



# MAKE THE MOST OF IT

## Helping people make the most use of advice, self-help material and other written resources

How often do we meet people in our work that have two conflicting views about what they should do? That's ambivalence. With the best intentions the practitioner may state the reasons for making a change and the client comes back with the reasons not to. As Bill Miller says author of Motivational Interviewing says, "...the ambivalent person is moved to the opposite side of the ambivalence by the very act of defending it."

Giving advice, or giving something written that is unwanted is likely to elicit pushback from clients that works against change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

We need a way to share information with our clients to help them change harmful behaviours while respecting their right to choose if, when, and how they will change.

Is there a more effective way to have these conversations to share information or give advice? Yes, A guiding style of communication (exploring alongside, supporting, encouraging) rather than a directing style (telling, prescribing) will be more helpful.

**Explore - Offer - Explore** is a way to give information or advice more effectively and is consistent with the spirit of Motivational Interviewing.

The principals of Explore, Offer, Explore (E.O.E.) involves:

- first evoking first the person's existing knowledge, they want it and are able for it
- give new information with permission
- explore their thoughts about the information.

This helps practitioners honour their client's expertise, and is a respectful way to ask permission to share material or advice.

(Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

The way in which you talk with people about their health can substantially influence their personal motivation for behaviour change.



Giving advice and using written leaflets or workbooks is a common practice in working with people in helping them change. What can we do that increases the possibility that they will use that advice?

### S.C.R.A.P.P.Y. O.L.D. B.I.T.S.

Less effective: A directing style:

- S** Suggestions: Maybe you could try...
- C** Closed Questions: Did you go to the gym?
- R** Reassurance: It'll be fine. You'll be grand.
- A** Advice & Opinion: You really need to... I think you should
- P** Pushy: We need to talk about x.
- P** Pep & Praise: Stay positive. Look forward. You are so clever. Well done!
- Y** Yes, but at least: At least it is only keyhole surgery.
- O** Opinion: (uninvited) I think x. My view is x.
- L** Like / loathe: Oh, I LOVE that idea. No, I hate that option
- D** Dive on solutions: Oh that's brilliant! You should definitely do that! Get started, let's do this!
- B** But - that's good but....
- I** Inquire into failure - Why did you fail?
- T** Telling off - I am disappointed
- S** Spoilers: How was your week? was it ok? (spoiler is closed question after an open question)

# Examples of exploring types of questions include:

"What do you already know about \_\_\_\_\_?"

"What would you like to know about \_\_\_\_\_?"

"May I share some information with you about \_\_\_\_\_?"

"We have a booklet people find help helpful. Would you be interested?"

The final step of E.O.E. involves exploring the client's thoughts and reflecting their reactions giving them time to consider how the information applies to their specific situation.

## EXPLORE

- Existing knowledge
- Interest
- Permission

What do you know about. I have a leaflet people find helpful. What would you think about that?

## OFFER

- Acknowledge strengths
- Affirmation
- Information one piece at a time
- Autonomy
- Support

That's strength that you are open to new ideas. What you do with this is up to you.

## EXPLORE

- Reactions
- Additional questions
- Next steps

What do you think about what was in it? How do you feel about what it said?

## Conversation skills: The guiding Style of O.C.E.A.N.I.C.

- O** **Open Questions:**  
What are your thoughts on...? How do you feel about...?
- C** **Consent:** Is it ok if I ask about x? We have a leaflet about x people find helpful. I would like you to see it. Is that ok?
- E** **Empathy through really listening:**
- A** **Acknowledge strengths:** Notice the qualities and characteristics that the person brings to the situation  
You've been working hard on this.....That was a courageous thing to do...
- N** **Nuggets:** A little advice or information – given with permission. Some people try a daily walk to reduce blood pressure, what are your thoughts about that?
- I** **Individualized:** How it affects them?
- C** **Chain:** link it to something in the next session

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Alcohol and You is The South Eastern Trust and ASCERT, working together to reduce alcohol related harm.

## W.E.D.G.E.S (Skills for reflecting)

- W** **Words:** Say what you just heard in slightly different words.
- E** **Emotion:** Name the emotions, describe how it felt: "You seem frustrated about..."
- D** **Double:** Reflect on the ambivalence "You want x and on the other hand you really want Y"
- G** **Glue:** Comment on how stuck things seem. "You seem to have hit a brick wall"
- E** **Express:** Your own emotional state as you listen. "I'm wondering... I'm Curious ... I'm Confused..."
- S** **Summarising:** Pulling things together.

Explore, Offer, Explore presents an opportunity to present nuggets of information given with consent followed by checking out what they think. It is what they think that will guide what they do.