



Talking about Tobacco Using Motivational Interviewing

In conversations about tobacco use, particularly with people that do not want to stop using or are unsure, we want to create a space where the person feels comfortable to talk freely, without fear of judgement. The goal should not be to get the person to change, but to guide them in considering the change. Ultimately, it is up to the person to decide what they would like to do about their smoking, if anything at all. In talking freely about their tobacco use, the person is more likely to discuss their ambivalence, and as we discuss in TCTTAC Motivational Interviewing trainings, the more a person articulates ‘change talk’ (their desire, ability, reasons, need, commitment, and actions taken) the more likely a person is to move in the direction of change.

Starting the Conversation	
Intervention and Explanation:	Example:
<p>Raise the topic of tobacco casually and ask permission to discuss it further.</p>	<p>“I’ve noticed that you like to smoke. Would it be OK if we spoke a little about your smoking?”</p>
<p>If the person says “yes,” ask an open-ended question to open the conversation and follow with a reflection.</p>	<p>“Tell me what you like about smoking.”</p> <p>“Smoking seems to help when you feel stressed and it’s something you like to do with friends.”</p>
<p>Explore the other side of the person’s ambivalence (dislikes) and reflect that back as well. You might also ask if there is anything else or anything you missed.</p>	<p>“What are some things you don’t like about smoking?”</p> <p>“It costs way more than it used to, and some people make you feel like you’re not welcome when you smoke. Is there anything else you don’t like about smoking?”</p>
<p>If the person says “no,” support the person’s autonomy, while acknowledging that you may bring it up from time to time as a part of your role.</p>	<p>“OK. That’s fine. I may bring it up from time to time to see where you are with it. What <i>would</i> you like to talk about while we’re together?”</p>
Gauging Stage of Change and Eliciting Change Talk	
<p>Listen for change talk (mentioned above) and sustain talk (talk directed away from change). One of our goals is to elicit as much change talk as we can and reinforce it when we hear it by reflecting, affirming, and inviting elaboration.</p>	



Several strategies can be used to elicit change talk (for a complete list, see TCTTAC’s Eliciting Change Talk Tip Sheet.) Remember, we want the person to articulate their own reasons for changing, as well as to build confidence in their ability to change.

<p>Looking forward:</p>	<p>“You have some mixed feelings about smoking. On one hand, you enjoy the taste and sensation from smoking. On the other, it’s eating a hole in your wallet and your partner doesn’t like the smell. What do you see happening long term if you continue to smoke the amount you are?”</p> <p>Or, alternatively, you might ask, “What would be some of the benefits if you did decide to cut down or quit?”</p>
<p>Looking back:</p>	<p>“How were your finances (or how was your relationship) before you started smoking?”</p> <p>Or you might ask, “You’ve talked about your recovery from alcohol in the past and how difficult it was getting sober. How did you accomplish that?” (builds confidence)</p>
<p>Querying Extremes</p>	<p>“What’s the best thing you imagine happening if you did decide to quit smoking?”</p> <p>Or “What’s the worst thing you imagine happening if you continue to smoke?”</p>
<p>Importance Ruler</p>	<p>“On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to stop smoking?” (The person says 6.) “Why did you rate it a 6 and not a 4?” (always ask about a lower number)</p>
<p>Confidence Ruler</p>	<p>“On that same scale, how confident are you you’d be able to stop if you decided to?” (The person says 5.) “5. So, you have some confidence in your ability to make this change. Why did you give yourself a 5 and not a 3?... What would help you get to a 6 or a 7?”</p>



<p>Exploring goals and values:</p>	<p>“You’re really having a hard time paying the bills lately. It’s important to you to be responsible in that way and not fall behind. You really want to do your part. How is smoking affecting your ability to pay the bills?” (insert the goals or values important to the person you’re working with, e.g., family, work, housing)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Affirmations</p> <p>Make affirmations that reflect strengths and values in the person/family you are working with.</p>	
<p>A person is starting to consider making a change to their smoking after 20 years.</p>	<p>“You want to be there for your family.” “You’re open to considering a change even after smoking for so long. That takes a lot of inner strength.” “You realize there are other things that are important to you.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sharing Information</p> <p>At some point we may want to share some information with the person, including from our own experience or other people we’ve worked with. This can be anything from the health and financial effects of smoking to tools for cutting down or quitting.</p>	
<p>Ask permission. This empowers the person to have some control over the conversation and lets us know if the person is open to hearing what we have to say.</p> <p>If the person says “no,” respect that by not continuing to share information.</p> <p>If the person says “yes,” we can follow up to understand and acknowledge what they already know and ask if there is something they would like to know more about.</p> <p>Provide the additional information and then follow up to learn what the person thinks</p>	<p>“Would it be OK if I shared some information with you about some of the tools available that make it easier to stop smoking?”</p> <p>“OK. I appreciate your honesty. If it’s OK with you, I would like to bring smoking up from time to time to see where you are with it. Are you OK with that?... For today, what would be helpful to work on during our time together?”</p> <p>“First, tell me - what are some of the things you have heard about that can make it easier to stop smoking?... Is there anything you’re interested in learning more about?”</p> <p>“What do you make of this?”</p>



