



# Motivational Interviewing Strategies for Vaccination Readiness

## Mindset

The purpose of the conversation is to identify an individual's motivation to get the vaccine and resolve ambivalence, not to persuade them to get the vaccine.

An effective approach involves partnership, acceptance and evoking sources of motivation.

- The message you communicate must be one of respect, trust, and collaboration.
- Avoid judging the other person and maintain a non-reactive stance.
- Enhance the other person's experience of control through statements and questions that support autonomy. When the perception of the need to defend one's self is reduced, the possibility of dialogue opens up.
- Maintain a stance of compassionate curiosity and work to draw out the other person's own arguments in favor of the vaccine.

### Say things like:

*"It's your choice.  
Only you can  
decide what's  
right for you."  
Ask for  
permission!*

## Skills

Open Questions often begin with how or what and ask for more than a yes or no response.

- How are you feeling about getting the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What are your current thoughts about the vaccine?
- What would help you feel more ready to get the vaccine?
- What are your concerns if you don't get the vaccine?
- How will you know when you are ready to get the vaccine?

### All-purpose Open Questions:

*"Give me an example."  
"What was that like?"  
"Tell me more about..."*

Affirmations highlight the other person's strengths, resources, values and efforts.

- You have been thinking about this a lot.
- You've really been weighing this decision.
- Your commitment to your health is obvious.
- You are thoughtful in your decision-making.
- You want the best for your family's health.

A genuine affirmation  
can help decrease  
defensiveness

Reflections attempt to capture what the other person said or the unspoken meaning in what the person said.

- This is a key way to show empathy or your attempts to understand the other person.
- Reflections should always focus on the other person's thoughts, ideas, emotions or experiences.
- Deliver reflections as a statement.
- After a reflection, you should pause to give the other person a chance to respond.

Avoid it feeling  
like a gimmick  
by not overusing  
*"Sounds like..."  
"What I think I  
hear you saying  
is..."*

## Strategies

### Explore – Offer – Explore

- This strategy is a great way to share information in a non-threatening, partnering way.



### Change Talk Rulers

- The purpose of the ruler is to evoke the other person’s own arguments for change (change talk).
- The number selected at any given time does not offer a valid or reliable measure of their readiness
- Share a ruler with the other person and ask them:
  - “On a scale from 0-10 with zero being not at all ready and 10 being as ready as you can imagine being, how ready are you right now to get the COVID-19 vaccine?”
  - Whatever number they select, follow-up with “Tell me about that number. What does it mean to you?”
  - Then you can ask, “What would have to happen to move you up a number or two?”

### Questions to Evoke Change Talk

- Questions that intentionally ask for the other person’s own arguments for change (change talk).
  - From what you know, what might be some of the risks of not getting vaccinated?
  - If you were to decide to get vaccinated, what would be your most compelling reason?
  - What would have to happen for you to feel ready to get the vaccine?
    - This question is great for someone who is not yet ready. It respects where they are and encourages them to keep thinking forward in the direction of getting the vaccine.

## Tips to Remember

### Responding to Misinformation

- When someone shares incorrect information, ask permission to share information.
- Offer contrasting information in a depersonalized manner.
- “What we know from experts” or “Some things that other people have found.”

### When Someone is Not Ready

There are times when someone presents with resistance to even having the conversation. Your goal shifts to make the experience as positive as possible and leave the door open for further conversation.

- Reflect on their reluctance to discuss.
- Demonstrate empathy and show curiosity about their resistance.
- Emphasize their autonomy and thank them for the conversation.