and provide freedom to make their own choices
  - address pros and cons to help encourage her in her decision making
  - helpful reminders:
    - › the survivor is capable of standing up for herself and using her voice
    - › **choices** they have made to bring their case as close as possible to their beliefs about what is best for their children and for themselves



# 3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

- › **Emotional Support/Encouragement**- assist survivors with processing emotional stressors and find their own solutions. We can support survivors in many areas that are often dismissed by attorneys as irrelevant to their work, including:
  - parenting,
  - communicating with their soon-to-be-ex (STBX) or ex,
  - court issues,
  - therapy/counseling issues,
  - education decisions,
  - extracurricular decisions,
  - religious decisions,
  - talking with their clergy member or not,
  - changing churches and other religious institutions for safety or lack of support from their originating religious group,
  - medical decisions,
  - communicating with their attorney or the court,
  - deciding to use a specific attorney or go "pro se,"
  - deciding whether to involve other court professionals in their case

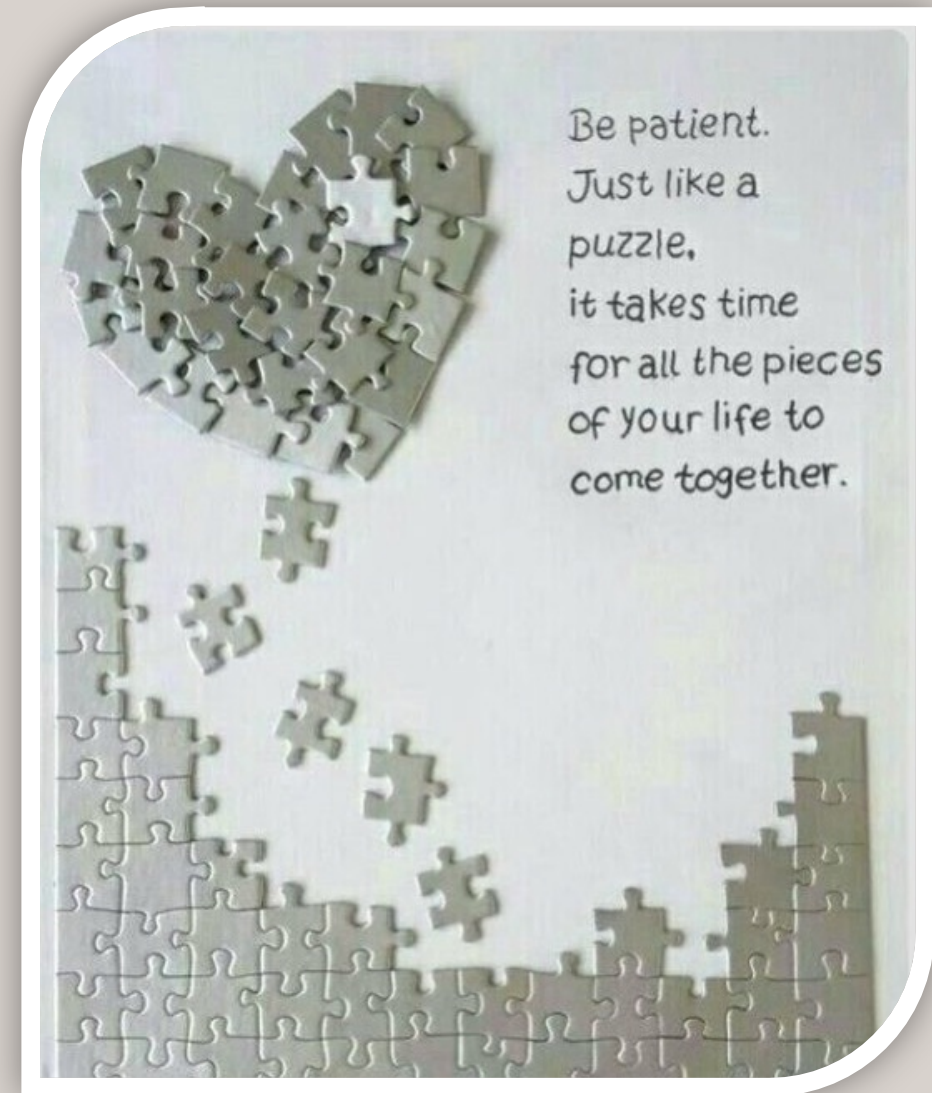
# Initial Intake Interview Overview

CTPM Intake Coordinator or Intake Advocate completes initial domestic abuse/coercive control advocacy intake interview

Covers background information, abuse history, lethality assessment, other issues, concerns, and goals.

Before an advocate's first contact with a survivor- check Salesforce to review intake form and familiarize yourself with case

As advocates, during our initial contact, we can start with an open-ended invitation such as, "Tell me about your situation..."



# Initial Interview Topic Examples

- Identifying information
- Reason for referral/Referral source
- Current Coercive Control/Domestic Abuse pattern
- Weapons owned/used
- Children Present
- Domestic Violence incident reported
- Abuser charged with child abuse?
  - Does survivor have to get a child abuse evaluation?
  - Department of Social Services involved?
- Community Service
- Suicidal/Homicidal



# Initial Interview Topics (Cont.)

- Previous Police Contact
- Family Court Involvement
- Temporary or Permanent Restraining/Protection Order
- Educational/Employment/Residential History
- Psycho-Social History/Risk Factors
  - Family History
  - Medical History
  - Coercive Control/Abuse History
  - Treatment history
  - School history
  - Social History
  - Current behavioral concerns





# Initial Interview Topics (Cont.)

- Mental Health History
- Childhood Problems
- Criminal/Legal History
- Substance Abuse and Other Addiction History
- Current Relationship
- Animals in the home



# Initial Interview Objectives

Advocate Impressions

Assessment for support amenability

1. Attitude towards advocacy
2. Learning styles
3. Previous response to advocacy and support
4. Any type of special consideration or needs (diagnoses, disabilities, language differences)

Safety Assessment for risk of physical and emotional harm

- Advocate documents assessment method used.

# Danger Assessment Methods

CTPM's Intake form contains a Danger Assessment (from <https://www.dangerassessment.org/DA.aspx> but we calculate total score, while the website no longer does)

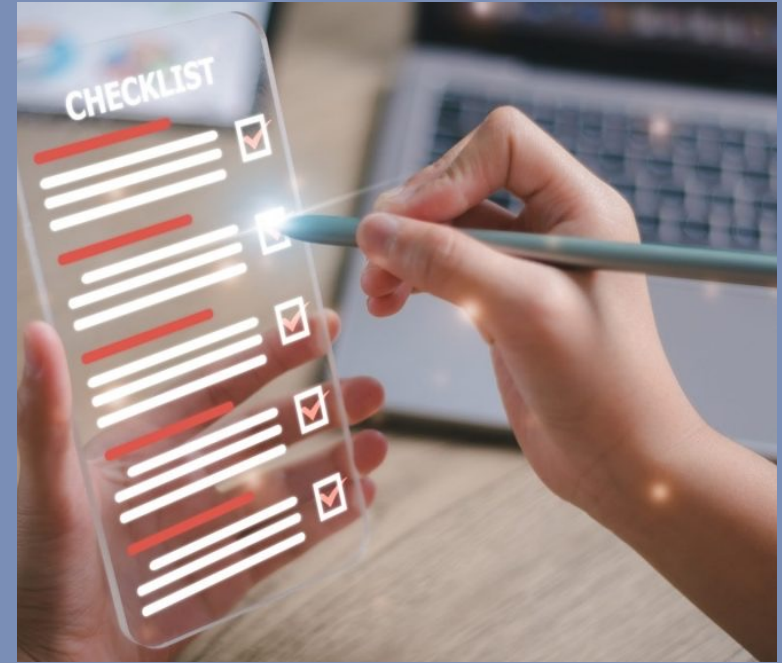
Mosaic Threat Assessment

<https://www.mosaicmethod.com/>

Types of Abuse Assessment- Coercive Control Checklists

<https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ipv-assess/>

Interview



# Initial Interview Objectives

- Risk factors associated with likelihood of increased violence/coercive control being used against survivor (See Monckton-Smith, 2020)
- Other factors for consideration:
  - Cultural issues
  - High-level resistance based on biblical interpretations
  - Transportation barriers
- Assessment of strengths based on information gathered in the evaluation
- Personal goals and strategies to obtain them





