

Strategies for Eliciting Change Talk

Ask Evocative Questions

Desire

- How would you like for things to change?*
- What do you hope our work together will accomplish?*
- Tell what you don't like about how things are now.*
- What do you wish for in _____?*
- What are you looking for from this program?*

Ability

- If you did really decide you want to _____, how could you do it?*
- What do you think you might be able to change?*
- What ideas do you have for how you could _____?*
- How confident are you that you could _____ if you made up your mind?*
- Of these various options you've considered, what seems most possible?*
- How likely are you to be able to _____?*

Reasons

- Why would you want to _____?*
- What's the downside of how things are now?*
- What might be the good things about quitting _____?*
- What would make it work your while to _____?*
- Finish this sentence: Things can't go on the way they have been because _____*
- What might be the three best reasons for _____*

Need

- What needs to happen?*
- How important is it for you to _____?*
- How serious or urgent does this feel to you?*
- What do you think has to change?*
- Complete this sentence: I really must _____*

Looking Forward/Looking Back:

- Do you remember a time when things were going well for you? What has changed?*
- What are the differences between the person you were 10 years ago and the person you are today?*
- How would you like things to turn out for you? Where would you like to be?*
- Where are you now? Where would you like to be?*
- What would be the best results you could imagine if you made a change?*
- Given what has happened so far, what do you expect might happen if you don't make a change?*

Query Extremes

- What do you think could be the best results if you did make this change?*
- What are your worst fears about what might happen if you don't make a change?*
- How much do you know about some of the things that can happen if you _____, even if you don't imagine this happening to you?*

Use change rulers

- How important is it to you to...? How confident are you?*
- Then –*
- Tell me about why you chose ____.*
- Why an ____ and not a ____ (number lower)? (example, why a 4 and not a 1 or a 2?)*
- What would it take to get you to ____ (higher number)?*

Explore Goals & Values

- Help people identify their guiding values and longer-term goals. Explore current behavior in the context of how it is supporting or getting in the way of those values and goals.*