<p>about what was shared and if they want to know more.</p>	<p>“What more would you like to know?”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Providing Feedback following a Tobacco Screening or Assessment</p> <p>Providing personalized feedback following a screen or assessment for Tobacco Use Disorder can be an effective way to engage someone in a conversation about their tobacco use. There are several validated screening tools available (e.g., Fagerstrom). The Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI), another example, is made up of only two questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After you wake up, how much time passes until you smoke your first cigarette? (a shorter time frame indicates a higher intensity addiction) • How many cigarettes do you smoke per day? 	
<p>Ask permission.</p> <p>If the person says no, graciously respect that. If they say yes, we want to share the information from the assessment in a nonjudgmental way.</p> <p>After pausing for and reflecting the person’s reaction, we may want to transition to the type of information exchange described above (if the person is interested in stopping or cutting down) or use an open-ended question to open the conversation.</p>	<p>“Thank you for taking the time to answer those questions. Would it be OK if we took a few minutes to talk about the results?”</p> <p>“You’re smoking about 10 minutes after waking and smoke about 20 cigarettes a day. Based on the amount you’re smoking and how soon you smoke in the morning, you are at increased risk for developing certain health problems, like problems breathing and even cancer. What do you make of that?”</p> <p>“That’s something that you’ve heard about, in fact, you see it mentioned all the time on TV. Tell me more. What else have you heard about tobacco use?”</p> <p>“You know it can cause cancer and things like that, but it’s hard to stop or cut down. Would you mind telling me, what is it you like about smoking?”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Responding to Sustain Talk</p> <p>Sometimes people do not want to change their tobacco use or are not interested in discussing it. This may sound like the opposite of change talk (desire, reasons, or the need to continue smoking, or lack of confidence to make the change) or pushback (e.g., “Why is everyone pushing me to stop smoking?! It’s my choice.”). In these situations, we want to validate the person, avoid pushing back, and defuse potential tension. Here are a few sample participant statements and responses using MI strategies:</p>	



<p>“Smoking helps me get through the day, although I’m spending way too much on it and I have little money to begin with.”</p> <p>Strategy: Double-sided reflection</p>	<p>“On one hand, smoking helps you cope when you’re having a rough day. On the other, it’s putting you in a worse financial situation.”</p>
<p>“I guess I might smoke too much sometimes, but I don’t think I have a problem with smoking.”</p> <p>Strategy: Agreement with a twist</p>	<p>“You feel you don’t need to do anything about your smoking <i>even</i> if it has gotten a little out of hand.”</p>
<p>“Why is everyone pushing me to stop smoking?! It’s my choice.”</p> <p>Strategy: Emphasizing autonomy</p>	<p>“You’re right, you are the only one who can decide whether or not you have a smoking problem.”</p>
<p>“My health is fine.”</p> <p>Strategy: Reframing</p>	<p>“You haven’t noticed any negative health effects from smoking. You are someone who will be able to tell when you need to do something about your smoking.”</p>
<p>“I am not here to address my smoking.”</p> <p>Strategy: Shifting focus</p>	<p>“Smoking is not something you’re interested in addressing right now. What would you like to talk about while we’re together?”</p>
<p>“I know smoking isn’t good for me, but I just have a lot going on right now...”</p> <p>Strategy: Coming alongside</p>	<p>“You have a good sense what your needs are and maybe now is just not the right time to address your smoking.”</p>
<p>When Someone is Ready for Change</p>	
<p>When someone expresses readiness for change (e.g., verbalizes more change talk and less sustain talk, starts taking steps), we want to help the person plan for the change. Importantly, the person needs to define for themselves what they want to change (e.g., cut down or quit) and with our help (if desired) identify what will help them get there.</p>	
<p>Summarize change talk (recapitulation).</p>	<p>“Let me see if I have this. Smoking has been a part of your life for 20 years. When you started, it was cool, and a lot of your friends were smoking. It was also something to do when you were bored. But recently you’ve noticed trouble walking upstairs and your doctor has warned you that continued</p>

<p>Ask key question.</p> <p>If the person asks for help, elicit their ideas first.</p> <p>Share information.</p> <p>Begin planning small steps.</p> <p>As part of the plan, ask about social support, which also helps solidify commitment.</p> <p>Provide a summary of the plan and strengthen commitment by evoking the person's intentions.</p>	<p>smoking will really affect your health. You've thought about cutting down, but really don't know where to start."</p> <p>"What would you like to do about this?"</p> <p>"That's great that you want to cut down and are open to our help with that. As you've been thinking about this, what are some of your ideas for how to go about it?"</p> <p>"Those are excellent ideas. Would you be open to hearing some of the other things that have worked for people?..." (share the strategies)</p> <p>"What do you think would be a good first step?"</p> <p>"You've identified some great first steps. One other thing that helps people stick with their plan is to share it with at least one other trusted person or group so they can offer support. What do you think about that?... Who will you share your plan with?"</p> <p>"It sounds like your plan, at least starting out, is to delay your first cigarette for as long as you can in the morning, and then try to have only one cigarette per hour for the rest of the day, and you'll try some of the strategies we talked about in order to do that. You also think telling your brother, Raphael, will be helpful as he's always looked out for you. Does that sound about right?... How ready are you to move forward with that plan?"</p>
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