# Consultation Use

## Consultation if affiliated:

- BAND group
- Advocate Coordinators
- For family court cases- with Dr. Debra and other team members

## Consultation if unaffiliated:

- Monthly Q&A class
- Facebook networking group



# Interviewing Skills applied to CC/DA Advocacy Survivors

I. Preparing yourself for the interview

II. Attending, listening, action skills- Revisiting the Basics

III. Tune in

IV. Approaches

V. What is CC/DA advocacy interviewing vs. traditional interviewing?

VI. Why are specialized Interviewing Techniques/Skills needed?

VII. What is survivor resistance in CC/DV Advocacy?

# The Value of Listening

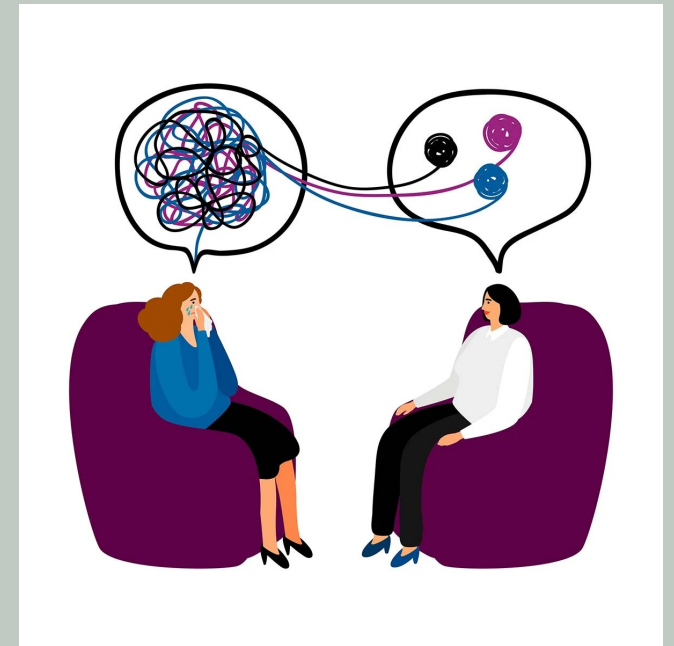
Our Lord listens to us!

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. (Proverbs 20:5)

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.  
Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. )Psalm  
116:1-2)

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Proverbs  
18:13)



# Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

## Social Facilitation

- We tend to act like those around us.
- If the interviewer is tense, the interviewee will be tense; if the interviewer is relaxed, the interviewee will be relaxed.
- Works during interviews, as well as during crisis interventions or anytime people interact for extended periods of time
- Also seen in social and developmental psychology

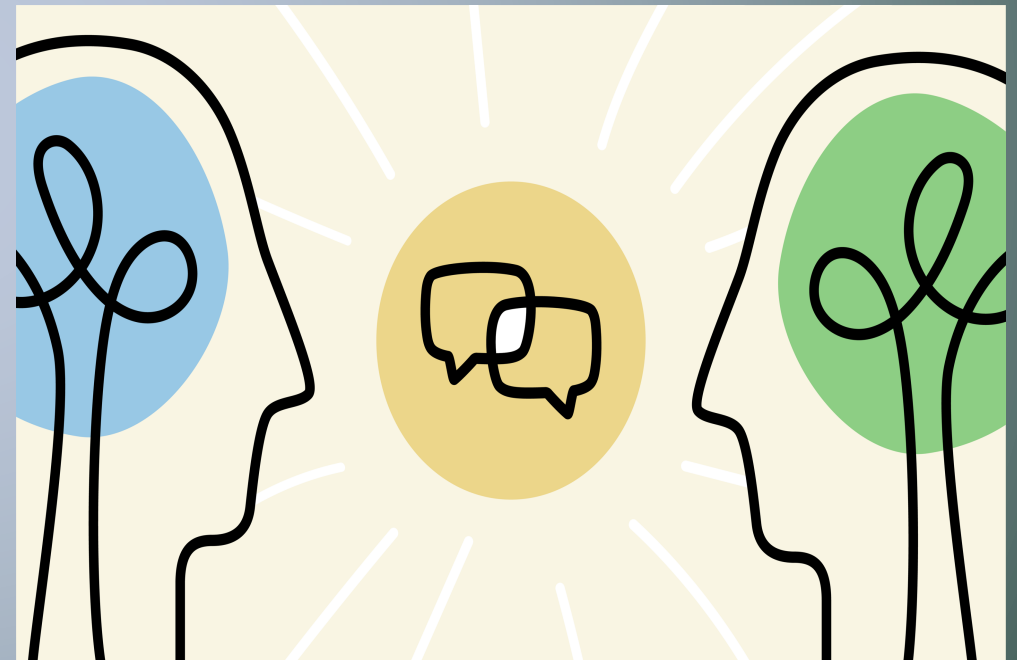




# Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

## Social Facilitation

- Since social facilitation has a strong behavioral influence on both the interviewer and the interviewee, it is easy to see that it can lead to bias in an interview.
- A “good” interviewer will be aware of the power of social facilitation and remain calm and in control regardless of the interviewee’s behavior.



Co-regulation is your response to another in the midst of a distressing situation.

Trauma Treatment Collective

You can't offer co-regulation without self-regulation.

Trauma Treatment Collective

Co-regulation Skills

1. Attunement and Responsive Relationship
2. Emotional and Physical Safety
3. Teaching and Modeling Self-Regulation Skills

Trauma Treatment Collective

# Co-Regulation



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# Principles of Effective Interviewing

## PROPER ATTITUDE:

### Interpersonal influence

- the degree to which one person can influence another

### Is related to interpersonal attraction

- the degree to which people share a feeling of understanding, mutual respect, similarity



# Principles of Effective Interviewing

## RESPONSES TO AVOID

### ❖ Avoid revictimizing

- Statements that increase stress
- Judgmental statements
  - put survivors on guard
  - communicates approval or disapproval of survivor
- Evaluative statements
  - also communicates approval or disapproval
  - may inhibit self-disclosure





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# Principles of Effective Interviewing

## RESPONSES TO AVOID

- ❖ Probing statements should be used carefully
  - Avoid “why...” questions
  - Causes defensive responses
  - May require respondent to reveal more than they are comfortable revealing
  - At times, probing statements are necessary, but should be made with care
  - In general, “how’s” are better than “why’s”



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# Principles of Effective Interviewing

## RESPONSES TO AVOID

### ❖ Hostile statements

- Unnecessary if trying to gather information
- May be used in a “stress interview,” but not to be done without experience in this area

### ❖ False reassurance

- Avoid giving a person reassurance when it is possibly unwarranted
- “Everything will be alright.”

