

# USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING TO IMPROVE MEDICATION ADHERENCE

Patients may be cautious or resistant to discussing their medication use during adherence outreach. Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative style of communication that is designed to strengthen a patient's commitment to change and reduce their feelings of ambivalence. This guiding style of communication relies on strong listening skills and empathy to empower patients to change their behavior.

## Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions invite patients to share their concerns, thoughts, and feelings without leading them in a specific direction. These types of questions allow patients to feel heard while creating a collaborative dialogue to help uncover important core values that can facilitate change.

### Examples of Open-Ended Questions

Tell me about...?

What questions, if any, do you have about...?

Tell me the best thing that has happened since the last time we talked?

What was the greatest benefit you noticed?

What have you found the most helpful?

What went well?

Tell me what you like about...?

What was the best part of...?

What do you think you need to do?

What do you think you need to achieve your goals?

Describe what that would mean to you?

On a scale from 1-10, how ready are you?

On a scale from 1-10, how confident are you?

What would need to happen to make it a higher number?

How would your life be different if...?

What would you like to do?

What is your next step?

If you were going to make a next step or goal today, what would it be?

What would you like to set as your goal until the next time we talk?

## Driving Conversations Forward

Certain open-ended questions can help move the conversation towards “change talk” (a readiness/movement towards change). These types of questions can get a patient thinking more about how making a change could influence their health outcomes. It is important to ask these types of questions with empathy and curiosity.

### Key Questions to Move Conversations Forward

- If you could do one small step that would help you, what would that be?
- What do you feel you need to do?
- What do you want to do?
- Why would it be important for you to (use a pill box, sign up for a mail order pharmacy, etc...)?
- What would the benefit be for you to stay out of the hospital?
- What do you want as a result of your (medication, pharmacy services, etc...)?
- What is one thing you will do that will help you to stay healthy?
- What would your life be like in 6 months if you were able to make this change?
- If you aren't able to make this change, describe what life would be like in 6 months?
- What other things, if any, could you do that would improve (your situation, your mobility, your blood pressure, your blood sugar, etc...)?

## Conversation Structure

Structuring a conversation using motivational interviewing in a strategic way can allow a healthcare professional to provide recommendations to a patient when they are ready. This format is known as the Elicit-Provide-Elicit method.

First, the healthcare professional **elicits** from the patient what he or she already knows. This helps identify gaps or errors in the patient's current knowledge.

Second, after asking permission, if the patient is interested, the healthcare professional **provides** the information that might be helpful to the patient.

Finally, after providing the information, the healthcare professional **elicits** the patient's reaction to the information. Maybe this is something that the patient has tried before, maybe the patient didn't understand what was said, or maybe there is a major barrier to trying the idea that was mentioned.

### Example phrases to use:

#### ELICIT:

*Find out what the patient already knows*

What do you already know about high blood pressure?

What do you know about type II diabetes and how to manage it?

What would you like to know more about...?

#### ASK PERMISSION:

*Ask the patient for their reaction*

"I have some thoughts I'd like to share with you, is that okay?"

"Is it okay if I share with you what we know?"

"Would it be all right if I tell you a few things that have worked for other people?"

#### PROVIDE:

*Provide additional information as appropriate*

What we have learned is...

What others have found...

Research suggests...

What we generally recommend is...

Some patients we have worked with have found...

References: Berg-Smith Training & Consultation, 2010; Miller & Rollnick, Motivational Interviewing, 2013