

OARS: A Quick Guide

Open Questions (How/What/Tell Me More)

Don't ask for just a yes/no/single word.

Response possibilities are endless.

Avoid "why" as it can put people on the defensive.

Openers:

Tell me about...

What was that like?

Tell me more about that.

How does that fit into your life/work?

What was that experience like for you?

Give me an example of a time when?

Tell me about how that fits into your routine.

How does that compare with where you're at now?

What would have to happen for you to make a change?

Affirmations

Show our appreciation for the other person's experience.

Not a compliment – avoid starting with "I am..."

Seek opportunities to notice & affirm:

Past successes, future hopes, current efforts

Struggles & desires

Humanity, character, strengths, spirit

Values & efforts to act on them

Openers:

That took a lot of....

This shows...

You're really...

It must have taken a lot of work to...

Reflections (You...)

Offer the other person's content back to them in a non-threatening way

Invite the other person to continue, or delve deeper

Can help the other person organize his/her thoughts

Demonstrates your attempts to accurately understand

Can help the other person recognize his/her own "change talk"

Avoid, or limit, using the word "I" in your reflections

Simple

Repeating

Rephrasing

Complex

Paraphrasing

Unspoken emotion

Metaphor (kind of like...)

Continuing the paragraph (and...)

Openers:

You're wondering if....

You're feeling...

From your perspective....

Almost as if....

It seems to you that....

So you....

Summary

Reflect the big picture:

Key themes

Change talk

Strengths

Values

Then...

"Have I got that right?"

Then...

Key question:

Where does this leave you?

What's next?