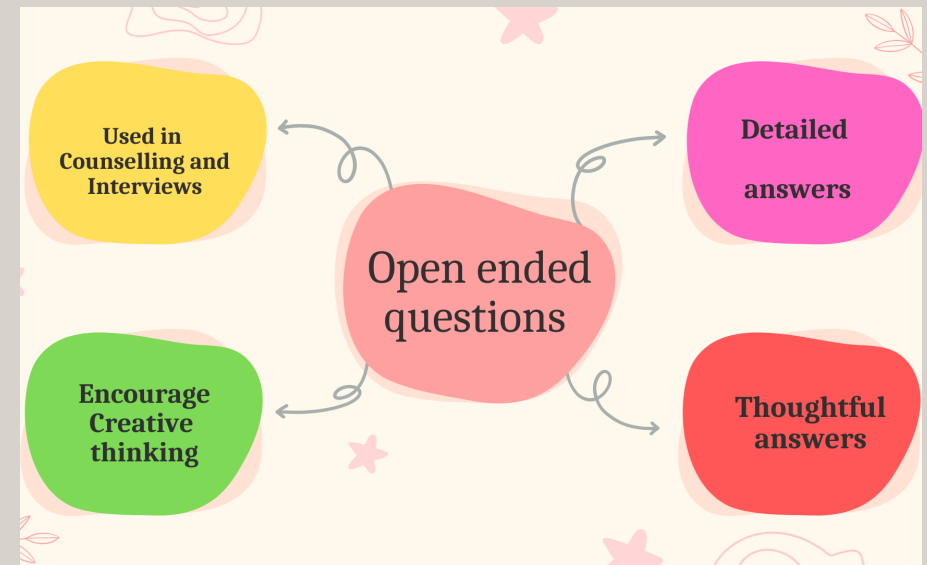
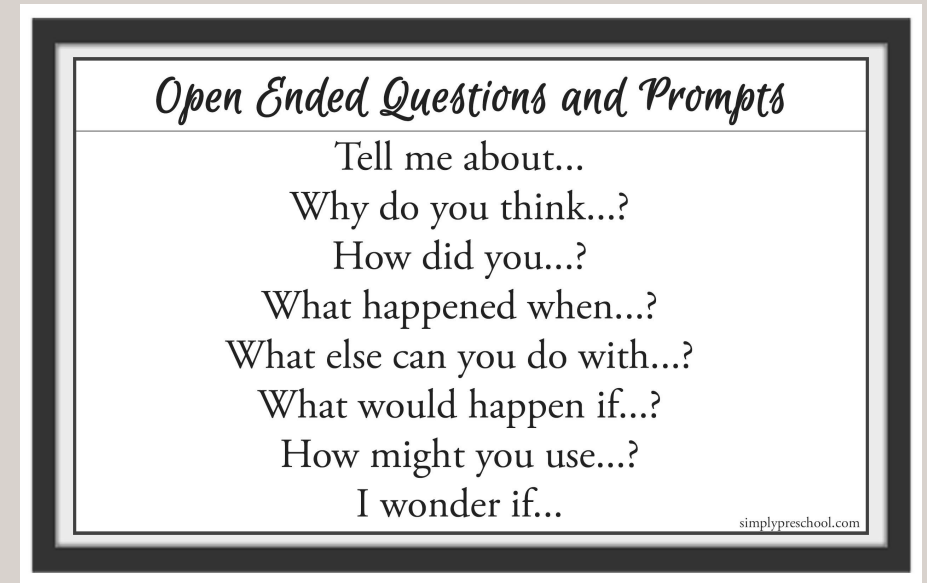


# Principles of Effective Interviewing

## EFFECTIVE RESPONSES

### ✓ Open-ended questions

- those that are unable to be answered specifically
- better than closed-ended questions/that can be answered specifically
- promote the flow of information
- provide a wide range of area for the advocate and survivor to explore



# Asking the right questions....

- Did he hit you?
- Why did you respond that way?
- Why don't you leave? Why do you continue to stay?

vs.

- What happened that led you to seek help for domestic abuse?
- Tell me in your own words what happened before things escalated?
- What happened during the escalation? What did you do?
- What was happening with the children when this occurred?
- How was the church notified about what happened?





# BREAKOUT: Practice Asking Questions

*Scenario: You are speaking with a survivor for the first time.*

- What question do you ask to open up the conversation?
- How do you reflect back what you heard her say?
- What is your next question to move the conversation forward?

First open-ended question

Reflection

Follow up open-ended question

# FOLLOW UP: Practice Asking Questions

*What did you learn about your style?*

- Tendency to ask closed-ended questions?
- Tendency to ask “why” questions?



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# Principles of Effective Interviewing

Ways to  
keep  
interactions  
flowing:

Transitional phrases

Verbatim playback

Paraphrasing and restatement

Summarizing

Clarifying

Empathizing / Demonstrating understanding



# Ways to Keep Interactions Flowing

## ❖ Transitional phrases

- "I see"... "Mmm hmm"
- Sometimes are not effective
- Best to back up to something relevant to what the interviewee just said

## ❖ Verbatim playback

- Repeats information that interviewee just stated
- Reinforces the fact that you are listening
- Also useful in that using the interviewee's words "connects" you to the interviewee



# Interviewing Skills: Active Listening

## Paraphrasing / Restatement

- rephrasing the content of what has been said
- reinforces that you are actually listening
- “checks in” with the client, to make sure that you’ve interpreted the information correctly

## Summarizing

- paraphrasing combined with reflection
- pulls together the meaning of several responses
- used to organize previous information
- can be used to direct the interview

# Interviewing Skills: Active Listening

## Clarification

- asking questions to better understand statements made during interview

## Reflection / Empathy / Understanding

- rephrasing the feelings associated with what has been said
- reinforces listening
- verifies feelings



# BREAKOUT: Practice Listening Skills

*Continue with previous scenario.*

- How can you move the conversation along using paraphrasing, summarizing, clarification and reflection?

Paraphrasing & Reflecting

Check-ins to make sure you're understanding correctly (Clarification)

Summarizing

# FOLLOW UP: Practice Listening Skills



*What active listening skills did you use?*

- How did you do with listening 90%?
- What information did you provide?



# The Value of Questions versus Giving Direction

Notice that Jesus rarely answered questions with a direct answer (only 3). Instead, he responded with challenges and questions with questions to elicit contemplation. In fact, he asked over 330 questions in the Gospels, while he was only asked 183.



- Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? (Matt. 12:10-11)
- "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? (Matthew 15:2-4)
- Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? So, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:9-11)

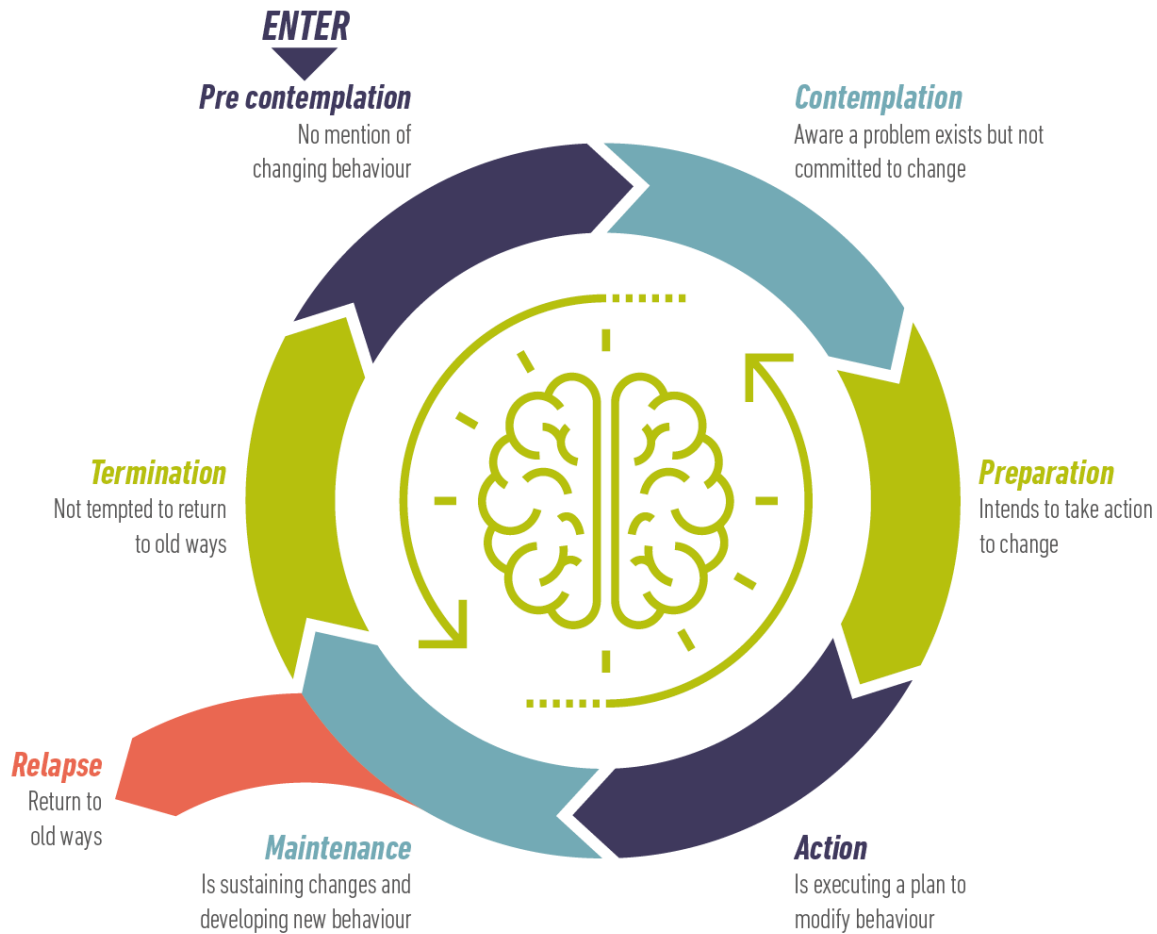
# Motivational Interviewing for Coercive Control Survivors

- What is MI?
- Stages of Change— The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change
- Readiness to Change
- MI Strategies & Traps to Avoid



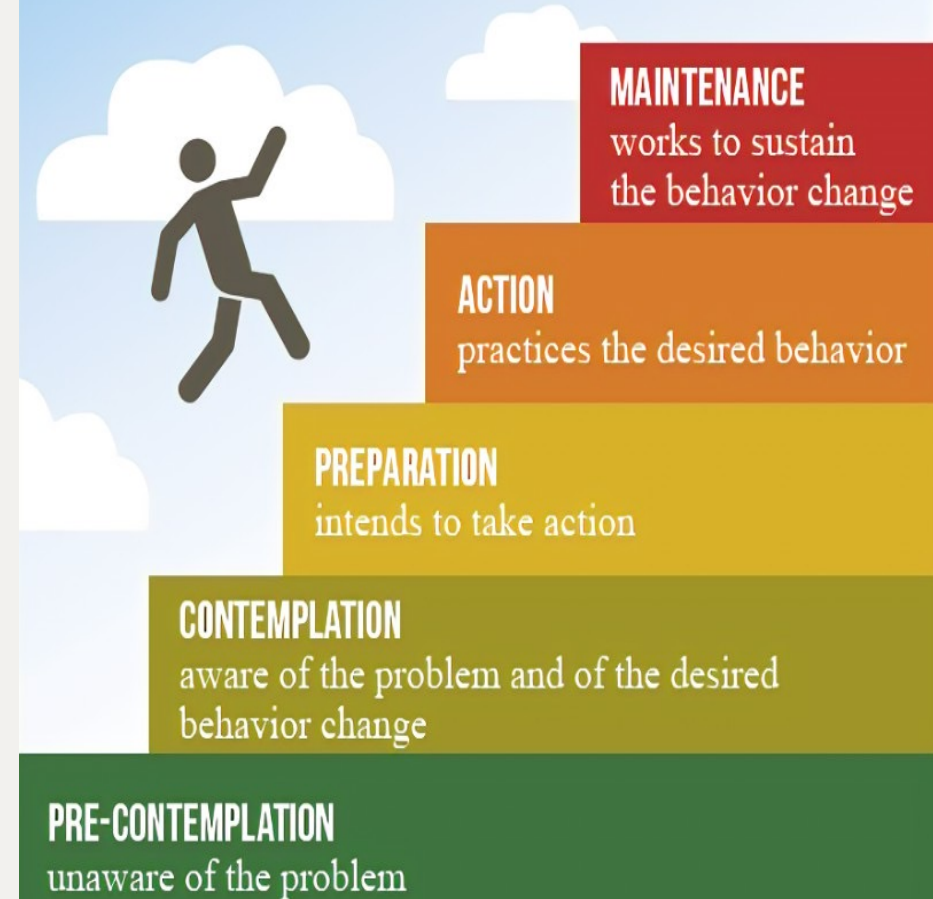
# Stages of Change

## Stages of change



Adapted from Prochaska and DiClemente 1983

## THE STAGES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE





# The Stages of Change

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**Precontemplation** (Not yet acknowledging that there is a problem behavior that needs to be changed)

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**Contemplation** (Acknowledging that there is a problem but not yet ready or sure of wanting to make a change)

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**Preparation/Determination** (Getting ready to change)

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**Action/Willpower** (Changing behavior)

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**Maintenance** (Maintaining the behavior change) and

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**Relapse** (Returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes)

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**Relapse and Recycling** - Slipping Back to Previous Behavior and Re-entering the Cycle of Change

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**Termination** - Leaving the cycle of change

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# From Contemplation...



# To Action



# Stages of Change Tasks

Precontemplation

Awareness, Concern, Confidence

Contemplation

Risk-Reward Analysis & Decision making

Preparation

Commitment & Creating an Effective /Acceptable Plan

Action

Adequate Implementation of Plan and Revising as Needed

Maintenance

Integration into Lifestyle

# BREAKOUT: Stages of Change

*Scenario: You have been working with a survivor for several months and she seems stuck on wanting help for her husband who has a mental health problem, and that with that help he will stop being abusive.*

- What stage of change is she in?
- How will you help her move forward with her life to the next stage of change?
- What questions or information will you provide her?

