Change Talk in Motivational Conversations
Why Change Talk Matters
“Change talk predicts behavioral change”

Miller & Rose. Toward a Theory of MI
Recognizing Change Talk
Neutral talk is “other talk”

Sustain talk favors the status quo, not changing (different from resistance)

Change talk favors movement in the direction of change
Change Talk: DARN-CAT

Preparatory change talk
- **D**esire to change (I want, like, wish)
- **A**bility to change (I can, could)
- **R**easons to change (if...then)
- **N**eed to change (I have to, got to)

Mobilizing change talk
- **C**ommitment (I will, I promise)
- **A**ctivation (I’m willing, am ready to)
- **T**aking steps (I made an appointment)
Change talk sounds like...

**Focus: Getting in better shape**

**D:** I’d like to feel more fit

**A:** I could maybe bicycle, jog, or swim

**R:** If I exercised more, I’d feel more alert

**N:** I’ve got to get off this couch and do something

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**C:** I plan to bicycle more, and drive less

**A:** I’m ready to get started this weekend

**T:** Yesterday, I walked for 10 minutes after lunch
Change Talk: DARN-CAT

Focus: ______________________________

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Degrees of Change Talk

“Will you take this person to be your lawfully wedded spouse, and be wholly faithful, for richer and poorer, in sickness and health, so long as you both shall live?”

I want to (desire)
I could (ability)
I should (reasons)
It’s important to me (need)
I DO!
Is it change talk, sustain talk, or something else?
Focus: Drinking

I like to drink. It’s what I do.
I suppose I could spend my money in better ways.
Focus: Drinking

If I drank less, I’d probably feel less groggy the next day.
You know, I’d like to quit, but it’s so hard.
Focus: Drinking

I’ve got to do something about my drinking. It’s really getting out of hand.
Who are you to give me advice! I saw you walking into a bar just last night.
Focus: Drinking

I’ve tried to quit more times than I can remember, and I’m done trying.
Focus: Drinking

I’ve tried to quit more times than I can remember, but I’m willing to try one more time.
Focus: Drinking

I’ve tried to quit more times than I can remember, and I’m not sure I want to try again.
Focus: Drinking

If I quit, I’m sure my liver will thank me.
Focus: Drinking

Maybe I could drink less whiskey and more beer.
Activity:
Listening for Change Talk
Activity: Listening for Change Talk

Jake

- It’s hard to get away from it.
- When I’m older, I’ll worry about pension plans and stuff.
- I don’t see my own family for a year, and I don’t care...
- Yeah, the coke’s my life...I care more about the dope than my loved ones or anything else
- I don’t know how to be without it
Jake

- I don’t know how to live everyday life without it
- You take it away, I don’t know what I’m going to do
- If you were to change me and put me in a regular-style life...
- I was there once in my life.
- Do you think you could send me to a skin specialist?
- I’ll go, Doc. Don’t worry, I’ll go.
- That frog you’re talking about. That’s me.
Eliciting Change Talk

Change talk often flows naturally by simply using OARS.

When it doesn’t occur naturally, we can elicit change talk using various strategies.
Strategies for Eliciting Change Talk

- Ask evocative questions
- Use importance and confidence rulers
- Query extremes
- Look back
- Look ahead
- Explore goals and values
Evocative Questions

In what ways has this been a problem for you?

How does it interfere with who you want to be?

What concerns you the very most?

How would you like things to turn out for you, ideally?
Evocative Questions

What do you see as possible options?

What changes, if any, are you thinking of making?

What will you do next?

How can I be helpful to you in this process?
Importance Ruler

Assess

“On a scale from 0 to 10, how important is it to you to make this change?”

Explore

“What makes you say ___ and not ___ (several numbers lower)?”

“What would it take to move from a ___ to a ___ (next highest number)?”

“How might I help you with that?”
Confidence Ruler

Assess

“On a scale from 0 to 10, how confident are you that you could make this change?”

Explore

“What makes you say ___ and not ___ (several numbers lower)?”

“What would it take to move from a ___ to a ___ (next highest number)?”

“How might I help you with that?”
“What concerns you absolutely most about _____?

Query Extremes

What are the very best results you could imagine if you _____?
Looking Back

“What were things like before ____?

“What has changed?”
Looking Ahead

“How would you like things to be different a month/a year/three years from now?”
Yearnings, Values and Goals

“Tell me what you care most about in life?”

“What are your deepest longings?”

“What are your long term goals?”

“What are the rules you’d say you live by?”

“How would you like your life to be different?”

“How does ___ impact the person you want to be?”

“What is the life that wants to live within you?”
Activity: Eliciting Change Talk

Ask evocative questions

Use importance and confidence rulers

Query extremes

Look back

Look ahead

Explore values, yearnings, goals
Providing Information and Suggestions

“It is easy to overestimate how much information and advice clients need to be given.”

Miller & Rollnick
Elicit–Provide–Elicit

A Simple Strategy for Information Exchange
Elicit–Provide–Elicit

Elicit

- Ask what person already knows
- Ask what person would like to know
- Ask permission to provide information
Elicit–Provide–Elicit

Provide

– Prioritize what person most wants to know
– Be clear; use everyday language
– Offer small amounts of information with time to reflect
– Acknowledge freedom to disagree or ignore
Elicit–Provide–Elicit

Elicit

– Ask for person’s response, interpretation, understanding
Activity: E–P–E

**Elicit**
- Ask what person already knows
- Ask what person would like to know
- Ask permission to provide information

**Provide**
- Offer small dose of suggestions, advice

**Elicit**
- Ask for person’s response
Thank you