Assessing Stage of Change

Determining Task for Stage of Change

Facilitating Movement

# Approaches that Pay Attention to the Process of Change

- Clearly identify the target behavior
- Evaluate stage of readiness to change
- Evaluate beliefs and practices related to target behavior
- Examine routes and mechanisms of influence in the culture and for the individual
- Create sensitive stage based multi-component interventions
- Re-evaluate regularly the process of change



# Processes of Change

- ✓ Change is the engine that enables movement through the stages of change
- ✓ Doing the right thing at the right time
- ✓ Cognitive/behavioral processes during early stages
- ✓ Behavioral processes in preparation, action and maintenance





# Processes of Change



## Experiential Processes

- Concern the person's thought processes
- Generally seen in the early Stages of Change

## Behavioral Processes

- Action oriented
- Usually seen in the later Stages of Change



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...and once  
readiness is  
present, little  
else may be  
needed.



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# Context of Change

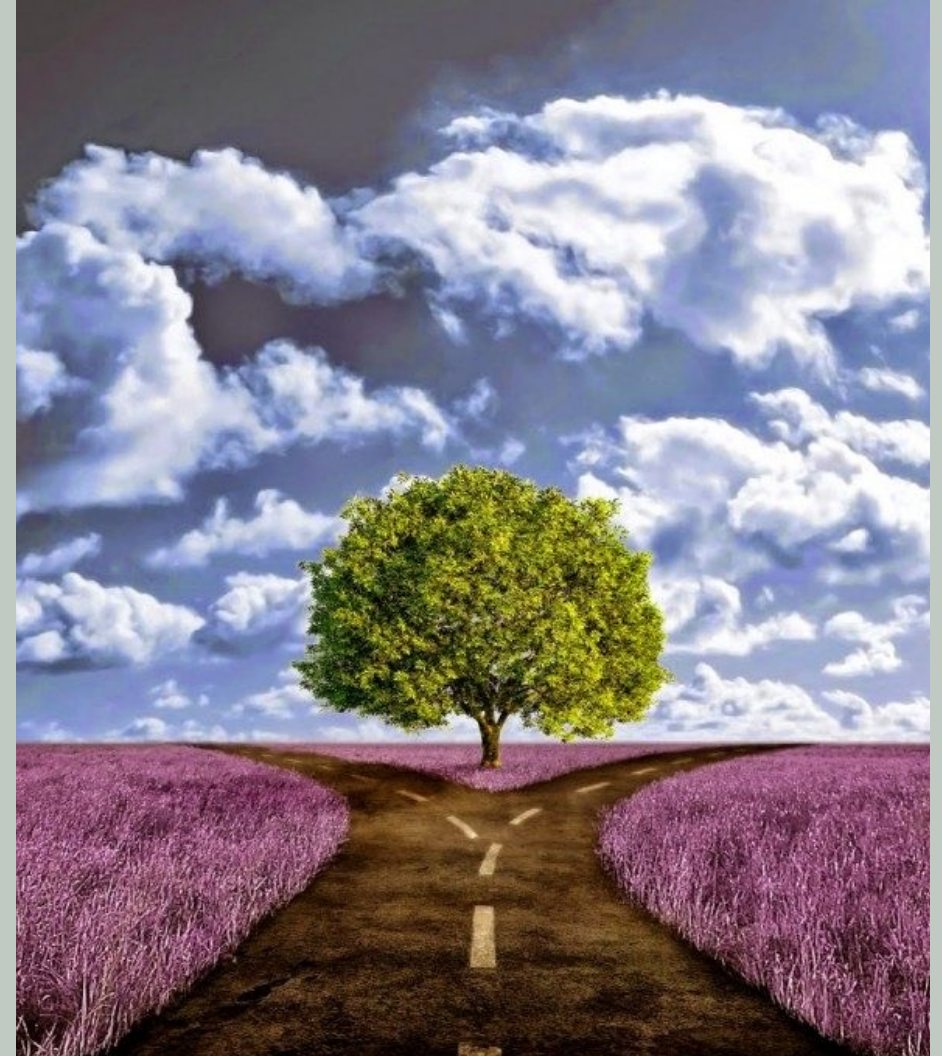
Situational Resources & Problems

Cognitions & Beliefs

Interpersonal Resources & Problems

Family & Systems

Enduring Personal Characteristics



# Decisional Balance Worksheet

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NO CHANGE

PROS (Behavior)

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CONS (Change)

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CHANGE

CONS (Behavior)

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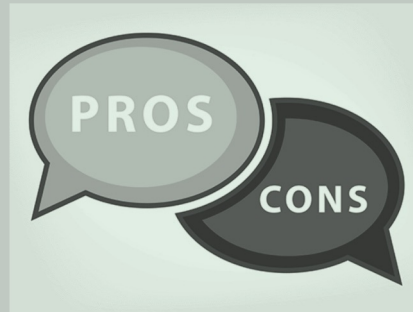
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PROS (Change)

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# Confrontational Approaches

Argue that the person has a problem and needs to change

Offer direct advice or prescribe solution to the problem without the person's permission or actively encouraging them to make their own choices

Use an authoritative/expert stance, leaving the survivor in a passive role

Does most of the talking, or functions as a unidirectional information delivery system

Impose a diagnostic label

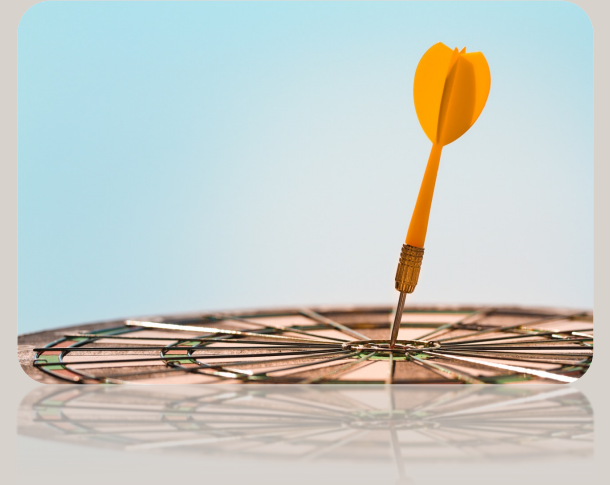
Behave in a punitive or coercive manner





# What is Motivational Interviewing (MI)?

- Motivational interviewing is a directive, survivor-centered advocacy style for eliciting behavior change by helping survivors to explore and resolve ambivalence.
- Compared with nondirective advocacy, it is more focused and goal-directed.
- The examination and resolution of ambivalence is its central purpose, and the advocate is intentionally directive in pursuing this goal.



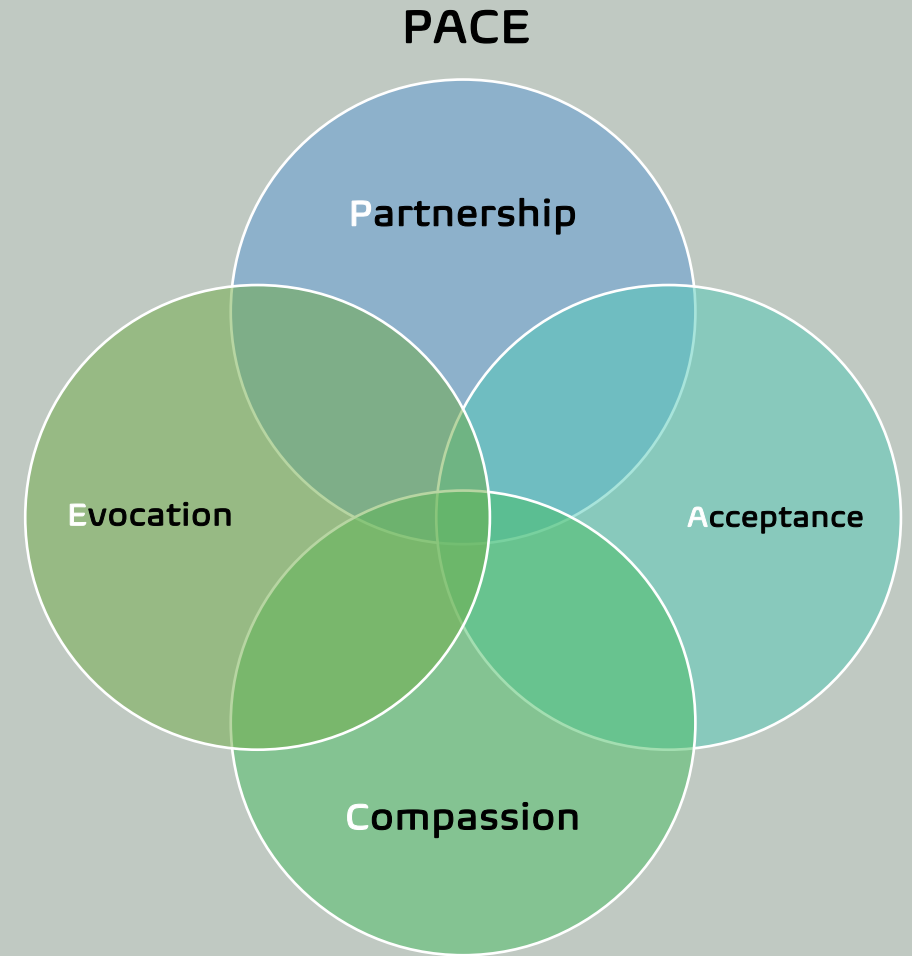
# The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

Motivation to change is elicited from the survivor, and the advocate refrains from pushing for change.

It is the survivor's task to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence. The advocate's task is to facilitate the survivor's choice to do things differently.

Direct persuasion is an ineffective method for resolving ambivalence.

The advocacy style is generally a quiet and eliciting one.

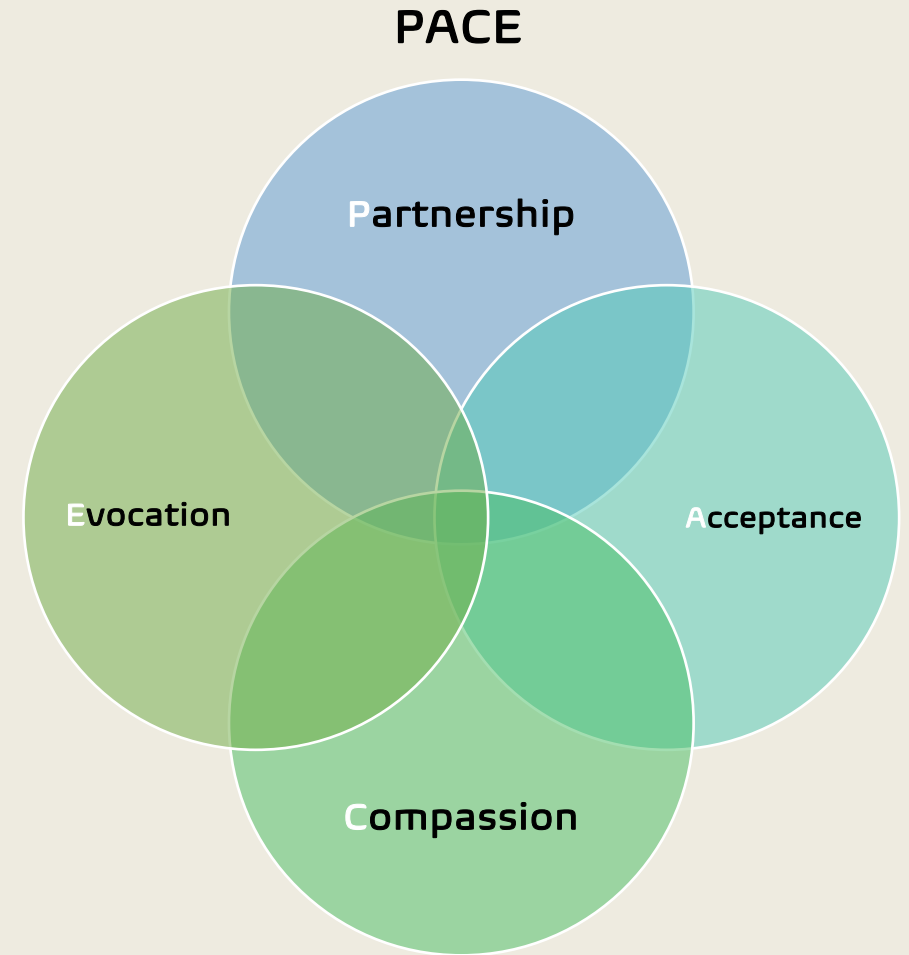


# The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

The advocate is directive in helping the client to examine and resolve ambivalence.

Readiness to change is a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction.

The advocate relationship is more like a partnership or companionship than expert/recipient roles.



# Specific and Trainable Advocate Behaviors

## Characteristic of Motivational Interviewing Style:

- Seeking to understand the survivor's frame of reference, particularly via reflective listening
- Expressing acceptance and affirmation
- Eliciting and selectively reinforcing the survivor's own self motivational statements expressions of problem recognition, concern, desire and intention to change, and ability to change
- Monitoring the survivor's degree of readiness to change, and ensuring that resistance is not generated by jumping ahead of the survivor.
- Affirming the survivor's freedom of choice and self-direction

# General Principles of MI

Express empathy

Listen reflectively

Develop awareness

Ask meaningful questions

Avoid argumentation

Roll with resistance

Provide selective feedback

Affirm self-efficacy

## FIVE PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING



Express empathy  
for the client

Develop discrepancy  
between the client's goals  
and values and their current  
behavior, particularly  
regarding substance use



Avoid argumentation  
and direct  
confrontation

Roll with client  
resistance, instead  
of fighting it



Support the client's  
self-efficacy, or  
their belief that  
they can change



# 4 Foundational Processes of MI

## ENGAGING:

The relational foundation

*Shall we walk together?*

## FOCUSING:

Guiding to a target behavior that is important to them

*Where shall we go?*

## EVOKING:

Drawing out their intrinsic motivation and own ideas for change

*Why are we going there?*

## PLANNING:

The bridge to change

*How will we get there?*

# MI: Interaction Skills (OARS)



# OARS

Key Skills in Motivational Interviewing


**O** **OPEN QUESTIONS**  
to explore concerns, promote collaboration, and understand the client's perspective.



**A** **AFFIRMATIONS**  
to support strengths, convey respect.



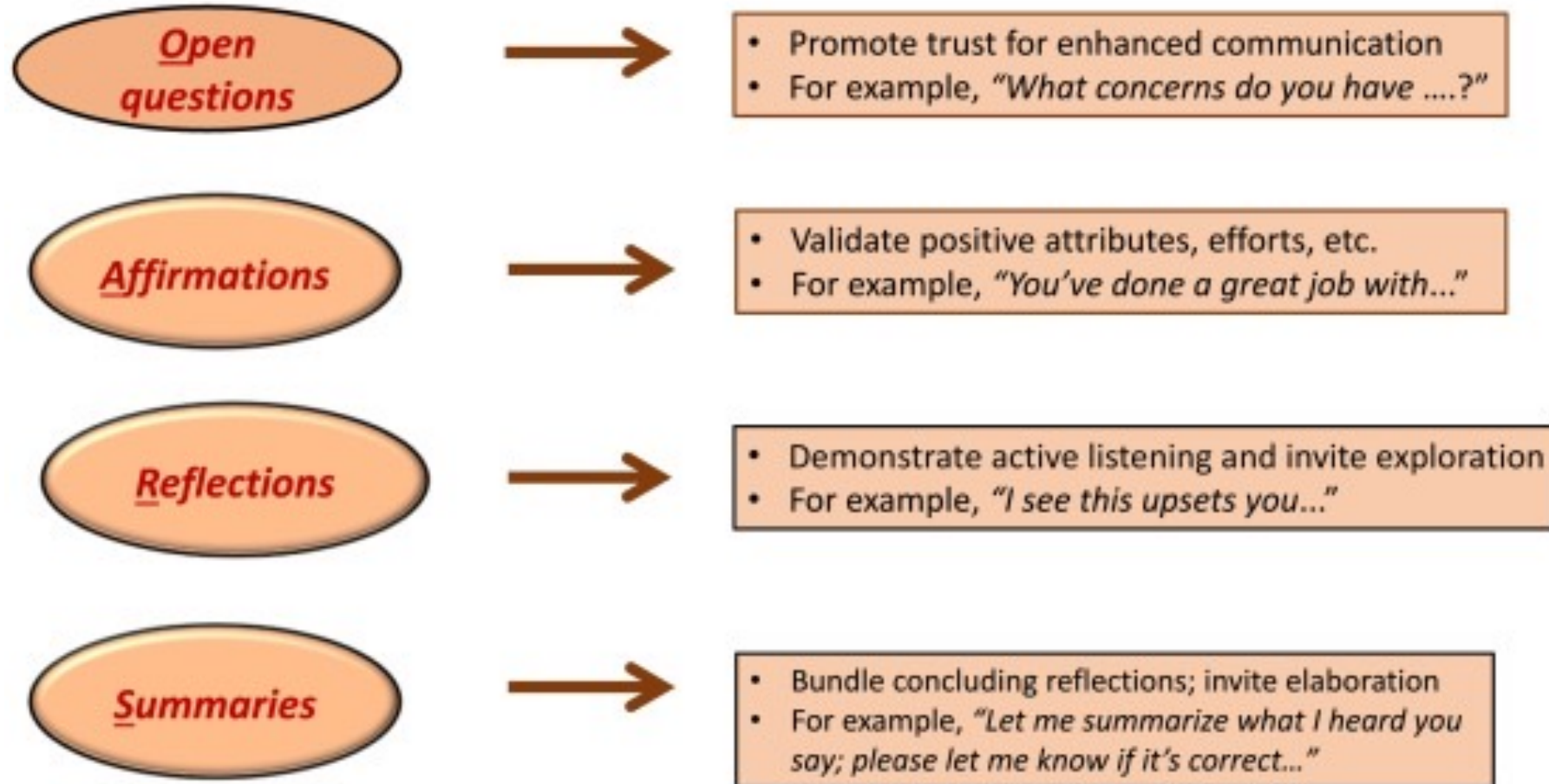
**R** **REFLECTIVE LISTENING**  
to explore deeper, convey understanding, deflect discord, elicit change talk.



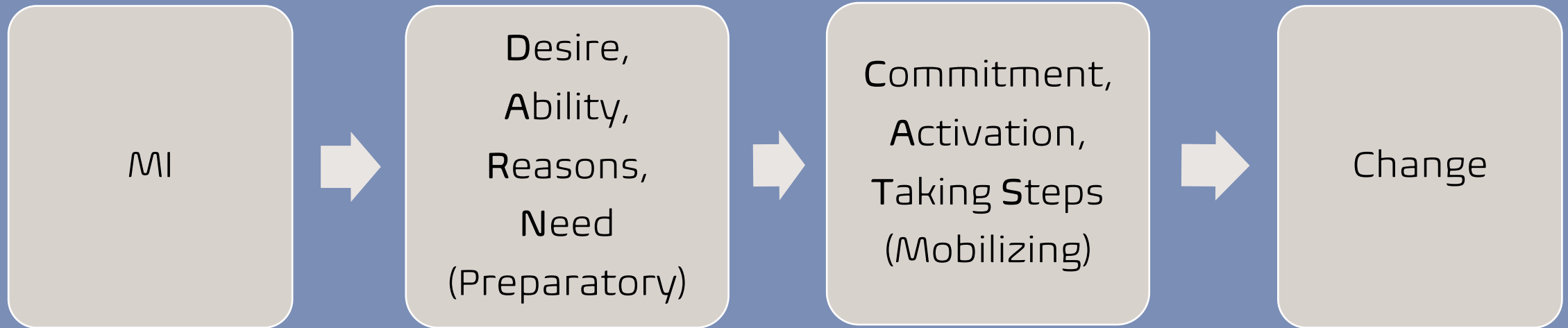
**S** **SUMMARIZE**  
to organize discussion, clarify motivation, provide contrast, focus the session and highlight change talk.



# OARS: Four Core Skills of Motivational Interviewing



# The Flow of Change Talk



# Confrontation is the Goal- *not* the Style

- Goal of MI is to increase ambivalence about coercive control to support the change process.
- Research shows survivors become resistant when advocates use strategies inappropriate for survivors' current stage of change.
- We change the MI strategies to fluctuate with readiness for change.
- The goal = have the survivor argue for change.





# Advocacy and Listening Bring Comfort

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3)

Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

# Effective Motivational Approaches



Giving **A**DVICE



Removing  
**B**ARRIERS



Providing  
**C**HOICE



Decreasing  
**D**ESIRABILITY



Practicing  
**E**MPATHY



Providing  
**F**EEDBACK



Clarifying  
**G**OALS



Active  
**H**ELPING

# Giving Advice

## Give

Give advice only when individuals are likely to be receptive.

## Target

Target advice to the stage of change:

- Clearly identify the problem or risk area.
- Explain why change is important.
- Advocate for specific change.

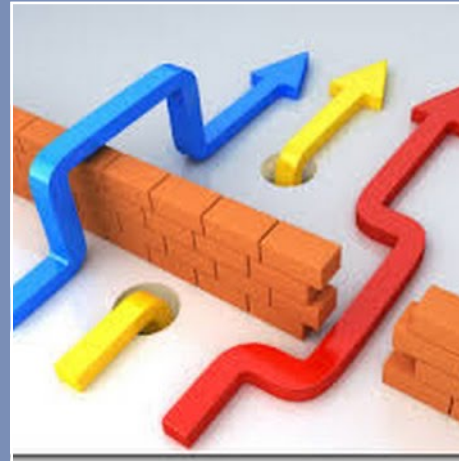


# Removing Barriers



Bolster self-efficacy

Address logistical barriers



# Provide Choices

It's the individual's choice:

- Whether to change
- How to change

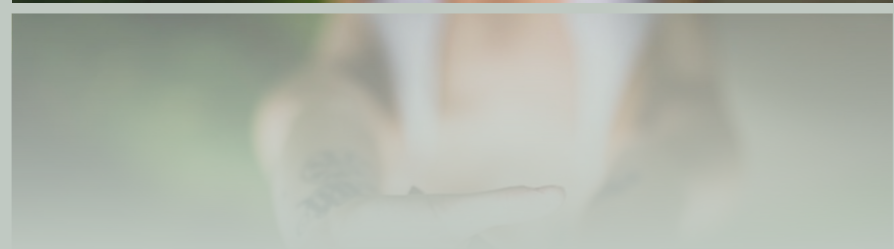




# Decrease Desirability

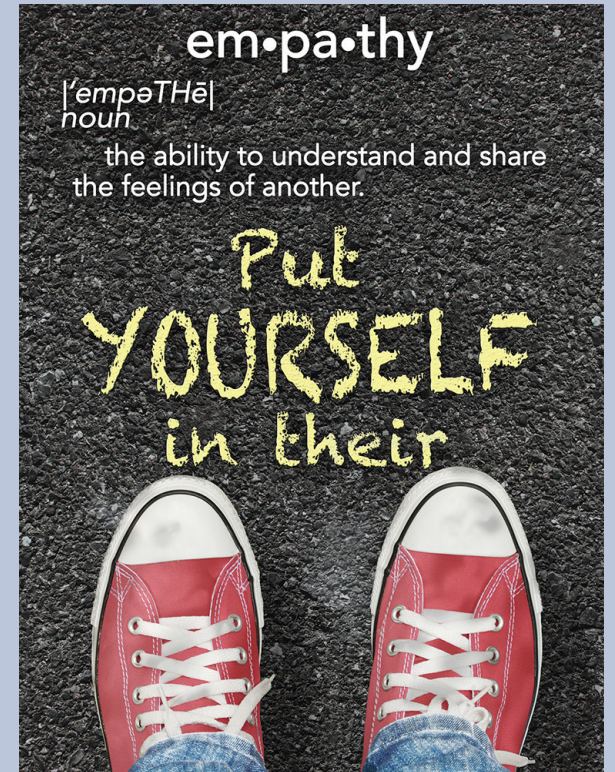
## Help individuals:

- Decrease their perceptions of the desirability of maintaining the behavior
- Identify other behaviors to replace the positives of current behavior



# Practicing Empathy

- ✓ Develop and communicate an understanding of the individual's situation and feelings around the behavior
- ✓ Explore pain around the behavior
- ✓ Empathy communicates acceptance, while supporting the process of change.
- ✓ Acceptance facilitates change.
- ✓ Advocate seeks to build up rather than tear down.
- ✓ Skillful reflective listening is fundamental to expressing empathy.



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# Providing Feedback

Help the individual identify and understand relevant:

Risks of the behavior

Negative consequences of the behavior



# Clarifying Goals

Help individuals weigh:

Pros and cons of their behavior

Pros and cons of changing their behavior in light of their goals for the future





# Active Helping

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Without assuming responsibility for behavioral change, extend yourself and show you care.





# Some MI "Traps"

Signs of survivor counter-motivation might include:

interrupting

ignoring

arguing

denying

talking about  
seemingly  
unimportant  
matters

daydreaming

reminiscing

"wondering  
aloud"



# Types of Traps to Avoid

Question/Answer Trap



Confrontation/Denial Trap



Expert Trap



Labeling Trap



Premature Focus Trap



Blaming Trap



# The Question-Answer Trap

Reinforces the survivor being in a passive role, waiting for the advocate to figure out the answer

Encourages brief answers, without the additional info needed for MI

Open-ended questions w/o reflective listening responses can have the same effect

Generally, avoid asking 3 questions in a row



# Confrontation-Denial Trap

If an advocate takes one side of the argument (to change) then the survivor who is not ready will take the other side of the argument (to stay the same or keep being victimized).

In this way, the conversation builds more denial and resistance.

The goal is to reflect what the survivor is saying and **AVOID** listing the reasons a person should change.



# The Expert Trap

MI as a collaboration, instead of the advocate imparting wisdom

Survivor is the expert on his/her situation

Similar to the question-answer trap in placing the survivor in the passive role

Avoid shifting prematurely to prescribing solutions, & doing problem-solving





# The Labeling Trap

While some survivors benefit from accepting a label like “victim” or “survivor”, this is unnecessary for each survivor’s success

Pressuring survivors to accept a label can reflect a power struggle in which the advocate attempts to assert control

Other buzzwords can elicit resistance, e.g., “your problem”

The MI approach de-emphasizes labeling

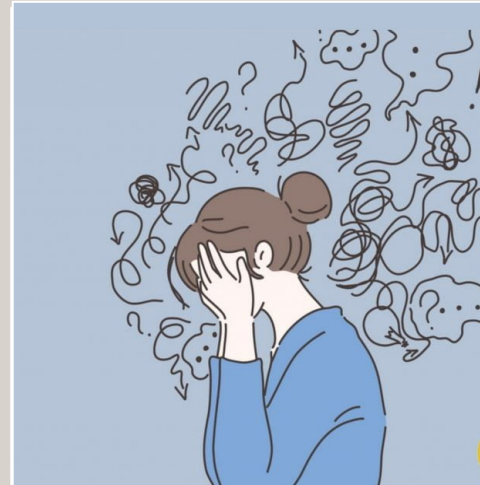


# The Premature Focus Trap

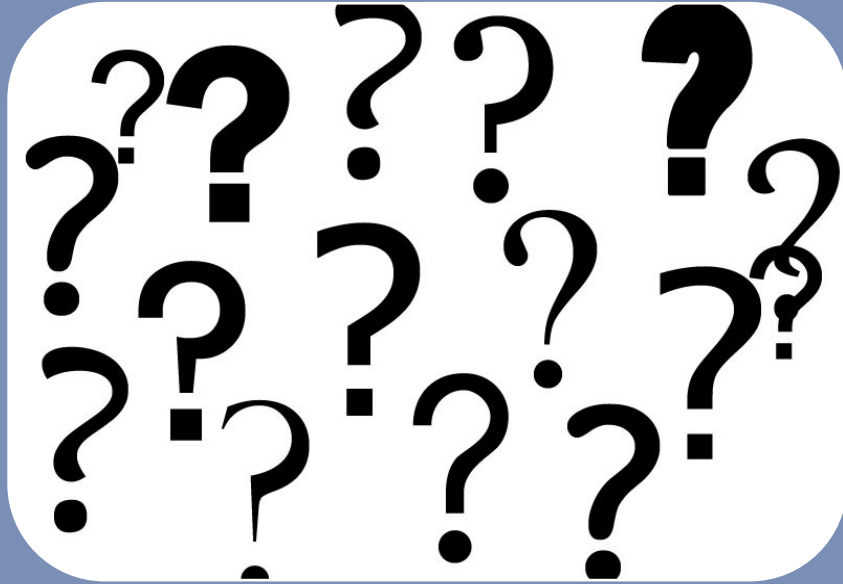


Trying too soon to focus in on leaving a coercive controlling relationship as the main issue may elicit much increased resistance

Better to start with the survivor's concerns- likely to eventually lead back to coercive control issues



# The Blaming Trap



Survivors in advocacy may be very focused on figuring out who is to blame for the problem



It can be useful to tell the survivor that advocacy is about figuring out what are healthy choices for their lives (and their children).

# Reasons for Relapse

Lack of Willpower/Experience

Environmental Pressures

Situational Cues

Inadequate skills

Lack of Support for Change

Problematic Self-Efficacy

Part of the Process of Change







# From Contemplation...



# To Action



# Priority of Asking Questions and Seeking...

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

(Matthew 7:7)

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. (Jeremiah 33:3)





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